July 17, 1934. L. L. FULLER 1,966,793

GAME BOARD DEVICE

Filed May 1, 1933

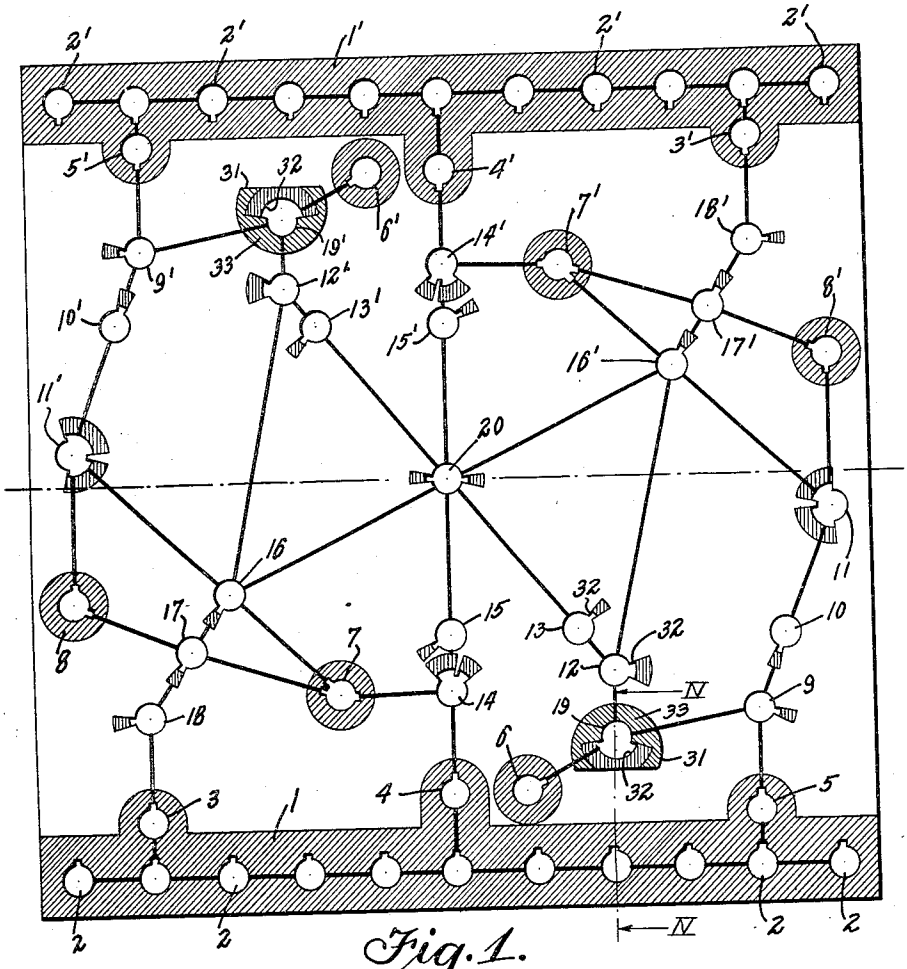


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

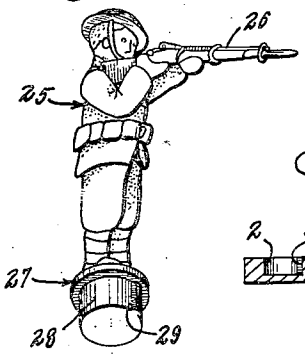


Fig. 3.

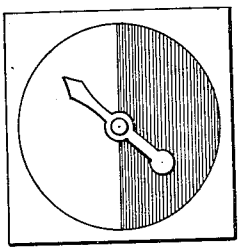
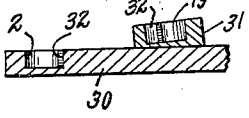


Fig. 4.



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GAME BOARD DEVICE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 273—131)

This invention relates broadly to game board devices and particularly to a war game in which playing pieces representing firing units of opposing armies are moved into various positions on a board to fire upon opposing pieces in certain other positions on the board.

A broad object of the invention is to provide a game that involves skill in playing, with or without the element of chance at the option of the players, and that because of its realistic resemblance to an actual battle engagement excites intense interest in the players.

Another object is to provide a game board and playing pieces cooperating therewith of such a nature as to make the possible plays apparent from observation of the board without the necessity of referring to a complicated set of rules.

Another object is to provide a war game board with pieces therefor cooperating with the board in such a manner as to positively indicate the firing range of each piece in each particular position into which it may be moved.

Still another object is to provide a war game board with cooperating pieces representing firing units adapted to be moved into various prescribed positions on the board, in which receptacles for receiving the pieces are provided in the various positions and the receptacles so shaped or inclined with reference to the pieces as to differently limit the effective range of fire of the pieces in the various positions.

The construction and mode of operation of the device will be apparent from the following detailed description which refers to the drawing;

Figure 1 is a plan view of a game board in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view showing the construction of one of the pieces to be used with the board;

Figure 3 is a plan view of a spinner element that may be employed in playing the game; and

Figure 4 is a detailed sectional view, taken in the plane IV—IV of Figure 1, showing the construction of the receptacles for receiving the playing pieces.

As shown in Figure 1, my game board comprises a base having a plurality of spaced apart receptacles for receiving playing pieces. The receptacles are indicated as the small circles numbered 2 to 20, inclusive, and 2' to 20', inclusive, on Figure 1. Each receptacle actually comprises a shallow, circular opening or hole in the board. Thus, as shown in Figure 4, the board 30 may be of substantial thickness (½ inch or more) and the receptacles provided by drilling holes in the board, such as shown at 2, which holes are of substantial depth but do not extend completely through the board. All of the receptacles shown in Figure 1, with the exception of receptacles 19 and 19', are formed the same as the receptacle 2 shown in Figure 4. The receptacles 19 and 19', however, are formed in separate blocks 31, which may be glued or otherwise secured to the surface of the board 30. The blocks 31 are inclined as shown in Figure 4 for a purpose to be described later.

Each playing piece may be in the form of a soldier as shown in Figure 2 having a rifle 26 at shoulder position and extending horizontally as shown, and is provided with a base designated generally at 27 adapted to fit into the receptacles on the board. Thus, each base may comprise a lower cylindrical portion 28 adapted to fit snugly within the receptacles and be held securely against tipping when inserted in the receptacle. An important feature of the game is that each piece when positioned within a receptacle has its horizontal firing range restricted to a definite arc. To this end, the cylindrical portion 28 of the base of each piece is provided at one side with an outwardly projecting key 29 and each receptacle is provided with a key-way 32 adapted to receive the key 29 of a piece positioned in that receptacle. By varying the circumferential lengths of the key-ways 32 in different receptacles, the latitude of rotation of pieces positioned in the different receptacles may be varied. Thus, referring to Figure 1, the receptacle 13 is provided with a relatively narrow key-way 32 which is only large enough to receive the key 29 of a piece so that a piece inserted in receptacle 13 cannot be turned and can point only in one direction. It will be observed from Figure 2 that the rifle 26 on the piece is pointed in the same direction as the key 29 on that piece so that, if the piece is inserted in receptacle 13, the rifle associated with that piece can point only in one direction, which is toward the receptacle 8'. The receptacle 12, on the other hand, has a wider key-way 32 permitting a piece positioned therein to be rotated through an arc sufficient to fire either on receptacle 9 or receptacle 10. It can be readily determined by inspection of the board what the horizontal range of a piece positioned in any receptacle will be. It will be observed that because of the positioning and dimensioning of the key-ways on the various receptacles, some receptacles are in the line of fire of pieces in some other receptacles but out of the line or range of fire of still

other receptacles. Some of the receptacles, such as 14, 14', 11, 11' and 20 have two disconnected key-ways so that a piece positioned therein has two separate ranges of fire but cannot be changed from one range to the other without removing the piece from the receptacle and reinserting it.

I prefer to make the positions represented by some of the receptacles invulnerable to fire from pieces in all but a limited number of other receptacles and to this end the board is either painted or constructed to indicate that receptacles 2, 3, 4, 5, 2', 3', 4' and 5' are in trenches which are protected from horizontal fire. Thus, the cross hatched areas 1 and 1' may be colored distinctively to indicate trenches and the shaded areas surrounding receptacles 6, 7, 8, 6', 7' and 8' may be colored the same as the areas 1 to indicate that the latter receptacles represent positions in shell holes shielded from horizontal fire. Since all of the receptacles except 19 and 19' have vertical axes, pieces positioned therein will project vertically and the rifles on the pieces will extent horizontally so that pieces in those receptacles cannot fire on pieces positioned in the trenches or shell holes. However, because of the fact that the receptacles 19 and 19' are inclined from the vertical as shown in Figure 4, the rifle of a piece positioned in either one of those receptacles is deflected downwardly to command the associated trench. Thus, the receptacle 19 commands the receptacles 2 in the trench 1 and the receptacle 19' commands the receptacles 2' in the trench 1'.

To readily distinguish them from the other receptacles, receptacles 19 and 19' may be surrounded with colored areas 33, colored differently from the areas representing the trenches and the shell holes.

The various straight lines connecting different receptacles indicate the permissible paths of movement of pieces from one receptacle to another. Obviously, the total number of receptacles, their positions and the permissible paths of movement between the receptacles may be varied between wide limits to vary the complexity of the game.

In playing the game, two sets of pieces are employed to represent pieces in opposing armies, each set being differently colored so that they may be readily distinguished apart. Many different rules may be adopted for playing the game but a desirable set of rules is as follows:

(1) Each player starts with a set of 11 pieces located in the receptacles 2 and 2', respectively, in the trenches positioned on opposite sides of the board;

(2) The players play alternately in "turns" as in checkers;

(3) On each turn a player may move twice or shoot once;

(4) Pieces may be moved in either direction but only along the lines interconnecting the receptacles;

(5) The determination of whether a shot is a hit or a miss is left to chance, by spinning an arrow on an indicator such as is shown in Figure 3. The two halves of the indicator card are colored differently and if the head of the arrow comes to rest on one color the shot is counted as a hit, and if it comes to rest on the other color the shot is counted as a miss.

(6) A piece that has been hit is removed from the board and that player wins who first succeeds in eliminating, or hemming in to prevent further movement, all the pieces of his opponent.

(7) Pieces in the receptacles in the shell holes or trenches cannot shoot.

(8) Pieces in the shell holes cannot be hit from any other position.

(9) Pieces in the trenches cannot be hit except by pieces in the elevated and inclined receptacles 19 and 19', respectively.

(10) Shifting a piece in one of the double range receptacles 14, 14', 11, 11' or 20 from one range to the other counts as a move.

(11) A player may pass. If both players pass in succession, the game is a draw.

As will be noted, there are certain favorable places into which a player tries to get his pieces as soon as possible. To give some idea of the strategy of the game, it may be pointed out that positions 14 and 14' are easily arrived at from the trench positions adjacent thereto and are favorable positions in which to get a piece for the reason that they control wide areas. Their weakness consists in the fact that pieces in those positions may be shot by pieces in positions 11 and 11' whereas the latter positions are out of the range of fire of pieces in receptacles 14 and 14'. Positions 11 and 11' are less easily arrived at than positions 14 and 14' but control a wider area and are less vulnerable. The only position from which receptacles 11 and 11' may be fired upon is receptacle 20. It should be noted that a piece in receptacle 20 cannot be shot from receptacles 11 or 11' but that it has a very limited range itself and is vulnerable from the easily arrived at positions 14 and 14'.

It will be observed from inspection of the board that some positions are ineffective so far as shooting is concerned. Thus, a piece positioned in receptacle 9 or 9' will be pointed straight off the field and a piece in receptacles 15 or 15' will have in its range of fire only the shell hole position 7 or 7' which is invulnerable to fire. It will also be observed that quite a number of positions control only one other position.

Obviously many variations may be made in the board and in the rules for playing the game, some of which changes will now be discussed.

Rule 3 may be changed, if desired, to permit a player on each turn to move only once or shoot once. This introduces more luck into the game.

If desired, the element of chance may be eliminated and the game made one of pure skill by considering that every shot is a hit. If this is done, the game is much like checkers or chess in its intellectual demands. Where the element of chance is eliminated it is perhaps best to make one shot equal to three moves so that a turn consists of shooting once or making three moves.

It is to be understood, of course, that where the chance element is introduced, it need not necessarily be provided by a spinner. Dice may be employed. Furthermore, if a spinner is used, the chances of hitting or missing may ve varied. Thus, three-fourths of the circle in which the spinner rotates might be painted one color and only the remaining quarter another color. A single die may be substituted for the spinner, the die having 2, 3, 4 or even 5 of its six sides painted one color and the remainder another color.

Obviously, the game need not be confined to the particular arrangement of receptacles and interconnecting lines shown in Figure 1. A much more complicated field could be drawn up and, to avoid confusion in a more complicated field, the distance a piece might shoot could be limited. Thus, a short ruler might be provided to measure a distance a piece could shoot.

If desired, the rules of the game may be altered to permit pieces in shell holes or trenches to shoot although still making them invulnerable to fire from other positions.

Although in the particular board described and shown in the drawing the trenches and shell holes are represented by colored areas, if desired the field may be constructed of stamped or molded material in which the trenches and shell holes are actually depressed below the level of the remainder of the field. By so depressing the trenches and shell holes and employing pieces of suitable height, it may be made apparent from inspection of the board with the pieces positioned thereon that the pieces in the trenches and shell holes can neither fire on other pieces or be fired upon from other positions (with the exception, of course, of positions 19 and 19' which command the trenches adjacent thereto). Alternatively, instead of depressing the areas of the board representing the trenches and shell holes, those areas might be realistically shown as protected positions by providing an elevated barrier or parapet in front of the trenches and surrounding each shell hole.

Because of the fact that numerous variations in the game board device described may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention, it is understood that the limits of the invention are to be defined only as set forth in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In a war game device, a playing board representing a field of action, having a plurality of receptacles thereon for determining the possible position in which playing pieces may be placed, two sets of playing pieces representing firing units of opposing armies, each piece including a pointer element indicating the direction of fire of the piece and having a base portion adapted to be rotatably supported in said receptacles, and cooperating elements on one at least of said pieces and one at least of said receptacles for positively limiting the arc of rotation of that piece in that receptacle and correspondingly limiting the range of fire of the piece when in that position.

2. In a war game device, a playing board representing a field of action, having a plurality of receptacles thereon for determining the possible position in which playing pieces may be placed, two sets of playing pieces representing firing units of opposing armies, each piece including a pointer element indicating the direction of fire of the piece and having a base portion adapted to be rotatably supported in said receptacles, each piece also including a stop element and the receptacles comprising means cooperating with the stop elements on the pieces for positively limiting the arc of rotation of pieces positioned in different receptacles by different amounts whereby pieces in different position on said board have different ranges of fire.

3. In a war game device, a playing board representing a field of action, having a plurality of receptacles thereon for determining the possible position in which playing pieces may be placed, two sets of playing pieces representing firing units of opposing armies, each piece including a pointer element indicating the direction of fire of the piece and having a base adapted to register with said receptacles, some of said receptacles being so directed as to limit the vertical angle of fire of a piece therein to one elevation and other receptacles being so directed as to limit the vertical angle of fire of a piece therein to another elevation, and some of said receptacles being distinctively identified to represent positions vulnerable to fire at one of said elevations and invulnerable to fire at the other elevation.

4. In a war game device, a playing board representing a field of action, having a plurality of receptacles thereon for determining the possible position in which playing pieces may be placed, two sets of playing pieces representing firing units of opposing armies, each piece including a pointer element indicating the direction of fire of the piece and having a base adapted to register with said receptacles, a first and a second group of said receptacles respectively being positioned on opposite sides of said board and distinctively identified to represent positions invulnerable from horizontal fire, other receptacles intermediate the first and second groups distinctively identified to represent positions vulnerable to horizontal fire, at least one of said other receptacles being so directed that the vertical angle of fire of a piece positioned therein is inclined below the horizontal to permit it to fire on pieces in at least one of said first and second groups of receptacles.

5. A war game device as described in claim 3 in which some of said receptacles are grouped and identified to represent positions in juxtaposed trenches invulnerable to attack, other receptacles are spaced between the trenches and identified to represent positions in shell holes invulnerable to attack, and still other receptacles are spaced between the trenches in positions in the line of fire from pieces in some receptacles and out of line of fire of pieces in other receptacles.

6. A war game device as described in claim 2 in which one at least of said receptacles is shaped to receive a piece therein in at least two positions of orientation while preventing rotation of the piece from one position to the other without removing the piece from the receptacle.

7. A war game device as described in claim 2 in which one at least of said receptacles is shaped to permit rotation of the piece therein through at least two distinct ranges of orientation while preventing rotation of the piece from one range to the other without removing the piece from the receptacle.

8. A war game device as described in claim 2 in which the various receptacles are interconnected with indicating lines for indicating between which receptacle pieces may be moved, in which one of said receptacles is identified to represent a base position for initially placing a piece at the beginning of a game, in which an intermediate receptacle shaped to substantially limit the range of fire of a piece therein is connected directly to said base position, and in which still another receptacle shaped to permit wide range of fire of a piece therein is connected to said base position only through said intermediate receptacle.

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