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GAME OF SKILL.

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FIG. 1

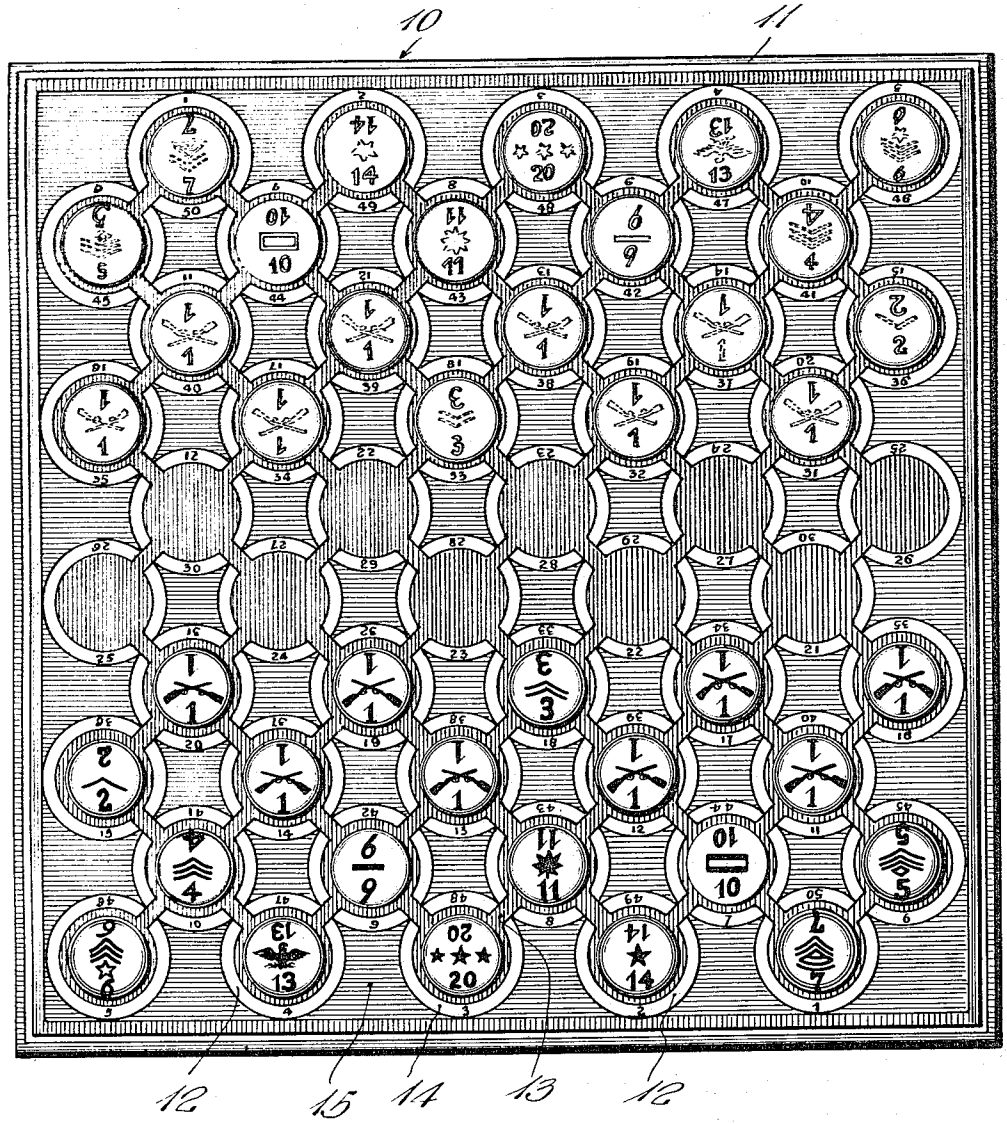

FIG. 2



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GAME OF SKILL.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, ABB L. LANDIS and WILLIAM DUDLEY ROY, citizens of the United States, and residing, respectively, at Nashville and Belleview, in the county of Davidson and State of Tennessee, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Games of Skill, which invention is fully set forth in the following specification.

This invention relates to a game apparatus designed to be entertaining and embodying certain tactics, principles and strategy employed in military maneuvers. The game is not one of luck or chance but a scientific study. The forces consist of two opposing sides, each force striving to win the game by superior play and tactics.

An important object of the invention is to make new and useful improvements in games of skill by retaining the manner of moving and method of captures known to the game of checkers, but to broaden the scope of development and increase the possibilities of combination and of strategy in offensive and defensive play, by changing the practice in checkers and by extending the theory of winning.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game which has superiority over the game of checkers and also of chess in the limitation of the power of pieces and time consumed in play.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a game which will fall half way between these two ancient games. The improvements give more flexibility in development than possible in checkers while it avoids the result of repeated "draws"; it also eliminates the complexity of chess, while retaining the fascination of that royal game through the possibilities of combination and strategy.

Other objects and advantages of the improvements will be apparent during the course of the following description.

In the accompanying drawings forming a part of this specification and in which like numerals are employed to designate like parts throughout the same,

Figure 1 represents the board on which the game is played and the pieces at the beginning of play are shown on the board, and Fig. 2 is a top plan view of one of the pieces or men.

The board indicated by the numeral 10 is surrounded by off-setting walls 11 upon which may be placed a lift-off covering not shown. The board is divided into a number of circles indicated by the numeral 12. "The circles" communicate with each other by means of diagonal passageways 13, the men or pieces moving from one circle to the other via said passageways. The playing areas are preferably circular in shape instead of square thereby effecting a great saving in the area of the game board. In practice it has been found instructive and entertaining to designate the circular playing areas as "redoubts" or "dug-outs". Other diagonal communications 13 being called "trenches", the supporting segments 14 are called "parapets", the outlining intervals 15 represent "no man's land." In practice the playing areas are made red, the supporting segments white, the intervening intervals blue thus giving a pleasing and distinctive appearance to the game board, and utilizing the patriotic sentiment in respect of the national colors of the United States and the allies.

A distinctive feature of the improvements in the game board are the duplicate numbering of the playing areas consecutively from 1 to 50, reckoning from the side for each player, for the purposes (*a*) of establishing two systems of five columns each of five circles (playing areas), where numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 form the base for the first system consisting respectively of five columns, each of which has five circles 1, 11, 21, 31 and 41 and 2, 12, 22, 32 and 42, and 3, 13, 23, 33 and 43 and 4, 14, 24, 34 and 44, and 5, 15, 25, 35 and 45, and numbers 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 for the base of the five columns of the second system consisting of the 25 circles with numbers ending in digits 6, 7, 8, 9 and 0, and thereby enabling the players to determine the "move" (ultimate opposition) by simply counting the pieces occupying circles in each system, this scientific arrangement constituting one feature of the improvements; (*b*) of facilitating correspondence and blindfold play by easy and ready reference and recognition of stated moves; and (*c*) of checking by inspection the typographical accuracy or

the practical possibility of recorded moves, this check by inspection of the record being due to the arrangement of the playing areas whereby a possible move from a circle with its number ending with the digit 1 only can be made to circles with numbers ending in digits 6 or 7; and similarly only legitimate moves can be made from circles with numbers ending in 2 to circles with numbers ending in 7 or 8; from 3 to 8 or 9; from 4 to 9 or 10; from 5 to 10; from 6 to 1; from 7 to 1 or 2; from 8 to 2 or 3; from 9 to 3 or 4; and from circles with numbers ending in 0 to circles with numbers ending in 4 or 5. Likewise by inspection the accuracy of recorded plays involving captures may be determined.

The pieces used in playing the game are forty disks. They are equally divided between the two players with corresponding insignia and inverted numbers, and of contrasting colors. The insignia may be those of officers and men of an infantry division of the United States Army. The numbers represent the numerical values of the pieces and are for scoring points in favor of the players when making captures and exchanges. Following is a table giving the military rank and numerical value of the 20 pieces and the numbers of the circles occupied at commencement of the game, reckoning from the side of the board for each player:

First row.

No. of circles.	*Value of pieces.*	*Rank.*
1	7	Sergeant-major
2	14	Brigadier general
3 (marked)	20	Lieutenant general
4	13	Colonel
5	6	Color sergeant

Second row.

6	5	Top sergeant
7	10	Captain
8	11	Major
9	9	First lieutenant
10	4	Sergeant

Third row.

11	1	Right guide (pvt.)
12	1	Private
13	1	Private
14	1	Private
15	2	Lance corporal

Fourth row.

16	1	Private
17	1	Private
18	3	Corporal
19	1	Private
20	1	Private

For insignia of officers and numbers on pieces, and for arrangement on the board see Fig. 1. Open numbers red, solid indicate blue.

It will be observed from the insignia that there are six commissioned officers, lieutenant general, brigadier general, colonel, major, captain and first lieutenant; six non-commissioned officers, sergeant-major, color sergeant, top sergeant, sergeant, corporal and lance corporal; and there are eight privates (their insignia crossed guns).

The six commissioned officers are stationed in the protected circles of the first and second rows, being guarded in the four outer circles by the four sergeants.

The lance corporal is stationed in the third row at the extreme left as "flank guard," ready for service as "combat patrol."

The corporal is stationed in the middle circle of the fourth row, (front rank) leading his "platoon," composed of two "squads" of eight privates.

The fifth and sixth rows are unoccupied terrain separating the opposing forces.

The players.—Two persons, on opposite sides of the board, each have 20 pieces of corresponding rank and value, but of contrasting colors at commencement of play, arranged as shown in Fig. 1. The one plays the pieces with values and insignia in red, while the other plays the pieces with values and insignia in blue. The one with the red has the first move in the first game of the series, thereafter the red and blue pieces alternate between the players. The first move is determined by lot or agreement. A player may give "odds" by surrendering one or more of his pieces to his opponent for credit in scoring points, or simply by removing one or more of his pieces from the board and thus assuming a handicap.

The move.—The move alternates between the two players.

Moves are made diagonally to the right or left, one circle at a time, and from an occupied to an unoccupied circle, as from circle 19 to 23; 19 to 24; 17 to 22; 16 to 21; 20 to 24; 20 to 25 and so on.

Obviously the initial moves can be made only with pieces in the front rank, fourth row, circle numbers 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 (reckoning from the position of each player).

Pieces with the numerical values 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (being the eight privates and six non-commissioned officers) only can move forward, until they occupy one or the other of the five circles (numbered 46, 47, 48, 49 or 50), on the opposite side of the board, when they earn promotion to the rank of second lieutenant with the numerical value of 8, and then can move and capture forward or backward.

Pieces with the numerical values 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 20 (the six commissioned officers),

from the beginning and during the period of play, have the power of "kings" in checkers to move and capture forward or backward.

Those with numerical values 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are known as "minor" pieces; while those with numerical values 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 20 are known as "major" pieces.

Captures.—Pieces with numerical values 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (the eight privates and six non-commissioned officers) can make captures only on forward movement, until promoted to the value of 8 (second lieutenant) when they may capture forward or backward. Pieces with numerical values 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 20 (the six commissioned officers) may capture forward or backward whenever opportunity offers.

Captures are effected by leaping or "jumping" over the connecting circle occupied by a hostile piece into the next unoccupied communicating circle. Continuous captures may be made where opportunity exists, excepting when a "minor" piece "jumps" into circle 46, 47, 48, 49 or 50, when there must be a rest until the opponent has moved before such piece is clothed with the power of backward move or "jump." An original piece of the "major" class could continue the jump from circles 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50 without any "rest."

As captures are made the captive pieces must be removed, and their values are entered as credits to the player making the captures.

When a piece is offered its capture is compulsory. When a piece is merely subject to capture (not purposely offered for capture or in exchange) it may not be taken, but failure to capture forfeits to the opposing player the piece with which the capture could have been made. The forfeited piece is taken by what is termed, "huff" or "blow," and its value is credited in counting points for the opposing player.

To win by scoring points.—To win the game by scoring points, the pieces taken through capture and exchange must have a total numerical value greater than the value of pieces lost to the adversary.

To obtain by compulsory exchange the adversary's piece with a value of 20, a player could afford the loss of five pieces with respective values of 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7, because their combined values are less than 20. Or three pieces with respective values 1, 2, and 3 with a gain of 3 points, could be surrendered to secure the adversary's piece with the value of 9.

Readily it can be appreciated that this feature not only distinguishes Trench from checkers, but adds zest and interest not possible in the play at checkers. It opens the way for "traps" entirely different from those laid for the unwary in the game of checkers, for the reason that a larger number of pieces may be exchanged for a smaller number and yet profit by the exchange because of the greater total values of the fewer pieces.

At the beginning of the game, the aggregate values of the twenty pieces for each player is 112. When pieces of the "minor" class have gained access to any circle in the last row on the opposite side of the board their value is advanced to 8. Therefore, the total value of the pieces of the same color remaining on the board will be increased by the difference between 8 and the original value of the promoted piece.

When a player has succeeded in so confining the pieces of his adversary that the latter can not move without loss by capture, the game is considered ended, and values of captured pieces are counted to determine the winner on points.

This method of winning by scoring the greater number of points may be the single object of the game should the players so agree; and, as before stated, Trench would then offer more amusement and be vastly more interesting than the game of checkers.

To win with the chief piece.—The circle occupied, at beginning of play, by the piece of largest value is marked for each player by a flag. Should a player succeed in forcing a way for his piece of largest value so that it could occupy the original station of his adversary's piece of largest value he would win the game, regardless of points scored on either side through captures and exchanges.

A player is justified in sacrificing every other piece, if thereby he can safely land his piece of largest value in the circle assigned to the similar piece of his opponent.

The mere statement of this second method of winning carries with it an understanding of the opportunities offered for the display of skill in protecting the chief piece from capture in his course across the entire field of play.

When both methods of winning are in mind when play begins, each of the contestants may lay his plans to build up values on the one hand through captures and exchanges, and, at the same time, be advancing the chief piece to a position when, at the opportune moment, sacrifices can be made to clear the opposing pieces from the way to the flag circle of the adversary.

It can be understood, therefore, that it is not always good play to exchange a number of pieces of smaller aggregate values for a fewer number of larger aggregate values, for the reason that a sufficient number will not remain to prevent the adversary from winning with his chief piece.

Openings.—As in checkers and chess there

is advantage in the first move, since the subsequent course of play may be influenced by the opening.

Openings are generally determined by the first few moves made by the respective players. Since Trench is a new game, it would be advisable for the beginners to try out the familiar openings in checkers, as a starting point for the development in subsequent play. For example, the first move 19 to 23, and reply 32 to 28 makes an opening similar to that of the "single corner" in checkers. And first move 19 to 23, reply 33 to 29; second move 10 to 14, reply 32 to 27; third move 5 to 10 making a similar opening to that of the "old 14th" in checkers. The first move 19 to 24, makes a similar opening to that of the "Bristol" in checkers. The following openings will be found similar to those quoted and well known to players at checkers. "Red" has the first move and "blue" the reply, notation being from the red side only for the red men, but a double notation for the blue:

	Red.	Blue.
"Single corner"	19 to 23	32 to 28 (19–23)
The "cross"	19 to 23	33 to 29 (18–22)
"Laird and lady"	19 to 23	33 to 28 (18–23)
The "dyke"	19 to 23 23 to 29	32 to 27 (19–24)
"Maid of the mill"	19 to 23 23 to 28	32 to 27 (19–24)
"Ayrshire lassie"	19 to 23 14 to 19	34 to 30 (17–21) 40 to 34 (11–17)
"Will o' the wisp"	19 to 23 17 to 21	33 to 29 (18–22)
The "defiance"	19 to 23 17 to 22	33 to 29 (18–22) 39 to 33 (12–18)
The "old 14th"	19 to 23 10 to 14 5 to 10	33 to 29 (18–22) 32 to 27 (19–24)
The "bristol"	19 to 24	
The "double corner"	17 to 22	

There are obvious lessons in the analysis of some of the above openings in this application to trench. To illustrate:—In the "old 14th," the "defiance" and the "cross," the first move is 19 to 23 and the reply 33 to 29. Now, the blue on 33 (18 from his side) has a value of 3 by the arrangement in the drawings, and when it is moved to 29, immediately the red on 20 could be moved to 24, forcing an exchange of 1 for 3 in value. And in the "laird and lady," when blue (value 3) is moved from 33 to 28, the red can leave circle 19 unoccupied and compel the capture of the piece (value 1) on 23 by the blue (value 3) on 28, and in turn the red could capture blue with the piece on 14. Should blue fail to capture the piece on 23 the blue piece (value 3) could be taken by "huff" or "blow."

When the military character of Trench is ignored, then the insignia have no significance and the values on pieces only are considered. However, it must not be concluded that in any circumstances the game will progress according to book-moves in checkers.

The greater number of playing spaces and the larger number of pieces and the different methods of winning the game render the checker openings suggestive only. However, any one familiar with these openings readily can adapt them to developing the game of Trench. The chess player will have no difficulty in the play at Trench.

To simulate military maneuvers.—The arrangement of pieces, at commencement of play, is as shown in Fig. 1.

In battle line, the corporal must be in position to give the order, "follow me," and his proper station is to lead his "platoon," and hence should occupy the middle circle (18) in the front rank for the respective forces.

When military maneuvers are to be simulated, the opening, as well as the middle and end games, should be made and developed with "field service regulations" in mind.

"Mass formation" and "center drive" develop the most vigorous attack when the prime object is to force a way through the enemy lines for the advance of the commanding general to his adversary's headquarters. The bold antogonist will adopt similar tactics in defense, or he will start simultaneous left and right flank counter-attacks.

Openings by the left and right flanks serve well for "enveloping movements," and often are the most effective for entering privates and non-commissioned officers in the last opposite row of "redoubts" for promotion and for use in attacks from the rear of the enemy.

It is to be understood that various changes in the shape, size and arrangement of parts may be resorted to without departing from the spirit of our invention or the scope of the subjoined claim.

Also it must be understood that the board could be in two contrasting colors, with the playing areas adjacent to the intervening spaces, thus eliminating the described white supporting segments. Or a one-color impression could be made and the playing areas distinguished from the intervening spaces by light and heavy shading.

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and what is desired to be secured and protected by Letters Patent of the United States, is:

A game apparatus comprising a board divided into fifty circular playing areas of the same color, said areas being arranged in diagonal columns with communicating passageways for movement of pieces from one circle or playing area to another circle or playing area; said areas being numbered consecutively from 1 to 50 from opposite sides of the board in both directions and arranged in horizontal rows and vertical columns with the circles or playing areas separated by intervening spaces, two of said

areas, one in each of the last opposite rows being of greater strategic importance than other playing areas; said areas being of contrasting color to the intervening spaces; the pieces adapted to be played in connection with said board consisting of two sets in contrasting colors of 20 pieces to each set of different numerical values with certain of said pieces capable of acquiring greater value when moved and played to occupy either of the five circles in the last opposite row of playing areas and the one piece in each set of the highest value occupying, in original arrangement of pieces, the important and strategic playing area and having the power of winning the game when maneuvered to occupy the original station of the adversary's piece of highest value.

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