

# **CHESS AND DOUBLE CHESS**

**by JOHN and DOROTHY de COURCY**

**Chess is a game that has been likened to war; might it be that war is also a game, played by greater beings, that compares with chess?**





Young men plunged up the beach to kill other young men

**T**HEY were huge, unguessably huge. But for all their size they were more tenuous than the lightest gas. Once maybe, they might have been human, but no longer did they bear any resemblance to the mother race from which they sprang. Some philosophers might call them archangels, others might call them high-raised spirits, and still others might call them gods. No matter what the name, they were mighty and their battles, too, were mighty, for they fought often and brilliantly.

The earth shook with reverberations as they maneuvered the forces of earth's armies in the seemingly endless conflicts. Yet were they conflicts? From their Olympian heights, the earth looked amazingly like a spherical chess board, and armies and tank corps and fleets of ships startlingly resembled the pieces.

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"Would you like white or black?" Dr. Rogers asked.

Peter Gaines shrugged his shoulders. "It doesn't make any difference to me."

Dr. Rogers nodded and selected two pawns from the box. He shook them briefly between his cupped hands and extended his closed fists. Peter pointed to Dr. Rogers' right hand and the hand opened, revealing a black pawn. There was silence broken only by the click of the pieces as they were taken from the box and set up on the board. When the board was arranged, the two men leaned back in their chairs. Dr. Rogers removed a cigarette from his pocket and lit it. Inhaling a puff, he leaned forward.

"As usual," Dr. Rogers sighed, "pawn to king four."

Peter chuckled. "And, just as customarily, mine too."

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Another artillery shell made a screaming trip and ended its life a dozen yards from the landing barge. Within the barge, the men swallowed hard and tried not to shake too much.

The young lieutenant put his mouth close to the captain's ear.

"I don't mind admitting I'm scared green."

The captain laughed softly.

"I am too. So's everybody else."

The lieutenant's mouth worked slightly.

"I sure as hell wish we weren't going to be the first to land."

"Somebody's got to make the opening," the captain answered. "It might as well be us. Anyway, we're only four seconds ahead of the next barge."

Both men turned to look at the beach through the tiny slit in the prow of the barge. The motor purred and water slapped the sides of the barge with monotonous regularity. Everyone had a great deal to say, but no one knew how to say it. Suddenly, a kid on the right side of the barge dropped his face in his right hand and began to cry. The lieutenant edged crabwise over to the

boy and put an arm around his shoulders.

"Keep your chin up, kid," he muttered. "The hard part'll be over in just a few minutes."

"Don't worry about me, lieutenant," the boy said hoarsely. "I'll be all right when I hit the beach."

The lieutenant nodded his head and patted the boy's back before crawling back to his station.

Slowly, the captain brought a whistle out of his pocket. He looked at it for a moment as though wondering what its shrill, fluttering voice could possibly accomplish. Then, turning his eyes back to the slit, he clamped the whistle between his teeth.

"Get ready, men!" the sergeant growled in a deep voice. "When the front goes down, get the hell out of here! And keep your heads down! Remember! If any of ya foul this detail up, I'll see ya rot on K.P.!"

The men laughed and the tension eased. Rifles were gripped more firmly and then—sand grated on the bottom of the barge. Rattle, crash, the bow fell to the beach. With a wild Indian war cry, a young Texan charged onto the beach and a young man from Brooklyn was right behind him screaming, "Kill the umpire!"

Onto the beach young men ran, half crouching, clutching their rifles. They ran, fell prone, fired wildly and died.

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**F**ARTHER up on the beach, young men crouched where they had been crouching for hours. While that first barge had purred uneventfully toward them, they had waited tensely in slit trenches and behind sand bags. The color of their uniforms was different from those of the men in the approaching barges and their language too. Yet, for all that, they were young men.

One of the men waiting began to sob.

He couldn't have been more than fifteen, yet already he was a non-commissioned officer. Another young man, an officer, edged toward him.

"Have courage, Hans. It will all be over soon," he whispered.

Hans nodded his head and brushed the tears out of his eyes with the back of his hand.

"I know, Herr Leutnant. I should not be frightened. The Fuehrer would not be frightened."

The young officer squeezed his arm.

"Don't be ashamed, Hans. I am frightened. So is Herr Captain. If the Fuehrer were here, he would be frightened too."

"You should not say that, Herr Leutnant," the boy whispered, "but it makes me feel better."

"Maybe I should not have said it," the leutnant agreed, "but I have seen too much war. So much that maybe I am not a good soldier any more. I keep thinking about my family and about those men out there in the barges. You know, they have families, too."

"It is not good to think such things," the boy replied.

"I know that, too," the leutnant answered, "yet I know they do not want to kill me any more than I want to kill them. But they must, and I must."

The boy shivered involuntarily even though it was warm.

"Why don't we use the artillery, Herr Leutnant?" he asked. "We are only using that one old gun."

"We do not have very much ammunition," the leutnant answered, "so we have trained all the batteries on the beach. We hold our fire until they land."

"Why don't their ships fire at us?"

"They do not know where we are," Herr Leutnant replied. "When we start our artillery, then we get it"

The leutnant squeezed the boy's

arm reassuringly and crept back to his own station. Through his field glasses, he watched the barges. Lowering the glasses, the young officer drew his pistol. He rubbed the top of the barrel with a moist palm. He didn't realize it but his lips were forming the words to an old prayer, a prayer to a God that nobody seemed to believe in any more.

The first barge landed and the signal came. Guns fired—big guns, little guns. Then, from the ships at sea, the first salvos screamed through the air. Young men began fighting. Suddenly a black object fell in the trench a few yards from the leutnant. Even before the young officer could think, a boy in a gray uniform leaped toward the little metal ball and fell on it.

*"Deutschland Uber—"*

The muffled thump of the exploding grenade supplied the final word. The others in the trench were shocked for a moment, but then they went back to their task, the task of young men killing young men.

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DR. ROGERS cleared his throat and brought his knight to king's bishop three.

Peter studied the board. "It's strange," he mused. "As a psychologist I would say that a surprise move might be the best, but as a chess play, I know a standard defense is best."

Shrugging his shoulders, he moved his own knight to queen's bishop three.

"You might have something there," Dr. Rogers agreed. "The only drawback is that chess is almost as old as war and probably more thoroughly understood. Like in war, the tried and true method is usually the best. There's no other move quite as good as your defense with the knight."

"I should think that chess would

come up to date and replace the knight with something more modern."

"It has been tried," Dr. Rogers answered, "but in reality the knight is only a symbol. It might represent anything. For instance, in a certain type of battle it might represent cavalry or in another place, tanks supporting infantry. It could represent artillery too."

"Chess still doesn't represent actual warfare," Peter countered, "because it fails to take human psychology into consideration."

"I wouldn't say that," Dr. Rogers replied. "You're a psychologist and I'm a philosopher. To you, the human equation is always present, but to me the actions of groups of men have no particular basis on the human viewpoint. An infantry detachment is just as self-sacrificing as this pawn, but after all, the men that make the division up wouldn't behave the way the group does."

"There have been instances," Peter objected, "when people have done more or less than they were expected to do in a group action. The point I was trying to make is that I'm sure that my pawn is going to do just what I want it to. To make chess exactly the same as a battle, there should be times when I move a pawn in a certain way and find that the piece doesn't do what I planned."

"I'm afraid if that ever happened to me," Dr. Rogers smiled, "I would give up chess. The shock would be too great!"

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FOR six hours cannon shells pounded the groups of young men on each side of the beach. Mortars thudded continuously, vomiting projectiles high in the air. Machine guns yammered unceasingly. The machinery of war went on and on, but the young men

who operated it were perishable. A young machine gunner emitted a startled yelp as a mortar shell exploded beside him. For a moment he stared stupidly at his own intestines lying on the ground in front of him. Then with frantic haste, he tried to stuff them back into his body. Only for a moment did he struggle. Then he fell forward over his gun and heaving a long sigh, quietly died.

The landing force dug in and men were grimly hanging on. In a pit not far from where they had landed, the young American lieutenant was holding the captain's head in his arms. The captain's shirt was soaked with blood. The lieutenant edged himself up and peeked over at two medics who were slowly inching their way toward him.

"Take it easy," he said softly. "The stretcher bearers are coming."

The captain coughed weakly.

"It won't do any good," he whispered. "I've—got—to—talk—fast. Tell—you—" The captain broke off in a fit of coughing. The coughs grew weaker and finally stopped. The captain wasn't breathing anymore.

Wearily the lieutenant waved the stretcher bearers back and turned to his business of killing young men.

The captain had tried hard to tell him that they were to withdraw at nightfall, but he hadn't. It was only a question of time until they were all dead. The lieutenant knew this but he didn't know why.

"I wonder if anyone knows why," he mumbled. "Why am I doing this? Why is anybody doing it?"

His thoughts were cut off by the muffled rumble of engines that rapidly grew louder. He waited tensely, watching. Then the planes came into view, B-25s, many B-25s.

Someone nearby screamed, "Hurray for the AAF! They're B-25s, boys!"

Seconds later the rumbled crash of fragmentation bombs shook the earth. Some of the artillery went out of action. The B-25s swooped lazily around and came back, the cannons in the noses of the planes exploding again and again and the machine guns cutting the earth to ribbons. Strangely, the American lieutenant didn't feel the least bit exultant.

"This is a dirty, dirty business," he thought.

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**H**ERR LEUTNANT gripped the field telephone in his hands. The instrument had gone dead several minutes ago and repair crews were still working. Anxiously the officer glanced at his watch. A man brushed by him carrying a box of ammunition. Wearily the lieutenant waited while the handset snapped and crackled. The telephone somehow represented security. It was the only contact he and the small group of defenders on the beach had with the world outside. Even men in a trapped submarine, the lieutenant recalled, breathed more easily when they could talk to someone outside. That's the way the lieutenant felt. Trapped!

A new sound intruded on his consciousness, the heavy pounding of many radial engines. He lifted his head enough to peek over the trench and he saw them. Instantly recognition caused his eyes to narrow.

"Billy Mitchells! Gott! Hundreds of them!"

He watched them roar a few hundred feet off the ground. The sound he dreaded rolled in great waves. He looked helplessly at the mute telephone waiting for the bombers to return. He counted the seconds, hardly breathing and then the hell began again. This time it was the staccato crash of the Mitchells' nose cannons. Two minutes later, it was quiet, deathly quiet. Herr

Leutnant jumped as the buzzer on the field telephone sounded. Quickly he jabbed the contact and barked, "Leutnant Hardt!"

A tiny voice replied, "This is Leutnant Schmidt in command of artillery. Our batteries have been wiped out. Headquarters was blown to bits in the assault. Herr General Stusser is dead."

"Are there any other officers?" Herr Leutnant asked.

"None but me."

"I'm alone too," Hardt said. "What shall we do!"

"We wait," Herr Leutnant Schmidt replied. "Colonel Wiegand is bringing up railway guns. We must hold out at all cost! Sieg Heil!"

Mechanically Herr Leutnant Hardt replied, "Sieg Heil!"

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**D**R. ROGERS extended his hand toward the board. Taking his king's bishop he moved it to queen's knight five.

As Dr. Rogers straightened up, Peter said musingly, "I wonder what Lopez had in mind when he invented that move?"

"Winning chess games, I suppose," Dr. Rogers answered.

"What I mean," Peter explained, "is just what section of warfare did he believe his bishop was representing?"

"Frankly, I don't think Lopez gave it much thought. As I said before, the values change. At one stage, it might represent chariots. At another, it could have been crossbows. Today I imagine it represents aircraft."

"How so? The value of a bishop is about equal to a knight or to two and one-half or three pawns. Surely air power is of greater value than artillery, if you want to call the knights artillery."

"Well, actually, modern warfare isn't a single chess game," Dr. Rogers ex-

plained. "It's better likened to a chess tournament or a series of games. This game we're playing might only represent the siege of a small town or possibly the taking of a beach-head."

"Well—" Peter replied, "I guess my best move is to bring out my other knight and threaten your king's pawn. Now let's see. If this were war, I would be bringing up more artillery."

"Exactly! After all, the object that you are going after isn't my bishop, or as you would say, my air power, but rather you're trying to capture my pawn or my infantry detachment."

"Maybe you're right," Peter answered, bring his second knight into the fray.

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THE flagship of the American task force shuddered as its cannon hurled tons of steel toward the hotly contested beach. On the bridge an admiral lowered his binoculars and turned to a general.

"Well General," he said. "Everything seems to be going according to plan."

"I wonder," the general sighed. "We knocked their artillery out, but I'm convinced they must have more."

The admiral shook his head. "I don't see where they could put it."

"Neither can I, but surely they have more adequate defenses than this!"

"Well," the admiral replied, "they apparently didn't. Besides, the landing was pretty much of a surprise, I think."

"That's true, but nevertheless, the enemy must have considered the possibility of a landing here, yet I can't see where they have made any adequate defense. They should at least have a railroad line."

A lieutenant commander looked at the general. "If you'll pardon the interruption, sir, I believe there is a rail-

road line."

"What!" the general exploded. "Where? It doesn't show on the reconnaissance photos!"

"I don't know if it's still there or not, sir, but I was an art student before the war and I used to come down here to paint sea scapes."

"Quick!" the general barked excitedly. "Show me on the map!"

The naval officer studied the photo panorama and shook his head. "I'm not quite sure, sir, but I thought it ran along here, about where this stream is." He pointed with his finger. "Of course, I may be all wet. I wouldn't bet money on it anyway."

The general's brows knitted for a moment.

"By God, that was a clever one," he muttered.

"What is it, General?" the admiral asked.

"I should have seen it before! There's *is* a railroad there. Under the water! They sprinkled the roadbed with white sand so that the rails wouldn't show and dyked up their spur line, diverting a stream so that it flowed over it. To all appearances, it looks just like another stream. The water's only about six to eight inches deep probably. Look here!" The General pointed to a spot. "You can see the natural lay of the land would carry the water through this gully. That means an artificial bank has been built up there."

"Shall we try to shell it?"

"I'm afraid we're too late for that, but I think we can save our fleet. We'll have to withdraw."

"Do we have time to send the landing barges?"

The general shook his head. "The only thing we can do is send in amphibious tanks and hope the boys on the beach can hold out long enough for

them to get there."

Even as the General's orders were being carried out, heavy reverberations rolled across the water. The general's knuckles turned white as he gripped the edge of the bridge. Tall plumes of sand shot up from the beach as the enemy's long range artillery opened up.

"I feel like a heel," the general muttered as the flagship withdrew.

As the rapidly moving flagship turned away, amphibious tanks lurched out of the bows of landing craft and splashed into the water like overgrown seals.

"At least this gives the men a chance," the general murmured, "but not much of one."

It was a long, long way from the landing craft to the beach; much too long, and the general knew it.

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"I THINK I see a flaw in your simile," Peter smiled triumphantly.

Dr. Rogers raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"First, what corresponds to the rook in modern warfare?"

"Well—" Dr. Rogers pursed his lips. I guess the rook's value is about the same. Once it represented the armored siege tower. Today it would still represent an armored force, tanks and armored cars probably."

"Exactly!" Peter said. "Now my guess is that your next move will be to castle rather than defend your pawn."

Dr. Rogers nodded his head. "It's worth sacrificing a pawn to castle at this point."

Peter chuckled. "Reverting to our original parallel, where would you find such a situation in planned warfare? That is, where would you find the general retreating and sending up an armored force at the same time, feeling that it is better to sacrifice an infantry division rather than try to rein-

force it?"

"I don't quite get your point," Dr. Rogers said, puzzled.

"I mean, where would a general retreat as he was sending up an armored column? As I understand it, the general would follow closely behind an armored unit."

"Oh I see what you're driving at," Dr. Rogers answered. "I guess such a situation probably would never happen, but to insert human values into a chess game would mean making it exactly like warfare. I only maintain that it is strikingly similar. A general is a single man in the game and naturally his values change the game to a certain extent, but in chess the position is worth the sacrifice and a general wouldn't sacrifice men for so slight a gain. In general, you must admit that with the exception of white castling in the Ruy Lopez, the parallel is certainly startling."

Dr. Rogers castled on the king's side.

Peter Gaines chuckled as he touched his knight. "It's funny, but I have sort of a twinge of conscience. I'm about to turn loose my artillery and annihilate a group of men. I think I'll stop putting human values on the pieces before it starts ruining my game."

Both men laughed as Peter captured the white pawn.

"TWO minutes," Herr Leutnant mumbled. "In only two minutes Colonel Wiegand opens fire."

Through Herr Leutnant's mind passed the picture of many young men being blown to bits. Leutnant Hardt had only a hazy idea of what America was like, but he knew that somewhere wives, mothers and sweethearts were waiting for these boys, so like him in everything but the color of uniform.

Herr Leutnant glanced at his watch again. "One minute, thirty seconds. Oh Gott! If there is a God, why must

this be!"

Unashamed tears were trickling down Herr Leutnant's face. There must be something, SOMETHING, he could do! This bloodshed was so senseless, so pointless. Many time he had had the same thought. Many times he had wished so desperately that he could do something to save even one life. He felt as though he were caught in some terrible, inexorable machine that was grinding himself and all humanity to a powder for no apparent reason.

"Gladly, gladly," he muttered, "I would give my life to stop this nightmare."

The sand in the hour glass, the hands on the clock moved on unheeding while Herr Leutnant's mind raced. He had made his decision. If there was a way to save those young men, he would find it. Suddenly he had it! The way! He glanced at his watch. One minute, twenty seconds. If he ordered his men to retreat, to run, to charge away from the beach, the Americans would follow.

Maybe, just maybe, they would escape the artillery.

Quickly Herr Leutnant Hardt clamped a whistle in his teeth and vaulted to the top of the trench. Half crouched on the ground, he shouted to his men.

*"Achtung! Achtung!"*

He drew a breath to blow the whistle, the whistle that meant life to hundreds of young men. His right arm was extended high over his head, but the gesture never came. The whistle was never blown. The crack of the rifle that killed Herr Leutnant Hardt was lost in the din. For a moment, Herr Leutnant remained half crouched with his arm in the air, the whistle between his teeth. As his eyes glazed, the arm that was to lead the men in mad retreat, fell toward the invading force. Herr Leutnant lay limply on the ground, al-

most, but not quite, the savior of many young men.

Then hell in steel cases rained on the beach, hardly missing a square foot. The defenders of the beach waited tensely in their trenches while man-made thunder rolled and echoed. Observers saw the amphibious tanks swerve in their course. They were too late, much too late. The amphibious tanks, looking like gigantic turtles, turned away.

Soon, there was nothing to be seen. The task force had gone. Guns barked no more. Men hurried this way and that making homes in the sand for newly dead young men. Herr Colonel Wiegand stood stiffly over the body of Herr Leutnant Hardt. A boyish German soldier sniffed and cleared his throat.

"If I may speak, Herr Colonel," the boy began timidly.

The Colonel nodded.

"The Fuehrer would have been proud. Herr Leutnant saw the Americans preparing to advance and fearing that they would escape your artillery, Herr Leutnant leaped from the trench and pretended to be leading a charge. His ruse worked, Herr Colonel, but Herr Leutnant was killed just before Herr Colonel's artillery opened fire."

The boy stood at rigid attention, saluted stiffly, and march away.

Herr Colonel knelt beside the body of Herr Leutnant. The colonel's face was lined and his eyes were suspiciously wet. Slowly, from his uniform, he detached a medal and pinned it on the dead Herr Leutnant.

"So like my own Johann," he murmured. "He died a hero too, Herr Leutnant, but I wish neither of you had done it."

Quickly Herr Colonel arose and walked away. He didn't look at all Prussian now.

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**T**HEY were huge, unguessably huge.

But for all their size, they were more tenuous than the lightest gas. From their Olympian heights, the earth looked amazingly like a spherical chess board, and armies and tank corps and fleets of ships startlingly resembled the pieces.

A thought flashed from one to the other. "I have often considered what I should do if one of my pieces should do other than what I plan."

The other's thought was amused as he replied. "I'm afraid if that should ever happen, I would never play the game again. The shock would be too great."



## OLD AGE BEGINS AT?



**D**R. DU NOUY, one-time associate of the late Alexis Carrel, says that cell activity rates drop from childhood to about the age of thirty-two at an extremely rapid rate. Healing processes slow down greatly with advancing age, as do all the other processes of life. After the approximate age of thirty-two the slowing-down is much more gradual. However the average man of fifty lives at about one-fourth the rate as the average child of ten. All of which is just one more indication that "we begin to die from birth." But where does the disease recognized at "old age" begin? Does it possibly begin with the failure of the growing mechanism to keep pace with the demands of an unestablished and hypothetical "normal" rate of growth? Or shall we say, with the custom, that old age begins when the growth mechanism has failed completely and key cells begin to die "en masse".

The Russian scientists have beat their gums about the way they hauled their dogs around the Crimea and the Caucasus looking for men who lived longer than the Bible says they should. They took these men and studied the various body tissues, deciding that the lymph and allied tissues in the marrow of the bones, the liver etc. contained a mysterious something that combated the slowing-down or dying process. Unfortunately, the Russian approach has taken somewhat for granted that the longevity of men in certain areas is owing to hereditary traits. Little attention has been paid to the chemical implications of the environment which may have played a tremendous part in the picture.

When the jaw-bone stops growing in the average man at about the age of thirty-five, the imperceptible changes in metabolism which form the substructure for "natural death" are on the road to victory. Probably no power on earth could ever make the wonderful human body so completely integrated that it could survive indefinitely after its machinery had been thoroughly mistreated, mentally, morally, physically, chemically and spiritually for thirty-five years. A.c.s. serum may be used to pump up the punctured tire, but it does not fix the leak.

Wherever age actually begins to become "old age" in the human cycle doesn't really matter so much. It is quite obvious that the factors which

bring it about may begin to work against life even before birth, even before conception. The matter of great moment is that the possibility is opened up by the Russian experiments that before many years all the factors operating to produce the ageing effects may be well enough understood and assembled that one's body may actually be theoretically everlasting. However, this environment, full of the tick-tocking of the cosmic rays, the inadequate nutritional phases of life, the incongruous and continuous and needless destructive impulses of our own kind, does not seem to be the ideal location for hoping to defeat old age. The load of radioactivity, the ever-increasing ratio of isotopic forms of elements to their original true forms, the failure of coordination and integration of the resources of science, industry and humanity to the purpose of the positive advancement of the race are enough in themselves to make the picture a bit murky.

That it should be possible for the race to achieve such an aim as the defeating of the processes of senility, is indicated, though far from demonstrated, by the formulation of the atom bomb. It has been said that with God all things are possible. It is virtually true that there is no definite limit upon the creative opportunities with which man is faced today. He is one jump from spatial navigation. His numbers are great, his resources are just beginning to come to light in respect to natural resources and mental ability, and only his will to believe in tomorrow is the limit upon his future accomplishments.

When the day arrives, if ever, when man can stop hating his kind, and destroying his kind, so as to devote every energy to the subduing of what is essentially a hostile environment, he will obviously begin to live longer, even if it were not the definitely-formed vision of the vanguard of total human mentality, already. The continuously jealous attitude of mind even among the most erudite scientists is obvious enough that a school-boy can decry it in the daily newspapers. If these minds are the best, which is doubtful, what sort of thing less than world catastrophe will ever cement real unions among men?

Where does old age begin—? Perhaps a more reasonable question would be, "When does life become a reality?"—*Carter T. Wainwright.*