

FURTHER INFORMATION

For some reason the French Military Game is absent from the more popular modern board game books. The game is discussed at length, however, in the following article:

Gardner, M. "Mathematical Games", *Scientific American*, vol. 209 (October 1963), pp. 126 ff. New York: Scientific American, Inc., 1963.

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FRENCH MILITARY GAME

by Damian Walker

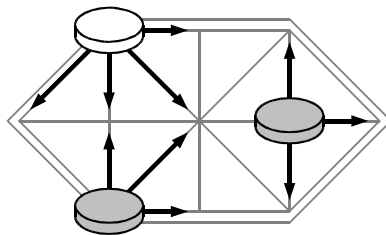
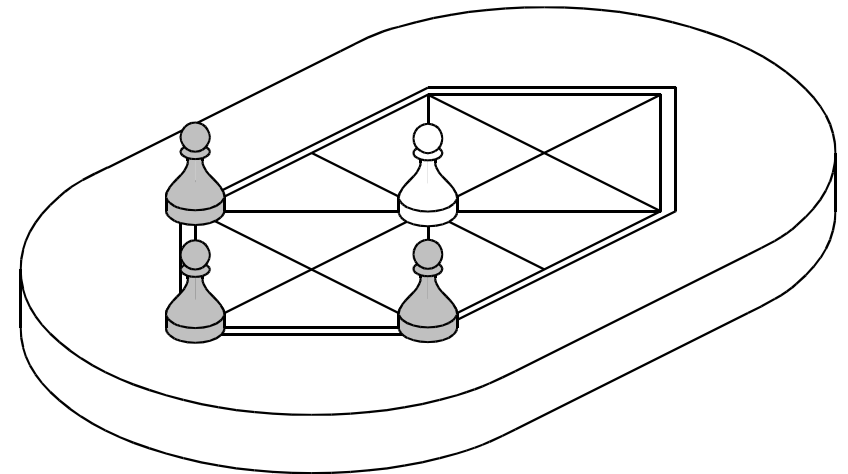


Illustration 4: moves of the pieces.

INTRODUCTION & HISTORY

The French Military Game, sometimes called *Hare & Hounds*, is the smallest and most simple of all hunt games. It originated in 19th century France, and became popular with French military officers during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

An article by Martin Gardner in the journal *Scientific American* generated further interest in the game in 1963, and it has become popular with computer programmers due to the ease of implementing its simple rules.

HOW TO PLAY

There are two variations known, differing only in the starting position of the prey.

Beginning the Game

1. The French Military Game is played by two players on the board shown in Illustration 1.

2. One player takes the part of three hunters, the other the part of a single prey piece, all set out as shown in Illustration 2, or as an alternative layout, Illustration 3.

3. First the hunter player moves one of his pieces, then the prey moves, play alternating thereafter until the game is ended.

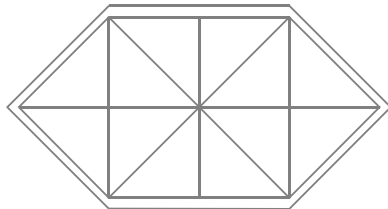


Illustration 1: the empty board.

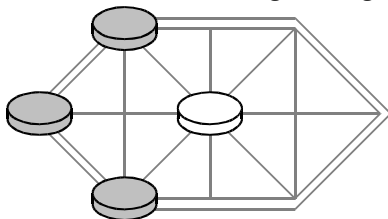


Illustration 2: the usual starting layout.

Moving the Pieces

4. A hunter piece may move one step along a marked line in any

forward or sideways direction, as shown in Illustration 4. Hunter pieces cannot move backwards, diagonally or otherwise, towards the end of the

board from which they started.

5. The hare may move one step in any direction along a marked line.

6. There is no jumping or capturing in this game.

Ending the Game

7. The prey wins by passing the hunters and reaching the end of the board from which they started.

8. The hunters win by trapping the prey so that it cannot move in its turn.

9. If the hunters do not advance

for ten turns, then they are deemed to be stalling, and the prey therefore wins the game.

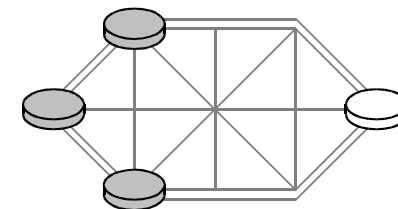


Illustration 3: an alternative starting layout.