...effing finally!

No. 0 / DECEMBER 2026



A DIPLOMACY ZINE

One game of postal Diplomacy to start with. If there's something else you'd like me to run, drop me a line.

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ISSUE 1 DEADLINE

31 December

Midnight, Stockholm time

Send submissions and game sign-ups to gm@effingfinally.com

effingfinally.com

Posted at last...

FROM THE EDITOR

...effing finally!
Long overdue and still years ahead of schedule. The plan was no zine editing until retirement. The itch got the better of me, so here I am writing another zero issue. I'm not entirely sure what make me return to this game time and time again. It's not like I am a particularly good players. that's what makes a good game I guess.

Stephen Agar must take some of the blame. I've been enjoying the retro layouts in **God Save the Zine**. I read issue 39 from cover to cover. First time I've done that this millennium, I think. Looking forward to what comes next.

I owe **Colin Bruce** of **Fury of the Northmen** a LoC.[1] A couple of years ago a colleague handed me an envelope from Colin. Apparently "printed matter" raised suspicions. I got quite a grilling over what was in that envelope. I nearly said "orders for the German army", but I wanted to get back to my desk before lunch.

One of my sillier reasons for doing this is that I wanted an excuse to use **Typst** properly. Think of it as LaTeX's younger sibling. I remember **Per Westling**, publisher of **Lepanto 4-ever**, plugging **LaTeX** enthusiastically in the early '90s. It was too techy for me at the time. Thirty-odd years later I've come round to Per's way of thinking. Give me another thirty-odd years and I might even pick up bridge.

I ought to say a word to the Swedish readers as well. Unfortunately somebody has already volunteered:



Svenska Diplomacyspelare! Jag höll ett tal om ...effing finally! Ett fantastiskt tal. Sju stolar i lokalen. Tolv tusen människor. På varje stol, säger vissa. Det var väldigt bra stolar. Dom bästa stolar ni nånsin sett.

En kille kom fram till mig. Stor kille. Han sa: "Sir, jag har spelat sedan 1990 och aldrig kommit in i Belgien." Jag sa: "Du spelar Italien, Göran." Han grät. Hela lokalen grät. Till och med Schweiz ringde och ville vara med. Schweiz! De brukar aldrig vilja någonting.

Vi har redan fler anmälda än det finns spelare. Hur gör vi det? Fantastisk redaktion. Anmäl dig. Gör Diplomacy great again.

I mean to start slowly this time. I know my supernova tendencies and burning out by overshooting would be a very sad return. One game of regular Diplomacy will do nicely for now. If there's a Dip variant or an old postal game you'd like me to run, tell me which one and put your name down as the first player. I'll sort out the rules for playing by post if we need them.

I'd quite like a thriving letters column as well. You better send some interesting topic starters or I am going to have to bore you with the current swedish politics affairs, or the lack there of. Or even worse, my musings on the intricacies of postal Diplomacy.

The PDF is free by email and at effingfinally.com. If you'd rather have paper, ask me for a copy. I do sympathize with appeal to the tactile look and feel of a physical zine.

The zine is going to have a monthly schedule. The deadline is midnight at the end of the last day of the month, Stockholm time. That goes for game orders too, unless your GM says otherwise. For issue one, you have until 31 December. That gives me until New Year's Eve to find seven players and write to Colin. On past form I'd put my money on the seven players.

Joakim Spångberg
1 December 2026, Huskvarna, Sweden1

reading: John Ajvide Lindqvist - Let the right one in
listening: Thomeas Barrandon - The Quiet Earth
watching: 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown

Waiting lists

Regular Diplomacy — 7 places open

To join, email gm@effingfinally.com with your power preference list, favourite first, or write "any power."

Seats go in sign-up order. Once the game fills, you can wait for the next one or sign up as a standby. Tell the GM if you want your email kept out of print (rule 02).

Have another game in mind? Email us your suggestion. We'll consider it for a future issue.

[1] A *letter of comment* is a reader's reply to the editor. In quite a few of the old postal zines, the letters column was the best part. Somebody would take issue with last month's editorial, the editor would answer, and by the following issue everyone else had joined in. I can think of a few zines where I still turn to the letters first.

Before you stab anyone.

HOUSE RULES

HOUSE RULES / v0.1 - December 2026
The house rules are a living document and may be updated at any time. The current version is always available in the web site at effingfinally.com/house-rules/. The opening notice for each game will specify any deviations from these rules.

Zine general

01 The clock
The zine comes out monthly. The deadline for submissions, sign-ups and all games is midnight at the end of the last day of the month, Stockholm local time. A game may specify a different deadline in its opening notice or game report.

Game general

02 Joining a game
Tell the game master (GM) which game you want to join and whether you can stand by. The opening notice names the GM, adjudicator, rules, variants and order address. It gives the pace of play, press, anonymity, draw rules and house exceptions. The GM confirms seats and the first deadline.

Seats go in sign-up order. Once a game fills, you can wait or volunteer as a standby. Player emails appear in the game-start notice and each report. Ask to keep yours out of print and the GM will share it privately with fellow players at game start and later on request. For anonymous games, the opening notice explains how players may communicate and which contact details, if any, the GM will share.

03 Submitting orders
Email **gm@effingfinally.com** unless the opening notice gives another address. Use "ORDERS — game, position, turn" as the subject. Early orders are welcome. Resend the whole set when revising. An accepted revision replaces all orders for that phase. Conditional orders for later phases stand until you replace or withdraw them.

Orders are on time if they reach the GM's inbox by the deadline. The GM acknowledges receipt only. You remain responsible for what you ordered. If you don't hear back, get in touch.

04 Deadlines
Late? Send your orders anyway. The GM may accept late orders or revisions until the result is released. **Never, ever count on it.** If the GM declines them, your last accepted set for that phase stands. Without one, the missed-order rules apply. After publication, rule 07 covers corrections. In an emergency or outage, the GM may extend the deadline for everyone.

05 Absence and replacements
Warn the GM before an absence and agree on a pause or substitute. After the first missed turn, the GM may call in a standby for one turn. After two consecutive misses, the GM seeks a permanent replacement. In Diplomacy, only movement turns count towards replacement. If the GM uses your late orders, that turn counts as played.

If you resign, tell the GM privately. Missed-order rules apply until handover. The GM names the phases a standby will play and confirms their first deadline. Only the player the GM puts in charge may submit or revise orders for that position in those phases.

06 Press and conduct
Follow the opening notice on negotiation and press. In a gunboat game, use only the communication expressly allowed. In a press game, identify copy intended for the public game report and use the signatures or anonymity the GM permits. Public press may be quoted in the zine.

Impersonating the GM is not permitted. Bluffing and deception are part of the game, but pretending to be the GM crosses the line. Harassment, extra accounts and outside players secretly directing another player's position are grounds for intervention. A player stepping in for another one is allowed if it is agreed with the GM. It will be announced in the game report unless the rules of the game prevent it. Report a concern to the GM in private.

07 Errors and rulings
Report an adjudication or transcription error as soon as you spot it. The GM pauses play if needed, publishes the ruling and corrected position, then sets a fresh deadline. Rollbacks or changes beyond the current turn may be considered at the GM's discretion.

08 Game reports

Each report gives the turn, orders played, result, new position, next deadline and player emails as provided in rule 02. Include scores or holdings, such as Diplomacy supply centre counts. Corrections remain visible. End-of-game statements are welcome.

Diplomacy specific

09 Power preference lists

Send the GM a private ranking of all powers if the particular variant supports it. For example, signing up to a Regular Diplomacy game, you might rank *France, Turkey, England, Austria, Russia, Italy, Germany*. Once the seats are filled, the GM draws names in random order. You get your first available choice, so this list gets Turkey if France is taken and Turkey is free. If no preference is supplied, the GM assigns a random remaining power.

10 Order writing

Variant rules take precedence over the base game. Mark each set of orders with your power, season, year and phase. Use the announced order syntax, including coasts where needed. The GM reads the orders as submitted. A promise of support in negotiations gives neither unit an order. Ask about notation before the deadline. After it, the announced rules govern illegal, missing and ambiguous orders.

In standard play, an unordered unit holds, a dislodged unit without a legal retreat disbands, and an unused build is waived. Compulsory removals follow the adopted rulebook. Conditional orders for a later phase are accepted unless the opening notice forbids them.

11 Finishing the game

The announced rules define a solo victory. Any survivor may propose a draw. The default is a draw including all survivors (DIAS). The GM sets the voting deadline, usually the next order deadline. When both fall together, the GM counts votes first. If all survivors vote yes, the game ends in the current position. Otherwise the GM resolves the orders. A missing vote leaves the game running. The GM announces the outcome and keeps votes private. Keep sending orders until the GM declares the result.

Submissions

12 What may go into print

Anything you send to the editor is eligible for publication in the print or PDF zine unless you explicitly say otherwise. That includes an ordinary letter, a quick reply, a correction or an attachment. Write **PRIVATE** or **NOT FOR PUBLICATION** in the subject or at the top to cover the whole message. If just one passage is private, mark where it begins and ends. “Please keep my name out of print” permits us to use your words anonymously.

Send private game business separately from material for print, even when both go to the same inbox. Mark orders as in rule 03 and votes “BALLOT — game”. Only the orders used appear in the report. Ballots and confidences stay private. Forwarding someone else’s private letter does not give us permission to print it.

13 What to send

Letters, game reports, end-game statements, strategy articles, variants, maps, artwork and replies are welcome. Pretty much anything goes. No topic is off-limits unless it is blatantly inappropriate.

Send them to the editor with a title or subject and the name or pseudonym you want printed. For a position or diagram, give the game, season and year. For a variant, include the map and the changes a GM would need to run it.

Send your own work or identify the source and the permission that lets us reproduce it. Credit collaborators and artists. Tell us if the piece has appeared elsewhere or must wait until a game ends. A submission that misses an issue’s copy deadline can be considered for a later one.

14 Editing, credits and corrections

Contributors keep ownership of their work. Sending publishable material lets the editor include it in the zine and keep the issue available in its archive. The editor chooses what fits, may shorten letters or tidy spelling and layout, and will check changes that affect your meaning. For letters and other submissions, we print your contact details only if you ask. Player email addresses in game notices and reports follow rule 02.

To correct a published item, name the issue, page and passage and send the replacement wording. The editor checks it and publishes a correction where readers can find it. For a ruling that could affect the next turn, contact the GM straight away under rule 07.

FROM THE POSTAL ARCHIVE

“Even the taste from licking 150 stamps is something that has to be experienced to be believed. Thank God for self-adhesive envelopes.”

Stephen Agar, *Spring Offensive* no. 12 May 1993, p. 275