

Issue #16

Christmas 2006



WASATCH FRONT HISTOICAL GAMING SOCIETY

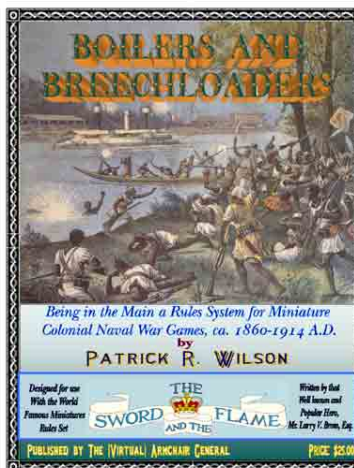
Warning Order

Boilers & Breechloaders

Although most colonial wargaming rules usually have a small section set aside for gunboats, they're usually treated as an afterthought, a gimmick, or as a scenario objective. For those gamers who've read about the expedition to save Gordon, watched the converted steamer run the gauntlet of Dervish fire in the film Khartoum, the Sultan shell Omdurman in The Four Feathers, or the climactic battle sequence in The Sand Pebbles, you've always imagined that some day you could game gunboat operations.

Now, with Boilers & Breechloaders from The Virtual Armchair General, you can. Patrick Wilson has designed a set of rules that makes gunboats take center stage. Better yet, they are designed to work with The Sword and The Flame rules, as well as fitting seamlessly into The Sun Never Sets campaign game.

This is a set of rules designed to simulate gunboat operations in colonial settings, whether that might be in China or the Nile. Each ship is treated individually, with separate weapons, crew types, etc., so this is no "fleet action"



game with generalized armament where you roll a D6 for 20 guns and see what the damage result is. Each player commands a gunboat and has numerous decisions to make each turn.

The rules come in a standard 8 x 11 format, with a color, glossy cover. There are several separate components inside, such as a player reference card, activation cards for the ships, torpedo counters, a wind gauge, and several ship logs for varying types of gunboats. So far, I was im-

pressed, as it was actually better than I thought it would be. After looking at the materials I opened the rulebook and began to go over it.

The rules are written in a style similar to TSATF. In fact, there's several references to that set of rules, so gamers familiar with TSATF should have no problems, meaning that you sometimes have to interpret what the author is saying or design a house rule or two! The meat of the rules is taken up by designing the gunboats. Players have a full range of options here, from beam width, length, and armament, all which are crucial to determine how many hits the boat can take, crew size, handling, speed, and more. In fact, this is one of the more fun aspects of the rules.

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- Interview with David Marks, author of *In The Name of Glory*.
- A how to section on building colonial gunboats.
- Reviews of board games, magazines, and buildings.
- A Seven years War campaign report.

Interview With David Marks— designer of *In the Name of Glory*

David Marks is the designer and author of a new set of Napoleonic rules called In The Name of Glory. ITNOG, as it's commonly known by its fans, has generated a lot of positive comments. In this interview, David outlines his thoughts on the Napoleonic period, wargaming in general, and the genesis of creating a set of rules.

Editor

How did you get into wargaming

I was about 11 or 12 years old when I first got into wargaming with figures. Some friends and I got a wargaming rule-book by Donald Featherstone from the local library.

We would take turns setting up in each others parent's homes. We used books for hills, which we placed on the kitchen table and covered them with a green felt cloth, which was actually the playing pitch from a 'Subbuteo' football game. We had a few bits of scenery, but pride of place was the 'Waterloo farmhouse' that Airfix produced, which was a model of La Haye -Sainte.

We also used Airfix Napoleonic figures and I remember that we all got into a kind of arms race where you were only allowed to table figures that were painted. It was all quite mad, but great fun.

What are your favourite periods and why

I have to confess that I am a bit of a stick in the mud and tend for the most part to play Napoleonic's. I have tried other periods but they just don't seem to work for me, with the exception to this being the English Civil war and more recently the American Civil War.

I extensively game Napoleonic's using 1/300th Adlers, but I have started to collect 10mm ECW figures, but I may change these for 15mm. I am also looking into starting a 15mm ACW figure collection.

It was the film 'Waterloo' with Christopher Plummer as the Duke of Wellington and Rod Steiger as Napoleon that got me interested in the Napoleonic period and you have to agree the uniforms are just great, only surpassed by the renaissance period.



What was the Inspiration for ITNOG

The inspiration for the rule's name 'In the Name of Glory' was my wife Gloria.

The inspiration for the rule's themselves was that our wargaming group back in the late 80's, early 90's were playing 'Sound of the guns'. These rules were great fun to play, but as our knowledge of the Napoleonic wars increased we felt the need to tweak things to suit our newfound knowledge and views, a process that continue even now. As a result of this I came up with my 'Off to War' rules. This rule set was based upon traditional mechanics, such as number of figures firing, figure removal etc.

In 1997 our group was invited to stage a participation game at the Napoleonic Fare in London. I found that in order for our game to work we needed a much faster rule system, so after much head scratching I devised what was to become the basis for ITNOG. The game was a success and we all really enjoyed the new rule system, so I started to rapidly expand and amend the rules as we played more and more games using them. It was in April 1998 that the first edition of 'In the Name of Glory' was produced. Since then there have been five editions of the

rules, with ITNOG 2006 being the most current.

With so many Napoleonic rules already on the market, what do you think makes your rules stand out?

First of all there is no rebasing as the game is dependant upon unit morale and not number of figures per base. If you already have an army painted and based then just keep them as they are all you need is four bases per unit. If base sizes are needed then these are detailed in the rules.

Because the game is dependant upon morale each army is rated for a break point. When that many units have been destroyed (broken), the game is over. NOTE: A broken unit is a unit that has had its morale point rating reduced to zero.

Each nation is given its own percentage break point, which ranges from 25%-50%. This is a clear way of telling when the game has finished and stops the game dragging on unnecessarily. This also forces players to think about reserves as they will need to replace their unit with low morale ratings that are engaged with the enemy with fresh troops to stop then becoming broken, which will help pre-

Interview With David Marks— designer of *In the Name of Glory*

vent their army loosing the game.

A lot of people have told me that most distinctive feature of the rules is the command & control system, which uses unit activation counters. In their turn each player may use ALL, SOME or NONE of their activation counters to activate their units or commanders and bring them into play, up to the maximum number of activation counters they are permitted to play in their turn, which averages about 60% of the total number of units in a players army. A Player may activate the same unit and/or commander a number of times in the same turn, by allocating additional activation counters to the same unit and/or commander in the same turn. However, an activated unit may either fire artillery/muskets once or fight one round of melee but not both in the same turn, irrespective of the number of times the unit is activated. Units on the inactive side can return fire or counter-charge if fired upon or attacked.

This means that a player can never get their whole army moving at the same time, because the total number of activations allowed per turn is always less than the number of units in your army. This I feel is more realistic because no army ever moved as a single entity. Players must therefore prioritize their activations and focus on those units that are the most important to the battle. I think this system really forces players to get their thinking caps on, making the game far more challenging.

The other advantage of this system is that players never see the full development of the enemy forces, and vice versa, so players never really know what each other are up to, which means that the rules allow players to out wit each other.

The rules also use pre-calculated artillery, musket and melee tables so you don't have to add or subtract a list of factors, just look at the events applicable to what you want to resolve. Some people at first are a bit put off by the tables but it is worth noting that you only use a small section of them at any one time, making them quick and easy to use.



The rules fully consider the possibility that you may have more than one player per side, and are written to accommodate this fact.

I have also provided an extensive chronology of the period covering a majority of the period from 1769 (birth of Wellington and Napoleon), to 1852 (death of Wellington), and list of 157 major battles covering the period from 1792 - 1803 and 805 – 1815 to help people new to gaming or not familiar with the period to get a better understanding of the Napoleonic era. I don't know of any other rules that give players this amount of background information.

In addition to the aforementioned, here is an overview of the rules which I hope provides the reader with useful information:

The rule system: These rules create a strategic game that primarily depends upon overall command and control of troops and their morale and not the actions of individual figures.

Commander lists: 13 nations, 231 commanders listed in total.

Complexity: Easy / Moderate.

Counters: All the counters needed to play the game are provided. However, you do not need to use the counters if you wish to use a different method of record keeping.

Figure sizes: 2mm, 6mm, 10mm, 15mm, 20mm, 25mm and 28mm.

Ground scale: 1mm = 2 yards. This

scale is universal for 6 to 28 mm figures and is applicable to all movement and weapon ranges. Although it is generally accepted that the ground scale and therefore weapon ranges should be amended to suit the figure size, I have found that using the same measurements irrespective of figure size makes no difference to the outcome of the game. NOTE: When using 2mm figures all measurements should be halved.

National characteristics: Basic morale point supplement for 24 nations, 60 lists in total.

No figure removal: Until a unit is reduced to zero morale point rating it retains all its figures and bases throughout the game. Once a unit is reduced to zero morale point rating then the unit as a whole (all four bases), is removed from the gaming table.

Number of figures per base: Not important as the game does not use single figure removal. However, the number of figures per base is given if required.

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Interview With David Marks— designer of *In the Name of Glory*

Scenarios: Arroyo de Molinos, a small engagement fought in Spain 1811.

Tactical level: Brigade or divisional level, where the smallest tactical unit is a battalion represented by four bases. However, these rules have been successfully used for playing Divisional and corp. level games by making each unit repre-



sent a brigade instead of a battalion and replacing unit commanders with brigade commanders.

Turn sequence: These rules use alternate moves with Side A going first. Once side A has completed their turn it is Side B turn. Once side B has completed their turn it is Side A turn again and so on.

What is your theory on why after all these years wargamers can't settle on one or two sets of Napoleonic rules?

I personally think that the reason we cannot agree on one or two sets of Napoleonic rules is that players all seem to want different things. It appears to be a simple case of "one man's meat is another man's poison". Some players want a game without much reference to historical fact or realism; others want almost a historical thesis, while a majority want something in between. Add to this that everyone has their own idea on how Napoleonic warfare was conducted, which is why so many gamers add their own house rules to existing rule sets. All this creates

a very unsteady platform from which to discuss and agree what are the best rules.

Some players prefer a more rapid play system such as Grande Armee, Volley and Bayonet, and ITNOG, others want a system that go into slightly more detail like General de Brigade, Shako, Napoleonic principles of war, Horse, foot and

gun, Piquet les gro-nards etc, etc, etc., and for those players who want a great amount of detail then rules such as Empire will fit the bill. So Napoleonic gamers may not agree on a particular rule set, but at least they are well served with a variety of rule systems from which to choose from. With so many good rules available, why should players stick with one or two sets of rules? I know many players who use

one rule set for Brigade level games and another set for playing Corps. level games and why not.

I think your own editorial comments in Warning Order No. 14, where you say "Could we inject at least some realism into games" highlights why gamers cannot agree on one or two sets of rules. Although I do not disagree with what you say, I think we have to accept that there are some sections of the gaming community who like rules that only touch on history and enjoy the games they produce; otherwise such rules would not exist.

As a rule writer I have found it is very difficult to get a happy balance between historical fact and playability. Some say I have achieved this balance, other say I have not. It is all down to the simple fact that I am never going to be able to cater for everyone's likes or dislikes.

I do not believe that Napoleonic wargaming would benefit if we all agreed to use one rule set, like ancient gamers use DBA. After all there are currently many successful Napoleonic championships held throughout the world using

different sets of Napoleonic rules.

The one thing that I do feel would be a greatly benefit Napoleonic gaming and I suppose gaming generally would be the standardisation of base sizes and number of figures per base (applicable to figure size). That would be really worth looking into, but in the meantime if we really must have a definitive set of rules then I propose that we use ITNOG, but then again others may not agree...AAHHH!! The debate starts all over again!

One of the most argued about topics in Napoleonic wargaming is the ratings of various leaders. How do you feel about the subject and who do you think were some of the great leaders during that era?

Commander ratings, this I feel is a tricky subject and is a very subjective issue, based on people's own viewpoint and perceptions. I don't suppose we will ever really have a detailed and accurate picture of how well commanders performed throughout their careers during the Napoleonic wars.

I think that rules should reflect these variable factors, so a commanders rating should be variable within a given band, after all even Napoleon had his off days.

I would like to point out that the primary reason that I have given commander ratings in ITNOG is so that people new to gaming or the period at least have a starting point. For those gamers who have knowledge of the period please feel free to amend the commander ratings.

I feel at times that commanders and their ability to conduct a battle are judge using isolated instances and I feel that other factors beyond the battlefield itself have a great bearing on the performance of a commander and the troops who will ultimately have to carry out the commanders orders. As someone once said "*Soldiers win battles; generals get the credit for them.*" and it is these external factors that sometimes get overlooked. Take the Duke of York, as a field commander it is accepted that he was poor, but as an administrator he was fantastic and his reforms I am sure assisted Wel-

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lington and other commanders in the British army to achieve the status as field commanders, that they did.

With regards to greatest leaders of the era, for me this would be an extensive list but to cut things short I would have say



Wellington; Napoleon; Crawford; Louis Desaix - if he had not died early he would have probably equalled or bettered Napoleon and lets not forget the American commander Commodore Edward Preble who defeated the Barbary Pirates. Bet you now get a lot of post saying how wrong I am...hehehe!!

We know that wargamers can do things that a rules designer would never think of. Can you tell us about some bizarre situations that you've seen with your rules being played or unusual questions that you've received?

I have received a number of very odd questions from the public and gamers alike over the years, such as:

"What period games are you doing?"
"Napoleonic" I replied. "That's funny" said the man, "there seems a lot of Napoleonic stuff going on here and little else".
"Well this is the Napoleonic fare, did you not realise this when you bought the ticket at the entrance".

At another show I had a cannon ball on display and a gentleman asked if he could have a closer look. I said OK, but to be careful as it is a 12 lb shot and is deceptively heavy for its size. I handed it to him and he nearly dropped it, saying, "Wow! That is heavy, how much does it weigh", to which I replied "12 lb".

Odd situations have occurred during our games that were not covered by the rules. So I wrote new rules to address these unforeseen situations, which is the reason for the different editions of the rules.

Your rules have a very professional fell to them. Was this a conscious decision to do them this way and do you think it helps in today's gaming market to increase your sales and exposure with a better produced set?

I am glad that you like the presentation of the rules as they are the product of a lot of hard work. I have always seen the publication of the rules as a bit of fun, just an extension of my wargaming hobby. They have never been a commercial enterprise and the money I get from the sale of the rules occasionally helps to cover my print/production costs. All the adverts in the rules are free, so you can see that the rules have been produced on a shoestring budget. I have prepared and publish the rules myself using a desktop publishing program and I have strived to produce the very best product that I can. I am pleased with the results.

I think that a well laid out product does go some way to get peoples attention, but more importantly it allows players to easily look things up and get to grips with the rules in an easier fashion. I do get the impression that many gamers feel that any rules that have been produced to a reasonable standard are done by large companies with a lot of financial support, which for ITNOG is not the case, but hopefully with your donations I will be able to feed and cloth my Wife and Children!!!

With regards to exposure of the rules, again advertising costs a lot of money and for the most part it is way beyond my budget. Because of this I have found that a great number of gamers have not heard of my rules, which is a shame as I feel they have a lot to offer.

What do you think the next big developments will be in game design?

I wish I knew then I would design it and retire. But on a serious note I think that whatever the development will be I think for the time being that it will still revolve around printed rules and dice. I did think, like Sam Mustafa said in an earlier interview, that computer would have a big impact on gaming. I thought that as computer technology was getting smaller, more powerful and more mobile that gamers would utilise computers to run games instead of hard copy books and dice. At shows held here in the UK, the few computer-moderated games that are staged are always popular.

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I am surprised that computes have not made more impact and am not really sure why they are not used more too moderate games. Then again programmes for such



use do not appear to be readily available and I personally have no idea how to convert my own rules for computer use. Maybe computers will have more impact in the future when more suitable programmes have been written.

One thing I am sure of thought is that the same old argument about which rule system is best will still rage on, because the game you get using a computer will be totally dependant upon the rule system programmed into it.

A lot has been voiced about the future of historical gaming and how to encourage new younger players into the hobby. I personally feel that the way forward on this issue is to stop presenting historical gaming as a history lesson and concentrate more on the fun aspect of historical gaming.

On The Miniature Page, 'Tim at Front-line' wrote the following about our meeting at Colours 2006 wargaming show and the game he and his son played using my ACW rule set, which are base upon my IT-NOG system. I thought we had played for about 20 mins, but was later told that we gamed for over an hour, while still chat-

ting to other interest members of the public explaining what was happening in our game.

"Hi Dave Thanks for the rules and the game at Colours, It was my 9 year old sons first show and he was a little shy and would not join in with any thing. We sat down at your game, he was able to pick the rules up and managed to run of your cavalry and thrash an infantry attack. The next day we picked up some old Airfix civil war figs at a toy soldier fair, he is in the process of basing them up and we have down loaded the rules. So thanks to your effort the ranks of wargamers has increased by one. Well done."

I think this posting is brilliant and I really appreciate what Tim has written.

The games that we put on at the shows tend to be big affairs and we run them on a "Game it and go" principle. What I mean by this is that people can join the game at any time throughout the show. They may play for as long as they like and leave whenever they wish and are more than welcome to rejoin the game should they want to. If no member of the public is available to play then we run the game as a demo until someone joins in.

This system really works well and we all have a great time chatting and gaming. I don't know of any other group that runs games on this basis, but I would highly recommend it. Maybe show organisers should introduce this type of game on their list, rather than the usual Demonstration or Participation game options. We never win any 'best demonstration game' or 'best participation game' as the organisers say that our games can not be both...but our games are. I firmly believe that we are at shows to encourage both experienced games and those new to gaming into the hobby and our chosen period, be that historical,

fantasy or sci-fi alike and our 'Game it and go' philosophy I believe is a total winner for the public as they really can have their cake and eat it and those who

want to join in the game do not have to wait, or are left disappointed by being told that the game is full up and the next available slot will be later that afternoon.

Finally, what are you working on for the future?

I have recently completed a set of American Civil War rules, 'Honor & Glory'. These rules can be downloaded, free of charge from the following yahoo chat group.

www.groups.yahoo.com/group/honorag

It has been great fun putting these ACW rules together, which is the result of a sportsman's bet I had with my good American friend Brian Casey. Prior to writing the rules I had little interest in the ACW period, but writing these rules has certainly got me hooked on this fascinating period and I can't think why I have overlooked this period until now.

As for the next big project, first it will be a booklet on how to make terrain. People are always asking me how I construct my terrain plates. So I think as simple booklet will help people out.

Once that is complete it will be a set of English Civil War or 30 Years War rules, but I won't be starting this project for a long, long time.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to discuss my rules and my thoughts on wargaming and I would like to wish you and your readers all the best and happy gaming in the future.

Regards

Dave



Cold War Commander: Which War?

This month will see the release of Cold War Commander which will take the Blitzkrieg Commander system into the Post WW2 period. Unlike WW2 where you have some clear cut choices about which armies and periods to game, the modern period offers a lot of confusion! After seeing some threads on TMP about this subject, here's some possibilities with their advantages and disadvantages.

Soviet Union/Warsaw Pact vs. NATO 1950-1990

This is the potential conflict that kept the wargaming industry viable in the 70s and 80s. Literally hundreds of scenario possibilities involving recon elements, artillery, air support, and more.

Advantages: Lots of scenario possibilities, plenty of information available about equipment and TO&Es, plus a wide range of figures are available in all scales. We're talking large scale combat operations involving all areas of the armed forces.

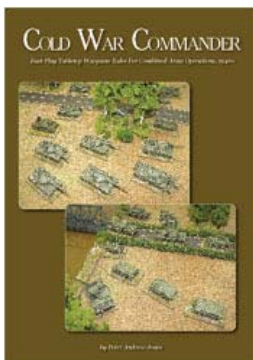


Disadvantages: Not many other than it never happened, so you're essentially going back in the past to play a fictional war. Some gamers like that, others don't.

Vietnam 1965-1975

Again, a lot of scenario possibilities, but if you're looking for massed armor battles then you're in the wrong period. This would be good for large airmobile operations, city fighting, and for gamers who like infantry battles.

Advantages: Again, there is a lot of info readily available, plus plenty of miniatures in all scales. The countless thousands of books on the subject are the



source for hundreds of scenarios.

Disadvantages: If you like a lot of tanks and armored operations, then move on to another war.

Arab-Israeli War 1967

OK, this is for masochists only. The Israeli advantages are so numerous here that any attempt to equalize the playing field will result in a total abstraction of history. The fighting in Jerusalem or the push up the Golan Heights are the only redeemable scenarios for this war.

Advantages: Plenty of info and figs available.

Disadvantages: Not much fun for the Arab player and the war was over pretty quick, so you'll run out of scenario ideas after the first few battles.

Arab-Israeli War 1973

Now we're getting somewhere. From armor slugfests on the Golan Heights to massive tank battles around the Canal, this period has a lot going for it. Plenty of scenarios, desperate fighting, and lots of armor.

Advantages: Readily available figures, orders of battle, and painting info. The Israeli tactical advantages are balanced out by numbers on the Arab side.

Disadvantages: Not many other than there's not much room for fictional scenarios.

War in Lebanon 1982

There were some major armor battles with the Syrians, but the war was very limited and neither side wanted to get heavily involved.

Advantages: Other than being able to use some of your 1973 War equipment mixed with a few new weapons, not many.

Disadvantages: Very limited scenario possibilities.

Arab-Israeli Wars-Future

This could be quite interesting, particularly if you had Jordan, Syria, and Egypt all gang up on Israel again. Both sides

have very modern equipment, so you would see a bewildering array of vehicles and aircraft on the battlefield.

Advantages: Lots of scenario possibilities plus figures are available in all scales. You could see M-1s going up against Merkavas. Certainly there is a potential for large scale armored operations which is what the rules are intended for.

Disadvantages: Coming up with feasible backgrounds for your games, given the ever changing and volatile situation in the Middle East.

Iran-Iraq War

Strangely enough, other than the Warsaw pact vs. NATO era, this may be one of the best periods to use the rules for. There were armored thrusts, large scale infantry assaults, helicopter deep strikes, and more. The wide open spaces would make for some great battles.

Advantages: Figures are available in many scales and you have a wide variety of actions to game.

Disadvantages: Good info is only now coming out, plus the operations in the war were kind of haphazard on both sides.

Angola 1980s

This is actually a pretty interesting period that has some potential. Both South Africa and the terrorist armies with their Cuban support fielded a lot of armor and mechanized units. Probably a good period for 15mm due to the large number of low quality infantry units that would be present.

Advantages: Interesting mix of unit types and an unusual theater with good scenario possibilities.

Disadvantages: OOBs might be hard to come by (continued on page 8)



Cold War Commander: Which War? (cont.)

and after a few games it could start generating a déjà vu type feeling.

Falklands 1982

While this is certainly an interesting operational exercise, I'm not sure how it would do other than in a skirmish type setting. Once the British got on the main island it was just a matter of time.

Advantages: Could be done easily since it was primarily an infantry battle and there's plenty of info on the war.

Disadvantages: Very limited scenario options and who wants to play the Argentine forces?

India-Pakistan 1971

This was a full scale war that had several large battles featuring armor and infantry. Pakistan was in a bad strategic position and India took full advantage of it. Close air support, naval strikes, armor, artillery, and infantry actions make this an ideal period for this rules set.

Advantages: A wide ranging war that has many scenario possibilities, plus figures are available in multiple scales.

Disadvantages: Painting info and OOBs may be hard to come by. There was a good game and articles on this period in an issue of Strategy & Tactics.

India-Pakistan Future

This would be a major war with modern, hi-tech equipment. The scenario possibilities are endless, but you would see a virtual showcase of military equipment in use, from SU-27s to T-80 variants.

Advantages: Hi-tech battles with lots of armor and mechanized infantry backed with artillery, helicopters and air support. Figures are available in multiple scales. What's not to like?

Disadvantages: Finding current OOBs is very tough and the wide variety of equipment within even the same units makes this tough to get accurate painting info.

China-Vietnam 1970s to Present

China briefly invaded Vietnam in the late 70s and didn't fare too well. Relations have improved since then, but the recent posturing by China over the oil rich areas claimed by Vietnam and other countries could erupt into open war.

Advantages: Interesting David vs. Goliath type match up with unusual equipment and organizations.

Disadvantages: Virtually no information to be found and because of the terrain, this would mainly be an infantry war.

China vs. Taiwan

This has been feared for several decades, but has never come to pass. If China ever attains significant sealift assets, they might give it a try, depending upon the world's political climate. If the Chinese get a foothold on the main island, then the handwriting would be on the wall for Taiwan.

Advantages: Another hi-tech conflict that would see some sizeable forces deployed. Plenty of figures and info are readily available for this potential conflict.

Disadvantages: Limited in scope, although you could use your Chinese forces for other potential conflicts in the region.

China vs. Russia

This seemed more probable in the 80s and 90s than now, although that could change.

Currently, Russia is the largest exporter of arms to China, so I'm sure they don't want to bite the hand that feeds them. This would be a hi-tech conflict fought over greatly varied terrain in vast spaces with both sides using similar equipment.

Advantages: Lots of scenario possibilities, plenty of mechanized stuff, aircraft, and artillery on both sides.

Disadvantages: The similar nature of both forces' organizations and equipment might get old after the first few games.

Russia Resurgent!

It appears that Russia is trying to get back into the superpower fold by increasing its armed forces, particularly upgrading the navy and air force. Also, political developments in the region over natural resources could lead to several conflicts that might even drag NATO forces into a war.

Advantages: A super hi-tech conflict, especially if NATO gets involved. Plenty of combined arms operations and many scenario possibilities. In 1/300th scale most of the present day equipment is available.

Disadvantages: Might be too much fantasy for some gamers.

Desert Storm/Iraqi Freedom

Both of these conflicts pitted a hi-tech, combined arms juggernaut against a medium-tech army that turned into a slaughter both times.

Advantages: Lots of info, maps, scenarios, and miniatures are available. The game would definitely let you use masses of figs.

Disadvantages: To keep the game realistic, the scenario objectives would have to be so high for the Coalition player(s) that even one tiny screw up should cost you the game. Also, not much fun if you're playing Iraqis.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Potential conflicts in the Balkans, Greece vs. Turkey, Egypt vs. Libya, and many others could be covered. Naturally, the rules are designed for the use of armored vehicles in combined arms operations, so you should be looking for conflicts that feature armies that have them. Although infantry slugfests can be done with this set of rules, where's the fun in that? I do believe that this rules set (based upon a few years of playing the WW2 version) will be what a lot of modern players have been craving, namely a rules set where ATGMs, artillery, air support, SAMs, and more can work smoothly on the tabletop without taking 12 hours for a game!



Cold War Commander: Which War? (cont.) Resources

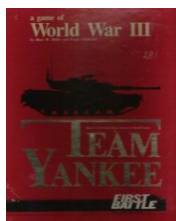
Surprisingly, some of the best resources for this period are board games! In the 70s and 80s modern day combat was at its zenith for the historical gamer. The NATO vs. Warsaw Pact theme was the #1 topic for gaming and a whole host of games, magazines, and books poured out on the topic. Many of these spilled over into other theaters and are still good for info even today. Many of these can be found on Ebay for under \$20 and could be essential for creating scenarios for Cold War Commander. This list will take a look at a few games that could be helpful.



Avalon Hill: The Arab-Israeli Wars

Based on the popular Panzerblitz and Panzer Leader system, this game features around twenty scenarios from 1956 to the present. The great

thing is that the scale (platoon level) is the same as Cold War Commander, so you just replace the counters for miniatures.



GDW Team Yankee

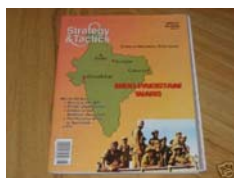
Part of the First Battle system, this game has numerous scenarios about U.S forces engaging a Soviet/Warsaw pact invasion of Germany. Again, it's at the same scale as CWC, so using the scenarios is pretty easy. There was also a desert version covering the Iran-Iraq war and Desert Storm.



GDW Assault

The Assault series had several modules, including Bundeswehr, Boots & Saddles, and a British module. All of the

games are platoon based, which again means that since the units are the same scale as CWC you just transfer the units into miniatures. More complex than the First Battle series by the same company, but the TO&E info is pretty amazing.

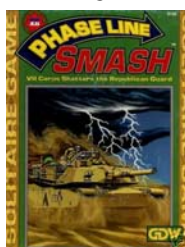


Strategy & Tactics #174: India-Pakistan

Strategy & Tactics #200: Taiwan

Strategy & Tactics #215: Iran-Iraq

All three of these games follow a similar theme, namely operational level treatments of modern warfare. The games are at a much higher level than CWC, but the info in the magazines is very useful on the armies of the combatants and the games are a great background for generating scenarios.



GDW Phase Line Smash

This is a highly complex, solitaire treatment of Operation Desert Storm that is an outstanding game. The booklet with the notes, orders of battle, and after action reports is worth the

price of the game itself. Again, great for generating scenarios and background info.



Victory Games:

Flashpoint Golan

A detailed treatment of a future Syrian-Israeli battle for control of the Golan Heights. Great scenario ideas for using the most modern weapons of both sides.



West End Games:

Air & Armor

Another treatment of operational level actions depicting NATO forces against a Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion. Not only is this a great game, but

there are some good scenario ideas here, even if the game is on a slightly higher level than CWC.

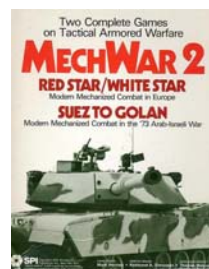


West End Games:

Air Cav

A tactical level treatment of air cav operations in a future European war. Scenarios can be easily converted over

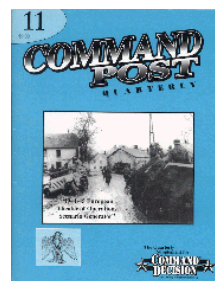
to CWC and there's big focus on delaying operations, probing attacks, and other situations that you rarely see on the tabletop.



SPI: Mech War 2

Another "monster" game from the old SPI days with 1600 counters, four maps, and several booklets. However, there are plenty of scenarios for NATO/Warsaw Pact plus a

dozen or so for the Arab-Israeli Wars.



Command Post Quarterly

Not a game, but a series of magazines that were produced in the early 90s in support of the Command Decision/Combined Arms miniatures rules. The same scale as CWC so you

can easily use the scenarios just by substituting CWC stats for all the units. Although primarily focused on WW2, there were several good modern scenarios. One that was particularly interesting was the U.S. Marine armor at the Kuwaiti International Airport, pitting their modernized M-60A3s against the Iraqi armor.

Final Thoughts

Naturally, this only scratches the surface in regards to books, Ospreys, magazine articles, and more. However, many of these games have information that is not readily available in other places and the scenario ideas can be used to provide unusual and challenging game situations. In future issues I'll keep adding on resources and future conflicts that I've missed here in this opening article and feel free to send me your ideas.

Building a 15mm Colonial Nile Gunboat

Workshop

Introduction

No Sudan game would be complete without Nile gunboats! The big problem? Other than the Melik and some drawings of the Tamai class, there exists very little information about colonial gunboat operations on the Nile. This despite the fact that in some operations there were close to 30 steamers in the combat zone! Not only that, the Mahdists did have steamers and gunboats of their own, but the only reference I've seen is the one that was put out of action by French forces near Fashoda. Gordon's forces operated gunboats continuously during the siege, but again, little is known about the actual combat operations.

What is Known?

We do know for a fact that there were very few dedicated gunboats and most of those were around during Kitchener's final drive to Omdurman. Most "gunboats" were converted passenger or freight steamers, with some boiler plate armor, sandbags, and an assortment of armament. But, this is what makes the topic so much fun and interesting!

Choosing a Gunboat Type

Here's your first big decision. Do you want a converted steamer or a dedicated gunboat? Second, do you want it to be screw driven, i.e., all of the propellers, rudder, etc., under the hull, or do you

want a stern or sidewheeler? These decisions will impact the design of the boat, the complexity of building it, and what parts you will need. Screw driven are the easiest, since everything is under the hull there's no need to build anything extra. Sidewheelers take some work, but look the best in my opinion. Finally, stern-wheelers are the hardest to build because of the exposed paddles.

Also, you will need to decide if it will be lightly or heavily armed, will be armored or use improvised armor such as mealie bags, crates, etc., and how many decks it will have. All of these need to be decided before you get started as they will seriously impact the construction.

Getting Started

For this project I've decided to build a Mahdist gunboat. The boat is a converted river steamer with sandbag armor, two decks, some antique cannon, and it will be a sidewheeler. I've chosen a length of about 10 1/2" with a beam of around 2 1/2". Large boats such as the heavily armed Sultan and Melik would be around 15" long. Although your boats will probably be way out of proportion to the ground scale of your land rules, they need to look right for the game. You also need to decide if you want a narrow bow or a wide bow as well. I've gone with a wide bow ending in a point, with a rounded stern.

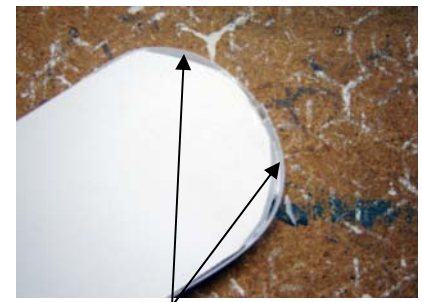


First, I used the 1/2" thick foamcore

available from craft stores. You can use wood, thinner sections of foamcore, or other materials, but I've found that this works best. To take care of the foam

sides, cut out 1/2" strips of sheet plastic and glue them over the sides of the hull. If you want the bow section to be raised, cut the strips for the front a little higher or taper them so it appears as if the hull is raised a little towards the front.

Now, cutting foamcore is not an exact science, particularly any rounded sections, so you will have gaps, usually at the bow and stern. Here's where a great little product can help you out. By using acrylic modeling gel(sold at arts and craft stores near the oil paints), you can fill in any gaps quickly as it dries clear and fast.



Large gaps between the hull and plastic strips.

The Main Deck

Most river steamers and gunboats in the 19th century had some type of wooden or teak deck. This is tough to model in 15mm as the boards would not be very long. There's two ways that I use to make decks for the gunboats and steamers.

The first is to trace the top of the hull onto some very thin sheet plastic. Then, using a ruler, mark off boards that are

about 1" long and 1/8" wide. Use the back of an X-Acto blade to make the impressions on the sheet plastic. This is time consuming, but it comes out pretty good. The other method is to use scribed sheet plastic available at most hobby stores that already has the long lines done for you. You just have to mark off the boards in 1" incre-



ments and lightly cut them into the plastic. While this method is much faster and looks a little better, the only drawback is that the decks will be a little bit thicker than regular sheet plastic. Paint the decks tan, then ink them, and drybrush with a lighter color.

At the start of this project I said that building these boats was all about decisions, and here we are again with some more that have to be made! Do you want the boiler exposed? Should the boiler be at the front, middle, or back? What should you use for the paddlewheels and should they be exposed or covered?

I decided that the boiler would be in the middle of the boat (as are about 75% of all river steamers) and that it would be exposed enough so that it would have to be modeled. We're not building a boat that will be displayed in a museum with the correct scale and working parts, so the idea is to make something that looks functional.

Michael's craft stores have a great



section of bagged wooden pieces that are generally used for doll houses. I took two of the wooden shapes and glued them together, then added a few odds and ends that looked like valves, doors, and a few pieces of wire. I then spray painted the whole thing black and drybrushed it gunmetal. In no time at all I had the boiler done.

Covered paddlewheels are the easiest to model, so again at Michaels I found a round cardboard jewelry box for around \$1. I then cut it in half and notched the base of them to fit over the hull, leaving about 3/16" between the water surface and the paddlewheel cover. Then, take some extra cardboard or sheet plastic and cut out a semi-circle to cover the inside of the paddlewheel as we're not going to build the paddlewheel itself! However, you will need to make some paddles out of balsa wood and glue them so they are



just poking out beneath the paddlewheel covers so that they touch the surface of the water. Glue the boiler, paddlewheels, and

some lengths of dowels to connect the boiler and the paddles to the deck. Again, paint everything first, then assemble it, which is much easier.



The Main Deck Superstructure & Upper Deck



sheet plastic or thick cardboard as well. Whether or not you want to scribe the balsa wood to show vertical planks is up to you. The variations on river steamers is astounding, with some having rounded corners, pilot houses back from the front, no cabins on the second deck, and the list goes on.

I chose a height of 7/8" of an inch for the walls, which gives enough room to fit some of the larger 15mm figures. The windows

and doors are small sections of sheet plastic that are cut out, then spray painted black before they are glued on to the superstructure walls. Although you could make fancier doors and paint the windows gray, these are gaming models, so I determined that black would be the easiest way to represent them.

The second deck floor is again made from foam core, with sheet plastic strips that go around the outside to hide the foam section. Again, repeat the process for creating the

deck from a few steps ago, although the second deck will be smaller than the main deck. Leave a place for the stack, armament, and ladders, plus an open area near the stern, which seemed to be a common feature on many ships of this era, particularly river steamers. Also, as mentioned previously, paint the various built sections before gluing them to the ship.

By this time you should have a pretty good looking gunboat, especially if you've been painting all the sections as you assembled them. (cont. on p.10)

Again you are faced with numerous decisions at this stage. What kind of superstructure? Should I have a pilot house on the second deck? Where should the ladders go? My suggestion at this point is to plan out how you want the main deck and the second deck to look. Take into account the type of armament that your ship will have and the room it will need for the crew. Once you've determined how it should look, it's time to start building again.

I built my superstructures out of balsa wood, although you could easily use



Now here's where you can have a little fun. What will make or break how your gunboat looks are the details. Anyone can build a few boxes on top of a hull, but it's the details that really make the gunboat model stand out.

First, most steamers are going to have some kind of tarp or awning over one of the open places on the deck. This can be made with paper, then the stripes marked and painted on. Second, since the primary role of most of these boats was transporting passengers, there would be railings on the sides of the ship. These



can be made from straight pins and string. Also, adding a few crates and flour sacks can't hurt the overall look and a flag should be added to the stern.

East Riding Miniatures makes some great 15mm ship accessories such as anchors, small boats, ladders, and armament. Since these are converted gunboats, the armament would be whatever was handy, which meant smoothbore cannon, early machine guns, and the odd howitzer.

Armor (if you could call it armor) would be mainly boards nailed to the sides of the hull to provide some cover from small arms fire. Sandbags, mealie bags, large sacks, and crates would also

be used, especially around the gun emplacements. Boiler plate armor might be used around critical sections of the deck to afford extra protection to the boiler and gun crews.

Don't worry about clutter as these boats aren't the QE II! Adding these kinds of details are part of the fun.



Final Thoughts

Hopefully, this article has been of use and has provided the gamer with some god ideas or inspiration to get started on a gunboat project. Details on this era are difficult to find, which is good for gamers as you can pretty much make anything that looks like a steamer and no one can say that it's not historical!

If you try to build the Melik or the Sultan, remember that those boats are heavily armored and armed, so they will pretty much destroy anything on the river. Instead, I would focus on creating converted steamers and lightly armed gunboats, which would provide a much more challenging game. A three gunboat flotilla backed by dhows with Dervishes providing the Marines that are trying to intercept a three or four Egyptian/British gunboats trying to run supplies to a besieged city would make for a great game. Remember that these boats are held together by rusty nails, glue, and prayers!



They would have seen extensive civilian service on the Nile and are not really designed for military operations, so keep that in mind when you are designing your rules.

Also, the Nile can be very wide at places, then extremely narrow in others, so shore batteries can be added to your games. There are also several places with islands in the middle of the river, plus shallows and rocks, so there are plenty of obstacles to navigation as well.

I've built six gunboats so far and plan to do more. My advice is to plan out the construction, get the parts (I have a scrap box full of sheet plastic, balsa wood, dowels, etc...), then get started. Patience can be required at times, so if you feel that you are pressing on the project, back off for awhile. You'll only get more frustrated and make some critical

mistakes if you keep going. By adding pieces day by day, you can see the ship coming together, which inspires you to do even more. Again, I cannot stress enough how important it is to paint each section before you glue it on. Building a ship, then painting it will be difficult, if not impossible to attain better results by doing it a piece at a time. Taking time of the details, such as adding lengths of thread to the stack that are tied down to the deck, can make your gunboat stand out.

So, wedge some sections of boiler plate armor between some sandbags, nail some 2 x 4s around the upper deck, drag a Krupp gun forward, and load up the marines. Gordon has to be saved!



In fact, if you've ever played Starfleet Battles and are familiar with SSDs, then you'll feel right at home here! The ship logs are well laid out, with spaces for damage, fires, officer status, and more. The beauty of the system is that once you've filled out the sheets you can use them forever if you laminate them or place them in a sheet protector, then use grease pencils.

There is also a comprehensive list of ship armament, ranging from muzzle loading smoothbore cannons to maxim loading smoothbore cannons to maxim guns, along with a chart showing how many weapons certain sized ships can carry. The firing and damage systems are easy to pick up and if you have marines on board or engaging enemy forces on the shore, then the TSATF shooting rules are used.

The sequence of play is pretty unique, although it does use a card activation system. Basically, each turn when your ship's card is drawn, you run through a series of orders, such as "Stand by to repel boarders", ordering the Black Gang to fight fires, and so on. This is followed by movement and then combat. Movement is again pretty easy to grasp, with the different kinds of ships (i.e., stern-wheelers, screw-driven, etc.) having different advantages.

There is also a lot of space devoted to lifeboats and saving survivors, which can be critical in skirmish games or if you are involved in a campaign. For those of you interested in actions in the Far East, there is an extensive section devoted to native sailing vessels such as junks and for those Darkest Africa type games there is a section on fighting masses of war canoes.

What I like the most about the rules is that whether you are trying to build and fight historical actions along the Chinese coastline at the turn of the century, or you are creating converted steamers for a fictional campaign set on a mythical continent that looks a lot like Af-

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rica, these rules are the answer. There's even rules for the first torpedoes!

So there is a lot to be positive about. A good system, great ideas, and better than average components. This system can be grafted on to any number of colonial rules and our group is going to use it for some sizeable actions on the Nile, with hypothetical actions between an Anglo-Egyptian fleet and all of the captured steamers that the Mahdi had.

There are a few problems, but thankfully nothing major. First, the pictures in the rules are less than inspiring. I think a call should go out to all gunboat gamers to get some new pictures for the next edition. The main point of a good set of rules is to make gamers want to go out and buy things! A one page "Gunboat Design" flow chart would also be good, listing the steps and options of designing your gunboats. I also think that for new gamers an example of a gunboat duel, showing how everything works would be very helpful. Again, I must stress that these are minor problems and have to deal more with the presentation than anything else.



So, how does the game play? Because of some holiday scheduling problems with my gaming group, we have yet to have a major gunboat battle. However, I have done some solo battles to test out the system.

First, it is kind of like The Sword and The Flame at Sea! The game plays fast and I especially like the firing and damage systems. I could easily see where if you had multiple ships in a battle things could get quite interesting. Decisions have to be made about where to move the First Officer, whether or not to bring up the Black Gang to fight fires or repel boarders, and more. I'm also anxious to try out the rules for engaging shore batteries, boarding actions, and more.

Our first playtest of this game as a group will involve a flotilla of Anglo-Egyptian gunboats trying to run supplies through a blockade and this will appear as a battle report hopefully in the next issue.



Hopefully in the future the authors can be convinced to produce some pre-made ship forms for famous gunboats of the era, along with transports and native craft. I also think that by making some deck plans and counters for crew that you could apply the system for 1/600 and 1/300th scale ships where the counters are moved on the deck plans as the ships slug it out on the tabletop.

Overall, for \$25 this book is worth the money. The components are well done, there's some great ideas here, and these kind of products should be supported so that the authors are encouraged to do more.

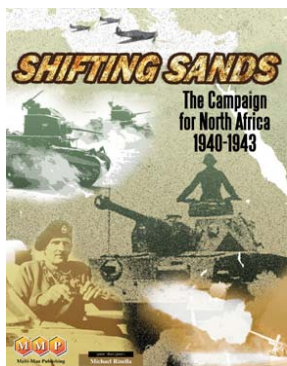
Shifting Sands

Board Game Review

Having been a big fan of the recent wave of card driven games, it seemed only natural to be sucked into Shifting Sands. I've played Paths of Glory, Wilderness War, Thirty Years War, and I love Empire of the Sun, so when it was announced that Michael Rinella, designer of another of my favorite games, Monty's Gamble, was doing a card driven North Africa game, I was immediately interested. There was a lot of hype on the Consimworld forums leading up to its release, so the big questions was, will this be a successful game? The answer is a resounding yes.

The components are definitely above average, with a beautiful map of the North African theater that also includes the Middle East and East Africa. There are 110 cards that are also well designed, with period style photographs and a few hundred counters of various sizes. The rule book is well laid out and the designer has published a few sets of errata and clarifications since it came out. The rules are not that difficult and after a second reading, you can pretty much figure out how the game is played.

The game starts in 1940 with two turns, then goes through 1941 and 1942 that have four turns each, then finally there are two turns in 1943. You start with a hand of seven cards in 1940, then it gets larger so you have a hand size of ten cards in 1943. Each turn, which represents three months, has six action rounds where players can play cards to move, bring in reinforcements, accumu-



late replacements, or conduct operations. Some cards can be used for multiple things when played and several require certain events that had to have already been played. Naturally, this makes the game great for multiple playings as you will get different hands every time.

As with most card driven games, the choices that are presented to you each turn can be overwhelming. Do you bring in more reinforcements? Should you play that event or use the card for badly needed replacements? Should you attack or move with the next card? Should you save the card for future use, but then you're not "burning" through the cards quick enough to get to the good stuff!

Counters represent divisions and brigade size battlegroups. You have divisions from India, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and even a Polish battle-group! Movement and combat are fairly straightforward, although the redeployment and supply rules may need to be read twice to get the nuances straight.

In fact, if there's any complaint at all with the game, it's that while the rules are basically simple, there's a lot of odd items and finding them can be difficult. For example, the Americans are -1 in combat until a certain card is played, but if you don't remember seeing that, good luck trying to come across it in the rules. This goes for many other items, although multiple games will see that most points are included.

The game starts out with the British holding Egypt and with small forces in the Near East and East Africa. The Italians are in good shape, except the combat strength of their units makes offensive operations tricky. The first few turns are desperate as the British try to rush in reinforcements, bring units up to strength, and try to prevent Egypt from being lost.

Then Rommel and the first of the Afrika Korps units show up and things get interesting. Units attacking with Rommel



get a big bonus, so the British are put on the defensive. Meanwhile, the British are trying to clear out East Africa and getting ready in case Iraq and the units in the Near East revolt. This is usually where each side is getting ready for the big showdown in 1942.

Halfway through 1942 Malta is under siege, Torch is coming in, most armor units have been upgraded, and there's plenty of forces all over the map. So what's the big problem? You only have so many cards to play for units spread all over the theater, which simulates the chaotic supply situation that both sides faced.

The Germans launch counterattacks against the U.S., British, and Free French units in Tunisia, trying to hold on to Libya, and most importantly of all, trying to maintain enough victory points to survive 1943! Whew! I've played this three

times for this review and all three games have been different. I will say that it is maybe a little too dependent on the card draw, however, good play and a well thought out strategy can alleviate some bad hands.

Overall, this game will be a hit and played for a long, long time. I feel that you could play it 15 times and not one of the games will be the same.

So far, I haven't seen any "killer" strategies show up on Consimworld, which is the mark of a good game in my book! This may not be the North Africa game for every gamer, especially if you're used to hexes and having a lot of control over the situation. It does, however, give a very good feel of the see-saw struggle of the conflict. Both sides have a variety of strategies open to them, plus you never know what your opponent has planned for you! The designer should definitely be encouraged to create more games like this for a variety of periods. In one word, "Outstanding!"



Wargames Downloads: Three Game Reviews

Wargame Downloads is a unique site in the gaming world. Here you can find complete board games, miniatures rules, paper models, and more, that can be downloaded and printed for a good price. I received three wargames for review and I will discuss each of them as well as some printing options.

First, the board wargames fall into the category of DTP games, or Desktop Publishing Games. These are not the usual Avalon Hill/GMT/MMP type games that come in a box with high grade components. Instead, you will get maps, counters, charts, and rules that you will have to print and assemble yourself. The kind of printer and materials that you have access to will greatly influence the quality of the finished product. Many companies sell blank counters or you can simply glue the counters on to some thick cardboard or foam sheets sold in many craft stores. If you have a variety of graphics programs on your computer, you can also re-size the map to your specifications.

Breslau-Hitler's Stalingrad

by Perry Moore of Fire-fight Games

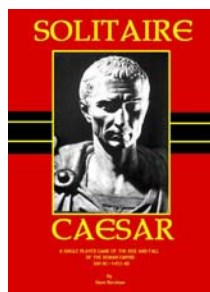
As many of you know, I love WW2 Eastern Front battles, so I was pretty excited when this game showed up as part of the review package. Breslau was an interesting setting as the city held out against a massive Russian force until after the war ended. The game portrays the Russian attacks on one side of the city (where most of the action was during the siege) and comes with over 300 well done counters representing German and Russian forces. There are Panthers, Tigers, 88s, SS units, Russian Guard units, and even Goliath remote controlled tanks. The map is functional and the rules are written in the old SPI or traditional

wargame style. So far, so good.

I think if the game had a traditional odds ratio combat chart, the game could have succeeded on many levels. But here, in my view, is where the designer got a little too clever.

First, a stack of units moves to attack, then the defender, if they roll right can launch an instant counterattack. Then both sides can try to move additional forces into the combat, which can produce more counterattacks, then you have artillery support that can be added in on both sides. Not too bad if there's only a handful of counters, but there's about 250 combat counters! This means that there is a lot of combat and you need to use large stacks as you will take some horrendous losses every time someone shoots. Also, the combat table is bloody as losses are expressed in counters. So, after a few rounds of combat there isn't much left.

Overall, I think it is an interesting topic with good components. What is definitely needed is a step by step example of combat in the rules, with some illustrations. Also, the roll 2D6 for this, 1D6 for this, or 1D10 for this other thing needs to be changed to just one type of die roll. If you like a lot of tactical level combat in an operational setting, then this is the game for you. If you prefer games like the SCS series from MMP/The Gamers, you may want to stay away from this one.



Solitaire Caesar

I'm not much of an Ancients fan, but this little game looked intriguing. The newest version has a re-worked map with all the charts on it and there are additional counter sheets

available at boardgamegeek.com. You get a small map, broken up into provinces, a sheet of around 100 counters, a record sheet, and a simple set of rules.



After assembling the map and counters I read through the rules in a few minutes and tried my first game.

Each game turn represents 100 years of the Roman Empire. During each turn you build cities and legions, attack and try to seize control of other provinces, and shift troops to meet expected threats.



Then, you roll for the size of the first Barbarian force and the size plus location of the second enemy force. These follow a specific line of attack, plus the combat system is very simple.

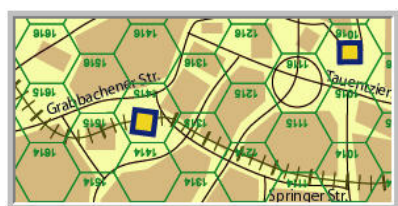
After the first three turns you can put away the rule book and just use the charts on the map. This enables you to play the entire game, about 1500 years, in an hour!

The game is simple, but yet very challenging. You know the starting point of the first

Barbarian force each turn, but you have no idea of its strength or where the second force in each turn will appear. A few times they showed up in the same spot, which can lead to the enemy forces overrunning half of the Empire! You then spend the remaining turns trying to fight fires and hold on to cities to fulfill the victory conditions.

This is the kind of game where you want to play a second game to see if you can beat your previous score, almost like playing video games! Another great thing is that if it looks like things are going badly and you will lose by a lot, you can dump the game and quickly start a new one. For \$5 this game is tough to beat and well recommended!

(continued on page 23)



Age of Reason: Beyond The Salle

Every so often our group gets into one of those moods where we desire to play a campaign. Whether we forget that we've never finished a campaign (has any wargame group ever finished a campaign?) or we get tired of set piece battles is unknown. We have a good selection of French, Austrian, Russian, and Prussian forces, so we went looking for a suitable campaign.

Fortunately, I had designed a game called Beyond The Salle back in 2000. This is a fictional battle assuming that the Prussians had achieved a victory at Zorn-dorf. Frederick and the main Prussian striking force are now force marching to Western Europe to counter an attack by French and Austrian forces in the Leipzig area.

It's a small campaign with about 60 SPs a side designed for Age of Reason that would give us a few interesting battles. This would be our second time playing it, so everyone was familiar with the rules and set up. I designed a new map for the game as the old one was not very good.

One of the reasons why we like campaigns, even though we rarely finish any of them, is that the battles mean something. There's no, "Well, it's the last turn so I'm sending all of my cavalry into a gigantic charge against that grand battery and hope that one unit survives to win the day." The terrain is random, the battle plans are given far more scrutiny than the regular Friday night fight, and serious decisions are needed about when things

Campaign Replay



go bad concerning withdrawals.

So, we sat down, placed our pieces, discussed some strategy (another fun part of campaigns), then got the campaign under way.

Turn 1-2: The French Offensive Begins



Age of Reason: Beyond The Salle

This campaign is pretty straightforward in that there aren't a whole lot of options for either side at the start. The French and Austrians are trying to get a force together and crush the Prussians quickly before they can concentrate. The Prussians are trying to assemble forces that are scattered all over the map to resist the Allied offensive.

The French naturally headed for Naumberg, but bad rolls meant that some of their force was a little slow in moving up (in the campaign the Prussian movement is fixed and faster, but the French and Austrians have to roll to move a second dot each turn).

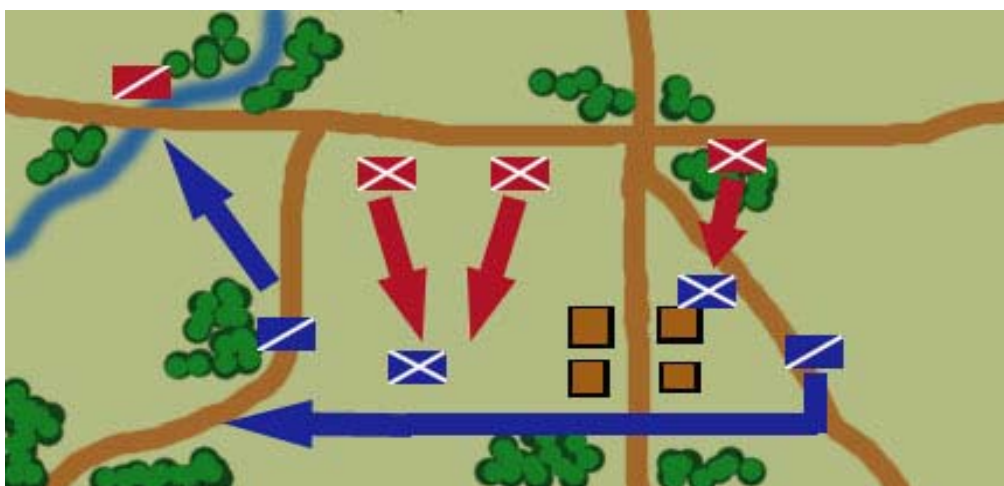
By the end of Turn 2, however, the French were attacking a Prussian block-

Campaign Replay

ing force at Naumberg, other forces were advancing to A13, and things were looking good for the Allies as they grew stronger every turn.

The Prussians were quickly moving forces all over the map into blocking positions, trying to determine the main axis of advance and waiting for the moment to counterattack.

First Contact



The French had a definite advantage in numbers, especially artillery. The huge Prussian advantage in cavalry, both in terms of units and quality, was heavily offset by the random terrain. With several bottlenecks and no large plain for the cavalry to operate the Prussians were forced on the defensive, which is something that they're not very good at.



With 15SPs to the Prussian 10, the French were pretty confident of winning the first engagement. Their confidence only got better after seeing what terrain map was rolled up for the battle. Definitely not cavalry friendly, which would help the French as they are usually short on cavalry during this period.

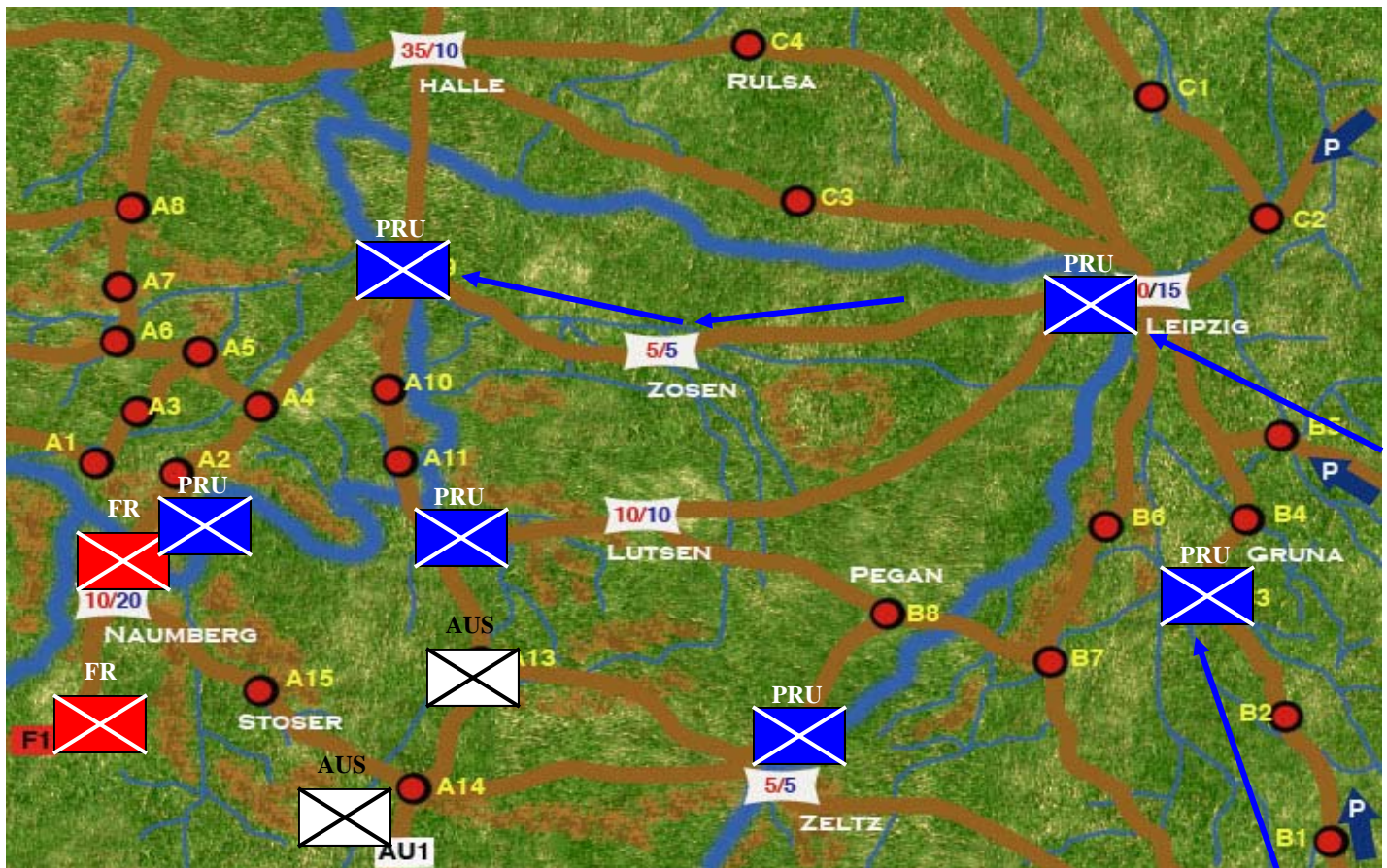
The Prussians decided to attack, which is what they do best and the rules give them several advantages if they're on the offensive. It was decided to strike a blow at the French cavalry across the river, hopefully forcing the French infantry on the defensive.

Naturally, all wargaming plans don't usually work out and this was no exception! The Prussian cavalry jumped off too early and the French were waiting. Their artillery fired into the flanks of the Prussian dragoon brigade, then the French cavalry counterattacked, routing the Prussian horse. Now the second Prussian cavalry brigade had to redeploy across the battlefield to shore up the left flank.

The two Prussian infantry brigades advanced to contact and despite some success near the town, things weren't looking good. This was confirmed a few

turns later when the French artillery began to unload on the Prussian battle line. The French were having a good day rolling the dice while the Prussians were far less than average. By turn 6 it was over and the Prussians decided the better part of valor was fleeing as soon as possible!

The Prussians lost 3SPs and the French only 1SP. The pursuit was not a factor as the Prussian cavalry advantage prevented a complete collapse. However, the French had given the Prussians a bloody nose in this first battle, which probably encouraged them to make a stand against Frederick's counterstroke.



Turns 3-4: Prussian Counterattack

Frederick grabs all available forces in the area around Naumburg and launches a counterattack against the victorious French, knowing that additional French forces have entered the area and will be joining the main force soon.

The Austrians have had bad movement rolls and so are still trying to assemble their forces in the A13-A14 area.

Meanwhile, the Prussians are desperately trying to move their smaller forces along the roads to block the main choke

points on the map. If the Prussians can hold for a few turns, they can assemble several good sized forces to push the Allies back. The situation is still in flux, but a huge victory by the French now could open the floodgates.

Second Battle: Frederick Moves to Block the French

With Frederick now present along with reinforcements, the Prussian side decided to restore the balance of power in the area at least until the main thrust of the Allied attack could be determined. Knowing the Allies had been bloodied in the previous battle, but not knowing what reinforcements they may have received, the Prussians decided to counterattack in the Naumburg area.

Once the move was made the battle was determined to be 34 SPs of Prussians against 24SPs of French, which would be a good sized fight. However, the terrain was rolled up and there was a river plus



a swamp/marsh in the center of the board, which is definitely not what the Prussians needed. However, the attack needed to be delivered to prevent the French from establishing themselves in the area, so the battle began.



In Age of Reason, if Frederick is present the Prussians have the option of setting up second. After looking at the French deployment, the Prussian players decided on a pinning attack in the center and the right, then overwhelming the defenses on the left with the best troops, namely a brigade of grenadiers plus the infantry Guard. No one could have foreseen the determined defense of the hill by the French, nor the "win at all costs" determination by both sides in what quickly became a meat grinder, similar to Zorndorff. By turn 9 both sides were appalled at their losses and yet the battle continued.

Second Battle: Prussians Launch an All Out Attack

The Prussian plan was to essentially stretch the French line as thin as possible by putting pressure all along the front. It was hoped that the French would not be able to send reserves to the left where the best Prussian brigades would attack through the entrenchments and carry the French rear areas.

Unfortunately, the entire Prussian force got drawn into the attack. There seems to be a natural inclination for gamers to not sit around doing anything like holding flanks, pinning enemy forces, etc., so they attack the first enemy force that presents itself!

On the far right the Prussian cavalry got far more than it bargained for and after some initial success, they were checked and forced to fall back on their supports. The French cavalry launched an attack on the Prussians that crossed the bridge, but were repulsed with heavy losses. This had the unfortunate effect of causing an advance all along the Prussian



line. Units became engaged in artillery duels with French forces on the opposite side of the river while in the middle the Prussians crossed the swamp and began to de-

ploy in front of the French positions.

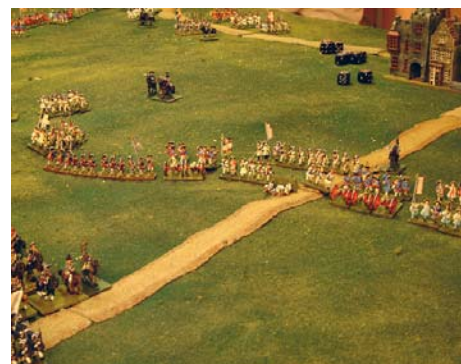
The Prussian hussars on the far left launched a massive charge against the entrenchments, but in series of close die rolls they were repulsed. The Prussian artillery formed a massed battery of four guns and started to wreak destruction upon the French troops not in entrenchments.

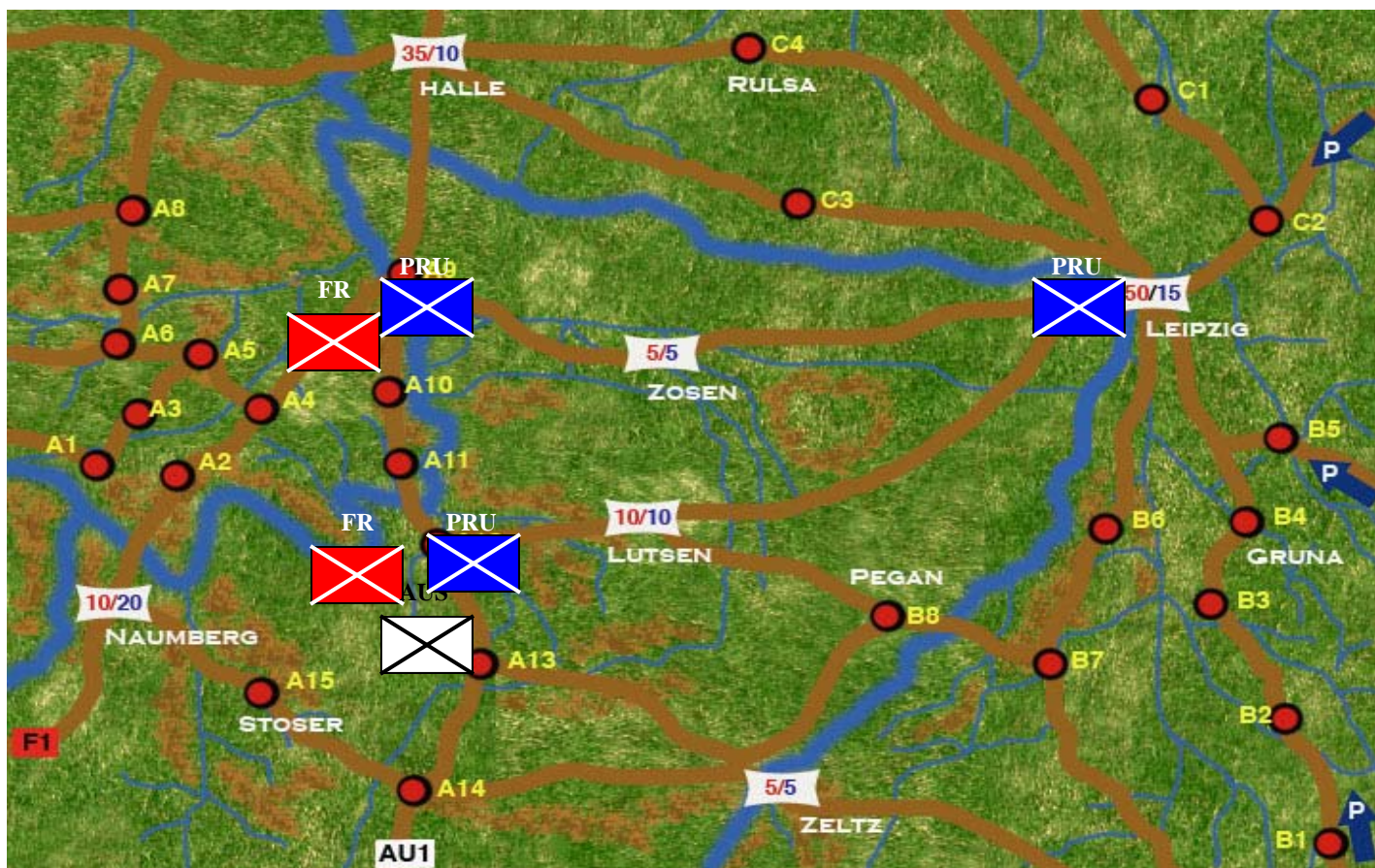
On the far right the Prussian cavalry was finally victorious, but they had lost a flag, had an officer killed, and were beat up pretty badly. The French reformed their lines to refuse the flank while more Prussian infantry deployed for the attack.

Simultaneously, all along the front the

Prussians moved forward and engaged the French, who by this time had committed all of their reserves. There were a number of firefights, attempted melees, and artillery bombardments that kept adding to the carnage. By turn 8 both sides had taken some serious losses and it looked as if it might go on awhile.

However, by turn 9 both sides had lost 25% casualties and were forced to check to see if their force would withdraw. The Prussians had lost too many flags, leaders, and were at 30%, so they failed the check and Frederick was forced to withdraw. The Prussians had lost 9SPs while the French only had a 6SP permanent loss. A chance for the Prussians to re-gain the initiative had been lost.





Turns 5-7: Consolidation & the Allies Attack

The next two turns were spent by both sides in consolidating their forces and moving up reserves. The Prussians seemed to have forgotten about how fast they could move compared to the Allies and instead opted for a more static de-

fense. The French, meanwhile, continued moving up forces and the Austrians also waited on their reinforcements to join them.

Finally, on turn 7, with all of their

pieces in place, the Allies struck at two different locations in an effort to pin down the Prussian forces. The first battle would be between a French/Austrian force of 35 SPs against a Prussian force of 25SPs.

Third Battle: French & Austrians Join Forces

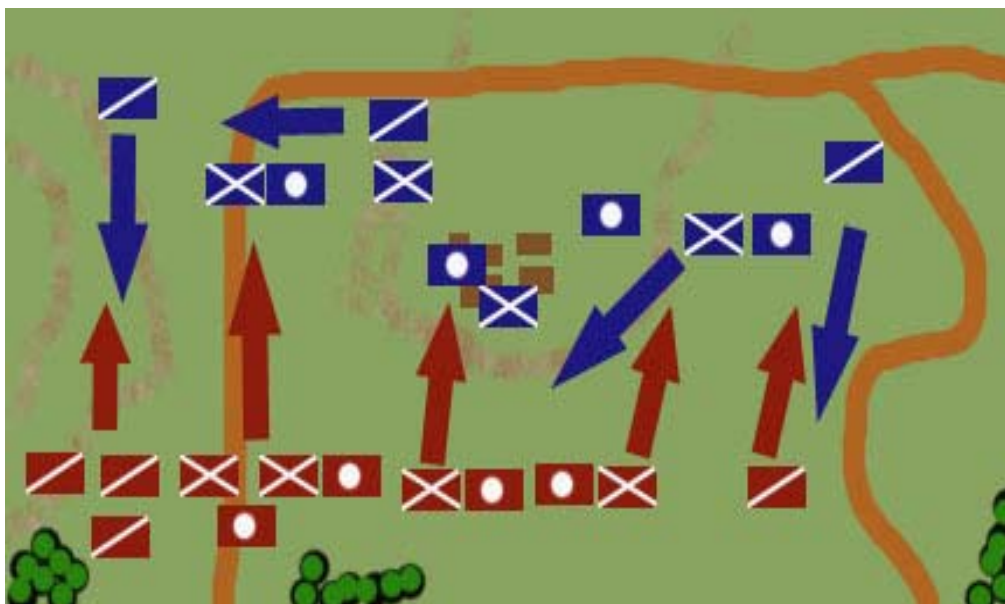
Again, the Prussians got the worst battlefield roll possible. Needing some choke points or a river to offset the numerical advantage of the Allies, the battlefield instead was a fairly open table with a town and hill in the center and some slightly rising hills on the flanks. The Prussians set up first with the plan of holding in the center and right, then using the best cavalry brigade, an infantry brigade of grenadiers, two siege guns, and

three batteries of heavy guns to turn the left flank and crash in the Allied center.

The Allies, however, had other plans. They opted for a pinning attack in the center and to



deliver the main blow with the big Austrian infantry brigades at the Prussian right, backed by most of the cavalry. After set up and some tactical discussions, the pivotal third battle was ready to get under way.



Third Battle (cont.)



The game started out well for the Prussians when the French got a little more than they bargained for by trying to flank the town on the Prussian left. Met by two siege guns and a brigade of hus-sars, the French cavalry took some serious losses and the infantry fell back.

On the Prussian right, however, things started off bad from the beginning. The opening cavalry charge saw one Prussian dragoon regiment routed and another broken. The Prussian cuirassier brigade that was being held in reserve moved to the flank for support and the remaining infantry brigade deployed to help.

The first attack on the town was easily repulsed and the Prussian grenadier brigade was making progress on the left, helped by three heavy batteries that were obliterating any forces in their way. The Austrian attack was just getting started in support of the assault on the village and the first firefight showed the huge advantage of those 18 figure units.

Back on the Prussian right things were not going well. The Prussian cuirassier brigade charged to restore the situation, if even for a few turns, but after some initial success, they were hit by fresh units and sent reeling back. The victorious French and Austrian cavalry continued the pursuit, inflicting heavy casualties on the Prussian cavalry force.

By this time the Prussian right flank was wide open and the Austrians were getting ready to overwhelm the remaining defenders. Even though the Prussian left was having success and moving towards the center, there were no reserves left, so the Prussians decided to withdraw. Casualties were equal, but the Prussians lost for the third

time in a row.

At this time the campaign has been halted for the holiday season and we hope to pick it up again in 2007. As most gamers know, completing a campaign is difficult, if not downright impossible, for a variety of reasons. Keeping focus, one side losing badly, and new interests have doomed many a campaign in the past. On the positive side, however, we fought three battles that we would have never tried at regular club meetings, gamers are much more cautious on the tabletop, and the strategy sessions with map moves are a lot of fun. I encourage everyone to at least try a campaign once in awhile.



Memoirs of a Miniatures and Board Wargamer pt. 3

Yes, Peter Gilder's Sudan miniatures on the cover of *Miniature Wargames* #5 started something over twenty years ago that continues to this very day. Although I had just bought some of the new Ral Partha Colonial figs, they were for the Zulu War. However, with a little research I found out that most of them would work fine for the Sudan. There was something about the vast space of the desert, the Nile, desperate battles in the middle of nowhere, etc., that caught my attention.



Ral Partha 25mm Colonial range British infantry, now sold through Great Endeavors. Visit their site at:

<http://www.greatendeavors.co.uk/colonials/>

So I started collecting plenty of packs of the Ral Partha Sudan range, then added in guns and camels from Lyzard's Grin, the odd Minifigs pack, and anything else I could get my hands on. Unlike the Zulu War, there was little in the way of information on the period and I was greatly helped by getting a subscription to *Savage & Soldier*. Lynn Bodin, who passed away at too early an age, was the editor and was kind enough to answer my letters about the Egyptian army and some of the odd units deployed in the Sudan. At about the same time *The Courier* ran a six issue series on the Sudan, with battle reports, figure reviews, and more.

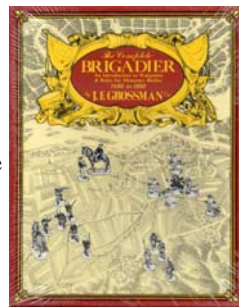
Within about three years I had assembled a painted force approaching around 300 figs. After looking at numerous sets of rules, I settled on two; *The Sword and the Flame* plus *Colonial Skirmish* rules. We played several games, but most of my group at that time were not into colonials, so they only came out every so often. This was also right at the time (around 1986-88) where 25mm manufacturers started going to the 28mm scale, leaving me the choice of just using Ral Partha figures. I kept building up forces for the period, however, always hoping that I would end up in a gaming group that liked colonials, but that wouldn't happen for a few years down the road.

The other period that I became fascinated with was the Mexican-American War. Again, this started with an ad by

Frei-Korps and a battle report in *The Courier* magazine, using a new set of rules called *The Complete Brigadier*. I have always found it funny that gamers, including myself, jump into a period for the strangest reasons! Then, you just can't sample the period, but you have to buy Osprey books, bags and bags of figures, terrain, and rules.

Again, I had chosen a period that was tough on finding research material. Yet again, I was greatly helped by a six issue series

on the period in *The Courier* magazine. Despite all the criticism that magazine has received over the years, before the Internet came into everyone's lives it was heaven sent for historical gamers. So I slowly started building forces for this period as well, even though there wasn't really anyone else interested in this period. Within two years I had enough forces to try a solo game and within three years I had amassed about 250 painted 15mm figs for the period.



I was still playing board games and they were about to reach their zenith. A new company called Victory Games was releasing some high quality games, including *Persian Gulf* and *Sixth Fleet*, the start of the Fleet series. We spent a lot of hours on these games, sometimes devoting entire weekends to playing the campaign games. Most gamers also have a thing for air combat (why is that?), so naturally when GDW's *Air Superiority* came out we flocked to it and many, many hours were spent in the skies above Europe, fighting hypothetical battles with F-15s against Mig-29s.

Other great games included GDW's *The Third World War* series, of which we played the full campaign game with all of the maps and counters not once, but twice! Avalon Hill's *Firepower* was another favorite, along with the excellent GDW *Assault* series. You could start to see, however, towards the end of the 80's that the game companies had run out of ideas and games were coming out less frequently and cost more. This situation would go on until around 2000 when there was a great resurgence in that side of the hobby.

This was also, I believe, the height of complexity in wargaming. Enola Games' *Combat Commander*, with its 150 pages of rules and a chart for every weapon in existence was treated as a matter of fact.

Looking through SPI's *NATO Division Commander* for a specific rule for 5 minutes was just a necessary part of playing the game. Today's gamers don't have the time or the patience for that anymore, which has led to new dimensions in gaming, both in playability and realism. Some good, some bad.



So the 80's were coming to a close. It had been a great run for gaming and I loved the hobby. I had made a lot of friends, had way too much fun, and it was an important part of many of our lives. Unfortunately, the real world was calling all of us to join it. Jobs in the private sector, armed forces members transferring out, marriage, and a growing trend in the hobby towards science-fiction gaming took a toll on the group and people we gamed with. Within about a year, everyone who I had gamed with (around 20 people) had moved on or left the area. Suddenly, I was pretty much alone as far as historical gaming went and close friends who were interested were over an hour away and scheduling was a nightmare. It was time to move on.

Blast From The Past Pt. 2

Colonial Skirmish Rules

There was an article in The Courier during the Sudan series that listed rules for the colonial period and this set was mentioned in it. I was curious, so I ordered a copy from England back in the early 80's. It is definitely an "Old School" set of rules, with a plain blue cover, small text in the book itself, and about four pages of charts that have been crammed onto two pages, so you really need to look closely!

This is truly man to man combat, with each turn representing about three seconds of actual time and each character/figure has its own stats. Loading a rifle, aiming, and firing can take several turns, all of which have to be written down. So far, it sounds tedious, complex, and boring, right?

Well, the answer is no. The game plays well, even with each player running 10 figures. Filling out orders is quick and the game plays faster than you would think. The shooting and melee systems each work extremely well, plus it's pretty easy to figure out. The game plays like an action movie since everyone starts pretty close to each other and the players get heavily involved with the life and death decisions of their command. True, there is a wide variety of modifiers for every conceivable situation, but after a few turns you can pretty much focus on just those sections that pertain to your scenario.

I do like the individual hit locations and players must decide whether to try to load their rifles or drop them and defend themselves with swords, etc., when the fighting gets close. Basically, you're taking about two minutes out of a battle and recreating the final, desperate rush that usually results in melee. The game works well and can be quite enjoyable. The only problems I've encountered is if you're playing in a large group and a few players don't like filling out the orders sheet, it can quickly ruin it for everyone else, so I would say that no more than four would be a good sized game.

I'm not sure if they're still available, but if you can find a copy it's worth every penny.

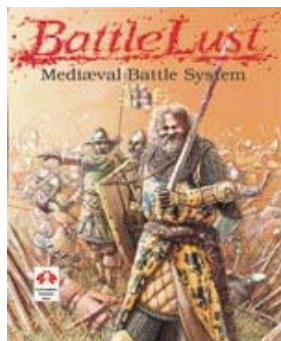
Battle Lust

By Columbia Games

When role-playing games were all the rage in the late 70s and early 80s, a number of companies started putting out high quality supplements that pretty much changed the course of the hobby. One of these was the Harn fantasy world, with its well done maps, books, and endless scenario possibilities. Out of this role-playing world came a unique set of skirmish rules called Battle Lust.

Battle Lust is not for every gamer. It is a detailed set of skirmish rules where one figure equals one man and each figure has a wallet photo sized stat card. Each gamer can run 10-20 figures and the emphasis is on melee, with a detailed set of rules regarding mounted troops. The rules do take some getting used to, particularly if you've never played anything beyond WH40K and you will need to go through the examples a few times.

Combat is again a very unique system, with a wide range of weapons and results depending upon the die rolls. This gives the game system a chance to let players feel the chaos of armored



troops in a massive melee. Not only that, but it does it very well. It does take some getting used to as there aren't many other systems I've come across that are like this.

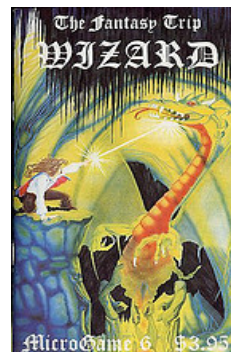
Although it was designed for a fantasy setting (and there are stats for Orcs, etc., in the army lists) it can easily be adapted to Saxons vs. Normans, Viking raids, other fantasy settings, and virtually any type of pre-gunpowder era.

The rules are professionally done, pack a lot of information, and are still sold toady through Columbia Games. If you are interested in pre-gunpowder close combat, this set of rules is definitely worth the investment and it will stand the test of time.

Melee & Wizard

By Metagaming

Following hot on the heels of the success that Ogre had, Metagaming re-



leased Melee, then Wizard. These two fantasy board games offered the combat systems in a board game that up to that point were only available in role-playing. Both had simple maps, counters representing different fighters, wiz-

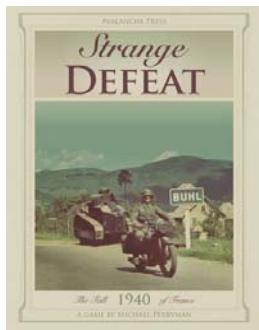
ards, and monsters, and a small booklet of rules. What made these games so special was that the system not only worked, but it worked so well!

I had played Melee several times, then when Wizard came out I became a big fan of that game also. But when the first solitaire adventure called Death Test arrived, I was hooked. I spent many hours of my high school days playing these games. They were simple, played fast, and best of all, they were fun. Wizard had a great little spell book and the programmed adventures made you really determined to see that your character lived! Several role-playing groups scrapped the D&D melee system and replaced it with this, which shows you how good this little game for \$3 really was.

There was an attempt to produce an entire fantasy role-playing system out of these two games and in fact, several books were released. Unfortunately, it was into an all too crowded market. Add in the fact that Metagaming had lost it's compass as far as game design went, then the company folded.

Today, the games fetch a pretty good price on Ebay. There are several sites that still support the game and it has almost a cult following. The rights for the game are for all intents lost, which is a shame as I think that new versions of the game would definitely do well. Hopefully, someday they will return.

Strange Defeat



Strange Defeat, about the Fall of France in 1940, is the third in a relatively new series of games by Avalanche Press, Defiant Russia and Red Vengeance have already been

reviewed in previous issues, with Defiant Russia remaining one of my favorite games in recent years. The series feature regular sized maps, about 120-150 counters, and can be played in 2-3 hours, making them ideal for quick games.

The first thing you notice about Strange Defeat is the map. Obviously it's France, but it is printed light gray with the lettering an even lighter gray, making things like the hex numbers and the political track almost unreadable. The

counters are nice and similar to previous games in the series. The rules are pretty simple and if you've played the other games in the series then you'll be playing in a few minutes as there's only minor changes. Apparently there was a huge goof with the set up in the first shipment, but my copy had the new set up card and terrain chart included.

After set up, the first thing that you notice is that there is a lot of map with few pieces on it. The Germans have some choices in the set up, but the game begins with the Germans blowing holes in the Dutch, Belgian, and French borders. Now here's where it gets interesting for the Allies. Do you stay and fight, or flee to fulfill the victory objectives?

The game is only several turns long, so players need to stick to their original



plans. Victory is based upon securing "Political Points", which means destroying units, capturing forts, withdrawing Allied forces to England, and others. Unfortunately, there's so many that keeping track of them during the game is tough. Basically, and here's where I have

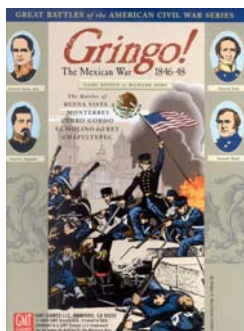
some real problems with the game, is that it forces the Allied player to "not lose too bad". This means that you have no chance to defeat the Germans other than preventing them from beating you too bad. So, everything you do is in terms

of losing, but denying the German player political Points, then declare victory!

Overall, it is an average game with mediocre components. Why they didn't make all the games in this series with the same rules and graphics so they could be linked is beyond me.

Board Game Review

Gringo!



The Great Battles of the American Civil War (GBACW) is one of GMT's most popular series. Gringo takes the series to the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 with five different battles.

As with most GMT games, the components are very nice. You get several maps, 500+ counters, the standard rules, then the battle book with the scenarios and commentary for the particular game. So far, so good.

Now, the GBACW series is not for the beginner and it can be like ASL for the ACW in some regards. There is an excellent command and activation system built into the rules that will take

some getting used to. The combat and melee systems, likewise, or not for new gamers. Both are detailed and produce realistic results, but add to the complexity of the system. With each counter representing a section/battery of guns, or several hundred men, we are talking about battalion level actions set inside of major battles.

Gringo features the battles of Monterey, with its difficult street fighting, the huge battle of Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Molino del Ray, and Chapultepec. Also, if you buy Issue 16 of GMT's C3 magazine, you get counters and a map for Churubusco. All of these, except for Buena Vista, are relatively small battles and are good for learning the system. Better to start here than with Gettysburg! Some of the battles also have a smaller



ground scale and a lot of special rules, so players will have to familiarize themselves with these rules before playing some of the scenarios. Monterey, for example, has a

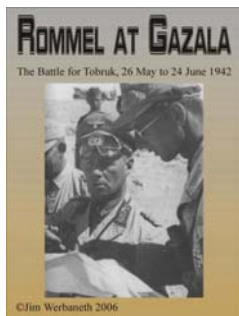
lengthy section on street fighting.

I played the Churubusco scenario for this review and it definitely had a lot of action in it. The system worked well, even though I had to reference the rules a lot. Players have a number of decisions to make each turn and the activation system keeps you guessing.

Overall, despite the high price tag (around \$60) this is an excellent game. They are supposed to be releasing a simpler set of rules, similar to the simple ancients system rules, which will enable even more gamers to try these games.

Wargames Downloads: Three Game Reviews (cont.)

Rommel at Gazala



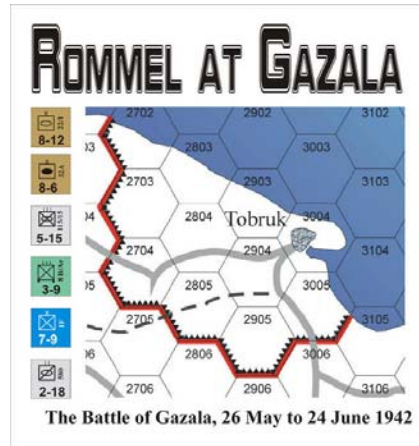
This was the third and final game I was sent to review. Having just bought and played Avalanche Press' Gazala 1942 (read review in WO 15), I was interested to see how this game

compares.

First, there is an 11 x 17 map with average graphics covering the Tobruk area plus about 70 counters, so this is a fairly small game. The rules are well laid out and simple to grasp, but I was pleasantly surprised by the inclusion of a 20+ page battle guide going over the actual campaign! So, you have few units and a lot of space on the map, which accurately depicts the North African campaign.

For anyone who has played wargames, this will be strictly standard fare with ZOCs, supply, and combat losses expressed in steps lost or hexes retreated.

Experienced gamers can be playing in a matter of minutes and this would make an excellent "gateway" game to bring people into historical wargaming.



Since there are few pieces and the objective is simply to seize Tobruk while killing off enemy units, the game plays very fast. Unlike the Avalanche version where the Afrika Korps moves and everything else sits around for days, the German player has an entire range of movement and attack options. The British player also has his/her work cut out for

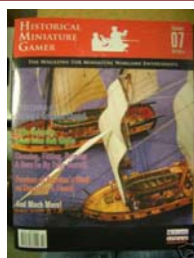
themselves as you need to decide when to pull out of defensive positions and where to make a stand. There's nothing here that's brilliant or memorable, but the game is good and as stated before, it would be great for new gamers.



All of these games are available at Wargame Downloads (see their site at: www.wargamesdownloads.com) for a small fee (usually less than \$10 each). The site also features more wargames, miniatures rules, paper models, and much more.

Latest Historical Miniatures Magazines

First off, I've been pretty critical of the historical gaming magazines over the last year, but with these new issues I'm seeing some light at the end of the tunnel! Historical Gamer Magazine, which I had forgotten about since I hadn't seen one in awhile, comes out with issue #7 and it's pretty good. The pictures have improved, the interview with Scotty Bowden is outstanding, and overall the magazine has taken a huge leap forward from #6. Hopefully this trend will continue!



I also received the latest (at least over here in the States) two issues of

Wargames Illustrated, which I believe were for September and October 2006, for which again I am pleasantly surprised. After months of skirmish oriented gaming, there has been a huge change and now we are treated to beautiful shots of mass combat with well painted miniatures. One of the issues featured a massive report on Historicon 06 with several pages of full color photos that was well worth the price alone just for inspiration!

One thing I still find mildly annoying are the fantasy/sci-fi articles that keep sneaking into what has been for almost 20 years a predominantly historical oriented magazine. Features on the Daleks and Zombies hold almost no interest for me, no matter how well done and I'm sure that this goes for many other readers as well.



One minute you're looking at some incredible Seven Years War miniatures and the next page over is a huge feature on zombies overrunning a city! Just plain weird.

Overall, I think I'm back to buying the magazine on a regular basis. I was getting worried that the VSF guys and authors promoting their own rules sets had taken over, but these two issues have laid to rest at

least some of those fears. Hopefully we'll see some more "how did we do this" type features on some of the more elaborate games, including figure lists, rules used, and more, which are helpful.



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I guess I don't get the excitement over the new "pre-painted miniatures" type games that are due out soon. Part of the attraction of the hobby to me has always been the research and painting of historical miniatures. I find it to be relaxing and enjoyable, even though I probably only get one game hour to every four to five hours of painting. There's a great feeling of accomplishment when a new unit gets finished and added to the collection, plus not to mention the hours spent sifting through a mountain of lead trying to determine what to paint next!

Judging by some of the Star Wars and Battletech stuff that is sold pre-painted, why would you want to be seen using that on the tabletop? Is it that critical that you open up a box, dump the miniatures on the board, then start playing? Is "getting in a game" the overriding priority that trumps what the hobby is really all about? Then what about the games themselves? Judging from what I've seen it seems like the rules were designed after the miniatures, which isn't a good sign. It's this "dumbed down" version of gaming that really irritates the grognards and old timers (and I'm only 44!) with good reason. The hobby has been fracturing for awhile now and this will just make the crevices a little larger. So go ahead and plunk down your \$100 for a couple of boxes of pre-painted figs, run over to a table and dump them out, play your 30 minute game, then scoop them all into a plastic storage bin for the trip home. If that's what excites you, then by all means have at it, but count me out.

Crescent Root Studio 25mm Buildings

Product Review

Last year I saw an ad for a new firm called Crescent Root Studios and I ordered in some of their 15mm desert buildings. I reviewed them a few issues ago and gave them high marks. Now they've come out with a new line of 25/28mm desert buildings. Naturally, since I game colonials in two different scales, I had to order some samples!

The first piece I ordered is a watchtower/mosque type large building that arrived in four pieces. You get a first floor, a second floor, a door that slides in the first floor, and a dome for \$17, which is an outstanding price. You can also order them pre-painted in several shades that suits your gaming table.

All of the pieces fit well and are well



sculpted, with numerous cracks, exposed brick areas, and full of character.

I also ordered several of the wall pieces and again, the unpainted prices are a real bargain. There is an entrance with a gate, corner pieces, plus short and long wall sections. All of the parts are easily assembled and can be painted in a variety of ways.

I must also mention the quick and professional service that I have received from this company. I recently saw a thread on TMP where a few people were unhappy over the service, but I have never had any problems. In fact, I have placed three orders and the longest time I had to wait for an order to arrive has been four days!

The pre-painted prices are great value



and even the painted versions are hard to beat, so gamers should have no excuses to not have good looking terrain for their desert

games.

Finally, a wish list! I would definitely like to see a large mosque, a well, a market area, a governor's residence, and a small fort/outpost. I can dream, right?

<http://crescent-root.com/>

