

Wasatch Front Historical Gaming Society

Warning Order

Issue #38

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Genesis of a WMA Campaign

Ronin, F&F, BKC 2 Battle Reports

Kit, Book, and Game Reviews

Plus Much More

Issue #38

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WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

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By The Sword: Genesis of a Campaign

The highlight of being in a gaming group surely must be participating in a campaign. Whether it is a long, ongoing affair or just a three or four night short campaign, it is a completely different experience than your regular one night battles that are usually waged on the tabletop. If you've been reading this magazine for any length of time you know that I've participated in several campaigns, both good and bad, but I've never given even the bad ones a second thought! Campaigns are such a unique experience that they should always be tried whenever possible.

Our group definitely loves Warmaster Ancients (although other rules systems can easily be used) and we've grown to the point where we have around eight armies. We've looked at various campaign systems and have fought several one day tournaments over the last few years. However, most of the campaigns we've looked at have been of the simple variety and we've been thinking about doing something a bit more complex.

I pulled my Tony Bath

Wargames Campaign book from WRG down off the shelf and went through it for the 100th time over the last 30 years. There's some good ideas in there, but some of them, such as drawing out all of the maps for every place on the continent, seems like maybe a bit too much.

So, I sat down and composed a list of what I wanted to see in the campaign and what I thought my group might want. Since I was the one who was going to be left doing this thing, I may as well enjoy what I'm creating!

The campaign needed to have the following things:

- An area movement system. Point to point and hex by hex take a large number of rules to get right and the campaign bogs down into a movement fest.
- A fantasy world setting since we would be using a variety of historical armies from across multiple time

periods.

- Random events. I love random events and it makes the campaign much more enjoyable.
- Economics. I think it is important for players to be able to man-



age their income and expenditures, but not to the point of needing an accounting degree!

- A campaign that can go on for quite some time, possibly years. This would give even players in hopeless situations the possibility of a comeback and to create a compelling narrative.

Armed with this shopping list of ideas I went to work. The (cont. on p3)

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Special points of interest:

- Several battle reports featuring Ronin, BKC2, TSATF, F&F ACW, and Phantoms.
- Two new Engagements scenarios.
- Kit and book reviews.
- Review of the reborn Ares magazine/game.
- Interview with the creator of Trenchworx.

By The Sword: Genesis of a Campaign (cont.)

(cont. from p2) first thing to come up was the map, so I started to think about all of the options that there were for maps that could be used. I had been researching fantasy maps online and came up with a wide variety for sale, how to make your own with a variety of software, etc., but nothing really interested me. Although I work in the IT field, many of the map making applications have a high learning curve and I didn't want to focus on that in my free time.



Then the answer was literally staring me in the face. On one of my gaming shelves was a copy of the Avalon Hill game Wizard's Quest. I remember that it had been successfully used for a medieval campaign in several issues of The Courier magazine. I opened the game box and after unfolding the game board I knew that this was the direction I needed to go in. For starters, it uses area movement and it was a great fantasy type map in that all of the regions were broken up into six territories, plus several castles.

The one thing is that it does have this weird "continental tunnel" that I had to take out using Photoshop (I found a scanned copy of the map on BGG) and I needed to add sea zones as well as ports. Also, the scrolls with the sequence of play and name of the game needed to be

changed. This only took a few hours and I had my campaign map. Yes, it's not original, but I think it will serve its purpose well.

The next thing to do was the event cards. I thought that this might be easier to do before starting the rules than vice-versa. I found a Word playing card template and went to work. The idea was to have 52 cards and one card would be drawn during each campaign turn. This ended up being a lot of work and literally took a few weeks to get all of the cards done. Fortunately, I play a lot of what are called CDGs, or Card Driven Games, such as Paths of Glory, Successors, Twilight Struggle, etc., which gave me a lot of ideas.

Most of the cards are one time events and are applied randomly. However, there are a few cards where the explanation of the event simply will not fit onto the card! For these special cards I had to devote a section of the rules where I could fully explain their effects. One card, called "Invasion" took up an entire page! It's also very hard to strike a balance between cards that are worthless and those that cause too much chaos. I also wanted a few cards to make the players understand that while they are fighting each other for control of the continent of Marnon, there are times where they may have to unite for the greater good.

The next thing up was the gazetteer. This is a section of the rules that outlines the geography shown on the map and then breaks down each region into what

are called territories.

There is a listing of territories, their location, and their economic value. I also decided to not save time and just use text, but rather I traced an outline of each player's region and used that with the information presented. Again, my thinking is that if I'm going to put this much effort into a cam-

paign system, now is not the time to skimp on things!

With the map, cards, and gazetteer out of the way it was now time to focus on the starting forces. How much is too much? What size armies do we currently have and how much painting would be done to bring them up to where I thought they should be for the upcoming campaign? I settled on two armies for each player that would be 1500 points each and one 500 point force kept in the player's castle (think of it as household troops, bodyguard, etc.). Most of us have 1500 point armies, but there will be the need to expand these forces as the campaign progresses.

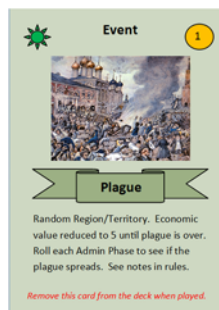
It was also at this time that I settled on the rule where everyone needed to have their forces in armies no smaller than 500 points. While it may be more realistic to keep track of forces spread all over a player's kingdom, in reality it is a nightmare. There was already going to be

some paperwork involved in the campaign, but I didn't want to see players focusing exclusively on that aspect. The 500 point minimum would keep things a bit under control.

From there it was on to movement and in particular, how to use naval movement. Both of these took some explaining, but the results turned out better than I had

hoped for. The big issue for miniatures campaign is always how much is too much movement? I've participated in some campaigns where the movements of each force were elaborately tracked and there were response moves, scouting forces, etc., which was realistic, but took forever to do a turn. I'm from the school of having little movement, thinking that each of these territories on the map are pretty large, the armies aren't very fast, and it makes players think more about where they're going and what their plans are, instead of zooming around the campaign map!

Next up is the combat phase, where again, several decisions needed to be made. I basically gave the players several choices in how the (cont. on p 20)



Marnon Gazetteer			
Note: Each card area is an Event. "Value" is economic value as printed on the card.			
Region	Territory	Value	Notes
Region 1	Lost of the Lizard	1	None
	Overbury	2	None
	Hidden Hollow	3	None
	Whisk Meadows	4	None
Region 2	Red Dunes	1	None
	Whisk Meadows	2	None
	Overbury	3	None
	Lost of the Lizard	4	None

Marnon Gazetteer (cont.)			
Note: Each card area is an Event. "Value" is economic value as printed on the card.			
Region	Territory	Value	Notes
Region 3	Whisk Meadows	1	None
	Overbury	2	None
	Hidden Hollow	3	None
	Lost of the Lizard	4	None
Region 4	Red Dunes	1	None
	Whisk Meadows	2	None
	Overbury	3	None
	Lost of the Lizard	4	None

Russian Link Up Attack

Back to the Eastern Front where it's the Destruction of Army Group Center in late 1944. The Russians have broken clean through the German lines and elements of an armored spearhead are located deep behind the front lines. A second Russian armored thrust is going to attempt to link up with this force and then continue the drive towards Germany.

The Russians started with a mix of infantry, some anti-tank guns, a couple of T-34s, and some assault guns holding a warehouse and some buildings alongside a railroad crossing. They are dug in with an all around defense and are awaiting other Russian elements to link up with them.



The Russians also began with two battalions of T-34/85s, a battalion of mech infantry, various support and heavy weapons units, plus several batteries of off board artillery. This force would enter the road at the far end of the table, directly opposite from where the other Russian forces starts. In between there was a large village and some forests, but most of the advance would be over open



ground, which could pose numerous problems for the Russians.

The Germans began the game with two small battlegroups already on the board. These consisted of various assault guns, armor, infantry, and support weapons. The remainder of the German forces were also hastily put together battlegroups that would enter at random locations. This would have the effect of making the game a bit unpredictable, but I thought it would simulate the historical situation well as the Germans time and time again threw improvised units at the Russian advance in an effort to halt it.

The Russian plan was to pile down the road as quickly as possible, then fan out once contact was made. The idea was to use speed and shock to overwhelm any opposition while trying to reach the railroad area where the other Russian force was as rapidly as possible. This was a bit dicey, since no one knew where the Germans were going to turn up at! Not only that, the long columns on the road could prove to be disastrous if the Russian command rolls were not very good for a few turns.

The Germans for their part were going to try to pin down the Russians until help arrived. Once they felt that they had enough armor on hand for a counterattack they would try to stop the Russian armor first, then take on what was left. The important thing was to prevent any kind of link up, use the terrain to their advantage, and most importantly, don't let the Russians use their numbers against you.

The first few turns went by pretty fast. The Russians moved down the road in long columns, trying to get to the first village as quickly as possible before any defenders could arrive. The Russians at the railroad and a German group at a nearby farm started swapping



shots in a long range tank duel. The first of the German battlegroups moved on board and things were going to get interesting.

Sure enough, the first German counterattack goes in from the Russian right. Two Panthers cause havoc amongst the Russian flanking force and in a few turns there are several T-34s burning. The Germans also begin calling in artillery fire, landing two barrages amongst the Russian mech infantry packed along the road, knocking out over half the battalion. The Panthers then cover a company of panzergrenadiers that dash from cover to cover, then take up positions in the first village. Another German battlegroup arrives and begins moving towards the





Russian armor now trying to deploy to the left of the first village.

At this point things looked really bad for the Russians. So bad in fact that we thought about calling the game and starting over again! Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed and we decided to go on for a few turns.

Good thing for the Russians that we did! All of a sudden things turned completely around! The Russian forces at the railroad knocked out most of the German units they had been skirmishing with. The Panthers were soon knocked out and the PZ IVHs that counterattacked in the center were soon set ablaze after a lengthy anti-armor duel. The remnants of the Russian mech infantry made into the town where they deployed to drive out

the German panzergrenadiers. The Tiger and other German units at the village in the center of the board were soon under fire as well.

The fight for the first village was a bloody affair that saw numerous close range firefights and several close assaults. In the end the Russian infantry prevailed, but not before losing over 75% of the battalion to the German infantry and artillery! The Germans continued to try to scrape up reserves to stop the Russians, but the barrel was almost empty and pretty much every attempt had failed.

The Russian armor, which had been relatively unscathed, continued to move around the flanks, pulverizing anything that got in their way. By this time the Germans were down to just a few units

and they were badly positioned to stop the Russians. A few turns later and the Russians swung into the open and headed for the linkup at the railroad. At this point the game was called as a Russian victory.

Definitely one of the wildest swings I've seen in gaming! The Germans were having their way in the first few turns and everything that could go wrong for the Russians did. Somehow, some way, they overcame this and still won the game. However, the Russian mech infantry were ruined and the supporting units such as assault guns, recon, etc., had also taken a substantial beating. In the end, however, the fields of burning German vehicles were a testament to the hard fought victory this day for the Russians.



MIGCAP-North Vietnam

Back to the friendly skies over North Vietnam in 1972 for this battle report. With only five players for this gaming night with one of them being new to the group, we decided to something fairly easy to play, so we went with Phantoms. This would allow me to referee and help everyone who don't always play a lot of air combat games.

For the uninitiated, Phantoms is a free set of jet combat rules based off of the Avalon Hill Mustangs game system. The rules, charts, data cards, and scenarios are available for free on the WFHGS web site. The game uses maneuver markers



that are hidden to the other players and once an aircraft reaches that marker, it performs the maneuver plus any speed loss/gain. There is a 10 impulse turn, which adds some drama in seeing who moves on what impulse. The system is easy to grasp, does a good job of simulating jet combat, and is great for group

play. Yes, it's not as complex or detailed as GDW's Air Superiority or COA's The Speed of Heat, but you can get a large group running two jets apiece in no time at all. Try that with those other games!

This scenario had two pairs of F-8s on MIGCAP over the north of the country in 1972. Three Mig-21s and one Mig-17 were vectored in to intercept them. We were using the spotting rules, so everyone had to fly straight until they visually spotted an enemy (no one had air search radar on their jets-only ground control), which created some unique starting situations. Both sides had two experienced pilots that they could use, which helps with the combat sequence.

The first pair of Migs tore between the F-8s while the second pair started moving in, having started pretty far behind. The Migs got off a few cannon shots, but not much more. The late arriving pair of Migs were able to fire off some Atolls, but one missed and the second failed to fall of the rails/failed launch (this is an optional, but highly recommended rule we use). The Crusaders fought back, but could only come away with some off angle cannon shots.

One of the Migs did finally get an Atoll to successfully launch and it scored a direct hit, knocking one of the F-8s out of the sky. The Mig-17 took some can-

Phantoms Battle Report



non damage in a F-8 attack, but at this point the NVAF was doing well. That changed a turn later when one of the F-8s rolled behind a Mig-21 and got it with a Sidewinder. Suddenly it was 3 on 3 and the dogfight continued to swirl, with both sides desperately maneuvering for any kind of shot. It was a tribute to both sides that they gave each other very few quality attacks during the game.

Somehow we got through eight turns, which is all the combat fuel that aircraft in the game have, so both sides had to turn for home. This was the first time that we've gone the distance in a scenario as usually one side or the other breaks off before the 8th and final turn. It was a well fought battle with only one aircraft on each side going down. It also showed that in this era trying to get good shots is tough as the early heat seekers have a very narrow field of fire and cannon shots from the front angles are very low odds attacks that essentially waste ammo.



I was looking at the incredible terrain pieces that Crescent Root Studios and Sally 4th Miniatures are putting out recently, thinking how great things are in the hobby right now for gamers. Terrain mats, stacks of new rules, boxes and boxes of plastic figures, WW2 armor in ten different scales, and not to mention the hundreds of specialty figures that continue to pop up. You go visit various blogs and sure enough, there's plenty of tables with beautiful terrain, well crafted, and look 1,000 times better than anything I had when I got into the hobby back in the 70s. There's only one problem; where are the figures?

Yes, gamers have everything except for one small problem. No one has figured out how to get masses of well painted armies into the buyers' hands yet. You still need to assemble/clean, re-search, base, then paint the figures that go on the beautiful terrain that everyone now has. With few exceptions, when I visit club websites, blogs, hobby articles, etc., there just usually aren't many figures on the board. Is it a problem with painting skills? Time? Too many entertainment options and painting is low priority? Or, is it a combination of all of the above?

Painting has always been the main problem facing the historical miniatures hobby. For a long time there was the twin problem of just not enough of the right miniatures available, but that is no longer a problem. You can pretty much find anything and everything your heart desires, if you can afford it. However, there is that looming problem of needing to actually paint the figures themselves. Sure, there are painting services available (I live near GAJO and get the chance to see their fine selection), but that path isn't cheap and so it isn't a viable option for the masses at this time.

That tons of figures are being bought is a given. Why else would ranges continue to expand, Kickstarters keep appearing, more and more specialty figures are being advertised (mainly fantasy and



sci-fi), plus there are some really spectacular ranges being sculpted in all scales right now. Gamers are buying miniatures like they're going

out of style and most of us have ten times what we could conceivably paint in our lifetime.

So, where are they and why aren't they featured on all of this beautiful terrain? Is it that painting is such a chore or that gamers can't focus on any one thing for too long? I know that there have been numerous discussions about pre-painted figures, color 3D printers, and some emerging technologies coming down the road that will give gamers what they want. Basically, there is a desire to go to the game store or shop online, plunk down \$500 and get a box with a terrain mat, a town, and 300 figures all fully painted. Just throw everything out on the table and start playing. But is that what we really want for the gaming hobby?

When I think about this problem I'm reminded of the quote from the evil guy in Pixar's *The Incredibles*. Basically he says that when he's through everyone will have super powers and then no one will be special. This is where I think the hobby is going and I'm not sure if it's a good or bad thing.

Part of the enjoyment for being in the hobby for myself and many other gamers I know has been the research, painting, setting up scenarios, creating terrain, and reading about what others are doing. When is the last time you looked at a game and thought, "Wow, that terrain piece took a lot of time and creativity?" For me it's been quite awhile. Everything kind of has a sterile quality about it. Gamers lay down their GW green grass mat, set out their JR Miniatures pre-painted river pieces, MBA or Crescent

Root buildings, and then their pre-packaged trees. Every game looks the same and on top of that there's not many figures. Yes, the figures take some work, so there's not going to be so many of those.

I have a large 15mm Renaissance army, among many others, that has taken me well over a decade to build up. It always draws attention because frankly, no one wants to invest the time painting and doing the research on something like that. It's also one of our club's most popular games to play, again mainly because it's so unusual from what you usually see played on a regular basis.

But what if someday there is a 15mm Renaissance gaming kit where all the terrain, figures, etc., are all in a box for a reasonable price and pre-painted to boot? What if everyone can become a Renaissance gamer or guru in the period for \$300? In that case, along with many other periods, no one would be special. Is this elitist thinking?



At this time I don't think so. My feelings on the hobby is that you always want to do what you enjoy. I find it relaxing to paint and there's nothing like seeing an army come together, then seeing friends enjoy games with it. But what happens when the day arrives when everyone has the same figures, can do any period they desire at the drop of a hat, and don't need to know anything about the period to set up a good looking game? My guess is that the soul of the hobby will get sucked away. Sure, many gamers will embrace this, but I also think that many will choose to move on to something else. When nothing is special anymore, why be involved with it? That day is still a long ways off, but it is coming and it will be interesting to see where the hobby goes once it gets here.

Three Early War German Vehicles in 1/48th

Kit Reviews



We've discussed this before, but our group likes the 28mm and 1/48th scale vehicles for use in our WW2 skirmish games. In our minds the 1/48th looks much better than the 1/56th stuff that is usually used. The only issue is that the 1/48th scale vehicles are hard to come by and usually have to be assembled!

I recently purchased and built three of the newer Tamiya 1/48th German vehicles. My goal was to make some early war recon units and/or use them in some scenarios as a break from the usual armor slugfests that seem to happen a lot in WW2 skirmish games.

The first was the SdKfz 232 eight wheeled armored car that was in use for quite some time with the German recon forces. Just from the box art you would think that this is a complex kit and is going to take quite some time assembling. Actually the opposite was true and of the three kits reviewed here it was the easiest one to build! The wheels, fenders, antennae, etc., all went together easily and the kit looks great when finished. The only real

difficult thing was getting the mirrors and other assorted items that fit to the fenders and hull at the right angle.

Going up in complexity is the SdKfz 222 light armored car. This kit started off easily enough, but then as you got towards the end there were problems. For one the instructions in a few areas where unclear about where certain parts go and how they fit together. The exhaust sections in particu-

lar took some guesswork and in the end I had to cut some areas to make it work. The biggest problem, however, was the turret. The 20mm cannon and machine gun are in a weird set up that has to fit a cer-

tain way into the turret. On top of this the turret cover is brass etched and getting the sides to bend right was almost impossible. In the end it came out looking good, but it was a lot of work.

The final kit was the SdKfz 250/3 command halftrack and it was the most difficult of the three. First, it has a full interior, which for skirmish gaming, is probably irrelevant. You build the dashboard, steering wheel, seats, rifle racks, and radio! However, that's only half the battle as the outer hull, wheels, headlights, etc., are all very challenging to assemble. In fact, there's nothing easy on this entire kit, which is the theme here.

Like the SdKfz 222 there are quite a few items where you have

to guess where they go as the instructions aren't clear or can't show the exact locations (I used photos of other models or their real life counterparts to help on this). Finally, the tracks are a nightmare, with about 16 parts per side that have to be glued together. The end result is impressive, but it took a lot of work to get to that point.

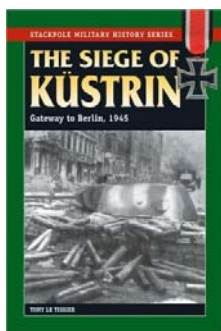
Overall, I now have three very impressive models to go with our 28mm WW2 skirmish gaming collections. However, two of the three were not easy to build and this is definitely the trade off if you choose to go the 1/56th route in that most of those are single piece kits or have very few parts.

Part of the problem could be in that I approach them like a modeler would in assembling the various pieces, painting them separately, then assembling the larger sections at the end. Many gamers would more than likely just assemble everything first, then paint it all at the same time, which would make things much, much easier.

Finally, what German vehicle would be complete without a lot of baggage on them? I used the stowage kits from Black Dog off of Ebay, which has a variety of bags, boxes, etc., to add on.



Author Tony Le Tissier has out many books dealing with the Eastern Front during WW2, particularly on the final year of 1945. The Siege of Kustrin marks another book in what could be termed the end of the German armed forces in the East series. The version I bought was the now familiar Stackpole Books series with green borders all the way around the book.



For those not familiar with this battle, Kustrin lies along the Oder River, which is the last major water obstacle to Berlin. There are several road and rail lines that run through the town, making it a very important objective, particularly for the Russians who were trying to move up their forces for the final battle. The town was also home to several barracks and contained a fort from the Seven Years War era.

The book opens with the shock to the German army that Russian forces were already on the Oder in January of 1945. The book details how the defenses of the town were organized, the geography, and how the Russians approached the town itself. Thee seemed to be a cut off from reality at least on the German side about where the Russians where, when should the civilians be evacuated, and the defenses of Kustrin. Through eyewitness accounts, each of these items is carefully explained.

The one problem that this book has is that the maps are wholly insufficient. The larger area maps are difficult to read as they've been condensed down to normal book page size, so you lose a lot of detail and the units are hard to read. The few tactical level maps don't show units and/or defensive positions, so are useful only in terms of referring back and forth to places mentioned in the main story. This is a shame as this battle is crying out for some detailed maps so that the reader can follow the action. Alt-



though the bridges are definitely the centerpiece of the action, it's difficult to tell their locations and the defenses around them. Again, it seems as if the book could have been so much more if just a little more thought and effort had been put into the maps.

At first the Russians did not realize the importance of Kustrin and were more concerned about seizing bridgeheads across the Oder and continuing the advance towards Berlin. The Russians were by this time having massive fuel and ammo supply issues and had not put two and two together that they really needed to seize Kustrin. This helped the defenders immensely at first as the artillery bombardments, air attacks, and probing attacks did little to take the town.

Little by little, however, you can see that the siege is going to tighten. There is pressure building along other fronts and the units holding the outskirts of the town and nearby villages see the Russians slowly advancing. The eyewitness accounts, while scattered in no particular order, tell the tale of an ever tightening noose. The battle for a certain factory in Kustrin itself begins to become more savage and the bridges begin to come under attack.

Finally, the Russians give up the drive on Berlin and begin to consolidate for the renewed offensive in early spring. Unfortunately, this means that Kustrin's time has run out and two Russian armies are assigned the task and seizing the town plus the surrounding area. The book then begins to move down two parallel stories. The first is the attacks on the town itself and the second is the relief operations.

The attacks on the town begin with heavy bombardments and air attacks. The Russians begin to assault the nearby villages and attempt to cut the road to Kustrin. The German army had been driving convoys to and from Kustrin for weeks, delivering

supplies and taking out civilians, with little to no Russian interference. Slowly and surely, however, this becomes harder and harder for the Germans.

The German defenders blow most of the bridges and the Russians continue the assault. The defenders, who are a collection of odd units, have successes and failures, but it leaves the reader with many questions about why these units were placed in Kustrin. The relief operations and counterattacks are covered at times, but without enough detail. The road is finally cut and the defenders are left to their own devices. A final relief attempt fails and Hitler declares the town a fortress that is to be held to the last man.

The final section of the book is the grinding, block by block battle to take the fortress, which eventually falls after a 60 day siege. The breakout attempts, final



battles by various groups of German defenders, and what happens to the commanders is probably one of the most interesting sections of the book. In the end the Russians end up controlling this vital

transportation junction and start to get ready for the final attack towards Berlin. Casualties were pretty heavy on both sides, which was testament to the savage fighting in the town and surrounding area.

Overall, this book is hard to rate. First, it is an unusual battle that is rarely mentioned. That the author attempted to cover it at all is definitely worthy of praise. The situation itself is interesting as well, combining a siege and almost daily counterattacks along with relief operations. As stated earlier, the maps are a big problem and while the images are good, without the maps they don't seem to matter that much. The biggest problem is the reliance on eyewitness accounts for most of the book. Much of this has little narrative in between, so you're not sure what is really going on at times. Only add this to your collection if you're a hard core East Front fan.

Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 25

Wargamer's Digest Pass in Review

Wargamer's Digest, which has been discussed before in these pages, was one of seemingly many hobby magazines from the 70s and 80s that served as your news source. With nothing like the Internet you had to rely upon catalogs, ads, and magazines that had reviewing features in them. One of the most popular and looked forward to was called Pass in Review inside of Wargamer's Digest.

Unlike a typical review, this feature had two pages of figures that had been recently (although this term could mean many things!) released. For many of us it was our first look at a new range of miniatures, offerings from periods you knew nothing about, or models that had been redesigned. I thought it would be interesting to post a few sample pages and comment on the products that were at that time, "new" or "cutting edge".

Usually, there were several 54mm and 90mm figures in almost every issue. Back in the day this was a part of the modeling hobby that sometimes crossed over into gaming in that many gamers painted these figures for display. When you see ads for gamers today these scales are nowhere to be seen. Instead, this



issue starts off with some Minifigs, who again, back in the day were a stalwart of the hobby.

Next up are some offerings from McEwan Miniatures, who had a good run during the mid to late 70s and even into the early 80s. Their medieval/fantasy ranges worked well for D&D players, plus at that time they had a highly thought of sci-fi ground game called Starguard and sold a wide range of figures for that. In fact, my first metal figures were McEwan dwarves (for a D&D campaign I was in) and a few squads of Amerons.

You didn't see a lot of 15mm in this era, so these next few images are a bit surprising. At this time there were a few offerings from Ral Partha and Heritage, but 15s remained largely unnoticed, which of course has completely reversed itself today. On the next page we start off with some Der Kriegspeiler's 25s, which like McEwan, were popular for a brief period of time, then bypassed as other firms (namely Ral Partha and Superior) came into ascendancy. Heritage Models were also at one time a dominating part of the miniatures landscape. They had a

wide variety of figures for many periods and it was not uncommon to see their figures on many tabletops wherever you went.

Now you get to some of the staples of almost every issue. WRW Imports had massive amounts of 1/87 scale models that were very, very popular at one time, even if they were hard to get a hold of. They worked well with HO railroad terrain and you can see pictures of them throughout many magazines of the era. Also present were CinC Models and GHQ, the two titans of 1/285th scale miniatures.

I didn't pick the best pages to illustrate a lot of the companies as usually there were offerings from Ral Partha, Grenadier, and Atlantic featured in these issues. However, this is still a good representation of what many of us gamers had to work with at this time. You looked through these pages, wrote a few things down, then maybe sent for a catalog or samples to help determine your next project. The biggest issue of the day was how to get these miniatures! Although there were far more hobby stores across the country back then than there are today, trying to find someone who carried gaming items was still a challenge.

Also, you had no idea what the entire range was like, were they scaled right, and how many poses were there. You always had a pretty good idea about what you were getting with GHQ, CinC, and others, but most of the time you were forced to guess. Yes, this did create a lot of useless mail back and forth, ordering figs that wouldn't work, and so on.

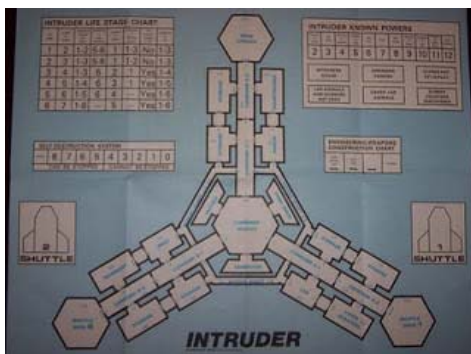
Although things are much, much better today, this was still an exciting era to be gaming in. You really had to plan to get into a new period, accumulate the miniatures, and you had to focus, which I think is a problem today. It's just too easy to think of a new project today, get the figures ordered in a few hours, then move on. Which is probably why all of us have so many unpainted figs!



Blast From The Past pt. 24: TFG microgames

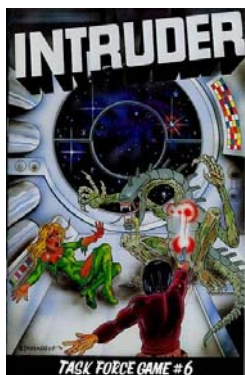
Back in the 70s Metagaming released an entire series of what were termed microgames. Not only were they successful, but it led others to think that this was the way forward in board gaming, which was not necessarily the case! Several other companies, namely Heritage/Dwarfstar, TSR, and Task Force Games tried to capitalize on this concept. In some ways they succeeded, but the cost was much more than a Metagaming game and frankly, some of the games were under developed.

I recently reacquired two of the Task Force Games, Intruder and Moon Base Clavius. Few people remember that the very popular Starfleet Battles began life as one of these pocket games as well as the Starfire series. I think that both of these series gave credence to the notion that virtually anything in this format would be successful. However, those two games were the anomalies and not the norm!



Intruder is well, let's just say it, a rip off of the movie Alien. You have a scientific outpost that has several specimens on board along with a small crew of engineers, scientists, and command staff. Of course one of the creatures escapes, mutates, and starts killing the crew. The crew responds by using laser pistols, building flamethrowers, etc., and if that fails can set the station to self destruct and escape via shuttles attached to the outpost. Sound familiar?

Intruder is a solitaire game that comes

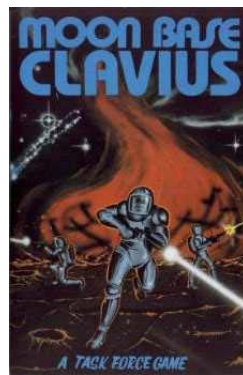


with a small map of the outpost, a few counters, and a rule book with charts. The rules are pretty easy to get through and after a few turns you rarely need to refer back to the rules at all. The components aren't great, but for the money the game costs back in the day they were pretty average for the time.

What Intruder does give you, however, is very good game play. The mutant can be tough at times as it builds up to be almost invulnerable and the randomness of its movements make for a challenging contest. Running the crew around the outpost, building weapons, then deciding how to confront the alien are some of the decisions that need to be made. A game will probably take an hour or so, which means if you kill the alien early or everyone gets eaten quickly, you can set it up again in a few minutes. Overall, this game is definitely worth the money there were charging for it.

Moon Base Clavius depicts a Russian assault on the U.S. moon base in 1996. Yes, it's 2014 and there's still not a base on the moon, but then in the 70s and 80s everyone thought by this time we would be exploring alien worlds in spaceships as well. You can forgive the designer for his optimism and just pretend it's 2026 instead as it doesn't hurt the game a bit.

Again, you get a small map with a sheet of counters and the rules, so components are pretty basic. They're not bad for the time and functional, but that's all you can really say. The rules reveal that this is pretty much a standard hex and counter wargame. There's some special rules about the moon base itself, nuclear mortars, and U.S reinforcements with tanks, but you can be playing the first



scenario in no time at all.

Like the components, the game play is pretty basic. The Russians try to overwhelm the initial U.S. forces before reinforcements arrive and the tide turns. Taking out some of the American positions can be tough, so it's not out of the ordinary to see big Russian stacks surrounding U.S. units. In fact, that's what the game basically comes down to and that is getting a few timely rolls by the Russian player to be in position for the inevitable U.S. counterattack.

It's not a bad game and you can play even the longest scenario in a couple of hours. I'm not sure on the replay value as there's only so much that both sides can do. Overall, a good, but not great little game.

These games definitely harken back to a different era in gaming. It's Friday or Saturday night, you don't know what to play, so you wander down to the local gaming store, drop a few bucks on one of these kinds of games, then go back and learn the rules while eating a ton of snacks. Then you and a buddy play it for a few hours and move on. They filled a need and a niche for quite some time in the hobby. In today's environment of high quality graphics, putting a lot of scenarios in the box, and gamer expectations, nothing like these two games could succeed.

The games must be well thought of, however, as both have new and improved versions either out or coming out soon.



Task Force games also released several others in this series that included Boarding Party, Ultrawarrior, Survival/The Barbarian, Spellbinder, Swordquest, and more. You can still find many of these on Ebay and I'm

thinking about trying some others if the price is right. There are still a few hidden gems out there and it's fun going out and trying to find them!

Since we had previously played the Battle of Franklin, which was featured a few issues back, it was only natural to try the Battle of Nashville next. We dug into the scenario books we have and got to work setting things up. First off, this is a bigger battle than you would have previously thought and it takes up a lot of room. We didn't have the room to do the full length, so we chopped off the CSA extreme left flank as not much happened there anyway.

Historically, Hood, for one reason or another, decided to besiege Thomas in Nashville with a smaller force. Just when Lincoln and Grant's patience had worn out with Thomas, which was going to result in his removal, he launches an attack that overwhelms the Confederates outside of the city, scattering them across Tennessee and pretty much eliminating them from the rest of the war.

The terrain in this area quickly showed that it was going to be no easy feat for the Union forces to get to the CSA positions quickly. Much of the area is forested with few roads running through it, meaning that getting brigades quickly into and out of these areas was going to be a challenge. We gave the Confederates entrenchments, but not the kind as at Petersburg or Spotsylvania. Our readings were that they had improved positions, but not the in depth works that were seen elsewhere in 1864.

Walthall's and Loring's brigades from Stewart's command were definitely going to take the brunt of the fighting in the opening hours. Around the flank the brigades of Johnson and Lee filled up the rest of the line with more units coming up. The CSA brigades were fairly weak, with Loring's only having four stands. There were powerful forces being rushed to the scene by Hood, but it would be several hours before they were in place.

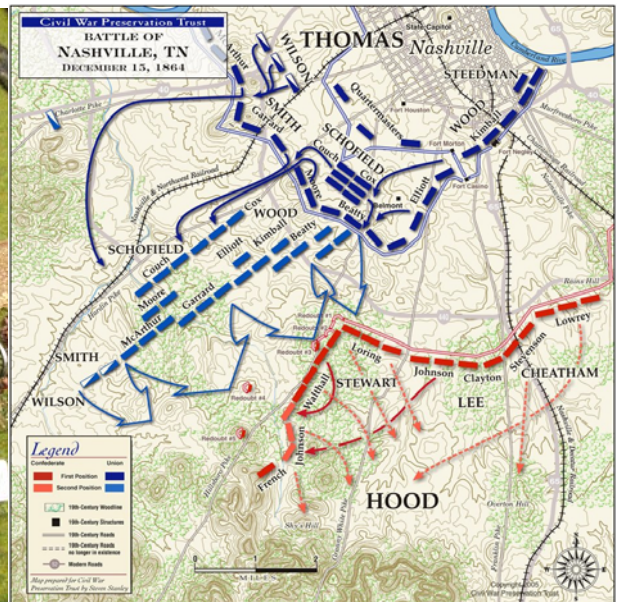
The Union columns of Smith, Schofield, and Wood came on slowly, but relentlessly, supported by Wilson's cavalry on the far flank. The Union, much as in the real battle, were going to hit at several points and try to collapse portions of the defenses, break through, then split the Confederate army into pieces. The only thing saving the CSA front line at this point was the terrain, which took the Union side quite some time to negotiate.

The first attacks hit Loring's brigade at the apex of the defenses, which was the boundaries between the various brigades and divisions. At this point there simply weren't enough troops to hold the defensive lines and the Union smartly struck here. However, this little brigade resisted everything thrown against it time after



time. One of Johnson's brigades moved down the line to set up a secondary defensive line, expecting Loring to fail at any moment.

The Union also struck Walthall's brigades, including the end of the line where one brigade was thrown quickly out of their works and the way was open to possibly end the game right then and there. The Confederate side had no reserves at this point and all of a sudden there was a gaping hole in the defenses. The Union side, however, had no supports present that could have exploited this opening. Walthall counterattacked with the help of point blank artillery fire and retook that section of the line. At this point everything was still holding, reinforcements were arriving, and things (cont. on p13)





(cont. from p 12) weren't looking so bleak. The Union achieved another breakthrough further up the line, but the CSA counterattack wiped out the Union brigades and ventured forth, threatening to split the Union army in two!

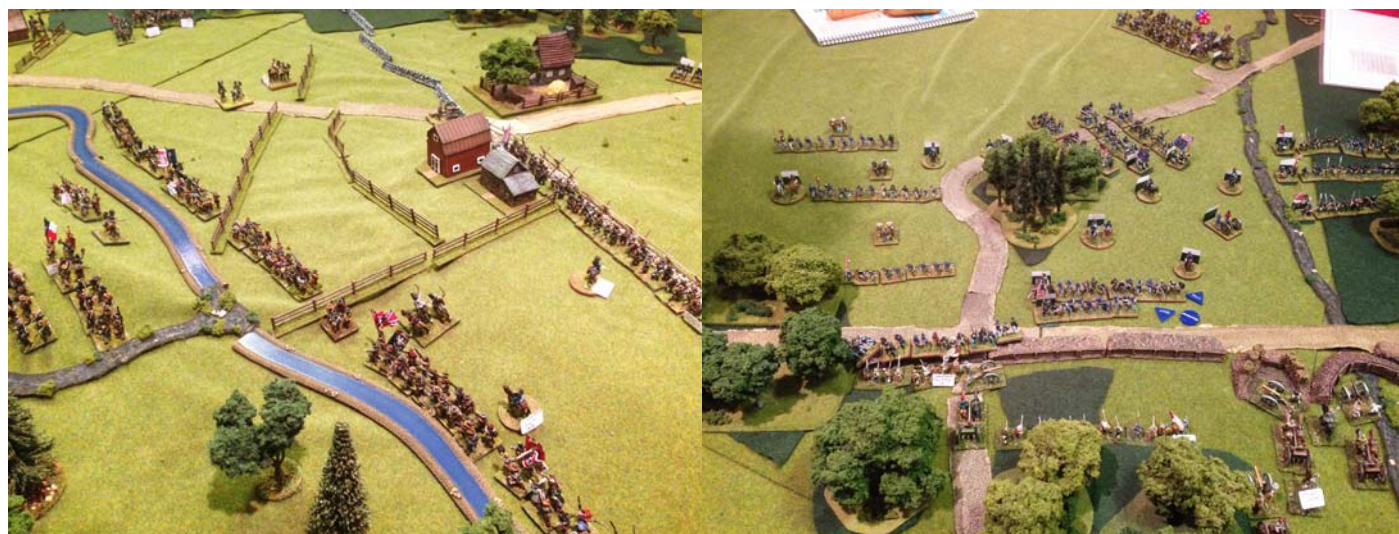
By this time the Union was probing all along the line, with attack after attack, including dismounted cavalry with their repeaters along with artillery. Hood had been ushering reinforcements to the front and a secondary line was already forming to the rear and in some cases moving forward to bolster the defenses. When the Union forces did finally breakthrough the defenses in several places, there was no panic or melting away, just a slow, but steady withdrawal to the new defensive lines.

At this point we unfortunately had to end the game. Yes,, we had started something much too ambitious to finish in a single evening! This was definitely one of those games where you need 90 minutes for the set up, 5-6 hours to play, then about an hour for the take down. We went about five hours and were barely halfway through the game!

After a brief discussion we figured that the Confederate side was doing well, especially in terms of overall casualties. The Union had lost about 25 stands and the Confederates only 6, but the Union clearly had the forces to lose and this barely put a dent in their overall combat power. Clearly, we were just getting into the interesting part of the battle and there were still quite a few turns to go.

This was definitely one of those battles where things need to go right for the attacking forces. You can't stop, have second thoughts, or try to adjust your plan on the fly as there simply isn't enough time. The Union needs to hit the first line of defenses quickly and move into the center as fast as possible. Simply put, the Union had some bad die rolls in the first attacks and never got to that point. This allowed the Confederate forces to begin moving in and setting up a new line of defense as well as provide additional reserves.

We've already discussed the need to play the full battle, so no doubt we may take this out and try again, probably over the 2014 holiday season, but it needs a lot more time to play the full thing.



Engagement 5: Attack Into The Fog

Situation: Blue needs to attack a well defended Red position. An early morning attack has been scheduled, but the area is covered by fog, which will benefit the attacker, but could also create some coordination problems. Red has reinforcements in the immediate area that could be moved up into this position, so time is of the essence.

Period: Designed primarily for the Horse & Musket era, but with a few changes could be used for Ancients as well.

Table Size: 4x8 for larger games, but a 6x4 could be used with smaller scale figures.

Terrain Notes: The hills are natural defensive positions and should present a serious movement obstacle. The river can only be crossed at the bridge and it is not mined for demolition. There are entrenchments/gun positions across the gap between the two hills.

Red Forces: Red has the following forces available:

6 infantry units (one unit is elite/grenadiers and one unit can be skirmish/light infantry).

1 battery of medium artillery

1 battery of heavy artillery

1 unit of light cavalry

1 unit of medium cavalry

Red Orders: Hold the town and the bridge at the end of the game. Blue knows that reinforcements are on the way, so they will launch a determined attack

Blue Forces: Blue will use the following forces for the attack:

10 units of infantry (2 units can be elite/grenadiers and 2 units can be skirmish/light infantry)

3 batteries of medium artillery

1 unit of light cavalry

2 units of medium cavalry

Blue Orders: Attack Red's defenses and seize the town plus the bridge. You need at least one of the objectives to force a draw.

Set Up: Red sets their forces up in the positions marked on the game map. Blue will enter on the board edge opposite Red on the first turn.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn

Game Length: 10 turns

Victory Conditions: Victory is determined by how many of the objectives (marked as red stars on the game map) that Blue controls at the end of the game.

Two stars-Operational victory

One star-Draw

No stars-Defeat

The Fog and Approach March Rules

For the first two turns there is a layer of thick fog across the battlefield. Infantry/artillery units may move 1D6 inches and cavalry units 2D6 inches. Units should be represented on the game board by some type of marker (cardboard counters are good). On the 3rd turn the fog begins to burn off and units can move their full movement. At the start of the fourth turn each unit of Blue must roll to see what their true position is on the battlefield due to having had to move through the fog. Roll 1D6 and 1 D12 for each unit and

place the figures at that location. The d6 marks the distance according to the following results and the D12 marks the position as if using a clock, with the 12 facing towards Red positions.

<u>Die Roll</u>	<u>Result</u>
1, 2	Full move
3, 4	Half move
5	Unit lost-can't move on Turn 4
6	No change-unit is in correct spot

Ex.; Blue rolls for a cavalry unit and rolls a 3 on the D6 and 7 on the D12. the cavalry unit is moved half a move back towards the 7 o'clock position.

There is no firing on turns 1 or 2 and any firing on turn 3 can only be performed out to half range. Units cannot charge on the first three turns.

By turn 4 the fog has burned off and there are no special rules-play resumes normally.

Variants: Naturally, time is the important part of the equation for this scenario and Blue should be forced to at least attempt to move through the fog. Feel free to adjust the length of the game to represent a shorter board or reinforcements perhaps arriving earlier than planned.



Engagement 6: Re-establishing Contact

Situation: Blue has cut off several Red units that are still holding out in villages along a roadway. Red is going to attempt a counterattack to reopen the lines of supply and communication with all three villages.

Period: Designed primarily for the WW2, but could also be used for the Modern period

Table Size: 4x8 for larger games, but a 6x4 could be used with smaller scale figures.

Terrain Notes: The villages are medium sized and Red's units should be set up in good defensive positions within the towns. The bridges are not wired for demolition and for purposes of this scenario cannot be destroyed by artillery. The river can only be crossed at the bridges. Blue probably does not have the force necessary at this time to take all three villages.

Red Forces: Red has the following forces available:

On Board at Start: 2 infantry units, one anti-tank unit, and one armor unit at the locations listed on the scenario map. These units may be set up anywhere in the villages and up to 6" from any village.

Counterattack force: 2 infantry units, 3 mech infantry units, one mortar battery, and three armor units. This force enters Turn 1 in the red outlined box on the scenario map.

Off board: 1 battery of medium artillery

Red Orders: Hold the villages and use the counterattack force to clear the roads leading to the village so that reinforcements and supplies can arrive safely.

Blue Forces: Blue has the following forces deployed on the board according to positions marked on the scenario map.

5 units of infantry, 2 units of mech infantry, and three armor units. The infantry units may begin dug in at the start of the

game.

Off board: one battery of medium artillery.

Blue Orders: Keep Red from opening up the roads to the three villages. If possible seize the villages, but they will be well defended.

Set Up: Red sets their forces up in the positions marked on the game map. Blue forces then set up on the board, followed by Red deploying their counterattack force in the red outlined box.

Initiative: Red is first each turn

Game Length: 12 turns

Victory Conditions: Victory is determined by how many of the villages have a clear path along a road to Red forces that then leads off the edge of the board where Red's counterattack entered. Naturally, there may be some debate upon whether or not the road is clear, can be hit by enemy guns, etc., so the players should define the victory conditions before play begins. Also, if a village is taken by Blue, then Red would have to retake the village to be able to have it count towards the victory conditions.

Three villages-Operational victory

Two villages-Draw

One or no villages-Defeat

Scale: Units can be squads/single vehicles, platoons, or companies based upon the rules system that you use or how many miniatures you have.

Variants: There are several variants that could add considerably more depth and challenge to this scenario.

1. Add the ability for both sides to call in airstrikes and heavy artillery (divisional and corps level).
2. Give both sides some late arriving reinforcements that will arrive on 1D6 turns from the start of the game. This will naturally depend upon how many figures/vehicles that you have as well as the size of your game board.
3. Add a number of supply vehicles to Red's forces that need to break through to the villages. Change the victory conditions to where the village can hold out for so many days based upon how many supply vehicles get through. Red needs to ensure that each village can hold out for a set number of days that the players outline at the start of the game.
4. Reverse the premise of the game and Red needs to evacuate wounded and/or withdraw the forces from the villages to gain a victory.



The Dark Valley by GMT Games

Game Review

I've lost count at how many WW2 Eastern Front games there are now, especially those that show the entire campaign. I myself own quite a few, plus other games such as Third Reich, The Supreme Commander, and more that have Barbarossa or Russian Front scenarios/campaigns in them. So, did we really need yet another game on the subject?

Ted Racier, the designer of numerous games including the famous Paths of Glory, along with GMT Games thinks so. But what could be so novel that it would persuade gamers to buy yet another game on the German invasion of Russia? Games on this subject feature the inevitable German steamroller in the summer and fall of 1941, the stop before Moscow, a second offensive in the spring of 1942, stalemate in 1943, then the Russian counteroffensive in '44 and '45. What's different about this game?

Well, a lot actually. First, there's the map. This is a two map "mini-monster" with a beautifully drawn map of the Eastern Front. The first thing you notice, however, is that Finland is not included in this game, which is an interesting fix to the problem that front often causes in games. Basically, either the Germans will be taking Leningrad or no one will! The counters are well done and in the usual GMT style, so no complaints there. The rule book and play book are equally well done, with plenty of full color play aids and easy to read.

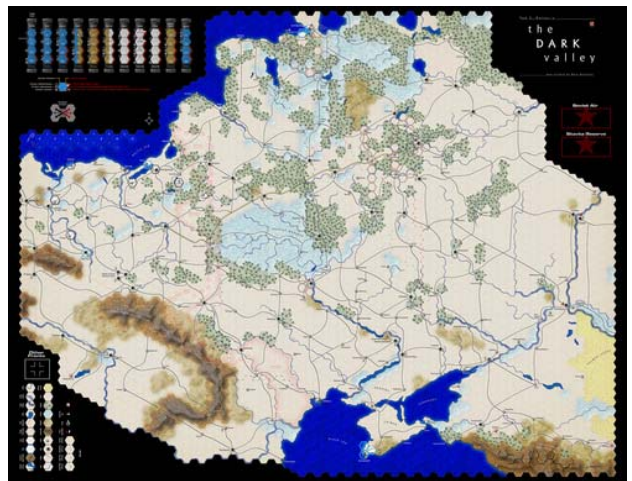
For a game of this size I was expecting a much longer set of rules, but the basic rules for this game run less than 20 pages, with most of the end of the rules and the play-book being taken up by the scenarios. One of the things I liked about this game is that there are scenarios for the opening invasion, the 1942 offensive, the fighting around Kursk in 1943, and the Russian drive to Germany in 1944, so there's no need to set up

the entire campaign each time that you play.

At its heart, this is a basic hex and counter wargame. Movement, zones of control, combat, etc., are all easy to understand and most gamers can skip this and get right into the meat of the system, which is that it uses chit activation. Yes, I can hear the howls of outrage now from most gamers. Chit activation for a strategic level Russian Front game? Yes, and it works well. So well, in fact, that if the chits come out right, the Germans actually have a chance to recreate some of those gigantic pockets seen at the early stages of Barbarossa, something that few games have been able to pull off.

Each turn both sides get a number of chits to move and/or have combat. At first the Germans get quite a few, including chits for the various panzer groups. However, as the game goes on, the Russians begin to get things like the Stavka and Zhukov chits, plus specialized chits like Deep Battle and more move/combat chits. The chits provide some uniqueness to the situation and the chit pull does a good job of simulating the ebb and flow of the campaign.

The Russians start with having divisions spread out all over the map, which slowly get replaced by corps and armies, then some of those get replaced by Guards units. As with most games on this topic, the Russian dead pile in the first few turns is enormous. However,

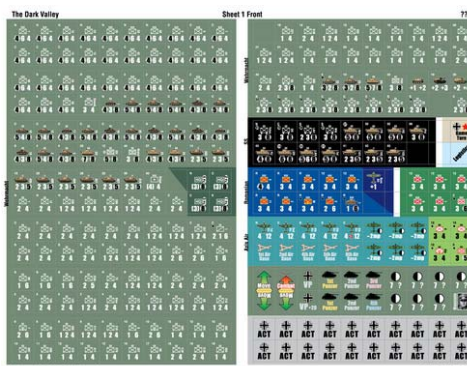
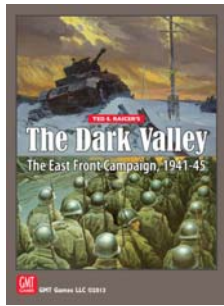


use Move or Combat on some chits, etc., the turns are going to take a bit longer than you would think. Also, if the chit pull goes badly for one side or the other it can have disastrous consequences that could skew the game. Probably not much chance of that in the campaign game as things will even out, but in some of the smaller scenarios it could end it before the game really gets going.

slowly but surely more and more Russian units begin to arrive, plus their quality begins to improve as well.

The

Overall, this is an interesting take on a familiar topic. The game looks good, is not that difficult to understand, and does a good job of portraying the conflict. The chit activation system may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I thought it was refreshing to see some new ideas. Be sure to get the set up/reinforcement cards that someone made (available on BGG/CSW) as they are really handy. For myself, I will definitely take this out from time to time, so it will get more plays.



Making a Desert Terrain Mat

How To

As many of you may have noticed from the pictures in this magazine is that we have a desert mat that is in all fairness, just way too bright! This makes our desert and NWF games look a bit sterile to the actual terrain. After the last NWF battle (which is featured in the next few pages) I decided that something needed to be done about this.

The first thing is what kind of mat should I be aiming for? We had a sand on felt mat for quite some time which wasn't bad and sand colored terrain boards, but both of those didn't seem to feel right. After some investigating I decided to do a heavyweight map and go all out, even though in the longer run it may have been smarter to buy a commercial mat!



The first thing to do was to accumulate the supplies. Wal-Mart has a great 6 x 9 canvas mat used for painting for around \$10 which would work great. However, you NEED to iron it first or the many folds will create some problems for you when you work on it. Next up was the caulking, which needs to be acrylic based to take the paint, and it should be in a sand/almond/tan type color so that if anything flakes/rubs off it still looks like desert. Next up is sand (I got mine at Petsmart-for lizards!) and some cheap kitty litter.

In the above photo you can see that I squirted out an entire tube of caulk, then using a putty knife smoothed it over the canvas. Start with small 2 x 2 sections and slowly work through the mat. I then dropped kitty litter and sand over the caulk, then pressed it into the caulk with an empty caulk tube (used as a roller) and an old rag which I just pressed the material into the caulk.

Once you've done the entire mat this way, (which will take you a few hours and it's not very fun) then you need to hold up the mat and let the excess sand and kitty litter collect into a container to be used again if necessary. The first thing that you notice is that it didn't stick everywhere and the mat turned a tan/sand color, which is perfectly fine. I then go back with some extra caulking and/or spray adhesive and put some more material into thin areas on the mat or where I wanted more rocky areas.

Everything dries pretty fast, so the next step was to take some brown and reddish brown spray paints I had and spray a few areas as in the image above. These will then show through the upcoming brush painting and give the mat it's irregular looking patterns.

Next up comes the paint. Although I was tempted to take the easy way out and use spray paint, I decided to do it the right way and use actual paint. I went to Lowe's and had them mix me two quarts of a desert yellow shade as seen in the image on the right, plus one quart of an almost almond type shade for highlighting. I then got a wide brush and got started. First, don't try to paint the entire mat! Let some of the darker colors that you sprayed earlier show through in places. Once coat was all it took, but it also soaked up about a quart and a half of paint!

Next comes the highlighting, where you use the almond shade to dry brush the mat. Simply put some paint on the brush, wipe off the excess on a piece of cardboard or newspaper, then drag the brush slowly over the mat.

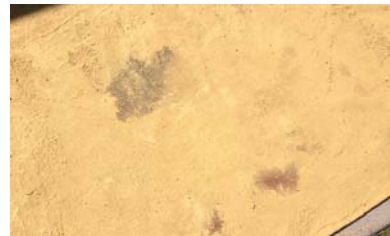


Some areas will get more than others and that's fine as you're going for an irregular look anyway. DO NOT become tempted to overdue the highlighting,, mix multiple shades for highlights, go back to rework sections, etc., as you will probably end up ruining the mat!

Finally, after about 24 hours of drying you now have a heavy duty desert/arid terrain mat that will last you for years. For one thing the mat is heavy and storing it could be an issue, but it looks really good and I'm quite proud of how it turned out.

If I do this again I may go with putting on a layer of caulking first, letting it dry, then second layer of caulking on top of that. Definitely more expensive, but it might give the sand/kitty litter mix something more to adhere to. Also, you could experiment with the shades to be used for the mat to represent different areas for your games.

So, overall I spent about \$80 and around 12 hours, but I feel it was worth it. The important thing is to not get impatient and just go step by step to create a beautiful gaming mat that can be used for quite some time.





and Indian units, their were some really bad rolls for shooting, and then the British MG and screw guns added to the Pathan body count. The British overall officer gave the order to advance and the British led force moved forward to take the village.

The Pathans by this time were well below half strength and were holding back a few fresh units for a final charge. With the British now having cleared most of the opposition near the river and the village entrance, there was some doubt among the Pathan commanders that the village could be held. So far, everything had not gone so well for the Pathans and defeat appeared inevitable at this stage of the game.

But then another event card got pulled

that flipped the game around 180 degrees. This card said that the British were victorious on another field and that this force was needed for the pursuit. A roll of the dice revealed that they had five turns to get the entire force off the board except for one unit that could remain as a rear guard! Naturally, this really changed the course of the game and the Pathan units came piling out from their cover.

Now the race was on as the British units were doing whatever they could to get off the road at the board edge. The Pathans were moving as fast as they could to cut off at least one of the British units to give them the victory. The British MG unit was surrounded and cut down, with those Pathans now joining in the general pursuit. The unit with the

crazy British officer, however, continued to perform beyond expectations, covering the retreat with long range firepower!

However, the Pathans weakened units and very poor die rolls for movement doomed their cause this time. The British just got the last unit off the board edge at the end of the fifth turn and thus emerged victorious in this battle.

It was a great game that had some crazy moments and swings of fortune. The event cards are what really adds life to the game, but the trick is determining how many should be used. We felt that rolling each turn and needing a 5 or 6 on 1D6 was just about right as you don't want more chaos thrown into what is already a pretty chaotic game!



By The Sword: Genesis of a Campaign (cont.)

(cont. from p 3) terrain could be laid out and how long the battles were. I included a randomized terrain placement table in case they couldn't decide on how to set the battle up. Again, this is one of those facets of the campaign where the players need to decide early on how they are going to handle it. I've seen campaigns where every battlefield is drawn up new as it occurs and I've seen some where the referee randomly set it up. My call is to give the players some ideas and let them choose which ones work for them.

Of course when you write rules for battles you also have to include rules for permanent losses, retreats, pursuit, and then sieges. With sieges there are again quite a few options, from simply storming the opponent's castle to settling in for a long siege to starve them out. Once again I gave players several options and then they can decide which method is best for them. Once you get the movement and combat systems designed the rest of the campaign rules are usually tying up loose ends and making sure that everything works!

While most campaigns try to not over-complicate things by adding in economics and logistics, I did exactly that. My thinking was that the players need to run their kingdoms, and by that I mean take into account how to get income, where it is spent, and what to purchase for upcoming turns. This also gets players thinking about how many forces can they support, do they have the infrastructure to go beyond their borders, or should there be a focus on naval operations instead of land campaigns.

Players get income through conquering and occupying territories, caravans, and merchant fleets. This gives the players an incentive to trade as well as fight, so you could see some unusual alliances crop up if they are beneficial to each other. Then players

Reference Card Side A

Sequence of Play 1. Randomize Deck 2. Randomize Deck 3. Randomize Deck 4. Randomize Deck 5. Randomize Deck 6. Randomize Deck 7. Randomize Deck 8. Randomize Deck 9. Randomize Deck 10. Randomize Deck	Land Movement 1. Randomize Deck 2. Randomize Deck 3. Randomize Deck 4. Randomize Deck 5. Randomize Deck 6. Randomize Deck 7. Randomize Deck 8. Randomize Deck 9. Randomize Deck 10. Randomize Deck	Naval Combat 1. Randomize Deck 2. Randomize Deck 3. Randomize Deck 4. Randomize Deck 5. Randomize Deck 6. Randomize Deck 7. Randomize Deck 8. Randomize Deck 9. Randomize Deck 10. Randomize Deck
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must spend their income to keep forces in the field, repair ships, and keep forts running to provide supply to their armies. This also serves as an artificial ceiling to how many forces a player can have. The larger your forces the more of your income you're going to spend to keep them in the field.

I made the supply system fairly simple as although that is a very important part (and not focused on enough by wargames I might add) of any campaign, I didn't want players spending hours and hours tracking the supplies of each unit. I set up a simple system where forces trace supply back to forts and ports in their own territories and if unable to do so, then they must roll for attrition.

So that's pretty much the base campaign system and in theory, it should play pretty quickly. Of course no system would be complete without optional rules and there are quite a few that can be added to the base system. Naturally, the more you add the more complex and longer playing the campaign will be. There are rules that cover optional movement systems, unit battle honors, skills for generals, advanced economics, etc. There will also be a system for training units and building fleets where they do not arrive on the turn of purchase, which will force players to do some long range planning,



Although this system is clearly designed for the War-master Ancients rules system since that is what we use for Ancients and Medievals, it can be used for other systems. Converting the points system used here to other rules such as FOG, Hail Caesar, Warhammer Ancients, etc., should be fairly easy to do. I did my best to keep the events, movement, combat, sieges, etc., fairly generic so that they could be used with almost any other campaign system. Also, there's nothing to prevent anyone from adding or modifying things to the

system to suit their needs.

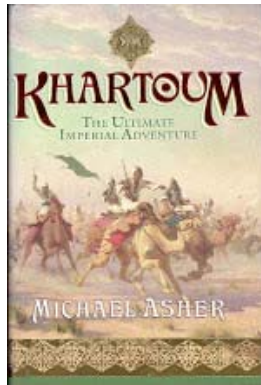
Of course the question has to be asked, "Will this campaign actually get off the ground?" That is a very good question and our group is struggling with this and my guess is that many others would as well, whether it's this campaign or another. Campaigns take an investment in time and commitment, both of which seem to be in short supply in the gaming world today. We have interest in getting this started, but not all members are excited about it, which could pose a problem down the road.

The two other questions about running a campaign like this are a) how often do you play a turn, and b) how much painting needs to be done. The first question sound simple, but again, it will depend upon the commitment of the group. Many gamers want to just hammer away at the campaign, playing it continually until either the group gets sick of it and loses interest, or it ends one way or the other. At this time we're hoping to play a turn once a month and do another game on the other meeting during the month to keep interest up all around.

The second question is not to be overlooked as well. With needing at least one 1500 point force plus the extra units generated by the territory bonuses, plus the units you can build, that could easily see armies of 2,000-2,500 points in a few turns. So, if you have 13-15 units painted up you may need to paint up an additional 13-15 units so that you can play with a full strength force. That's a major commitment in purchasing the figures, then painting them. Either of these questions can pose problems, but hopefully they can be worked out.

Overall, I'm pretty happy with how things have turned out so far. The rules and cards are completed, so now its time to look things over with my group. My biggest question is whether or not I can post this on the club web site for gamers to download. I don't own rights to the map and I have modified it for our use, plus I used a lot of images for the event cards. That's fine for personal use/gaming group use, but I'm unsure about sharing it with the rest of the world!

I've read so many Victorian Colonial books and article over the years that I'm at a point where I don't expect much. There's the usual overview, a few comments on notable names, a one page description of the battles, some maps, and then the summary chapter at the end. This is definitely not one of those books!



Most books on the Sudan give a quick overview, use the Egyptian Rebellion to set the stage, then move onto the Mahdi's rebellion in the Sudan. This is then followed by long sections on the River and Desert columns, the fall of Gordon, then a hastily written chapter on the British destroying their enemies at Omdurman. Long on analysis, but short on details, particularly the battles, always seems to be the main theme.

Not so here. While there is a discussion about the Egyptian Rebellion, how the Mahdi came to power, the state of the Sudan, etc., these things aren't the driving force behind the book or used as filler. They are topics that are setting the table for British involvement and for the battles to come. The author does a very good job of describing not only the players, but the complex political situation during this period of English history.



The Hicks and Baker expeditions are described in more detail than usually seen, but again, they are merely setting the stage for the next act. With the Egyptian presence in the Sudan collapsing and there being few options, Gordon and Graham are finally brought into action. Graham's expedition, which begins with

British troops disembarking to protect Suakin is where you begin to see that this book is not like many others that you may have read on the Sudan.

For one thing, the author does a good job of describing the terrain and the logistical difficulties of managing a campaign in one of the most desolate places on the planet. When Graham marches out of Suakin to engage enemy forces, you feel that you are along for the journey. The strategies, troop deployments, etc., are all described in more detail than I've seen in many colonial books.

This leads to the first two battles, which were El Teb and Tamai. They are blow by blow accounts from the first exchange of rifle fire between skirmishers of both sides to the climax where British coolness under the most dire circumstances saves Graham's army. There are many individual actions that are noted and the battles contain much more information than I have seen elsewhere, making each battle a fascinating part of the book.

Although Graham prevails, in the end he really does change the situation at all, which is clearly explained by the author, leading the government to send for Gordon. Gordon naturally moves to Khartoum where he is quickly surrounded. The book then focuses on the River and Desert columns sent to save Gordon as well as the situation inside of Khartoum itself. Most of the action now revolves around the Desert column, from its creation to the actual march to the Nile.

Again, the author does a wonderful job of describing those in command, the strategies, the issues with moving this force on camels, and the battles that would need to be fought. Each step of the Desert column is retraced, from their initial meanderings back and forth to start the campaign, to the final attempt to reach Gordon in Khartoum. For myself this was the most fascinating part of the book. Although Graham's expedition was interesting, you knew that they were going out to find the enemy and fight them. With the Desert column, it was more of a bold strategic move, exploration,

and special forces operation all rolled into one.

The battles, the final run to Khartoum in steamers, and then Wilson's escape are all vividly described in the book. The situation in Khartoum is not forgotten wither, with the author going through all of the various endings to Gordon's life from several sources. There is also a very good post campaign analysis here that shows the opportunities, failures, and what could have been.



The book then switches to Kitchener and the final operations to retake the Sudan around 13 years later. The planning for the campaign, the first fights of the reorganized Egyptian army, and the changed situation both in Egypt and the Sudan set the reader up for the final act. The building of the railroad, the issues with the Dervish army, Kitchener, and the allocation of British forces are all put into place. Finally, the British and Egyptian forces advance to Omdurman, face their old foe, and prevail in one of the largest battles of the era.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough. In fact, if you are new to the Sudan period, start here and then work through other books (although *Fire & Sword in the Sudan* is still a personal favorite). The details in the battles and the operations are fascinating, which gave me a new perspective on many of things that I "thought" I had known about this campaign. The illustrations and images are also not the standard fare and my only complaint is that the book needed more well done maps, which were sadly lacking. Overall, there's not much to complain about here and this is a book that you should definitely own.

We've played Ronin a few times, so it didn't take long to set up and explain the scenario. Ronin is great for those evenings where you need to come up with a game and fit it into a shorter time slot, which was great as we had only about 2 1/2 hours before the store that we were playing at closed! I had actually planned to finally do a mounted attack, but events conspired against me, so we went with this scenario.

Basically, four groups were descending upon an already suspecting village. The village was home to a samurai and seven ashigaru, who were set up to defend the two main approaches. This group was essentially a "fifth player", but since there were only four of us we rolled dice for their actions and discussed their best possible moves, which worked surprisingly well!

The first group (black) was after some rumored treasure in the village. This group consisted of one ronin, an ashigaru leader, and six ashigaru. Their task was to search all of the buildings until they found the treasure chest. Before the game the various buildings were numbered, then a D6 was rolled and hidden, which indicated which building had the treasure.

The second group (purple) consisted of five ronin, all of who had a variety of skills and composed a powerful, but small force. They were here simply for revenge, needing to take the samurai's head back as proof that they had completed their mission. Like many of the other groups involved, they needed to get their prize off the board to fulfill their victory



conditions.

The third group (blue), consisting of one ronin, one ashigaru leader, and six ashigaru were bent on anarchy, wanting to burn down the village for some past transgression. They needed to move to each building, roll 1D6 for how many turns it took to get the fire going, then move on to the next building.

The fourth and final group (yellow) were after the samurai's head for the bounty. As with several of the other groups they had a ronin leading the group, a leader for the ashigaru, and then several ashigaru. This group was trying for a quick entry into the village, defeat the samurai, then get back off as quickly as possible.

For those who have never played Ronin before, the first thing you do each turn is determine who has priority. That player then chooses who goes first in movement, shooting, and combat. This can be critical in certain circumstances, particularly when melees start springing up all over the board! This is followed by movement, where each model can either move six inches or run nine, although with certain restrictions if you choose to run. At the end of the movement phase there is a shooting phase if any models are armed with bows. Then comes the combat phase, which involves close combat/

melee, followed by an actions phase where bow can shoot again or teppos (arquebus) can then shoot. The sequence of play is very straightforward and goes by quickly with few, if any problems.

All of the groups marched onto the board from the corners and headed directly for the village. There were a few archery attempts, but at the opening ranges it was difficult to hit anything. All of the groups began to move closer to the village and the arch-

ers began to find their mark, inflicting several light wounds. Ronin uses a process where models can be stunned, suffer a light wound, a grievous wound, or death. Stunned results can pile up on a model, but can be removed at the end of the action phase with a successful die roll. Two light wounds is the same as a grievous wound, while a grievous wound plus any other wound is death. The type of wound depends upon the difference of the attack vs. defense die rolls.



Start of the fourth turn, with all of the various groups now engaged or trying to get to the center of the village. The L denotes the leader of the group.





The first group was now crossing the bridge and getting closer to the center with the second group moving through the samurai's house. The third and fourth groups both ran into the samurai's ashigaru guards and close combat started. Each model is rated for their CP factor, which is the number of "stones" that they get each round. Players choose how many attack or defense stones they want to use. When an attack stone is set out, that model can attack another model while if a defense stone is set out the defense value goes up from 1D6 to 2D6. Once each model is out of stones the combat for that round is over. Certainly a unique system, but one that not only works, but involves a lot of strategy.

Now things began to happen quickly.

Everyone who could attack someone did and soon several melees broke out across the board. The yellow group actually got to the samurai in the center first, but were themselves pushed back by the purple group with the highly skilled ronin. Black, despite taking several casualties, started searching houses and found the treasure quickly! They proceeded to beat a hasty retreat off board, having achieved their victory conditions.

Blue had set fire to one building, but were tied down by two of red's ashigaru. This became the "Battle of the Stunned", with both sides achieving nothing but stunned results! We joked that everyone was using the wrong end of their spears! Yellow was heavily engaged, taking casualties, but dealing out some punishment

of their own. They tried to get back into contention for the samurai's head, but could not overcome the highly skilled group of ronin in the center that did eventually take the head, then quickly moved off.

Overall, black and purple achieved their victory conditions while blue was getting there and yellow, despite defeating several enemy soldiers, was left with nothing. It would be interesting to try this game with some mounted figures, more missile weapons, and different skill sets. In the interest of time I had filled out all of the unit rosters, but in the future it would be nice to have everyone choose their own figures and skills. A very fun, fast moving game that showed off the system nicely.



Revenge of the Saracens!

WMA Battle Report

We've added a few more units to our Crusader and Saracen armies, plus we had a new desert mat to try out, so it seemed like an opportune time to have a Warmaster Medieval game. As has been mentioned a million times before, WMA and WMM is one of our favorite game systems. The game plays fast, is a lot of fun, easy to teach, and it looks like an ancients battle.

The Crusaders this time had a few more units of foot troops than in our previous battles, including some dismounted knights which were going to be tough in any fight. They had several units of mounted knights, which were the real striking power of their army. The Crusaders deployed with the knights on the flanks backed by lighter cavalry, then heavy infantry including the dismounted knights in the center. The force was screened by several units of crossbowman. There was a break point of 12, with 24 actual units.

The Saracens this time, were going to go with a heavy cavalry assault as they now had six units instead of the four units available in previous battles. There were plenty of light cavalry units to go around, plus the usual masses of infantry. The Saracens had few archer units, but they



were arrayed across the front of the infantry in the center of the formation. The Saracens also had a break point of 12, but had 30 actual units, so it was a quite large force.

The Crusaders obviously were going to try to win on the strength of their

knights charging and destroying any opposition on the flanks, then mop up in the center where hopefully, their higher quality units would defeat the masses of Arab infantry opposite them. The Saracens were hoping to hold their own against the knights, then try to swamp the center with their larger force, relying upon attrition to take its toll on the Crusaders.

The game started off slowly, with both sides only being able to move part of their overall force. In fact, this would quickly become a trend as the command rolls of both sides were going to be having a bad night! By the end of the second turn both sides had most of their cavalry deployed out on the flanks while the infantry forces lagged behind. The plans of both sides were clearly being frustrated by the slow deployment of their forces, but with enemy in range of several charges it was time for the festivities to begin.

The heavy and light cavalry of both sides got into several large melees on both flanks. On the Saracen left they held their own, destroying two units of knights for the loss of three Saracen units, which was a good trade for the Saracens. On the right the Crusaders fared better, and after several attacks and counterattacks they were (cont. on p25)



Revenge of the Saracens! (cont.)

WMA Battle Report



(cont. from p 24) in control of that flank. However, their command rolls prevented any further follow up attacks for two turns, giving the Saracens a chance to shore up that flank. When the Crusaders finally got things coordinated on that side it was too late and they were thrown back with heavy losses.

After five turns the cavalry forces of both sides were hurting badly, but the losses had been about even and in fact the Crusaders were in a good position to let the Saracens come to them, which in the end they decided to do anyway. The Saracens were trailing by a few units in the break point race, so after a quick consultation it was decided to push things in the center and see if the advantage in numbers of infantry would work out.

The Saracens got their infantry brigades reorganized and went in, smashing into the more heavily armored Crusader infantry. By this time the flanks had worn themselves out, so the game would be decided here in the center. For the first turn both sides exchanged blows, with more units added to both sides' break points.

Then, the Saracens started rolling their saves. On one turn alone the Saracen infantry saved something in the neighborhood of 15 out of 20 hits and scored close to 75% hits on their attacks. The losses were devastating to the Crusaders, who saw their lines pushed back across the entire center of the board. A few reserves went in to stem the tide, but they too were chewed up badly. The final Saracen push

saw them eliminate three Crusader infantry units in the final turn, pushing the Crusaders over their break point and seeing the game end as a Saracen victory.

A great game and very unlike most of our WMA/WMM games. Usually units are running to and fro, cavalry battles can rage deep behind enemy lines, and it's a real dogfight with no real organization. For this battle, however, everything pretty much stayed in lines, reserves sealed off any penetration of the front, and supports were well coordinated. It almost looked as if we knew what we were doing! Overall, it was a fun game that was decided in the last moment. It's also a lot of fun to have some pretty good sized armies on the board with lots and lots of units!



Interview with Dave Baker of Trenchworx

One of the more successful wargaming Kickstarter projects lately has been the Tanks of WWI from a new gaming company called Trenchworx. With all of the interest regarding 3D printing and how it fits into wargaming, I thought that it might be interesting to talk to someone who not only works with this technology commercially on a day to day basis, but is now using it for the hobby. It also helps that Dave is a member of our local gaming group and I've personally been over to his work-shop/offices to see some of the incredible things that they're doing in this area. Hopefully other gamers will find this as informative and interesting as I have.

board. At the end of the game, they recovered their 'wounded' models and rolled up different effects and skills for each model based on actions performed in the game. One soldier got bionic legs, one lost an eye and another a fancy new web pistol. I later found out they were playing a squad level mission for a skirmish game called Rogue Trader. I was hooked.

2. What are your gaming interests and favorite periods to play?



28mm and 6mm MkV 3D prototypes.

then and there is something about all those sepia photographs that leaves a bit of mystery yet to be explored.

3. What's the main idea behind Trenchworx?

The original goal behind Trenchworx was to quickly create cool models that don't exist using our 3D printers. As we got into it, we found that some of the models actually had more demand than we suspected, so we started down the road of resin casting with our WWI Kickstarter. We intend to apply our 'quickly create' strategy to the resin casting as well to get the models to market faster. We plan to source all of our manufacturing locally in the US and avoid the longer lead times and larger inventories often associated with off-shoring. We may pay more for labor, but we will keep our cost low through solid Lean Manufacturing practices. Another aspect of Trenchworx is that we will do periods prior to



A mix of the resin and printed models for World War One gaming that are available through Trenchworx.

1. How did you get into wargaming?

I discovered wargaming back in the mid 80s in Auburn, Alabama. I had just turned 16 and got my drivers license when I stopped by a FLGS named Hobby Hall. I remember walking into the back room and seeing a bunch of people with all these 'buildings' laid out on a big ping pong table. The buildings were actually the styrofoam packaging inserts that show up in TV and other electronics boxes. Each person had about 10 figures they were pushing around the table working their way to the other side of the

in the small scales, when painted well, really appeals to me. My son is turning 8 this month, so we are painting and playing the usual GW games, Star Wars and some other board games. Being a mechanical engineer, I also find the turn-of-century periods (1900, not 2000!) fun to play and research. There were a lot of great inventions

The last few years I have been playing a lot of smaller scale games in 15mm, 10mm and even 6mm as well as some skirmish/RPGs. I enjoy playing games where the board 'looks' like a map of a large area. The amount of detail



Schneider CA1 - 3D test prints - From Right to Left - 28mm, HO Scale, 15mm, 10mm and 6mm

Interview with Dave Baker of Trenchworx (cont.)

1950 and after 2150. We intend to avoid periods and projects that are associated with current conflict.

4. *Why did you choose to start with the WW1 period?*

We chose WWI because the tanks look cool! We have an awesome 3D modeler on the team who has a passion for the machines of World War 1, 2 and the years in between. The flat surfaces and high detail level (bazillions of rivets) also worked well with our 3D printers. Another bonus was that there is not a huge selection of models for the period. More and more people are doing lots of steam punk and pulp games and we felt they could benefit from the models. We were also a bit cautious of doing the more popular WW2 because there are so many manufacturers out there making great models and it would be hard for us to differentiate Trenchworx from those companies.

28mm BT-42



5. *How do you think 3D printing technology will change the hobby?*

I think 3D printing will be great for the hobby. I believe one of the big advantages is scaling. When we make a model, we plan to market it for 6mm, 10mm, 15mm, 20mm, 28mm, 40mm and everything in between. We design a fantastically detailed model first then adjust a scaling value and almost instantly have a newly sized model. There's a lot of meat and potatoes behind that statement, but I think that is

where 3D printing will make the most headway... Variable Scales.

As awesome as 3D printing is, there are still a few drawbacks. As a company gets into 3D printing, they find the medium is a constant progression and printing can get expensive fast. First you just want to print something, then you need a bigger envelope, next more throughput and finally finer resolution. Let's not forget about printing in stainless steel or titanium either! The desktop models are awesome in just being able to build something you create, but as you get

further along and if you are model making, you will almost always want the finer resolution. Machines that print in the desirable 0.0005" layers can run upwards of \$50,000 to \$500,000 and then you have the cost of the materials of around \$5-40 per cubic inch depending on type.

I've seen a lot of people on various forums make comments such as 'it is too expensive or it isn't quite there yet.' Those statements are somewhat true. It takes a lot of experimentation to get the print job to do what you want it to do. We have the luxury of owning several 3D printers for our other businesses and learn, not just from printing our Trenchworx models, but from printing entire machines for manufacturing plants. Since we are learning everyday, we can do a lot of trial runs others can't. If you are going to get into 3D printing, be prepared to spend some time and money learning.

6. *Your initial Kickstarter program was overwhelmingly successful. Can you describe your Kickstarter experience? Would you use it again?*

The Tanks of WWI Kickstarter has been a very fun experience. It isn't over just yet since we are still building and shipping product from our first



28mm Resin A7V. Trenchworx is working on several types of WW1 tanks using the 3D printing process to create models in multiple scales. They are also trying to come up with innovative ideas to help gamers, such as creating magnetic parts for the British 'male' and 'female' variants of tanks that can be changed out where necessary.

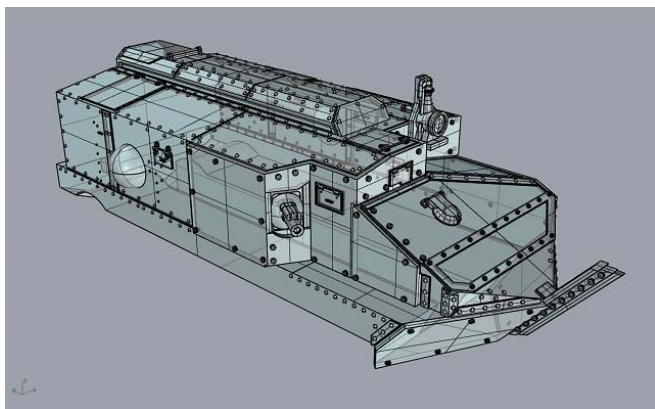
Interview with Dave Baker of Trenchworx (cont.)



Trenchworx has also been working on 3D parts for various other models such as this 28mm Sherman calliope turret.

one. The support we received from the contributors has been amazing. That alone is motivation to launch additional Kickstarters. I think the Kickstarter has gained us a very loyal following. We will definitely use it again.

7. *So many hobby businesses get started and fail. With your experience in both non-hobby and hobby businesses, what do you think the main contributing factors are to this?*



Trenchworx is only a year old; hopefully, we will continue to execute our business model well and we won't crash and burn anytime soon! We do have the luxury of being a spin-off of our successful engineering and 3D printing business, Worxsimple, LLC.

Thanks to Worxsimple, we always have the support of some excellent engineers and process specialists when needed. I think this support is what will help us ride the ups and downs of the availability of Trenchworx customer's discretionary income.

As far as what makes a business successful or not depends on so many factors. It is easy to offer opinions on how to run a business, but the principles that have served us well are summed up in just a few points...

Charge a fair price and keep your costs transparent to your customers

- Acquire new technology and figure out how to use it effectively.
- Plan your entire manufacturing system around Lean Manufacturing principles.
- Remain flexible and give your customers what they ask for.
- Hire the smartest, most passionate people you can trust without question.

8. *What's on the drawing board for Trenchworx?*

We have so many ideas, but unfortunately there is only so much time in the day! I think we will continue our work in the 1890 to 1940s periods. We will continue to focus on vehicles and other 'mechanical' contraptions. We will probably do some work with 'organics' but only to compliment our main products. Our resin products and mold making will only get better as we gain experience and it should be fun to watch the next 10 years.



For more information or to order some of the Trenchworx models, visit their site at:

<http://trenchworx.com/>

We thank Dave for taking the time to tell us about his company and their upcoming projects. The models have to be seen to be believed and the ability to produce these in multiple scales will be a huge plus for gamers. I've also seen some remarkable prototypes of various pieces that can be used on existing plastic model kits. Truly, there is no end to the possibilities for the hobby with this new technology and Trenchworx seems to be on the right path.

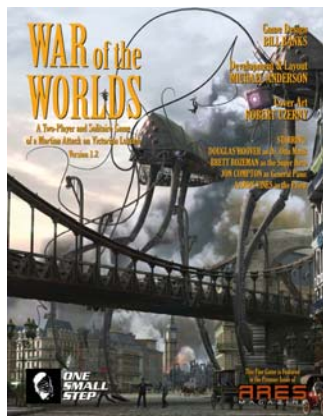
As part of my regular job I supervise a computer lab with multiple 3D printers and there are numerous challenges that few gamers think of. First, finding people who have skills in the 3D modelling arena, followed by choosing the right printers/materials, and then testing/adjusting the various models for printing. Anyone who thinks that they are going to sit down, draw a tank model, then mass produce them is sadly mistaken. There is a lot of trial and error behind the scenes along with a great deal of frustration in making this technology work!



Going back several decades there was a science fiction magazine with a game inside called Ares from SPI. Designed as a Strategy & Tactics for sci-fi and fantasy gamers it put out a small run of games/magazines, some of which are still highly thought of today. While Strategy & Tactics has continued its run to this day and expanded with a WW2 and Modern issue with games inside, Ares went under and was never seen again.

That was until a successful Kickstart program brought it back. The first issue is now available and it is certainly a step up from the older magazine. This issue features a large number of science-fiction short stories along with ads for other sci-fi and fantasy games. Since this isn't the New York Times Book Review, we'll dispense with the magazine side of things and instead focus on the game that comes with the issue, which is War of the Worlds.

The only War of the Worlds game I remember is the old one from Task Force Games back in the early 80s and a few miniatures rules that had scenarios for this type of encounter, so there's not much to compare this to. The components are very nice, featuring a full color 8 page set of rules, map of London, and two sheets of counters cut in hexagons and circles for the various units as well as game markers.



The rules are a very easy read and you can be set up and be playing probably inside of 15-20 minutes. The sequence of play is pretty straightforward, with the Martians moving first in a what is usually a 12 turn game. Each side moves its units, activates units that arrived at the end of the previous turn (which enables them to move/fight next turn), combat, then receives reinforcements. There's not a lot of units on the board, so turns go by pretty fast and you can get a game in under 45 minutes and maybe an hour if you really think over your moves.

Now there are some interesting quirks to this game and it is more of a tongue in cheek look at the Martian invasion based upon the H.G. Wells' version of the story. For example, if the Martian player chooses the missile base there's a chance that one of the missiles could blow up on the pad. The Human player can choose a superhero or hero, there's infernal machines (airships, EMP gun, etc.,), and a heroine that could or could not be an objective.

What makes the game interesting is that the Martian player has to pick one of five objectives, which could be anything from levelling the city to capturing the heroine. The Human player has to ascertain what the Martian objective is and try to organize a defense around it. The game ends either at the end of Turn 12 or when the Martian player accomplishes their objective, meaning that an already short game can be made even shorter.

Each player gets to choose a number of units to start the game with. The Martians get walkers, flying saucers, etc., that arrive one per turn. The Human player gets to pick from champions, artillery, infantry, infernal machines, etc., and then some random units get added to the turn track as reinforcements. Usually the Humans will start with 2-4 units on board with more coming later, but usually no more than 10

will be on the board at any one time.

Adding to the craziness is the combat results table, which I needed to stare at for quite some time to make sure I was getting this right. The Martians can achieve some overwhelming force at times which produces a lot of Human retreats (I guess it's better to fall back than be destroyed!) at the upper end of the table, while suicidal attacks, such as the warship moored along the Thames at 1:6 odds almost always destroys a Martian war machine! Weird, but it works. There is also a one page solitaire rules page which actually works pretty well and is easy to use.

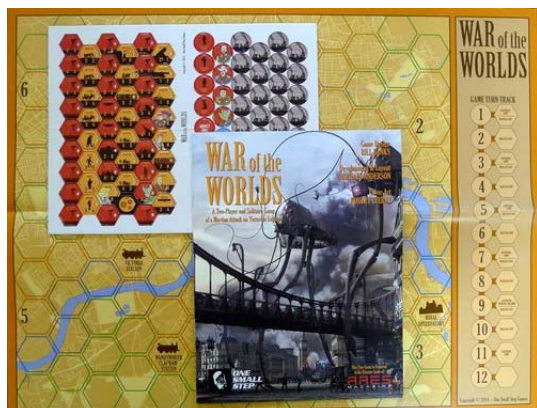
The question is whether or not you should pay \$25-30 for this magazine and game. This is usually the eternal question where magazine games are involved. As

I've stated here many times most of the S&T issues I buy end up being sold as they're not fully developed or play tested. That isn't the case here, but rather the problem of whether or not the game is worth that much.

First off, there's not much in the way of components, even if those that you get aren't bad. The

map could have been more "city like", but it works. My big problem with the game is just that there isn't that many pieces on the board. For example, the Humans get 10 points to spend on initial forces, then they get to randomly choose five army units and one infernal machine to go on the turn track. Not a problem until you realize that they come in on odd numbered turns. If you pick a superhero champion (8 points) and one other unit, that's all you get to move until turn 2! In fact, there probably aren't more than 10 units for both sides on the board by Turn 6, halfway through the game! My personal choice would have been to load up on units for both sides and really slug it out over London, but that's just me.

Overall, good magazine, good components, easy to grasp rules, great theme, but so-so gameplay.





WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play a wide variety of games in 1/300th, 10mm, 15mm, and 25mm, including Age of Reason, Age of Discovery, Age of Eagles, Fire & Fury, General de Brigade, Warmaster Ancients, TSATF, Phantoms, Mustangs, BKC2, and more...

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As long as I've been in the hobby there's always been expensive gaming items. Whether it was the giant sci-fi warships put out by Superior Models back in the early 80s or the bigger boxed games of that era, there have always been items that you wanted to get into, but couldn't afford. This is why I find it so fascinating when I go into stores or shop online now and see how much the sci-fi/fantasy miniatures go for nowadays. You basically need to take out a second mortgage on your house to get enough stuff to do a four player game of Warhammer Fantasy or Dropzone Commander. This is also why I've always considered historical miniatures gaming such a great deal. Sure, there's some expensive miniature lines for historicals as well, but nowhere near what most fantasy and sci-fi lines are charging.

This leads to my next point, which is something I've been waiting for a long, long time. That is the day when sci-fi and fantasy miniatures gamers finally start questioning why they're paying so much for their stuff and maybe they should get into historical gaming. I've seen a few threads about this pop up recently and it is certainly encouraging. That you can get an entire army for basically what you pay for two units of sci-fi or fantasy seems to be sinking in, although slowly. I don't expect any major changes in the hobby immediately, but I think there will be a shift at some point in the near future.

Tank Battle: East Front 1945

I have long been a fan of the Panzer General series of games and have been searching for a worthy successor for quite some time. I blundered onto a game for the iPhone and iPad called Tank Battle well over a year ago from a company called Hunted Cow studios. The game was a hex based, turn driven WW2 operational level battle where you could play a scenario in 15-20 minutes or less. The game also uses unit strength, which is very similar to Panzer General.

You could also purchase additional



modules that had anywhere from 6-12 extra scenarios in them. The scenarios ranged from the very good to some silly premises, but most, particularly if they were on the hardest setting, were pretty challenging.

I then found out that they have a new series called Tank Battle: East Front, with the modules broken up into the various years. I purchased the 1945 game and immediately opened it up, which had a number of surprises. First, the summary for each scenario at least tries to be historical, detailing the operations for that particular time period. Maybe not the most accurate, but at least it is an attempt. Second, the graphics have gone up a notch, especially the graphics for the mortars, nebelwerfers, and Stalin's organs attacks. Not only that, most tanks can now move and fire, which adds greatly to the feeling of the battle.

This module included eight scenarios, but you can play as the Russian or the

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Germans, plus there is a campaign as well. The scenarios are challenging and I failed several of them the first time through.



I'll probably add a few more modules and give those a try as the games are relatively cheap. While not on the same level of Panzer General due to the limitations of the platform, I find them to be good games in their own right. The company also makes other games that look to use the same type of game engine that range from Ancients to ACW and beyond. Overall, a good value for the money and worth your time.

