

Warning Order

ISSUE #39

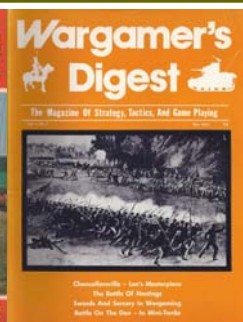
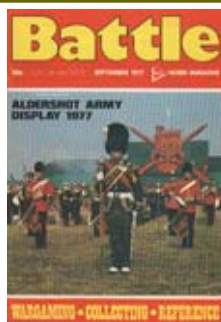
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TWO BKC2 BATTLES
RONIN BATTLE REPORT



Warning Order

When you think of what could be regarded as one of the prevailing pillars in our hobby that one thing would have to be gaming magazines. They have existed since the beginning of the hobby, from the Don Featherstone War Game Digest and Jack Scruby's Table Top Talk editions when the hobby was first starting out, to the glossy enterprises that we have today. While they were relevant in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and even 90s, there seems to be more discussion on whether or not they are needed in this day and age, particularly with all of the other avenues of information that are available.

The first magazines were naturally pretty crude by today's standards, but they made up for that with passion and ideas about the hobby. The next iterations would be magazines such as Battle and Wargamer's Digest, who started to take the hobby into a more professional route. Here you had reviews, scenarios, modeling tips, and ads for gaming products. Even magazines such as Military Modeling got

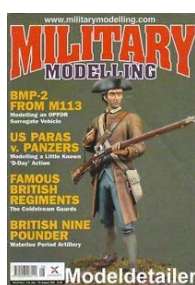
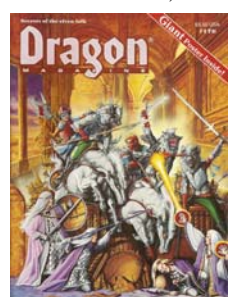
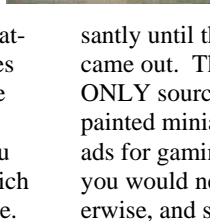


also had magazines like the Dragon and the Space Gamer, which although they were primarily for sci-fi and

fantasy, did have a lot of articles that most gamers were interested in. You have to remember that back in this era you were excited for any gaming information!

These early magazines were the life blood of the hobby and were bought, read, and discussed incessantly until the next issue came out. They were also the ONLY source for pictures of painted miniatures, they had ads for gaming products that you would never hear of otherwise, and served to bind gamers together in the hobby. However, they were about to take a big leap where the consequences are still felt even today. (cont. on p3)

Of course you



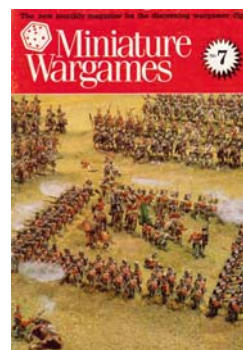
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Special points of interest:

- Gaming Operation Sea Lion
- AOE, BKC 2, and Ronin battle reports
- How to: Creating the Melee Redesign
- 7th annual WMA Tournament report
- Several board game reviews and the usual features.

(cont. from p2) Two magazines came along that changed how gamers viewed these types of publications. They were Miniature War-games and White Dwarf. You couldn't get two more diverse titles, with one being solely about historical wargaming and the other about sci-fi/fantasy games. What they did have, however, were glossy,, slick presentations with dozens of beautiful images. Suddenly, gamers expected this of their magazines, which caused these two to surge to new heights while the established veterans began to fade away.



These two magazines had an effect that continues today. First, everything from this point on had to have beautiful images of painted figures. Second, articles became secondary to the eye candy and although they were and are still present, they pale in comparison to the almost academic versions published in the early gaming magazines. Third, they could be used to push product and although this did not happen for many years, both White Dwarf and now Wargames Illustrated have almost become catalogs masquerading as magazines.

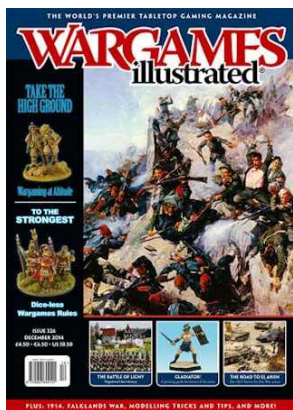
Miniature Wargames did morph into Wargames Illustrated and while others have come up to challenge it over the last decade, it is in a class by itself. It has also created the aspect of you either love it or hate it as there doesn't seem to be much in between. But at this point we have to ask the question, "Are wargames magazines even needed anymore?"

For a long, long time they were a source for scenarios, contacts for gamers, reviews of products that you never even

knew where out, and articles about long lost battles and campaigns. The newer magazines have pages and pages of beautiful pictures of figures, arrayed in all of their glory on terrain boards that few gamers can even dream of having. But can't you just get this stuff on various sites on the Internet?

The answer is yes you can. The amount of blogs, web sites, company pages, etc., means that everything you needed from magazines is now at your fingertips. Do you really need another poorly or average written article on how to game Gettysburg when there's 1,000 Google links to better material? Do you need to know that Company A has out a new product or did you already see it on their web site weeks or even months before the ad in the magazine reached its readers?

This is the debate that is currently before us now. On one hand wargame magazines seem to act as a barometer for the hobby. When there are numerous magazines out there filled to the brims with ads and jaw dropping projects presented in glossy color it has the effect of making gamers think that the hobby is on a trajectory to the stars. When there are few or several cease publication it becomes a warning sign that the hobby could be in trouble.



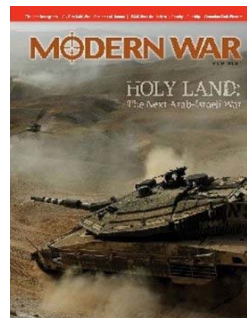
However, the truth is probably somewhere in between. The hobby, for all of its outward appearances, probably isn't big enough to support several glossy magazines. There simply aren't enough writers, clubs, companies, ads, etc., to provide enough material for a *quality* magazine. I stress the word quality as most of the articles in hobby magazines are pretty much regurgitated from online resources and represent little original thinking. The days of looking for some originality and ideas that could be used for your games are pretty much gone. We all need to face it that you're getting these magazines to look at finely presented games.

Now there's nothing wrong with that, but why are you paying for it? With the amount of blogs, websites, dealer sites, forums, etc., there are enough pictures of finely detailed miniatures, scenery, and more to last a lifetime. The same needs to be said for board wargaming magazines such as Modern War, which grew out of the S&T family. Why pay \$30-50 (depending upon issue) for what usually amounts to underdeveloped and quickly play-tested games that you wind up playing maybe once

before consigning them to the game pile or Ebay.

My only answer is that a) gamers have disposable income, b) force of habit, and c) gamers crave games. Add all of these up and the result is that there is enough money coming in to keep these items going. There is also the option of free choice and many gamers choose to buy each and every issue that comes out, no matter how good or bad that they are. I know several gamers who buy just about each and every issue of certain magazines, glance through them once, then throw them on a pile of other magazines! Why?

Well,, that's a good question and I'm not sure what the answer is. For now gamers continue to support the few magazines that are out there, but for how much longer? The old guard in gaming is passing away and if they're like me who hasn't bought a miniatures gaming magazine in almost five years, these publications could be in trouble. However, there must be some interest as the rebirth of the old SPI sci-fi magazine with a game in it, Ares, just came out and we'll have to follow its progress to see if gamers really want another gaming magazine or not to add to their ever growing piles.

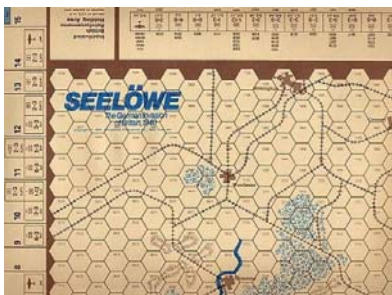


Operation Sea Lion: Gaming One of the Great What Ifs

Definitely one of the greatest “what ifs” of WW2 must be the planned for, but never attempted German invasion of England. Called Seelowe, or Operation Sea Lion, this would have radically changed the course of the war, one way or the other. In the end, the British won the air war during The Battle of Britain and the rest as they say, is history.



While there are numerous games about the air war, ranging from *The Burning Blue* and *The Battle of Britain* which cover vast air raids all the way to solitaire games such as *RAF* and *London's Burning*, there are very few invasion games. Although many grand strategic games such as *Third Reich*, *The Supreme Commander*, *World at Flames*, and more give you the chance to do this during games, there are very few specific games on the topic itself.



My own view is that there are several things working against getting out a game on this subject. The first and most obvious is that it never happened, so it's hard to drum up interest. The second is that the air war was certainly more interesting, compelling, and easier to bring about as a game. The third thing is that finding our orders of battle for both sides is tough as no one knows what would have truly happened. Would the Italians have been involved? Would England call home all of its Commonwealth troops? All of these things combine to make a game on the invasion tough to pull off.

However, there are a few and this article will go over the ones I've at least seen and played. Then we'll discuss how you can use miniatures to simulate the various aspects of the invasion. I'm leaving the air battle side of things out of this as there are plenty of those types of games out there and invari-



ably they have little to do with the invasion itself.

Seelowe

One of the older SPI games and as far as I know the first board wargame on the topic. Printed in the standard blue, brown, and grey colors of the early SPI area, the game covers most of England with the possible invasion sites clearly defined. The game uses what are by now pretty standard wargame systems for movement, combat, etc., so it's pretty easy to get into for most gamers. The game play isn't bad, but there's not much compelling about it either. Overall, it's not a bad game and worth the 2-3 hours it takes to play.

What the game does do a good job of is having three types of invasion plans. The first, which would have been in July, is a sort of having the Germans go directly across the Channel

after conquering France. The second would have been in August, right after the RAF is defeated and forced to move back from the coast. Finally, there is the September, or the plan where everything is ready to finally go. All of the plans have their pros and cons, but they also show how hard it would have been to not only get German forces ashore, but keep them supplied.

Their Finest Hour

As part of GDW's Europa system you get the typically bland map and a lot of counters, particularly air units. Europa is in many ways similar to Seelowe in that it is pretty standardized wargame fare.

Although the Europa series still has a devoted following, this is one of the less well thought of games in the series. The reason? The unending focus on the air warfare part



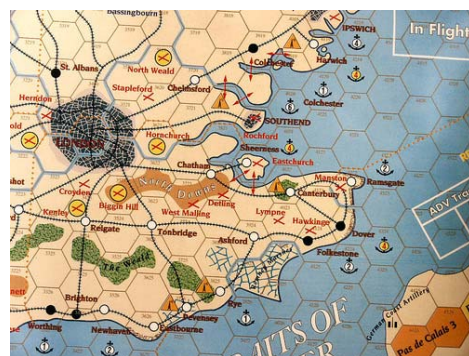
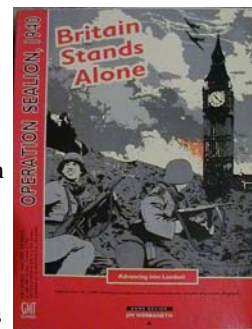
of the equation.

In fact, this is what ultimately makes this a hard game to either love or figure out if the invasion would have actually worked. The air system simply overwhelms everything else that you're trying to do on both sides and in many views it skews the ground warfare results. The Europa ground system is fairly predictable, but the air and naval system within

the games have never been the strong points, which is unfortunate because they take center stage here.

Britain Stands Alone

Next up is GMT's Britain Stands Alone, which takes a much different look at a possible German invasion. Not only are the maps and counters light years ahead of the previous two games, most of the systems in the game are decidedly different from most wargames.



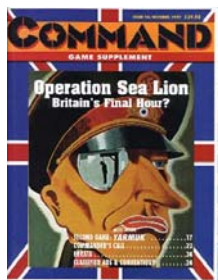
This is a true operational level treatment of Operation Sea Lion that deals with air, naval, and ground combat. In fact, there's almost three games in the box as each of the various components (land, sea, and air) has their own rules. This also makes the game (cont. on p5)

Operation Sea Lion: Gaming One of the Great What Ifs (cont.)

(cont. from p4) probably one of the more complex offerings on the topic. Launching airstrikes, trying to defeat the Royal Navy, organizing the landings, the ground campaign, and logistics are all portrayed in detail, which may or may not be for every gamer.

Operation Sea Lion

This is one of the games from the magazine *Command*, which is very similar to *Strategy & Tactics*. As with most magazine games it is underdeveloped and probably wasn't play tested thoroughly. The game covers only the land portion of the campaign and the map only covers the southeastern part of England. The game system is sort of strange in that the Germans are heavily dependent upon supplies (pretty accurate) and barely move at all during the game. In fact, the game turns into WW1 trench warfare at times.



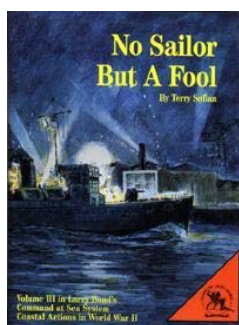
Combat Commander: Sea Lion

This is a scenario pack for the very popular *Combat Commander* tactical games from GMT. There are some interesting skirmish actions including some that feature American intervention!



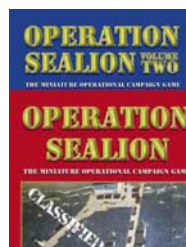
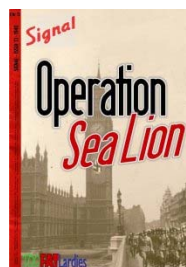
No Sailor But A Fool

While this is a supplement for the *Command at Sea* series from *Clash of Arms Games*, it does contain a section on running a *Sea Lion* amphibious assault action. To say that it is detailed and would take some time would be a mild understatement. Not only are you tracking individual aircraft, ships, coastal guns, etc., but what every transport has in it! Definitely for those who want a lot of detail and have some time to run this type of game.



Miniatures

The only two published items I know about for miniatures are the *Operation Sea Lion* supplement for *I Ain't Been Shot Mum* and there was a two volume set by a publisher who I believe is now defunct. That set of campaign guides was designed for operation level rules such as *Spearhead*, *Kampfgruppe Commander*, etc. There has been a variety of articles in various miniatures magazines over the year and I recall seeing a few skirmish games based on the Home Guard vs. various German units. Also, there were some very inspiring pictures a long, long time ago in either *Miniature Wargames* or *Wargames Illustrated* of some 20mm *Operation Sea Lion* games that included a well done harbor area and an E-boat!



The good thing about miniatures games for *Sea Lion* is that they can be virtually any scale and use any set of rules that has data/charts for the early WW2 period. This means that you can do everything from a platoon skirmish with *Bolt Action* in 25mm to a massive panzer attack with *Blitzkrieg Commander* 2 in 1/285th scale.

But what kinds of scenarios could be set up for *Operation Sea Lion*? Unless you have a lot of time, players, figures, etc., then doing the entire campaign would be difficult, if not altogether impossible. However, smaller, more focused campaigns and scenarios are still a viable option.

A large German airborne drop would have been an integral part of the invasion, so that's a great place to start for scenarios. German airborne and glider forces would have tried to seize a number of bridges, airfields, vital crossroads, and to cut off ports designated for conquest from quickly being reinforced. This opens up a large number of scenario possibilities, from the Home Guard trying to hold a vital bridge to British army units counterattacking Ger-

man airborne forces trying to hold onto a captured airfield.

Although there weren't going to be any *Utah Beach* or *Iwo Jima* type assaults on the English shoreline, there would have been a number of attacks to secure docks and harbor facilities at several coastal locations. Scenarios here could include a vast range of troops, from British auxiliary forces to German units snuck in by E-boats. Engineers would have been prominent in this type of role as would sabotage by British forces.

Once the Germans had been established in England, more conventional type scenarios would then open up. German mechanized forces trying to break out from the beachheads, counterattacks by British armor units that had been scraped together, and a large number of infantry actions would become possible. Both sides would also have plentiful air and artillery support.

For campaigns my suggestion would be to either focus on one part of the invasion or to do a multi-scenario mini-campaign where forces carry over into each scenario. Focusing on one part of the invasion (on a divisional or corps front) would involve giving the German players an airborne force, an air landing force if they seized any airfields, then infantry and mechanized forces. The German side would have to organize the forces into landing waves, seize port facilities, then advance inland. Marking objectives on a map and a timetable would also pressure the German forces into acting much quicker than they normally would in many other types of campaigns. They would be opposed by British regular units, Home Guard, then supported by reinforcements that could possibly include Commonwealth troops recalled to defend England!

After almost 75 years *Operation Sea Lion* remains one of the great "what ifs" of not only history in general, but for wargamers. As this article has shown, there are many ways to play out this fictional campaign, either by board games or miniatures. With a little imagination you can create your own *Sea Lion* campaigns in virtually any scale and with any rules system.

Age of Eagles: Katzbach 1813

Battle Report

After playing several Peninsula battles with Age of Eagles over the last few years, we decided to move back to Central Europe. The scenario that was chosen was Katzbach, which was one of many battles during the exciting 1813 campaign. 1813 is definitely our club's favorite year for Napoleonic battles, probably because of the wide variety of troop types and countries involved.

Just to refresh everyone's memories, Katzbach was fought in the interim between Napoleon's triumph at Dresden,

with a lot of forces crammed into any clear space. You will also notice in some of the images that we forgot the bridges for the first night of battle, which we rectified for the second night!

Once the terrain was set up it was on to getting the forces organized. The Coalition's forces consisted of Prussians and Russians, with a large number of cavalry as well as artillery. The Prussians were closest to the

French lines at the start of the battle and were arrayed in deep columns, supported by cavalry. The Russians were still a bit spread out and it actually took a few game turns for their commander to get things sorted out and the forces into some kind of line of battle. The Russian command structure was puzzling to say the least and it took us awhile to figure out who was in command of what!

The French had similar numbers of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, but had one serious problem which occurred in the actual battle as well. The French positions were split by the terrain, so effectively you had two French forces that could not support each other. Moving troops back and forth through the meandering obstacles would have taken quite some time. There were additional French forces arriving about halfway through the game and it was thought that those would bolster whichever side of the battlefield was in trouble at that moment. The other note that didn't help the



French any were that the roads in this area only provided access to cross through the terrain and there was no road bonus for movement.

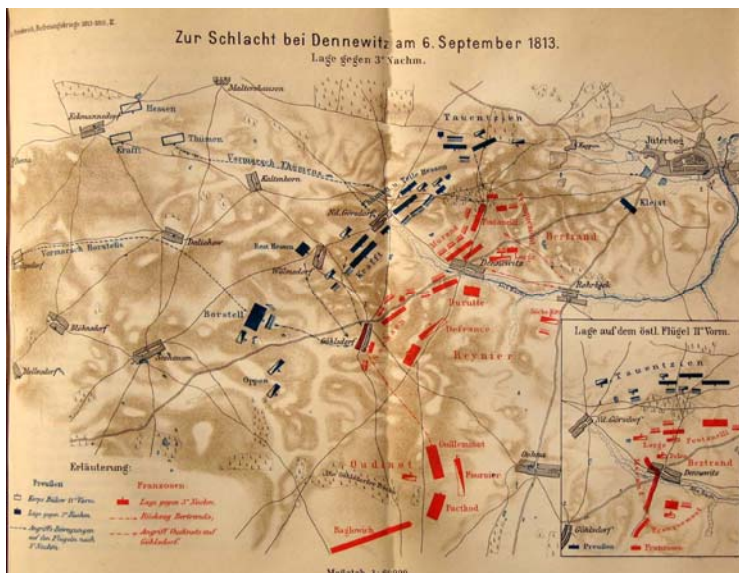
Finally, everything was set up and ready to go. Our next biggest concern was that we had created a monster battle and due to circumstances beyond our control, we only had three players! Two played the Coalition forces while the third played the French, which was not going to be easy.

For the Coalition the strategy was easy. Pin the French with the Russians on one flank and smash them with the Prussians. For the French it was to try to hold on until reinforcements could help against the Prussians and possibly attack the Russians to try to draw off forces from the other flank. (cont. on p. 7)

but about six weeks earlier than Leipzig. The battle pitted McDonald against Blucher on a stormy, rain soaked day that saw the French forces driven back with heavy losses.

When choosing to do one of the historical battles from the rules or the first AOE scenario book, especially those in Central Europe, the first thing you notice besides the large amount of troops for both sides is that there are a lot of forces in a very small area! This is definitely something that gamers are not used to and you rarely see many club games where unit upon unit is packed into tight spaces. The next thing is wondering if you have enough terrain or figures to pull this off!

The terrain for this battle is particularly nasty. The battlefield was crisscrossed with several rivers and streams, many of which could only be crossed at certain locations. There were also several small villages, areas of forest, and altogether it made for a very constricted battlefield





(cont. from p. 6) The first turn began like all of the following turns would, which was with the Prussians and Russians having the initiative. This would ultimately prove to have dire consequences for the French by the end of the game. The Prussians reorganized their forces slightly and then began to open up lanes for the following turn's assault. The Russians spent the first turn as well organizing, moving commands up to the ridge overlooking the French positions, and trying to figure out what the French were going to do.

The French for their first turn tried to shore up the front line, really not knowing what was coming at them or the quality of the enemy forces. The reserve artillery began to move up to support both sides, but the road situation made this a

painfully slow process. On the French right there was no good solution. Either sit there and let the Russians come to them, or cross the stream with no momentum and get picked apart by the waiting Russians.

The second turn opened with a Prussian attack that steamrolled the French front line formations. The French fell back and only bad breakthrough die rolls prevented a French disaster. The French rallied a few units and moved up some of the reserves, but the rain was hurting musket fire and giving the Prussians the melee advantage. The Prussian, Russian, and French cavalry on that side of the battle engaged in several charges and countercharges.

The third turn opened much the same

way as the second, with the Prussians continuing the attack and ripping gaping holes in the French lines. The French cavalry were forced back as well plus a battery was overrun. French casualties were piling up after some fairly bloody hand to hand combat. While the French line had bent, it had not been entirely broken up to this point. The French continued to try to re-establish the front line and even moved back to shorten the gap between villages where the Prussian columns might have difficulty in breaking through. The Russians and the French began an artillery duel that started knocking off a few stands here and there. The Russian position looked menacing and they decided to attack the French.

By turn 4 things were (cont. on p. 8)





It was at this time that the French reinforcements began to arrive. We did a calculation and determined that it wouldn't be until almost the end of the game before they were even in position to help! At this point we decided to call the game as it was an obvious Russian/Prussian victory, much like the real thing.

There were several things that were interesting about this battle and the scenario as a whole. First, the terrain and the rain makes the situation almost impossible for the French. Second, sometimes scenarios that were lopsided victories in history will also be the same way when gamed! Yes, that means that you are spending a lot of time to set up and play something only to see one side or the other get slaughtered. Also, the French failure to get initiative really hurt as the French need every break that they can get.

Finally, while it was a beautiful looking game with a lot of stuff on the board and fun to play, these types of games need 6-8 players and a full day for set up, play, then take down. We were a bit overambitious and this definitely showed us what to do next time for a big game.

(cont. from p.7) not looking good for the French, although they did throw back the Russian attack. The Prussians once again stormed forward, this time overrunning two French brigades and just about ending the game. Another near death experience for the French occurred when a Russian cavalry unit got around the flank, defeated the French cavalry and almost caved in the French line before order was restored.

Now the failing to gain initiative issue really began to rear its ugly head. What the French desperately needed was a turn where they went second and then first the following turn. This would have allowed an organized withdrawal to new positions, rally some of the defeated brigades, then hang on until fresh troops arrived on Turn 6. None of that happened. The Prussians launched fresh attacks that whittled down the French brigades even more.

The French decided to cross the stream in forces and attack the Russians in an effort to draw off the Coalition reserves and hopefully restore some balance to the one-sided contest. The first French attacks went well and the Russian counterattacks were pushed back. For a turn or two it looked as if the strategy

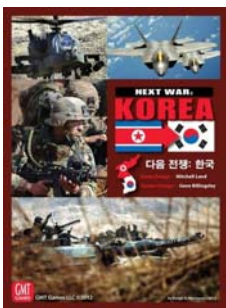
was working and that things might even up after all. However, the remaining French forces had problems crossing the stream, Russian artillery and counterattacks isolated the French brigades who had advanced, and in the end the French were pushed back to their start lines.



When the NATO vs. Warsaw Pact gaming phase in the hobby was at its peak, there were so many games on the subject that it was impossible to play them all. Since that time, however, games on modern warfare have been few and far between. The main reasons seem to be that they are hard to develop because of the ever changing hardware and technology, what situations can be created where the U.S. doesn't destroy everything in its path, and is there an audience for this type of game?

GMT's Next War series and designer Mitchell Land is going to test this out. The first game in the series is on Korea with more to come that will cover Taiwan and India vs. Pakistan. The game is one of the more expensive in the GMT line, but you do get a lot for your money in the box.

First off, there are two 22 x 34 maps with large hexes that cover most of the Korean peninsula. You then get several sheets of nicely done counters, a wide variety of charts, tables, reference cards, display, a rulebook, and finally a scenario/playbook. Yes, there's quite a bit in the box and if playing the advanced game you will end up using most of it. Also, there are more charts and tables, plus the latest version of the rules available online provided by the designer.



Next War: Korea is really three games in one. The first, which is the Standard game, is a classic hex & counter offering with concepts that most gamers will be readily familiar with. There are several small scenarios for the Standard game and one that covers the entire war. It is an ideal way to learn the base systems of the game and to determine if you want to go further.

Then you get to the Advanced game, which quickly takes things to a whole new level. Now you add in HQ's, supply depots, special operations forces, detection, and finally the air game. The air game is almost a separate component to the overall game. In fact, the third game included in the box is just the air campaign itself! It is played with one display card and all of the air counters! The Advanced game is basically the entire war, but as in Victory Games' NATO, there are three levels to start out with, which are strategic surprise, tactical surprise, and extended build up. Each of these starting situations determines the force levels and preparation for the campaign for both sides.

The standard game is definitely the easiest to get into and if you've played many wargames, then the 12 or so pages of rules are fairly easy to digest. Movement, ZOCs, combat, etc., are comparable to most wargames, although the sequence of play is very interesting. The side with initiative here is rewarded, with units of that side being able to dictate movement and combat for the turn in an alternating system that looks strange, but works well.

It's not until you get into the advanced game where things rapidly escalate in complexity and then you're basically playing the full campaign which has a lot of units. At this point the turns go much longer, have more spaces on the sequence of play track, and you will spend a lot of time looking up rules. While definitely not for the squeamish, it presents an entirely new aspect on the conflict. Instead of basic air points in the standard game, now you are dealing with strikes, escorts, CAP, and more on top of the ground combat. For some gamers this may be a

step too much, but for those who are into modern combat and/or a bit more complexity, it is rewarding.

There are some nice touches here as well. Clearing operations for cities is a unique concept that should be adapted to other wargames. Tunnels, North Korean sniper brigades, helicopter support, etc., are some of the more interesting ideas that are presented here. While there are many advanced and optional rules, none of them by themselves makes the game more complex. Rather, it is the entire amount of them layered onto the air game and the standard system that gives you a full plate.

If I had any complaint (s) at all it would be the terrain charts needs some work as the hexes on the map and the colors on the chart make it hard to deter-

NORTH KOREAN ARMY				U.S. ARMY			
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1 82044	2 82044	7 82044	7 82044	1 82044	2 82044	7 82044	7 82044
0-2-4	8-6-4	7-5-6	5-4-0	0-2-4	8-6-4	7-5-6	5-4-0
7 82044	7 82044	7 82044	7 82044	7 82044	7 82044	7 82044	7 82044
1 82044	2 82044	7 82044	7 82044	1 82044	2 82044	7 82044	7 82044
2-2-5	0-4-1-5	2-2-4	1-12	2-2-5	0-4-1-5	2-2-4	1-12
CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY				U.S. MARINES			
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SOUTH KOREAN ARMY				JAPANESE ARMY			
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mine what is what. The orders of battle should have come as a separate series of sheets or have been included in the playbook instead of having to download them. Fortunately, there is a web page with updated rules, charts, orders of battle, and more that is a valuable resource. Finally, I think the capabilities of the North Koreans are a bit overrated and in reality, I don't think they're as near as good as portrayed here, but my guess is that it is a play balance issue.

Overall, this is an interesting system and worth your money. Great components, wonderful and unique ideas about modern combat, and there are enough scenarios, campaigns, and force levels to keep a gamer busy for quite some time. The game system, particularly the advanced game, will take some patience and work, but it's worth it. I'm now looking forward to Next War: Taiwan and Next War: India-Pakistan which are both coming soon.

Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 26

Star Trek

Wargaming

As with most gamers my age, there seems to be one common element and that is either all of us like watching Star Trek in its various iterations or have played a game of it somewhere along the line. Combine the two hobbies and you get a weird combination of obsessive compulsive, completest sc-fi loving wargamers!

My experience with gaming in the Star Trek universe began when a fellow gamer brought over his collection of ships and the Star Fleet Battle manual, which was definitely one of the earliest sets of miniatures rules for any period! This game focused solely on the "Classic" Trek ships and was a ton of fun along with a lot of work, which was a hallmark for rules of that era. Although the theme was appealing, after a few games it was enough to have whet the appetite and then it was on to other things.

Then Starfleet Battles from Task Force Games came out and everything changed. All of a sudden you had a lot more ships and races, a new way of fighting battles, and plenty of scenarios. Star Trek gaming, at least in my part of the world, went nuclear. Over the next five years, armed with several supplements, miniatures, magazine articles, etc., hundreds of battles were fought. Not only that, but we did all day slugfests, campaigns, miniatures battles with close to 100 ships, and more. Times were good for Star Trek gaming.

To throw fuel on the fire Start Trek II: The Wrath of Khan came out during this time and things really took off (as if they hadn't already!). This was also the start of the Star Trek FASA license, which added even more items into the Star Trek gaming world. Besides the movie com-

bat games, which were hit and miss, there was a role-playing game. With us playing D&D, Merc, Top Secret, and more, we figured we should get into this game too!

Unfortunately, role-playing in the Star Trek universe wasn't as fun as it seemed at the start. When you have a group of gamers who had seen every classic episode, read every novel, etc., it was tough to come up with settings and adventures. It ended up as being sort of a ho-hum experience that we did a few times. It was certainly nothing to regret, but then again I don't remember anything particularly exciting about it after all these years either. It was definitely a shame as the game was well produced with quality components for the era and it had potential.

So it was back to Starfleet Battles, but then that too was beginning to have run its course. Too many new games, friends moving away or getting on with the real world, and the new version of the rules which made the game almost unplayable, put an end to a glorious run.

In the years that followed as my gaming hobby ebbed and flowed, Star Trek was not a part of it. I still went to all the movies, watched the classic episodes, and even read a few Star trek books. The weird thing is that I did not once have the urge to go search for a Star Trek game. It didn't help that for a long time there really was not much out there as it seemed the entire property had dried up.

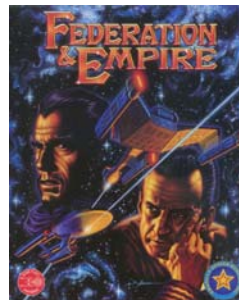
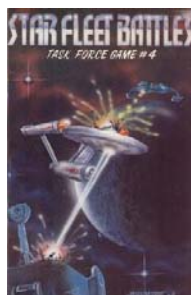
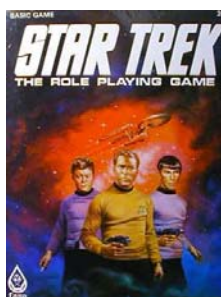
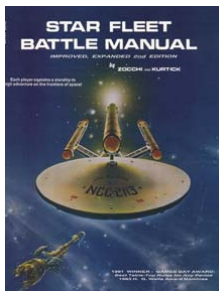
After another decade or so when ADB started to produce Star Trek games again I almost bought a few, then decided not. By this time the question had turned to who would I play them with? This was the complete opposite from the early 80s where we literally had to turn gamers away or the games would be so large as to be completely unplayable.

Still another decade passed and still no Star Trek gaming. Again, I'm not sure what the reason was other than Star Fleet Battles had so burned me out that I wasn't ready to tackle the subject again.. I also think that once you've experienced something really good, whether it's a movie, book series, album, etc., that a second helping can sometimes be too much. Over and over again I kept reading rules about the newer versions of Star Fleet Battles, I looked at the new graphics, etc., but I just couldn't get myself to commit.

Over the last year or so I was tempted yet again to get into Star Trek gaming by the Star Trek: Attack Wing game that is now out. High quality components, slick marketing, and definitely plenty of opponents. However, after reading the rules and having been burned out on similar, "Euro" style wargames such as Wings of War, I took a pass. I'm sure it's a good game, but tactical level Star Trek gaming just doesn't hold the appeal that it used to.

Finally, I blundered upon Federation & Empire after having forgotten that I played in back in the mid 80's. I bought the base game, then madness overtook me and now I have that, nearly all of the supplements, and about 7,000 counters (yes, I clipped them all-but that's a story for another day!). F&E feels more like a strategic wargame and it got me back into Star Trek gaming, so at least for now all is good.

It definitely is hard to go back to something that you liked when time has seemingly passed it by. Those were good times back in the late 70's and early 80's, but you can have too much of a good thing. It took me almost 30 years to come full circle with F&E now and hopefully this game will continue to move forward. Yes, you can always go back, but not in ways that you imagine!



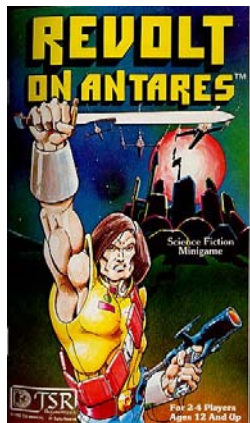
Blast From The past Pt. 25: Revolt on Antares

Back in the 70s and 80s several game companies decided to follow the Metagaming trend of producing microgames.

While no one succeeded as greatly as they did, it also showed that this was a diminishing market as evidenced today where there are no games similar to those microgames of ages past. One of the companies who tried to get in on this (with varying degrees of success) was TSR, who produced a series of microgames. Most of them are conveniently forgotten, but there is one that has become a cult classic; Revolt on Antares.

You didn't get much in the hard plastic container that was definitely an interesting take on a wargame box. There was a small, wildly colored map of the planet Antares, a sheet of just under 100 counters, a D6, and a little rulebook. In terms of components it was at the higher end of most of the microgames of the era, especially with the amount of color used throughout the game. When it was published the components would have been considered to be about average, which by today's standards means they are good enough to warrant a play or two.

The premise was quite simple and one that most sci-fi gamers have seen a time or two. The planet Antares is garrisoned by units of an empire and the various factions want to free the planet. Yes, nothing too unusual here, but then things



get a bit interesting. First, there are various "houses" on the planet, all of whom have their own armies. Then you have the Imperial troops, native forces, and a variety of characters who can intervene in the rebellion. To top it all off there are several items that each player can acquire that would fit into the fantastic weapons category that changes the game even more. Items such as the Devastator, Energy Drainer, Sonic Imploder, etc., certainly add a lot of character to the game.

The leader of each house has their own counter, which represents not only the character but probably (its never quite explained) some sort of household guard. Each character has a special ability such as Simon Fitzgerald who uses ion waves to add +1 to units stacked with him. Part of the fun of the game is to use each character's skills and forces in the overall game plan.

The game starts with the Imperial troops and a house in support of the garrison while several other houses rebel. Despite the unusual map, characters, etc., Revolt on Antares is a pretty standard wargame where each side moves their units across the planet and engages in combat. The combat system is certainly unique and results in the loss of units, which usually return as reinforcements, at least in the early part of the game.

Now where the game gets interesting is when the neutral houses start to pick sides and if either side gets various "neutral" characters. I stress neutral because they are sort of a free agent/mercenary type group who can end up on either side. Characters such as the Iron General who is treated like a laser tank battalion or the Nullspace Kid who is like an airjet squadron. Basically, these are characters who are leading various combat units and it fits remarkably well into the game.

As you can imagine it is a bit chaotic. Units are flying all over the planetary spaces, the front lines suddenly become the rear when

new forces are added to each side, and it's a challenge to get your forces organized to take over the planet. Using the artifacts/special weapons, dealing with enemy abilities, balancing reinforcements, etc., presents quite the puzzle.

There are two things that this game has going for it and why it has earned its cult status. The first is that it is a lot of fun and the second is that it has tremendous replay potential. The game plays fast, things change quickly, there's a number of strategies to employ, and if things go badly you can quickly set it up and try again. Yes, the graphics are dated and the counters are hard to read, but if you can find one of these it is certainly worth the money.



So, what are the chances that this game will ever get reprinted? At this time I'm not sure. While there have been some amazing reprints over the last few years such as Britannia, Republic of Rome, Titan, Merchants of Venus, and Ogre to name a few, I'm

not sure how this fits into the mix. I think with a larger, better designed map and new counters, it could find a new audience. I don't think it would ever be a huge seller, but my guess is that it would at least do as well as most wargames that are coming out today and better as it is closer to a "Euro" game than simulation. Not to mention that it has a great theme! I'm not sure what the copyright status is on this title, but hopefully one day we will see a new version.

Until then, Todd Sanders on BGG has uploaded a new map and counters in a redesign effort. I'm not crazy about the map as it looks too similar to the old one, but the counters are great. He used a 50s sci-fi theme which just screams character and is a huge upgrade on the old counters. It's efforts like these that keep these games going and hopefully more people can try them. So until a new version comes out grab this if you have the opportunity. It a fun, fast moving game that is definitely worth the money and time.



A BKC2 Game to Forget

Scenario Design

As has been mentioned before, Blitzkrieg Commander 2 is one of our favorite games to play and we usually have a pretty good time with it. The rules are pretty easy to digest, the game plays pretty fast, and the command & control system works very well. Well, what follows is how NOT to set up and run a BKC 2 game!

The scenario in question was set in Normandy in early August of 1944. The Germans have front line positions backed by armor plus some local reserves for counterattacks. The British are frustrated at only being able to advance a few hundred yards a day in this sector and are determined to break through. To this end they have assembled a force to break through the front line and exploit the breach with armor, trying to exit forces off the road exits.

The British attacking force consisted of the following:

- 1 battalion of infantry (leg)
- 1 battalion of infantry in halftracks
- 1 battalion of Shermans
- 1 company of Churchills
- 1 company of M3 light tanks

Recon and artillery with one battalion (three batteries of 25lbars) in direct support and one additional battalion firing three scheduled bombardments.

The German defense consisted of one battalion of infantry and one company of PZ IVHs in or near the front lines along with 1 88mm AT battery in support. The reserve force consisted of:

1 company of Panthers

1 company of Stug IIHs

1 company of panzergrenadiers in halftracks with a 75mm AT battery.

The German defenders also had recon assets as well as three batteries of 105mm in support.

Although heavily outnumbered, there were extensive entrenchments blocking the road, forcing the British to either assault the entrenchments, then unleash the armor once they were taken, or try to get through the gaps on the side which would probably be covered by the German armor reserves.

The British pounded the entrenchments with artillery, then began to move up the first infantry battalion while the armor moved to the sides. The Germans reacted by moving up the armor reserves to their blocking positions. The British first attack went in against the entrenchments, but instead of hitting them with all of the battalion's stands, only a few got to the Germans on the second turn with no support. This attack was easily dispatched with.

The M3 company next tried to move around the flank and were counterattacked by the German PZIVHs waiting on that side. In two turns the M3s were all aflame and that side of the attack had faltered. Action now shifted again to the center where poor British command rolls meant that the Churchills, the remaining British infantry, and some Shermans in support barely moved the first three turns. On the British right the mixed task force consisting of a squadron of Shermans and the mech infantry battalion began to move towards the gap in between some forests. This appeared to be the last hope of the British attack.



Unfortunately, they were met by Panthers of the German reserves and artillery directed into the middle of the mech infantry battalion. With most of the battalion's halftracks on fire and half of the Shermans knocked out, that flank was out of action as well, leaving a few scattered units in the center. We surveyed the scene and determined that it was pointless to carry on as the Germans had lost some trucks, but half of the British force had been wiped out! (cont. on p 13)





(cont. from p 12) So, what happened here and why did this game turn out so poorly? We spent over an hour setting it up, played three turns and that was that as it was too late to start again and essentially the fun had been sucked out of the room by that point!

The blame must surely lie with your truly, as I designed the scenario and ran the game. The mistakes are too numerous to count and some of them you would think wouldn't affect game play, but they contributed to the overall failure of the game.

- I needed to have read all of the rules again to become more familiar with the game systems. This caused a lot of unnecessary checking up on rules

that slowed the game down. With our group playing so many rules this should have been a top priority.

- Produce army lists for both sides, which again cost a lot of time looking up stats each turn.
- Not explaining the rules fully, particularly about entrenchments, close combat, and support. The first British attack should have been with everything and the kitchen sink, but wasn't, which caused the British some painful losses.
- Spend more time on the terrain and the set up. The Germans had too many open areas for calling in artillery, which doomed the British attack once someone saw them.

Now nothing that I could have done would have prevented the bad British command rolls or the good luck the Germans had with their artillery, but the British were not adequately briefed on the rules, particularly for attacking the entrenchments. It also doesn't excuse the amount of time taken looking up rules and stats, which tends to make the experience less entertaining.

Overall, I chalk it up to a lesson learned. Whether it is a large scenario with 10 players or a small one like this with 4, it is important to do diligent work on the scenario. You expect that of other members of your club when they run games, so it should be no different when you are tasked with running a game on the usual club night.



Back when Games Workshop was really getting going, with *Rogue Trader*, *Epic*, etc., expanding like there was no tomorrow, a big boxed game called *Space Hulk* came out. Based in the WH40K universe the setting used was a gigantic space ship reemerging in Imperial space, which was boarded by Space Marines. Unfortunately, there were also a nasty horde of aliens called Genestealers on the vessel as well, which threw themselves at the marines in overwhelming hordes. Also, the marines were in something called Terminator armor, which just added another layer of coolness on what was a widely popular game.

Space Hulk took off right from the start and my gaming group was no exception. Tense, sometimes suicidal battles



For those of you who have no idea what *Space Hulk* is, this will hopefully provide some clues. First, it is a big and heavy box as there is a lot of stuff in it. You get stacks of very thick, colored cardboard pieces that represent the various rooms and hallways of the space hulk ship. You also get a wide variety of

doors, markers, tokens, boarding torpedoes, and stacks of other stuff used in the game. Very high quality on the components and it will take some time to punch them all out and get things organized.

Next come the miniatures, which consist of 12 Space Marines in Terminator armor with a variety of weapons. There are also 24 Genestealers, who are the opponent for the marines in the game. All of these miniatures come on multiple sprues and while fairly easy to assemble, it will take some time to get them all finished. While I'm a big fan of the Terminator miniatures I think they went a bit overboard on trying to create a variety of poses for the Genestealers. I would have preferred a few charging poses, but they went all out and gave you some on walls, crouching, in strange poses, etc. Finally, you come to the rules and mission book (scenarios) that are up to the usual high standards of GW.

raged up and down the corridors of the ship, even to the point at a few conventions where we had 20+ players playing on boards constructed from a half dozen games. As with everything GW though, there is no end to the supplements, additional figures, etc., and so it was with *Space Hulk*. After about three years I think most of us were burned out on it and sold our stuff off. Over the years as the various versions came out there was a temptation to get back into the game. Finally, for Christmas this past year I got the new 4th edition.

Similar to the 3rd edition, which was a tremendous value for the money, this 4th edition (as a note this new version seemed to come out of nowhere) expands upon that very popular edition. The changes have mostly to do with the four extra missions that have been added.



The rules are fairly easy to get through and most gamers can become familiar with the system by taking a few miniatures and throwing them on a hallway to try out the movement,

shooting, and melee systems. After a few tries it should become fairly standard fare as that is what most of the game is about!

Each turn the Terminators try to achieve their objective, usually by moving down the corridors and killing anything in their path. Each figure gets a number of actions that are used for moving, firing, turning, clearing jams, etc. Figures can also be put on overwatch to cover areas with weapons or on guard, which gives a bonus in hand to hand combat. The Terminators also get command points each turn which can be given to anyone on that side for extra actions in their turn or during the Genestealer turn.

The Genestealers get actions as well, which usually consist of moving down corridors and attacking the Terminators. What helps them is that most are hidden as they are shown on the game board as sensor blips, that when revealed could be 1, 2, or 3 Genestealers. This gives each mission a high replay value as the blips are randomly chosen.



All of this naturally leads to massive amounts of firing down corridors at hordes of Genestealers, hand to hand combat, desperate delaying actions, and more. Each mission is a puzzle to be solved that can be played multiple times. I remembered many of the missions from the 1st edition I had almost 25 years ago and they are still as tense and fun as they were back then.

This is a great game for the money and if you think that this might be the last time they print it (that's a whole other topic) then by all means get it. The amount of stuff in the box is easily worth the \$125 retail price. The game is easy to get into, can be explained to new gamers quickly, and provides hours of exciting missions. Now the big question is whether or not I end up painting all of the miniatures that came with the game or not!

Every so often there is an event in my hobby of wargaming or life that causes me to pause for a moment and take stock of the situation. This would include having the first child (where things came to a virtual standstill) to not finding gamers in your area interested in what you're interested in, to a new gaming system such as GW's Epic/Titans where you blow all of your available cash on new figs. These things tend to cause you to pause, reflect, then plan on where you're going for the future, even if it is only until the next game meeting and someone shows off something new and shiny!

For me last year it would be losing both of my parents in the span of six weeks, right before the holiday season. To say that it was a catastrophic, life changing event would be an understatement. To suddenly have two of the most important people in your life vanish so closely together is something that no one should have to experience.

It is times like this where you realize where your hobby fits into the grand scheme of things and how it needs to be set into your list of priorities. For about twenty years now I have been playing with the same group of guys (some come and go, move on, new gamers come in, etc.) and listing the update on my site almost religiously every two weeks. In fact, I will usually schedule my other events such as running races, seeing movies, grocery shopping, etc., around our gaming night.

All of a sudden, it didn't seem to matter much. I had to spend a lot of time with both of them at the end, so I missed out on gaming for almost two months. The club web site sat stagnant for almost three months as the will to update it didn't seem to be there within me. My painting slowed to a crawl. Where I had been cranking out a few units a month for various games now I could barely clean some figs and get them primed. The hobby had become something that gave you time to think about what had happened and what was happening to members of your family. The quiet time that I had enjoyed for so long and found so therapeutic was now a curse.

So I sat there in my gaming room and

looked around. Stacks of wargame magazines, some of which I had not opened in years, were there next to my painting table. Boxes and boxes of terrain and armies were packed under my table and on the sides of the room. Rules, stacks of boardgames, bags of unpainted figures, Ospreys, paints, and more all surrounded me. All of a sudden the only thing I could think of was, "How did I get all of this stuff?"

My hobby had taken on a life of its own. By itself this isn't a bad thing and the hobby has provided me with some great memories. There was no urge to quit the hobby or to sell everything off and join a monastery. Rather, this was a golden opportunity to take stock of what my hobby situation truly was and where exactly I was going with it.

Until this event I was like most gamers. Looking at web sites each day, buying new rules, figs, terrain, etc., and continually getting into new periods. I've often wondered if this was a good strategy and I've written in the past here in this magazine about being involved in too much, there's too much coming out too fast, and so on. But now my "gloom and doom" editorials as they've been described, really hit home.

I have a Samurai army that hasn't been really used in almost five years. I have 200+ gaming magazines that probably will never be referred to again. I have 150+ boardgames that include many titles that will probably never hit the table again in my lifetime. There's enough figures to keep me painting until I'm 100, not to mention terrain that needs to be built and painted. I have armies for 20+ periods, many of which get used maybe once each year and many every 2-3 years. The Balkanization of the hobby has virtually insured that many of these armies and/or rules that I have will probably never get used again or sparingly.

In the end the passing of my parents reminded me of the one universal constant associated with our lives: time. There will never be enough time to do all the periods I want to try, to paint all of the figures I'm interested in, to try all of the monster board games that I like, or to read up on the fascinating periods that

have long been a staple of my enjoyment with this hobby. To think otherwise is folly and I needed to come to terms with my own mortality and how to be involved in the hobby going forward.

So, what to do? Obviously, things need to change. While I like learning new rules, periods, and board games, that doesn't mean that I have to be the one to do the groundbreaking and teaching. I think that my days of trying to get people interested in new things and always moving forward have come to a close. I've realized that with the time that I have left (however long that is) I should be enjoying the hobby more than I am. That means playing, painting, and reading up on the periods that I am really interested in.

Already this year I've seen a change in my buying and painting patterns. I really want to play a Warmaster campaign and some sieges, so I've bought and am painting 10mm castle walls/towers, siege towers, battering rams, etc., so that we will have this available to us for the campaign (if we ever get started on it!). I also want to finish my 15mm Sudan project, so that's where my other purchases and time will be spent for the next few months. Yes, that means my dreams of doing Franco-Prussian war in 15mm, Mexican-American in 15 or 28mm, and many others will remain just that...dreams. There simply isn't enough time and/or money to pursue all of these things and do them well.

In the end, however, what is the hobby primarily about? My own view is that it is about enjoying the company of old friends who have similar interests, in this case historical gaming. This was brought home to me pointedly when we ran our WMA annual tournament at the end of the year. There we were for the 7th time in seven years, having fun with an all day event. I was there with friends, many of whom I've known for quite some time, enjoying history, gaming, and each other's company. In the end, it is these memories that in my later years I will look back upon with fond remembrance. So my final advice is do what you are interested in, don't go in too many directions, and have fun. After all, time is running out.

WMA: Successors vs. Assyrians

Battle Report



in (we were playing at the local store), so this size of game would fit right in.

The Successors went with their standard pike forces backed by several units of cavalry, medium infantry, and some skirmishers. They also took along a unit of elephants to provide that extra shock to supplement the pikes. All in all, it was a well balanced force with some serious striking power.

Yes, as you can tell by the title this was not a historical scenario, although you could postulate the Successors conquering Syria and the surrounding areas after the death of Alexander!

Actually, what happened is that it was supposed to be Successors vs. Indians, but I packed the wrong army! I did bring along the Indian elephants, but unfortunately took along the Assyrians instead of the Indians. To make things worse, I left the Assyrian heavy chariots at home as well. With only three of us playing this night the only thing to do was to run Successors vs. Assyrians and limit what the Successors could take.

In the end we settled on around 1500 points per army, which is still a good sized game and it lets everyone have plenty of units to command. We only had a three hour window to the get game

The Assyrians were severely limited in what they could choose for forces as I had left their best units (heavy chariots) at home by accident. The Assyrians went with a mass of infantry and archers plus a screen of skirmishers. The only mobile force that they had were a few light cavalry units. If they were going to win the game the Assyrians were going to do this on the backs of the armored infantry.

The deployment of both sides gave away the strategies right off. The Successors were going to try to use their superior cavalry to secure the flanks, then attack the sides of the Assyrian formations. This would hopefully pin

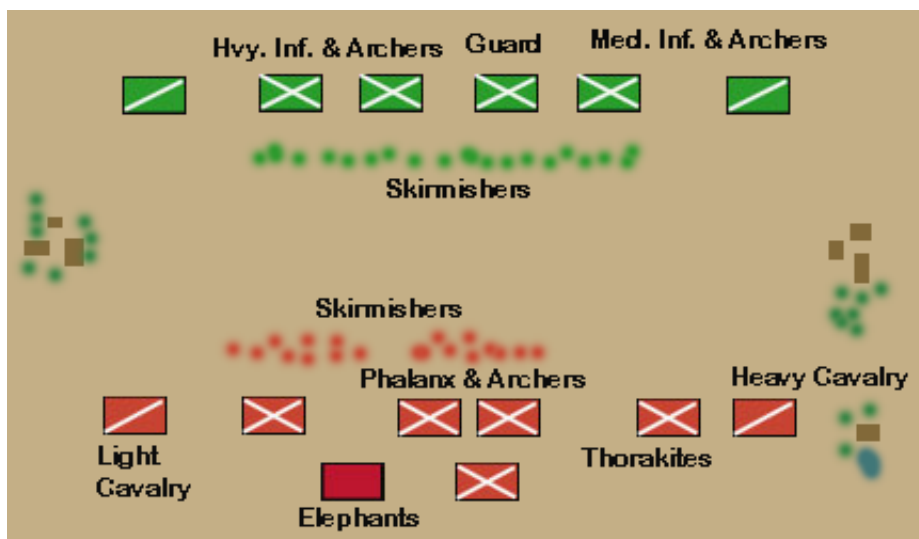
them down while the pikes and elephants advanced down the center to finish the job. On the other side the Assyrians would advance in a series of infantry brigades supported by archers and screened by skirmishers to the front. The light cavalry would have to buy time for the armored infantry, particularly the guard units, to do their damage in the center and win the game.

The Assyrians had some good command rolls and got off to a great start, moving their infantry formations out quickly and in well organized brigades. The cavalry went out in search of trying



to tie up the Successor cavalry and succeeded. By the end of Turn 2 the Assyrians were advancing in good order, blows had been exchanged on the flanks, and things were looking good for the Assyrians.

On Turn 3, however, things began to get a bit more difficult. Several units failed their command rolls, the left flank was not doing well and under pressure, plus the pike phalanxes were beginning to advance. By Turn 4 the Successors owned the flanks with most of the Assyrian light cavalry dead or reduced to where they were no longer a threat. The cataphracts and heavy cavalry of the Successor army lined up their next targets, which were an advancing infantry brigade and charged in. They were hoping to deal a killing blow to the Assyrians who would then be finished off by the now advancing pikes and elephants, which were a few turns back. (cont. p17)





(cont. from p16) However, the Assyrians not only held, but inflicted some heavy damage on the attacking Successor cavalry. The Assyrians surged forward and engaged the Successor skirmishers and medium infantry. After a series of running fights, the Assyrians were still in good shape thanks to their archery and armor saves.

The Successors now sent in their Gaul allies and the pikes began to arrive. The elephants had failed several command rolls and were still well off in the rear. The Assyrians, Gauls, and remnants of the Successor cavalry clashed in the center, with heavy casualties for all of the units involved.

The final act was now approaching,

with the Successor pike units entering the fray. The pikes crashed into the Assyrian infantry which at first gave way, but then counterattacked. The battle see-sawed back and forth for almost three full turns before the Successors got the upper hand. Both sides were nearing their break point and one more determined push would be all that was needed.

Unfortunately for the Assyrians, they failed several critical command rolls at the worst times, mainly due to giving orders to damaged units. The few units they had that could have gone in and finished the job failed to receive orders. Not so with the Successors. They identified the Assyrian units that could be picked off to win the battle and coordinated their final attacks. In the end the

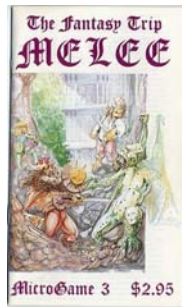
final attacks proved fatal to the Assyrians and they hit their break point, causing them to withdraw from the battlefield.

A very good game, despite the Assyrians not having their best weapon on the table. The compact mass of armored infantry and archers was a tough opponent for the Successor wildly varying units. The game was fast (around two hours) and had a lot of momentum swings for both sides.

The Assyrians are a decent opponent for most armies in the WMA lists as they are a well balanced force. The Successors have too many choices for units and eras, which makes coming up with the right combination of forces a difficult challenge.



The second Metagaming game I purchased after Ogre was Melee. This was a pretty simple game of man to man fantasy combat that when combined with Wizard and a few of the programmed adventures, gave me hundreds of hours of gaming fun back in the day. Why I ever sold my copies of those games, I have no idea, but when I went to re-acquire them Melee was going for around \$50! Yes, it's a good game, but there's not much too it in terms of components!



This is when I came across the Melee Redesign by Kwanchai Moriya on Boardgamegeek. I've talked about this in the past where redesigns along with print and play games has become a growing part of the hobby. There are some beautiful redesigns of out of print games such as Dune, Magic Realm, Chitin I, and more.

Naturally, the question arises about why would you not want a redesigned game of a 70s or 80s classic with better boards, cards, counters, art, etc.? The answer to that is that for redesigns you need to print and create your own copy of the game. For some of these games you can easily spend \$50-100 for a game that you can still find on Ebay for less than that. On top of that there is the work involved, where with something like Magic Realm's redesign you're going to spending days if not weeks getting it built.



However, if you want a newer version of a game that you like or wish to try out a game that is now sadly out of print, redesigns are essentially your only option. Not wanting to pay \$50 for a 1970s copy of Melee and intrigued by the redesign files, I decided that I would try one out. The other reason why I chose Melee is that it looked like one of the more simple redesigns!

So there were several options available in how to approach this. The main game comes in a PDF file that has the

cover, the map in four sections, two sheets of counters, rules, and the charts. Another gamer graciously contributed decks of weapon and armor cards in the same graphic style as the redesign, so those had to be added as well.

The first option was to just print everything out in paper, use scissors and glue, then put it into a zip-loc bag! Great for a playtest, but definitely not anything long term. I toyed with the idea of doing some components professionally and some with cardboard, but gave up on that as well. Finally, I decided that I would go all out where possible. It was also at this point that while it would be pretty hard to create the very small size of the original game, I did want something smaller than a regular size wargame if for nothing more than to pay tribute to the original series!

The first assignment was the rule-book. I removed the cover, map pieces, and counters from the pdf, printed the pages, then had the rules spiral bound with a clear cover in a 9 x 6 format, which turned out well. Next up were the cards for the weapons and armor, which I printed on paper, then used spray adhesive to fix them to some art mounting board. The cards were then cut out and sleeved (although finding the really small card sleeves was a challenge).

Next up were the counters, which I printed on high quality semi-gloss poster printer. I then cut them out and glued each one individually to a 20mm square thin wood square (I used figure bases for this). They were then sprayed with gloss clear and finally an anti-UV matt clear spray. There aren't too many counters in the game, so the extra effort didn't take that long.

Next came the map board. Again, there were a lot of options,

ranging from paper on cardboard, printing it on gloss paper and rolling it up, printing to fabric, and so on. I finally sent the file to a company called Print & Play Productions who created a four piece folding board for me for around \$25 including shipping. Could I have done this myself? Probably yes, but for the price it was hard to beat, plus the 48 hour shipping made it a great deal. I did spray it with the anti-UV clear from Krylon to make sure the board will last.

Finally, I came to what was surprisingly the hardest part; the box. Finding the right size box for the smaller format I had chosen was much harder than I thought. Although there are all kinds of companies selling boxes, most of them were too large or you needed to order them in lots of 20 or more. I finally found the right size box, created some artwork for the box, cut and glued the pieces, then sealed it with the anti-UV clear spray. Done.

The redesign turned out pretty good and I'm quite happy with it. I estimate that I probably spent around \$55-60, of which most of that was the board, anti-UV spray, and printing the various parts. You could spend more or less depending upon the quality that you want. I can't imagine doing some of the larger redesigns unless you had deep pockets and a lot of time. My only complaint at this time is that there is not a similar redesign for Wizard, the companion game to Melee, but hopefully one day.



Wars & Battles: Normandy 1944

App Review

Computer war-games, for some reason, were never that appealing to me. Yes, I had Panzer General, Close Combat, F-15E Strike Eagle, and more, but they always seemed to come in a distant third for me in the hobby after miniatures and board wargames. Either they had a poor AI, weren't fun to play, or they had such a high learning curve that it wasn't worth the effort. I've also tried games like Operational Art of War and many other hex and counter wargames, but the time spent learning them didn't seem to translate into fun for the investment.

With the advent of mobile devices I thought that there would be a huge jump in computer wargames, but have been a bit disappointed so far. Although the Tank Battle apps are fun in a way and try to be historical, they're a distant cousin to Panzer General. The Shenandoah Studio games such as Battle of the Bulge and Drive on Moscow aren't bad for what are seemingly area type wargames. However, I was still searching for something to whet my appetite for a reborn Panzer General.

Enter Wars & Battles: Normandy 1944. Designed for the IOS on iPads and soon other devices, it is trying to take tablet wargaming to a whole new level. In fact, this is the first game in a series that will cover various wars through the centuries, all with the same game engine. At first glance, Wars & Battles is definitely a step up from other app based wargames. Just the splash and intro screens alone tell you that this is not going to be something that you've encountered a thousand times



before.

For starters, there are a series of overlays that show units, terrain, status, and more. You can adjust these to your desired setting and I spent some time trying out

various scenarios with different views. The important thing here is that the scenarios *look* like Normandy. You can see the various roads, rivers, crossings, and towns. You can see the choke points, good defensive positions, and the best routes to move up troops quickly. I was quickly impressed that terrain would play a massive role in the game as the scenarios unfold.

The game play is not difficult and fortunately there is a comprehensive manual and tutorial system. By spending some time with these you can figure out what to do in the game, but don't expect to just come out in the first scenario and do well! Each scenario seemed to me to be a puzzle that could be solved in a number of ways and most of the fun was trying to figure out the solution.



Naturally in a hex and counter game there will be units. In Wars & Battles each unit can be displayed along with all of its stats, giving you a comprehensive view of your forces. Each side then gets a number of activation points that will enable your units to move and fight. Also, this is one of the few games I've seen where weather can influence movement, which was a nice touch. There is a lot of strategy involved in determining which units can or should move, how far, and seeing how they can only have combat once a turn, who and what should be

attacked. The odds are displayed and then there is a brief animation of the combat with the results.

The first few scenarios are pretty simple, but it took me awhile to figure everything out. Basically you overwhelm the enemy forces with your units, but as things go on this becomes a bit more



difficult. The maps get larger, there are more units, then you add in bombardments, etc., and suddenly there is a lot going on! For those who want to take their time and study each turn carefully there is much to do. You can check the status of each unit, analyze the terrain, turn overlays on and off, then come up with the right combination to shift the odds in your favor and win each individual battle. Or, you can just throw units at the enemy and see what happens, which will usually result in you having to replay the scenario many times!

About the only complaint I have is how the costs are structured and it could be hard for some gamers to understand. Basically you pay for the base game which gets you some scenarios and then there is a second pack that adds on more along with extra campaigns. In the future there will be more games using this engine and the titles look very interesting. I think on their site it should show what scenarios/campaigns come with the basic app and what else you can get, which would definitely help.

Overall, this is a very good game and worth every penny. The graphics are outstanding, there was time spent on historically portraying the campaign, and terrain along with weather is critical to your operations. Highly recommended.



Engagement 5: Siege Preparation

Situation: Red is building up forces for a siege and is off board. Red has an artillery battery entrenched on a hill that has been bombarding the fort. Before the siege can tighten, Blue is going to raid the surrounding countryside for supplies to try to last until a relieving force can arrive.

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

Table Size: 6 x 4, but a larger table could be used with more terrain added.

Terrain Notes: The woods should be considered to be light woods. The stream can be crossed by infantry and cavalry (treat as rough terrain), but artillery can only cross where the road intersects the stream. The fort should be a sizeable structure with towers, a gate, and defenses.

Red Forces: Red has (2) guns on board at the start of the game, located at the entrenchments on the hill. The remaining Red forces arrive as reinforcements each turn according to the following schedule. Roll 1D6 each turn:

- 1 Unit of infantry
- 2 Unit of infantry
- 3 Unit of light infantry/infantry
- 4 Unit of cavalry
- 5 Unit of artillery (2 guns)
- 6 No reinforcements this turn

Once the type of reinforcement has been determined, roll a second D6 and the unit starts at the location corresponding to the number marked on the map.

Red Orders: Disrupt the Blue attack and attempt to prevent Blue from delivering supplies to the fort. Eliminate as many Blue units as possible.

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

- 6 units of infantry
- 2 units of cavalry

In addition, there is one unit of infantry and (2) guns in the fort that must be left

to defend the fort. However, they can engage any enemy unit in range.

Blue Orders: Move out from the fort and bring back as many supplies as possible to prepare for the siege. Knock out the artillery position on the hill to aid in the attack.

Set Up: Red sets up their artillery unit on the hill. Blue can place one infantry unit 12 inches outside of the fort for a pre-dawn attack on Red's artillery position. Each turn Red rolls 1D6 and on a 5 or a 6 Blue's unit is spotted and can be fired upon. Once either Blue's unit is fired upon or the artillery unit is overrun by Blue, the first turn officially starts. Blue's other units can move out from the fort and Red can begin rolling for reinforcements.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn

Game Length: No set game length. Game ends when either Red quits attacking Blue forces or all of Blue's forces return to the fort.

Special Rules: There are supplies at the following locations that must be moved back to the fort.

Farm: (6) crates of ammunition

Village: (12) crates of food.

Well: (8) barrels of water

Players can determine how the supplies are acquired, should Blue be given

transport, civilians to help load, etc.

Victory Conditions: Victory is determined by how many points Blue acquires during the game based on how many supplies get back to the fort. A D100 is rolled and if the number is less than the points Blue has acquired, then Blue survives the siege.

Each crate of ammunition: 5 points

Each crate of food: 4 points

Each barrel of water: 4 points

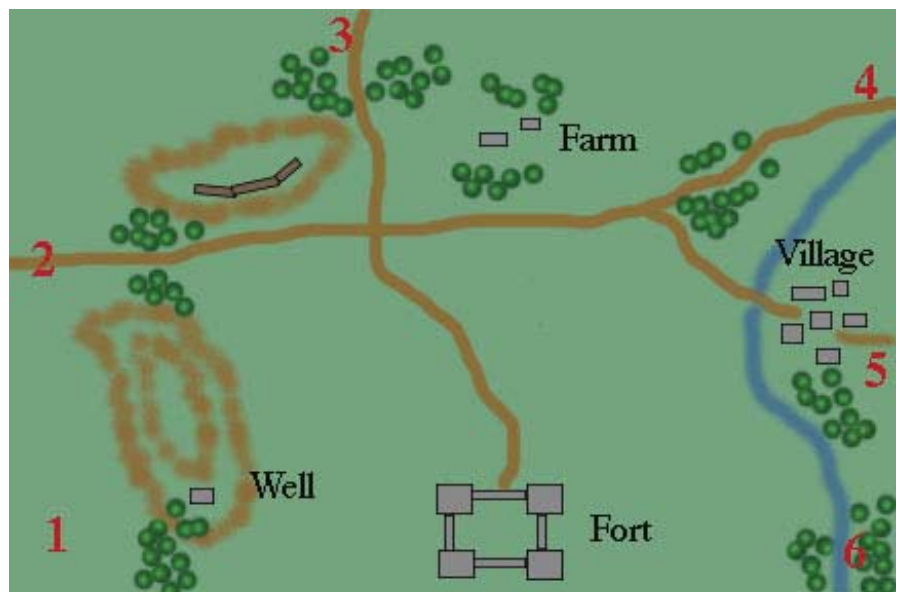
Red's opening artillery position knocked out: 5 points

From this total subtract Blue's casualty percentage.

For example, Blue knocks out the artillery position (5 points), takes back 6 crates of ammunition (30 points), 6 crates of food (24 points), and 4 barrels of water (16 points), but loses 20% of their starting force. The final total would be 55. If Blue rolls 55 or less on D100 they survive the siege and win the game.

If Red ever seizes control of the fort Blue automatically loses.

.Variants: Players could award points for Blue destroying the stream crossing outside of the village, causing casualties to Red's forces, etc. Also, you could introduce a relieving force for Blue late in the game.



Engagement 6: Raid From The Sea

Situation: Blue is a raiding force that intends to sack the surrounding area. Red has been warned of Blue's approach and reinforcements are expected shortly.

Period: Designed primarily for Ancients/Dark Ages era, but with some modification it could be used for other eras. The victory conditions and objectives would need to be changed.

Table Size: 6 x 4, but a larger table could be used with more terrain added.

Terrain Notes: The woods should be considered to be light woods. The stream can be crossed by infantry and cavalry (treat as rough terrain). The fort can be represented as a small watchtower or a barracks type building with a high wall and gate.

Red Forces: Red has 1 unit of infantry at the fort and a unit of militia/villagers at the village. The remaining Red forces arrive as reinforcements each turn according to the following schedule. Roll 1D6 each turn:

- 1 Unit of infantry
- 2 Unit of archers/crossbowmen
- 3 Unit of light infantry/infantry
- 4 Unit of cavalry
- 5 Unit of militia/villagers
- 6 No reinforcements this turn

Once the type of reinforcement has been

determined, roll a second D6 (1-2=1, 3-4=2, 5-6=3) and the unit starts at the location corresponding to the number marked on the map.

Red Orders: Disrupt the Blue raid and attempt to prevent Blue from returning to their ships. Eliminate as many Blue units as possible.

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

- 6 units of infantry
- 2 units of archers/crossbowmen
- 2 units of cavalry

Blue Orders: Move out from the beach and raid the surrounding area.

Set Up: Blue starts with all units on the beach, having just landed from several ships. The ships will retire to a safe distance to await the signal for pickup.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn

Game Length: No set game length. Game ends when Blue embarks on their ships or the last Blue unit is eliminated.

Special Rules: When Blue reaches each farm for the first time, roll 3D6 for the number of farm animals, people, food, etc., that can be looted and carried back to the ship. If Blue reaches the village, roll 6D6 for the number of similar items that can be looted. Players should come up with rules that slows down Blue

movement based upon how many items each unit is carrying.

When Blue is ready to return to the ships Blue says that they are firing the signal arrow and the ships return two turns later. It takes one turn to load one unit per ship and Blue has three ships. Once all of Blue's remaining units are back aboard ship the game ends.

Victory Conditions: Victory is determined by how many points Blue acquires during the game based on the following:

Fort destroyed-25 points

Bridge over stream destroyed-10 points

Each farm destroyed-5 points

Each item looted-1 point

Each Red unit reduced to below half strength-5 points

From that total subtract the following:

Each Blue unit reduced to below half strength-5 points

Each ship destroyed-25 points

Compare the total number of points that Blue has at the end of the game to the following:

100+ =Total Victory

75-99 = Major Victory

55-74= Minor Victory

45-54 = Draw

Under 45 = Defeat

If Red ever destroys more than one ship Blue automatically loses. Players will need to devise rules for dealing with Blue ships during the game.

.Variants: The forces could be greatly expanded or different victory conditions could be added, such as rescuing prisoners, ambushing a caravan, etc. A horse & musket type game could be worked up using Napoleonic or Colonial forces, which in this case artillery should be added to all forces, including reinforcement. Finally, a modern version could be used with marines and heli-borne forces would conduct the raid with air cover. There are a large number of opportunities to change this scenario to fit almost any era.

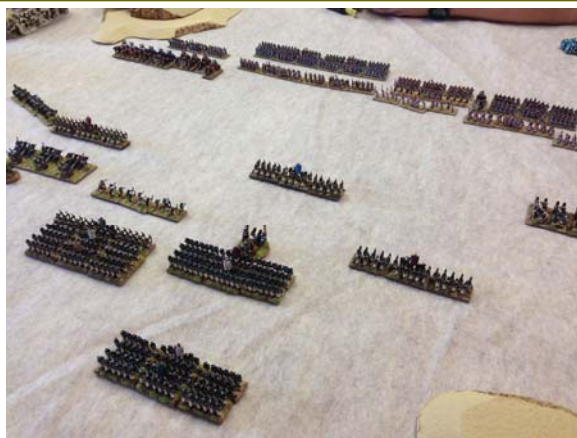


7th Annual Warmasters Ancient Tournament

One of the most fun events that we do each year has been the annual Warmaster Ancients tournament held at the end of each year during the holiday season. With all of our work and family schedules we find that it is easier to hold this event during that time frame than earlier in the year. We also need 4-6 hours depending upon the length of the games plus set up/take down, which makes doing this on the usual Friday nights a bit of a challenge.

Over the years we've used several formats, army sizes, starting lines, etc., but we seem to finally have come up with a workable solution and are sticking to it...for now. First off, each player gets one free general, then 750 points of units according to the army lists. This still forces players to take the minimum/maximum outlined in the lists, but gives each player a good choice. On top of that we use the campaign system in the second book too generate three "territories" for each player. Territories give each player either one extra unit or some can be combined to offer higher value units for an army.

This year we had Successors, Indians, Hittites, and Late Romans. As the Indian player I'm always torn about what units to take to compose my army. The Indians are what I would term a "mass of mediocrity"! They have a ton of infantry and archers, but everything is unarmored, so you need to overwhelm your opponents and you can't be afraid of taking casualties to win the game. The other issue is what to do about elephants. In Warmaster Ancients elephants are a pow-



erful weapon on the tabletop, but they also cost 200 points per unit, which is almost a third of your army! If you lose them you're in big trouble as they constitute the core of your striking power.

In the end I decided not to use the elephants and went with a unit of heavy chariots and an extra leader instead. Having to take four units of archers was also an option I wasn't thrilled with, but there was no getting around that. I was left with a balanced force that should have been able to use its numbers as an advantage. My problems were also compounded by the fact that my three starting territories weren't really the optimum for my army, so the bonus units I received didn't really help much.

Unfortunately, things didn't work out well for me! The beauty of this tournament is that you get to try some ahistorical matchups and see some interesting army compositions. Against the Hittites I could not come to grips with them and got nickel & dimed to death! Their light chariots dashed in and out, inflicting large amounts of casualties where I could not get the Indian infantry up and into the fight. At the end of the first game the Indians looked beatable for the upcoming games as well.

Usually, WMA games go down to the wire with very few that get decided early or turn into complete routs. That is precisely what did not happen in my second game against the Successors! They hit all of their command rolls, launched massive combined attacks, and my Indians could do nothing right. By the end of turn 3 it was pretty much over and midway through turn 4 it was. In under an hour my Indian army had been virtually wiped out while inflicting hardly anything against my opponent.

In the final game against the Late Romans my Indians had a chance. This was a real bloodbath with both units teetering on breaking the last few turns of the game, which was filled with heroic stands, horrific command rolls, and blown opportunities. At the end, however, the Romans prevailed and I ended up going 0-3. Not good.



The order of finish was:

1. Hittites
2. Successors
3. Romans
4. Indians

The Hittites also won the Masters of Mayhem award, which goes to the army that inflicts the most casualties. Overall, another fun tournament that was finished in less than five hours. We're actually talking about doing this twice a year now as it is a really good time.



7th Annual Warmasters Ancient Tournament (cont.)



10mm figures by Old Glory and Magistar Militum for the Hittite, Indian, Successor, and Roman armies shown here in these images. Each player had a 750 point army plus one free general along with troops generated through three starting territories.

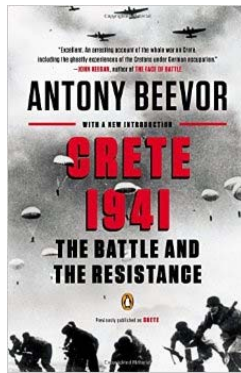
Crete 1941: The Battle and the Resistance

Book Review

Although I've literally read hundreds of books on WW2, I seem to recall having only read one previous book on the subject of the invasion of Crete in 1941. When I encountered this book on the shelves at my local B&N, two things immediately stood out. The first is that it was a new book on an interesting subject and the second is that it was from an author that I was familiar with, Antony Beevor. I've found that Beevor does a good job of bringing up previously accepted facts and explanations, then dissecting them from new information that he has gleaned during his research. This helps to provide a new take on each subject and one that usually captures your interest in to what otherwise could turn into dry reading.

For those unfamiliar with the subject, Crete was a British island base in the Med with a relatively good port at Suda. During the Germans initial string of conquests they quickly overran Greece, forcing the remaining Allied forces back to Crete and Egypt. From there a daring airborne assault was launched to seize Crete and deny its use to the British for the rest of the war. It was one of the first large scale airborne operations and an interesting battle in that both sides made a large number of mistakes.

The book begins with the Italian at-



tack into Greece and how German forces had to be used to not only seize the initiative, but to finish the operation. You first start getting the idea of the large number of Allied problems, from the horrific strategies employed by Greek forces, to the widely varied skills exhibited by British, Australian, and New Zealand commanders. The Allies are forced to abandon Greece and most of the survivors are shipped to Crete where a defense is set up.

Now here is where things get interesting. Because of ULTRA, the British knew the date of the attack and which forces would be used, which are massive advantages in any war. However, they completely misinterpreted the signals into thinking that a seaborne invasion was the primary threat at a time when the Italian and German fleets had very little amphibious capability. The Germans on the other hand completely underestimated the amount of British troops on the island. These things together would prove to be catastrophic for both sides in the coming battle.

Beevor covers the initial landings well and gives the reader a feel for what the Germans encountered as they assaulted their objectives. He then switches sides to give the reader the Allied perspective. Although quite bewildering to both sides, he never seems to lose the reader, taking time to explain what each side's forces were doing each hour.

Naturally, a great deal of time is spent on the Allied defense, the confusion over what to do, and the massive counterattack that never came, but which would have ended the battle as an Allied victory. Instead, the reader gets a good view into Allied thinking and what eventually happened, which was an avalanche of mistakes. By the end of the second day it was easy to see that while the Germans had taken horrendous casualties they were going to win the battle.

The remaining sections of the battle go over the German reinforcements, futile Allied counterattacks, then the long retreat to be picked up yet again by the



Allied warships and transported back to Egypt. A good deal of this is spent on Allied leadership during the retreat and the evacuation, which sheds a poor light on the various commanders.

Although you would think the book is over at this point you are actually only two thirds of the way through it. The remaining sections cover the almost four year resistance, which combines elements of combat, James Bond, and the best of any spy thriller! This was a very interesting segment, especially since all of it took place on one island in the Med! Finally, the Allies return at the end of the war, which is followed by an extensive order of battle and notes section.

Overall, this is worth your time and provides an interesting perspective on the battle. The German airborne assault in



particular is fascinating stuff and should be read by anyone interested in WW2 airborne operations. My only complaint is that there wasn't a section about what the various participants did after the war or an extensive look at the recriminations after the battle. This is a small criticism and by no means should dissuade you from getting this fine book. I look forward to more books from this author in the future.



Three Way Fight

Ronin is one of those games where you don't need a lot of preparation, so it's perfect for those last minute Friday night games where no one knows what we're playing until Thursday night! Once you have a few units painted up, which can be anywhere from 5-12 figures on average and their stats written down, they can be used over and over again in numerous scenarios.

For this scenario it was set up as a three way fight. A lord and his retinue were trying to get off one of the long side board edges. However, there were three groups who were after them. The first two were on the same side and each consisted of a leader, one bow armed ashigaru and five spear armed ashigaru. The third and final group were several ninja, who would enter from any board edge.

After an explanation of the rules for those of us who had not played in a few months and a summary of how ninja worked we were ready to start. The ninja decided to blanket the board in an effort to locate the lord who was their target. The two groups of ashigaru who were also hunting for him, entered on opposite sides of the board. Everyone moved towards the center and it wasn't long before contact was made.



Now in an everyone against everyone type of scenario things can get a bit chaotic, which was exactly what happened here! The Ninja took the lord's bodyguard head on, with not so great consequences for them. The ninja also became embroiled in a running battle with one of the groups of ashigaru. This gave the samurai lord a chance to take out a few of his attackers and plenty of options for where to go. Also, several of the groups lost track of the real prize, which was to get the lord! Instead, a series of melees broke out across the board.

By the fifth turn of a ten turn game the ninja had taken the brunt of the fighting and were down to 50% of their starting numbers. The samurai lord's bodyguard had been set upon by all of the other

groups and were down to only a few men as well. Both ashigaru groups had done pretty good, but were badly out of position when the lord decided to make a run for it.

One of the ashigaru groups finally saw what was going to happen and moved to intercept. The lone archer on that side had three or four chances to shoot the lord, but only succeeded in stunning him for a turn. In the end the lord escaped, the ninja were down 2/3rds of their force and there were several dead bodies strewn about the courtyard. It took us just under two hours for the set up, explanation, and to play 8 turns of a ten turn game. It was a

fun, fast game that saw plenty of combat and all sides definitely had their chance to win at the end.

For those of you who have not tried Ronin I would strongly suggest that you get the rules, if only to possibly use them for other periods. The basic rules are only a few pages long and it has one of the most unique melee systems in the gaming hobby. The rules do come with several army lists, a few simple scenario ideas, and a basic campaign system. You can also customize each figure by adding a wide range of characteristics and weapons, which makes each game unique. We have yet to try mounted combat, but we continue to add figures and terrain. This system could easily be adapted for medieval and ancient era skirmish combat.



BKC 2: Bridgehead Breakout

Battle Report

After the disastrous BKC 2 scenario that was featured earlier in this same issue, I was a bit hesitant about setting up another BKC 2 scenario, let alone one dealing with the same British forces! However, we found ourselves on one of those weeks where we needed something to play and BKC 2 is always an easy choice.

The scenario was set in Normandy in late July of 1944. A British force had some unexpected good luck the previous evening and seized a bridge over a small canal. During the night reinforcements were brought up and at first light the force would breakout from the bridgehead and cut the German forces in this sector in two. However, the Germans were preparing for a counterattack of their own, which would also go in at first

The Germans had one understrength battalion of infantry in the entrenchments opposite the canal to start the game. The remaining German forces would come onto the board on the first turn, but the German players had their choice of which road(s) to bring them on. The German force consisted of one company of Panthers, one company of PZ IVHs, one battalion of panzergrenadiers, plus a Tiger platoon, Sdkfz 251/22, and an 88mm AT gun that could be attached to any force.

The British needed to score 20 points to win the game with each squadron or company equivalent (for infantry) that was able to reach a road exit. There was

a company of Jgdpz IVs that were in reserve that could be brought on by giving the British 5 victory points. If the Germans at any point recaptured the bridge the game was over as a German automatic victory. The railway embankments were impassable to vehicles as was the canal except over the bridge.

The game started out pretty well for the British who were able to spread out and get some of their

forces towards the bridge. The Germans then responded by getting some pretty incredible die rolls that saw them able to deploy almost their entire force onto the board on the first turn. This was the first inkling of trouble as when I designed the scenario I envisioned the British getting about half of their force into the open area in the first few turns, then a big slugfest to determine the outcome.

Instead, the British came on in an uncoordinated way, with several commands failing critical

rolls to move at the wrong time. What should have been a good start and getting their combat power forward all of a sudden turned into a battle for survival.

By turn three each side began exchanging long range tank fire and the artillery began to drop. British artillery knocked out some of the German halftracks, but they had disgorged their infantry and the town with the twin road exits was now firmly in German hands. The British would need all of the mech infantry to assault the town and clear a path to the exits. The German artillery was particularly nasty this night, falling on target virtually the entire evening. Although it didn't cause a lot of casualties, it had the desired effect by suppressing several British tanks right on the bridge, creating a huge traffic jam just when they were desperately needed at the front.

By turn 4 the German armor started to find the range. Although they lost a PZIVH the Germans responded by knocking out two Cromwells, followed by the Firefly. The British (cont. on p27)



light with whatever forces that they could scrape together overnight.

The British had one squadron of Cromwells with a Firefly positioned on the other side of the bridge at the start. There were additional forces on the road and more waiting to come on board. Each turn the British could bring on a mech company or armored squadron, plus they had three batteries of 25 pounders off board and three scheduled bombardments. The entire force consisted of one battalion of Cromwells, one battalion of Shermans, and one battalion of mech infantry. There was also a second infantry battalion guarding the canal, but it could be used in the forthcoming operation.





(cont. from p26) tried to maneuver their armor to flank the German position, but were continually turned back. With the artillery still falling on the bridge area, bad command rolls for the reinforcements, and being overwhelmed by German firepower, things were not looking good for the British at this point.

The British responded by engaging the German armor and trying to coordinate their artillery, but to no avail. Then the decisive event occurred in the game. The 75mm AT gun attached to the panzergrenadier battalion and the Sdkfz 251/22 launched a counterattack! They moved from position to position near the village, knocking out a British armor unit almost every turn! With the fire from these two weapons and the German ar-

mor, the end was not long in coming. By the end of the seventh turn there was no way the British were going to get anywhere near the road exits and the game was called as a German victory.

Upon retrospective, the British and the scenario designer (me) made some fatal mistakes. First, the single crossing was definitely a hindrance to the British and it was suggested that more of the starting British forces should have been on the other side of the river. Second, all of the British forces should have started on the road, which would have saved them some time. Also, the Germans should have had a staggered deployment or had to choose what units arrived in a certain order. Those were the problems on the scenario side.

For the British, the leg infantry battalion played no part in the game, but it could have crossed the canal and attacked, even towards the road exits or to protect a flank. The British seemed to have focused on not losing the bridge, so kept them in place. The other issue was that the British armor became too spread out and when faced with overwhelming odds they decided to die in place rather than seeking cover and awaiting help.

It was still a fun experience and we finished in under three hours, which isn't bad for a five player game. BKC2 is a lot of fun, but designing scenarios for it can be a bit of a challenge. The command rolls can present some issues as can the wild swings of fortune that seem to occur in each scenario.





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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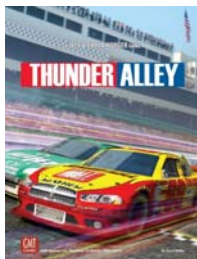
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I think that we've officially hit the saturation point on wargaming rules. Over the last 7-10 days on TMP I've seen news stories or announcements for 10 different sets of rules! It's got to the point where I don't even click on them anymore and could basically care less if they're good or not. There are several lines of thinking on this. First, it's great that the hobby and modern publishing techniques allow for so many sets of rules to be produced. Obviously the hobby is alive and well, plus it gives gamers a massive variety in choice for their rules. It's bad in that the main periods of the hobby, i.e., ancients, WW2, ACW, and so on are massively oversaturated in rules. This leads to threads in various forums where gamers are asking each other about new sets of rules with questions like how the basing is handled, what is the scale, what is the playing time, etc. Naturally, there's few if any answers. This is probably because THERE ARE TOO MANY RULES and no one has them all! Yes, there's no way all of these rules are being bought and played to the extent that you can find opponents, get questions answered, or think about maybe using a new set to replace one of your older sets. Now I could be passing on the greatest thing in rules design since sliced bread, but I'm just beyond caring at this point. I have the rules that I play and have played for quite some time, plus trying to remember all the rules that we use is getting to be quite the challenge. I think at some point you have to stop buying new rules and I think I've reached that point.

Thunder Alley from GMT Games

Game Review

I know what many of you are thinking; what is a review of this game doing in a wargaming magazine? Well, first we are gamers and love to play games. Second, this is more of a wargame than you would think!



Thunder Alley is GMT's newest racing game, but it's not your usual racing game where you maneuver a car around a track. Instead, this is a racing game where each player manages a *team* of cars. Yes, depending upon the number of players you can be racing anywhere from 4-6 cars per player. You will also notice that there are no dice in the game as it is totally card driven.

The components are very well done and the box is pretty heavy. The main reason for that are the two double-sided mounted map boards for the four tracks that come with the base game. You also

get a sheet of counters, a large deck of cards for the racing element, then a smaller deck for events during the race. The rules, while on the shorter side, need a second reading and a turn of playing to figure out what exactly is going on here. Once learned, however, you rarely need to refer back to the rules.

Races are between 60-90 minutes long depending upon the number of players. If using, for example, the track pictured here, the entire race is only two laps! That is because you're simulating the entire race and the decisions for a team manager, not racing an individual car. Each player gets a number of cards each turn that allow for solo, pursuit, lead, and draft movement. Each of these types of movement can push, pull, or do both to entire lines of cars, much like in an actual Nascar race.

Here's where the wargaming element comes in as there is a lot of strategy and



tactics here. When to maneuver, who to help and when, should you pit or not, and thinking a few cards

ahead are the keys to victory. The game play is fast, furious, a lot of fun, and we had four dedicated wargamers counting out the spots to the finish line when we got to the end!

This is a pretty good game that I think all gamers would enjoy. They're going to release more tracks and probably some "campaigns" at some point. Highly recommended for not only families, but for gamers looking for something new.

