



WFHGS

# *Warning Order*

**ISSUE #46**

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**TSATF, WMA, SAGA**

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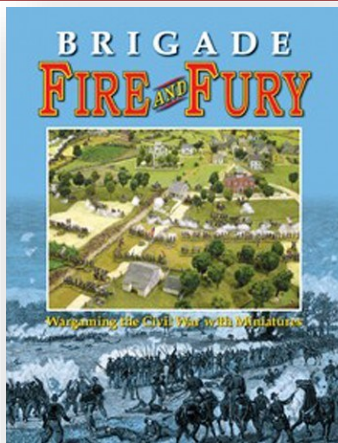
# Warning order

## First Look: Fire & Fury 2nd Edition

Well over a decade and a half ago our gaming group had come to a crossroads of sorts. The group had split, with one faction moving on to 28mm only and the other, of which I was a member, wanted to continue using our large 15mm armies for various periods. At that time, our preferred rules for the ACW were Johnny Reb 3. However, with our new group having to rotate places to play, fewer members, etc., something needed to change.

Johnny Reb 3 was good and bad. While we liked it and had been playing the system for quite some time, if you didn't know the rules front and back, you could get taken advantage of pretty easily! Not only that, most of the larger scenarios were two night affairs, which wasn't going to work for us at least in the short term. We needed to look for something else or put playing ACW games on hold for awhile.

Enter Fire & Fury ACW. We knew the rules existed, that you could use 15mm figures, and that they were supposed to be fast playing. The added attraction is that you could fight some of the larger



battles in less time than with Johnny Reb 3, which was certainly an attraction to us. Our group ordered a couple of copies and we started reading the rules, then set up a test game, which was so successful we immediately started rebasing our figs! To this day we have not looked back and have even avoided trying out other rules as we're quite happy with Fire & Fury as it is.

Like The Sword and the Flame, Fire & Fury has been around for quite some time and there's always been talk about a new version. For myself, rules are rules and the old versions work just fine for me. However, in this new day and age of gaming, if you're not seen as moving ahead in some fashion,

gamers will drop you in favor of something new and shiny. The original Fire & Fury rule book, while functional, didn't have the best graphics, charts, maps, etc., but expectations have since changed and an upgrade was definitely needed.

Before we get to the new version, a discussion of what Fire & Fury is might be helpful. Unlike many ACW rules that focus on individual regiments, usually at a scale of 1:20, F&F as it known by, has the brigade as the standard unit. With units usually being 4-12 stands, you're talking about brigades of anywhere from just under 1,000 men to larger brigades of 2500. Each stand represents 150-200 men, one gun is a battery, and turns are 30 minutes of real time, so we're definitely talking large scale games.

What makes F&F unique, however, are the movement and combat systems. Each turn a commander rolls 1D10, applies modifiers, then moves each brigade. The results determine how far a unit moves and/or if it rallies. Simple, but very effective and you never know (cont. on p3)

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### Special points of interest:

- Several battle reports for BKC2, BKC3, WMA, Saga, AOD, and TSATF.
- Rules reviews for BKC and F&F2.
- A complete fictional colonial campaign with map, counters, and charts.
- Game and book reviews.

# First Look: Fire & Fury 2nd Edition (cont.)

(cont. from p2)  
what is going to happen, which often results in plans going awry more often than not! The combat system is also simple to use where you count up a brigade's stands, then check the range to see

how many fire points it generates. Add some modifiers and then roll 1D10 to see if you cause any casualties. Stands are rated as Fresh, Worn, and Spent, which is determined by how many stands are left in the brigade. As you go down in levels there are negative modifiers for movement, firing, and melee. Again, a very clever system that is easily taught and produces a good historical simulation.

We finally get to the new edition and the first thing you notice is that it is hard-bound and as you flip through the book there is a lot of color used throughout. The author has clearly taken all of the feedback, suggestions, and ideas from thousands of gamers over the years and applied them to this version. The rules are clearly laid out, there are a large number of examples/diagrams, and you're

## MOVEMENT RATE

Full Move / Double Quick

		Open Ground	Broken Ground	Rough Ground	Road
Infantry	Line	12 / 16	8 / 12	6 / 10	-
	Field Column or Extended Line	12 / 16	10 / 14	8 / 12	-
	March Column	12 / 16	10 / 14	8 / 12	18 / 24
	Broken	16	14	12	24
Cavalry	Line	18 / 24	12 / 16	4 / 6	-
	Field Column or Extended Line	18 / 24	14 / 20	6 / 8	-
	March Column	18 / 24	14 / 20	6 / 8	24 / 36
	Dismounted Extended Line	12 / 16	10 / 14	8 / 12	-
Artillery	Field Gun	12 / 16	8 / 12	4 / 6	18 / 24
	Horse Gun	18 / 24	12 / 16	4 / 6	24 / 36
Leader	Mounted	24	20	12	36
	Dismounted	16	14	12	24

been using for quite some time, there are some tweaks here and there. This may be to get things more in line with the Regimental Fire & Fury rules, as the bases now show three figures per base where most of ours are still using four (you can use the suggested basing scheme or the rules will work just about any scale/basing). My take is that

you can use the three figure stands to play either set of rules, which is smart and expands the base of players for both games.

The rules are laid out in a logical format, with examples and snippets from the charts highlighting each part of the sequence of play. No doubt, years of feedback have definitely shaped the organization of the rules and you can see where there has been some critical thinking in how to explain things even for gamers new to the period. I was always impressed by F&F in terms that really only one person in the gaming group needs to know the rules well as it is one of the more easier games to explain. In our experience you can have players running movement and combat off of their own charts in under 15 minutes.

What's changed? There are some new rules, but what impact they have on play is yet to be determined and I suspect the final verdict won't come out until we've played this a half dozen times. There is a new result on the movement chart called Double Quick, towns and built up

areas are finally explained, and cavalry can countercharge, which are just some of the changes. The big changes are in the firing system, which by first appearances may make things a bit more decisive. New items such as Heavy Casualties and Key Positions, along with minor tweaks to the charging rules will take a few tries to get right.

The old firing chart was a monument to simplicity. The new firing chart is still fairly simple, but there are changes. The

most noticeable is it now matters what class of troop you are shooting at, so Veteran units now finally get some separation from the other units on the battlefield. There is also more separation in regards to types of weapons, which may or may not be to everyone's liking. Again, I think this is to bring the brigade game more into line with the regimental version. The changes where each brigade now has levels assigned to them (crack, veteran, experienced, and poor will also have a huge effect during the game.

The game also features new types of unit labels and three scenarios, First Bull Run, First Day at Gettysburg, and Reams Station. The unit labels, scenario maps, and just how the scenarios are set up is first rate. If only all rules had scenarios that look this good! Fortunately, there are plans to redo the old Eastern and Western Theater scenario books, bringing



them up to the standard in this book, which will be welcome news for F&F as well as ACW gamers in general.

F&F has been an extremely popular set of ACW rules, selling thousands of copies and even black and white versions off of copiers have been around for quite some time. The author has take his time, corralled all of the errata, suggestions, etc., and combined it with current printing technology to produce an outstanding version of the rules. The various changes will take some time to sort out and play through, but in my first reading or two they look pretty good to me. We'll definitely have a battle report or two for the next issue as my group is excited to try this out. Again, this is a set of rules that should be on every historical wargamer's shelf.



first take is that this is a well designed, professional level effort. In this day and age where you never really know what you're going to get in terms of rules, especially revised ones, with F&F any fears that you may have had are quickly put to rest.

Naturally, one of the first things you look at are the reference cards that come with the rules. They're pretty good size, in color, and you can quickly see a few changes. Even though these are essentially the same rules as F&F players have

## BKC2: Battle at the Railyard

## Battle Report

This was to be our last game using the BKC2 rules as the 3rd edition is now out and most of our group will have theirs shortly. It was also a strange looking board as in my haste to pack everything up I forgot the roads! Anyway, this was going to be a four player battle that involved U.S. mechanized forces in France during the main advance in 1944. We didn't know what table size we would have until we arrived, so I had to rework the scenario on the fly and it actually turned out well!

The scenario had a U.S. task force holed up in a small town across a river. This force had advanced a bit too far the previous day and was now cut off by German mobile forces. The U.S. side would launch an attack that would hopefully link up with the separated force and prevent the Germans from forcing their surrender. The Germans meanwhile, had taken up positions to block the bridge and cover the rail line, where the expected U.S. attack would begin from. The Germans also had two powerful mech forces entering onto the board to counterattack and U.S. forces that get across the rail line.

The U.S. force had one company of armor plus one of mech infantry guarding the bridge across the river. Two battalions of Shermans, a battalion of light tanks, and a battalion of mech infantry with three batteries of 105mm in support would make the main attack. The Germans had a panzergrenadier company and a company of Stugs waiting at the rail-



yard and positioned along the cut. This force could not hold up to a major attack, but was supposed to fight a delaying action until the main German armored forces arrived. A small kampfgroupe consisting of a company of infantry, an 88mm AT gun, and a Tiger bottled up the U.S. forces across the bridge.

The German counterattack force was in two groups. The first was a mixed anti-tank unit consisting of three Jdpz-IVs and three Marders. The second had four Panthers, four PZ-IVh's, and a company of panzergrenadiers. These would enter from the opposite board edge and try to get into position quickly. There were also three batteries of 105mm available off board. Both sides had FAO's and recon elements available.

The U.S. forces right off the bat ran into trouble. First, there were a lot of units coming on at the same time and there was the inevitable traffic congestion issues. The second was that some bad command rolls made it even worse, de-

laying the arrival of units to the front. This allowed the German defenders along the rail line to engage small groups at a time when they realistically should have been overrun fairly quickly. The artillery of both sides began to rain down on friend and foe alike! The German artillery knocked out several U.S. infantry units still in their trucks as that side of the attack bogged down with poor command rolls.

Meanwhile, the German counterattack force got rolling, trying to get to the railway defenders as fast as possible. The German force that bottled up the Americans on the other side of the bridge came under heavy fire, losing the Tiger that



was attached to them. After a few turns, things looked pretty good for the Germans and if they could just get more units up to the rail line, the scenario would definitely end up as a German victory. At this time the German command rolls went from good to bad. (cont. on p 5)





(cont. from p4) The Panthers reached the railway right as the last German defenders in that area were knocked out or forced back. This set off a wild melee that went for several turns, with both sides slugging it out at close range. Soon, there were large numbers of burning vehicles strewn about the railway. Artillery continued to come in fast and furious, breaking up attack and counterattack alike.

The U.S. mech infantry finally got going, dismounting and attacking the panzergrenadiers holding the rail cut. The fighting moved to the hand to hand stage where the defenders were finally overrun. This set the Shermans on that flank free and they turned towards the center of the board after crossing the cut.

The Germans dispatched the two mobile anti-tank forces to plug the gap. By this time the casualties on both sides were pretty high and withdrawal for one side or the other was imminent.

Back at the main railyard, the German and U.S. armor slugged it out, where after several turns both sides were unable to advance any further. The battle would be won in the center of the board with the few units still capable of sustained combat. This meant the few companies of Shermans that crossed the cut against the Marders and Jgpz IVs. All other forces were either engaged or too worn out for further operations.

The battle was shorter than everyone expected. The U.S. player on that side, who had a knack for rolling snake eyes in

our BKC2 games, did so again! The Shermans let loose a massive barrage that left most of the German forces in flames. The Germans scored some hits, but for all intensive purposes the game was over. The Germans could not hold any longer and more U.S. forces were pouring through the now open railway cut and they would link up with the trapped U.S. forces on the other side of the river.

This was a great game! Both sides kept throwing units into the maelstrom around the railyard, which with artillery thrown in became a killing ground. The Germans tried to reinforce the defenders, but ran into heavy opposition. Just as it looked like the Germans prevailed, one big turn set the U.S. forces loose in the center of the board, ending the game.



*Note: Somehow, Engagements jumped from #8 to #11 several issues ago, missing #9 & #10! For those who want a complete set in order, the scenarios for this issue have been numbered 9 and 10.*

## Engagements #9: Betrayal

**Situation:** Red is preparing for a major battle where it has numerical superiority and victory is all but assured. However, unknown to Red, Blue has made a deal with part of Red's forces to switch sides before the battle begins. Red must extricate their forces from this sudden change of events and regroup back in Red's territory.

**Period:** Ancients to late 19th century is preferable, particularly the Samurai era where betrayal and/or switching sides was a common occurrence. The slower move rates of pre-mechanized forces gives Red a chance to organize a response to the turn of events.

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

**Terrain Notes:** The hills are fairly low, but block line of sight. The town is a mixture of wood and stone buildings. The woods are light woods, but do block line of sight. Additional farms could be added to the board for those wanting additional terrain on the battlefield.

**Scale:** Can be used with any rules, but something where each unit is a battalion or regiment would probably work best.

**Red Forces:** Red's forces are deployed in three groups:

### Left

3 units of infantry  
1 unit of cavalry  
1 battery of artillery

### Center

6 units of infantry  
1 unit of cavalry  
2 batteries of artillery

### Right

1 unit of infantry  
3 units of cavalry

**Set Up:** Red's forces can set up anywhere up to the red line running across the center of the board. Each group should be set up for an attack on Blue's positions as fair as possible since Red will not know which

flank will be the one that betrays them. Each group must have at least 75% of its forces on the Red line near the center of the board.

**Red Orders:** Hold villages B & C for as long as possible. If the villages are lost to Blue, then exit as many units as possible off of the road back towards Red's territory.

**Blue Forces:** Blues' forces have been waiting for the inevitable Red attack, which will probably end the war. However, at the last moment one of Red's factions has struck a deal to change sides. Blues' front line commanders are not sure which faction it actually is and where they are located, so their defense is set up against the entire Red front.

### At Start:

6 units of infantry  
2 units of cavalry  
1 battery of artillery

**Blue Orders:** Defend village A, then once the Red group switches sides attack and attempt to seize villages B & C.

**Set Up:** Blue's starting forces are deployed anywhere behind the blue line marked on the map.

**Betrayal:** Before the game begins, Red rolls 1D6 to see if the betrayal occurs before or after the attack on Blue begins.

On a 1 or a 2 the betrayal occurs before the battle begins. Roll 1D6 and on a 1-3 it is the Left group that changed sides and on a 4-6 it is the Right group. If the betrayal does not occur before the game, then during the game Red rolls 1D6 at the start of each turn:

1-2 No betrayal this turn.

3-4 Left group betrays

5-6 Right group betrays

**Initiative:** Red is first each turn.

**Game Length:** 12 turns

**Special Rules:** Once the betrayal occurs those forces officially come under the control of Blue and may be used during Blue's turn. If the betrayal does not occur before the game then Red MUST attack Blue each turn until it does.

**Victory Conditions:** Blue needs to control villages A & B for a tactical victory. If Blue captures both villages and prevents at least 50% of Red's forces from exiting the road, then it is deemed a major victory. Any other result is a Red victory.

**Variants:** There are a large number of variants possible, starting with larger forces and playing surface. Reinforcements could be added to Red to balance out the game, especially if Blue is fortunate if the betrayal does not occur for

several turns and Red's forces are spread out due to the attack.. Troop quality could be adjusted to also affect the play balance. Players could also roll for individual units rather than either flank, which would make for a much more chaotic event. Blue could also be allowed to know which group will betray Red and co-ordinate their defense before the game begins.



# Engagements #10: Invasion!

**Situation:** Red has decided to launch a punitive invasion of Blue's territory. If the situation develops favorably, Red can reinforce the beachhead and look to expand operations for a larger campaign. Red must quickly move out from the beach and seize the nearby village along with its critical road juncture.

**Period:** This scenario can be used with any period, from a possible Greek or Roman invasion to modern day forces against a fictional country. The force lists would need to be adjusted for modern day infantry/vehicle types as well as air assets.

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

**Terrain Notes:** The hills are fairly low, but block line of sight. The town is a mixture of wood and stone buildings. The woods are light woods, but do block line of sight. The beach area provides no cover.

**Scale:** Can be used with any rules, but something where each unit is a battalion or regiment would probably work best.

**Red Forces:** Red's forces consist of the units on the board at the start and reinforcements that arrive later in the game.

## First Wave (arrive Turn 1):

5 units of infantry  
1 unit of light infantry  
1 unit of cavalry  
1 battery of artillery

## Reinforcements:

4 units of infantry  
1 unit of light infantry  
2 units of cavalry  
2 batteries of artillery

Each turn Red can select three units from the available reinforcements that can be landed at the beach until all of the reinforcements have arrived. Units arrive in column and cannot move further on the turn that

they arrive.

**Set Up:** Red's first wave arrives on Turn 1 anywhere along the beach in column formation, which is all the movement those units get for the first turn.

**Red Orders:** Seize and hold the village along with the road junction by the end of the game.

**Blue Forces:** Blue has established a series of small forces along the coast in anticipation of an invasion by Red. There are reinforcements that will begin arriving once the alarm has been sounded. It is assumed for this scenario that Blue has seen Red's ships coming and has sent messengers out to the various reinforcements, telling them where to assemble to defeat the invasion.

## At Start:

1 unit of infantry  
1 unit of light infantry  
1 unit of cavalry  
1 battery of artillery

## Reinforcements:

Roll 1D6 each turn:  
1 2 units of infantry  
2 1 unit of cavalry  
3 1 artillery battery

4 1 unit of light infantry  
5 1 unit of infantry  
6 Roll twice for reinforcements

Roll a second D6 to determine where the reinforcements enter:

1-2 A  
3-4 B  
5-6 C

**Blue Orders:** Delay the invading forces until help can arrive to secure the village and the vital road junction. Counter-attack where necessary to assist reinforcements moving up on the roads.

**Set Up:** Blue's starting forces deploy anywhere behind the blue line on the map. Reinforcements begin arriving on Turn 1.

**Initiative:** Red is first each turn.

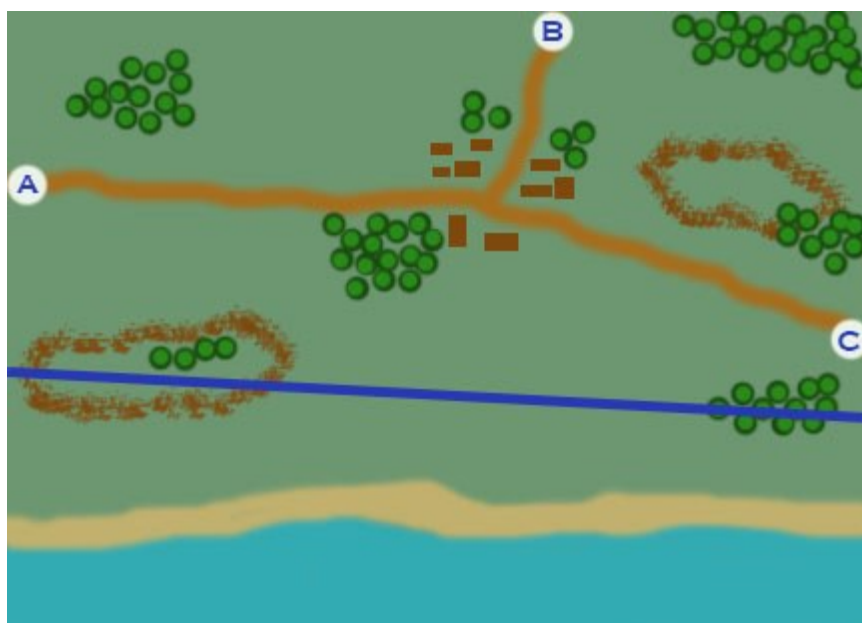
**Game Length:** 12 turns

**Special Rules:** The reinforcements for both sides are the only special rules in the scenario.

**Victory Conditions:** Red needs to seize and hold the village by the end of the game. The success of this attack will determine if Red reinforces this beach sector for further campaigns. Any other result is a loss for Red.

**Variants:** There are a large number of

variants possible, starting with larger forces and playing surface. Reinforcements could be added to either side to balance out the game or playing experience. Adding weather, particularly for landing reinforcements, would be an interesting addition to the scenario. Blue's reinforcements could also arrive in larger groups and supplies on the beachhead could be made into a major objective for Blue where they win if they are destroyed and forcing Red to defend them.



# Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 33

## Blowouts & Knowing When to Quit

It's happened to all of us at one time or another in the hobby. You spend a lot of time preparing a scenario, you get there early on game night for the set up, you go through the briefings for the players, then the game ends suddenly for one reason or another when one side completely obliterates the other. In my experience there aren't certain sets of rules that are more susceptible to this than others,

certain dice (i.e., D8s, D10s, etc.) systems that bring this about, levels of the intelligence of the players, or any other reason. Blowouts just happen.

One of these was with a favorite

period and rules set of ours, the Age of Reason. We had a large fictional battle planned between the Austrians and the Ottomans. After carefully laying out the terrain, setting up the units, making sure everyone knew the special rules for both sides, etc., we got started. Two turns in, there were a series of massive cavalry battles on both flanks where the Ottomans annihilated the Austrians, routing everything they came into contact with. By turn three they were crashing into the flanks of the Austrian infantry and artillery, either routing or destroying many of those units as well. Three turns in the Austrians had lost 40% of their force, three flags, two officers, four artillery batteries, and naturally failed their withdrawal check which ended the game!

A few years ago we decided to do a BKC2 Eastern Front battle which featured a German counterattack into a slow rolling Russian offensive. Now most of our BKC2 games go at least 9-10 turns and some even longer than that. This one barely went three turns! The Germans had incredible movement rolls, including several snake eyes, which allow for double actions. They rolled up to the front lines and proceeded to wipe out anything that even resembled being Russian! The Russians could do nothing right and the

Germans nothing wrong. Inside of an hour the game was over and we decided to replay it, with the second game won by the Russians in around 10 turns!

In another game we were just starting a modern micro-armor campaign and in the first game the Soviets had massed too many units for the first battle on the board. The NATO covering force looked things over and requested the release of battlefield nuclear weapons, which were allowed in the rules. Now the process was fairly involved and you needed to roll some weird numbers in a certain sequence, meaning it was pretty impossible to do. The NATO commander rolled it. Most of the Soviet force was obliterated on turn 2 and for all practical purposes the scenario and campaign came to an end! There was nothing left to do but restart from scratch and the Soviet players were much more cautious the second time around!

I recall many other oddities like these over the last 40 years that I've been gaming. From Starfleet Battles where a Federation force could not miss anything marked Klingon and won despite being outnumbered 4 to 1, to various horse & musket games where one side makes a mistake and then it snowballs into complete disaster. Some of these are player errors, scenarios not thought through, horrific die rolls, or sometimes it's just one of those nights where things go wrong.

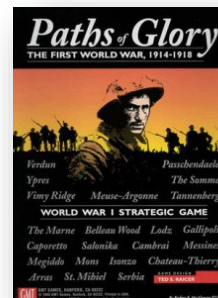
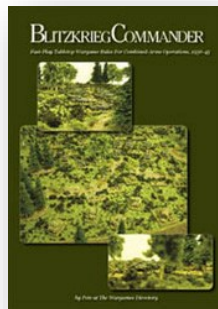
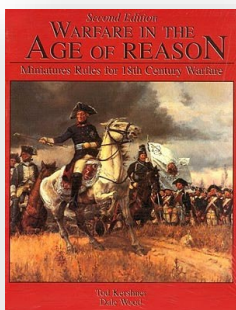
Blowouts can still be fun, especially if you're on the winning side! I think for the most part, however, that gamers want a close contest where everyone gets to participate and have a good time. If you're the person who set the scenario up and possibly even provided the figures it can feel like a letdown. All of the time and effort coupled with the waiting for game night, then to see it shattered into a million pieces in under an hour can be hard to take. Hopefully, the group is interested in restarting or trying the scenario again (maybe with some mods) in an attempt to salvage the situation.

The other end of the spectrum is not knowing when to quit in our hobby. This is a sensitive subject that usually draws a lot of gamers into the conversation, pro and con. When is the right time to throw in the towel if you're losing? Does your group allow for that? Do you get mad when someone robs you of your ultimate victory? These are the kinds of things that get dropped into a discussion about when is a game truly over.

Fortunately, I've been playing with a group who once the handwriting is on the wall, usually calls it a night. If there is time left, we'll restart the scenario or play a smaller version to fit the time remaining. For us it's more about using the gaming time, trying out things, having fun, and the social aspect of the game. From my experiences this is the best of the available choices, but other gamers may see things much differently.

One of my negative experiences with this was playing Paths of Glory with someone outside of our group. I had only played once before, but the guy who I was playing had played 20+ times, knew the card deck in and out, plus knew the optimum play for each set of cards for each turn! Not fun at all. The game can go on for something like 16 turns and by turn 10 my side was done and I conceded. He wouldn't accept it and wanted to continue until the very end! I stressed that I had no chance, I was behind in victory points, and was heavily outnumbered, but he wanted to try some new strategies and "see how things play out". After two more turns of his running commentary on each card that was played, I thankfully got a call and used that as an excuse that I had to leave. We had already played five hours and there was probably another three to go, which would have been pure hell.

In the end, blowouts are going to happen and you will run into people who want to fight to the bitter end. Hopefully, both will be encountered in small numbers!



## Blast From The Past Pt. 32: The Perfect Modern Rules Search

As with many gamers from the late 70s and early 80s era, I spent a lot of time playing modern micro-armor. Back then NATO vs. Warsaw Pact games were the rage and countless weekends were spent playing board games, micro-armor, Harpoon, and pretty much anything and everything on the topic. However, micro-armor was the most popular and it hit the wargames table far too many times to count. The big issue for us was finding a set of rules that we a) liked, b) felt realistic, and c) we could stick with for awhile. Game play, time spent, etc., were way down the list of priorities!

You need to remember that this was the era of gaming complexity and most of these rules wouldn't even get a second look in today's hobby. Then again, we had a lot of time on our hands back in the day, you could immerse yourself in a set of rules, other players were patient (you don't see that too often today), and if the game took 8 hours that was fine as there wasn't anything else pressing on the calendar!

WRG was the pre-eminent authority in gaming at that time, so it seemed a good place to start with rules. I had played the WW2 version and the skirmish version at a club in California, so I was familiar with the unusual prose and how they worked their combat tables. Our first few games were pretty fun and our forces grew larger by the day. Every extra penny went into a Ros-Heroics, CinC, or GHQ order, so soon we had units from every NATO force. This then led to larger and larger games followed by campaigns. However, there was something wrong with the WRG rules and we couldn't quite put our finger on it. The armor and gun ratings seemed off, the time scale was unusual, and there were a lot of holes in the rules. Or so we thought....more on this later.

About that time we started looking around, Tacforce from GDW came out. We played GDW games, so this was an

obvious slam dunk. One problem off the bat was that there were multiple rules booklets and only cards for U.S. and Soviet equipment. At the time it was a beautiful package and way ahead of any competitor. We eagerly set up multiple games and the first results felt more realistic, but there was a huge cost.

That cost came in the terms of playability and the fact that unless each player owned the rules, you could only do the basics. The game results seemed more realistic, but the experience was dry and so process oriented that it seemed more like an academic exercise than having fun gaming. After a few more tries the group decided to go back to WRG. In the meanwhile, however, we looked at a few other sets of rules, but most seemed like they were written for a specific club, had quite a few missing elements, or were WW2 with modern weapons added in. We even thought about converting games like SPI's Mech War 2 into miniatures.

Then a few of us blundered into the rules by Enola Games called Combat Commander. Mistaking completeness, hordes of optional rules, and enough tables and charts to last a lifetime with playability, we quickly took these up! Not only that, but there was a supplement with even more rules!

Quickly determining that these were the rules for us, we launched into several games followed by a campaign. Although the rules were complex and there was a separate table for every caliber of weapon, the first several games were promising and we decided to keep adding advanced and optional rules. Soon we were gaming at the "high end" of modern warfare, including night actions, hidden movement, and if memory serves me, even dealing with ground pressure. No club on the planet was probably doing the kind of modern

micro-armor games that we were doing!

One small problem, however. It got to the point where we were only doing about 4 turns every 6-8 hours! Yes, our games had become so hyper-realistic that they were virtually unplayable. In our search for the ultimate micro-armor rules we had gone clear to the other end of the spectrum. The experience essentially shut down modern micro-armor as a

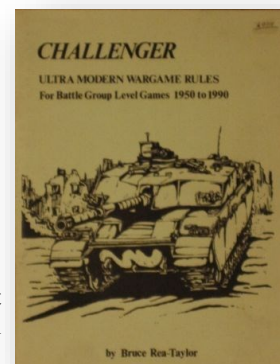
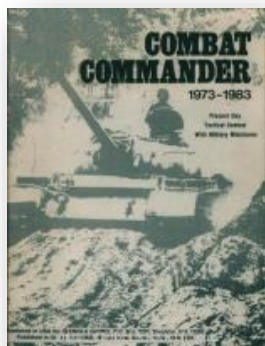
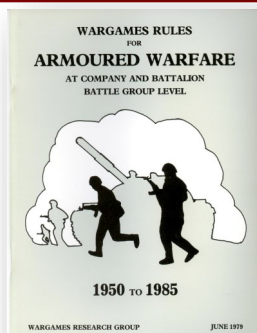
game for almost a year and we turned to other games to take up our hobby time.

We finally came across Challenger, which seemed to be more like an updated version of the WRG rules and less complex than either of the others that we had tried. We quickly got back into

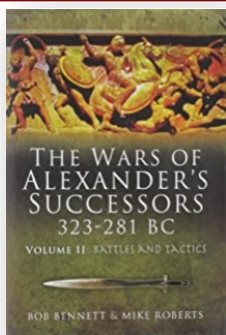
playing modern micro-armor games and discovered that these were the rules that we had been looking for. It took us awhile to get back to not have to look up a hundred tables, search through endless pages of rules, or argue over every little thing that was done on the board. We actually started having fun again with the period.

Unfortunately, we found these rules too late. The end of the Cold War, everyone moving on with life, not as much free time, etc., conspired against us. Collections were sold off, everyone went their separate ways, and all that was left were some great memories of games long past. We had blundered around for almost 10 years, only to find our holy grail too late.

Thinking back now, we should have just stayed with the original WRG rules and soldiered on. After all, there was nothing really wrong with them! It certainly is a lesson to use your gaming time wisely as you never know when a good thing is going to come to an abrupt end!



Several issues ago I reviewed a book entitled *The Wars of Alexander's Successors Vol I-Commanders & Campaigns* by Bob Bennett and Mike Roberts. The book was hard to follow through all of the plotting, conspiring, changing allegiances, etc., that swirled around the years after Alexander's death. The campaigns were described in detail, but I came away frustrated that there was very little information on the battles or the armies of that crucial period in history.



should have. His end would also set the stage for what would become commonplace in the successor's various wars, that of treachery and shifting alliances.

There are also several chapters on the more famous battles of Gabene, Ipsus, and Gaza. Each side's forces are shown, the strategies of each side, then how the battle played out including a map. The one thing that you quickly see is that the forces on both sides were remarkably similar, usually only differing in the number of phalangites and cavalry that were available. Each side had large numbers of skirmishers, archers, slingers, and light cavalry along with friendly auxiliaries. Both sides would also usually place the heavy cavalry on the right in the place of honor and leaders were at the forefront of the action

While the maps are adequate, what is missing are maps that go along with the blow by blow account of the battle, so things can get a bit confusing at times as it's hard to visualize what is happening on the battlefield. The other item of interest that continually crops up is just how little is known about the various units in the armies of the successors. Some general numbers, heavy or light cavalry, etc., are known, but in many instances the few sources that are available often conflict. Fortunately for the reader the authors do take time to try to explain these discrepancies.

Also, while the Romans are referenced and would become the ultimate end of the successors, there are no battles described in the book. The main reason is that the authors chose to solely focus on just the immediate time after the death of Alexander and to where the Romans begin to make their appearance on the stage while the successor kingdoms began to fail one by one. If you're looking for a book that chronicles the rise of the Romans and how it changed the successors, then you definitely need to look elsewhere.

Considerable time is spent on the makeup of the successor armies as time marched forward. Ptolemy's use of African elephants, Seleucus's bodies of Per-

sian cavalry, how the phalangites changed from primarily Greek heavy formations to units raised locally throughout the various empires, and more. It is a fascinating look at how each side continually used what was available and then having the authors explain why so little is known about these armies.

The final few chapters could almost be books by themselves. Naval warfare was a huge part of the successor's wars, but here it is only given a chapter, which is a shame as it is one of the most interesting parts of the book! How the fleets came about, how they were used, blockades, and how critical battles shaped the land campaigns are described here, making the reader wishing that there was more.

The final two chapters are on siege warfare, which was a huge part of the successors campaigns, and the various border wars that sprang up in between the major campaigns. Siege warfare is described in some detail, especially the famous siege of Rhodes. The authors describe the situations, how the commanders approached the siege, and how the defenders often countered the besiegers. The border wars chapter showed that on the fringes of each empire there were numerous rebellions, switching allegiances, and more that had to be continuously dealt with.

In the end, this is everything the first book should have been about. The battles, forces, campaigns, and leaders of the wars makes for fascinating reading. In fact, I would argue that the information in this book should have been added into the first one, making one large, but more cohesive story. It also shows that even after all of this time and the numerous books that have been published, we still don't know much about this period, especially when compared to the Roman Empire. What we do know is that Alexander's death set in motion a series of wars that led to the rise and fall of the various empires of his generals. This book may not be the final word on the subject, but the authors do their best to explain what they do know and their guesses about the rest made a lot of sense to me. Recommended.

The book then moves on to several chapters about Eumenes, who certainly did the most with the least, frustrating larger forces and continuously snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. These chapters are some of the most interesting reading in the book, dealing with a commander who seemingly created miracles and lasted far longer than he probably

# Warlord Games Successors Starter Set

# Product Review

Last issue when I was describing my 28mm Seleucid army project I briefly mentioned that I was able to get one of the Warlord Games Successors Starter Army boxes. Warlord has a number of these for various periods, so I thought it might be a good idea to go over what's in the box, how it works out for building an army, plus any pros and cons.

First, the box isn't as big as you would think! There's a lot of stuff in the box, however, but it fits neatly into the package. You get the following:

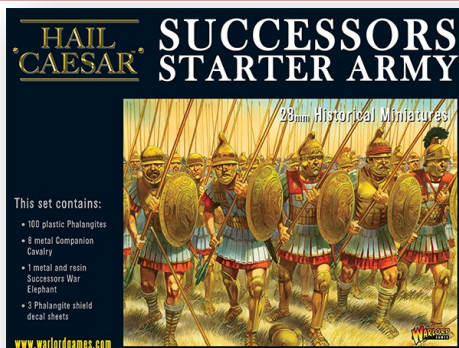
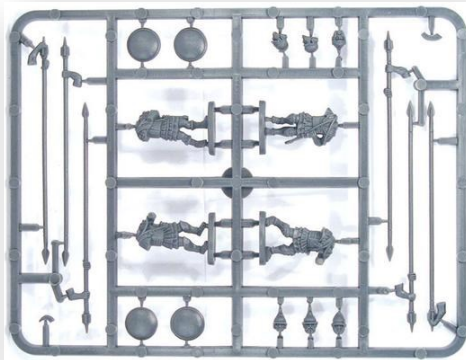
- 100 phalangites
- 8 Companion cavalry
- 1 War elephant

Definitely an interesting choice for what should be a "starter" army. Where are the command and skirmisher figures? We'll get to this later.



The bulk of the boxed set is taken up with the 100 phalangites, which come four to a sprue. There's limited poses available, but basically you get two figures leaning somewhat forward and two marching with pikes upright. At first this doesn't seem that great, but when you're building a massive pike block it works out pretty good. There are a number of separate heads which adds character to each unit and gives the unit a well worn campaign look.

The assembly is pretty straightforward and the only issue I had is that the leaning forward figures keep falling over on my work-



bench! The shields are separate, which definitely makes painting easier. Three decal sheets are included with the boxed set, but they are all the same Macedonian star symbol in black, which leaves little room for variety. Warlord naturally sells the LBMS transfers which have a number of different shield patterns. The figures are well made and look great painted.

Next up are the 8 Companions, which are metal. Again, these are very good sculpts and the assembly isn't very difficult. You can definitely use these to represent a number of the Greek, Macedonian, and Successor heavy cavalry units that were prevalent in that era.

Finally, there is the war elephant that I wrote about in the last issue. This is primarily a resin cast with a few metal pieces that has a great looking tower and five crew. The big selling piece for this elephant is that you get a large number of crew and the model looks great when finished. It took me awhile to figure out that some of the

molding on the tower needed to be cut out so it would fit on the elephant and I put-tied some of the seems, but the assembly was fairly simple.

The one thing not provided was decals for the various shields hanging on



the tower. You can either use some of the black star decals from the phalangites, paint your own, or you guessed it, order some more from Warlord.

I was able to get a good deal on this boxed set through a gaming store on Ebay. \$100 and free shipping is hard to beat, especially since it retails for \$120 plus shipping! If you add up all of the items in the box separately it would cost you around \$155-165, depending upon who you order it from. Overall, it's a great deal at a very good price and you get a lot of high quality products in the box.

However, is it a great starter army? My answer is no, but it may depend upon what you need it for. I clearly used the boxed set as additional troops for my ever growing Seleucid army and for that it was hard to beat. If you're just starting out,

then you would get two 40 man pike units, one elephant, and one small unit of cavalry. I'm not even sure that's sufficient to do a very small game of Hail Caesar. If you're playing Kings of War then that gives you five 20 man pike units, so that would be a good starting force.

The other issue is where are the command figs? Warlord has packs for the pike units available separately and you'll have to order a general from some other company for your army. The other issue is what to do with the extra 20 man pike unit (Hail Caesar recommends 40 man pike units), you'll need another box of Companion cavalry for a 12 figure unit, and there are no skirmishers or archers. You're going to need to invest another \$100 or so to get enough for an actual beginner's force.

Overall, it's a great value for the figures that you do get and it should be used to provide additional units for your army. I'm not sure if the term "starter" is warranted here, but what you do get in the box is a high quality product.

With the announcement that the latest version of Blitzkrieg Commander was coming out, there were the inevitable threads about the rules, scale, and what were they like. Naturally, there were some very strong comments about the game's command and control (C&C) system. These comments were split down the middle, with some loving it and an equal number hating it.

I've seen this before with games like Warmaster Ancients, Hail Caesar, and many others. We'll not even get into the history of C&C in wargaming, but suffice to say, there's been a large number of systems over the years. These would include the counter system used in Johnny Reb and Command Decision, written orders, chit or card pull, and far, far more. They range from the very simple (Warmaster Ancients) to the complex (The Complete Brigadier) and cover pretty much every period of gaming. There are even C&C rules in most naval warfare games.

Gaming in the 70s and 80s meant that not having C&C was sort of the exception rather than the rule. Almost every set of rules I played or looked at had some form of C&C, whether it was written orders or just keeping units within a foot of the general. Few gamers complained and when everyone starting playing Empire, Johnny Reb, and Command Decision on a regular basis in the late 80s and 90s, most gamers thought nothing of it.

Moving onto today, however, and things have changed greatly. Most of the "Euro" type wargames do not feature any type of C&C and the action is fast & furious, with the game being settled within an hour or two. Transitioning some of those gamers to games with C&C is usually about a 50/50 outcome, with some swearing never to play anything with a C&C system ever again and the other half



at least interested enough to try similar games. The fact that with many of these games you roll large numbers of dice and kill things by the horde has something to do with it, at least on the surface. Not being able to move or fire means not getting in on the kill or causing your fair share of destruction.

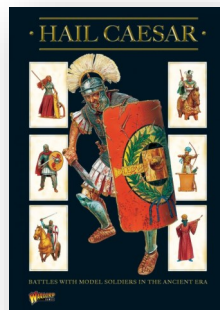
The astonishing part of not being interested in C&C at least for me is the number of historical gamers who do not like it. These are the same people who pour thousands of dollars into their hobby, attempt to paint their figures as close to their historical counterparts as possible, research the period, and generally know at least a few things about the battles of the period. How could one not know that C&C played a vital role in warfare throughout the ages? Yet, for many they either choose to ignore that aspect of military history or don't like the restrictions placed on them during a game.

When one looks through the annals of military history you can't help but notice a large number of C&C failures. From generals refusing to cooperate with others, misunderstanding of orders, getting lost maneuvering to the battlefield, and so on, C&C is a major part of every era of warfare. Units pursue defeated enemies that take them out of the remainder of the battle, running out of fuel just short of the front lines, open gaps in a line of defense, withdrawing from the field without orders, etc., are all events that have been well documented along with thousands more.

So why is it then that gamers have a dislike for C&C? Is it that the odds are some rules try too hard and there's a good chance of failure occurring? Are the systems too complex? Have gamers had a bad experience with certain systems and have now unfairly painted all C&C systems with a broad brush? Or is it simply that gamers can spend their money and time as they please with C&C affecting their enjoyment of a Friday or Saturday night game?

The answer may be that it is all or a

combination of those things. I know gamers who love chit pull systems for activation of units, but won't use chits for commands. I know gamers who like roster systems, but won't write down



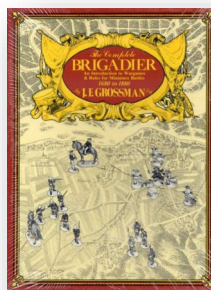
orders. I also know gamers who complain about how unrealistic certain aspects of rules are, but then don't like C&C in any shape or format! At times it seems like gamers are at war with themselves in terms of what they like or don't like, but when the subject of C&C comes up there are strong opinions on both sides.

The facts, however, speak for themselves. Blunders, strokes of genius, forces moving up at the right or wrong time, forces not arriving, and so on, were an important part of battles throughout history. For myself, the more C&C the better and for that there is no finer set of rules than The Complete Brigadier if you want a realistic battlefield experience or play the Controller version of SPI's NATO Division Commander. Both of these systems are a ton of work and you may not play them twice, but they were great experiences in how hard it is to command formations in combat.

Blitzkrieg Commander, Hail Caesar, and Warmaster Ancients are a great compromise if you're looking at trying a C&C system. They are easy to use, work well, and provide just enough chaos that it keeps those games very interesting each

and every turn. If you're not into C&C I feel that you are missing out. Always being able to move and fire your units, while fun for some, relates little to how things actually work in a battle. I've turned down playing several sets of rules just because of that. Maybe I'm missing out, but I don't think so as it then

becomes more of a formulaic routine. However, it's your hobby, your time, and your money, so feel free to play your games as you see fit.

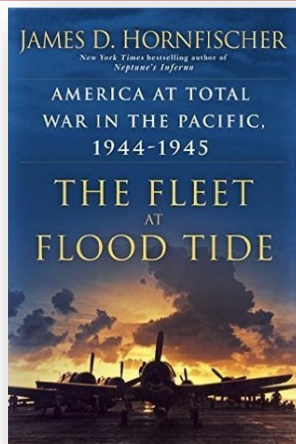


When most people think of the WW2 campaigns in the Pacific, the focus usually shifts to Coral Sea, Guadalcanal, and Midway. While there are many books on the invasions of Saipan and Guam, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the retaking of the Philippines, the 1944-45 period regarding naval actions is quickly skipped. After all, the Japanese fleet took grievous losses and weren't in a position to challenge the U.S. Navy anyway, so why read about it?

A new book by author James Hornfischer attempts to correct that misinterpretation of history. The book is *The Fleet at Flood Tide* and it chronicles the final campaigns in the Pacific during WW2. For those who think that the U.S. merely jumped from Midway to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan, this book lays out in detail the planning, strategy, and actions that brought the war to a close. Far from being a copy of many other books that focus on the Marianas Turkey Shoot and Leyte Gulf, this book brings a fresh perspective into how these campaigns were formulated and managed.

The book wastes very little time in bringing the reader up to speed on what had occurred in 1943. Clearly, the reader can see that American shipyards and training facilities are turning out hundreds of ships and thousands of aircraft that are assembled into great armadas. The author lays out the geography of the campaign, the leaders going into 1944, and gives a simple, but solid summary on what the situation is for both sides.

This is then when the campaigns begin and the first one is the taking of Saipan in the Marianas. Not only do you get the strategy for taking the island, but the list of possible options, the units that



will be used, etc., are all presented in an engrossing format. Even the sections on amphibious invasions, the UDT teams, various officers over parts of the invasion, and so on all point to the fact that no one regarded this as a sure thing. Not once is there any mention that the U.S. commanders thought this would be an easy campaign or that the war was over. They planned for success, prepared for disaster, and every painstaking detail of the coming campaign is explored.

In most books this attention to detail may become dry and boring after a few chapters, but not here. Hornfischer has a unique writing style, almost as if the book was fiction, not fact, which keeps the reader interested. His ability to describe the campaign, from the island terrain to the air strikes against Japanese positions, keeps the reader at the front lines. It would have been useful at times to present more of the Japanese view of the events, but the few paragraphs there are do provide some insight.

One of the more fascinating aspects of the book focuses on the commanders in this theater of war. From Spruance to Mitscher to Halsey to Turner, each man had unique abilities and views on how the campaigns should be managed. When you add inter-service rivalries, politics, and MacArthur, you really begin to wonder how Nimitz was able to run a successful campaign! Just about every chapter introduces you to a new commander, their style, record, and the role that they played in the war. Where as in most books with a large roster of characters the reader can get lost, it doesn't happen here. The author continually reminds you of the chain of command and the main protagonists are usually only a few pages away.

Most of the first 2/3rds of the book is spent on the preparations for and the invasions of Saipan, Guam, and Tinian. You will learn more

than you ever have before about amphibious operations, particularly the logistics involved as well as shore bombardment. Where in most books these things are thrown in as side stories, here they are at the forefront and you see the massive operations that these invasions were.

The naval battles, especially the Marianas Turkey Shoot, is vividly described as well as other major actions that centered around the Japanese trying to counterattack the invasion sites. But here is where the book takes a sudden and strange turn. The naval battles are forgotten about and you enter several chapters of the air bombardment campaign against the Japanese home islands, leading up to the dropping of the atomic bombs. You would expect a chapter or two on this, but after most of the book is about the U.S. Pacific Fleet, that part of things gets quickly forgotten about. Yes, taking these



forward islands did setup the B-29s for the final phase of the war, but the book takes you on a completely different path and finally gets back to the fleet towards the very end.

This is a very hard book to rate. For one thing, the invasions and fleet actions for the first half of the book are extremely well done and I was fascinated by the complexity of the operations and the commanders. The descriptions of the air to air actions, the naval support fire for the Marines, and the UDT teams was first rate and very interesting. However, the end of the book became an oral history of the Army Air Force's final campaign against Japan, where I would have rather have seen a chapter or two, then more about the final naval operations. Still, it is worth your time and effort just for the 1944 invasions alone.



## AOD: Armored Cavalry Clash

## Battle Report



It's been awhile since we've played anything in the Renaissance period, so we decided to do a battle in the 1525 period, with the French forces featuring the Swiss pike up against the Imperialist forces, which were a conglomeration of various units. We had not played Age of Discovery for some time, so it took a few turns to remember how to play and run the combat tables! In fact, we did a few things wrong in the first turn or two which thankfully didn't impact the game.

The French had a strong cavalry force, featuring four heavily armed units, of which two were grade 4 gendarmes, which is about as good as it gets in these rules. There were also four Swiss pike units, two Italian pike units, several light cavalry units, a few units of arquebus, and two heavy guns. The issue with the heavy guns is that once they're set up they can't move for the entire game! Overall, it was a very good little army, with some elite units, but short in numbers.

The Imperialists featured four units of German pike, two Italian pike, and two units of Spanish pike. They had some heavy cavalry, of which the German heavy horse were the best, some arquebus units, a few light cavalry units, and three batteries of artillery. There were plenty of good units in this force, just not quite as good as the Swiss pike or the French heavy cavalry.

Both sides set up two pike moves from the center of the board and the first turn began. It was pretty apparent that the main cavalry action was going to be on the French right where both sides had massed their good cavalry. Elsewhere the Swiss advanced towards the Germans and Spanish to their front while the light cavalry began to maneuver around the flanks. Both sides cautiously pushed units up to the front lines, not knowing the full capabilities of the units or how they would react.

The French heavy guns opened fire, driving some of the Imperialist arquebus units back, then the cavalry started a series of charges on both sides. These were titanic struggles, with both sides having grade 3 or 4 units, plus with horse or full armor, they quickly became struggles to the death. Charge met countercharge, then the fresh second line units entered the melee, adding to the carnage in front of the artillery of both sides. By

the fourth turn both sides had their heavy cavalry units either destroyed or down to a few figures, effectively taking them out of the fight.

On the French left the light cavalry got into a nasty fight with the Imperialist light cavalry and came out the worst for it, fleeing the scene and routing back towards the French camp. Fortunately for the French, both units rallied and were able to hold the approaches to the camp. By this time most of the light cavalry, skirmishers, and arquebus units had fought themselves out, routed, or were in no position to affect the battle. Also, the French lost one heavy gun and the Imperialist two guns by rolling a down 6,



which causes an explosion! This happens from time to time (the artillery of the period was pretty erratic), but to see three batteries knocked out in one game was definitely unusual! (cont. on p15)





(cont. from p14) This meant that the main action was going to be the Swiss vs. the Germans and the Spanish pike near the French left-center. Although both sides had some Italian pike, it had either run off or were hammered by artillery and fell back. One unique feature of the rules is that when an equal or higher morale grade unit routs, units within 6 inches of that unit must check morale. Naturally, this happens several times in the game, with the chaotic result of both sides having units with no losses falling back or routing! By turn 8 this meant that it was the high morale grade pike units that were still left.

The Swiss did not have the best approach and one unit came up short on the charge. The German pike counterat-

tacked and were soon pushing back the Swiss. Another Swiss and German unit got locked into a death match, where after a few turns there were hardly any figures still left in the pike units of both sides. Another Swiss unit plowed into a Spanish pike unit and despite the initial devastating blow, could not finish it off in time to help the other Swiss units.

Usually in our AOD games the Germans come up just short in the push of pike contests vs. the Swiss, but not this day. The Swiss were causing casualties, but not as many as the Germans and this soon began to tell, with the Swiss being pushed back unit by unit. By the end of the third turn of this huge melee, two of the Swiss units broke, which triggered several morale checks in the area, with

disastrous results. By the end of turn 10 things were not looking good for the French. The Swiss were beaten in the center, one artillery battery remained, the heavy cavalry was down to a few figures, and there were no fresh reserves. After a few minutes of discussion the game was called as an Imperialist victory.

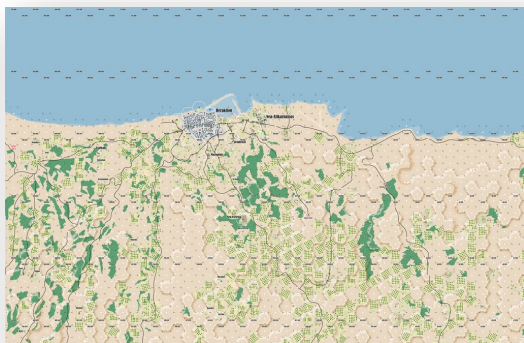
Despite us having forgotten some rules, the game ended up being a close run and bloody affair. Trying to manage the chaos is definitely a challenge with this period and it certainly lived up to that in this game. Guns blowing up, cavalry charges to the death, pike melees, units fleeing for no reason, and more made for a fun game. If you get a chance to play a Renaissance game, please try the AOD rules as they are wonderful for the period.



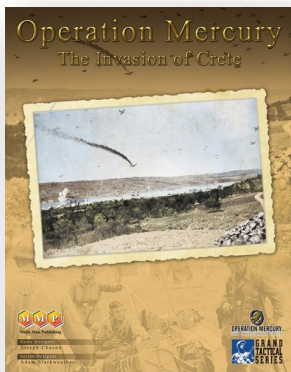
# Operation Mercury: Why You Should be Playing GTS

Eons ago, a company called Victory Games came out with an East Front title called Panzer Command. This game used a unique command and combat system to portray operational battles, which gave the game a fairly long shelf life and it is still thought well of even to this day. When Adam Starkweather started MMP's Grand Tactical Series (GTS), there were clearly elements from Panzer Command in the game, which were refined and supplemented. Operation Mercury: The Invasion of Crete is the fifth game in the GTS series along with Devil's Cauldron, Where Eagles Dare, No Question of Surrender, and The Greatest Day Vol. I.

First off, and I alluded to this in my review of The Greatest Day Vol. I, these games aren't cheap (with the exception of No Question of Surrender, which is fairly small) and the retail price of Operation Mercury is around \$170, but you can find deals on it here and there. However, in the case of Operation Mercury, you get a fairly large boxed packed with gaming goodness. Five large 22 x 34 maps, two smaller maps, plus two 8 x 11 maps start the components off. These maps are works of art, with each olive grove on the island, village, road, track, and anything else that played a part in the historical battle clearly represented.



After that you get 8 counter sheets (around 1400 counters!), two combat tables/terrain cards, division displays, off table display, rules summary, rules book, and an exclusive rules book plus four D10s. All in all, it is an impressive compilation of components, with the rules



being in full cover with plenty of illustrations. Every combat unit that participated in the campaign is present, from Greek police companies to coastal batteries to the unusual CREFORCE formations, they are all presented here in one form or another.

The rules are written in a fairly easy to understand model with quite a few examples along the way. What looks to be an incredibly large and complex monster game is actually pretty tame once you start playing. Yes, there's a lot going on each turn, but once you get into the game it seems pretty easy to grasp the various systems. You basically just follow the sequence of play and if you have questions, follow along with the rules summary. Once you get through the first few turns things get easier, even when you keep adding reinforcements and the game seems to be getting larger. This is the point where many monster games fail and that is basically just trying to get through the sequence of play, which for some games of comparable size, can be a 40-50 step process!

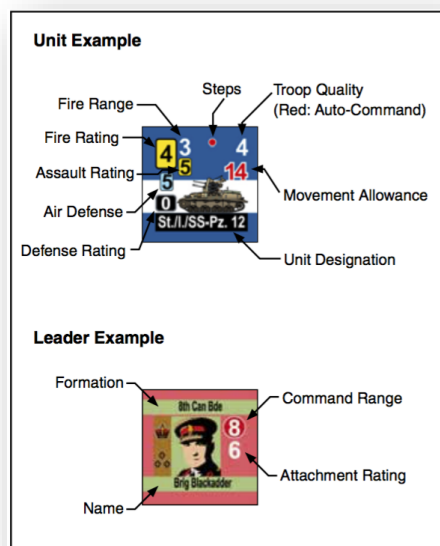
As stated above there are a large number of counters, with about half of them dedicated to providing info on the unit such as cohesion markers, step losses, suppression, entrenched, and so on. The informational counters are well done in that they have the modifiers printed exactly in the same place as the unit counters, so you can clearly see what the +/- is to each unit's stats as without having to refer to some kind of chart or table. While the combat units have a lot of numbers and colors on them, once you've run through a few turns the numbers become second nature.

GTS is one of those rare series of

games where you really need to pay attention to the units that make up your force for each scenario, which is something you don't see in the hobby that often. Many of us are used to playing games where you have 50 German units with varying strengths that simulate armored or mechanized divisions, tactical games where there are Shermans or T-34s all with the same stats, or all mechanized and infantry forces have the same speed. You often stack units with the intent of getting high combat strengths to abuse the combat results table and ignore the weaker units in your force.

If you do that with a GTS game you are going to flounder pretty quickly. Each unit has a role to play and their strengths/weaknesses can vary with each counter. You need to look at a unit's troop quality, their assault rating, the color they use on the fire chart, number of steps, and so on. Getting the right mix

for an attack, defense, creating a reserve, etc., will force you to use your units more historically than in many other games. I've played a number of games over the years where the anti-aircraft units, mortars, etc., are usually left behind and you do all the fighting with the armor and mech infantry. This is not the case in GTS and every unit can have a profound effect in



any number of battles.

Each turn the various divisions must use what are called dispatch points to purchase formation chits, which are put into a cup. Each time a formation chit is drawn, the units of that formation are eligible to perform one action such as move, fire, rally, etc., and can perform a second, but different action by the expenditure of command points. There are also Direct Command and Division Command chits, which allow units to perform certain actions during the (cont. on p17)

## Operation Mercury: Why You Should be Playing GTS (cont.)



(cont. from p16) turn. Using your command and dispatch points effectively will take some practice and planning. If you want a certain formation to carry the attack this turn, then you need to make sure you have enough points to buy its formation chit, then have enough command points for second actions as well as when the other command chits are drawn.

Firing is pretty straightforward as well, with each unit having a different colored fire value that is modified for range, mass of target, target's defense strength, etc., then a die is rolled to determine a hit and what the effects are. Results include suppression, cohesion hits, and step losses. Once you get the hang of it you can just start rolling for units that are firing and check if the die roll looks close! The final combat aspect is assault and here is where things can appear messy. In fact, there is a two page assault flow chart in the rules summary! However, once you start using it the sequence

works well and produces believable results.

Artillery is handled differently than in many other games. Most artillery or indirect fire units just need a friendly unit to spot for them and resolve things on the fire chart. Larger batteries, however, must be in an artillery "park", then put in contact with a formation leader.

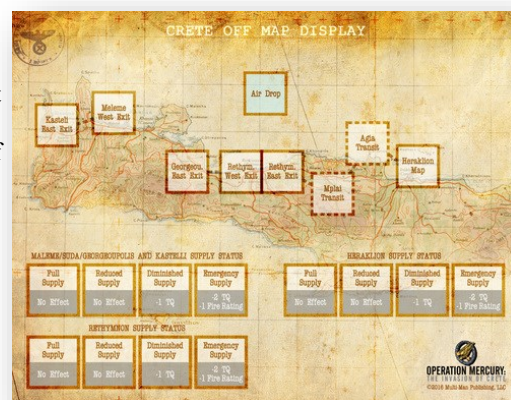
Artillery attacks also produce barrage markers, which hamper enemy units in a variety of ways. Although it sounds harder than it is, this is one of the most realistic depictions of artillery that I've seen in wargaming.

The Operation Mercury GTS game focuses on the two day German assault on the island of Crete. The Germans are represented by an entire division of airborne and glider borne troops, plus a mountain division that is able to land by air once an airfield is taken, which is easier said than done! The defenders are a mixed bag, especially the CREFORCE division, which has everything from Australians to Greek police units in it! There are British, New Zealanders, Australians, tank detachments, Greek infantry, coastal batteries, plus a large number of odds and ends, which makes for an interesting defense of the island.

The terrain on the maps is very interesting and much different than in other GTS games. The airfields are clearly the prize, but surrounding them are olive groves, scrub, a few hills here and there, plus villages and towns. Where in most games terrain is thought of in terms of defensive benefits, in GTS it is key to how to defend various objectives and how you can assemble forces for an attack. Gamers must constantly think about lines of sight, can units move in columns quickly, how accessible are the roads,

and more.

Fortunately for those new to the situation there is a simple introductory scenario played on a 8 x 11 special map. GTS is great in that there are small as well as larger scenarios. The other scenarios are a mix of the airborne drops, counterattacks, and withdrawals as the island gradually fell to the German invaders. There are also larger games that focus on the three main airfields as well as the entire campaign, which would take a good sized room to lay out all of the maps end to end! Suffice to say, there is something here for everyone and scenarios that could take a few hours up to many days of gaming.



My experience with the few times I've played Operation Mercury is that the high quality of the German airborne forces is offset by the limited command situation and the scattered drop zones. The Allies have similar challenges in that they have a lot of forces, but many aren't of very good quality and getting them to interact with each other is a challenge.

Overall, this is another outstanding addition to the GTS series and I look forward to playing many of the scenarios and hopefully someday the full campaign. First time designer Joe Chacon did a great job, especially for the size of the game. If you're not playing GTS you should be. It is a well thought out, beautifully done WW2 series that provides a number of challenges each time that it is played. I am definitely looking forward to the next set of games which will see the second volume in the Normandy invasion series as well as a Bastogne game.



# Blitzkrieg Commander 3

## Rules Review

Years ago when the Warmaster system was perhaps at the height of its popularity, along came a set of WW2 miniatures rules entitled Blitzkrieg Commander (BKC). After having played nearly two dozen sets of rules for the period, including everything from Tractics to WRG to Flames of War, we were a bit skeptical if A) the Warmaster system could be adapted to WW2, and B) what could there possibly be for WW2 that we hadn't seen already?

Whether it was timing, our need to always explore new rules, or that BKC was just that good, the rules stuck with our group. Even though we still experiment with other systems from time to time, the one we keep coming back to and that we constantly report on in these pages is BKC. When the second edition came out we quickly moved to that and have been playing that for several years now. With Pendraken Miniatures now managing the BKC franchise, they have recently published the third edition of the rules.

First off, for those who do not know about the BKC system, a brief primer. The game runs on the command system, which uses the Warmaster engine where commanders get a rating from 7-10. Each turn commanders issue orders to a unit or groups of units by rolling

2D6. If you roll under or equal to the command rating the order succeeds and the unit(s) can move and/or shoot. If you roll higher that commander is done for the turn. Units can continue to receive orders, but for each additional order it is a -1 and for each 20cm from the commander it is an additional -1. A unit trying for a third order 40cm from its commander with a command value of 8 would need a 4 or less to activate a third time in the turn. Also, if your roll snake eyes the units take two actions in a row and if you roll a 12 then there is a blunder, where you roll on a chart and the

results are usually pretty bad for that force.

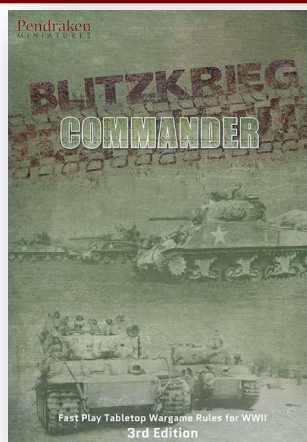
As would expect, this brings a lot of chaos to the game and wild swings of fortune. Your units may go several times in a turn or sit still for a few turns. This is what, at least for our gaming group, makes the game so challenging in that you don't have complete control over the battle unfolding before you. This is also the biggest complaint against the system. A lot of gamers really don't like any aspect of command and control, so the prospect of watching your forces sit around for a few turns can be frustrating.

Combat is pretty simple as well, with each unit rolling a number of D6s equal to its AT/AP value and basically scoring a hit on 4+, then there are saving throws.

If you exceed the number of hits a unit can take in one turn, then it is destroyed. The key phrase here is "in one turn" as if it is not destroyed the hits are reset to zero. Combat is fast and furious, which combined with the com-

mand system makes for an exciting game, at least in our club's view!

With the third edition there have been a large number of changes and far too many to list here. Most of these are fairly small and are quickly glossed over, but for the sake of this review, I'm going to just focus on some of the major ones. First, however, I want to comment on the general direction of the rules themselves, which is a move to get in line with other current rules systems regarding points lists and how the game is generally set up.



BKC and BKC2 were in my opinion, unique in that you could get together for game night, choose your forces based upon what everyone brought, design a quick scenario, and generally have a good time even if the points weren't exactly balanced. With BKC3 that could be asking for disaster! For BKC3 you need to choose a scenario, then tailor your force to meet the scenario objectives, which can be greatly varied. There are so many options available with the army lists that you really do need to sit down and create your list before arriving on game night. This is great if you have a lot of time on your hands, but if not (like with our first battle using this edition) things can be hopelessly out of balance. Some will say this is basically true of the previous editions and many other rules as well, but to us it seemed to really stand out with BKC3.

First, the reconnaissance section has been rewritten to make it somewhat easier, with just a 3+ needed to succeed and one of the new features is that you can do pathfinding, which helps units get through terrain faster. The terrain and visibility rules have been clarified and expanded, which is probably a big help to most gamers who had arguments over some things that weren't always that clear in the first few versions.

One of the bigger changes is the addition of unit abilities, which gives some vehicles additional bonuses not seen in the first few editions. An example would be the "Mechanized" ability, which allows troops to assault enemy units after taking a free dismount action. Our group was split on this feature, with some of the abilities being interesting, such as heavier armor, able to shoot on the move, etc., but trying to remember them during the game is difficult and there's no way to mark these units other than on paper or having a good memory. My own view on this is that it probably isn't needed and I'm not sure I want BKC to turn into WH40K.

The area that we all agreed upon that was disastrous, was the reworking of the artillery rules. Whether (cont. on p19)



## Blitzkrieg Commander 3 (cont.)

## Rules Review

(cont. from p18) it was by design or by accident, the old rules about basically needing a 6 to hit armored vehicles is gone, replaced with the standard to hit procedure. This means that artillery becomes devastating and several batteries can ruin an opponent's day pretty quickly. In fact, a battalion of 105s is the best defense against

even the heaviest armor. Where in BKC and BKC2 armor might get suppressed, in BKC3 there's a good chance it won't survive a barrage! The differences between barrages and concentrations is gone and gamers need to guess how to handle the firing of several batteries at a time.

Command and Initiative have been clarified, also with several changes. There is a new formation that can be created using "Order Groups", suppressed command units can still give orders (with penalties), and the FAO/FAC roles have been combined. Some of these make sense and some of them are simplification for the sake of simplification. It will take several games to figure out if these changes are good or just a few more things that you need to remember during the game.

The army lists are where the biggest changes occur and already many gamers have posted a large number of questions about point values, ratings, and unit abilities. Some items sound right, yet others are baffling, and that's not to mention many of the things that were left out. Why the previous lists weren't left alone is beyond me, but they have been changed and it would take quite some time to list all of the changes. We in-



stantly noticed a number of changes to the attacks to several of the units we've used over the years and there was pretty much no explanation given.

There are many other changes throughout the rules, including cumulative hits, which is optional and should silence critics of the "vanishing" hits system used with the rules. Opportunity fire is better explained as is Response Fire, which can get units into major firefights during each player's turn. Command units can now be targeted, which also changes the dynamic where you anticipate the movement of units and put the commander far forward. If you do that now you'll be short a commander!

You can clearly see that there was an attempt to simplify some of the systems, clarify questions that had come up over the years, and inject some new thinking (i.e., unit abilities). Exactly why the final product was so uneven is hard to say. BKC has been a pretty popular system since the day it came out and the second edition only confirmed that. That there have been questions in the forums, TMP, etc., there can be no denying. But was the answer to completely change many of the sub systems that made this set of rules so popular?

In our playtest of this edition

(there's a battle report later in this issue) we were perplexed at a number of things. Some of the stats made no sense, artillery destroyed anything that was in the target area, and we kept forgetting about the special abilities. Also, since you've been playing one version for quite a few years, it takes time to "unlearn" things! We continually had to stop ourselves and correct things that had changed with this new version.

At the time of this writing, Pendraken is going to fix the rules and army lists, then reprint the entire rulebook and ship it to those who purchased one. To say that is going beyond the average level of customer service is an understatement and I expect them to take a massive loss on this project. Kudos to them for doing this, but how did it get to this point? GMT Games has had to do this for a few of their recent games, even in the case of The Supreme Commander to tell everyone to keep the map and most of the counters, then throw everything else away!



In summary, wait for the revised version to come out and I would even go so far to say that you should see what they put back in, fixed, etc., before transitioning to BKC3. For something that should have been a pretty simple update, explaining the rules better, adding a few things in here and there, etc., this has ended up as a disaster. I'm sorry for Pendraken who has to pay for this mess, but this is definitely a cautionary tale for anyone looking to upgrade or enhance a current set of rules. For my group and I it's back to BKC2, which for us has been good enough for quite some time.

# Pendraken Miniatures

# Blitzkrieg Commander 3: First Battle

## Battle Report

As I usually point to in each issue, we're not the most organized gaming group on the planet! We decided to do a playtest of Blitzkrieg Commander 3 (BKC3) literally at the last moment and were woefully unprepared, with most of us only having read parts of the rules. Certainly a recipe for disaster, but the game turned out anyways, despite our attempts to do otherwise!

Again, with little to no planning, we quickly came up with a scenario and some forces so that we wouldn't be spending all night going over points lists. We're seeing with BKC3 that you really need to come prepared with a force list, points values, abilities, etc., which will make the game set up much easier. With all of the various options you really need to put in much more effort than in the past, which again isn't great for us as we are notoriously averse to a lot of scenario preparation!

For this scenario we had a U.S. armored force backed by mech infantry attacking a German held position. There was a fairly sizeable town in the center of the board with a critical crossroads running through it. The Germans had pretty good defensive terrain to start with while the U.S. force would need to cross some open ground, but they had the advantage of numbers.

The German defense consisted of an infantry company plus support holding the town and the immediate outskirts. Although spread thin, they were able to cover the approaches fairly easily. The



German left had a company of PZIVHs while on the right there was a mixed anti-tank kampfguppe of a few Marder IIIs and some Stug IIIs backed by a company of infantry. A company of Panthers was positioned in the center of the board down the road as a reserve. The Germans also had three batteries of 105mm artillery off board as well as recon assets. The German players split their command by using the road going down the center of the board as an operational boundary, which worked out well with two players.

The U.S. side had just under two battalions of Shermans and a company of light tanks, which we found out later was a pretty powerful force by itself! There was about a battalion of mech infantry as well along with three batteries of 105mm in support. To win the scenario the U.S. forces needed to capture the crossroads as well as exit forces off the German baseline. A pretty straightforward scenario which would give us a chance to playtest the various rules changes.

The German plan was pretty simple. Use the forward units to determine where the main axis of attack would be, then use the Panther company to counterattack and defeat the largest concentration of enemy armor. The U.S., for their part, opted for a broad attack and hoped to create a hole where they could drive enough forces through to win the game. We didn't bother to go with points, but we figured even if it wasn't fair it would be good enough for our first time out with the new rules.

The game began with the U.S. rolling forward, which immediately started a long range gunnery duel between some Shermans and the PZIVHs on the German left. We noticed that the recon rules had been modified and that commanders



could now fight and be shot at, which is a big change from the previous versions! At this point the Germans weren't sure where the main threat would be developing from, so they decided to sit on the reserves a few more turns (cont. on p21).





(cont. from p20) The next few turns pointed out some good and some bad things with the rules. First off, the new unit abilities are very interesting, but remembering to use them each turn is a challenge. The second is that the artillery pendulum has swung too far to the other side, meaning that artillery barrages are now devastating and the Germans suffered quite a few losses that they would not have seen in the older versions. Both sides now began tank duels across the board, where again, we discussed the changes to the various stats for the vehicles, which we felt were a bit out of whack in some places.

After a few bad command rolls the U.S. mech infantry moved up and began to attack the crossroads. The Germans

finally moved the Panthers out of their reserve position to bolster the German left, where most of the PZIVHs were now burning and the position was in danger of being flanked. On the other flank the U.S. forces pushed forward, knocking out some Stugs and forcing the defenders to consolidate their positions. By the end of turn 6 things were not looking too good for the Germans, who were down at least 25% and could not get any traction as the U.S. players both had some hot dice on their saving throws!

The Germans counterattacked the best that they could, but the poor die rolls and heavy fire coming from all directions put a halt to that even before it began. The U.S. side now began to press its advantage and quickly seized the cross-

roads, knocking out several more German armored units. By this time the end was in sight and both sides agreed that the U.S. would easily get their breakthrough area and win the game.

A fun scenario, even though in the end it was a bit one-sided. Everyone had some concerns and comments about the new edition, agreeing that it would take some time to get used to a few things. We also agreed that more effort would need to be put into our scenarios for the future. Some of the stats were puzzling and the artillery is definitely overpowered, so hopefully when the revised version comes out some of these things will be corrected. Overall, we made some errors here and there, but it was a good first game with the new rules.



## Three Sided Samurai Battle

As often happens with our group meeting nights, the best laid plans usually fall apart! We had a four player scenario of Ronin ready to go, when we found out at the last minute that there would only be three of us! Rob, who created the scenario, quickly reconfigured the forces and got the game underway.

For the uninitiated, Ronin is one of the Osprey sets of skirmish rules, designed to have each player manage a small force during the Samurai era. Each force usually has a leader, then several other soldiers in the unit, with several having special skills. You can customize your force however you wish and there is a point system in case you wish to play that way.

The game uses a unique combat sys-



tem where each figure draws a number of "stones", which equate out to enhanced attacks or defense during a combat round. The system works well and creates a game within a game where each player has to decide whether they will focus on attack or defense during each round. The remaining mechanics such as movement, shooting, etc., are fairly standard. You can usually finish a four player game with under 40 figures in around two hours.

For this game we had a concubine and her escorts trapped in a compound outside a small village. The concubine and her son plus the escorts were going to break out and seek refuge outside of the village. Another warlord's forces, however, had surrounded the compound with

instructions not to let anyone in or out. A third force consisting of ninja were going to kill the concubine and her son along with anyone else who got in their way!

The guards were set on patrol, with small groups circling the compound. The ninja were allowed to position themselves for the attack and ran into some of the patrolling guards right away, setting off several melees on the first turn! The concubine and her escorts saw their chance and ran out of the compound. Unfortunately for them, two ninjas were waiting for this and attacked her escorts. By turn two there was fighting all over the village, with more soldiers rushing in from all angles.

The ninja took out several of the guards and were also engaged with the concubine's escorts at the same time. One of the guards took out two ninja, which was one of the highlights of the game, but his luck ran out against one of the concubine's escorts. By the end of turn 4 there were dead bodies all over the village and the fighting wasn't even halfway over!

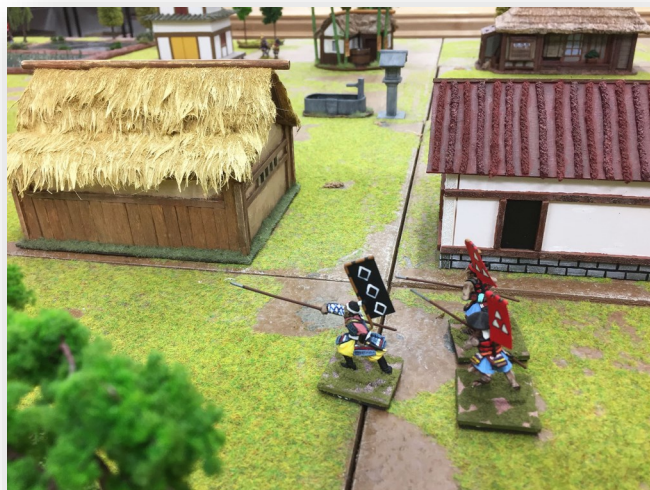
The concubine ran around the outside of the village and right into a group of guards, setting off a multi-turn melee with one of the guards actually taking control of the concubine, which was short lived. More of her escorts arrived and wrested control of her and her son in another

## Ronin Battle Report



round of melee. By this time there were very few figures left. The ninja were down to only two of them and the guards only had about three or four. Most of the better samurai were dead, killed off in titanic battles against each other.

In the end, the concubine and two escorts saw the way clear and escaped off the board for the victory. The ninja and patrolling guards had become so entangled in their melees that by the time they realized that they needed to break off and form a blocking force, it was too late. It would have been interesting if we had four players as that would have added to the confusion! Multi-sided skirmishes are always interesting and by the first few turns any plans have been thrown out and it's basically down to the combat. It's also interesting that in the heat of the action everyone forgets about their special skills on their rosters!





Several shots of the very confused action, with the ninja attacking everyone in sight, the warlord's forces trying to contain everyone near the compound area, and the concubine's escorts trying to break through! The game was played on a 6 x 4 table in around 2 hours, so it was pretty fast moving.

## Prison Break!

I've said this a number of times, but why we don't play The Sword & The Flame more than we do is beyond me. It is definitely one of our most popular games and we really have a great time with it. Although more Hollywood than actual colonial warfare on the frontier, it is a good break from the other games that we do play and it produces some great moments.

In this scenario set on the Northwest Frontier, a local tribal leader and holy man has been imprisoned in a fort controlled by the British and their Indian allies. Unbeknownst to the British, however, a group of Pathans disguised as villagers and traders has killed all of the sentries and set him free. There are more Pathans waiting outside of the fort to escort their escaped leader as well as an additional Pathan force beyond the pass entrance that will take him to safety. The only thing standing in their way is a fortified outpost that guards the entrance to the pass.

The Indian infantry platoon had felt something was coming and has stood to all night long. Now with dawn breaking they hear the alarms go off in the British fort and a mass of Pathans forming up on both sides. Their outpost has two gates that provide an entrance to the pass, although you could move through the rough terrain at 1D6 speed (which no one tried all game long!). The British had to spend two turns getting out of their barracks and into some kind of formation to begin the pursuit.

We usually play with the event deck, where we roll 1D6 and on a 5 or 6 pull an event card. This time, however, everyone decided that it would be far more fun to pull one every turn! This makes an already chaotic game even more crazy as things happen every turn that can vastly influence the game. There was also a Bengal Lancer patrol with a screw gun section that had been out scouting that returned right in the middle of the battle!

### British At Start Forces:

- 2 British infantry platoons (fort)
- 1 Indian infantry platoon (outpost)

### British Patrol:

- 2 Bengal lancer squadrons
- 1 screw gun section

### Pathans At Start Forces:

- 4 units of infantry
- 2 units of cavalry

The game began with a snowstorm (event) that fortunately only lasted one turn. However, it was replaced by a thunderstorm that went for several turns! These storms affected the firing ranges and allowed the Pathans to get close to the outpost without being under fire for a

## TSATF Battle Report



long time. The first few attempts to get over the high wall were failures, as was the explosives they were carrying (the Pathan force got four tries to blow a hole in the wall). After killing and wounding two of their own men with the explosives, the decided to go over the wall.

The Pathans hit the outpost on both sides, setting off a multi-turn melee that saw the Pathans take control of the outpost and both gates to the pass. The British were still trying to get sorted out at the fort, having undergone a series of events and bad die rolls that still had them in columns inside the fort! At one point they were able to line the front walls, but the thunderstorms and then dust clouds reduced firing to 12 inches.

Things were looking good for the Pathans as an easy victory until the Bengal Lancer patrol arrived. (cont. on p25)





(cont. from p24) The Lancers formed up and charged right away, crashing into the Pathan horse and driving them back. Just then, however, more Pathan reinforcements arrived and began forming up on the edge of the board. The British received reinforcements as well, but unfortunately they just added to the traffic jam at the fort.

The massive cavalry melee continued with the Pathan infantry rushing headlong into the attack. The Bengal Lancers continued to give better than they received, but were losing a few men here and there. We've used the Lancers several times in TSATF games and they've always done well, with this night being no exception. In one charge they destroyed a unit, but didn't suffer a single wound!

Things weren't looking good for the British, but another event had the force escorting the escaped leader conduct a glorious charge at the closest enemy! This seriously disrupted the Pathan plans as their units piled out of their now safely controlled outpost towards the advancing British infantry. This also, however, hurt the British in that one of the units went through a gate and came out on the flank of a Lancer unit. This set off another confused melee and when all was said and done the Pathans were fleeing, but the Lancer squadron was ruined and fell back.

Things got worse for the British when more Pathans showed up and now there was no way with the limited strength they had currently to contain the Pathans. The

main British force was just getting into the action, but it was too late and the game was called as a Pathan victory.

First off, I did a terrible job as referee! We hadn't played in awhile and I forgot all the positive modifiers for the Bengal Lancers! I also messed up the melee sequence for the first few as well, which shows that I'm playing too many games! Pulling an event card every turn was far more chaotic than we thought, so we'll go with an excellent suggestion that came up during the game to tailor the deck for the scenario, so we'll try that next time. Overall, though, it was another fun game and no one seemed to mind that we were doing things wrong for about half the game! Next time we'll try scaling ladders and try to seize the fort.



## Old Foes Meet Yet Again

Definitely not the first time we've had a WMA battle between the Romans and the Seleucids, but these games usually produce a close run contest. Yes, we only have Imperial Romans and not the Republican ones, but hopefully someday we'll get an army of those painted up! We also easily have forces for up to 2,000 points a side (and more), which makes for a good 4-5 player game. These two armies also have some unique strengths as well as weaknesses, which again produces some interesting contests.

For this game the Seleucid force was split into three since we had three players this evening for one side while the Romans had two. All three of the Seleucid players decided to go with the "heavy" list from the set of three that I brought along. This list uses not one, but two units of elephants, which is a bit dicey. The elephants have tremendous striking power and can roll a ton of dice in the first round of combat, which usually crushes an opponent. The down side is their cost. For what one unit of three elephants costs you can get two heavy cavalry, four or five units of infantry, or some other combination that may be more valuable. They also only add one to the break point while adding several other units means that your opponents will need to do more damage than usual.

To go along with the elephants, the Seleucids had a unit of cataphracts, two heavy cavalry, some bow armed cavalry, four units of archers, two skirmishers, some light infantry (can fight formed or skirmish), two units of imitation legions, Thorakites, and of course two units of elephants. With a break point of 10 this was a smaller than usual force in terms of the number of units, especially for 2,000 points. The Seleucids were also short on officers, having only two leaders and the overall general. A small, expensive, force with tremendous striking power.

The Romans had several legions,



backed by a core of auxiliary infantry that would add close support. This is a deadly combination in WMA and usually allows the Roman front line legions to stay in melee for long periods of time and win

most combats. The Romans also had archers, skirmishers, and artillery, but were short on high quality cavalry. As per their usual, the Romans would win with their legions in the center. With a break point of 13, the Romans had units to spare in a battle of attrition.

The Seleucid plan was to hold and skirmish on the left flank, so they positioned most of their light troops in that area. The pikes, archers, and elephants were in the center, while the right flank had the Seleucid heavy cavalry with the option of using some of the elephants which were near that flank as well. The overall idea was to tie down the Romans on the left, keep parity in the center, then crush the Romans on the right, which is strangely enough what happened! The Romans deployed in a basic formation, using what had worked for them over the years. Hold on the flanks, get the legions up in the center, crush the enemy infantry lines, and win



rolls kept them from intervening on the Seleucid right. On the Seleucid left, both sides could barely move anything and the terrain was creating some (cont. on p 27)



## WMA Battle Report

by breaking the other force.

The battle started slowly, with both sides failing their command rolls after a few successes, meaning that only a few units moved up in the first turn. By turn 2, however, the Seleucid heavy cavalry was in position to strike a blow. This was the pattern for the first several turns; i.e., the Seleucids move up on the right, charge their enemy, inflict a heavy, but not crippling blow, then fail most of their own savings throws! Not bad if you have more units than the enemy, but the most expensive units in the Seleucid force were being cut to pieces while not inflicting enough damage to finish off entire enemy units.

The Romans tried moving up the legions in support, but bad command



(cont. from p 26) problems in that the heavier forces were unable to get into the action.

Around turn 5 the Seleucids got a break when they charged a unit of elephants and two units of heavy cavalry, which wore down, then defeated most of the Romans in front of them. The legions moved up, then got entangled in a wild melee that saw flank charges from both sides, elephants pushed back, big victories, and in the end there were a few intact Seleucid units and a crushed Roman flank. The Seleucid pikes now advanced as the Romans drew back their formations into a semi-circle in the middle of the board, trying to hang on until either the Seleucid force hit their break point or the Roman right prevailed.

The Roman right, however, was having problems of its own. While they had some success driving back the Seleucid light forces with archery fire, they simply weren't doing enough damage. A charge by the Roman light cavalry was defeated by skirmishers and all other attempts to win a victory on that side of the battle were plagued with bad die rolls. For the Seleucids this was going according to plan and just tying down the Romans was going to give them a victory elsewhere on the battlefield.

Finally, the Seleucid pike units were in position and there were several tremendous melees that saw the legions pushed back, then shoved into an ever shrinking defensive perimeter. Under archer and skirmish fire, strong pike units to their

front, and their right flank bogged down, the Romans finally broke on turn 9 and the result was a Seleucid victory.

While the Seleucids had won a few victories over the Romans in our games, this was the first where everything went basically according to plan! Usually it goes down to the last unit or two that breaks, but the Seleucids still had units to spare. It also marks one of the few times that the legions were worn down and defeated in detail. Usually, it's the supporting cast that lets the Romans down, but in this game they sat on the sidelines! Also, the archers on both sides did very little except die to the man! Overall, this was a very fun game that worked great for five players. Including set up, take down, and 9 turns it was about 3 hours!



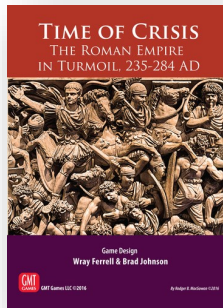
# Time of Crisis by GMT Games

## Game Review

Over the last several years there has definitely been a surge in what are termed “civ” type games, meaning games where the goal is to build a civilization, expand it through trade and war, and end up as the dominant empire in whichever area the subject covers. This would range from Mare Nostrum, Genesis, Space Empires, etc., to Euro type games like Seven Wonders and Roll Through the Ages. You can pretty much find almost anything you want in terms of how many players, specific periods, game length, and so on. Into this crowded arena comes a new game; Time of Crisis from GMT Games.

Time of Crisis covers the Roman Empire from 235AD to 284AD, when there were numerous emperors, barbarian invasions, etc., that threatened the existence of Rome. The map covers an area from Spain to England to Africa and all the way to the end of the Roman Empire in Syria. The map is broken down into areas called provinces, each with its own track that regulates a number of things for the game, most notably support. The mounted map is well done and while probably not the best map I’ve seen, it is functional and well laid out.

You also get a large number of components, including three counter sheets, several player reference cards, player mats, and two decks of cards. As is usual with GMT, everything screams quality and it is no different here. The rules are well laid out and surprisingly, is much shorter than you would think, especially with the game covering so much ground. Overall, it is a beautiful package that



once again shows GMT is at the top of the wargaming industry.

While the game can be played by less than 4 players, in my opinion it isn’t worth the effort as the 4 player game is where it works best. Each turn the players do the same things in sequence. First, you roll for a crisis, which could mean that barbarians begin to assemble for a possible invasion. You could also roll an event, many of which affect all of the players. There is also one result where each player gets an extra card for that turn. Speaking of turns, there is no set limit, rather each player is trying to get to 60 Legacy to win (40 for a shorter game). This may only take a few turns or in a close game it can go on for awhile.

Next up the player needs to use the cards that have been chosen for their hand that turn. The cards can contain instructions such as placing mobs in opposing provinces and they generate a number of points that can be used to build legions, attack enemies, create limes, build structures, or try to convert provinces to your cause. There are quite a few options and there’s no way to go over all of them here. The card management does take a few turns to get used to and you can quickly find yourself in a hole by choosing the wrong cards.

This is definitely a card management/deck building game where you need to embark on an overall strategy and stick with it. During the turn you generate support points, which can be used to purchase better cards or to get rid of poor cards. This creates some tough decisions, but if you don’t get rid of the lower rated cards you can get stuck with them in

some turns when you are rapidly trying to keep pace with the other players. Also, if you focus on military cards then you are firmly cemented on that path, but some bad combat rolls can doom you.

Finally, the player generates legacy points based upon how many provinces that they control plus military victories as well as building various structures. After this play

passes to the next player and they go through the turn sequence.

Combat is pretty simple and revolves around rolling a number of D6s based upon how many legions and militia units there are, usually against barbarian invaders, but you can attack another player. You never know when, where, and how many barbarians will invade each turn, which makes each player warily watch their border and keep back forces just in case! The barbarians are definitely one of the jokers in the deck and they can set you back if a large number of them arrive or you do poorly in combat against them.

On top of all that you have an ever changing political landscape, with players taking over Italia and declaring themselves emperor, undermining support for provincial governors, and still yet other players declaring themselves pretenders, plus rivals who can show up through events! The political chaos could be a

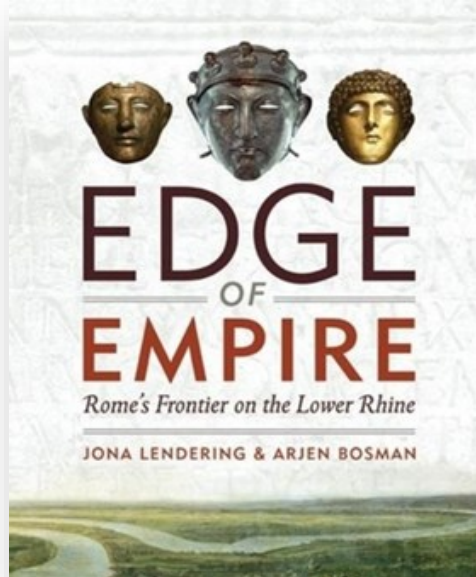


game unto itself and as a player you can certainly go down that path to victory. Also, ignore the political side of the game at your own peril!

So, you have random barbarian invasions, multiple paths to victory, interesting events, and a system that plays much faster than it looks, with most 4 player games rarely going over three hours. Are there any issues? For one, the system is so unique that it takes a few turns to figure it out. The rules themselves barely cover a dozen pages, so it’s not complex, but there are a series of interactions that take some time to figure out. Second, avoid only going to 40 on the legacy track as a few players can jump out quickly and never look back.

Overall, this is a fast playing game that is unique and has great replay value. If you’re into Roman history or civ type games, then Time of Crisis is highly recommended.





Personally I am fascinated by Ancient and Medieval history. I find it far more exciting than say, Napoleonic History, which is not my cup of tea. It is perhaps why I jumped on Aetius and Arthur when those rules were released for Saga. Not long after starting work on a Late Roman warband for it, I stumbled across *Edge of Empire: Rome's Frontier on the Lower Rhine* by Jona Lendering and Arjen Bosman. I thought this would be a fantastic source of inspiration for my Late Romans, Goths, and Saxons and so I picked up a copy.

The book covers the time period from the initial conquest of the Lower Rhine (Belgium, Netherlands, parts of France, and parts of Germany) up to right around Charlemagne. It chronicles the ebb and flow of the border, and its effects on the peoples on both sides of the Rhine.

While there is a lot of military information, the book does cover the associated fallout due to military action, and proposes (as some other modern works do) that feudalism is a Roman invention and not the result of a slide into 'darkness'. It was the Romans who invented the concept of the serf, and this seems to simply be one thing the invaders picked up, among many Roman ideas. The Romans implemented this concept in order to ensure there was enough food grown to support their frontier facing armies, which became an ever heavier burden on the state.

The area itself saw a great deal of economic development and then decline due to Roman influence or lack thereof. Belgium became a key financial base for the support of the Rhine legions and would later be used as a key source of power for Merovingian and Carolingian kings. Meanwhile, the border in the Netherlands would become porous enough that Rome would essentially abandon the line at times and eventually all together. The subsequent fracturing of an overlying command structure slowly saw parts of Germany and Holland decline in economic power from their heydays as major centers under Roman rule. The authors postulate that the Romans were willing to sacrifice the North as, even after centuries of Roman civilization; it was still where barbarians were.

The book also traces the inter-related nature between Germania Inferior and the North Sea. This is one of the reasons Belgium stayed relatively stable despite Rome eventually shifting the legions around and no longer needing the extensive grain network that Germania Inferior initially supplied for thousands of troops along the border. Perhaps, unintentionally, it starts to shape why various Germanic groups conquered post Roman Britain, and what brought the Danes across en-masse (if trading was occurring, these other groups would have started to learn of the wealth in Britain, been used to contact, known about the break down in leadership, and had known routes into it that would eventually pave the way for conquest). It perhaps paints a different picture than unknown folks showing up to raid an abbey in the North Sea. While that isn't the aim of this book, it

isn't hard to see shadows of it in the work that is presented (Britannia only receives mention in terms of how it relates to trade routes and migratory patterns, the waves of invasion are touched on, but the framework is there).

It does, however, suffer a little in the modern need to see similarities across nationalities. As a result it tends to perhaps discredit potentially valid previous theories under the idea that peoples on either side of the line were essentially the same. While there is a convincing case that the peoples across the border were not simple fur wearing barbarians, it is something else entirely to make them overly similar when clearly they were not (both sides seeing themselves as different in some fashion) and when those peoples did migrate in, the ruling caste tended to be anxious to try and cloak themselves with 'Roman' trappings to maintain power over the Roman survivors. The authors do note they have colored some of the interpretations, unknowingly, based on modern sentiments. So their honesty at the end of the book in that they are seeing certain aspects through today's lens is refreshing. Thus while there is some validity to their point, it is perhaps sold a bit too heavily.

In the end, if you are looking for an overview of life on the frontier, military combat, and the social/political fallout as a result of that, it is well worth a look. *Edge of Empire* is interspersed with lots of translated Roman texts (so that you can see how the Roman's viewed things in comparison with what archeology shows us), and good insight into what would have been periods of stability punctuated by an increasing jumble of chaos and ultimately collapse of the old order. Despite which everything didn't just disappear, but something fundamental clearly changed to the point that eventually the 'new comers' stopped all pretense at being 'Roman'.



## Saga: River Crossing

## Battle Report by Rob Coleman

This scenario is suitable for many periods. While our game involved Vikings vs English (Anglo-Danish), it could easily be Germans vs Romans, Scottish vs English, Greeks vs Greeks, etc.

The basic setup requires a watchtower and some acoutraments to form a camp with a river on one side of the board. One of the forces has encamped around the tower which overlooks a ford or bridge on the river. The other force is trying to claim the bridge and either force the enemy out of the watchtower or burn their camp (essentially depriving them of needed supplies and forcing them to withdraw anyways).

Our setup looked like the image below, but you could adjust it to fit your terrain:



The attacking force comes in on the side showed by the blue and yellow arrows, and deploys up to 6" onto the table. The majority should come on through the larger arrow, with a smaller group coming on at the smaller arrow. Each of the red and white boxes were tents for the defenders where they slept/supplies were stored. The two yellow and red circles were fires that the attackers could get brands from to burn down the tents/supplies. In the middle of that is the watchtower.

The defenders start within 6" of the watchtower/encampment. They need to hold the tower while moving a force out to protect the bridge which is their line of retreat. This scenario uses victory points with the following conditions instead of normal game victory rules.

Condition	Points
Control the watchtower at end of game	5
Control the bridge at end of game	5
Burn or Save a tent/supply location	3 points

To burn a tent/supply depot, the attackers have to move into base contact with a fire and can then burn a single tent/supply depot when they move into contact with it.

When playing this scenario I choose to set it during/ after the Battle of Stamford Bridge. This battle occurred a little ways inland, and not all of the Vikings would have been at the battle. Some would have guarded key points back along the line. In this case, the Vikings had a fortified tower that guarded a route back to their ships and an advance force of Anglo-Danish had been sent in to recapture it and block any retreat from Stamford. If the Vikings prevailed, at least some of their forces would escape, if they failed they would be cut off and die as they did historically.

We played using Saga, with 5 points per side. Each side had a warlord, two units of Hearthguard, 2 units of warriors, and a unit of bow armed levy. The Anglo-Danish had one unit of Dane Axe equipped Huscarls, and the Vikings had one unit of Berserkers.

The Anglo-Danes lost

the initiative and had to deploy first. Apparently they were still a little rushed in getting up north and had not been very sneaky in approaching the ford. They deployed with one unit of Warriors on the far side of the river, with both Hearthguard units on the near side of the river. The Warlord deployed near to the Levy and remaining unit of Warriors so that he could push them into battle as needed.

The Vikings, in the meantime deployed their Warlord and unit of berserkers so that they could quickly move down the road and then swing along the river to intercept the enemy Hearthguard. A stand of Warriors and a unit of Hearthguard setup to hold the line at the tower, and the levy were positioned behind the tower ready to rush in and com-

mand it's battlements. For this scenario, ranged units fired at double range if they occupied the tower. This meant the bow armed Levy, who are generally not reliable at holding positions, could rain shots down on advancing opposition.

Opening moves saw the Anglo-Danish slowly advance up trying to get their Levy in range of the opposing Viking

Hearthguard, while a group of Viking Warriors moved off in an attempt to flank the Anglo-Danish. Initially shooting from the tower was indecisive, causing only a single casualty on the AD Levy.

The other Viking Warrior group moved up to the base of the bridge, and would engage in a brutal back and forth for the next few turns with the Anglo-Danish Warriors on the far bank.

(cont. on p31) The



## Saga: River Crossing (cont.)

## Battle Report by Rob Coleman

Vikings won Initiative, as they generally did for most of the game, and slammed their Berserkers home into the first line of Anglo-Danish Hearthguard. The Warlord and his Berserkers made mince meat of their foes, only loosing two Berserkers in the process. They would follow this up by slaughtering the remaining

even managed to skewer the Viking Hearthguard trying to hold the gap in the rocks, preventing them from being more aggressive. Eventually they

would do in the Hearthguard while their Warriors and the Viking Warriors self annihilated each other.

Things were looking grim at this point in what we were already calling our bloodiest Saga match ever. The beleaguered AD Warriors on the far side eventually managed to whittle their Viking opponents down to a single man, who fell back with the Warlord towards the tower. The few stragglers setup camp on the bridge, as the AD Warlord and Levy moved into the camp. The Viking Levy continued to pump shots in, and score wounds, but not in sufficient quantities to stop the tents going up in flames.

At this point the Viking Warlord had made it back to camp, and bellowing a terrific war-cry he charged home against his opponent. The survivors on both sides wisely stood back as the two Warlords went toe to toe, only for the Viking Warlord to descend into Valhalla and the AD Warlord to survive bruised but alive.

With no remaining Saga dice at this point the game was called a win for the Anglo-Danish. While nu-

merically superior, the Viking Levy could generate no dice, and we decided that they surrendered to the pitiful Anglo-Danish survivors. In total 3 Warrior units were wiped out with the remaining one at half strength, 4 Hearthguard units were killed to the man, 1 Warlord went to Valhalla, and three quarters of a Levy unit never made it back to their farms. As with his-



Hearthguard while loosing the last two Berserkers, effectively stopping the Anglo-Danish efforts to support their comrades across the river. On the Bridge the Vikings initially pushed the Danes back across the bridge, before loosing the follow up engagement and being shoved back across to their own side of the bridge.

The Viking Thralls continued pumping shots into the AD Levy, and while surprisingly accurate, the AD Levy kept making their saving throws, so that at this point only three of them were down, with their Warlord and Warriors ready to tackle the incoming Viking groups. Indeed, the AD Levy



tory, the Anglo-Danish forces successfully cut off the Viking line of retreat, but it cost them dearly. Perhaps also mimicking history, in that by the time the Normans would land, many of their best warriors were already wounded or tired out from the epic slug-fest in the North.





*Troubled Border is a fictional campaign system set in the Victorian Colonial era. This campaign represents a revolt by the local tribes in the area to overthrow the country's government which in turn would force the colonial power supporting them to leave the region. During the campaign both sides will have different objectives that they will try to meet. The tribes are attempting to spread their revolt, seize towns, and force the local government to collapse. A victory point track shows their progress and once it reaches a certain level the colonial power decides that it's too much trouble to stay in the country and the rebels win. The government, meanwhile, must carefully balance how many resources are spent on putting down the rebellion, when to ask for aid, and on top of that come up with a military strategy to end the revolt.*

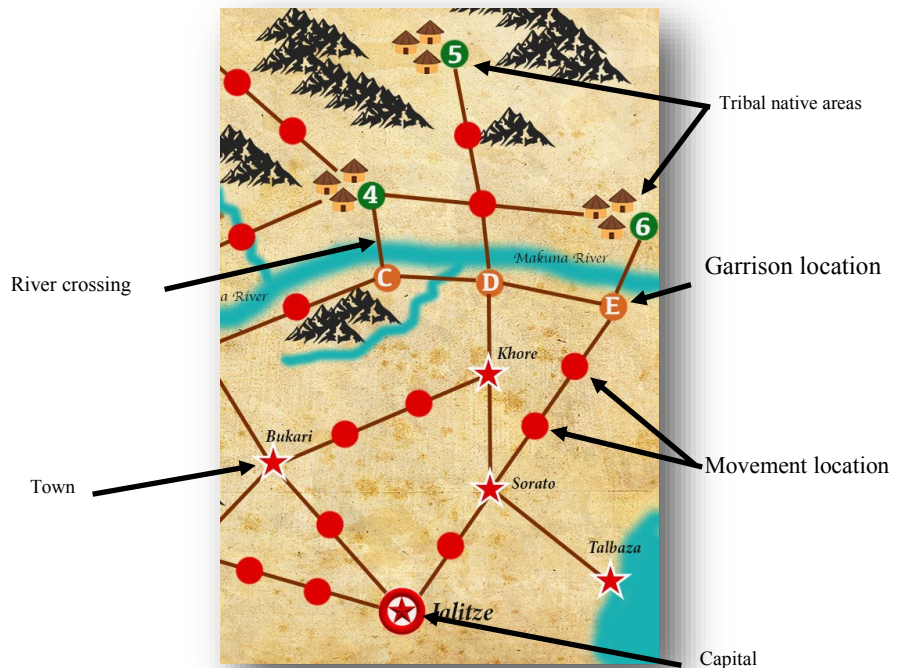
*Any set of rules for the period can be used as the unit scale is flexible and the setting can be adapted to the forces that you or your group have at their disposal. For example, if you wish to have a Northwest Frontier setting, the natives would be Pathans, the askari forces Indians, and the colonial power would be British. If you only have a few units that are individually based, then rules such as *The Sword & The Flame* might be a good choice, while if you have large forces with units representing companies or battalions, something like *Battles For Empire* or *Black Powder* would be suitable. These campaign rules are also something of a game kit, so players should feel free to add optional rules and/or change things to make the campaign more amenable for their group.*

A fictional campaign system that  
can be used with any set of  
Colonial miniatures rules

# The Map

The campaign map represents the fictional country of Zalfari, a country that is part of a vast colonial empire. The area to the south of the Makuna River has been pacified and is under local government control, while the area north of the river is still relatively wild, with several tribal areas always teetering on the edge of revolt. The Makuna is the great divide in the country, with the government controlling the river through garrisons and gunboats that patrol the river, although there are several areas where it can be crossed. The campaign map is used to regulate movement for units and show control of the various villages and tribal areas.

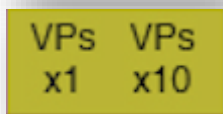
*Players should print out as many copies of the map as they need for planning and keeping a record of their battles as well as moves.*



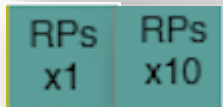
# Counters



Turn and Revolt Level



Victory Point markers



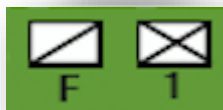
Resource Points markers



Tribal area in revolt



Town under rebel control



Native units-cavalry & infantry



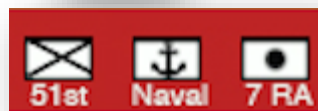
Askari forces-cavalry and infantry units



River flotilla



Column marker



Imperial units



Garrison and garrison destroyed markers

*Counters are used to track the location of the combat units of both sides as well as the status of various functions, such as the turn, victory points, resource points, and more. The counters are completely optional and dry eras markers on a laminated map could be used instead.*

## Set up

To begin play, position the following units on the map and the corresponding markers on the game tracks:

- Set up the garrisons one per location, matching the letter on the garrison counter with the letter on the map. Garrison F goes in the capital (Jalitze).
- Place 1 askari infantry and 1 askari artillery in the capital (Jalitze).
- Place 2 askari cavalry and 5 askari infantry in the various towns, one unit per town.
- Place the Flotilla at any one of the garrison locations.
- Put the Turn marker in the 1 space and the Revolt marker in the 1 space of the Game turn/Revolt track.
- Put the Victory Points markers in the 0 space and the Resource Points x1 marker in the 5 space on the VPs/RPs track.
- Roll 1D6 and put a Revolt marker on that location to start the campaign. Roll on the Revolt table to see what native forces begin at that location.
- The game is ready to begin and follow the Sequence of Play for Turn 1.

*This is the basic set up and probably should be used the first time you try this campaign. The premise is that one native tribal area is in rebellion and that the local government forces are spread across the country in barracks. Can the askaris concentrate and defeat the native forces before more areas (and more forces) go into revolt?*

*The setup could certainly be adjusted depending upon how many figures your group has, the number of players, and the size of battles that you would like to play. You can experiment with random locations for the starting forces, begin with a punitive expedition under way, or simply beef up both sides to create large battles on the very first turn.*

## Sequence of Play

Each turn follows a strict sequence of play. Players should go through each phase in order until they reach the end of the turn, which will complete one full turn. Play then proceeds with the start of a new turn. The Native side will be the first to move in each turn.

1. **Revolt Phase:** The Native side rolls on the Revolt Table to see if any additional tribal areas join the revolt against the government. If additional areas do join the revolt, roll on the Starting Native Forces table to determine which units are placed in the newly revolting area.
2. **Native Movement Phase:** The Native side moves all of its forces.
3. **Imperial/Askari Movement Phase:** The Imperial/Askari side moves all of its forces.
4. **Resolve Battles Phase:** In any movement location where there are forces from both sides, resolve battles.
5. **Supply Phase:** Imperial/Askari forces check their supply status.
6. **Native Replacement & Reinforcement Phase:** The Native side rolls on the Replacement & Reinforcement Table to see if any new units join the revolt and/or if any units that have suffered losses can be brought back up to full strength.
7. **Resource Points Phase:** The Imperial/Askari side determines the number of resource points they receive this turn and can then spend those points on new units, bringing depleted units back up to full strength, and unit maintenance/supply.
8. **Revolt Track & Victory Points Determination Phase:** The state of the revolt and Victory Points are added/subtracted on the appropriate tracks.
9. **Advance the Turn Marker:** Begin a new turn.

*By studying the Sequence of Play, you can clearly see that the Native side has one major advantage in that they get to see if any new tribal areas join the revolt, then move first in the turn. If new forces join the revolt and move in conjunction with their existing forces, it can change the balance of power in one area of the map very quickly. The Imperial/Askari side has no way of knowing what will happen in the early turns, so they must position their forces centrally to respond to any developing threat.*

*Unlike in many board or campaign games, possible reinforcements for one side (in this case the Imperial/Askari side) do not appear at the start of the turn, which has some pros and cons. The disadvantage is that you can't use the movement phase to quickly reinforce an area while the advantage is that you can purchase new units and place them in critical areas if there is an open supply path.*

*Using the Sequence of Play to your advantage is key to winning the campaign. It will take a few turns to get used to the various phases and it will affect your plans each turn.*

# Revolt

*The Revolt track is the key to the game for both sides. While the number is high, chances are most, if not all of the tribal areas will revolt. At that point, the Imperialist/Askari side needs to do everything possible to put down the revolt by occupying the tribal areas quickly and leaving a unit to occupy the area. However, if there are a shortage of units and the tribal areas are left unoccupied, there is a chance that they could revolt for a second time. Once the Revolt track marker reaches 0, the native side has lost the campaign and the game is over, no matter how many victory points they have at that time. Also, occupying the tribal areas before they revolt, while tempting as it places forces that can quickly crush a revolt near the front, it can be catastrophic in triggering more revolts.*

Each turn during the Revolt Phase the native side will check to see if any additional tribal areas join the revolt. The game begins with one tribal area in revolt and on the Revolt/Turn track there is a Revolt marker in the 2 space. This track determines the possibility of any new tribal areas joining the revolt. As the marker moves up and down the track the chances of additional tribal areas joining the revolt will increase/decrease depending upon where the marker is on the track.

During the Revolt Phase, roll 1D10 for each tribal area that has not joined the revolt. If the number rolled is equal or less than the number where the Revolt marker is on the track, then a Revolt marker is placed on that tribal area. Immediately roll on the Starting native Forces table to see how many units are placed in that tribal area.

A tribal area stays in revolt until it is occupied by Imperial/Askari forces. Once occupied, that tribal area no longer rolls on the Revolt table each Revolt Phase. If the tribal area is left unoccupied by Imperial/Askari forces, the tribal area could possibly revolt again during the campaign, but there are modifiers on the table for areas revolting a second time. For purposes of the campaign, once a tribal area has revolted twice and occupied twice, it will no longer revolt for the remainder of the campaign. If Imperial/Askari forces occupy a tribal area before it revolts the first time, there is a positive modifier to the Revolt track.

# Movement



*Flotillas represent a small fleet of Colonial era gunboats, armed steamers, and transports. For purposes of the campaign they are more*

*than sufficient to control any point along the river when they are moved there.*

*Their presence makes it impossible for Native forces to cross the river there and they can also aid Imperial/Askari forces by moving columns across the river into the tribal areas. However, the river is long and there are only so many ships, so they cannot be everywhere in the game.*



*Columns are the way that Imperial/Askari forces cross the river and conduct operations in the tribal areas. Columns are not only the military*

*units, but the logistical train that would be needed to support their actions in the field. Their movement is fairly slow, due to the number of wagons, pack horses, etc., that would need to be deployed to carry the supplies, water, ammunition, etc., needed for punitive campaigns. In battle they should be represented by model wagons, horses, civilians, etc., and their loss should be catastrophic and force the column to retreat or be disbanded.*

Units can move from location to location on the map using Movement Points (MPs). Towns, garrisons, tribal areas, etc., are all considered to be termed locations. *Ex., moving from Garrison B to Bukari and then on to Jalitze would be 4 movement locations.* The movement points are as follows:

Infantry 3 MP

Cavalry 4 MP

Artillery 3 MP

Columns 2 MP

Flotilla No limit

Each location moved to costs one MP. If a unit enters a location occupied by an enemy unit(s), that unit must stop its current movement. If a Native force has a unit ratio of at least 7:1 (except against garrisons, which cannot move), the Native side at their option can force the Imperialist/Askari unit(s) to retreat from their current location. This can occur any number of times up to either a) the Native force runs out of MPs, or b) the Imperial/Askari units retreat to a location where the force ratio is no longer 7:1 or greater.

Rivers can be crossed wherever a river crossing is marked on the map. It takes an entire turn to cross a river, unless there is a flotilla present at that location and then it is only 1 MP. If a flotilla is present at a movement location, Native forces cannot cross at that location. If a location across the river is enemy controlled, then that location must be attacked during the combat phase. If the combat is successful and the defending side is either destroyed or retreats, then the winning side is assumed to have successfully crossed the river and is placed at that location.

Columns are the only way that Imperial/Askari forces can cross and operate on the other side of the river. They must first move to a location that serves as an assembly point. Once all forces are at that location a Column marker is placed on them and their movement is completed for that turn. The Imperial/Askari side can only have two columns in the game at the same time. Columns must be paid for with Resource Points.

# Resolve Battles Phase

*There are several ways to set up the terrain for the battle. Before that, however, the more obvious items need to be considered. If the battle is taking place at the capital, town, garrison location, tribal area, etc., then that needs to be the focal point of the terrain and set up first on the table. A map or drawing should be made of the setup so that if a battle takes place at that location again the setup will be consistent. After that there are three ways to set up the terrain:*

1. *Have a neutral party lay out the terrain. This is by far the preferred method as it will create numerous challenges for both the attacker and defender.*
2. *Both sides agree on the placement of various terrain pieces. The idea here is to create an interesting and challenging set up for both sides.*
3. *Both sides write down how many pieces of terrain they would like to see, then add up the total and divide by 2. Roll this many times using the Terrain Set Up Table.*

*Use the terrain section of the rules that you are using for the campaign to help identify the types of terrain that fit closest to the Terrain Set Up Table. The idea of course is to provide interesting battles, so the terrain may need to be adjusted to fit the size of the table being used as well as what your gaming group has available.*

*The Makuna River may be featured in several battles, particularly early in the campaign when Native forces attack garrisons. This river should be at least one foot wide if playing in 15mm and possibly 18 inches to two feet wide if using 25mm figures (or even larger). It is a considerable obstacle, but not un-crossable, and should be the focal point of any battle with locations featuring a river crossing.*

*If the terrain available to your group permits, each garrison and tribal area could be laid out differently, to provide some variety and to create some unique challenges with attack and defense. Again, it is important to map or draw the battle map so that if there is a battle there again later in the campaign, the terrain can be set up exactly like the first battle.*

When there is a location on the map where both sides have forces, the following sequence needs to be completed:

1. **Accept Battle**-If both sides agree to have battle, then proceed to step 2. If one side or the other decides to not have a battle, they must retreat to the nearest unoccupied location (towards the capital for Imperial/Askari forces or towards a tribal area for Native forces). If one side or the other has cavalry superiority there may be losses involved.
2. **Set Up Terrain**-Use one of the methods described on the left sidebar to set up terrain for the battle.
3. **Conduct Battle**-Use the rules decided upon for the campaign to conduct the battle.
4. **Retreat & Losses**-Loser retreats and losses are administered.

## Accepting Battle

If one side decides to not accept battle, they must retreat as described above. Compare the number of cavalry units in both sides forces and consult the Pursuit Table to determine if there are any losses to the retreating side. If the side that retreats has cavalry superiority there are no losses. *Ex., A Native force with 10 units enters a location with 2 Imperial/Askari units. The Imperial/Askari side decides to fall back in the face of this larger force, so the Imperial/Askari force is retreated one location back and there is a die roll on the Pursuit Table. The Natives have 1 cavalry unit and the Imperial/Askari force has none, so the die roll is on the +1 line of the table.*

## Conduct Battle

This is primarily up to the players in terms of setup, baselines, length of the battle, etc., and the rules that your gaming group has chosen for the campaign will determine many of these items. The overriding rule is to be consistent for each battle that occurs.

## Retreat & Losses

Once a side has lost a battle, it must retreat. For the attacker, that is the location from where it advanced to the battle, while if it is the defender they must either a) retreat towards the capital if Imperial/Askari, or b) towards a tribal area if Native. Use the Pursuit Table to determine additional losses for the retreating force. If the side that retreats has cavalry superiority there are no losses. Once the battle is completed, including any losses from pursuit, both sides roll on the Permanent Losses Table to determine the true extent of their losses for that battle. *Note: This simulates units rallying, rounding up stragglers, lightly wounded returning, etc.*

## Attacking Garrisons

Garrisons are a unique case for resolving battles in that often at the start of the campaign the Native forces may need to attack at a river crossing. When setting up the terrain the garrison should consist of a few buildings representing the barracks, supplies, armory, etc., inside some sort of fort or entrenched defensive position that covers the river crossing.

Native forces have several options for attacking the garrison:



1. **Attack from another location from across the river, i.e., from Garrison B to Garrison A.** In this case the river might be on the flank of the battle, but there is no contested crossing.
2. **A contested crossing.** In this scenario the Natives are assumed to have built rafts, small boats, a temporary bridge, etc., or a combination of all of them to force their way across the river.
3. **Flank attempt.** In this scenario the Native side decides how many units will cross further down river and attempt to flank the garrison in conjunction with a contested crossing. For each unit sent on the flank attempt, roll 1D6. On a 1 the unit is swept down-river and permanently lost, on a 2-4 the attempt fails, and on a 5 or a 6 the unit successfully crosses and enters the battle from one of the garrison's flanks.

## Supply Phase

Native forces do not have to trace supply during the campaign. This is for two reasons; first, it is much easier on the players as they only have to worry about one side tracing supply. Second, Native forces are assumed to be operating in familiar territory, would get help from sympathetic villagers, and would carry enough supplies to sustain their limited operations. Columns are assumed to have a large supply train attached to their combat forces.

Native forces do not have to check supply each turn. Imperial/Askari forces, however, need to check supply each turn. Each Imperial/Askari unit or stack of units, including garrisons, must be able to trace a supply line to either the capital, Jalitze, or to the port town of Talbaza. The supply line must be a continuous string of locations and cannot enter a location occupied by Native forces. If an Imperial/Askari unit is unable to trace a line of supply, it should have a Supply 1 marker placed on it. The movement of that unit is reduced by 1MP for the following turn. If an Imperial/Askari unit is out of supply for a second consecutive turn, the marker will be changed to Supply 2. The unit has its movement reduced by 2MPs on the following turn and roll 1D6 for each unit with a Supply 2 marker. On the roll of a 6 it is eliminated. If an Imperial/Askari unit is unable to trace supply for a 3rd consecutive Supply Phase it is eliminated.

Columns and the Flotilla do not have to trace supply.

## Native Replacement & Reinforcement Phase

*This represents tribes, clans, and groups arriving from areas outside the map to join the revolt as well as a constant stream of new recruits that can be used as a replacement pool for units that have been involved in battle.*

Each turn the Native side will roll on the Replacement & Reinforcement Table, which will possibly generate new units and/or replacement points that can be used to rebuild units that have taken losses in battle. New units are placed at any tribal area that is currently in revolt. The counters provided for Native forces are at a set limit, so if they are all in play no new units will be received. Each replacement point will rebuild one native unit back to full strength. Replacement points cannot be carried over from turn to turn, so if they cannot be used on that turn they are permanently lost.

## Resource Points Phase

*Imperial loans may seem like an easy path to victory for the Imperial/Askari side as it allows forces to be built quickly. However, the cost in Victory Points can be high and in a short game it can prove to be catastrophic, especially if the Revolt Track cannot be brought down quickly.*

Each turn the Imperial/Askari side will receive a number of Resource Points (RPs) that must be used to pay for troops in the field, rebuild units, and to purchase additional units. Add up the number of towns that are controlled by the Imperial/Askari side, pay for maintenance of troops, then any RPs remaining can be used for other purchases or they can be saved by marking them on the Resource Track. Loans of any RP amount can be granted by the Imperial authorities, but there is a cost in Victory Points. Newly purchased units are placed in the capital, unless it is Native controlled, then any town.

## Revolt Track & Victory Points Determination Phase

### Game Length

*If the Revolt Track ever reaches 0, then the native side loses, no matter how many VPs they have at that point. Players can decide how many turns the campaign will be, then compare the number of VPs the Native side has at that point to the VP Determination Table. Also, if the Native side hits the automatic win VP total at any point the campaign is over.*

The final phase of the turn revolves around the status of the Revolt Track and calculating the +/- for Victory Points (VPs) for the just completed turn. For the Revolt Track, go down the list of modifiers on the Revolt Table and adjust the marker on the track accordingly. For VPs, do the same with the Victory Point Table and adjust the markers on the track. **Only the Native side earns VPs.** All of the modifiers are cumulative based upon what occurs during each individual turn. *Ex., the VP marker is currently at 21. The Native side captures a town, destroys a garrison, but loses a major battle during the turn. The native side would earn 8 points for the town and garrison, but lose 5 points for the battle, with a net result of +3. The VP marker is moved to 24 on the track.*

# Imperial Intervention

*The Imperial government would of course not like to intervene in the rebellion, but it must also look after its colonial interests. The decision to land Imperial forces will come at a cost in VPs and means that the chance of the tribal areas revolting increases due to the presence of foreign troops. They will add a lot of firepower, but will also soak up precious RPs.*

*The Naval infantry unit is attached to warships just off the coast as Talbaza cannot be allowed to fall into Native hands since it is the only port in the country. The die roll for additional Imperial units represents these forces needing to be transported from across the Empire, so they will arrive at various times and may be too late to save the country.*

Imperial intervention, i.e., the deployment of Imperial troops (the red counters), occurs in one of two ways:

- 1) The Imperial/Askari side decides to intervene militarily in the rebellion. The Naval infantry unit is immediately placed in Talbaza and reinforcements are rolled for starting on the following turn.
- 2) The Native side moves forces to a location adjacent to Talbaza. At this point the game is temporarily stopped and the Naval infantry unit is placed in Talbaza, thus triggering Imperial intervention. The game turn then continues.

Once Imperial intervention has been triggered, move the Revolt Track marker 2 spaces to the right. During the Resources Points Phase of the following turn, roll 1D6 for each Imperial unit that has not been deployed to Talbaza. On the roll of a 6 the unit is placed in Talbaza. This continues until there are no more Imperial units available. Maintenance must be paid for all Imperial units that are currently deployed and RPs can be used to bring them back up to strength if they've taken losses in battle.

If a battle is fought in Talbaza, Imperial ships adjacent to Talbaza are counted for purposes of the battle as being able to provide two batteries of artillery. If Talbaza is seized by the Native side, any Imperial reinforcements that arrive are assumed to be off the coast and Talbaza must be seized with an amphibious assault for them to be deployed.

## Optional Rules

### Victory Conditions

There are so many variables with the Revolt and Victory Point tracks that there is no way to know if the game is balanced or not. Feel free to add new modifiers, change the existing ones, or recalculate the VP totals if that is what works best for your group.

### Starting Forces

You can also adjust the starting forces if you would like a shorter game or see what would happen if the campaign was further along. An example of this would be having two or three tribal areas already in revolt or several garrisons have been overrun and Imperial intervention is triggered. If your group has large forces you could double the number of units that begin in the campaign.

### Unit Quality

A good way to balance the campaign is to add unit quality. Give each side a number of elite units as well as some that would be graded as green or militia. This will definitely add some unpredictability to the campaign as well as to give players a chance to amass some elite units for a

critical part of the campaign. Players could also track the experience of units and raise their quality depending upon their performances in battle.

### Hidden Movement

To make things interesting, the campaign could use hidden movement. Both players would write out their movement orders, then do some type of sequential movement, perhaps rolling D100 for each force that wishes to move and then move in order from highest to lowest. Once units are revealed they would not revert to hidden unless they could break contact with the enemy.

### Leaders & Chit Pull

Another way to add an interesting variation to the movement system for the campaign is to use leaders along with a chit pull system. Basically, the Native side would get perhaps a leader for each tribal area in revolt, while the Imperial/Askari side might only get a few. Units could not move unless they were stacked with a leader. Each leader would also get a movement chit that is thrown into a cup at the start of each turn. When that lead-

er's movement chit is drawn, the leader and the units he is stacked with could then move. This will definitely add some chaos to the campaign and many forces could be pinned before getting to move and it makes the chit pull critical in the overall scope of the campaign.

Leaders could also be rated for how many units they can command, a modifier for sieges, terrain choice, etc., and maybe a special ability. You could also have up to a dozen prepared leaders that could be used in the campaign, then when one is needed they are randomly drawn from a pool of available leaders.

### River Flotilla

In the campaign the flotilla serves only a few minor purposes. This could be greatly expanded upon by allowing the flotilla to patrol the river, possibly interfering with any native crossing or attack on a garrison. Boats could be captured and/or sunk in battle, plus the Native side could be allowed to purchase a shore battery or two to protect their tribal areas. This is an area that could be greatly expanded, depending upon how much complexity the players wish to add.

## Optional Rules (cont.)

## Sieges

Instead of attacking garrisons or Imperial/Askari forces in towns, Native forces could choose to start a siege. The requirements should be that the besieging force has at least an equal number of units to the force in the garrison or the town. Place a Siege 1 marker on the location during the Resolve Battles Phase. At the end of the turn roll 1D6 and on a 1 that location surrenders and any Imperial/Askari forces present are considered destroyed and must be paid for as new units if brought back into the campaign. During each subsequent Resolve Battles Phase add another marker, such as Siege 2, Siege 3, and so on, always needing to roll the number on the siege marker or less to conduct a successful siege.

Depending upon the interest level of your gaming group, sieges can become a game by themselves. There could be sorties, breakout attempts, forces could try to lift the siege, Native forces may be needed elsewhere and have to withdraw, and so on. You would also have to modify the current supply system in the rules as garrisons, towns, etc., may or may not have

enough supplies to withstand a siege.

## Fortifications

Allow Imperial/Askari forces to build entrenchments and/or fortifications at locations for Resource Points. Entrenchments, which might include some redoubts, should be fairly cheap, with the option to expend more RPs to upgrade the entrenchments to fortifications, which will also impact the location's ability to withstand a siege, so if you are using the optional siege rules, they will need to be modified as well.

## Events

To add even more chaos and uncertainty to the campaign, create an Event Table or a set of event cards that need to be checked each turn. Events could include a temporary truce, more Native units flocking to the revolt, withdrawal of Imperial units due to a crisis in another part of the globe, and so on. There should be a good balance of events, pro and con, for each side as well as some that would affect both sides, such as tropical storms that stop all movement or extreme heat that would reduce movement or hamper

supply lines.

### Additional Reinforcements or Allies

Allow both sides to roll for extra units or forces that would join the campaign. For example, you could set a VP threshold where if the Natives achieve that mark another tribe from off board joins their revolt with a random number of units. Likewise for the Imperial forces where a country friendly to the local government sends forces to put down the revolt to keep peace in the region. Several reinforcement tables could be constructed to handle various scenarios.

## Another Colonial Power

If you have the miniatures, then adding another colonial power to the campaign would definitely make things more interesting. They could enter from the western side of the map in what would create a three sided campaign, with the new colonial power trying to seize the country while helping the other power put down the revolt. Meanwhile, the Natives would be trying to pit both colonial powers against each other and pick off stranded units where possible.

## Designer's Notes

Campaigns, particularly colonial ones, have always been a favorite of mine. The strange thing is that I've only played in one over the last 40 years!

However, I still read about actual campaigns during the Victorian era as well as old gaming magazine articles about fictional campaigns, hoping to someday run one again.



The colonial era is perfect for campaigns and this system is fairly simple, designed to be set up and played without needing to know an entire rulebook, filled with lots of things that may never happen. That's why there are so many optional rules discussed at the end as the players can pick and choose what level of realism and complexity that they wish to use while playing the campaign.

The good thing about fictional colonial campaigns is that you can pretty much use any figures that you have with any type of rules. If you have Zulus and Egyptians, then use those forces! If your units are all based for The Sword & The Flame, then this will be a small scale revolt, with various platoons guarding critical locations. If your forces are Jack Powder, then these are les between battalions or regi-  
-nt native hordes.

Colonial era battles are about beleaguered garrisons, gunboats navigating dangerous rivers, small forces facing a tidal wave of natives, and much more. Both sides should strive to make the battles interesting by how they place the terrain and turn

gaming night into more of an event rather than a tournament game. Of course, if you can get an impartial person to set things up ahead of time or map out locations, all the better.

The main idea behind a colonial campaign, and for that matter any type of miniatures campaign, is to have fun and experience something unique in the hobby. Pouring over maps, coming up with a plan, deciding where to fight battles, etc., are all factors not seen on most regular gaming nights. I've said this before, but some of my fondest memories about being in this hobby are the campaign games that I've participated in. The uncertainty, councils of war, and unique battles are something that every miniatures gamer should get to try at least once in their lifetime. This is simple system, so please try it and have fun.

## Campaign Map



# Troubled Border Reference Card

## Revolt Table

Roll 1D10 for **each** tribal area not in revolt. If the number rolled is less than or equal to the current Revolt level on the track, that area joins the revolt.

Move the Revolt Track marker up/down according to the following events:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Marker +/-</u>
Each tribal area that joins the revolt	+1
Each garrison destroyed/occupied	+1
Each town occupied	+1
Tribal area occupied prior to revolting	+2
Capital occupied	+3
Tribal area reconquered/occupied	-1
Each garrison/town reoccupied	-1
Imperial forces intervene	+2
No tribal area in revolt (each turn)	-1
<u>Die Roll Modifier</u>	
Tribal area revolting a second time	-3

## Starting Native Forces Table

Roll 1D6 for each tribal area that has revolted. The units listed below appear immediately in that area.

<u>Die Roll</u>	<u>Units</u>
1	2 infantry, 1 cavalry
2	2 infantry
3	1 infantry, 1 cavalry, 1 artillery
4	2 infantry, 1 cavalry, 1 artillery
5	3 infantry
6	2 infantry, 2 cavalry

*Note: The counter mix is a set limit on how many units the Native side can have on the map at any one time. If a result is rolled and there are not sufficient units of the type that were rolled, there can be no substitution of other types of units.*

## Movement Point Allowance

Infantry 3 MP  
Cavalry 4 MP  
Artillery 3 MP  
Columns 2 MP  
Flotilla No limit

## Sequence of Play

- Revolt Phase:** The Native side rolls on the Revolt Table to see if any additional tribal areas join the revolt against the government. If additional areas do join the revolt, roll on the Starting Native Forces table to determine which units are placed in the newly revolting area.
- Native Movement Phase:** The Native side moves all of its forces.
- Imperial/Askari Movement Phase:** The Imperial/Askari side moves all of its forces.
- Resolve Battles Phase:** In any movement location where there are forces from both sides, resolve battles.
- Supply Phase:** Imperial/Askari forces check their supply status.
- Native Replacement & Reinforcement Phase:** The Native side rolls on the Replacement & Reinforcement Table to see if any new units join the revolt and/or if any units that have suffered losses can be brought back up to full strength.
- Resource Points Phase:** The Imperial/Askari side determines the number of resource points they receive this turn and can then spend those points on new units, bringing depleted units back up to full strength, and unit maintenance/supply.
- Revolt Track & Victory Points Determination Phase:** The state of the revolt and Victory Points are added/subtracted on the appropriate tracks.
- Advance the Turn Marker:** Begin a new turn.

## Native Reinforcements/Replacements

Roll 1D6 to receive the following reinforcements/replacements.

<u>Die roll</u>	<u>Units/Replacements</u>
1	1 infantry/1 repl.
2	1 cavalry/2 repl.
3	1 artillery/2 repl.
4	2 infantry/3 repl.
5	2 infantry/3 repl.
6	4 replacements

## Pursuit Table

Cav +	1	2	3	4	5	6
0	0	0	10	10	20	25
+1	0	10	15	20	25	30
+2	10	20	25	30	35	40

Losses are % of retreating force

# Troubled Border Reference Card

## Terrain Set Up Table

<u>Die Roll (2D6)</u>	<u>Terrain Piece</u>
2	Impassable/Rocks
3	Large Hill
4	Small Hill
5	Light Woods
6	Heavy Brush
7	Fields
8	Small Hill
9	Heavy Brush
10	Dry River Bed
11	Light Woods
12	Large Hill

## Permanent Losses Table

<u>Die Roll (2D6)</u>	<u>Losses (Winner/Loser)</u>
2	10/100
3	20/80
4	30/70
5	40/60
6	50/50
7	50/50
8	60/50
9	70/50
10	80/40
11	90/40
12	100/30

## VP Determination Table

0-10	Native side loses and fades from history
11-20	Native side slowly loses over the years
21-35	Draw. Rebellion goes on for years.
36-45	Rebellion will eventually sweep the country in a long war of attrition.
45-55	Government collapses and Imperialist side must commit more resources.
56+	Automatic Victory

## Resource Points

### Costs

Maintenance	1 per 5 units
Bring unit up to full strength	2
Infantry unit	3
Cavalry unit	4
Artillery unit	5
Flotilla	8
Rebuild Garrison	5
Prepare Column	2

1. Collect resource points
2. Pay maintenance
3. Build units
4. Pay for Columns
5. Carry over points on the Resource Track.

### Resource Points per Turn

Each Town	+1
Capital (Jalitze)	+3
Imperial loan	+?

## Victory Points Table

Capture town	+5
Capture Talbaza	+10
Capture capital	+15
Destroy garrison	+3
Win major battle	+5
Imperial Loan	+10 per 5RPs
Town recaptured	-5
Talbaza recaptured	-10
Capital recaptured	-15
Lose major battle	-5
Tribal area occupied	-5

*A major battle is any combat where both sides have at least five units present.*














































































## Reminders

- Flotillas prevent Native river crossings at the location where they are deployed.
- Imperial/Askari forces can cross the river with the aid of a Flotilla for 1MP.
- Columns are the only way that Imperial/Askari forces can cross the river into the tribal side of the map.
- Only Imperial/Askari units need to be checked for supply each turn.

## Imperial Intervention

- 1) The Imperial/Askari side decides to intervene militarily in the rebellion. The Naval infantry unit is immediately placed in Talbaza and reinforcements are rolled for starting on the following turn. +2 on the Revolt Track.
  - 2) The Native side moves forces to a location adjacent to Talbaza. At this point the game is temporarily stopped and the Naval infantry unit is placed in Talbaza, thus triggering Imperial intervention. The game turn then continues. +2 on the Revolt Track.
- Roll 1D6 every Resources Phase for each Imperial unit that has yet to arrive. On a 6 they are deployed in talbaza.

## Counters & Game Tracks

 A	 B	 C	 D	 E	 F	Turn	Revolt	VPs x1	VPs x10	RP x1	Supply 1
 1st	 2nd	 3rd	 1st	 2nd	 3rd	 4th	 5th	 6th	 7th	RP x10	Supply 1
 8th	 9th	 10th	 1st	 2nd	 Flotilla	A	B	 10th	 17th	 4th	Supply 1
 13th	 24th	 51st	 Naval	 7 RA							Supply 1
 A	 B	 C	 D	 E	 F	 1	 2	 3	 4	 5	Supply 2
 6	 7	 8	 9	 10	 11	 12	 13	 14	 15	 16	Supply 2
 17	 18	 19	 20	 1st	 2nd						Supply 2
											

## Turn Track

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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## Revolt Track

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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## Resource & Victory Points Track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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## WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

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*As I get closer to Issue #50, where I promised myself I would re-assess my commitment to this endeavor, I can't help but draw upon the parallels that are currently ongoing in the entertainment business. I recently read an article in the Wall St. Journal entitled "Twilight of the Rock Gods" where they talked about the new musicians doing nowhere near in terms of album sales and revenue generated compared to what the classic rock groups have done. They also reflected on what is going to happen when they die or completely fade away, which isn't good for the music business! The same could be said for gaming where clearly a few companies dominate right now, but what would happen if they were suddenly gone? Would someone step up and take their place or would a host of competitors just fight for increasingly smaller slices of the hobby pie? While many new companies, games, game systems, etc., could be seen as successful, just how much in comparison to yesterday's giants remains to be seen. I think new companies have a hard time gaining traction because the gaming marketplace is so saturated right now. For every Warlord Games, Games Workshop, Old Glory, etc., there are 30-40 smaller firms trying to break into the big time of the hobby as well. They produce a few items, advertise, sell some things, then the tidal wave of realism and economics hits them. Shortly thereafter they are never to be heard from again, but more arrive to take their place. Good for the hobby, but not so great for those who were trying to build up a collection of that company's items.*



*Even Kickstarter and companies that use a pre-ordering system have not been immune to some of the changes that are taking place in the hobby. If you're Warlord Games there's no need to do a pre-order sale to raise capital or test out theories, you simply allocate the funds and create the product. If you're a smaller company you have to hope that your item is the next Kingdom Death Monster or you'll be gone within the next year. I remember when I first got into gaming the big two were Avalon Hill and SPI, who had their games in most hobby stores. This is very similar to Warlord and Games Workshop today where to not carry them is to invite failure even before opening. In that bygone era many companies produced one off games or low run productions such as Marshall Enterprises, West End, Conflict, etc. A few grew into huge operations such as TSR and Steve Jackson Games, but hundreds went by the wayside, much as is happening now. I think the difference between then and now is that it seems to be happening much quicker today, where if you don't make it in the first year your products are gone. Meanwhile, SPI and Avalon Hill games are still available to some degree on Ebay and other sites. I wonder if Warlord's and GW's products will be available the same way in another 20-30 years?*

