

Warning Order

ISSUE #47

Wasatch Front Historical Gaming Society

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40 Years of Gaming
Engagements Scenarios
Game Reviews & Battle Reports

Issue 47

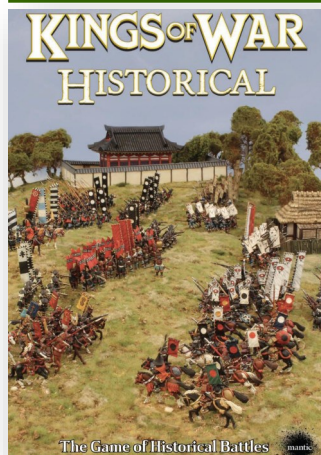
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WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

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Kings of War Historical



When Games Workshop decided to do away with Warhammer Fantasy and start Age of Sigmar, a sizeable segment of fantasy wargamers sought refuge elsewhere. The number one option was Kings of War (KOW) from Mantic Games. With the ability to use any army, several supplements, and easy to read rules, it quickly gained a following. Mantic also released fantasy armies of their own, there is a dedicated forum, a fair number of resources are available, and overall it has been a successful venture.

In what appears to be an effort to attract historical gamers, or at least those who have ancient armies, Mantic has re-

leased Kings of War Historical, which takes the base set of fantasy rules and adds things like elephants, skirmishers, pel-tasts, and so on. The question then becomes, can you take a set of fantasy rules and convert them to historical ancients combat?

First off, the rule book is very nice and lavishly illustrated. If the idea was to make either the ancients period attractive to fantasy gamers or to show ancients gamers that their armies work for KOW, Mantic definitely succeeded. The rules are in an easy to read format and the base rules won't even take the average gamer 30 minutes to digest. There is a brief intro, then sections regarding the turn structure, movement, shooting, melee, and how units rout.

This is followed by a section on scenarios, a generic list of units, specific historical armies, then a section on how to add magic and other fantasy elements into ancient forces. Overall, a very nice package.

To break down the rules, however, you first have to understand what units are in KOW and how this fits into the game system. For infantry, units come in at 10, 20, and 40 man sizes, each with varying points cost, attacks, and nerve ratings. Cavalry are in 5 or 10 man units and then there are single figures used for generals, heroes, artillery, etc. There aren't really formations in the game and although you can use single figures, the game encourages element based units as there is no casualty removal. (cont. on p3)



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Special points of interest:

- *General d'Armee playtest.*
- *Two new Engagements scenarios.*
- *A complete Renaissance campaign for any rules system.*
- *Battle reports for WMA, Saga, Mustangs, and Kings of War.*
- *Several board wargame reviews.*

Kings of War Historical (cont.)

(cont. from p2) Basically, a unit is a unit is a unit and the only question is how many figs are there and the number of attacks or damage it can take.

The simplicity factor is also seen in the turn sequence which is IGOUGO. A side moves, shoots, then melees. All movement, even charges is standardized. Here is where you first start to see what this game is about, namely putting large numbers of figs on the tabletop, killing off units quickly, and coming to a resolution in a few hours. This will appeal to a lot of gamers, but I can see how it might not for others. Are there tactics involved? Yes, but more in terms of choosing the right units from the army lists, then matching them up correctly on the tabletop.

Shooting and melee also have an element of simplicity where each unit has a number of attacks with some modifiers. You roll a handful of D6s (some large units can roll 25-30 at a time!), score hits usually on a 4+, the defending unit rolls for saves, then a “Nerve” test is taken by adding the number of casualties + 1D6. If that number is higher than the Nerve rating the unit is routed/wiped out. If not, it can usually counterattack the next turn. Notice that shooting and melee are not simultaneous affairs! Only one side fights, which is a radical departure from most rules.

Units have abilities such as Thunderous Charge, Phalanx, Elite, and plenty

more that add some character to the various forces. In fact, that is a big part of the game in getting your units with certain abilities to form a mismatch against units on the other side. Add to this heroes that can attack separately, musicians and standards for rallying, artillery, etc., and the game can be pretty chaotic.

As you can see, this is a no non-sense approach to ancients warfare where units aren't going to last very long and there is little use for subtlety. Gamers used to using historical tactics or the advantages their forces get in most rules are going to have re-think things. With KOW it's about getting combat power forward, dealing massive amounts of damage, then repositioning your units for the counterattack. In the end, can your units survive the beating that they will take before the enemy's forces crumble?

Now we come to the part where most ancients gamers have had a complaint about KOW; the army lists. Basically, there is a list of units like heavy cavalry, elephants, heavy pikemen, and so on. There are stats and points costs for varying sizes for all of the units and then there are special units for each army. For example, the Successors have units like the Silver Shields and Foot Companions that are unique to their army. Does this in any way cover what most lists in other rules have? The answer would be no and the army lists could use a very thorough re-

write. If you're just starting out in the period or coming in from the fantasy side, the lists are a good place to begin.

While creating an army from a list has always been a staple of ancients gaming, probably not to this level and it requires a different mindset. If you create an army based off of



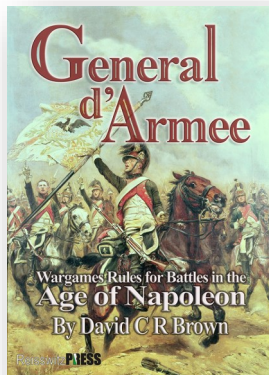
what you always play, historical contexts, or give little thought to it, you will usually get crushed by someone who has analyzed every aspect of their own list. This is a huge change for most historical gamers where you are putting the system first and the history second.

A good example of this would be elephants. A unit of three is expensive, but the high number of attacks, ranged attacks, and special abilities make these monsters on the battlefield; in fact, that's what they are in fantasy terms. KOW has ported over what would be dragons, giants, monsters, etc., into the historical version and applied the corresponding status to elephants. Historical tactics won't work against them, so they must be met with raw combat power in return.

In the end, will ancients gamers turn to these rules to replace Hail Caesar, Warmaster Ancients, Fields of Glory, and so on? Probably not. If there was more effort in the army lists, variable move distances for charges, and a few other small things, you might get an audience. **However, Kings of War achieves what it sets out to do, namely allow gamers to get a lot of figs on the tabletop, roll tons of dice, produce decisive results, have fun, and get a game in under a few hours.**

As a historical gamer I feel that you should give it at least one try. My feeling is that it would be great for campaigns in that you could get in several battles in an evening. Also, it could serve as a great intro to ancients gaming as it is pretty easy to explain, plus fun to play. A good, but not great set of ancients rules that has potential for a segment of gamers.

[illegible]



Surprise, surprise, imagine our group trying yet again another set of Napoleonic rules! While I myself have all of my figs based for Age of Eagles and that continues to be the de-

fault set of rules for the group, that hasn't stopped others from trying a variety of the latest rules for the Napoleonic period.

While many of us have played in several General d'Brigade (GDB) scenarios over the years as you can see in past issues, I think there was a prevailing opinion that the games were too long (anything on a 4x8) was going to take 8-9 hours) and the orders rules were difficult to teach, let alone retain when you don't play again for several months. So, along comes General d'Armee (GDA), which is suppose to simplify the General d/ Brigade system and hopefully compete with many of the other rules systems out there right now.

For starters, the GDA rules use the same 1:20 scale that GDB did, so most of the units that you have for one system can be ported over for the other. Of course, there are new recommendations for unit sizes, which is in line with recent trends of larger bases and standardized unit siz-

es, such as small, standard, and large sized units. Rebasing as we discussed throughout the game would definitely have helped, but we survived. There are four pages of charts that are pretty easy to use, but it helps to have multiple sets available for all of the players.

The command system is interesting in that it uses a system of "ADC's". Basically, each brigade generates a command dice (1D6) that you roll each turn. For each 3-6 rolled you get one ADC, or order that can be placed with each brigade. These orders allow for assault fire with artillery, faster movement, deployment of reserves, and so forth. They also allow for re-rolls on activation dice. How many and where they are placed are difficult decision in each turn with there never being enough of them to go around. Each brigade then rolls 1D6 and on anything but a 1 or 2 they get to activate in the turn.

Movement and combat are pretty standard, being chart driven with only a few modifiers for each part of the rules. After the first turn or two everyone gets the hang of it and the rules need only be consulted for the odd or special situation. The charge procedure has an approach procedure during movement, then if both sides are still in contact, there is a melee

phase at the end of the turn. We were surprised at how fast the turns went, especially after playing GDB several times where each one was around an hour!

Our battle was a straightforward Prussian attack at a French and French Allied position, with the French still trying to



get into a good defensive posture when the game began. The first Prussian assaults were thrown back, so they regrouped and went forward again. This time the two Prussian artillery batteries did some serious damage to the French brigade in the center and it fell back, leaving a gaping hole in the lines. The French cavalry charged forward, trying to disrupt the Prussian advance and was successful, buying time for the French to move in a fresh brigade.

On the other flank the (cont. on p5)





(cont. from p4) Prussians shifted their artillery and began to pound the Saxons around the village. The Italians withdrew after suffering serious casualties, so that flank was in dire straits by the 7th and 8th turn. The French reinforcements were heading that way when the game was called as a massive hole was developing there.

In the center the French launched a counterattack on the other side of the ridge, but the Prussians held firm and in a series of firefights and melees, threw the French back. On the far right the French cavalry had some success, but they could never quite cave in the flank, which would have saved the day. Charge and countercharge by the cavalry units of both sides soon turned that flank into a no

man's land as the various brigades pulled back to regroup.

However, the end was clearly in sight as there were Russian reinforcements arriving and the French were being driven back into a smaller defensive line. Only the Prussian's poor activation rolls were keeping them from rolling up the French left and it was only a matter of time. As this was the end of the second night we called the game as a well deserved Prussian victory.

Everyone was pretty positive about the GDA rules. The turns went by pretty fast and it certainly appeared that you could do a large multi-player game in a reasonable amount of time (probably 6-8 hours). The charts and procedures made sense, so once you get through the first

few turns things get easy to manage. All in all the system has a lot going for it if you are into the 1:20 scale for Napoleonic warfare. The group expressed interest in trying the game again in the future, which is always a good sign for new rules!

Are there any issues? Skirmisher fire seemed too powerful to me, but that could be just one side or the other rolling some hot dice. We also had multiple brigades falter when losing just one battalion, then fall back almost completely out of the battle, which seemed extreme, but again it could be just poor dice rolling. There were a few other small things, but nothing serious enough to prevent playing the system again.

More pictures of the battle can be found on page 16.



878 Vikings by Academy Games

Game Review

I've always been a bit wary about war-games on Kickstarter as I've seen a few disasters, plus you might want to wait for some reviews to come out before purchasing certain games. However, when I saw that this was coming out from Academy Games, I knew that there was a fair chance I would actually see the game and it would be pretty good.

878 Vikings by Academy Games is an interesting project. Through the use of cards, plastic figures, and irregular dice, players work through the major Viking invasions that occurred during the time frame of the game. Part Risk, part Britannia, and borrowing heavily from their successful 1754 and 1775 games, this game fits somewhere between a Euro and a true wargame. Designed for four players, but playable by two, it is a fast moving, frenetic game that can be completed in just under two hours and has a very high replay value.



With Academy Games you know that there will be no skimping on components! The map is nicely done, showing all of England with the multiple tracks needed to run the game on the edges of the board. The map is broken down into "shires" or areas for movement and combat. You get quite a few cards, ranging from leaders and movement cards to events and combat. There are also a large number of advanced cards that can be added, giving players multiple options when choosing their deck. A large bag of plastic figures for each faction, different colored dice with various symbols for combat, leaders and stands, plus a nice rulebook top off the list of components.



If you were just buying this game at the store, it's pretty good in terms of components. If you backed the Kickstarter then you get wooden cardholders and some markers that will come in pretty handy during the game. If you spent the extra money then there are several

expansions that include more cards and leaders, relics/holy sites, legends, a set of plastic leader miniatures, miniature Viking ships, and more, including a giant, poster sized version of the map. Yes, you could drop about \$200 on this game to get everything that they've made available so far.

The game seems complex with all of the leaders, cards, cubes, miniatures, tokens, etc., but once you get through the first turn things fly by. Each turn (except for the first) you draw a cube from the bag and that colored faction conducts its turn. First thing is that new forces arrive and in the case of the Vikings that usually means another leader with large forces that joins the invasion. That faction must play a movement card that shows how many armies can move and how far they can go. Leaders, who usually have the most forces go first. This is a bit of a challenge as you can't allow your forces to get too spread out as you can't move around the board gathering your forces. Finally, that faction draws to bring their hand up to three cards.

The invasions are interesting as a leader arrives with quite a few miniatures on their card. They then advance as far as possible, obliterating smaller forces and dropping off garrisons, so the further the invasion goes the weaker the leader and his armies get. Each city that is taken is marked with a token taken from a track on the map. Depending upon the scenario being played the Vikings need to have so many of them on the table to win.

As you can suspect, trying to conduct a defense can be a challenge, especially



when after Turn 4 the Vikings can pretty much show up anywhere along the coasts. Trying to gather reinforcements, move them to form armies, and protect the remaining cities, is definitely tough. If you're playing with four players, with two on each side, trying to coordinate the attack or defense will pose problems. In the two player game its pretty easy, as one player controls both factions on a side.

Combat is pretty interesting, with each player rolling a number of dice (usually 2 or 3), regardless if you outnumber someone by 3, 4, 5, or more to 1.



All that means is that you can take more losses and will win in a battle of attrition. Each faction has a different combina-

tion of symbols, which will result in the loss of a figure, one flees, or an option to fall back to another area. Combat seems unpredictable, but larger forces will usually defeat smaller ones. The English factions also get to deploy fyrd miniatures in shires that contain cities during combat, giving them some extra, although unpredictable forces!

The basic game is fun, but when you add in the advanced cards/options to the mix, things get rather interesting. There are a wide number of strategies for all of the factions and the game would seem to have very high replay value. Once you get through a turn or two each faction can get through its turn sequence quickly. If you're pressed for time there are smaller scenarios included that would take around an hour. When you add in the expansion with its relics, legends, new leaders, optional rules, and more, the basic game suddenly seems pretty vanilla, so you'll probably never go back to it

after that. This is a fun game that will appeal to a lot of gamers. There are so many options and strategies that it would take multiple plays to discover all of them!

Engagements 19: Extreme Flank Attack

Situation: Red has a very strong position guarding the extreme right of the army. There is a thick forest with streams on the right and the main army is on the left. Red is focusing on the upcoming battle, which they believe to be in the center, so most of the reserves are posted there. Blue sees an opportunity to flank Red and has detached forces for a flank attack. Local guides will aid Blue's forces in a night march through the terrain to coordinate an attack at dawn.

Period: Ancients to late 19th century is preferable.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are very low, but will provide cover to units beyond the crest and benefits to any unit defending on the hills. The town is a mix of stone and wood buildings. The defenses in front of the town consist of trenches and redoubts that can hold up to six units. The terrain on the left side of the map is thick forest with streams and marshy areas, so it should have severe movement penalties.

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 reserves that may arrive later in the game.

On Board at Start:

5 units of infantry
1 unit of cavalry
2 units of artillery

Reserves:

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

Set Up: All of Red's forces must be set up on the front line (one unit can be deployed in the town) except for one unit that can be positioned at the road junction to the rear of Red's position.

Red Orders: Prevent Blue's forces

from isolating and taking the town. Use the reserves to counterattack any Blue units that break through the front lines and retake the town if Blue occupies it.

Blue Forces: Blue's forces have been split into two groups for the attack. The first will attack and pin the forward defenses while the second launches a flank attack. However, the flanking force has been marching through the night in difficult terrain and may or may not be in position for the dawn attack.

At Start:

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

Flanking Force:

4 units of infantry
2 units of cavalry
2 units of artillery

Blue Orders: Keep Red's defenses occupied until the flanking force can form up for attack. Once the defenses and town are taken, begin moving troops off the board using the road exit to the rear of Red's position.

Set Up: Blue's starting forces begin on the board in the blue At Start area.

Blue Flanking Force: The flanking force has been marching all night with the aid of local guides, several of whom became disoriented in the dark and not use to guiding large formations. For each unit in the flanking force, roll 1D6 and place that unit at the location marked on the map. All of the flanking force units

begin the game in column formation and are disorganized from the terrain.

Red Reserves: Once a Blue unit emerges from the terrain on Red's right, Red can call for reserves beginning the following turn. Roll 1D6 for each unit in the Reserves and on a 5 or 6 they have been released to aid Red's defense. Units can either come on via the road or the board edge behind the hill to the rear of Red's front lines.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: The flanking force for Blue and reserves for Red are the only special rules.

Victory Conditions: Blue needs to seize the town and defenses to force a draw. If Blue can get at least three units off the road then it is a major victory for Blue. Any other result is a Red victory.

Variants: There are a large number of variants possible, starting with larger forces and playing surface. The Reserves die roll could be modified for Red to balance out the game and allow the units to arrive faster, especially if Blue is fortunate where the flanking force arrives in strength on the first turn or two. Troop quality could be adjusted to also affect the play balance. The flanking force could be allowed to be in line at the start of the game or have a separate die roll to see if units are not disorganized for an attack on the first turn.



Engagements 20: City Defense

Situation: Blue is defending a sector of a large city that is under attack. Blue's force is a hodge podge of units that must be cobbled together to form a cohesive defense to hold the airport and bridges for as long as possible, then withdrawing only if absolutely necessary.

Period: This scenario is only suitable for the WW2 and modern periods.

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

Terrain Notes: The hill is fairly low, but does block line of sight. The city consists of a large number of stone and metal buildings. The woods are light woods, but do block line of sight. The river can only be crossed at the bridges. Red begins in control of bridge #1.

Scale: Can be used with any rules, but something where each unit is a platoon or company 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.

On Board at Start:

12 units of infantry (4 are mechanized)
4 units of armor
1 unit of reconnaissance troops
1 unit of self-propelled guns
3 batteries of artillery (off board)

Reinforcements:

8 units of infantry (4 are mechanized)
2 units of armor

Set Up: Red's forces can set up anywhere up to the red line in the area marked At Start.

Red Orders: Seize the airport and remaining bridges. Prevent Blue from withdrawing forces over bridge #3 and off the road exit next to the bridge (marked with a star).

Blue Forces: Blue's forces are spread throughout this sector and there are not enough units to cover all of the objectives that Red will be after. Reinforcements may or may not be assigned to this sector and are of varying quality.

On Board at Start:

8 units of infantry (2 are mechanized)
2 units of armor
1 unit of AT/self-propelled guns
1 recon unit
2 artillery batteries (off board)

Reinforcements: See special rules.

Blue Orders: Hold on the dark blue line for as long as possible, the fall back to the light blue defense line. When the order comes, withdraw all forces over bridge #2 or 3 and off the road exit marked by the star.

Set Up: Blue's starting forces must be deployed on or near the dark blue line on the map. One unit may be deployed at the airport and two units may be deployed as reserves anywhere in the city.

Blue Reinforcements: Each turn the airport is not captured by Red, roll 1D6 and on a 5 or 6 a unit of infantry is flown in to join the defense. If the airport is not captured, but under direct fire a 6 is needed.

Each turn roll 1D6 and on a 5 or 6 a unit of infantry (lowest possible quality) joins the defense and can be placed anywhere in the city.

Each turn roll 1D6 and on a 5 or 6 roll again for the type of reinforcement that arrives. 1,2, or 3 is an infantry unit, 4 is an AT unit, 5 is an armor unit, and 6 is a MG or mortar unit. Appear at the star.

Red Reinforcements:

Each turn starting on Turn 2 Red can bring up to 2 units onto the board from either of the Red At Start board edges.

Phased Withdrawal: Beginning on Turn 3 Blue can be ordered to pull back to the light blue defense line. Roll 1D6 each turn and

on a 4, 5, or 6 Blue can pull back units to that line. Until then, no Blue units can leave the area of the dark blue defense line. Starting on turn 10 Blue may be ordered to withdraw units from this sector of the city for the final battle in the city center. Each turn roll a D6 and on a 5 or 6 Blue may begin withdrawing units off board at the road exit marked by the star.

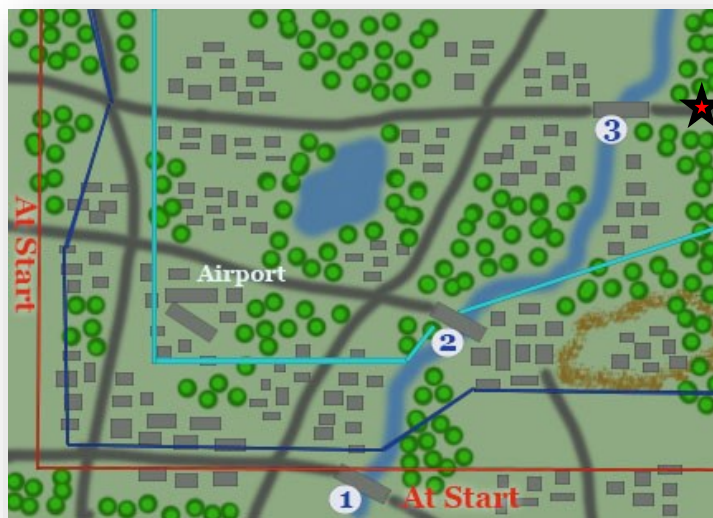
Initiative: Red is first each turn.

Game Length: 20 turns

Special Rules: The reinforcement rules for both sides and the phased withdrawal is described above. Bridge #2 and 3 are large bridges that are wired for demolition. Any time a Red unit gets to within 6" of either bridge they may be blown. Roll 1D6 and on anything but a 6 they are destroyed.

Victory Conditions: If Blue destroys both bridges while there are Blue units trapped on the other side of the river, Blue loses. Red wins if they capture the airport and are able to get at least three units off of the road exit marked with a star. Any other result is a Blue victory.

Variants: The first thing that could be changed would be to add more artillery and mortars to both sides along with airstrikes for Red. Additional units such as engineers (especially for city fighting) could also be added. Rules for crossing the river or using the subway/sewer system for movement could be applied as well. Communication issues and troop quality could be inserted to adjust play balance as necessary.



Teaching the Next Generation

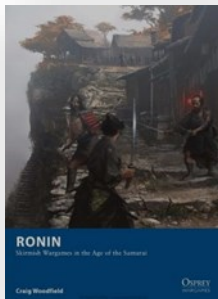
by Rob Coleman

As a wargamer it can often be a challenge to line up a game that all parties want to play, get everyone to have the rules/figs, or have someone volunteer to be the referee. For those of us blessed enough to have children we may have the potential to translate our love of the hobby to them and perhaps find willing opponents in the house. Both my kids love to craft and are very interested in the figures I paint as well as the terrain I build. So when my daughter turned 7, I bought her a set of Kensei's Onna Bugeisha for use with Ronin along with some brushes to paint them with. This decision was predicated on a few factors as follows.

Ronin is a game we play from time to time as a club, and is a great wargame for teaching younger players with. There is a lot of basic math with the rolls/weapons that helps my daughter get faster with simple math. Also the model count is low, enabling her to more easily stay focused while painting and playing. The alternating activation also helps keep her from becoming too distracted.

Secondly, feudal Japan had some female warriors that I could let her utilize. While not numerous, there are examples of them in excess of the relatively few European ones. Eventually I want to get her up to Romans/Greek/Normans/Vikings, but know your target market. Having 'girl' soldiers would be a better intro for her, while still enabling me to talk history with her.

To start our experiment, we spent a little time looking at patterns and designing concept art prior to painting. I wanted her to get a sense for what would work, and then let her dabble a bit in



terms of design. Finding some line art wasn't too hard, then I printed out a bunch of copies and we went wild with colors and designs. I knew many of these would be too complicated for her to paint, so we pared it back to a likely few before she selected part of the concept art on the left. Mainly we borrowed the teal/yellow for the lower portion, then simplified the shirt and armor to make it easier for her to paint. In the end, she chose a lighter blue for the top, and brown with pink with purple accents on the armor. Now those choices might not be too historical (the pinks/purples), but she's 7 and some lee-way has to be given in design or your child will lose interest.



I cleaned, assembled, and primed the minis and we were off. While these were never intended to be award winners, we worked in stages to help keep her interest and my patience intact.

There was a longer stretch in there than I intended, but we got to a sufficient place in the end. Prior to fully finishing we played a small, quick game of Ronin to help stimulate a desire to complete the job, which worked wonderfully. For weeks afterwards she was asking every night if we could go paint. To fully round her out, I painted her buntai leader and a ronin (shugyosha) for her that she can use from time to time.

This past weekend marked our first game with her completed force and while slow at times we both enjoyed it immensely. For the scenario I chose the Ninja Assassination mission in the rulebook, setup some terrain, and put some villagers on the table to set the scene. We went back through the rules, then spent about an hour and half to two hours having some quality Dad/Daughter time.

Night Attack!

My Daughter's Forces consisted of:

1 Senior Sohei with Intuition, Naginatajutsu, and a Naginata
4 Sohei with Naginata
1 Sohei with Yumi

My Ninja Consisted of:

1 Chunin
5 Ninja

Civilians:

4 civilians

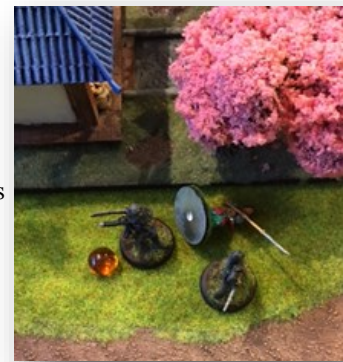
Special Rules:

Night – max of 12" visual range for most of the board, except models inside the village or within 6" of the lantern near the bridge. Anyone in these areas could be seen as normal (i.e. during day times as the light would make them easy targets for unseen shooters waiting in the dark)
Infiltrator – we would take turns moving the civilians, 1 of which was a ninja in disguise that I could reveal at any point (this meant I started with 5 models on the board instead of all six)

Initial deployment had the sohei start within 6 inches of the village, with ninja starting at least 12" away from

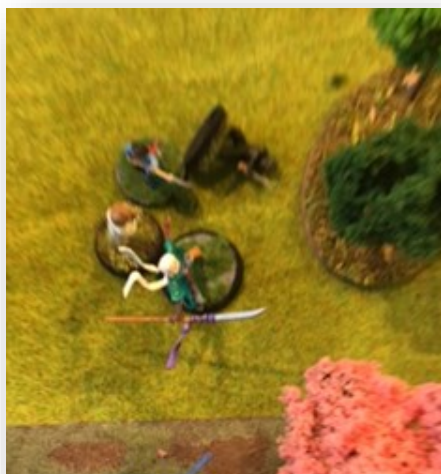
any sohei. My daughter chose to spread out a little and entirely without prompting came up with explanations for placement that fit with the scenario (this person checking out noises, this one sleeping, two guarding their shrine, etc.). It was actually fun to see her imagination provide logical explanations for why things occurred over the first few turns, making it almost a role-playing game at times.

At the start of the game, momentum was definitely all with the ninjas, and things opened up looking very grim for the sohei. I won priority for (cont. on p11)



Teaching the Next Generation (cont.)

by Rob Coleman



(cont. from p10) the first few turns, and came in shuriken flying. This yielded a lightly wounded sohei and a grievously wounded sohei. As ninja closed in, one sohei was dispatched, and the lightly wounded sohei took a grievous wound in combat with her foe.

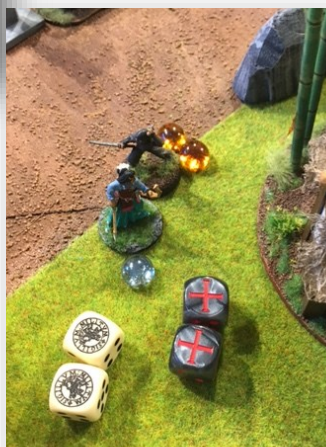
Meanwhile the senior sohei and a companion cornered one ninja sneaking through a wood at the rear of the village and engaged him while the yumi equipped sohei started moving towards the ninja moving up the road from the bridge after initially trying to cover things from the square. The ninja were able to ratchet up another kill on the grievously wounded sohei, but things slowly started to go south for them. While the yumi equipped sohei couldn't pincushion her man effectively, attack roles started to go awry for the ninja. The senior sohei and her companion were finally able to finish their foe off, though it took quite an effort, and turned to try and unmask a civilian.

The ninja slowly crept closer from the side of the temple and out of the rice paddies, but one ninja coming up the other road was locked down by sohei. Now I could have used acrobatics to unstick from combat and keep run-



ning at the senior sohei, but I felt this would have been a bit unfair for my daughter and a bit too much to need to account for strategically for her, so my ninja decided to be cinematic, and stick out fights they could have run from.

The sohei unmasked their first civilian, finding only a simple monk, and turned to move back into the town square to intercept some fleeing civilians and confront the encroaching ninja. At this point the chunin threw off his disguise



and went charging into the senior sohei after missing with this shuriken. Alas, he never stood a chance. The medium armor plus my daughter suddenly rolling a

slew of double sixes (and no rolls below a 10 with maybe 1 or 2 exceptions) while the ninja's luck ran out saw the chunin go down with only a few stunned results on the senior sohei.

On the far road, the sohei dispatched the ninja, while the one coming out of the rice paddies was slowly ground down and killed. At one point we both rolled double sixes (that darn medium armor came into play again! Curses!) and the ninja went down.

A final desperate push saw a lone ninja get two rounds in solo with the Senior Sohei, but he could only manage to lightly wound her before going down to the combined might of 2 sohei guards and the senior sohei piling the combat stones on. With all ninja having been killed off, and 4 turns remaining until game end, it was a victory for my daughter.

All in all a good game that veered wildly about half way through. What looked like a great start for the ninja unraveled quickly. It got my daughter's force on the table, and was quality time for some one on one action. While it can frustrate you at times, the payoff is worth it if the child enjoys themselves. Overall the process has been successful enough that my son is bugging me for when he can start playing, too!



Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 34

A Love/Hate Affair w/Fantasy Mass Combat Gaming

There is something about the notion of large forces of trolls, orcs, dragons, etc., battling armies of men, Elves, or Dwarves that captures the imagination of gamers. Even die-hard historical gamers like myself get tempted from time to time and I have definitely had my share of fantasy armies over the years. Whether it is the incredible miniatures, the Lord of the Rings books, or just the notion of something different than the usual gaming fare, fantasy mass combat is the theme I keep coming back to time and time again.

My first exposure to this was surprisingly through WRG Ancients rules! A gamer of long standing in the area had multiple ancient armies and thought a fantasy army would be interesting, so painted and based one according to WRG standards. It actually worked out well and was featured in several of our campaigns back in the late 70s. This was also the era where the Minifigs fantasy figures



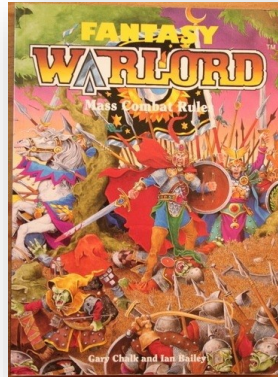
were giving way to Ral Partha and Grenadier, which certainly proved to be an incentive to try your hand at fantasy gaming outside of the usual D&D.

In retrospect, D&D did actually provide the framework for many of us getting into fantasy battles. We had always enjoyed the larger slugfests in our fantasy adventures where a group of 6-8 adventurers took on 20-30 orcs or skeletons. Since we used miniatures for our RPG games we soon had some sizable forces! This led us to look for faster combat systems and actual battles over towers, mountain passes, temples, and so on that were a lot of fun.

For rules you name it and we converted or played it. Chainmail, Bloodlust, Cry Havoc, Ral Partha's Battle System,

Knights & Magic, and so many others that I can't remember them all now. The things that was weird is that there were very few specific sets of rules for doing large fantasy battles and most were just offshoots of RPG systems that had been modified. I should also point out that 99.9% of fantasy battles were with 25mm figs at that time.

Naturally, this changed with the release of Warhammer Fantasy. Before we go further, however, the 1st edition was totally unlike anything that came after it. A lot of us tried it, liked what we saw, but there were some rules issues and it lacked a certain "vision" of what could be done. By that I mean there wasn't a comprehensive marketing plan in place to demonstrate what the rules *really* were.



Fantasy combat was then kind of dormant for a decade with gamers moving onto other periods and scales, or desperately clinging to the RPG games they had been playing for 10+ years. Then in the early 90s Fantasy Warlord (does anyone remember that set of rules?) came out and people got back into fantasy. I remember playing it a few times and liking it, but the game seemed to come and go so fast (no supplements or plans ever came through) that there was a sudden void.

We all know the story of what came next. Citadel, then later Games Workshop, came roaring back with Warhammer Fantasy and various ranges of armies that forever changed the fantasy gaming world. Not only were there rules, but compendiums, magazines, boxed sets, and more. Fantasy mass combat exploded into what it is today and it was all thanks to Warhammer Fantasy, love it or hate it. Although I played the game I never got into it

enough to paint armies. I had been burned by the ever changing WH40K and Epic/Adeptus Titanicus systems and had no desire to see the same thing happen to me with their fantasy version.

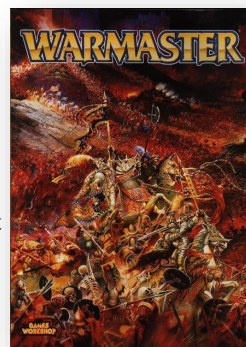
After a long layoff my gaming group did get into Warmaster Fantasy and for three years we built up several armies, played in a few tournaments, and had a lot of fun. What happened? Well, for one Games Workshop killed off the rules and the figure lines. That coupled with gamers moving into other games and the release of the historical version saw us sell our armies and focus on that instead. Today we could all kick ourselves for selling off those armies!

So what was it about fantasy mass combat that has led many of us to this Holy Grail type quest for almost 40 years now? For one thing, back in the day you were starved for fantasy books, movies, rules, etc., as there was nowhere near the plentiful supply today. A gamer walks in with a 24 figure unit of nicely painted skeletons and soon everyone was buying figures off of the fantasy racks! The games looked great, the setting was unique and cool at the time, plus there's always some kind of inner desire to do fantasy gaming right.

For some reason, though, it never has been fulfilling and many of us have moved on (several times for some of us!). Treating Orcs like Greek phalangites, Men of the West like Romans, etc., sounds great, but after a few games there seems to be something wrong. Add in magic, weird units, etc., and all of sudden something that was exciting seems to wither on the vine. Today, the cost of a fantasy army from most companies is about the same as a mortgage payment!

Also, getting gamers to focus on painting for that long is very tough.

Still, I keep looking at those new Mantic armies for Kings of War and thinking about getting started. After all, I have over 40 years of experience in my love/hate relationship with fantasy gaming!



Blast From The Past Pt. 33: The Starforce Trilogy

SPI was nothing short of imaginative in the 70s, putting out game after game that no one else in the hobby even dared attempt. One of the areas that was definitely underrepresented in the hobby during that time was science-fiction. Although Metagaming was making some inroads and GDW put out the odd sci-fi game now and then, SPI took a break from the endless stream of NATO and WW2 titles to make their mark on sci-fi board wargaming.

What they came up with is commonly called The Starforce Trilogy and indeed, they at one time sold a boxed set of all three games that made up this trilogy. The three games were Starforce: Alpha Centauri, StarSoldier, and Outreach: The



to any point in space by pre-plotting coordinates and then rolling to see if you arrives safely or not. Combat was by a differential table, you had stargates, alien forces, and several scenarios with a lot of replay value. No one had ever seen anything like this and it is definitely worth a play just to try something different.

StarSoldier was also innovative in that it was first sci-fi wargame that wasn't treated like WW2 ground combat.

After Starship Troopers by Avalon Hill came out, this game was almost the exact opposite! Each player basically got one squad per battle and the theory was that small forces, such as a platoon, could control a planet. The thinking was that these soldiers could fly, were heavily armed, and could call upon orbital fire support, so there was no need for larger forces.

The game featured plotting and simultaneous moves, plus it was more complex than most sci-fi games that one would normally see. The somewhat generic map and counters took away from what was a very good tactical combat system. There were some interesting scenarios, but even today StarSoldier is still the least popular game in the trilogy.

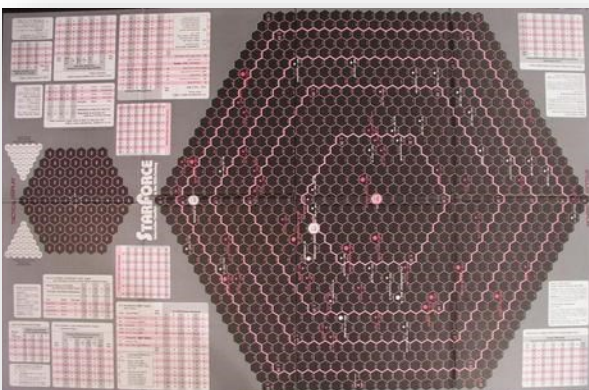
Finally, we get to Outreach: Conquest of the Galaxy, which was one of the first of what are now called 4X games (eXpand, eXploit, eXterminate, and eXplore) along with Stellar Conquest, Godsfire, and Starfall. Besides the unusual map, the first thing that struck everyone was the scale of the game, where each turn was a century with fleets trying to

expand your civilization. Each turn the players had to explore, build new fleets, colonize, encounter new civilizations, and more as they raced to the center of the galaxy. The idea was to be the first to collect what were called Wisdom chits that would enhance your civilization.

Naturally, along their way players would fight wars with each other, lose fleets in exploration, and basically it was a chaotic race to become the most advanced civilization. The fact there was some record keeping (as with most games of this era) and the game was open ended, meant that a four player game could go on for 8 hours or more! Today, Outreach is thought of as one of those games where if you can get four players to try it one time then by all means it is worth the effort. There are so many 4X games today that seem to be better (Space Empires, Twilight Imperium, Eclipse, etc.), but nothing on this kind of grand scale.

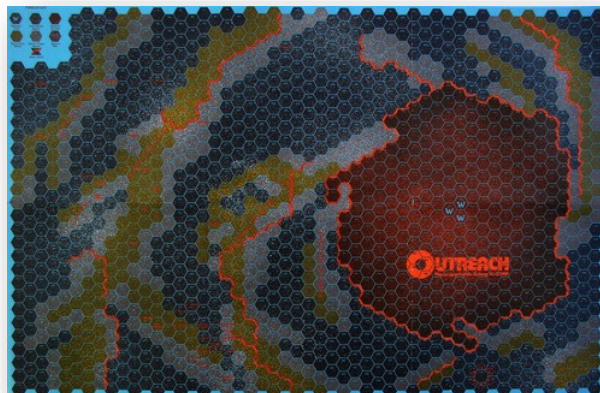
When a discussion about SPI pops up, many gamers immediately think about one or more of these games. For the time they were bleeding edge, innovative, and a much different take on sci-fi warfare than you would usually see, even today. Have they aged well? Not really and there are recent games that do things better, look prettier, and are certainly faster playing. Are they still worth a play? Yes!

With all of the games out today and the incredible components, it's hard to look back and see what was so great about these games. However, back in the day, when we were starved for sci-fi games, these three filled that void for many years and are fondly remembered.



Conquest of the Galaxy. All three initially began as the standard SPI flatpack with your typical components. However, all three had something unique about them that continues to this day. Whether you agreed or disagreed, liked or disliked these games, very few people could argue that they were not innovative, especially for their time. While you theoretically could combine StarSoldier with Starforce, Outreach had nothing to do with the other two games!

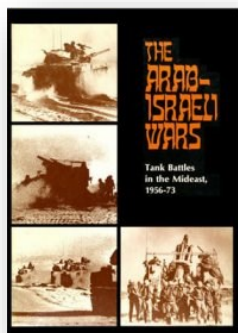
We'll start with Starforce: Alpha Centauri, which is about starship combat in the far future. For starters, the game used three dimensional hexes for movement, which caught a lot of gamers by surprise as figuring out how to use this wasn't the easiest thing in the world, especially with how SPI rules were written! Starforces (or fleets) would "shift"



Looking Back to 1977-Celebrating 40 Years in the Hobby

Believe it or not, I've now been involved in the hobby in one way or the other for a little over 40 years. Although I bought my first wargame, SPI's Sixth Fleet, in the fall of 1976, it wasn't until 1977 that things really got rolling for me in terms of the hobby. Up to then I had an inkling that there was a hobby, but it wasn't until I got involved with a club and bought a magazine or two that I realized how big it actually was. I thought it might be interesting to go back and see what was around in 1977.

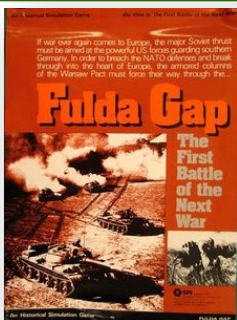
For one thing the board wargame hobby was big, dominated by Avalon Hill and SPI at that time. You could actually find their games in bookstores, toy shops, and there were regular ads in many magazines, which is how I found out about Sixth Fleet. The big difference between 1977 and today is that you could go to these stores and actually look at the



games before deciding on a purchase, where today most of my buying at least is done online.

SPI was really hitting their stride with NATO vs. Warsaw Pact games and dabbling in sci-fi at the same time. Of course this was also the height of Strategy & Tactics as well, so if you were into SPI's games, they certainly had quite a few for sale! Avalon Hill was the other big player in the board wargame hobby, although they were only putting out a few games a year. Of course, this year would see the introduction of Squad Leader, which I played for decades and Arab-Israeli Wars, which I still try to play at least once a year even today.

Even then, you could see that the hobby was getting larger with the introduction of



titles from new companies. Game Designer's Workshop (GDW) was also putting out games, although slowly. They are responsible for one of my Top 10 all time wargames with Imperium, which has held up well for over 40 years! GDW's games were a cross between SPI and Avalon Hill, having been better play tested than SPI, but not as good in terms of components as AH's games.

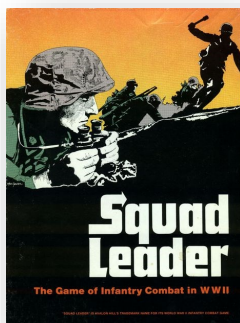


This was also the year that Metagaming was introduced into the hobby with one of the all time favorite sci-fi games in Ogre, which has also stood the test of time.

This first game launched a line of what were called micro-games, many of which are still played today. I've spent years playing these games, especially Ogre/GEV, Melee,

Wizard, Black Hole, Ice War, and many others. For \$2.95 at that time they were a bargain and would be played again and again. Their magazine, Space Gamer, got off to a good start, but as the hobby expanded and there were quite a few other offerings it faded away.

There were quite a few other board games by smaller companies, of which some like Bar Lev from Conflict Games, were picked up and produced by GDW. When you went into a hobby store, it was not uncommon to see a hundred games or more in stacks on the shelves. This was both good and bad in that there wasn't a lot of information on these games unless you waited for articles in The General or other magazines that reviewed them or at least gave more information. There were no "living rules" or online errata like there is today. Questions were answered via mail! Looking back now, however, that was part of the fun. Looking over the games, selecting one,

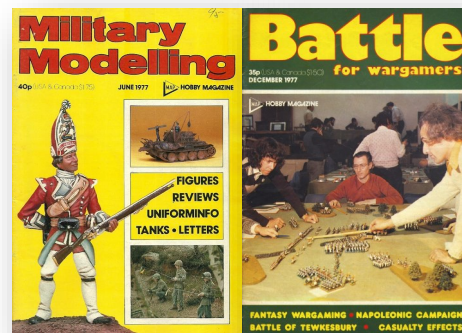


opening it up, then figuring out to play with your friends was all part of the hobby and I think back then we were far more tolerable as well as willing to work through problems than we are today.

So, how did we get our hobby news?

Basically, there were three ways. The first were mailing lists where a few of the gaming companies would send you their ads or you would see something in the little catalogs that came with each game. Often, that was the first time you saw a new game! The second was from hobby store owners who had seen the new games on their order forms sent to them by game distributors. The final way was from hobby magazines.

It may not seem so today, but hobby magazines in the 70s and 80s were beacons of information back then. There were only a few professional ones and quite a few amateur versions, but they were your link to what was out, what was on the way, and any sort of reviews. The big ones at the time were of course SPI's

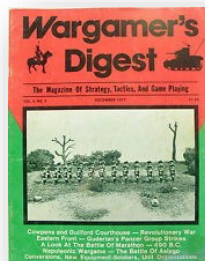


Strategy & Tactics and Avalon Hill's The General. They were good and bad, featuring in depth articles on their games, but little info on the games from other companies! The Space Gamer from Metagaming and The Dragon from TSR kept you up to date on fantasy/sci-fi, but you usually had to buy several magazines to get a clear picture of what was going on in the wargaming hobby.

For historical miniatures, there were several pretty good magazines at the time. Military Modelling and Battle were definitely great sources for (cont. on p15)

Looking Back to 1977-Celebrating 40 Years in the Hobby (cont.)

(cont. from p14) scenarios, what was coming out, uniform painting information, etc. Wargamer's Digest was



another great historical miniatures magazine and of course the following year would see the introduction of The Courier.

The big attraction of the hobby magazines, however, was the ads, especially in

Military Modeling and Battle, where many miniatures companies had full page lists of their products. A gamer would literally spend hours just reading and re-reading those ads, which generated excitement and plenty of ideas for new periods that is hard to understand in this day and age of the Internet. I remember showing other friends various products, then we would brainstorm about new gaming periods, rules, and what scale. At this time, however, there weren't many scales to worry about!

In terms of rules, again, there were a lot of rules out there, but you rarely saw them in stores. In 1977 the first version of Empire was just coming out, WRG was king of the ancients world, Chainmail was still popular for medieval combat, and Tractics was used for WW2. These rules sets pale by comparison to today's highly polished, glossy publications. Most of these were printed on standard black and white paper with a stapled card cover. There were very few, if any examples of play or illustrations, and they were very chart heavy, making the games probably longer than they should have been!

With hardly any reviews, you took your chances with miniatures rules. I recall numerous times seeing various rules in magazine ads and ordering them sight unseen, only to be underwhelmed upon their arrival. However, that was the hobby back then, so you ordered rules, tried them, and if that didn't work you moved on to something else. Probably not the most efficient way to do things,

but you didn't have a lot of options and on the positive side you got to try out a lot of game systems!

In terms of miniatures that could be used with historical rules, this was certainly the heyday of plastics, if only because they had been around for so long and were readily available. The popularity of WW2 in the early stages of the historical miniatures hobby was in my opinion, due to the large amount of 1/72nd scale figures and kits from Airfix, Matchbox, and others at the time. On top of that you had all of the boxed sets from Atlantic, which were great value for the money. My first ACW army was Airfix and until I could afford micro-armor all of our WW2 skirmish battles were done with plastics.



This was also the year where The Lord of the Rings/D&D craze really started taking off, so

quite a few miniature companies began expanding their fantasy ranges. Every gaming magazine had ads for fantasy armies and the lists seemed endless at times. Minifigs and many others had figures for hobbits, elves, orcs, etc., as D&D shamelessly tied itself to The Lord of the Rings. This was also the year right before the great explosion in fantasy where Grenadier, Ral Partha, and quite a few other companies really emerged, taking fantasy gaming to new heights.

Scales also need to be addressed here as in 1977 there weren't a lot of choices. 25mm, not 28mm as they are now, was the dominant scale for lead miniatures. There were quite a few companies producing figs in this scale, but ranges and options were still pretty limited. For WW2 gaming the preferred scale was 1/76 or 1/72, although 1/87 did have quite a few followers. Micro-armor was just getting going and was proving to be a great alternative to the larger scales for WW2. 6mm was rep-

resented by Heroics & Ros with very limited ranges and virtually no rules support at the time. 15mm was just making inroads, but the selections were few, being limited to ACW and Napoleonic at the time.

Figure quality wasn't the greatest back then, but it was really way down the priority list.

Types of figures and large ranges for various periods were far more important than the faces and folds on the uniforms were! Also, painting techniques and hobby supplies weren't designed for gamers in 1977. My first miniatures were painted with Testors enamels and then for

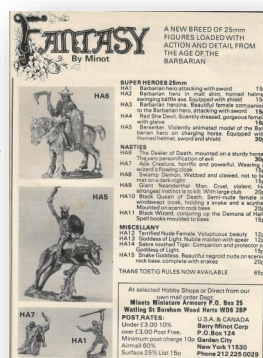
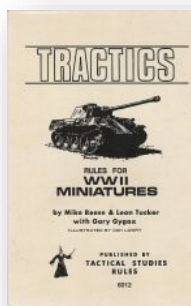


several years I moved to oils. It wasn't until the early 80s that acrylics and inks were readily available to gamers.

Terrain was pretty much non-existent. Railroad grass mats or giant green felt cloths on ping pong tables provided the backdrop for 90% of the gaming back then. Lichen served as forests as making trees was a lot of effort with the railroad hobby kits that were out there at the time. 1/72nd was popular because you could use all of the HO scale buildings that were available at any toy store. The few buildings available through magazine ads were crude to say the least. Today's gamers are certainly spoiled by the kinds of terrain that we would have given anything for back then.

I know that by now many of you are probably wondering how we survived being gamers back in the dark age that

was 1977! Well, we did and we had a lot of fun in the hobby at this time. The passion and camaradery were certainly at much higher levels than they are today. You lived and breathed the hobby back then, with game days being epic events and I wouldn't have missed it for the world!





Several additional pictures from the General d'Armee battle from pages 4-5. These are 15mm figures from a variety of manufacturers and based for General d'Brigade. The owner of these armies has not decided to rebase for the new rules, which while making things simpler would also be a major project!

At some point in the wargaming hobby, one needs to ask, "Why do we need another Market Garden game?" This was my first question when GMT announced Holland '44 by Mark Simonitch. I've been a fan of this "series" of games that includes Ardennes '44, The Caucasus Campaign, Ukraine '43, and France '40. That I would no doubt order it was a foregone conclusion as with GMT Games and Mark Simonitch, it's hard to go wrong. Still, I have SPI's Arnhem, DG's Highway to the Reich, MMP's Where Eagles Dare, AH's Storm Over Arnhem, and MMP's Monty's Gamble. Why do I need another game on this topic?

Let's go over the components first. The map is a two piece affair, with a smaller map that features the Arnhem area and up to Nijmegen that fits in with the larger map. The map is your usual Simonitch fare, meaning it is very well done and the terrain is laid out clearly for everyone with little to no need for interpretation. You get two sheets of large counters, with color coded units that have just enough information on them, including set up hexes and reinforcement turns, which is always a big plus. The rules are well done with a two turn example of play, which again is very helpful in understanding the game. Several play aids round out the very well done package.

As with all Simonitch games, everything has been thought out in detail. For example, the British glider pilots form up and appear on Turn 2 as a unit. There's a counter for them and a holding box on the map. There are holding



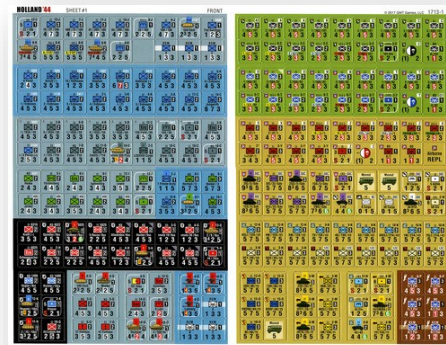
boxes for Traffic markers, air strikes, replacements, and more. Every detail has been thought out and made easier for the gamer. You can read through the rules, set the game up, and be into the first few turns with hardly any effort.

As with most games on the subject, the first turn is going to have a ton of special rules, from the airborne landings to the XXX Corps breakout. This game is no different, but there are some subtle, common sense rules here that speed you through that crucial first turn. The landing procedure is simple and results in no long term effects to the para units, which is good since the historical drops had few problems the first day. German movement is limited, the Allies are given a 50/50 chance to capture bridges, and basically only a few units on the highway and canals can attack the first turn. A nice touch that aids in the replay value of the game is that there are 20 unknown German units in key locations that may or may not prove to be obstacles, creating potential problems for both sides. In what usually takes a few hours in most games on the subject, the first turn in Holland '44 takes maybe 30 minutes!

Once you get through the first turn the game turns into a standard WW2 operational level battle as the Germans try to knock out the paras and prevent the British armor from linking up with the airborne bridgeheads. Again, many of the key features of this battle such as the traffic problems on the highway, supply, determined defense of key positions, etc., are handled simply and elegantly. I continually found myself trying to figure out how to move forces up the road to get to the bridges, where in most Market Garden games you seem to spend an inordinate amount of time micro-managing various sub units of the paratroop divisions.

A feature of all Market Garden games is of course

the terrain. The various canals, rivers, bridges, polder, and so on are usually the focal point of these games. In Holland '44 there is a different approach, namely



terrain is just "terrain" and treated like any other wargame. In other words, players are free to focus on strategies instead of worrying about how to get that few extra hexes of movement by combining some bizarre combo of roads through polder, off road into forest, over a bridge, and so on. There are different levels of troop quality, ratings for armor, and simple artillery system that works very well during game play. Again, things that are usually complicated get boiled down into a few extra sentences in the rules.

With the game being at battalion level, the counter density seems just about right, but some players may want that extra level of detail that is so prevalent in Market Garden games that feature all kinds of recon jeeps, AT batteries, and so on. My only complaint is that the game tracks should have been on separate cards, as no one is going to be sitting at the bottom of the map as it is impractical, but that's where they're facing. Another issue is that if things don't go well around Arnhem in the first few turns you may want to set it up and try again as the stream of SS units that will be heading towards Nijmegen will make it almost impossible for the Allies to win.

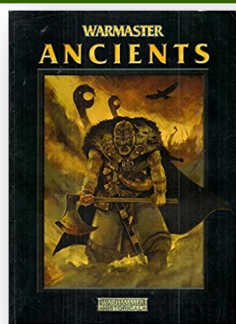
Overall, this is another successful Simonitch design and will probably become the go to game on the subject for most gamers. I found it to be a good gaming experience even though I've played this topic at least 40 times over the years. This is a very good game and hopefully it will encourage gamers to try other games in the series.



In one of the many discussions centering around the new set of WW2 rules by Sam Mustafa called Rommel, one got the sense that unless you got with the times, bought these rules, played them, then expressed your undying love for them all over the Internet, then you weren't really a WW2 gamer. Now this isn't a discussion about that particular set of rules as I have not played them or even looked at them, but rather this is a look at a trend in the hobby that has been going on for quite some time. What trend is that, you might ask? The trend of proclaiming various sets of rules "dead" and using that as an excuse to move on.

For starters, we need to define what many people term "dead" when discussing rules, which varies accordingly to each gamer's needs/wants/desires/etc. Usually, it means a set of rules where there hasn't been a new version in quite some time, there's been no supplements, no online content, figure ranges aren't coming out for it in some instances, or that discussion of said rules has slowed down. For many gamers this is sufficient reason to abandon what they've been playing and move on. A great example of that would be Warmaster Ancients.

Back in the day, rules would seem to die a natural death, i.e., nobody was playing them! I can think of several sets of rules that our gaming club tried and that was the last of it as there was no word from other gamers, no articles, reviews, or any news at all. Usually those rules were tried in an attempt to find something better or seeing what other options were out there. It was definitely easier back then as there were far fewer sets of rules coming out, fewer periods to game, and there was always the "commonality" factor to consider. By that I mean if your group played Empire or WRG Ancients, you always had



second thoughts about abandoning them because if new gamers moved into the area or you yourself moved away, there were always gamers who were playing what you were into.

Not anymore. Rules are coming out so fast and furious that finding anyone to play what you do is a real challenge. Some of this is due to gamers just gravitating towards new things which is certainly part of what is usually termed The Cult of the New. This has always existed in the hobby, but with online marketing, game forums, etc., the amount of product available at your fingertips is truly staggering. The urge to try new sets of rules is overwhelming for any gamers and at times seems to trump common sense. Once a gamer sees a new set of rules, many start to justify why they would abandon a set that they've been playing for so long.

A case in point would be Arc of Fire, which I consider to be one of the better WW2/Modern skirmish games out there. We've certainly had a lot of fun with it over the years, it's had pretty good reviews, and many gamers think highly of it. So why do we rarely see it played or talked about? My guess is that it has been swamped under by Chain of Command, IABSM, Bolt Action, Disposable Heroes, and a ton of other rules. Are those rules better than Arc of Fire? Maybe some are and maybe some aren't. However, the fact remains that Arc of Fire has been declared "dead" by most of the miniatures gaming hobby and attempts to resuscitate might be too much effort.

I'm even seeing this extended to The Sword & The Flame (TSATF), one of the most beloved sets of colonial skirmish rules and a pillar of historical wargaming. With new rules from Osprey and others on the subject it's almost as if some gamers are willing themselves to declare TSATF "dead". They probably don't even know why they want it to go away, but they do. Is it so that everyone can embrace the set of rules that they've deemed to be popular now? Is it a mob based mentality that is sweep-

ing through the hobby? Why not just enjoy TSATF for what it is? Is there some sort of insatiable need for gamers to have the rules that they are currently playing accepted as the norm?

I think the answers at this time are all over the place. In the past there was definitely a limit on what rules were avail-

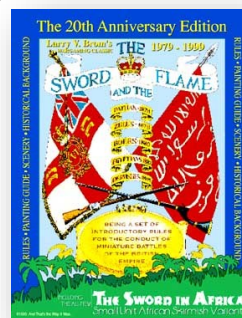
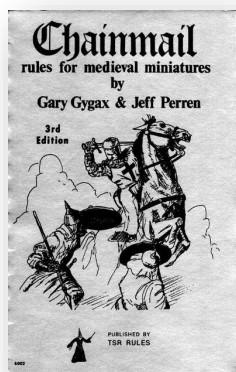
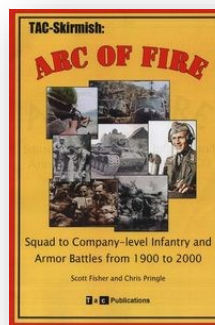
able, which is why many of them, even Tractics (which has been greatly disparaged through the years), survived for so long. In this new era of a half dozen sets of rules coming out each week, the temptation to try new things is too great to pass up for many gamers. If you like a certain set of rules, how do you get others to join your

cause to help set up games, paint figs, create terrain, etc.? By disparaging the set of rules they've used for quite some time? Unfortunately, we are seeing this in the hobby.

There's nothing wrong with trying new things and that is one aspect of the hobby that has never changed. If you're happy with Chainmail, WRG 1925-1950, Hordes of the Things, Striker, etc., there's no need to change and in fact I would be glad to join you for a game! Those are some great sets of rules that have stood the test of time. Are there better rules out there? Maybe. But, it's what you enjoy playing, which is the salient point missed by many in the hobby. Too often, gamers get emotionally invested and lash out at the first criticism of their new rules.

For myself, TSATF and Warmaster Ancients work for me. I've got huge forces for both, we have a lot of fun playing the games, and I can't see anything ever sup-

planting them at this stage. I'll gladly try other sets of rules for these periods, but I'm not going to declare them "dead" in an effort to justify trying something new. I wonder how soon it will before Flames of War, Bolt Action, etc., are declared "dead"?



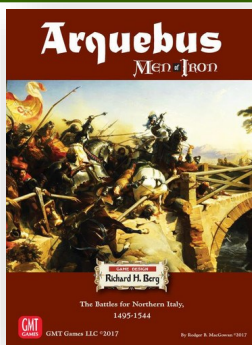
Men of Iron Vol IV: Arquebus by GMT Games

Game Review

One of the more popular series by GMT Games is the Men of Iron series. Up to this point the battles have been more of the medieval variety, including the War of the Roses and Crusades, but now the 4th entry into the series ventures into the Renaissance era. From its modest beginnings with the first game, this series continues to progress in terms of variety and components while still keeping the heart of the system fairly simple.

In terms of components there's not much to really complain about as they are definitely up to GMT's already high standards. First off, you get a ton of counters. In fact, there are three sheets, which covers all of the major forces during the Renaissance era plus assorted markers. There are several back printed maps, reference cards, and then the rules plus a scenario book. In short, everything looks great and the additional scenario book with some examples is a great addition to the series.

My biggest complaint with the first two games in the series was that you spent more time hunting and pecking for the right counters in each scenario than playing the game! Since many of the units are generic and the same color, finding specific counters such as MAA 7-10 for a certain leader was an exercise in frustration. The third game addressed this issue better and this volume does try to solve it as well with the colored stripes that match the leaders. Still, my first few plays revealed that I still had to hunt for just the right counters for each scenario. I think a good solution to this is what GMT did with the Gringo (GBACW series) and just have a separate



section of counters for each scenario. I would gladly pay the extra money for this!

Fortunately, the rules for the game are easy to understand and once you have a few turns under your belt things flow pretty smoothly. At the start of the game a side gets to activate a leader. Every unit in his command in his range is activated, meaning that they can move, charge, or attack, pretty much in any order. Once that command is done, you can roll to activate another leader on your side. If you fail, then the opposing player gets to activate a leader and so on. Each side can try to "steal" the initiative, but if you fail then the other player can pick any leader on the board to activate freely. Simple, easy to follow, and it plays pretty fast.

While shooting is fairly simple, combat can take a few turns to get used to. Basically, each attacking unit is trying to roll a certain number to disorder or retire an opposing unit. Retire in game terms means the unit has fled and has to be rallied where each overall commander has planted their flag. Disorder results in a unit being flipped to where its stats aren't as good as the front side. You compare troop types on a chart, modify for strength (more than one attacker), terrain, flank/rear attacks, leader, quality, etc., and roll a D10. Again, once you get used to it the combat goes faster than I've described it.

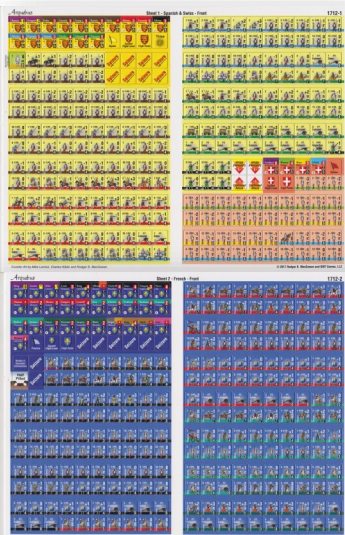
The objective is to usually force the opposing army to break and this is achieved through flight points. Each unit that is eliminated is worth a number of points that is kept track of during the game. Once the marker reaches the number printed on the track for that scenario, that side has lost the game. Again, this is fairly simple in operation and after the first few turns you can clearly see how the system works and what you should be focused on.

Arquebus comes with a number of maps and scenarios for Fornovo, Cerignola, Agnadello, Ravenna, Marignano, Bicocca, Pavia, and Ceresole. Some of these, like Pavia for example, are quite large battles with plenty of units for both sides. Others are small scenarios that will only take an hour or two to play. This gives the series perhaps its strongest selling point in that there are several battles that are all different, but yet can be finished in under 3 hours for most of them. Also, once you know the system, you can easily purchase the other games and start playing immediately.



Are there some issues with this game and series in general? As I stated earlier, the set up at times takes longer than it should. For some games it will be very easily, but any scenario that uses shared counters will take some extra time. In terms of game play there can be some confusing situations with combat in terms of who should fight first, the modifiers, retreats, etc., but it's nothing major. The game play at times can be a bit frustrating, where it seems that you're waiting for that lucky roll to activate a formation with a poor leader, continuation, or trying to fight across an obstacle. You will catch yourself doing the same things over and over with the same units, trying to achieve a positive result before the game ends.

Now these are small quibbles in what is otherwise a fine series. Arquebus does a good job with Renaissance era warfare, which is basically adding some arquebusiers and artillery, both of which weren't very effective in this era, to a medieval game system. There are a wide variety of scenarios with good replay value. Recommended.



To Naples!

A Fictional Renaissance Campaign

Introduction

The Battle of the Sesia essentially ended French ambitions in Central Italy in 1523, with the French forces under Gouffier falling back in disarray. The Imperial-Spanish counteroffensive in 1524 then sacked Provence. In 1525 this led to the French campaign that ended with defeat at Pavia. But what if history had taken a different turn...

The Battle of the Sesia, fought just a week ago, has produced an opportunity for France in Italy. Driving south quickly, Rome is seized with hardly a shot fired. Now, after several years and varying success, Naples is there for the taking. France has decided to invest significant resources and has sent additional troops, supplies, and money for mercenaries. Imperial-Spanish forces have fallen apart, going off in a variety of directions under different leaders. French forces consolidate near Rome for the drive towards Naples, hoping to destroy the enemy's scattered forces once and for all, leaving France as master of Italy.

The Imperial-Spanish forces, however, regroup and are eager to get back into the campaign. Realizing that this is their last, best chance to thwart French ambitions in Italy, they prepare for the coming campaign. Additional Spanish troops arrive, mercenaries are contracted, and supplies are brought forward. French forces, however, are concentrated and ready for the final push towards Naples, while the Imperial-Spanish forces are spread throughout the area. It remains to be seen if they can consolidate and unite fast enough to defend Naples in the coming campaign.

To Naples is a fictional campaign for the Renaissance era suitable for any rules. The campaign is alternative fiction in that the Battle of the Sesia, which was a major victory for the Imperial-Spanish forces, is presumed to have been a draw. This has enabled France to pour more resources into the Italian campaign, while the Imperial-Spanish forces have fallen back in disarray.

The campaign is fought over a map covering the area around Naples. The various towns and roads have been shown using a series of movement points (shaped like squares) that will regulate how far forces can move in the campaign. Movement will be depended upon the ratings of the various leaders, which will be drawn at random before and during the campaign. Each side will have to roll for the leader's initiative as in the Renaissance era armies did not move very fast and often not at all!

Forces will be broken down into strength points, with each point representing either a unit or a number of stands depending upon the set of rules that have been chosen for the campaign. Each force is then assigned a leader, who can then move a force on the campaign map and some leaders can command other leaders, potentially creating larger forces for battles.

The rules that your group chooses to use for the campaign will dictate how battles will be fought, but the campaign rules will determine the fate of the forces after the battle, including the ratio of permanent losses, pursuit, and the fate of

leaders. There will be several choices in how to set up the terrain for the battles, which will give gaming groups options for the campaign.

The supply rules for this campaign will be fairly simple as with the limited scope it was felt that a complex system would require too much paperwork. Basically, forces just need to trace a path towards an off map area to maintain supply. As with many of our other campaign rules with this magazine, gaming groups are free to experiment and use their own systems. These campaign rules are designed to provide a series of interesting battles that your gaming group would not ordinarily choose to do, often with vastly unbalanced forces.

Of course it wouldn't be the Renaissance if it wasn't for the chaos involved in this era! There are a wide ranging variety of events that will occur during the campaign that will affect movement, supply, leadership, and mercenaries. Mercenaries must be bought and paid for from an available pool of units, then maintained with pay each turn during the campaign. This will make it a challenge for both sides to depend upon forces which you may not be able to afford at all times.

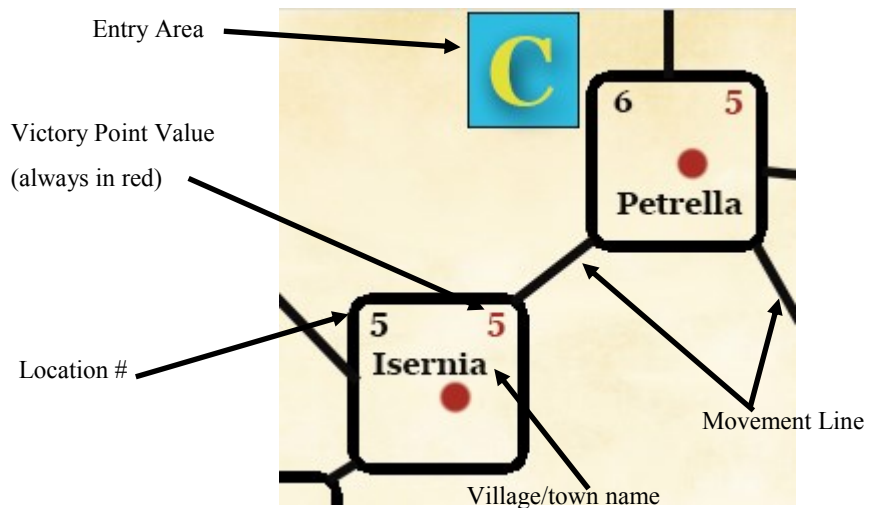
Most of all, this campaign is designed to provide a unique challenge for Renaissance gamers. Campaigns are a great experience and this set of rules merely provides a way forward. Everyone is encouraged to expand upon or change these rules to make it the best possible campaign for your gaming group.

The Map

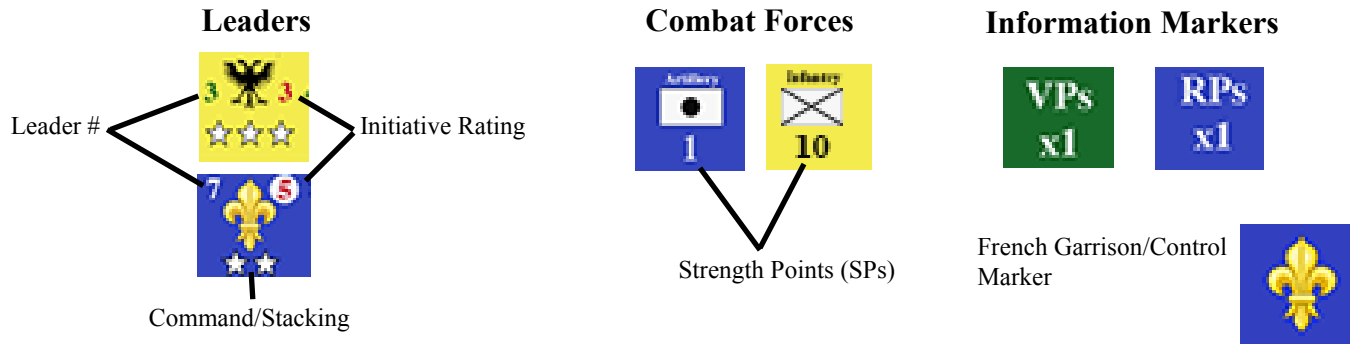
The map represents the area where the To Naples campaign takes place. The various squares (locations) are used to regulate movement and to provide objectives for the two sides. Each square is connected by a line which shows where forces can move to adjacent squares. If there is no line present, then a force cannot move directly to that square.

Each square also has various information such as the square number, victory point value, and the town or village that is present near that location (for historical reference).

Naples is of course the primary objective and is marked as a hexagon with a fortress icon so as to distinguish it from the other locations on the campaign map.



Counter Information



Leaders & Stacking

For a force of strength points to move, it must be stacked with a leader. Each leader can command the following number of strength points and/or leaders:

- ★ 5 SPs and no leaders
- ★★ 10 SPs and two one star leaders
- ★★★ 15 SPs and any combination of leaders up to three stars.

Ex., a 3 star leader is in a space with 12SPs. He could command a 2 star leader with up to 10SPs and a 1 star leader with up to 5SPs. The total force in the space would be three leaders and 27SPs. The maximum force in a space that a 3 star leader could command would be 30SPs.

When multiple leaders are stacked in the same space, they must use the Initiative Rating of the leader with the most stars.

If there are two or more leaders with the same amount of stars in a single space, that side can choose which leader's Initiative Rating to use. If a side chooses to break apart the force, this must be announced prior to rolling for initiative for each leader that is breaking off from the main force. It is possible to have more than 30SPs in a space, but each force would have to roll for initiative separately and there may be coordination problems if there is a battle in that space.

Sequence of Play

Each turn of To Naples is governed by a sequence of play that helps regulate movement, combat, events, and more.

1. **Event Phase**-Both sides roll 2D6 for any random events and consult their side's event table.
2. **Resource Points Phase**-Both sides determine if they receive any new Resource Points (RPs) this turn. RPs are then spent by both sides to keep troops paid/supplied for the turn as well as recruiting additional Strength Points (SPs).
3. **Determine Initiative**-Each side rolls 1D6. The side with the highest roll decides who will move first in the turn.
4. **First Side Movement Phase**
5. **Second Side Movement Phase**
6. **Resolve Battles**
7. **Resolve Sieges**
8. **Supply Phase**
9. **Victory Determination**

Turn Start

Events

At the start of each turn both sides roll on their respective event tables. If there are events, then these are applied immediately. Follow the instructions listed for each event. Any event involving RPs will adjust the total available to that side for the current turn. Some events can only be used once per campaign and if they are rolled again, then treat that result as a No Event roll.

Resource Points

Resource Points (RPs) are used to keep troops paid, recruiting additional forces, and creating fortifications. Each player rolls 2D6 to determine the amount of RPs they receive for the current turn, modified by any RP influenced events. Both sides then spend RPs to keep their troops in the

field as well as recruit new troops. The Resource Point Costs table at the end of these rules lists the appropriate cost for each action.

If there are insufficient RPs to pay for all of a side's SPs, then a number of SPs must be eliminated. RPs can be accumulated from turn to turn by either recording the number on paper or using the game record tracks at the end of the rules.

Movement

Leaders & Movement

A force consists of a leader and a number of SPs, up to the leader's ability or based upon how many leaders are in the force. **SPs cannot move without a leader.** To move a force, choose the highest ranking leader in the force, then roll 1D6. If the number is equal or less than their Initiative Rating, then that force can move. If the number is higher than the leader's Initiative Rating that force is unable to move that turn.

Forces can move up to two locations (squares on the campaign map) per turn. Leaders can move up to three locations per turn if moving by themselves. *Entry areas are off board locations, so the first location moved to is the one closest to the*

entry area.

Extended Movement

A force can attempt to move an additional location each turn, but must then roll on the Stragglings Table, which could result in SP loss. To move an additional location, first roll 1D6 against the leader's Initiative Rating, then roll 2D6 on the Stragglings Table. Any losses incurred due to the result of the roll are immediately removed from the moving force (round fractions up). *Armies of this period were prone to straggling, poor march discipline, foraging needs, leaders lagging behind, & multiple other problems.*

Interception

When a force moves to a location adjacent

to a force of the non-moving side, that force can attempt to intercept the moving force. Roll against the Initiative Rating of the leader with the intercepting force and if successful, that force moves to the location of the enemy force. The movement for both forces now ends.

Withdrawal

When a force moves to a location occupied by an enemy force, movement ends for both forces. However, the non-moving force can attempt to withdraw by rolling against the leader's Initiative Rating. If successful, that force can retreat to any non-enemy occupied location. This can happen any number of times during movement, but if the roll is failed, then movement ends for both forces.

Resolve Battles

When there are two enemy forces at a location, movement ends for both forces and a battle is fought in that space. The sequence for the Resolve battles phase is as follows:

1. Determine the size of the battle.
2. Set up the battlefield
3. Conduct the battle
4. Retreat & pursuit
5. Determine permanent losses

Size of the Battle

When there is a clear superiority of numbers for a battle (ex., 25 SPs against 3 SPs), both sides may just want to roll on the table below to determine the result rather than going through the lengthy process of setting up a battle that will be over quickly. *Note: Both sides may want to agree before the campaign begins about when this table will be used.*

Odds

DR	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1+
1	2/1	2/2	1/1	1/2
2	2/2	1/1	1/2	1/3
3	1/1	1/2	1/3	1/4
4	1/2	1/3	1/4	0/E
5	1/3	1/4	0/E	0/E
6	0/E	0/E	0/E	0/E

##/#-Number to the left of the slash is the SP loss to the attacker and number to the right is the SP loss to the defender. An E result means the entire defending force is eliminated. In all cases, if the defender is not eliminated they must retreat.

Setting Up The Battlefield

Once it has been determined that a battle will be fought in that territory, there are several ways of setting up the battlefield. The first is to have both players mutually decide what terrain and/or scenery should be represented. The second is to have a

third party set up the battlefield, then each player rolls 1D6 with the highest roll choosing which side that they will deploy on.

A third way is to have each player write down a number from 0-10 for how many terrain pieces that they would like to see on the battlefield. Both numbers are added together, then divided by 2 to get the number of how many rolls are made on the Terrain Table below. Each player then places one terrain piece until the desired number is reached (if an odd number roll 1D6 to decide who places the first piece). Once the battlefield is set up, each player rolls 1D6 and the highest roll decides on which end of the table to deploy.

Terrain Table

Die Roll	Terrain
2	24" Ridge
3	Forest
4	Large Hill
5	Small Hill
6	Village/town
7	Forest
8	Small Hill
9	Marsh/Rough Ground
10	Farms/Farm Fields
11	Forest
12	River

- Forests should be an 18" square area of trees, so for example the strip could be 6x3, 9x2, etc.
- Farms and farm fields can be treated as open or difficult ground.
- No terrain piece other than the ridge or river should take up more than one square foot of area.
- If a river is rolled, roll 1D6 for the number of 12" long sections that can be placed. Roll 1D6 and if a 4, 5, or 6 is rolled there is a bridge located somewhere on the river. Roll a second 1D6 and on a 5 or 6 there is a ford located on the river.

- If the battle is taking place at Naples, then the board should as much as possible represent a large city with defenses. This will of course be up to the players in terms of how much terrain they own to represent the city of Naples.
- Players should feel free to slightly adjust the terrain to conform to the rules for their campaign.

Conduct the Battle

For campaign battles use your regular rules for the period and before the campaign and/or each individual battle, set the game length. The main difference from most one off battles is that each force has a number of strength points in terms of infantry, cavalry, and artillery attached to it, so the army lists in your rules will not be used to determine the usual percentage in each force. It is up to the players to decide which strength points represent which units. This can be tracked as part of the campaign record or players can pick each unit before each battle.

Retreat & Pursuit

At the end of the battle or if one force decides to withdraw, that force must then move to an adjacent location. If the attacker loses the battle or withdraws, they must return to their previous location before they entered the battle location. If the defender loses the battle or withdraws, it may move to any adjacent friendly location. If all other locations are occupied by enemy forces, the defeated force is eliminated instead.

The victorious force may then decide to pursue the defeated/withdrawing force Roll against the Initiative Rating of the winning leader. If successful, that force can then roll on the pursuit table to possibly inflict additional SP losses on the defeated/withdrawing force. This is done by comparing the number of cavalry SPs in both forces and rolling 1D6. Any differential less than -1 is treated as a -1 and any differential greater than +3 is rolled for on the +3 column. The result is the additional number of SPs that the defeated/withdrawing force loses from their force.

Resolve Battles (cont.)

Cavalry SP Differential

D6	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
1	0	0	0	1	1
2	0	0	1	1	2
3	0	0	1	1	2
4	0	1	1	2	3
5	0	1	2	2	3
6	1	2	2	3	4

Permanent Losses

Once retreat and/or pursuit has been completed, both sides need to roll on the following table to determine how many of their SPs are permanent losses. This should include all SPs (or units depending upon your rules) that were either routed off board or destroyed. Roll 2D6 and add/subtract modifiers for the result.

Die Roll

Die Roll	Result
2	10%
3	20%
4	25%
5	30%
6	40%
7	50%
8	60%
9	70%
10	80%
11	90%
12	All

Modifiers

Winning Side	-1
Losing Side	+1
Lost any SPs in Pursuit	+1

Sieges (optional)

When an opposing force enters a location, a smaller force may wish to not offer a field battle. A force no larger than 5SPs (any SPs over 5 can wither fight a field battle or retreat to a friendly location) can stay in a location with an enemy force, but is assumed to be under siege in the many towns and fortresses in Renaissance era Italy. As long as the enemy force keeps at least double the number of SPs in the location, that location is considered to be under siege. Each turn the Siege Level goes up by 1 and when it reaches 4 it is assumed that the besieged force has surrendered and those SPs are eliminated.

Naples is a major city that could withstand long sieges if necessary. Players will need to work out a siege system to deal with Naples if they do not want to simply fight a field battle for its control.

Replacements, Recruiting New Forces, & Leaders

Replacements

Replacements (in the form of SPs) arrive via events and reflect wounded soldiers returning to duty, local recruiting, etc. Replacements may be added to any friendly force that is able to trace a valid supply line.

Recruiting

Additional SPs may be purchased using Resource Points each turn, which simulates the recruiting of additional units that

will be added to the army. SPs that are purchased may be placed in any friendly entry area or in entry area A if purchased by the French. These new forces must stay in their entry areas until a leader or event allows them to move. *Entry areas are off board locations, so the first move for these forces would be to the location adjacent to the entry area.*

Leaders

Each side begins the campaign with a number of leaders. Additional leaders

may arrive via events. If a leader is killed or captured, a replacement leader is randomly chosen from the available pool of leaders (ex., *if a 2 star leader is killed then choose from the pool of 2 star leaders*). If all leaders are in play, then any events that would add leaders are ignored and any leader that is killed or captured is not replaced. If an event or death/capture requires a leader of a certain rank and there are none available, a leader with a lower rank may be chosen instead.

Supply

Forces are considered to be in supply if they can trace a line of friendly controlled locations to an entry area. France begins the campaign in control of entry area A and can seize control of other entry areas by controlling the location adjacent to that entry area.

If a force is found to not be in supply

during the Supply Phase, the following effects are assumed to occur:

- Movement is reduced to one location per turn.
- Replacements or new leaders can not be added to that force.

If a force is not in supply for two turns in

a row, roll 1D6 for each SP in the force and on a 6 that SP is eliminated. Add +1 for each turn after the second that the force is not in supply.

These rules do not apply to sieges as it is assumed that those locations have provisioned enough supplies to withstand a siege.

Victory Conditions & Campaign Set Up

Victory Conditions

At the end of 10 turns, add up the point value of locations that the French control and compare it to this chart to determine the level of victory.

0-50	Disaster
51-75	Operational Defeat
76-95	Tactical Defeat
96-110	Draw
111-125	Minor Victory
126-140	Operational Victory
141+	Major Victory

Note: When a location is taken by the French, place a garrison marker on that location. They are assumed to the equivalent of 1SP for combat purposes and cannot move from that location. If RPs

are not paid for a garrison each turn the garrison marker is removed and the location returns to Imperialist control.

Campaign Set Up

France

- 50 SPs Infantry
- 10 SPs Cavalry
- 5 SPs Artillery
- 1 3-Star leader
- 2 2-Star Leaders
- 2 1-Star Leaders

Leaders are chosen randomly from the available pool. All forces start at Entry Area A.

France starts with 250 Resource Points.

Imperialist

- 10 SPs Infantry, 2 SPs cavalry, 1 2-star leader, 1 1-star leader @ Cassino (location #5)
- 10 SPs Infantry, 1 SP cavalry, 1 SP artillery, 1 3-star leader @ Riccia (10)
- 15 SPs Infantry, 3 SPs cavalry, 2 SPs artillery, 1 3-star leader, 1 1-star leader @ Naples
- 5 SPs Infantry, 1 1-star leader @ Bovino (14)
- 6 SPs Infantry, 3 SPs cavalry, 1 SP artillery, 1 2-star leader @ Lucera (11)
- Imperialists start with 250 RPs.

Optional Rules

French Supply Center

There is one French supply marker available that can be used as a supply center for the campaign. This marker has a movement of one location per turn and must trace supply to an entry area. All French forces that are recruited may appear at the location of this supply center rather than at an entry area. Also, if French forces are cut off from an entry area for supply purposes, they may trace supply to this supply center for one turn. This rule should be used to balance out the campaign or for inexperienced gamers in a campaign setting.

Reduced Resource Points Expenditure

Both sides can easily see that the longer the campaign goes on the less chance they have of being able to pay/keep all of their forces. If both sides wish the game to go longer or would like to change the system, you could either double the amount of RPs received each turn or identify various locations as supply/resource centers where no RPs have to be paid for SPs that turn. You could also reduce the RP costs for maintaining forces or pay the cost every other turn.

Forts

Forts can be built at various locations by paying the RP cost. The size and complexity of the fort will greatly depend upon your gaming resources. If you have the pieces for extensive entrenchments, walls, etc., for a town or battlefield, then use those. If your group feels that they should be represented by 24 inches of entrenchments and an artillery redoubt or two, then use that. The important consideration is that both sides agree to what constitutes a fort so that it is consistent throughout the campaign.

Chit Pull Movement

Rather than one side moving or attempting to move all of its forces, you could use a chit pull system. Simply make an extra set of leader counters for both sides. Place one chit corresponding to each leader currently on the campaign map in a cup. When a leader chit is drawn, that leader can attempt to move. If it is leader that is currently subordinated to a higher ranked leader either on the map or on the organizational display, that leader may be moved separately or the side passes, letting that leader move when the higher

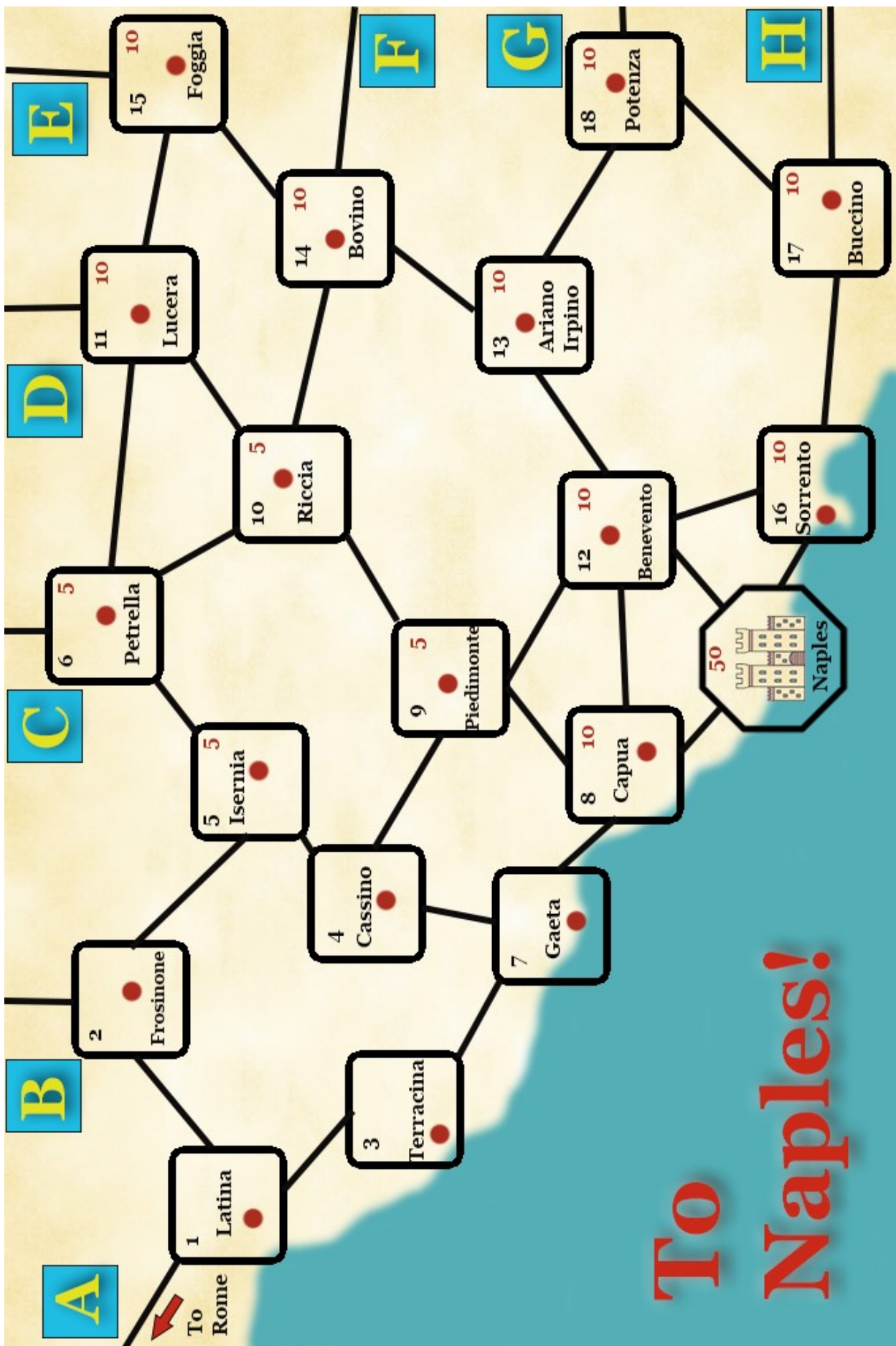
ranked leader's chit is drawn.

Hidden Movement

This will add a level of complexity to the campaign, but using hidden movement would make the situation far more interesting. The easiest method would be to create a log sheet that lists all of the leaders available to both sides with columns for the turns in the campaign. At the beginning of the turn write movement orders for each leader, then the sides can alternate moving their leaders according to their orders. If a force moves into contact with an opposing force that has not moved yet, it is pinned and both sides proceed to the battle phase.

An alternate, but even more complex version would be use cavalry forces as screens, so reconnaissance becomes very important as well. Please see some of our club's other campaign rules for ideas on this, which would take too long to explain here.

Feel free to experiment with different terrain set up tables, straggling, pursuit, etc., systems to make your campaign fit your needs.



To Naples!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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French Organizational Display

Leaders

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Resource Points

0123456789

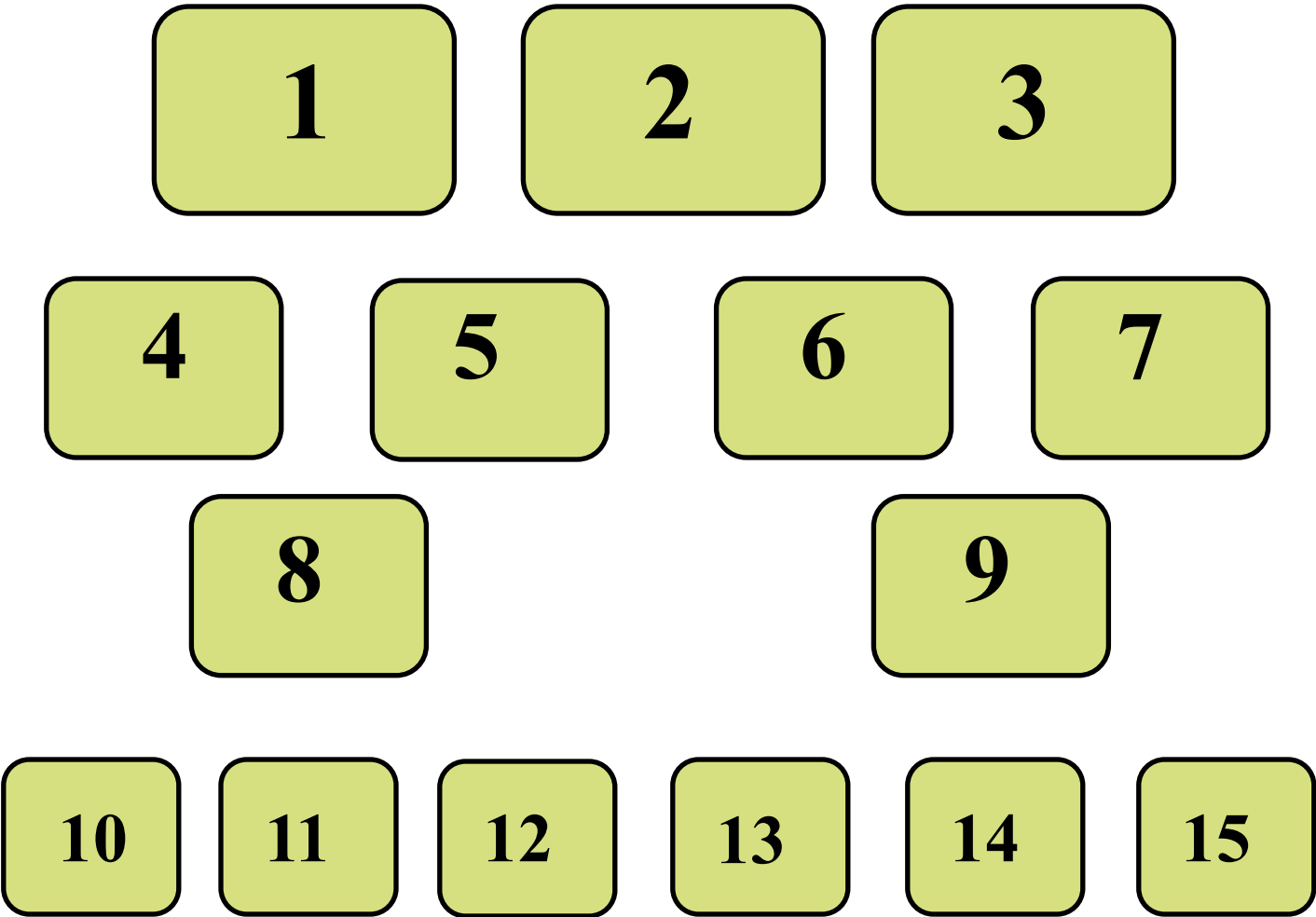
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Turn Initiative

Imperialist Organizational Display

Leaders



Resource Points

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
00	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
000	100	200							
									Turn Initiative

French Events

Roll 2D6 (one being a colored die for the first number) and apply the event for this turn.

- 11 Gain 5 extra Resource Points.
- 12 Indecisiveness. Randomly determine one leader who is then unable to move this turn. If this is a 2 or 3-star leader, then all forces under their command or at the same location cannot move as well.
- 13 One 2-star leader appears at Entry Area A. If there are no 2-star leaders available randomly select a 1-star leader.
- 14 Artillery transportation shortage. One random force that has artillery SPs is unable to move this turn.
- 15 2 SPs of cavalry arrive at Entry Area A.
- 16 One random leader has health issues and retires from the campaign. Randomly select a replacement with the same number of stars.
- 21 Scouts find better roads. One force may move two locations this turn.
- 22 Garrison revolts. Randomly select one French garrison and remove it from the campaign map. If there are no other French forces at that location the space becomes Imperialist controlled. This may place other French forces out of supply.
- 23 Gain 10 extra Resource Points.
- 24 Heavy rains slow movement. All forces this turn may only move one location on a roll of 4, 5, or 6 on 1D6.
- 25 Superior reconnaissance. In any one battle this turn, the French side can choose the side of the battlefield to deploy after the terrain is set up.
- 26 Misunderstood orders. One randomly selected force must move to a random adjacent location towards a friendly entry area.
- 31 Lose 5 Resource Points.
- 32 1 SP of infantry, 1 SP of cavalry, and 1 SP of infantry may be added to any force. This force must be in supply when the event is rolled.
- 33 Successful foraging. All forces are in supply this turn, no matter the circumstances.
- 34 Siege guns. In any one battle this turn the French side receives 1 SP (or artillery battery under the rules you are using) of heavy artillery.
- 35 Mercenaries revolt. Pay an additional 10 Resource Points this turn or lose 5 SPs from any force(s). The SPs may be taken from several forces.
- 36 Successful negotiations. Pick one enemy force and 3SPs from that force are immediately removed (assumed to have been bribed to leave the campaign area).
- 41 Swiss intransigence. If there is a battle this turn, all Swiss units must be deployed at the front of the army and must move to attack the closest enemy units until contact is made.
- 42 Arguments over command. All 2-star leaders this turn have an Initiative Rating of 1.
- 43 Mismanagement of resources. Roll 2D6 and subtract that number of Resource Points.
- 44 Field works. At any one battle this turn the French force receives 18 inches of entrenchments/fortifications and two fortified artillery positions.
- 45 Retreat turns into rout. Any French force that retreats this turn and loses at least 1 SP in the pursuit rolls 1D6 and loses that number of additional SPs.
- 46 Unseen approach. Because of the terrain, weather, poor scouting, etc., in any battle this turn up to two French units may start within one move of any forward deployed Imperialist unit.
- 51 Rumors of an enemy landing behind the lines. One random French force must move one location back towards a friendly entry area.
- 52 Mercenary contingent arrives. A force consisting of 5 SPs of infantry, 1 SP of cavalry, and 1 SP of artillery may be placed with any French force on the campaign map. This force is paid in full for the first 3 turns from when it arrives.
- 53 Roll 2D6 and receive that number of additional Resource Points this turn.
- 54 Loss of support. One random 3-star leader is removed from the game and replaced by a random available 3-star leader. The first leader is put back into the pool and may arrive later due to other random events.
- 55 Heavy rains and bad roads make campaign movement almost impossible. For each French force attempting to move this turn, roll 1D6 and they can only move on a 4, 5, or 6.
- 56 3 infantry SPs arrive at a friendly entry area.
- 61 Receive 5 extra Resource Points.
- 62 Flank attack. During any one battle this turn, up to 30% of the French army may start within two moves of the enemy's flank.
- 63 Pursuit stopped. During this turn, all French forces are unable to pursuit as they are too busy plundering the enemy's baggage wagons.
- 64 A random 1-star leader appears at a friendly entry area.
- 65 Determined attack. In any one battle this turn, all French heavy cavalry go up one morale grade.
- 66 French high command indecision. All French 3-star leaders this turn have an Initiative Rating of 1.

In the case of random movement, selection of random forces, etc., choose the closest available die to determine the force/leader/location affected. For example, if there are 7 French forces, use a D8 to determine which force is selected, ignoring the result of an 8. In some cases there may be some confusion in how to apply the event with the rules that your group is using. As always, either discuss it and come up with an agreeable solution or let a die decide.

Imperialist Events

Roll 2D6 (one being a colored die for the first number) and apply the event for this turn.

- 11 5 SPs of infantry appear at any friendly controlled entry area.
- 12 Stealing a march on the enemy. Any one force may move a second time after all other forces have finished movement for the turn.
- 13 Command divisiveness. Roll 1D6 for each force and on a 4, 5, or 6 that force cannot move this turn. Also, forces cannot combine for an attack on this turn, even if they are both able to move into the same enemy occupied location.
- 14 Lose 5 Resource Points.
- 15 High command replacement. Remove a 3-star leader (randomly if there are more than one) and replace him with a randomly selected 3-star leader from those that are still available. That force is unable to move this turn.
- 16 Receive 2 SPs of infantry and 1SP of cavalry at any friendly controlled entry area.
- 21 If there is a battle this turn, Imperialist forces may place up to 18 inches of entrenchments and two artillery positions in their deployment area.
- 22 One randomly selected 2-star leader appears at a friendly controlled entry area.
- 23 Orders confusion. One randomly selected force must move towards Naples this turn.
- 24 Roll 1D6 and receive the following leader at any friendly controlled entry area OR any force on the map: 1-2: 1-star, 3-4: 2-star, 5-6: 3 star.
- 25 Mercenaries revolt. In any one randomly selected force at least half of the SPs will be eliminated unless 10 Resource Points are paid immediately.
- 26 Heavy rains and mud prevent the movement of artillery SPs this turn. They must be left behind if a force that has them decides to move.
- 31 Spanish reinforcements! 7 SPs of infantry, 2 SPs of cavalry, 1 SP of artillery, and one 2-star leader arrive at any location along the coast area of the map (3, 7, 8, 16, 17, or 50). If there is a French garrison or force in that location then a battle will be fought that turn. Note: This event can only occur once per game. If it is rolled again the Imperialists receive 5 Resource Points instead.
- 32 Corruption. Roll 2D6 and lose that number of Resource Points.
- 33 Enthusiasm for the cause. All Imperialist leaders have their Initiative Ratings increased by 1 for the turn.
- 34 Active patrolling. Any attempt by Imperialist forces to intercept French forces automatically succeed this turn.
- 35 Disease outbreak and poor medical facilities. Randomly select one force and lose 2 infantry SPs.
- 36 Cavalry supremacy. In any battle fought this turn in which the Imperialists win, they automatically roll on the +3 column.
- 41 More leaders join the cause. Add one 1-star and one 2-star leader (randomly selected) to any force on the map.
- 42 Raid! French forces successfully ambush baggage trains and camps. Lose 2D6 of Resource Points this turn.
- 43 Attack! In any one battle this turn the Imperialist forces get one free move on the battlefield before the game begins.
- 44 2 SPs of infantry join any force on the map.
- 45 Accumulated supplies. All forces on the map this turn are automatically in supply, even if besieged.
- 46 Drive them from Italy! At least one force must make an attack this turn by moving to a French occupied location and fighting a battle. If no attack occurs this turn roll 2D6 and lose that number of Resource Points.
- 51 2 SPs of cavalry arrive and may be assigned to any force on the map.
- 52 Poor battle plans. At the first battle of this turn Imperialists forces may not move on the first turn.
- 53 Inspirational strategy. One Imperialist force may move this turn without having to roll against the leader's Initiative Rating.
- 54 Desertion. Lose 2 SPs from any force.
- 55 Successful delaying action. One French force that successfully rolls for movement is unable to move this turn.
- 56 No quarter! At the first battle of the turn all Imperialist infantry units must move straight ahead towards the nearest French infantry units and charge as soon as possible.
- 61 Weak mounts and foraging problems. All Imperialist cavalry units this turn fight as one morale grade/class lower than they actually are.
- 62 Add 5 Resource Points this turn.
- 63 Heavy guns. Imperialist forces get one extra battery of heavy artillery at all battles this turn.
- 64 Mercenaries refuse to fight. Pay 2D6 in Resource Points immediately or lose 10 SPs from random forces.
- 65 Battlefield promotion. Pick a 1-star leader and replace him with a random 2-star leader.
- 66 Operational coordination. If there are two Imperialist forces adjacent to a French force both forces may automatically move this turn and in the ensuing battle, one force starts on the flank of the French force.

In the case of random movement, selection of random forces, etc., choose the closest available die to determine the force/leader/location affected. In some cases there may be some confusion in how to apply the event with the rules that your group is using. As always, either discuss it and come up with an agreeable solution or let a die decide.

To Naples! Reference Card

Resource Points	
Die Roll	Resource Points
2	50
3	40
4	30
5	25
6	20
7	20
8	20
9	25
10	30
11	40
12	50

Resource Points Cost	
Item	Cost
Infantry SP	1
Cavalry SP	2
Artillery SP	2
French Garrison	1
Recruiting	
Infantry SP	2
Cavalry SP	3
Artillery SP	5
Build	
Fort	25

Sequence Of Play	
1.	Event Phase-
2.	Resource Points Phase- Both sides receive RPs and spend them.
3.	Determine Initiative- Each side rolls 1D6. The side with the highest roll decides who will move first in the turn.
4.	First Side Movement Phase
5.	Second Side Movement Phase
6.	Resolve Battles
7.	Resolve Sieges
8.	Supply Phase
9.	Victory Determination

Movement Rates	
Force	Two Locations
Leader	Three Locations
Extended Movement-One additional location	

Straggling Table	
Die Roll (2D6)	% Lost
2	40
3	30
4	25
5	20
6	20
7	10
8	10
9	20
10	20
11	30
12	40

Die Roll	Terrain
2	24" Ridge
3	Forest
4	Large Hill
5	Small Hill
6	Village/town
7	Forest
8	Small Hill
9	Marsh/Rough Ground
10	Farms/Farm Fields
11	Forest
12	River

Permanent Losses	
Die Roll	Result
2	10%
3	20%
4	25%
5	30%
6	40%
7	50%
8	60%
9	70%
10	80%
11	90%
12	All
Modifiers	
Winning Side	-1
Losing Side	+1
Lost any SPs in Pursuit	+1

Quick Battle Resolution Table				
DR	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1+
1	2/1	2/2	1/1	1/2
2	2/2	1/1	1/2	1/3
3	1/1	1/2	1/3	1/4
4	1/2	1/3	1/4	0/E
5	1/3	1/4	0/E	0/E
6	0/E	0/E	0/E	0/E

Pursuit Table					
D6 Roll	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
1	0	0	0	1	1
2	0	0	1	1	2
3	0	0	1	1	2
4	0	1	1	2	3
5	0	1	2	2	3
6	1	2	2	3	4

The African Campaign by Compass Games

Game Review

John Edwards and Jedko Games produced several popular wargames in the 70s that are still played to this day, including The Russian Campaign, Fortress Europa, and many others. One of those games was The African Campaign, which has now been brought back by Compass Games in a newly released “Designer Signature Edition”. While The African Campaign (TAC) shares many design systems with The Russian Campaign and Fortress Europa, it’s still enough of a one off game that it is hard to think of it belonging in that series, even though there are many arguments for that.

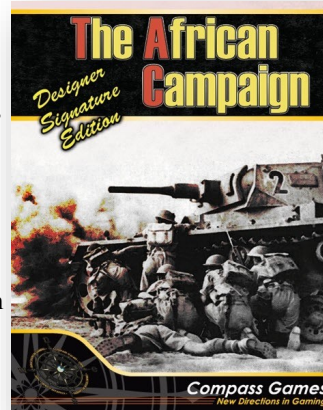
TAC comes with some very nice components, with a reworked map that is distinctively larger than the original Jedko version. As with most maps of

ter problems, which is great. However, this is a fairly small game with limited components, so it’s hard to see how these kinds of things could have occurred.

The rulebook is pretty easy to get into and if you’ve played The Russian Campaign then all you need to look at are the special rules. The turn sequence is your standard IGOUGO with locking zones of control. If you’re in the ZOC of a unit you have to attack it during the combat phase and the combat results table usually inflicts step losses on one or both sides. In fact, step losses and replacements are critical factors in this game, particularly with the small numbers of units on the map at any one time. In The Russian Campaign or Fortress Europa five or six step losses in a turn can be average. In TAC it can mean ruining your entire strategy and costing you the game!

As one would expect, the movement rates for a North Africa game are pretty crazy. Everything can move long distances, especially with strategic movement. However, the Axis forces only have a certain amount of fuel points, meaning that any unit that moves over a certain distance has to pay for it. This does affect the Axis strategy for deep drives across the map towards Egypt. The ridges, passes, and single highway provides ample choke points for defense, so most of the game revolves around attacks at key points along the top of the map.

Minefields, air support, and the ability

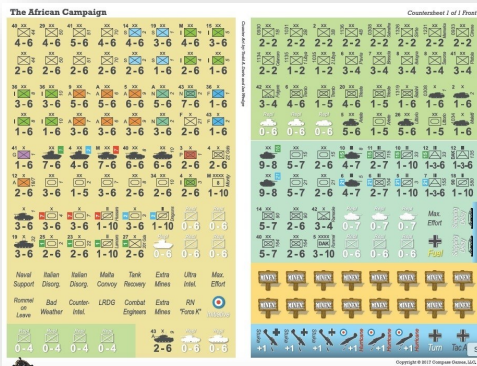


to breakdown units add a bit of chrome to the game, but nothing that most gamers aren’t used to. In fact, I would encourage gamers to start right off using the optional rules that include events, tactical advantage, maximum effort, etc., as these rules add some flavor to the game, plus they are pretty easy to understand.

There are 50 turns in the campaign! Yes, that is a lot

of turns, but with both sides sometimes having less than 10 units on the board each, the turns go by pretty fast. Most of the game is spent moving new units and replacements long distances to the front lines, fighting one or two combats a turn, and then managing step losses to either await replacements or how to push forward. If it sounds repetitive at times, that’s because it is. This is a bare bones, classic hex and counter wargame with a lot of turns that is finished in 3-4 hours. If you’re looking for unique rules, new systems, a lot of randomness, etc., then this game isn’t for you.

In the end, this is a good remake of a classic wargame that is easy to set up and get into. The game does a good job of showing the ebb and flow of the North African campaign, although it ends before the U.S. invades. The big issue seems to be keeping enough interest to get through the full campaign when the turns do seem to be repetitive at times. The optional rules do seem to help with this and I would encourage anyone trying this game to use them from the start. I look forward to seeing Compass bring back more of these classic wargames.



North Africa, there aren’t a lot of terrain features, so instead functionality is stressed with many of the tables, turn records, etc., printed right on the map for easy use. There is one sheet of the larger 5/8ths type counters which are colorful without being distracting and feature all of the brigade and division sized units that fought in this theater. Finally, there are two player reference cards and a set of rules.

Unfortunately, this first game in a “designer” series had some hiccups. Several counters were missing their back side graphics, an error on the turn track, and the minefields section in the rules needed several clarifications. Now these things happen in games all the time and Compass quickly put out the errata and will mail stickers for the coun-



From time to time I do get a lot of comments about various features and the command & control editorial certainly elicits a lot of varied opinions. One of the better thought out responses was this piece by fellow gamer Robert Peipenbrink. We definitely encourage readers who have opposing viewpoints that help move the hobby forward to contribute.

Command & Control—the Lead-Pusher’s View

Guys, none of this is intended to denigrate wargamers who are thrilled by orate C&C rules. There are too few miniature wargamers—certainly too few historical miniature wargamers—for serious internal quarrels. But a house editorial in WO#46 seemed puzzled why every wargamer’s heart did not leap with joy when someone announced a new set of rules emphasizing command & control even more. So I thought I’d drop in and explain why some of us are less than thrilled.

- ◇ *Because they’re usually not very realistic.*
- ◇ *Because they’re usually no fun.*

Realism. Yeah, I know. It’s the Holy Grail of historical miniatures gaming. We call it that because, like the Holy Grail, it’s almost impossible to find and identify. But let’s think for a moment what we’re talking about here. Movement rates reflect the speed of men, animals and vehicles, making allowance for training, formations, fatigue and terrain. Fire rules reflect weapons ranges, terrain and observed effects. What do command and control rules reflect? So nearly as I can see—stupidity, insubordination, distance and staff size. And they do it, by and large, with two mechanisms—a magic circle and a critical die roll, the consequence being troops who can’t move, or who move at a reduced rate.

Distance. People, I’ve been on a road march or so. It’s perfectly true that in pre-radio days, if you sent someone on a wide right hook, it was very hard to change his orders, and you had to allow the

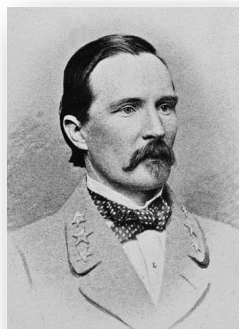


commander on the spot a fair bit of latitude. But if the troops have been told to march on Village X, they do not slow down or stop because they’ve moved some critical distance from the army commander, or the army commander moved away from them. They probably didn’t know where he was when they started marching, and they certainly didn’t know when he moved.

Stupidity. I am especially down on C&C rules which say, in effect “General Smith is stupid, so he gives fewer orders per turn than General Jones.” This is especially irritating when one is taking the part of such a general—“can you win a battle while being an idiot?”—but it’s also not very realistic. If none of you have had the joy of a truly incompetent boss, trust me on this: they give at least as many orders as their more clever brethren—often more. Often many, many more.

Sometimes C&C rules do exactly the same thing, only leaving personalities out of it. “General Smith has a much smaller staff, than General Jones, and so can give fewer orders in a turn. “I spent years on US Army staffs from battalion TOCs to the Pentagon. I AM a staff weenie, and I know what we’re good for. A good staff can provide the commander with decent maps, an understanding of the terrain and the fighting methods of his adversaries and sometimes even decent order of battle. It can make sure troops are trained, fed and supplied. It can anticipate needs and properly allocate replacements. But if anyone thinks having a staff big enough to fill a circus tent actually gets orders out faster, I have news for him—wrapped around some cigars, and written by the chief of staff himself.

Insubordination. Well, it’s perfectly true that some commanders are more likely to obey orders than others, and you can



almost never be entirely sure. But it’s also true that this is—despite all kinds of wargame rules—seldom a reflection on the competence of the subordinate. Some of the very best division and corps commanders of the Napoleonic Wars were only so-so at obeying orders, and were usually especially bad at obeying orders to stay out of a battle. C&C rules are very strongly biased toward troops standing still, and share the intriguing notion that the measure of a subordinate’s competence is how likely he is to do exactly what he’s told. Neither of these is especially true. For every MacClernand at Champion Hill you can’t seem to get to move, there’s a Harry Heath at Gettysburg, getting into a fight you told him not to, or a Sickles moving when he was supposed to stay where you put him.

So, point by point, I have my doubts about how realistic a lot of what we do with C&C is. But there’s a deeper level. We’re expected to exercise tactics on a tabletop—to keep troops within supporting distances and in appropriate formations, to keep our fields of fire clear and our reserves handy. Command—REAL command: leadership—is a real part of generalship and often the primary bit—giving clear orders, and making sure your subordinates want to obey them Making them understand their role in the operation, and ideally placing them where their own temperament works to greatest advantage. Think of Nelson preparing for Trafalgar or Morgan the night before Cowpens. But we don’t “do” generalship the way we do tactics: we just pick a number and roll for results. Not surprising it feels arbitrary.



Would I like a game which focused on generalship? Probably not. Too much committee game or role-playing. But if you really want to put a C&C element into your games, my advice would be to throw out the C&C rules and, if you’re playing an army-level (cont. on p25)

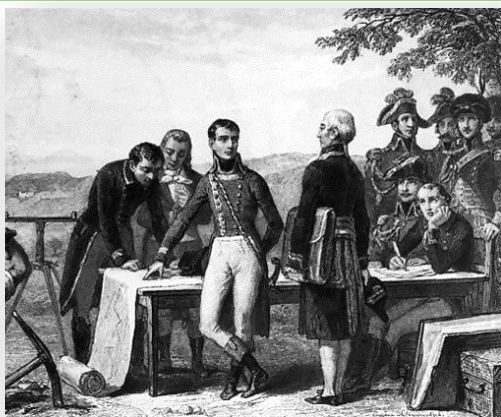
Command & Control-A Rebuttal (cont.) by Robert Peipenbrink

(cont. from p24)
game, recruit actual people to be your corps commanders. If you do that, I can almost guarantee every effect C&C rules are intended to produce. Some of them will misunderstand orders. Some will ignore orders and always, always, there will be the subordinate commander who's just a turn or two slow. The games in which I've felt most like descriptions of army commanders in battle, running around trying to impose a battle plan on half a dozen or so subordinates of varying levels of competence and discipline, involved half a dozen human subordinates, and not a C&C rule in sight.

Fun. I promised to get to fun. Let's try it this way. You travel 100 miles or so for an out of town game, and you're given a command. The magic number is 7 or below, and you roll an 8, this happens three times in a six or eight turn game, and as a consequence your troops never quite get into position. Or they stand there and are slaughtered by their better-rolling opponents. Does this seem improbable to you, given the game has "a strong emphasis on command and control?" I didn't think so. About how many times would you repeat the 200 mile round trip, hoping for better activation numbers? *And what would you have done if that had been your first wargame?* Yeah, that's what I thought too.

Gentlemen, I give you Piepenbrink's First Rule of Wargame Rules: if there's something in your rule book whose normal "happens every now and then" result is bad enough to discourage a newcomer from joining the hobby, there's no particular reason why any of us should have to put up with it, and we certainly shouldn't do it in front of the newbies.

So am I saying every casting on the battlefield should do exactly what the wargamer wants? Despite a lot of rhetoric by those in favor of elaborate C&C rules,



I think it's a straw man. I've been pushing lead since 1969, and I've never seen any such rules. From the days of Featherstone, Grant and Vietmeyer, units sometimes falter when under attack or taking losses, decline to attack when ordered and leave the field

when the wargamer most needs them to remain. The unwise pursuit is nearly as old. I've recently seen some interesting provisions making units more prone to certain types of misbehavior based on the type of order, and the type of troops, which discourages that wargaming cliché of the handful of irregular light cavalry merrily throwing themselves into a melee with their "battle cavalry" opponents for an advantage on a chart only the wargamer can see and understand.

But units, gentlemen—squadrons, perhaps, or brigades of a corps or army. Not divisions, columns, corps or wings. I would propose the following:

- Sometimes, simplistic C&C is a necessary feature of a quick-play system. If you want to resolve a major ancient battle with two players, 100 castings and half an hour or so, the constraints on the rules—and the role of luck—will be considerable. Just keep in mind that it's like accepting poor acceleration in a car in order to get good mileage—a design compromise, not a desirable feature.
- It is entirely appropriate that individual units—depending on the nature of the units, the period and the situation—may retreat without orders, refuse an order to advance or, more rarely, attack on their own initiative or continue a pursuit without orders. The Great Captains accepted this. So

should we.

- Orders actually not received are, I think, a little more common in wargaming theory than in real life. I suggest those who disagree with me take a serious look at how much distance is represented by an inch on the tabletop, and how much time by a turn. Just how many times could a courier ride to anywhere at Gettysburg or Waterloo in an hour?
- Where C&C rules are most prone to unsatisfactory results is when they try to serve as a sort of rudimentary artificial intelligence, taking the place of an individual general with a personality, a staff and different units and types of units under his own control. If the only wargamers present are two army-level commanders for a horse and musket game, the AI is unsatisfactory. You don't want to fight out Gettysburg with just a Lee and a Meade: you need a Ewell, a Longstreet, a Reynolds and a Sickles. But if you actually have the players available, ask

yourself how often the C&C rules mean you have invited your fellow gamers to meet at your house in order for them NOT to push troops.

Dating back to the dawn of wargaming is the dictate that "nothing shall be done in the wargame which

could not be done in war." But we miss the obvious corollary: everything should be legal which might be done in war. Our little lead avatars should be as capable of deep insight and clear, incisive orders as any historical general might have been. As for the mistakes, the jealousies, the forgotten units and neglected opportunities—trust me on this, gentlemen: insert wargamers into your chain of command, and you can have all of that, without any C&C rules whatever.

They'll all have a better time of it too.



1940 English Channel Raid

Mustangs Battle Report

I always wonder why we don't do more air combat games as they always end up being pretty fun, even if the scenario ends up being woefully unbalanced! Most of us had recently seen the movie Dunkirk, so any scenario from that time frame that featured Spitfires was an easy sell. This scenario would feature one of the countless convoys that ran the English Channel in the early war years, protected by the RAF and always subject to raids by the German forces in occupied France.

We use Mustangs, which is a miniatures version of the old Avalon Hill board game and available for free from the Yahoo Air Pirates group or from www.warflag.com. There are also a wide number of add-ons and data cards for most WW2 aircraft. We use what is called the KPH variant data cards, which are a) look better graphically and easier to use, and b) enables the Early War aircraft to move faster than the mph rates used in the original game.

Mustangs is ideal for group play and using large numbers of aircraft, plus it can be explained to newcomers in just a few minutes. Each aircraft puts out a series of maneuver markers (we use hidden markers) and when the aircraft moves to that hex (the board and miniatures versions use hexes to regulate movement and shooting) it completes the maneuver. Speed and altitude changes occur at the end of the turn, so there is no complex



formulas for determining speed and altitude loss occurring each turn. The game is fairly simple and a lot of fun.

The convoy consisted of several freighters, one DD that had heavy flak, and two light escorts that moved at the end of each turn towards the board edge. They were escorted by two Hurricanes and two Spitfires that could set up anywhere around the convoy. Their goal was to stop the German raid any way they could, while hopefully the light and heavy flak would take care of anything that got through the defenses.

The Germans had a large airstrike that consisted of four JU-87 Stukas and four HE-111s that were in turn escorted by two pairs of Me-109s. The fighters were positioned in front of and behind the bomber force. We joked beforehand that the fighters would abandon the bombers the first chance they got and were continually reassured that would not happen. As you will see, that understanding lasted about two turns into the game!

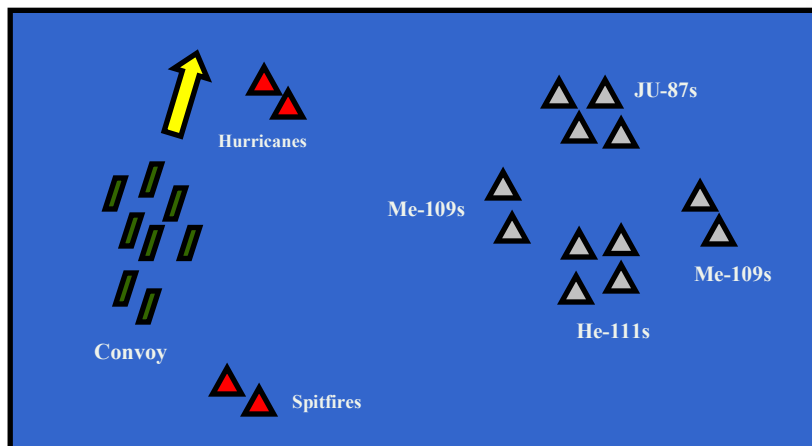
The Hurricanes and Spitfires jumped out towards the incoming Germans. For the sake of brevity we dispensed with the optional spotting rules, so both sides started maneuvering right away. The Spitfires slashed through the He-111 formation, sending one of the bombers down in flames, but they were immediately set

upon by a pair of Me-109s. The Hurricanes moved in and out of the He-111s, blowing big chunks out of the planes, but not downing any of them. A Spitfire broke off and pursued the JU-87s, but was knocked down by their defensive fire!

The DD's heavy flak was the big winner this game, knocking three German aircraft out of the sky. The Germans did reach the convoy and get in a mildly successful attack at the end of the game. The final tally was two freighters sunk, one damaged, one Spitfire shot down and another seriously damaged. The Germans lost five aircraft with another five suffering damage, including a few that might not have made it home.



Overall, it was a very fun and fast moving game. Watching the Hurricanes move through the bombers being pursued by the German fighters was a highlight, but the star of the show was the DD that broke up several bombing attacks. Next time it's back to fighting Flying Fortresses with German jets!





You can see the confused situation where the British and German fighters are mixed up among the bomber formations while the Stukas break through and make their attack on the convoy.

Kings of War First Try: Seleucids vs. Undead

OK, probably not the kind of title that you would normally see in an issue of Warning Order, but there's a reason behind this! We had been wanting to try Kings of War Historical for quite some time, but there was just one small problem; only one person in the group has a historical 28mm army! Fortunately, you can use the fantasy Kings of War rules and army lists with the historical version and someone did have a fantasy army.

Despite the crossing of the periods, units are still units and have a common stat line in the size of the unit, number of attacks, and the amount of punishment



that each could take. Naturally, the Undead army also has magic and a few nifty special skills, but the hope was that the historical unit skills would offset this.

We went with around 2500 points for each side, which we found was probably too much for a 6 x 4 table! We decided not to play any of the scenarios, rather we just set up our forces and went straight at

each other to figure out how the game works, which in the end worked out pretty well. Not knowing a thing about the game other than having read the rules, the set up reflected our complete lack of understanding about units, skills, speed, etc., and it showed throughout the first game.

The one thing we did find out about quickly is that the Seleucid pike phalanxes were nasty opponents. Not only were they large and took a ton of hits, they also affected their enemy's to hit rolls as well. In Kings of War, units are OK until they hit a certain number, then they waver. If they go a few points higher they rout or are destroyed, then the entire unit is taken off the table. Simple, effective, and pretty bloody. The pike units could take up to 23 hits while most of their opponents only went up to 13 or 15. However, they were expensive, so the question about taking one large unit or several small ones was something we talked about all night.

The first game featured some huge slugfests that we found to be fun, exciting, and despite the IGOUGO system, it worked out well. The Seleucids were a particularly nasty opponent and their heavy cavalry obliterated most of what it attacked. The elephants and medium infantry did OK, but the pike blocks were the star of the show in the first game. By the 8th or 9th turn the handwriting was on the wall and the Undead side withdrew.



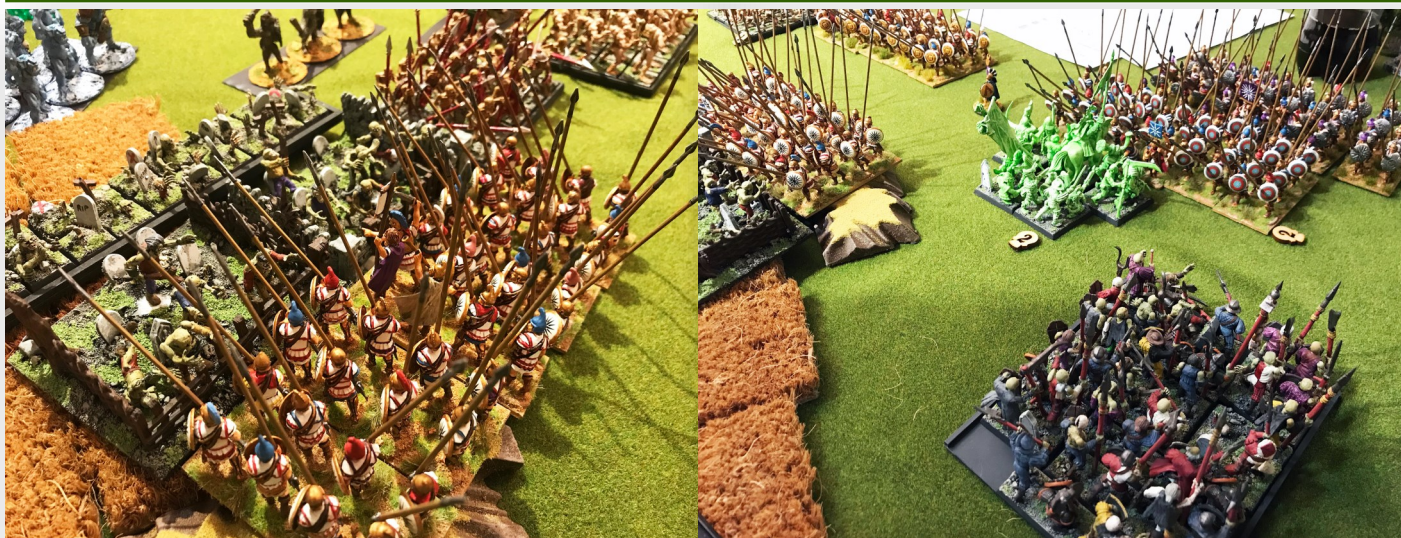
In a little over 2 hours we had played a lot of turns and came to a result, despite having hundreds of figures on the board. We quickly rearranged things and went with a second battle, but used the same forces. We looked up a few rules that we had questions about, discussed a few items, then got back to our second game.

This time the Undead players took their lessons learned to heart. Pin the phalanxes and flank them with smaller units, get at the right angles to prevent enemy forces from flanking you, use your heroes and general more, and basically focus on the tactics that the system allows you to have. The second game was a much different affair than the first! In the end the Undead were on the verge of winning when we called the game. By that time we were 9 turns into the second game and had played for almost 5 hours.

So, two huge games in about 5 hours! Not many rules allow that. The game features element basing, so (cont. on p39)



Kings of War First Try: Seleucids vs. Undead (cont.)



(cont. from p36) there's no removal of single figures, which speeds up the game immensely. Both sides get a chance to attack and counterattack, plus roll huge quantities of dice for maximum carnage. A much different game than most of us are used to, but everyone appeared to have a pretty good time.

Are there some questions or potential issues? Most definitely. The inability of the defender to strike back or countercharge is a problem that you have to get used to. Basically, you are going to charge others and inflict damage, but unless you destroy them on the first turn (pretty hard when facing large units) you're going to have the same thing happen to you. Skirmishers are present, but using them seemed to escape us and they

were pretty much speed bumps, with no real purpose in the game system.

Shooting seemed underpowered, but then again, we didn't have much that could shoot during the game! Elephants are the closest thing the game has to ancient panzers and cavalry is pretty deadly as well. It was a bit hard keeping track of the special skills of the various units and we couldn't quite get how to use heroes, musicians, etc., effectively during the game.

We were intrigued by the system and a matchup of historical opponents would be very interesting or even two fantasy armies, just so everything was a bit more evenly matched. We also needed much more room, where units could flank and terrain could be an interesting part of the

overall puzzle. We certainly did see that a huge part of the game and attraction to the system is to create a very good army list. You maximize your unit strengths while minimizing your opponent's is definitely the name of the game here. Constantly exploring and changing your list seems to be a big part of the Kings of War community.

Having said all of that, however, this is a fun set of rules. The system is certainly blunt force trauma applied to ancients gaming. It is fast, furious, and you can get a large game in under a few hours, which is something most gamers can't say. You can argue the weird army lists and how the system works, but it does produce a good game for everyone involved.



Saga: Saxons vs. Romans

Battle Report

Although we've played Saga several times over the last few years, this would be the first time using Saxons and Romans on the same board. The scenario was set in Roman controlled Belgium, where a Saxon raiding party was planning on pillaging a village. The village is one of a chain that supplies the Roman forces in this area, so it is crucial that it is defended and the Saxon raiders driven back.

The Saxons had a few large infantry units and then two smaller, elite forces that entered one side of the board. Their goal was to get to the village quickly, kill the men, and capture the women. It sounded like a pretty straightforward plan and would probably have succeeded if it wasn't for the Romans in the area trying to stop them! The Romans had a unit of citizen levy in the center of the village itself along with a light ballista guarding one of the approaches. A unit of Roman infantry and two small sections of cavalry entered the board on the first turn as reinforcements.

The Roman plan was to hold for as long as possible in the village until the cavalry could arrive, which would hopefully deliver the fatal blow and win the game. As plans go for a skirmish game it had two consistent things going for it;



one, it was simple, and two, things never go as planned in skirmish games! The Saxons entered the board and headed directly for the village, where they ran into the ballista, which caused more delay than actual harm! The Saxon archers responded, but couldn't hit a thing the first few turns. The other large Saxon infantry unit headed for the village and immediately got into a fight with the Roman levy.

Meanwhile, the Romans entered the board and started towards the village. The first two Roman units clashed with a small Saxon unit guarding a planked crossing of the stream and both sides started taking casualties. The Roman cavalry split into two forces, with one going to reinforce the village while the second attacked the Saxon force on the

other side of the village, which had just taken out the Roman ballista.

The Saxons would have won the game except for one small thing that no one considered when the game began and that was the Roman levy holding the center of the village for most of the game! This little unit exceeded all expectations (bad Saxon die rolling played its part as well), so when the Roman cavalry arrived things weren't as dire as expected. The other Roman cavalry unit charged into the Saxons approaching the village on the opposite side and this began a several turn battle to the death.

By this time the Romans, although bloodied, were closing in on the village from several sides. The Saxon remnants continued to push towards the village center as well, but the Romans were slowly gaining the upper hand. Things were still very much in doubt when the Romans had a few good rolls with their Saga dice and the Saxons could not do anything with their armor rolls. After one more turn the handwriting was on the wall, with the village secure and the Saxons short a few points of victory.

A fast playing, bloody scenario that was completed in around 2 hours with four players. Both sides had numerous chances for victory, but at times just could not get the right dice combinations. The Saxon archers in particular had a very bad day. We'll have to try another scenario with the Romans sometime soon.





Several shots of the battle, which is played on a small board, but it works for skirmish games such as Saga. The Roman cavalry was the main strike force and made its presence felt on two fronts. The Roman levy in the village center were the real heroes of the game and lasted far longer than any of us thought!

Annual Thanksgiving Game: Warmaster Ancients

Over the years we usually try to do a game on the Friday after Thanksgiving. Instead of joining the masses in the usual Black Friday shopping spree, we find it much more desirable to spend time with other gamers! Usually we go to a late breakfast, then play a large game. In some years this could be a massive 6-8 hour affair or we play two smaller games. With everyone's schedules this year, however, we opted for breakfast then a large Warmaster Ancients game.

First, I need to apologize for the images as the table top was actually a desert tan, but it shows up as white in the images! We settled on a 2000 points per side battle between a Seleucid force and Imperial Romans. I had brought along several armies and we were going to have five players, so in the interest of time we went with these two armies as we already had army lists (and copies of the lists for everyone) set to go. This greatly aids in the set up and within about 20 minutes we



field an army of exotic units and to preserve the main themes of each army, but when you get to the 2,000 point threshold you can really reshape things.

For the Seleucids, 2000 points will get you either a large standard force of pikes and heavy cavalry, or you can get a crazy assortment of units that truly represents the Seleucids at the end of their empire. After going with an elephant heavy army the last two games, I decided

to go with a more balanced approach for this one. There would be only one unit of elephants, but four units of heavy cavalry. There were also pikes, medium infantry, light infantry, archers, skirmishers, and a few units of light cavalry.

The Romans deployed in what is by now their standard formation in our games and I suspect, for much of that era.



had all the troops on the table and deployed, which is pretty good.

Choosing an army from the lists in either Warmaster Fantasy or Ancients is never an easy choice, especially when you have painted a lot of figs and have a wide variety of options. As with most games that I've played over the last several decades, you can certainly overthink things, experiment too much, or simply choose the wrong combination of units. The minimums/maximums certainly helps to control the urges of most gamers to

The legions were in the center in a long line, backed by auxiliary units with some archers out front. Skirmishers and the few cavalry units were on the flanks. Naturally, the idea for the Romans is to hold on the flanks, then crush the opposing center with the legions, which is a successful strategy if the Romans can get there on time.

The Seleucids deployed heavy cavalry and medium infantry to the right flank, then light cavalry, light infantry,

skirmishers, and some medium infantry to the left flank, with the pikes, archers, and elephants in the center. The Seleucids were going to either crush the flanks and surround the center, or crush the center and hold on the flanks. With the wide variety of units, the Seleucids can be very flexible in achieving their goals!

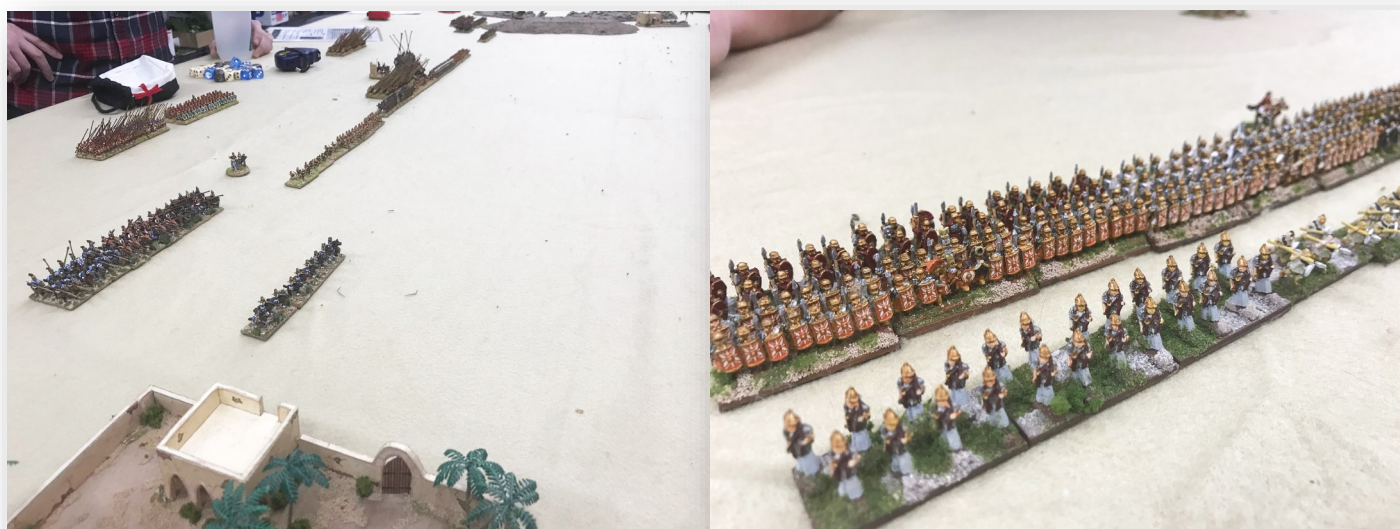
The one problem that we didn't think about when setting up the game is that we had chosen the wrong size table! Usually we play on a 6 x 4 for WMA, but we had a 8 x 6, which really spread things out and both sides did not take enough leaders. In hindsight we should have given each side one free leader as the flanks spent most of the game dancing around, pretty much leaderless! There wasn't much terrain, but some hills and rough ground did come into play on the Seleucid left flank.

The leadership issue really took a turn for the worse when two of the Seleucid players (me included) blundered and had our command ratings lowered for the entire game! This made a bad situation worse and with the distances involved (we even started further from the edge than usual) it made for half of the Seleucid force sitting around for long periods of time. The Seleucid center got going, however, and soon it was in the middle of the battlefield, awaiting the Romans who were having command issues of their own.

There was heavy fighting on the flanks, although with the bad command rolls neither side could gain an advantage in the early or mid stages of the game. The Seleucids suffered 6 (!!!) blunders during the game, which certainly made things more difficult. (cont. on p43)



Annual Thanksgiving Game: Warmaster Ancients (cont.)



(cont. from p42) The Seleucid left never got going, but did prevent the Romans on that side of the board from really doing anything to interfere with the center, due to the terrain, which really restricted the cavalry. The Seleucid right finally achieved some success and despite some losses, were now in control of that flank and threatening the Roman center. The issue was that the Seleucid commander on that side had blundered three times and his command rating had dropped from an 8 to a 6, making it almost impossible to follow up the successes!

By turn 8 the Seleucids were ahead, but that could change in a heartbeat when playing Romans. The legions advanced and soon there were several combats across the center with legions and auxilia-

ries going up against pikes and elephants. As usual, these are very bloody affairs with entire units being destroyed each turn. The Romans at first had the upper hand, pushing deep into the Seleucid center, but were in turn counterattacked and driven back. With the flanks seemingly unable to move or contribute at this point it looked as if the center was where the battle would be ultimately decided.

Sure enough, both sides pressed the issue, attacking and counterattacking. The Roman legions followed up time and time again, inflicting losses, but slowly and surely being whittled down in return. By turn 10 the Romans were in serious trouble and the Seleucids saw their chance in what was now a simple battle of attrition. The Seleucid pikes surged

forward one more time, causing enough casualties to break the Roman army and claim victory.

As usual, it was a close run affair and the Warmaster system, along with the army lists, gives each side a chance and rarely, if ever, results in a blowout. Both sides were really strung out with not enough leaders, which in the end seemed to affect the Romans the most as their right flank could never get going with their one leader focused on the infantry close to the center.

Definitely a fun game that got us together on an off gaming night for a few hours of fun. We certainly need to get going on our Warmaster campaign as we now have more than enough armies.



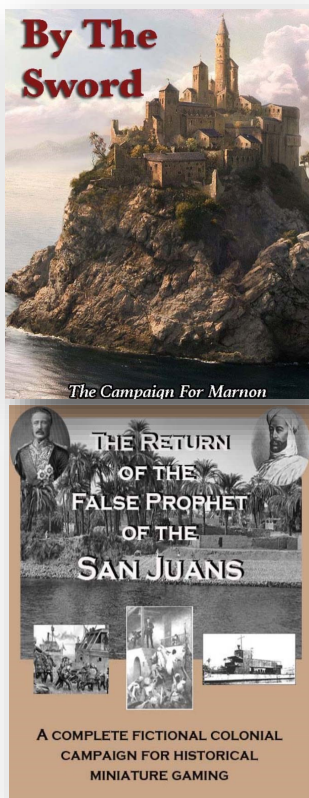
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With the announcement of Spartan Games going under, then Tor Gaming,



SPARTAN GAMES

plus others either looking to sell their ranges or being bought out by Warlord Games, you have to wonder if the long awaited shakeout in the hobby is beginning. I've mentioned this before, but when I go into my local gaming store and see a ton of product sitting on the shelves, but no one playing the games anywhere, that is a disturbing sign. Spartan certainly was trying to move into the upper tier of the gaming arena and while Tor's Relic line wasn't huge, it was well thought of (it looks like it has been sold to another company). Both are serious losses to the hobby as well as several other firms selling out or saying that they can't go further. The reasons are interesting as well, with most citing the overcrowded marketplace and the work it takes to run even a small miniatures line. The truth is that other than a handful of companies in this hobby, no one is getting rich selling miniatures, terrain, and rules! The other is just the sheer volume of items that are coming out each day makes it very difficult, if not altogether impossible for a smaller company to break into the hobby let alone be successful at it.

This also brings up another very interesting facet to this story and the hobby in general. Is it just a few gamers who are keeping some of these companies alive? When I look at the web site of Company A, for example, who has a range of, let's say, 28mm alien worms vs. mutant humans that no one else has, how are they viable? If they have a boxed set or two, then 20 packs of figures, how are they selling enough to get by? Even if it is just a side hobby, that is a lot of effort, time, and money invested just for the sake of providing yet more alternatives for gamers. Are there 200+ gamers who buy one of everything and just add it to their stash that takes up half of their house already? Is this why we never see the game played at local game stores, shows, or even on a blog? I actually think this is closer to the truth than many of us think. Everyone in the audience raise your hand if you know someone who goes into the local game store each week and lays down \$100-200? I know a few and have heard of many others. Are they artificially keeping some of these firms in business where if there were tough economic times they probably wouldn't even exist?

With modern publishing and manufacturing techniques, you can get a range of figures ready for sale, create packaging, rules, and a web site in short order. That used to be a problem for many hobby companies, but now they seem to be sprouting regularly. I think the question is if they should be. The wargame hobby is saturated as it is, with so many choices that is indeed fracturing into so many elements and different groups that keeping track of, and catering to them is all but impossible. My guess is that more companies will rise to take the place of those going under, but I think we're at the point of wondering if there's any products left that gamers could possibly need.