

Warning Order

ISSUE #59

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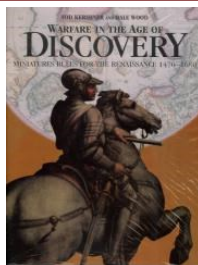
Warning order

Glorious Disasters-The “Too Many Rules Phenomenon”

For one of our Friday night battles recently we decided to go with the Renaissance period. For this we use *Warfare in the Age of Discovery* (AOD) by Tod Kershner and Dale Wood, who also wrote our favorite *Seven Years War* rules, *Warfare in the Age of Reason*. It was getting a bit late in the week leading up to the game, so when Renaissance was chosen pretty much the day before, there was a scramble to re-read the rules.

We ended up using army lists that were from the previous scenario, but the terrain definitely was not the same, which led us to our first problem of the night. Without consulting the terrain rules, the terrain was just placed on the table. Then, during play, questions came up concerning how fences/walls are treated, what are fortifications, what should some of the terrain be treated as, etc. Not only that, I had set up a town as an obstacle to an objective bridge behind it, only to remember that skirmish troops are the only ones that can go into towns in the rules and there weren't any of those on the board!

Definitely not off to a



great start and while we've played AOD numerous times, the firing and combat systems always take some time to get used to again. We probably should have set up a sample combat

or two so everyone picked up on it again, but no, we pressed ahead thinking we knew the rules backwards and forwards! No real

work to do better the next few turns. This was followed by more questions about secure flanks, cavalry charges and angles, can infantry charge cavalry, and so on and so on. Now we've played quite a few battles with these sets of rules and some of these questions were familiar, but there were a few new ones as well. If a new gamer had been with us this night, they would have



harm done here other than we had to slow things down a time or two just to go through the combat one step at a time.

Much later, we kept finding modifiers to firing, melee, and morale that we had missed during some of the early action. No way of going back of course, so we would just

been concerned that this was one of our favorite sets of rules, but it looked like we didn't know what we were doing!

We spent so much time questioning things, resetting a combat or two, checking through the rules, etc., that we barely got in about six turns. Just when things were (cont. on p3)

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Special points of interest:

- Two new *Engagements* scenarios
- Part two of *One Day Campaigns*, this time focusing on a simple set of tactical rules.
- Battle reports for *WMA*, *Battlegroup Panzergrenadier*, *Check Your Six*, and *Age of Discovery*
- Game reviews for several new games, including *Third World War*, *Salerno '43*, etc.

Glorious Disasters-The “Too Many Rules” Phenomenon” (cont.)



(cont. from p2) getting interesting and the pike were coming to grips with each other, we had to call it a night. Both sides had lost several units, but the game was really just getting going. Where in the past we would have been making withdrawal checks to end the game, we weren't even anywhere near that stage. Granted, it was an unusual game with some unorthodox events that played out, but we should have been playing this much faster.

While it sounds bad, everyone still had fun this night. There were some great cavalry charges, breakthroughs, contagious morale events, artillery blowing up, etc., but the fact that we couldn't get the game completed in around 4 hours was disappointing. There were a number of lessons that could be learned from this, but if past experience is any guide, it

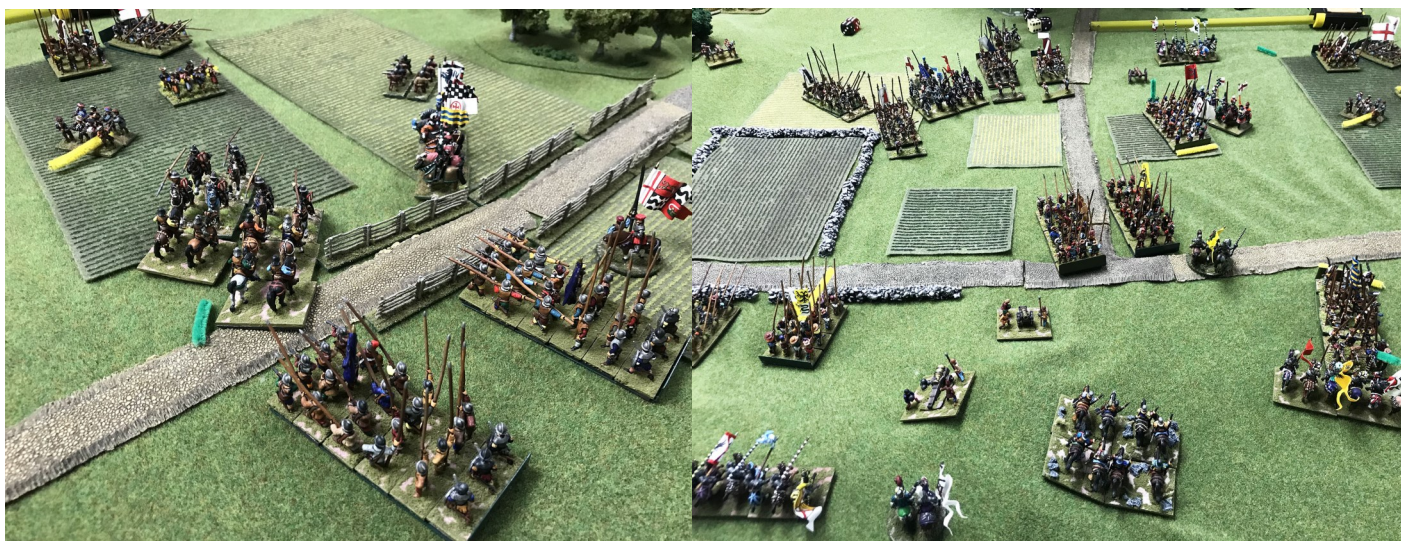
might be doubtful that they will be applied any time soon!

First, as the designer of the scenario I should have reviewed the terrain rules first before laying out the terrain, which had some ill effects. Second, reviewing the rules for a few minutes the night before a game is no substitute for thoroughly going over them the entire week. Third, the rules, while fun, are a bit scattered in places and finding things is difficult as well as taking up valuable gaming time. After all of these years you would think that we would have created an index on our own as well as a cheat sheet with some of the more important rules.

Now none of these is a deal breaker in terms of what rules we play and most games using AOD work out well. However, it does show and the comments during and after the game bear this out, is

that we simply play too many rules. Game systems get confused, we do the wrong things for routs/rallies, look for modifiers on the charts that are in other games, and so on. Each time we come back to a set of rules we've played before, there is a learning curve. Granted, it is a shorter curve than learning a new set of rules, but it takes a few turns to get back into the swing of things.

My guess is that this is a problem for many gamers and gaming groups. The answer is to cut back on the number of periods and rules that you use, which is harder to do in practice. No one wants to give up on rules, sell off figures, etc., but this kind of thing seems to be happening more often than not. So, what's the answer? Clearly something has to give and either better preparation is in order or its time to focus on just a few sets of rules.



Phalanxes Prevail Against Elephants

WMA Battle Report

We've been playing Warmaster Ancients for so many years and with the same people for so long, that when a new gamer needs to learn the system it can be a challenge! That's what happened here when over the Holidays I had an opportunity to teach the system to a new gamer who had recently joined our group. With the thinking that he would be playing Warmaster with us a few times a year, it might be good for him to figure out how it works!

Seleucids vs. Indians is a good matchup for learning the game, mainly due to the Indians being a pretty average force with little to no special rules. As the teacher for this game, I took the Indians so that I could spend more time helping the new player navigate the Seleucid army list. The first thing to do in this situation is put all of the units out onto the board, broken into their various categories such as infantry, skirmishers, cavalry, etc.

This would be a 2,000 points per side battle, which might have been a bit much for a first game, but we had a lot of time on our hands that day, so that was a small problem. The Indians had a lot, and I mean a lot of infantry. There were 12 infantry units, 8 units of archers, skirmishers, cavalry, and elephants. While there were certainly a lot of units, only the heavy chariots really had armor and the elephants did have some striking power. This is a large, fairly average army!

The Seleucids would have their usual mish-mash of troop types, ranging from Guard cavalry (Companions) to Tho-



rakites. There were 6 pike units, heavy cavalry, imitation Romans, skirmishers, archers from several continents, and even a unit of elephants. While not as numerous as the Indians, most units were armored and the cavalry was something to be feared.

The next step was teaching about how each unit has three stands, how movement works, what the command rolls mean, and when to use initiative. Once that gets explained, it's on to combat, going over shooting, then hand to hand. I ran a sample combat between two infantry units to demonstrate how the system works, especially how the hits vanish at the end of the turn and what happens to units who lose a stand or two. Finally, I went over the game ends in terms of break points or we could do a number of turns and go by points lost. The good thing about Warmaster

Ancients is that it is a very easy game to teach.

We decided to go with a brigade set up, with each player setting out a brigade at a time until all units were placed. We started 30cm from the table edge and 20cm from each side. This would give a new player a turn or two to see how the command and movement system works, rather than piling directly into combat on the first turn! With a few tips and tricks thrown

in at the last moment, the game was finally ready to begin.

Both sides had command issues right from the start, which is a hallmark of Warmaster Ancients games! The Indians went first and while they were able to get a few brigades moving here and there, the left wing refused to budge the first few turns. The Seleucids were able to get their center moving and their right wing, but their left wing had problems. When the Indian cavalry emerged in the first few turns, the Successor player already had seen a flaw in his deployment, so he was desperately trying to shift a few cavalry units over there to counter it.

By turn 3 pretty much everything on the board had moved at least once. The Indian right was way out in front of the rest of the army, while the Indian center was a jumbled mess that would take a few turns to get straightened out. The Seleucids were still pretty much in their



original lines, but were making good progress on their right flank while the Indians, who had some unit advantages there, could not bring their power to bear.

The action started on the Indian right with a series of cavalry and infantry charges that just about broke through the Seleucid lines. However, some timely countercharges rectified the situation and by turn 4 both sides had lost several stands. Both center formations began to exchange archery fire as the heavier units started to move up for a decisive confrontation. While that was still a few turns off, attention turned to the Indian left as the Seleucids formed up and attacked with great success. Then the Indian command issues began... (cont. on p5)



Phalanxes Prevail Against Elephants (cont.) WMA Battle Report



(cont. from p4) Instead of launching an immediate counterattack, the Indians rolled a command blunder instead. This allowed the Seleucids to press the issue and when the Indians failed their command rolls over on that side two more times in a row, that flank was pretty much gone. While the Seleucids had suffered casualties in the melees, the Indians were in deep trouble on that side of the board. The action then shifted to the right side, where the Indians had pressed on, regardless of casualties, and had pretty much ruined the forces of both sides. There were multiple units with at least one stand loss and many with two, meaning that flank was winding down.

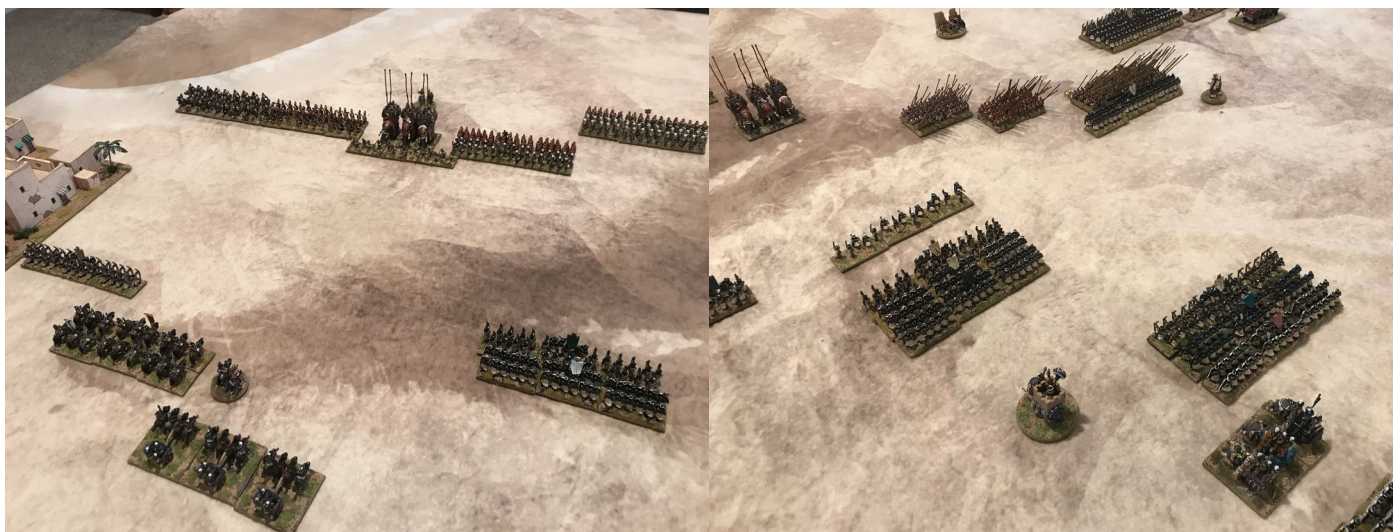
This left the center, where the pikes, elephants, Thorakites, and Indian massed infantry formed up for the showdown. At this point the Indians really needed things

to go their way for a few turns as they were trailing the Seleucids by quite a few units. While the Indians had a huge break point number, the cheap troops were dying in droves! The Indian elephants did get in the first charge, ripping a gaping hole in the Seleucid front, trampling one unit and plowing into the reserve. The idea was clearly to get in a huge blow and then clean up the remnants to knock out as many units as possible before the pikes could do their damage. This was a great strategy until the main Indian general started to fail his command rolls, leaving several fresh units waiting in the back when they were needed at the front to widen the breach.

This was the point where the pike phalanxes attacked and they simply devastated the Indian infantry. The Seleucids started to have pretty good combat

rolls and soon the phalanxes were into their secondary targets. The Indians tried to respond, but continued to be unable to move units to plug the gap. This allowed the Seleucids to pick and choose who and where to attack. They knocked out the elephants, destroyed the archers, and fairly quickly the Indians reached their break point and the game was called as a Seleucid victory.

It was a good first game and ended up showing a new player a lot of situations that commonly occur in your first game of Warhammer Ancients. The Indians are a good army to either fight or play yourself when learning the game as they have very few special rules. With the set up, explanation, and going through the first few turns slowly, the entire affair only took about four hours, which is great for a first game.



It's been quite some time since we tried a Battlegroup Panzergrenadier game, but with our annual after Christmas game pushed to New Year's Eve and with a snowstorm as well as only a few us available, it seemed like a good time to try it again. While the scenario would not exactly turn out to be the siege of Budapest in 1944-45, it was set in the fall of 1944 and in Hungary, so it would be close! Fortunately, we had a long table available and we scraped together every 15mm building we could for the urban zones.

From the pictures it would appear that some discussion of the terrain would be in order. There was an urban zone that took up pretty much the entire center of the board. While we didn't have sufficient 15mm buildings, we had a separate colored cloth mat with squares marked off to represent the building blocks. Anything in one of those blocks would be considered in hard cover and movement would be an issue in the urban zone as well. There were two fairly open areas to both sides that would be used for the Russian approach. The Germans held most of the bridges, except for one that was contested by a Romanian unit.

The Russians had a pretty powerful force. The left flanking force had several ISU-152s along with a company of infantry. The right flanking force had a company of 9 T-34/76s along with a company of SMG troops. There were also the Romanians, who were holed up in a large farm/estate just outside of the third bridge. As long as they were there it would be difficult for German forces to cross it and it made a great place to begin



an attack to take that bridge. The Russians needed to secure two of the three bridges for victory.

The Germans had a mix of forces that were spread out in defensive positions across the board. Since a feature of the scenario would be hidden movement, you didn't need a lot of Germans to make it seem like they were everywhere to the Russians! Although the Russian players couldn't see much, there was a feeling that the defenses included some German armor. Most of the units, however, were infantry backed by LMGs and a few AT teams. Probably easy to deal with in open country, but in this urban environment it would be a challenge.

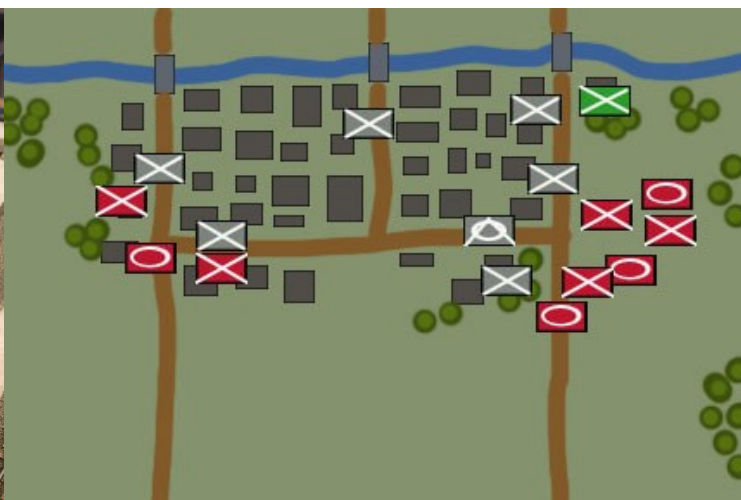
For those who have not played Battlegroup Panzergrenadier the turn begins with determining which side has initiative. There is a sequence of play where each side then moves, conducts fire, rallies, etc. Each unit can perform a number of actions, dependent upon their orders for that turn, whether it be to move full,

move and fire, fire twice, etc., which are clearly marked out on the charts. Speaking of charts, there are six per player! Yes, this is a chart driven game and having two pages to deal with throughout the game may not be to everyone's liking. On the positive side, they are color coded, everything you could possibly need is on there somewhere, and after a few turns you get used to them.

The game began with completely different things happening on opposite ends of the board! On the Russian left the SU-152s and infantry began to probe the outskirts, meeting fierce opposition and demonstrating at least to the Russian players that this would be slow going. On the Russian right the Germans counterattacked, trying to knock out the Romanians who were holding onto their foothold in the city near the 3rd bridge. This would set off an epic fight that would last several turns.

The next turn or two saw the Russian T-34s enter, but not before being bombed by Stukas! Not much damage done and they broke into three groups; one to go help the Romanians, the second to bring fire on the German infantry, and the third to cross the railroad tracks and proceed down the road. The Germans got into the Romanian held block and pushed them back before casualties slowed their advance. The Romanians tried to counterattack, but by this time both sides were in serious shape, having lost several sections each.

On the Russian left there was a bit of a breakthrough when a group of German defenders were wiped out. (cont. on p7)





(cont. from p6) The Russians started to advance further into the city, but were met by fire from two more defensive positions, setting off a multi-turn fire-fight.

The Germans on the Russian right flank were now re-thinking their initial attack against the Romanians. Having given away their positions, the T-34s now poured fire into the buildings while the infantry moved up to the railway embankment. That particular German platoon was now barely hanging on, but the Romanians were spent as well, although they did still control the approaches to the bridge.

Just when things looked like they were going right for the Russians, two German Stugs appeared and opened fire at the T-34s crossing the open area. The first T-34 was knocked out and another damaged

in the first exchange of fire. The T-34s fired back, damaging one of the Stugs as they withdrew to another ambush position. This was a signal for the Russian infantry to hop off the armor and start making their way towards the urban areas. One Russian group ran headlong into a German ambush and took several losses.

By now it was becoming apparent that this was going to be a major undertaking to get to the bridges! More German forces crossed the bridges to join the defenders, while some more Russian SU-152s and additional infantry started to come on board to join the attack on the left flank. The Russians had not performed poorly and were making progress, but it was hard to say how many German defenders were still left. By this time we had finished around 6 turns in about 4 hours.

At this point the game had to be called, which was a shame as everyone was enjoying it. We were, however, faced with a few realities. First, it was New Year's Eve and our spouses weren't going to let us play all night! Second, once again we had bitten off more than we could chew, which happens fairly often to our group. Set up was almost an hour, which left us four hours to finish the game. That might be enough for some rules, but Battlegroup Panzergrenadier probably isn't one of them. The rules reward real world tactics, which does take time to see it unfold on the tabletop.

We'll probably try this sort of battle again in the future, but maybe cut down on the table size, which would also give us a chance to pack more building into the urban area!



Engagements 45: Attacker Turns Into Defender

Situation: Blue has been searching for Red over the last week and came across Red's forces strengthening a bridge, possibly for a move towards Blue in this direction. The force was fairly small and was quickly defeated by Blue's forces. Blue was preparing to move across the bridge in force when Red's main force appears and launches an attack. Blue needs to quickly reorganize their defenses and prevent Red from gaining control of the bridge.

Period: Designed primarily for the Ancients as well as Medieval/Renaissance periods.

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

Terrain Notes: Hills are gently sloped and while they should give defensive benefits, they are not major obstacles. Woods are light and will provide some cover. The village/town is mainly wood buildings with some stone mixed in. The river banks are fairly steep, but it can be crossed. Units need to go up to the river's edge and stop for that turn. On the next turn they must spend the entire turn crossing the river. On the turn after that they may move half of their movement rate. Any unit defending a river bank against an enemy unit coming out of it should have advantages in combat. There are two fords, marked F1 and F2 where crossing the river is only half movement.

Scale: Can be used with any rules and any scale.

Red Forces: Red's forces consist of the units that enter the North edge of the board on Turn 1.

8 units of infantry

4 units of archers

2 units of skirmishers

3 units of cavalry (2 heavy and 1 light)

Set Up: Red's forces have been building up off board after hearing about the attack on the force that had been working on the bridge. Red can bring 4 units on the board during the 1st turn, then 8 units on the second turn, followed by the remaining units on the third turn. Red's units can enter anywhere along the north edge of the board.

Red Orders: Pin down the Blue units that have already crossed the bridge, then get forces across the river as quickly as

possible. The primary objective is to secure the bridge and if possible, capture the town along with the road exit.

Blue Forces: Blues' forces are broken into different commands and are set up as described in the Blue Set Up section below.

#1/Across the river:

2 units of infantry

#2/Waiting to cross:

2 units of infantry

1 unit of archers

1 unit of skirmishers

#3: In reserve

2 units of infantry

2 units of archers

#4: Searching for Red

1 unit of heavy cavalry

1 unit of light cavalry

Blue Orders: Defend the river line for as long as possible. Do not let Red gain possession of the bridge.

Blue Set Up: Blue's #1 force needs to

be within 6 inches of the position marked on the map in any formation. Blue #2 is strung out along the road in column.

Blue's #3 force (the reserve) cannot move on the first turn. Blue's #4 group needs to roll a D6 before the game begins. On a 1 or 2 the force arrives on the first turn, on a 3 or 4 the second turn, and on a 5 or 6 it arrives on the third turn.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: The only special rules are those in the Terrain Notes regarding the river and fords.

Victory Conditions: Red secures a minor victory if the bridge is securely in their possession at the end of the game. Red can achieve a major victory if they seize the bridge and have control of the town by the end of the game.

Variants: Weather could greatly impact the scenario, particularly the river if there were flooding or the chance of it during the game. To balance the game out leave the fords off the map/board, then Red has to search for them, which will allow Blue to respond more easily to threats.

The scenario could be adapted to the Horse & Musket period, although the longer firing ranges would make crossing the river for Red much more difficult. The scenario could also be expanded with additional forces arriving for each side, which would allow for more players, although the board may have to be larger.



Engagements 46: Initial Wave

Situation: Red is looking to cut off Blue's forces in the region in conjunction with a major offensive. Red needs to land forces in this area, then seize a vital bridge as well as a major road junction. If these objectives can be seized quickly, follow on forces can widen the beachhead and possibly become a second front during the offensive.

Period: Designed primarily for the Ancients as well as Medieval/Renaissance periods.

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

Terrain Notes: Hills are gently sloped and while they should give defensive benefits, they are not major obstacles. Woods are light and will provide some cover. The village/town is mainly wood buildings with some stone mixed in. The river banks are fairly steep, but it can be crossed. Units need to go up to the river's edge and stop for that turn. On the next turn they must spend the entire turn crossing the river. On the turn after that they may move half of their movement rate. Any unit defending a river bank against an enemy unit coming out of it should have advantages in combat. There is a marsh located near the bridge area that should be treated as rough terrain with serious movement penalties. The fort/watchtower (at C) is described in the special rules.

Scale: Can be used with any rules and any scale.

Red Forces: Red's forces begin landing on the beach on Turn 1 and consist of three separate groups. One group will land on each turn, so all forces should be on board by Turn 3.

Group 1

3 units of infantry
1 unit of archers
1 skirmisher unit

Group 2

3 units of infantry
1 skirmisher unit
1 unit of archers

Group 3

2 units of medium cavalry
2 units of infantry

Set Up: Red's forces may land anywhere along the beach. On the turn of landing, units may only move half of their regular movement.

Red Orders: Land all forces and move them to seize the various objectives as quickly as possible. Blue has forces in the area that will arrive once the alarm has been raised.

Blue Forces: Blue has forces scattered around the area. Blue is aware that there could be a possible attack by sea, so has garrisoned a few towns and forts, then has other units that can rush to the area of the attack.

At the Fort/Watchtower:

1 unit of infantry

1 unit of archers

Town Garrison:

1 unit of infantry

1 skirmisher unit

Bridge Guard

1 unit of infantry

Patrol

1 unit of medium cavalry

Blue Orders: Defend the various objectives for as long as possible. Do not let Red gain possession of the bridge too quickly or reinforcements may have a hard time reaching the battlefield.

Blue Set Up: The town garrison is unable to move during the first turn, but starting on turn 2 they may be deployed in any formation within 6" of the town. Roll 1D6 for the patrol and on a 1-2 they are at C, 3-4 at B, and on a 5-6 they are A.

Blue Reinforcements:

Roll 1D6 and consult the following table:

| <u>Roll</u> | <u>Unit</u> |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Medium Cavalry |
| 2 | Skirmisher |
| 3 | Infantry |
| 4 | Infantry |
| 5 | Infantry |
| 6 | Archer |

Blue rolls for reinforcements once per turn beginning Turn 2 for six turns. To see where a reinforcing unit arrives, roll 1D6 and on a 1-3 it arrives at the road behind the town and on a 4-6 it arrives on the road near the bridge.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: Depending upon the availability of terrain to the gaming group, objective C can be a small fort or a watchtower. While Blue has forces in or around the objective, it should have significant defensive modifiers not only for the structure, but for defending uphill. However, since there are no siege rules or artillery in the scenario, Red should be able to capture the objective, so it shouldn't be impregnable.

Victory Conditions: Red wins the game if at the end of any turn Red has control of the three objectives. If at the end of the game Red controls only two of the three objectives the game ends in a draw. Any other result is a Blue victory.

Variants: Weather could greatly impact the scenario, particularly to see if the landing boats actually make it to the shore or land further away and have to march towards the battlefield.

The scenario could be adapted to the Horse & Musket period, although the forces would need to be restructured to include artillery.

The scenario could also be expanded with additional forces arriving for each side, which would allow for more players, although the board may have to be larger.

Blue's reinforcements could be randomized even more or placed in groups, representing various commands assigned as mobile reaction forces.



GMT's Caesar: Rome vs. Gaul

Game Review

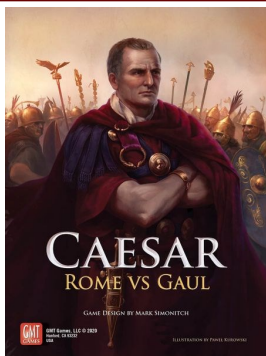
With two of the hobby's greatest wargames already under his belt with Hannibal and Successors, plus an extraordinarily popular series of WW2 wargames through GMT, what could designer Mark Simonitch possibly do for an encore? The answer would be Caesar: Rome vs. Gaul, which is an operational portrayal of Caesar's campaigns in what is now modern day Europe.

If you've played Hannibal or Successors, you're going to be able to get into this game pretty quickly. When you open the box you immediately notice the similarity in political influence markers, the cardboard standees for the leaders, combat strengths on the counters, etc. However, while some things are similar and it will definitely help you learn this game, there is a subtle, but challenging system here that awaits you.

The map is well done, with the different areas and provinces clearly marked. The one thing I like about Simonitch games is that usually no space goes left unused and it's the same thing here.



There are places to put various markers, holding boxes for some of the game's features, and pretty much the game is laid out in the best possible way for the players. There are two counter sheets, with most of the counters being the political influence markers. Surprisingly, there are few combat units, which makes the game easier to understand and manage. A rulebook with a one turn play through, two reference cards, and dice complete the package. Another fine product by GMT and there is little if anything to complain about here.



There are 6 one year long turns. At the start of each turn you roll to see if Caesar returns from Rome in time to start the campaign season, then there is an opportunity for Roman replacement steps (each combat unit has two steps). Then things get interesting. Two tribes are drawn from a cup and the Gallic player has two options. For the first option, they can go on the map in the listed province along with a fortified town. The second option is to place one or both in the Gallic Council box. This box is a holding area where the Gallic player can create a mini-uprising by paying an action.

Each player gets 8 cards, with each card either having an event, a bonus, or just used for the actions, ranging from 1 to 3 actions. Some cards allow the event and the actions, while others are used for combat, then a replacement card can be drawn. Very easy to use, but there are quite a few permutations on how the cards can be used. Each action allows a player to activate a leader (and his forces), place an IM (Influence Marker), or in the case of the Gauls, bring units out of the Gallic Council box and/or the Submitted Tribes box. Cards can help you one turn, then be your worst enemy the next!

Combat is pretty simple, but again, there are some nuances here. Leaders get a number of re-rolls, either for their own dice or an opponents. You find the column for your total strength, roll the dice, then inflict a number of steps on the opposing forces. Losing tribes submit and go to the Submitted Tribes box. If it is their second step loss they are tracked for victory points. Strongholds and fortified towns can aid the combat strength or just be sieged by themselves. Sieges are usually successful with enough combat points, but they can be costly to the attacker, especially if it goes several rounds.

The key to the game are the IMs and

understanding when and where to place them is going to take a few plays. To control a province you must have a minimum number of areas with your IMs on them. This sounds easy enough in practice, but enemy forces can remove them, the can be lost through isolation at the end of the turn, various cards allow the placement and removal of IMs, etc. Just when you think you have several provinces under you control you lose a few others!

The Romans need to keep expanding to get enough victory points to win the game. They acquire victory points by

invading Britannia and Germania (not easy to do), destroying a number of tribes, and by achieving Governance, which is holding plenty of provinces at the end of the turn. All of this sounds easy, but with the ever shifting

situation it's actually pretty hard and the Romans can automatically lose on any turn where their governance isn't good.

For most of the game this leaves a big stack of legions with Caesar, running around Europe playing "whack-a-mole" as the various tribes show up here and there. The card play is unpredictable, so the situation can ebb and flow each turn, which may be too much chaos for some gamers. The Romans have all kinds of advantages, but they can only be in a few places at a time, leaving the rest of the board open to the tribes. There's only six turns and while 8 cards each per turn sounds like a lot, the turns can go by pretty fast, especially once you figure things out.

If you like Hannibal or Successors, this is right up your alley. It's not quite a Viet Nam type situation, but fairly close.

Once you play a turn or two things really start picking up steam and the rules aren't that long, plus they are well indexed for any questions you may have. Definitely a challenging situation for both sides and it seemed pretty balanced in my two plays so far.

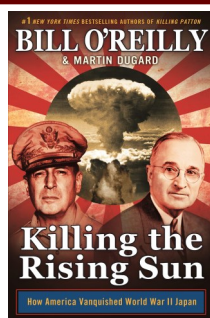


The end of World War 2 has always been a popular subject for authors. The final campaigns, the end of empires, and what transpired afterwards does make for fascinating reading. Bill O'Reilly, the author of the extremely successful "Killing" series, takes on this subject with two recent releases. While O'Reilly might not be popular with everyone due to his political views, his books in this series have been interesting and often feature little known facts along with plenty of rare images.

The first book in the pair deals with the end of the war in the Pacific. The book picks up with the invasions of the various islands during the 1943-44 campaign as the U.S. and its allies moved ever closer to the Japanese mainland. There is a lot of emphasis on the casualties sustained in taking these islands, particularly Okinawa. You can quickly see that this is going to be used as the main justification throughout the book for dropping the atomic bomb.

The book moves from viewpoint to viewpoint, which at times can be interesting while at other times frustrating. The segments on Hirohito and the state of Japanese society at the end of the war is fascinating, but this is countered by the various sections on Douglas MacArthur. Yes, he was fighting one of the last campaigns of the war, but there seemed to be an over emphasis on his plans to lead the invasion of the Japanese homeland. The book seemed to imply that the atomic bomb ruined his plans and the personal effect on him as well as his career. While yes, it did effect things surrounding him, it wasn't essentially an attack against him!

Naturally, there are sections on the design and creation of the atomic bomb. About one chapter is spent on the scientists, where they worked, and how the initial test went. There are of course, many, many books on this subject, so this is certainly a scaled down version of how the bomb was created. How it was shipped and assembled was pretty interesting, which leads to the other weird part



of the book. There are also sections on the death of Roosevelt, how Truman felt about things, and the concerns from both sides about Russia's global ambitions.

The story of the U.S.S. Indianapolis is well known, so it's a bit strange about why it is included here, along with the story of the Japanese submarine that sank it. This is what causes some confusion about the nature of this book. Is it about the dropping of the atomic bomb? Is it about the final aerial campaigns? Is it a collection of interesting personal stories about events that happened at the end of the war? Well, actually it's all three!

The dropping of the bombs, what happened to the cities, and the aftermath is certainly worth reading, but again, not much time is spent on it as you move quickly from situation to situation, from person to person, on this whirlwind tour about the end of the war. In the end you're left with a sometimes fascinating read, but nothing that is explored in depth. That makes this book great for a weekend read or for someone brushing up on their late WW2 history, but if you want more information about any of the dozen or so topics in the book, you'll need to look elsewhere.

The next book is also about the end of WW2, but this time in Europe and the supposed focus is on Hitler's last days. I use the term "supposed" as this book is really all over the place. Most books on this subject cover the Russian advance to the Oder, the preparations for the final Attack, then a blow by blow description of the battle for Berlin, culminating in the death of Hitler. With this book, there's not much of that!

In fact, the book begins with the Battle of the Bulge. I guess the attempt was to show how this was Hitler's final gamble and after it proved to be a disaster, then the end of the Third Reich would be not long in coming. This is how the premise begins, but then it starts deviating from that path and the focus instead turns towards General Patton! Yes, in a bizarre twist

there is a lot of time spent on Patton's campaigns across France and how he and his staff saw the Ardennes offensive ahead of time and how they met the challenge. Interesting enough, along with some pictures I had not seen of the battle, but what that had to do with Hitler's final days is anyone's guess.

The book then spends some time about Patton, Bradley, and Eisenhower visiting all the stolen art hidden in a mine by the Germans, the Yalta conference, and then the discovery of the concentration camps. Most of this is presented in a disjointed fashion, so it's hard to make heads or tails about where the book is going other than to give the reader a scattered view of the end of 1944 and the start of 1945 in Europe.

You do eventually get to Hitler's bunker and what was happening there the last few months. There are some interesting segments about Eva Braun, various other figures who go in and out, and the desperation that set in during the final few weeks. While some of this is interesting, there wasn't too much that most readers probably didn't already know. Little is mentioned about the situation outside the bunker.

So, where are the Russians in all of this? Well, they're not mentioned very often! The great Russian offensives, the Battle for Berlin, running into the Allies at the Elbe, etc., get hardly any time spent on them at all. Readers who skip through the book or have little knowledge of this period may come away with the idea that Patton conquered Germany and killed Hitler himself!

In the end, this is a pretty basic history book suitable for junior high students or maybe those who have read very little about the subject. While there are interesting tidbits here and there, they just don't go together as a cohesive whole. The reader would be better off re-reading Cornelius Ryan's The Last Battle instead.



BILL O'REILLY
A SPECIAL EDITION BASED ON THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUDIOBOOK
READ BY ROBERT PETERSEN • INTRODUCTION READ BY THE AUTHOR

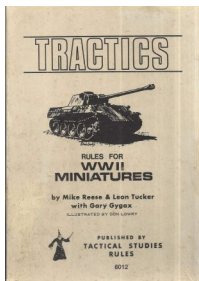
Memoirs of a Miniatures and Board Wargamer Pt. 46

A Typical 1970s/Early 80s Saturday

When I first got into the hobby in the mid-70s, there were few gaming groups around and the offerings in terms of group games were far and few between! Throughout high school, a few years in college, then a full time job, there was a certain pattern to my gaming and I suspect, for many of the readers of this magazine as well. The big gaming days were the weekends, in particular Saturdays. There was no school, no hurry to be anywhere, limited family commitments, and even more limited entertainment options. Most places closed at 6pm, so even if you worked a job you were free at night. This made Saturday, and to some extent Sunday, prime gaming days.

By Friday night you knew what was on tap for Saturday as you and your friends had exchanged calls, talked to each other at school, etc. I was lucky enough to be near a local model store that also sold board games and miniatures. They had an addition to the store where there was gaming on Saturdays. A quick stop at the local 7-11 to pick up snacks for the day, run into the store to see what was new that week, then over to the game. Usually there were 3-4 games going on and you were always welcome somewhere.

This is where many of us got into micro-armor playing Tractics, ancients with WRG rules, medieval combat with Chainmail, and had a chance to experiment with new RPG systems that were out. Many old time gamers (funny that today most of us are those guys now!) would set up the scenarios and teach you how to play, hoping you would join them for the next few years and paint more armies. If the game went 6-8 hours no one cared-there wasn't really anywhere else for you to be! Complexity was shrugged off as there weren't many game systems to compare to the one you were currently playing!



On really good Saturdays you might finish by 3 or 4 pm, then travel with some gaming buddies to other stores in the area. We had a few toy stores that sold Avalon Hill games, a hobby shop or two that sold a variety of things, and one or two more boardgame/miniatures stores, so I counted myself lucky. Then it was a fast food dinner, followed by a movie (if there was a sci-fi, action, or horror title you were interested in), then on many nights off to someone's house for more gaming!

Although many of the stores went in and out of business, gaming venues changed, etc., once you got in with a good gaming group you seemed set for life. Even if the membership changed (I lived near a USAF base, so people were always coming and going), the group did a lot of things together. One of my fondest memories was a group of 10 of us going to Pizza Hut for dinner, then over to watch Star Trek II at the theater, then over to someone's house to play in a massive Star Fleet Battles game that went until 4am!

Even hanging out at the local game store to talk about the latest projects, going over to a fast food place for lunch, then back to the store to talk some more made for a great day. Time seemed to know no bounds. Whether it was playing at the local store all night or at someone's house, everyone made time for the game. Even larger games would sometimes carry over to Sunday, with most of us going to bed in the early hours of the morning, then going back to finish the game on Sunday afternoon.

As many of us started to work more, trying to schedule something became a bit more of a challenge. Saturday mornings and afternoons were usually off limits, so gaming moved to Saturday nights. Again, we would determine what to play well ahead of time, then with most people being available after 6pm, we would meet and game until 2 or 3am. Some years we would have 15-20 people who were associated with each other, so there were multiple games at different places, making it so that you were never left out. It was an exciting time as there were some great board games, a bunch of new RPG systems, new miniatures rules, etc., all waiting to be tried.

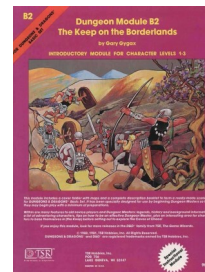
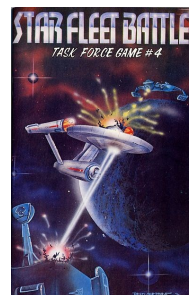
This was the era of playing GDW's Third World War for two days straight,

micro-armor campaigns that went on and on, D&D sessions that only ended when the sun came up, and so on. Everyone showing up with 15mm ACW figs to paint for the big Antietam game coming up in a few weeks, plus many, many other projects. There was a sense of belonging and being with friends that made even terrain building sessions fun! We would even take breaks to play GDW's Air Superiority, a game or two of Ace of Aces, or continue a season of Statis Pro Football. The important thing is that we were gaming and all together.

This continued on for many years,, even as the gamers changed or moved on. We ran TSR Top Secret campaigns, played missions with the Merc RPG system, huge Star Fleet Battles campaigns, playing Gulf Strike all night, and much more. As new gaming items came out someone would buy one and they would get added to the playing queue. We had 1/3000th fleets, divisions of micro-armor, D&D figs for any situation, enough ACW figs to do Gettysburg at the regimental level, and so on. It seemed as if the good times would never end. No matter how bad your week was, Saturday was something to look forward to.

Slowly and surely, things began to change. Dating became more serious, time commitments grew, and people moved out of the area for new jobs. We still gamed Saturdays, but there were fewer of us and the games were more limited. By the end of the 80s everyone had gone their separate ways and Saturday gaming was gone. Everyone was left to fend for themselves in the hobby.

Today, our gaming is twice a month on Friday nights. Games are limited in scope, with most us not able to make it past 11pm any more! No more all night sessions, not many group projects, and too many interests to keep track of. Still a lot of fun, but those Saturdays in the 70s and 80s will never be replaced.

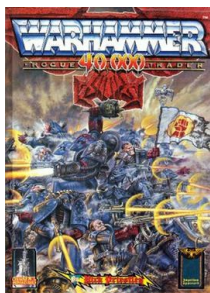


Blast From The Past Pt. 45: Games Workshop Early Years

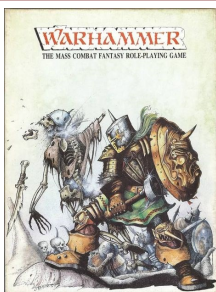
No company in the hobby can generate more pro and con discussion than Games Workshop. Today they are a gaming empire, producing hundreds of thousands of figures each year, magazines, boxed games, and running their own retail stores. Love them or hate them, they are a force in the hobby to be reckoned with. However, there was a time when they were relatively unknown, which is today hard to believe!

Back in 1983 when Warhammer Fantasy first came out, we really didn't know what to make of it. The rules were certainly more professionally published than many other items in that era, things looked good, plus it would go along great with all of the relatively new Citadel fantasy miniatures that were just then coming out. We played a few games and while there was potential there, we had no idea that it would become a force unto itself!

2nd and 3rd versions came out and we started seeing more armies and battles between gamers in the area. It quickly became the de facto set of fantasy mass battle rules. The Citadel miniatures continued to improve and started to dominate the fantasy world, becoming quite popular with the many RPG gamers in the area. At that time we were thinking it was too bad that they didn't have a science-fiction version of these rules as there seemed to be some interest in that genre, but not much out there for gamers to buy.



That changed dramatically in 1987-88 when Warhammer 40,000 Rogue Trader came out. Call it good timing, luck, or just appealing to the right audience, this set of rules pushed all the right buttons for many gamers. There was a boxed miniatures set and articles about conversions began to appear in issues of White Dwarf, the company's magazine. Soon, battle were raging all over tabletops in my area and game stores could not get product in fast enough. Would this be a one hit wonder?

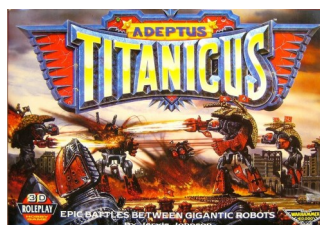


For many of us long time (well, maybe at the time many of us had been in the hobby for around 10-12 years) gamers who were used to board wargames, tactical level miniatures rules, etc., this was a dream come true. Science fiction platoon level combat with cool miniatures? Sign us up! It was a game where tactics were rewarded and we spent all kinds of time trying to find the right combination of units. We used all kinds of WW2 scenarios with our games, such as ambushes, attacks on entrenchments, urban fights, and much more. How could things get any better?

Well, they did. Two boxes of vehicles came out for sale. For \$20 you got two land raider tanks or three Rhino armored personnel carriers! We bought multiple boxes and kit bashing took off. I went out and found a 1/72nd M-901 so I could get the missile launcher and hook it onto a Rhino! There were now vehicles added to our scenarios and we devised new tactics for our games. Campaigns sprang up, gamers built fortresses, there were 10-12 player battles at the local store, and WH40K took off like no other game outside of Dungeons & Dragons.

All the while White Dwarf fueled the fire. Incredibly painted miniatures, painting tips, articles about what was coming out, discussions about the rules, and more. However, this is where the first problems, at least for me and many others in my group, started to appear. I think it all began with the appearance of the Elder Harlequin. All of a sudden, a WW2 battle game set in space started to take on a more silly, fantastical outlook. More specialty figs, prices went up, and you started to spend more and more time configuring your forces to defeat the "flavor of the month".

Just as we were starting to question our investment in all of this, Adeptus Titanicus came out. Quickly, all of the problems of 40K went out the window as we all started to customize and paint our titans. In a repeat of the introduction of WH40K above, now it was Adeptus Titanicus' turn and battles were joined in houses and gaming stores in my



area. When Space Marine came out the intensity increased dramatically. Massive battles, some with 12-15 titans and hundreds of space marine stands went all day and night. As more armies and miniatures came out the fever only got worse.

What was interesting at this time is that Warhammer Fantasy, which started all of this, had become somewhat forgotten! Everything was now focused on the WH40K universe and what would be coming out in White Dwarf. Games

Workshop had went from a new company trying to get a foothold in hobby stores to the dominating giant it is today in barely 10 years. While I started to have questions about some things and the games in our area started to reach a certain level of silliness, I did buy Space Hulk, which to me was the last great game to come out of this early GW era. Space Hulk was and still is today, perhaps their greatest game in my humble opinion.

We all know what happened next. Endless rules changes, new army lists, ever escalating prices, and the games just weren't the same. Most of us sold off our collections, usually after some game where bizarre tactics, a high priced model, or some new trial rule in White Dwarf ruined a game for us. To this day I still don't know if it was just that we were tired of riding the whirlwind and wanted to get off, or was just the game didn't suit our play style any longer. It may have been a bit of both.

Fast forward to today and there are a large number of Games Workshop boxed sets, stand alone games, thousands of miniatures, and even White Dwarf is still going strong. I still cringe at the prices of their products and every time I think about going back there's an ad for a new version of the rules that will be out soon. No thanks. However, for a few years there it was a major part of my hobby life and I wouldn't have missed it for the world!



ONE DAY CAMPAIGNS

PT. II: TACTICAL RULES



Introduction

Now we come to the second part of the one day campaign series, which will focus on the tactical rules used for the tabletop battles. If you're doing a one day campaign with multiple boards, maybe ranging from three all the way up to a dozen, it should be readily apparent that your existing miniatures rules will not work. Most of the rules used by various gaming clubs can barely fit a large battle into a single gaming night, so unless you want to spend several weeks playing a "one day" campaign, something else is clearly needed.

The tactical rules presented here are in no way comprehensive. The movement rates, firing ranges, how combat is conducted, etc., is all designed for one thing; speed of play. In order to facilitate large numbers of vehicle and infantry models moving across multiple boards, turns must move quickly and there simply isn't time to look through a wide range of charts to adjudicate a single tank on tank firefight. Airstrikes, artillery, close combat, etc., all must be dealt with quickly so that the tactical game can move on to a conclusion, allowing the campaign to continue.

No doubt there will be some questions about the various systems presented here, stats for vehicles, and basically how the entire set of rules works! That's fine and it's important to realize that these are guidelines and a base system to get a campaign going. By all means, feel free to change the firing tables, saves/armor, artillery, movement, and so on to how your group wants it to be. Add house rules, more stats, etc., so that the rules work best for your campaign. Again, the idea is to provide a basis for your tabletop battles on multiple boards and to have fun doing it.

How to Use These Rules

As mentioned in the first part of these rules regarding one day campaigns, the various game boards should be set up before the tactical game would start. Once the defenders are set up according to the campaign map, then the game begins with the attacker moving and firing in the first turn.

The rules are primarily designed for 6mm (1/300th) and 15mm figures/vehicles. For 6mm all measurements would be in CMs (centimeters), while for 15mm all measurements should be in inches. For other scales such as 10mm or

20mm, a decision would need to be made to use either centimeters or inches for the tactical battles. Gamers should also be encouraged to create their own tables using measurements that work for their table size and figure scale.

In terms of figure scale, each vehicle or infantry stand can be seen as either one vehicle/one infantry section or they could be platoons. The rules are written so that each vehicle model, weapons stand, or infantry stand moves and fires individually.

As stated above, these rules are designed to provide a fast moving system that will allow for a number of battles across multiple boards to be completed quickly. The combat system is fairly simple and produces decisive results. There are a number of optional rules that will add layers of complexity to the base system, so they should be looked over closely before deciding to add them to your campaign. Also, since the base system is pretty bare bones, gamers can easily add on additional rules that they feel will make this into a better game.

Sequence of Play

Turn Sequence

I. Initiative Phase

Initiative Phase: Each side rolls 1D10 and the highest roll decides which side will go first during the current turn. This can be important as if one side goes last, then first again in the next turn it will allow their units to possibly fire twice in a row, which offers some advantages. Note: **The attacker automatically gets the initiative on the first tactical turn.**

II. Initiative Side Movement/Combat

- A. Move/Fire Phase
- B. Artillery Phase
- C. Air Attack Phase
- D. Close Combat Phase

Movement/Combat: During their turn, each side will move and/or fire their units. Units cannot move and fire during the turn, so they can only perform one or the other. There is no set order in how each side handles their part of the turn in regards to movement and combat. A side can move all the units that they want, then have the remainder fire, or have all the units that could fire do that, then the remainder can move. Another method is to just move across the board, moving and firing units until that side has completed the phase. It may be helpful to use markers to signify which units have moved or fired for the turn.

III. Non-Initiative Side Movement/Combat

- A. Move/Fire Phase
- B. Artillery Phase
- C. Air Attack Phase
- D. Close Combat Phase

Artillery & Air Attack: Artillery and air attacks are conducted against units of the other side. Follow the procedures to determine accuracy, the effects of the attacks, and any save rolls.

Close Combat: Units that have moved into contact with enemy units conduct close combat.

Move/Fire Phase

The Move and Fire Phases are combined as each side must go unit by unit, deciding if they will move or fire. Units are NOT allowed to do both during each turn. Since this could become confusing during each turn, it is recommended that gamers use dice and/or markers to identify which units have already moved and/or fired.

Movement

To move, check the unit's movement rate on the chart according to its movement class. The unit can then move up to that distance during its turn. Where the unit will be moving over two or more different types of terrain, you will need to pro-rate the movement.

Ex., a Sherman tank is moving along a road, then moves off the road into light woods. Looking at the Tracked row on the movement chart, the Sherman could go 20 if it used its full movement on the road. The Sherman moves 10 along the road, which is half of its movement allowance. Movement in light woods is rated as 10 for tracked vehicles, but since the Sherman has already used half of its movement, it can only go 5 in the light woods, which would complete its movement for the turn.

Fire Combat

To fire, a unit must have a target in a clear LOS (Line of Sight) and in range. To fire at a target, complete the following steps in order:

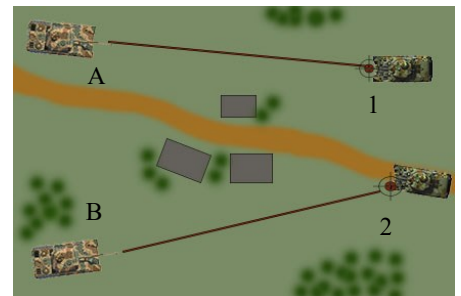
- Read along the row for the appropriate type of weapon.
- Check the modifiers.
- Roll 1D10 for the result.
- Roll for any saves on an eligible target that is hit.

All units are rated for their weapon and armor class. For example, a Panther tank would be an A-IV, meaning that it fires on Row A and saves on a 7-10. The combat results are:

- Miss-No effect
- H-Hit: Target suffers one hit. Units with an armor class of 1 or 0 are destroyed.
- X-Destroyed: If an armor unit does not have a hit and rolls a successful save, the destroyed result is changed to one hit.

Class 0 and I armor, along with infantry and weapons only take 1 hit, so any H or X result eliminates them. Units with

Class II-IV armor saves take two hits to eliminate.



Two Panthers are firing at two advancing Shermans. Panther A measures the range to Sherman 1, which is 20, then sees that there are no applicable modifiers. One D10 is rolled and the result is an 9, which is an X result on the Sherman. The Sherman fails its save rolled and is knocked out. Panther 2 measures the range to Sherman 2, which is 22 and that means the next range band will have to be used. The Panther rolls a 10 on the D10, which again is an X result. The Sherman, however, rolls an 8 against its armor class of III, which is a save. The Sherman takes 1 hit. Cover, attacks to the flank/rear, or a unit's status (Elite/Green) could have produced modifiers that would have changed the results.

Artillery & Air Attacks

After the Move/Fire Phase, the next step is the Artillery Phase followed by the Air Attack Phase.

The first step in the Artillery Phase is to designate targets. It is assumed that if you are using the campaign rules (Part One of this series on One Day Campaigns), then artillery has been assigned to particular formations or is available on call. Depending upon how you set up your formations for the campaign, you can handle artillery fire support in several ways:

1. Let any company or battalion command vehicle/stand call for support—no die roll needed.
2. Company or battalion command vehicles/stands need to make a contact roll to call in artillery on a target. Roll 1D10 and on a 6-10 the artillery unit is available for support.
3. Attach Forward Artillery Observers (FAOs) to units who can call in artillery support.

The command vehicle/stand or FAO must have a clear line of sight to the target to call for fire support. Measure the impact area (depending upon the scale

you are using) and then roll to see if the fire support is on target. This process is repeated for EACH artillery battery that is firing in support.

There are three results when determining if the artillery support is on target:

- Miss—No Effect
- Good—Roll 1D10
- On Target—Roll 2D10

For each unit in the impact area, roll the dice from the accuracy roll above. Consult the Target Type column, then read across for the type of artillery that is firing. Apply the result to the unit in the impact zone.

Ex., a medium artillery barrage is going to attack a group of advancing Shermans. The impact zone is placed so that at least two of the four tanks are in the area. A D10 is rolled for accuracy and the result is a 7, meaning that each target in the impact area will have 1D10 rolled for it on the Artillery chart. Cross referencing the Armor roll with Medium artillery shows that a 9 or 10 is needed for a hit.



Air Attacks

Air attacks follow a similar process. If playing with the campaign system, each air point equals one air attack against ground units. Air attacks do not need spotters and may attack any enemy

units on the tabletop.

- Determine impact area.
- Check if there are any anti-aircraft units in range of the impact area. If there are, roll once per AA unit on the Anti-Aircraft table.
- Any surviving air points may now roll 1D10 per attack on the Air Attack table.
- Apply hits and saves to the target unit(s).

Infantry vs. Armor & Close Combat

The Direct Fire table is used for infantry vs. infantry or weapons (AT guns, MGs, etc.). It is assumed that many infantry stands will have anti-tank weapons. Before the campaign or battle begins, players will need to note and/or assign AT weapons to their infantry units. Each infantry stand equipped with AT weapons may fire during the Move/Fire phase of each turn. All infantry type AT weapons have a range of 8 and use the Direct Fire modifiers.

| Weapon Type | To Hit |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| A | 1-8 Miss 9-10 Hit |
| B | 1-7 Miss 8-9 Hit 10 X |

Close Combat

Close Combat is fought when both sides have infantry and armor in base to base contact. This could be armor over-

running infantry in the open, infantry assaulting an enemy held building, or a mounted attack by vehicle borne infantry. A number of D10s are assigned to each side for close combat, then the totals are compared to see the results of the combat. The attacker determines how the close combat engagements will be fought in the case of multiple attackers or defenders. They can be fought as single engagements or as one larger engagement.

Close Combat Procedure

- Move infantry/vehicles in the Move/Fire phase into contact with enemy units. Supporting armor should be placed behind attacking infantry if it is a combined arms assault.
- During the Close Combat phase of the player turn, determine the results of any close combat engagements.
- The attacking player decides if each stand will fight its own engagement or there will be one engagement with

numerous stands/vehicles.

- Both sides figure out the number of dice available.
- Both sides add up their rolled total, then compare it as a ratio of attacker vs. defender. Refer to the Close Combat results table.
- Apply combat results.

Ex., One German infantry stand and one combat engineer stand along with a halftrack are assaulting two Russian infantry stands in a building near a village. The Germans would roll 4D10 (1 for the infantry, 2 for the engineers, and 1 for the supporting halftrack). The Russians will roll 3D10 (2 for the infantry and 1 for defending the building). The Germans roll 28 and the Russians roll 13, which is a ratio of 2.15. Looking on the results chart the Russians would lose one infantry stand and the remaining stand would fall back 5. The Germans would advance and occupy the building.

Optional Rules

As you can see, these are very basic rules intended to allow for a large number of miniatures and players over multiple game boards in sync with the campaign system. Here are some additional rules that could be added to the basic set that would add a bit more realism.

Opportunity Fire

If an enemy unit moves within the line of sight and is within range of a friendly unit, that unit may fire during the opposing side's Move/Fire phase. The enemy unit may be stopped at any point along its movement path, then the friendly unit may fire. If the enemy unit is not destroyed, it may then continue moving. Each friendly unit may only fire once during the opposing side's Move/Fire phase. Place a marker next to any friendly unit that fires during this phase and in their next Move/Fire phase all firing is done at a -1 to the die roll.

Suppression

Units that take a hit, but are not destroyed are Suppressed. Place a marker next to the unit to signify that it is Suppressed. For the remainder of the current Move/Fire phase and the next Move/Fire phase, that unit cannot move and fires with a -2 die roll modifier. At the end of the next Move/Fire phase (enemy or friendly) the marker is removed.

Forward Artillery Observers FAOs)

In the basic game, any unit can be used to sight for artillery fire. With this optional rule only designated command units or forward observers may be used to call in artillery. Each formation should have a HQ unit and a number of forward artillery observers should be assigned to each side for the campaign. HQ units and FAOs need to have a line of sight to the enemy unit to be able to roll for artillery fire attacks.

Additional Movement Classes

While there are only three movement classes in the basic game, this could be greatly expanded. Rules and movement rates for fast/slow tracked vehicles, moving heavy weapons, etc., could all be added to the charts. If weather is being used, then a separate column for mud, snow, and even movement at night could be added as well. Instead of the current system, a random movement system could be used instead, giving each unit a variable number of dice for movement.

Multiple Rocket Launchers

Stalin's organs,, nebelwerfers, Sherman calliopes, etc., are not specifically covered in the basic game. Different blast radii, modifiers to the die roll, etc., could be added to take into account these weapons instead of classifying them as normal artillery.

Ground Attack Aircraft

In the campaign game and in the tactical game each air point assigned to ground attack generates one roll of the die on the Air Attack table. While this would entail more paperwork for the campaign, air points could easily be split up into fighter, fighter-bomber, and ground attack points. Give each fighter-bomber one roll on the table, but each dedicated ground attack air point would generate two rolls. You could even experiment with larger attack aircraft (simulating B-26s, Mosquitos, etc.) which would get three rolls per air point.

Morale

In both the campaign and tactical games it is assumed that units will keep fighting on regardless of casualties. Then, during an operational turn at some point the survivors of a formation will get reinforced or combined with some other group. Instead, a morale system could be used during the tactical game. Each formation would need to have a morale rating assigned to it before the campaign begins.

To keep things fairly simple, each time a formation reaches 50% casualties, it must roll on the morale table below. Once the unit hits the 50% threshold it must then roll on the morale chart every time it loses a unit. Roll 1D10

| Morale Grade | Good | Wavering | Retreat |
|--------------|------|----------|---------|
| A | 1-7 | 8-9 | 10 |
| B | 1-6 | 7-8 | 9-10 |
| C | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-10 |

Modifiers

Formation in defensive positions -1

Formation is wavering +1

Morale Results

Good-The formation continues normal operations.

Wavering-The formation cannot advance against an enemy (it may take up defensive positions).

Retreat-The formation must move so as to exit the current board it is on, towards any board controlled by its own side.

Rallying Formations

Units that are Wavering or in Retreat can rally. Roll 1D10 and if the result is in the following ranges, that formation rallies. A formation that is Wavering will return to Good and a formation that is in Retreat will return to Wavering.

A: 7-10

B: 8-10

C: 9-10

Note: If this optional rules is used, Morale and Rallying should become Phase E during the Move/Fire segment of the turn.

Tactical Command & Control

In the basic rules there is no command & control, so units can be spread all over the game board. With this optional rule, units must be within a certain range of their HQ stand, vehicle, etc. belonging to their formation. Each formation can be assigned a command rating that designates how far a unit can be from its formation commander to be able to move/fire. If they are outside of that range the unit can only move to get within range, although it can defend itself and use opportunity fire.

| Command Rating | Command Range |
|----------------|---------------|
| A | 20 |
| B | 15 |
| C | 12 |
| D | 10 |

HQ units that are destroyed can be replaced during that side's following tactical turn, but at the next lowest command rating. Gamers should feel free to assign various command ratings and morale grades to formations to reflect elite units, operational doctrine, poor training for conscripts and militia, etc. HQ units can also be used to spot for artillery and airstrikes.

Reference Sheet

Sequence of Play

Tactical Turn

I. Initiative Phase

Initiative Phase: Each side rolls 1D10 and the highest roll decides which side will go first during the current turn. This can be important as if one side goes last, then first again in the next turn it will allow their units to possibly fire twice in a row, which offers some advantages.

II. Initiative Side Movement/Combat

- A. Move/Fire
- B. Artillery Phase
- C. Air Attack Phase
- D. Close Combat Phase

Movement/Combat: During their turn, each side will move and/or fire their units. Units cannot move and fire during the turn, so they can only perform one or the other. There is no set order in how each side handles their part of the turn in regards to movement and combat. A side can move all the units that they want, then have the remainder fire, or have all the units that could fire do that, then the remainder can move. Another method is to just move across the board, moving and firing units until that side has completed the phase. It may be helpful to use markers to signify which units have moved or fired for the turn.

III. Non-Initiative Side Movement/Combat

- A. Move/Fire
- B. Artillery Phase
- C. Air Attack Phase
- D. Close Combat Phase

Artillery & Air Attack: Artillery and air attacks are conducted against units of the other side. Follow the procedures to determine accuracy, the effects of the attacks, and any save rolls.

Close Combat: Units that have moved into contact with enemy units conduct close combat.

IV. Operational Turn

Operational Turn: If 10 tactical turns have passed, the battle is temporarily paused so that both sides can conduct an Operational Turn for the campaign. Once that is completed, play resumes with the start of a new Tactical Turn.

Movement Rates/Terrain Costs

| Troop Type | Clear/Open | Light Woods | Heavy Woods | Village/Town | Urban | Road | Hills |
|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------|-------|
| Tracked | 15 | 10 | Only on Roads | 10 | Only on Roads | 20 | 10 |
| Wheeled | 12 | 8 | Only on Roads | 10 | Only on Roads | 25 | 8 |
| Foot | 8 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 6 |

| Movement Modifiers | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Mounting/Dismounting | 1/2 move |
| Crossing Fortifications | 1/2 move |

Infantry vs. Armor

| Weapon Type | To Hit | Modifiers | |
|-------------|----------|-------------|----|
| A | 1-8 Miss | Green | -1 |
| | 9-10 Hit | Elite | +1 |
| B | 1-7 Miss | In cover | -1 |
| | 8-9 Hit | Vs. 0 armor | +1 |
| | 10 X | | |

Close Combat

| # of Dice (D10) | |
|---|----|
| Infantry/Weapons | 1 |
| Combat Engineers | 2 |
| Armor/Halftracks | 1 |
| Defending buildings, difficult terrain, and entrenchments | +1 |
| Elite troops | +1 |
| Green troops | -1 |
| Armor/Halftracks vs. Infantry in the open | +2 |

| Result Ratio | Close Combat Result |
|--------------|---|
| -3.1 + | Attackers Defeated: Attackers lose 50% of attacking force and fall back 10. |
| -1.1 to 3.0 | Attackers Pushed Back: Attackers lose one stand and/or vehicle, then fall back 5 |
| -1.0 to 1.0 | Indecisive Fighting: Re-roll close combat |
| 1.1 to 3.0 | Defenders Pushed Back: Defenders lose one stand and/or vehicle, then fall back 5 |
| 3.1 + | Defenders Defeated: Defenders lose 50% of attacking force and fall back 10. |

Reference Sheet

Direct Fire Table

| | | Range | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|-------|--|------|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|------------------|------------|
| Weapon Class | | 1-8 | | 9-20 | | 21-40 | | 41-60 | | 61-72 | | Results | |
| A 88mm+ | 1-3 | Miss | | 1-4 | Miss | 1-5 | Miss | 1-6 | Miss | 1-7 | Miss | Miss | No Effect |
| | 4-7 | H | | 5-7 | H | 6-8 | H | 7-9 | H | 8-9 | H | H | 1 Hit |
| | 8-10 | X | | 8-10 | X | 9-10 | X | 10 | X | 10 | X | X | Destroyed |
| B 57-76mm | 1-4 | Miss | | 1-5 | Miss | 1-6 | Miss | 1-7 | Miss | | | Modifiers | |
| | 5-8 | H | | 6-8 | H | 7-9 | H | 8-9 | H | | | | |
| | 9-10 | X | | 9-10 | X | 10 | X | 10 | X | | | | |
| C 30-50mm | 1-4 | Miss | | 1-6 | Miss | 1-7 | Miss | | | | | In cover | -1 |
| | 5-8 | H | | 7-8 | H | 8-9 | H | | | | | Vs. 0 armor | +1 |
| | 9-10 | X | | 9-10 | X | 10 | X | | | | | Saves | |
| D Up to 30mm | 1-6 | Miss | | 1-7 | Miss | | | | | | | IV | 7-10 |
| | 7-8 | H | | 8-9 | H | | | | | | | III | 8-10 |
| | 9-10 | X | | 10 | X | | | | | | | II | 9-10 |
| Infantry (vs. Infantry & Weapons only) | 1-6 | Miss | | | | | | | | | | I | 10 |
| | 7-8 | H | | | | | | | | | | Flank/Rear | -1 to roll |
| | 9-10 | X | | | | | | | | | | # of Hits | |
| MGs/ Light Mortars | 1-6 | Miss | | 1-7 | Miss | | | | | | | II-IV | 2 Hits |
| | 7-8 | H | | 8-9 | H | | | | | | | 0-I | 1 Hit |
| | 9-10 | X | | 10 | X | | | | | | | Inf./Weapons | 1 Hit |

Artillery

| Target Type | Light | | Medium | | Heavy | |
|-------------------|-------|---|--------|---|-------|---|
| Armor | 10 | H | 9-10 | H | 8-10 | H |
| Open Top Armor | 9-10 | H | 8-10 | H | 7-10 | H |
| Soft Vehicles | 7-10 | X | 6-10 | X | 5-10 | X |
| Infantry in Open | 7-10 | X | 6-10 | X | 5-10 | X |
| Infantry in Cover | 10 | H | 9-10 | H | 8-10 | H |

Air Attack

| Target Type | To Hit |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| All | 1-7 Miss 7-8 H 9-10 X |

Modifiers

In Cover -1

Artillery/Air Attack Accuracy

| D10 | Accuracy |
|------|----------------|
| 1-5 | Miss-No Effect |
| 6-8 | Good-1D10 |
| 9-10 | On Target-2D10 |

Impact Area

Artillery: 8cm x 24cm/4" x 10"

Air Attack: 10cm x 10cm/3" x 3"

Anti-Aircraft

Range

| AA Type | Light | 6 | Medium | 12 | Heavy | 24 |
|---------|-------|---|--------|----|-------|----|
|---------|-------|---|--------|----|-------|----|

Roll 1D10: 1-8 Miss 9 Abort 10 Destroyed

WW2 Data

The following data for artillery, anti-tank weapons, and armor are to provide a basis for gamers to create their own more comprehensive lists. As with other aspects of the rules, feel free to change these ratings based upon your own research, to balance out the game, or expand them with additional categories.

| Artillery | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Light | up to 76mm |
| Medium | 77mm to 105mm |
| Heavy | 120mm and up |

| Infantry Anti-Tank Weapons | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Category | Type |
| A | PIAT, Panzerfaust, etc. |
| B | Bazooka, |

| Anti-Aircraft | |
|---------------|------------|
| Light | up to 37mm |
| Medium | 40mm-57mm |
| Heavy | 75mm + |

| Germany | |
|--------------|-------|
| PZIIIJ | II-C |
| PZIVH | III-B |
| Panther | IV-B |
| Tiger I | IV-A |
| Tiger II | IV-A |
| Stug IIIG | II-B |
| Marder III | II-B |
| Hetzer | II-B |
| Sdkfz 251/1 | I-MG |
| Sdkfz 251/10 | I-C |
| Sdkfz 251/22 | I-B |
| Sdkfz 221 | I-MG |
| Sdkfz 234 | II-C |

| England | |
|--------------|-------|
| Cromwell | III-B |
| Sherman | III-B |
| Firefly | III-A |
| Comet | III-A |
| Churchill | IV-B |
| Archer | II-A |
| M3 halftrack | I-MG |
| Daimler AC | I-C |
| Humber | I-MG |

| United States | |
|---------------|-------|
| M3/M5 | II-C |
| Sherman | III-B |
| M26 | IV-A |
| M10 | III-B |
| M36 | III-A |
| M3 halftrack | I-MG |
| M8 | I-C |
| M20 | I-MG |

| Russia | |
|---------|-------|
| T-34 | III-B |
| T-34/85 | III-A |
| T-60 | II-D |
| T-70 | II-C |
| IS-2 | IV-A |
| SU-85 | III-A |
| BA-64 | I-MG |
| SU-122 | III-B |

Notes:

- Vehicles with primarily HE weapons such as the SU-122 are rated one class lower to reflect their lack of anti-tank ammunition.
- Anti-tank guns have 0 armor and should be rated by the size of the gun. i.e., a German 7.5cm Pak-40 would be classed as 0-B.

Ideas for Modern Period Battles

Ranges

Modern tank and anti-tank weapons have far more range capability than their WW2 counterparts. The range bands should probably be modified to include an additional block for 73-100. The other option is to just keep the range bands, but assume that the ground scale is a bit larger. Due to the accuracy of modern optics and fire control computers, the hit numbers should be adjusted by at least 1 or a +1 to hit for given tanks/weapons.

Armor

Modern tanks have ERA, Trophy, ceramic blocks, etc., so the saves for modern tanks will need to reflect this. An easy way to do this would be to add a second save roll, so each modern tank would get

two chances to save if they were hit in fire combat.

ATGMs

Another weapon line or two should be added for ATGMs, probably broken into older and more modern ATGMs, with hit numbers similar to A class weapons.

Move & Fire

Unlike WW2 tanks, most modern tanks can fire while on the move. Adjust the Move/Fire phase to reflect this by allowing tanks to move at least half of their normal movement and fire either before moving or after.

Artillery & Air Attacks

Modern artillery and air attacks are far more accurate, so the hit numbers and

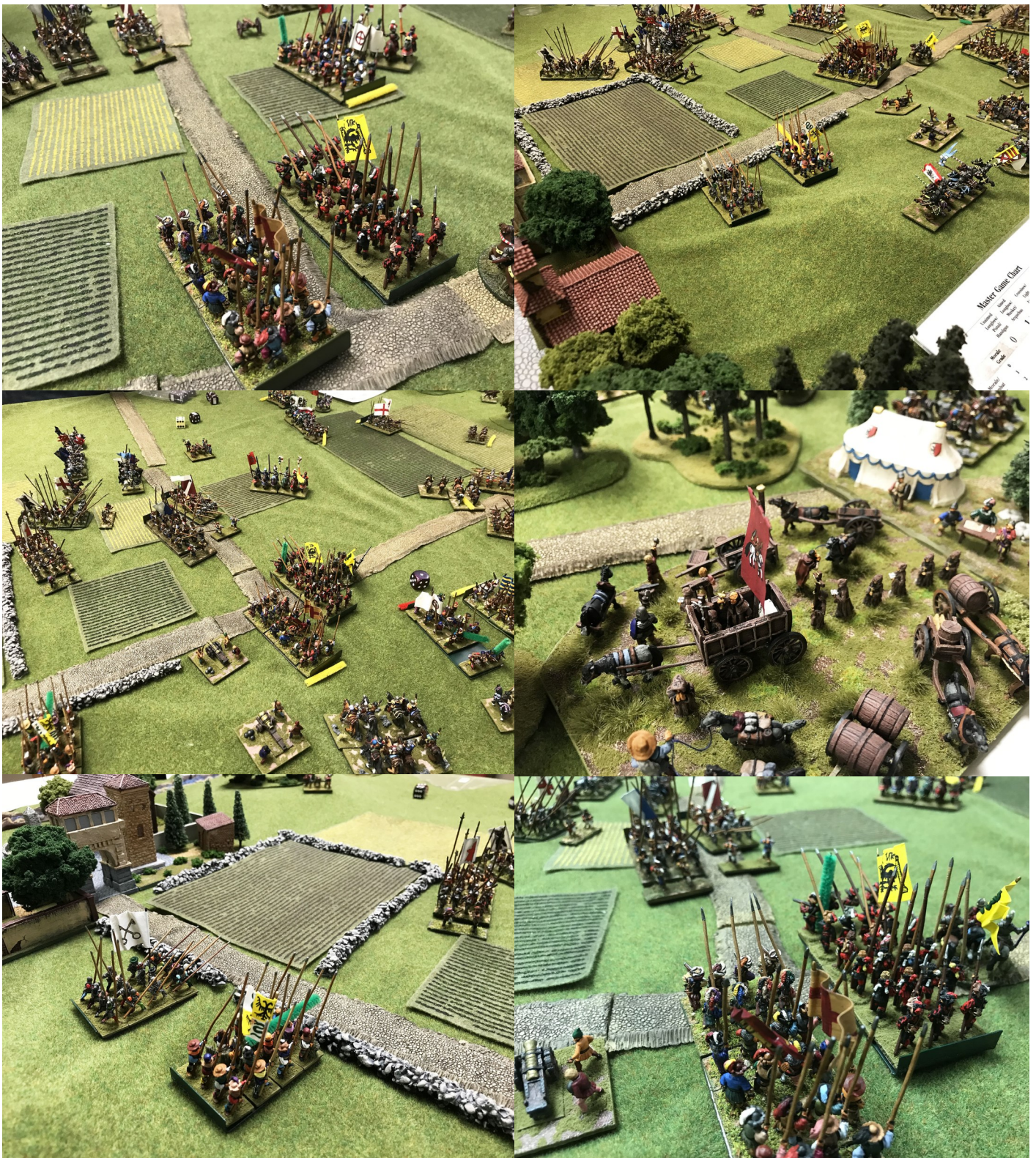
accuracy rolls need to be modified by at least 1. Air defense should be changed as well, with the Heavy AA being treated as the entire board to simulate Patriots, S-400, etc.

Helicopters

Helicopters should have a move rate of at least 50 per turn and allowed to make up to two attacks with ATGMs or one ATGM and one weapon class D attack.

Converting the tactical rules to reflect modern battlefields would take some work, but it's not impossible with a bit of effort. The main issue is increasing the ranges, lethality, and accuracy of modern weapons. If there is enough interest/feedback, a set of modern charts could be provided in a future issue.

Glorious Disasters-The “Too Many Rules” Phenomenon” (cont.)



Six more images from the Age of Discovery Renaissance battle discussed in the article. By mid game there was a mass of confusion in the center as any sort of battle formation and/or plan went out the window! Each side tried to respond the best that it could, with counterattacks and desperate stands taking place along the length of the game board.

As I go through my daily routine of checking various forums, web sites, blogs, etc., for hobby news, I've been noticing a trend that seems to be gaining steam. At first I just chalked it up to gamers being gamers. We are a bit of a nerdy/geeky type crowd who do unusual things at times, but this seems to be taking it to a whole new level. Instantly, your mind probably races through all the weird things gamers do, but this could be a new one for you.

As more and more games come out, genres get split into more genres, specialized gaming becomes more specialized, and so on, there appears to be a race "to be first". By that I mean post pictures of the game sitting on your doorstep in a shipping box, seeing the game set up the first time, how the figures look primed, and on and on. There seems to be this strange innate feeling that gamers have that every other gamer on the planet is interested in what they do!

Now, don't get me wrong here as I like seeing posts about games the much as the next gamer, especially if they're accompanied with some good discussion or on rare topics. However, if Warlord Games releases a new boxed set and 10 other gamers have posted pictures of it having arrived at their houses, why do some gamers feel the need to post theirs as well? We get it, the game has shipped; thanks. The boxed set is available as it was clearly spelled out by the company and now one gamer shows a picture of it at their house. Hurray for them! Is it really necessary to see other gamers post theirs too? Are theirs different in some way?

Not to be outdone, the next step is to have an "unboxing" video. Many of you have seen this where a gamer tears off the shrink wrap, then slowly empties out the components. This is followed by the painstakingly slow motion process of picking up each item, showing it off, then making a comment about it. Finally, there is a flip through the rules, play book, reference cards, etc., followed by a lengthy commentary on how they think the game will play. I guess if you have no idea about the game this might be helpful, but I'm not sure about the level



of help here.

First off, on the Kickstarter or P500 page there's almost always images of the maps, counters, miniatures, etc., plus detailed lists of what you're going to get.

If the company blurb says large board and 48 miniatures why is it newsworthy if the person doing the unboxing video pulls out a large board and 48 miniatures! Not to be outdone, other gamers will then create more unboxing videos for the same game. Is their game different? No, in fact the exact same components are in the box that the other videos showed!

These kinds of things are merely annoying, but now we've moved into another new level in the race to be first for gamers. This incorporates trying to be first, but if you're not first then some gamers feel the urge to "just do something". Whether that takes the form of unboxing videos, pictures of them holding the rule book, or clearing space on their gaming table then announcing it's for game such and such, there is a compulsion to get something out there online. Why this need for attention, especially within a niche hobby and one where many gamers will be getting similar games is beyond me.

This leads inexorably to several things that really irk me and I'm sure many other gamers. The first is a gamer ripping off the shrink wrap, then hurriedly setting up the game. This is followed by them pushing around the miniatures or game pieces, trying to describe to you how the game plays! Naturally, without them really having read the rules they come off looking like idiots. If the intent was to give gamers an idea of how the game plays it's a obvious disaster that should have been avoided.

The second thing is start playing the game, trying to review it, or posting a dozen questions about game play when clearly the gamer hasn't read the rules! This actually happens more times than you would think. In an effort to show either they are first to play the game,



showing others that they're involved in the hobby, wanting to be seen as a gaming superstar, or trying to hurry things along as they have other new games to get to, it really doesn't help anyone at all.

Finally, the last item are those gamers who have resorted to simply playing with the unpainted figs. Now this has been going on for quite some time, particularly with our brethren on the sci-fi/fantasy side of the hobby. To now see it actually gain traction with historical miniature gamers is a bit surprising, especially where for decades the painting, research, and building up for a game has been so important. We'll not even get into the rise of paper armies or Lego figures this time around.

On top of all this are those who are seemingly unable to take proper pictures with their cell phones. Poor lighting, poor subject choices, hard to see details, etc., simply flood the wargaming internet groups and forums with useless drivel. Take some time, learn how to take proper pictures, maybe download a graphics package, etc., to make things better.

Yes, it sounds like I'm being "get off my lawn!" guy, but this perverse need by gamers to get acknowledgement for even the simplest things needs to end. Back in the day we went to the game store, bought a game with very little knowledge about it beforehand, read the rules, then played the game with our friends. There was no celebration, posing for pictures with the game, or worrying that we can only play two turns because several more games just arrived! We would paint figures, order more terrain, share reference material, discuss the rules, etc., before putting on a miniatures game. Does no one do this any longer?

Now I have no problems with those who produce videos about how to play the games. Those can be super helpful at times and a lot of thought and preparation goes into some of those. Likewise for those who spend time making reference cards, play aids, and so on, which can be very helpful, especially when showing gamers how to play a new game.

What's really needed in the hobby right now is some introspection, self awareness, and quality control. I don't think that's going to happen, either! Look forward towards some more unboxing and "I got mine first" posts.

Never one to shy away from air combat games, I had been wanting to try Check Your 6 for a while now. While we usually play Phantoms, Mustangs, Wild Blue Yonder, etc., there's nothing wrong with trying other sets of rules! Fortunately, two long standing gamers in the area embarked upon a project to get started with these rules and had more than enough miniatures to try out a game.

First, there are rules for WW2 and jets, so they do cover the two most popular periods for air combat. The other good thing is that you really don't need to make a major investment other than your time in painting the miniatures. You'll need a hex map, miniature stands, the miniatures themselves, and finally some charts copied from the rules. The mat is probably the most expensive investment, especially if you go with 1/300th scale aircraft, which is what we used to play



maneuvers designed for each speed level. You look at your current speed, then choose a maneuver code. This then determines how many hexes you can move, your altitude change (if any), then any speed changes. At first it looks complex, but by the second or third turn it becomes pretty easy.

For our scenario we had a lone B-17 that got separated from a raid that is trying to make it off board, escorted by two P-51s. The Germans would be diving into the action on the second turn, right on top of the B-17 with a pair of Me-109s as well as a pair of heavily armored FW-190s. The B-17 and its escorts moved out, then the Germans came on, which forced the escorts to immediately turn into the Me-109s.

Since everything is pre-plotted, it can become a guessing game at times for what your opponent may or may not do. In this case it resulted in the P-51s getting into it with the Me-109s while the FW-190s pressed on towards the B-17. The systems does a good job of controlling altitude and its pretty easy to figure out how to change levels along with the associated speed loss/gain. With many air combat miniatures rules and board games, changing altitudes can be labor intensive, but not here.

What followed was the Me-109s trying to keep the P-51s busy while the FW-190s closed the range. You can fire pretty far in this game and it wasn't uncommon to see all of us firing at ranges of 7-8 hexes at times. Granted, they were pretty low odds shots, but you can take them, although there is a chance that you could run out of ammunition. The game uses a unique combat system for determining hits where you roll for possible hits, then the target sort of rolls a "save" based upon armor, pilot skill, etc. If you hit, then you roll a series of different types of dice (D6, D10, D20, etc.), which are added up then compared to a table for damage

results. Sounds complicated when explaining it, but it goes pretty fast.

The Me-109s did get a few hits on the P-51s, including a long range snap shot that did some damage. The FW-190s took a few hits from the B-17, but nothing to force them away from continuing the attack. The B-17 was certainly blessed this day as the FW-190s kept scoring hit after hit, but the B-17 survived everything that the FW-190s could throw at it! On the last turn the FW-190s did do some



damage, but nothing serious enough to stop the B-17 from exiting the board and winning the game.

From set up to explaining the rules to playing 7-8 turns, the entire game took a little less than three hours! Once you've played a few turns things start moving much faster. Essentially, everything you need is on your aircraft log, so there's little overhead for the players. Definitely not as complex as The Speed of Heat or Hostile Aircraft, but there's more meat here than in Wings of Glory. I'm hoping to try one of the jet scenarios sometime soon to see how it compares to other games on the topic.



our scenario. The stands are basically telescoping antennas with magnets on top that attach to the aircraft. This keeps the miniature in place and allows you to place them at various angles to show turns and diving/climbing.

Air combat games can get complex in a hurry, but Check Your 6 is not at the higher end. If you've played Phantoms, Blue Max., etc., you can probably get this figured out relatively quickly. In fact, once you know the basics, you really only need the aircraft logs and reference sheet to play the game. There is an aircraft log that can manage two aircraft at a time. It lists the turn number and then a series of

Third World War Designer's Edition

Game Review

In these pages over the last several years I've made a lot of observations about redesigns, reworking older titles, "re-imagining" games, and so on. While in some cases the new edition is pretty good and a welcome addition to my game library, others have fallen flat. If there ever was a game or game series that deserved a redesign, then you need to look no further than GDW's Third World War.

At the height of the WW3/NATO vs. Warsaw Pact gaming craze in the 70s and early 80s, Frank Chadwick of GDW put out a game called Third World War: Battle for Germany. GDW at that time was one of the smaller game companies when compared to giants such as SPI and Avalon Hill. There had been numerous WW3 type games put out that covered

system worked and gamers craved more.

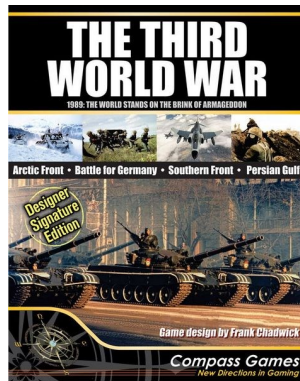
The success of Third World War spawned additional games such as Arctic Front, Southern Front, and Persian Gulf. When combined, you had WW3 from Norway all the way down to the Strait of Hormuz. My gaming group and I played the full campaign at least twice, which are definitely some great gaming memories. One of the great things about this series of games is that you could play the entire thing as a huge monster game, or just play the individual games, which were quite manageable.

There had been rumors of a redesign for quite some time, which were then confirmed when Compass Games announced that they would produce all four games in one package. Slowly and surely, some images of maps and counters started to appear, then it appeared that the game would be coming out in early 2020. Covid, issues with printers, working out the rules, etc., kept pushing the date further and further back. Finally, in February of 2022 the game shipped.

The game comes in a fairly large box, but actually when you're through sorting everything into plastic trays and/or baggies it's not big enough! First, there are six very well done maps, labeled A to F, which cover Norway and Sweden all the way to the Persian Gulf. The orientation of the maps have been changed a bit from the old GDW ones, which had to be assembled in a bizarre pattern so that everything would fit. The choice of colors is a huge improvement over the old maps. Next up are a large stack of set up charts, aircraft displays, reference cards, etc. Again, a huge improvement in graphics and the set up cards were a much needed and pleasant

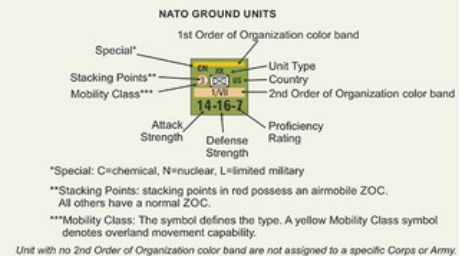
operational, tactical, and global battles, so it was already a crowded field. Gamers, however, including myself, could not get enough of the subject, so it was a pretty easy sell.

The game was quite a shock to many of us at that time. Not only was it a comprehensive look at a possible WW3 in Germany, but it included a full air campaign as well. Scanning through the counters you could also see that considerable time had been spent on the order of battle. Once you had set the game up and played a few turns, the brilliance of the system began to shine through. For the first time here was how an actual Warsaw Pact invasion of Germany would be portrayed. The turn sequence with its multiple move and attack phases definitely simulated an echelon based attack. The proficiency rating was an interesting way to show how good units were and how long they could sustain losses. The



surprise for this game series.

Then there are the nine counter sheets that cover the air and ground forces of every nation that could have been involved in a possible WW3. Again, the graphics upgrade is definitely more noticeable with the counters. The different colors for the nations, colored stripes for the higher formations, and plenty of markers to track various game functions.



While many gamers will never play the combined game, if you do there won't be a shortage of markers! While the unit counters may look busy to some, as you can see from the illustrations above, everything is clearly marked and serves a unique purpose in the game. Once you've played a few turns things become very easy and you won't need to refer to what the numbers on the counters mean.

Finally, there are the rules and play books. As with everything else in this package, they are well done. The rules are clearly laid out and while they appear to be long (35 or so pages), there's nothing here that is overly complex. In fact, once you get through the first 9 or 10 pages which cover the game basics, you can easily see that everything else are special rules or situations. The play book goes over the scenarios for each front, then combined games such as Arctic Front plus Battle for Germany. There are also rules for the combined campaign, which is quite large. In terms of components, this is a great package. (cont. on p25)



Then and now. A comparison of the different map styles with the GDW version of a section of Germany on the left and the new Compass version on the right.

(cont. from p24) The rule book is well illustrated and definitely shows the amount of effort that was put into this project. For years, players of the original GDW games had cobbled together the four sets of rules and there were all kinds of various interpretations. Now there is a combined rulebook that covers the entire series of games, listing the special rules for each theater in one place and there is a comprehensive index as well. Every effort has been made to clarify the various systems in the game and to streamline the learning process. While the rules may seem long, they are fairly easy to grasp and you can progress through them rather quickly.

The play book is something new and was certainly needed. There are now chapters for each game that list the situation, hints on play, then the orders of

attack the other side's runways in an effort to keep units grounded and in some cases destroy them on the ground.

Air combat is done by the highest rated aircraft firing first, which can generate various results such as abort, halved, shot down-halved, or shot down. Shot down units are consolidated at the start of the next turn, so while you may get one or two back, there will be permanent losses. There is a lot of strategy with the air game, especially with the large



sions show up (which are pretty average) they can continue to develop the attack. Units are rated for Proficiency, which gives modifiers in ground combat and is the number of disruptions a unit can take before it's eliminated.

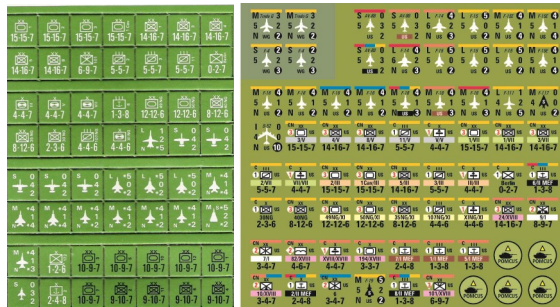
Ground combat is pretty simple. Figure up the initial odds, modify for terrain and proficiency, place an odds marker (signifying an attack must occur), then conduct air support. The results are a combination of disruptions, retreats, and the occasional exchange. Again, it's hard to believe how easy the basic systems are, especially when you see how big the game is!

There are airborne, airmobile, territorial units, and much more. Every nation's armed forces are present and in the case of Iran, multiple factions. The replay value here is off the charts and the game is very easily playable by up to 8 players for the combined game. Terrain and weather can play important parts of the game, so you really need to study where you're going to attack, what to

support it with, and then what are your plans for the rest of the various turn phases. It is a massively different experience from other games.

In the end, this is an amazing package for one of the hobby's

greatest series of games. The ability to play each game separately or the entire campaign is a huge plus and it's fairly easy to teach others. I really could find nothing to complain about, but that could be simply because I was excited to get back into something I had played dozens of times back in the 80s! There are apparently more modules coming, a re-worked order of battle (more accurate), and more. Highly recommended.



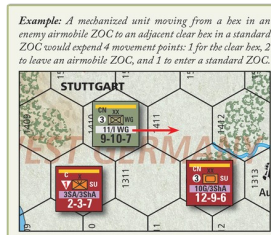
The old GDW counters for the U.S. and some German units are on the left, while the redesigned ones are on the right.

battle with set up information which coincides with the set up cards. You can also now play the games separately, as a monster sized campaign game, or by joining one or two of the smaller games. Again, this is very well done and was quite handy when I was setting up my first few games.

As mentioned above, there is a complete air campaign system which is almost a game by itself. Each turn both sides make maintenance rolls to see if there aircraft units are available. Air units are then placed on Air Superiority and the side with the most wins it for that turn, which enables the winning side to use two units for escort and interception. Air units can then be used to strike/interdict hexes, which is useful to prepare for an attack or saved for later in the turn to support ground units in combat. Air units can also

a NATO reserve phase where they can move and conduct combat. This completes the first half of the turn. The second half of the turn then has two more Warsaw Pact move/combat phases followed by two NATO move/combat phases. This allows both sides to develop offensives, being able to move and attack twice in a row during various parts of the turn.

This sequence of play really allows the Russians and their allies to attack, exploit, then move in fresh forces to continue the offensive while the first wave regroups. It will definitely take some time to get used to it, but once you do it's a pretty unique system that works well. When the Russian Category B and C divi-



SaltCon is the big boardgaming convention held in Utah twice per year at the Davis Convention Center in Layton, Utah, which is about 20 minutes from Salt Lake City. The spring convention is much bigger than the end of summer show and stretches out over four days, including areas for 24/7 gaming. This year marked the return of exhibitors, who took up most of the main ballroom area.

At about \$100 for all four days, it's not terribly expensive if you're looking to play board games the entire time, meet/make new friends, and try a lot of new games. Besides the main gaming areas, there were a number of side things that you could check out. These included the RPG room with a lot of tables for all manner of role-playing. There was a game swap/flea market room which was packed all day and night, plus there was a room dedicated to a Star Trek simulator where participants helped run a starship. SaltCon also features a large game library where you can check out games to play throughout the convention, which is an innovative and successful idea.

Of course, there was the main gaming hall, which had its good and bad points. It was definitely large as you can see by the images and the amount of games that was going on was quite impressive. However, it did get hot in there at times (limited air circulation?) and while there was a main walkway, the paths between the tables were a bit too narrow, so there was bumping and jostling all convention long. There were also some fairly large tables laid out this



time, which made seating for some four player games quite the challenge! Despite the fact that there were tables in the outer hallways, entrances, side rooms, etc., table space was at a premium, so there were reports of people packing up unattended games and taking over that table! We left someone at our table all day just in case.



Conventions are a great time to break out games that you ordinarily don't get to try at your regular game nights. Usually this is due to having anywhere from 5-7 people show up, where here at the convention it was mainly 3 or 4 of us there most of the time. No time limits, plenty of space, etc., means it is time to play things you don't see every day! The only issue is having to read all of the rules before hand and then trying to not confuse them with other games that you're playing!

On the first day one of our crew had to leave early as a contractor was coming to his house to do work and another was going to be late. This gave two of us a chance to play the old Avalon Hill War at Sea, which went right down to the wire! The Germans held on to the very end with a few well timed die rolls from their last few ships. Next up we did a huge game of Talon, which started out looking like it might be over in the first 30 minutes! However, a quick reverse and all of a sudden it was a fairly tight game that went almost four hours. By that time it was around 8pm and we had been playing since 10am, so it was on to Friday.

The next day saw a four player game of Britannia right when all of us arrived. As usual, it was a lot of fun and went

down to the last turn as the Blue and Red factions really went after each other. Britannia is a great convention game as you can teach it pretty quickly and while it takes 3-4 hours, the time seems to go by fast. After that we played Dune Imperium for a few hours, then two of us finished up with a Combat Commander scenario.

Saturday, believe it or not, was spent playing one game; Angola. For those who have never played it, the game is one of the better four player wargames ever designed. The down side is that we had a lot of battles, some rules questions, frequent breaks, and lunch in between! Just when it looked like one side or the other was going to make a breakthrough, they had a catastrophe and the game went on. The table next to us had an 8 player game of Twilight Imperium going on (which is one we played last year) and after 8 hours it looked they were barely half way through!

We never did get to the new version of Successors. Everyone's schedules, the need to leave someone at the table to watch our stuff, etc., just made it so the game didn't fit in. The one thing the convention did show us was that we needed to bring more 1-2 hour games as often we still had a bit of time left before shutting down for the day, but everything we had brought had a 3-6 hour playing time!

There were some interesting things in the vendor hall and 3D printing was certainly the major trend. All kinds of game accessories, miniatures, parts, etc., were available to purchase or order. Surprisingly, there weren't many places selling actual board games!



This was my 5th SaltCon and after they gave up on historical miniatures a few years ago (we ran several games in a separate room), I've had mixed feelings about attending. There's not many wargamers there and the con is designed for thousands of people to move quickly between one hour long games. For \$80-100 I'm going to need to reflect how badly I need to play wargames in a public venue when I can pretty much play them with our group at almost any time.



The campaigns in Italy during WW2 are a long neglected subject in the wargaming hobby. Sure, there is Avalon Hill's Anzio, Thunder at Cassino, some Strategy & Tactics issues, but the overall feeling is that there isn't a lot to choose from.

Certainly, there is opportunity here and into this opening comes the first of what may be several games in Mark Simonitch's "44" series called Salerno '43.

Mark Simonitch's WW2 operational series continues to grow both in the number of games available to its rising popularity with gamers. All of the games feature a similar base system, well done maps, great counters, and have been extensively playtested. The series now covers Normandy, Market Garden, The Battle of the Bulge, along with several other games. Once you have played one of these games you can easily move on to others in the series.

Out of all the games in the series, this is perhaps the "minimalist" in the bunch. The map is smaller than you would usually see, covering the entire Salerno landing area, along with the difficult terrain that slowed the Allied advance. As with most Simonitch maps, many of the game's functions appear as tracks in open space, meaning that while during play everything is right out in front of you. A sheet of counters, rulebook, and two player aid cards round out the package. In the end you get a smaller package than usual, but everything looks really good.

The rulebook is laid out very well, covering the units, the various movement/



combat systems, then the special rules that cover this particular battle. Most of the first two pages cover the various units and markers. The counters have a lot of information on them and anyone familiar with the series will know that understanding the various combat values is key to your success in these games. The good thing is that the information on the counters is well laid out in an orderly, logical fashion and during play everything flows pretty well.

Of course, the most talked about aspect of this series is the "ZOC Bond" rules, which takes a while to get used to. While many other games have standard zones of control, this series goes a bit further in defining when and how you can enter into a hex adjacent to an enemy unit. In many instances it's not possible to get between enemy units or to advance into an advantageous space. This forces players to rethink their well tried tactics as well as how you defend areas on the map.

Once again when doing a review of this series it's worth mentioning just how well designed everything is. For the air and naval support there are boxes off map with counters placed there that show if they are available or not. The weather track, VP track, turn reminders, etc., are all clearly presented. The objectives are marked on the map, breakdown units are in their separate box, etc., and you can clearly see how everything is laid out extremely well. If you know the game series you can set up an start almost immediately. If not, go through the first two turns slowly, then things really start flowing after that.

Since this game starts out with an amphibious invasion, there will need to be special rules covering that. Where in many games this would cause a lot of concern and possible confusion, here it is simply handled with a minor adjustment to the turn sequence. Once that is finished it's on to the rest of the game, which is a standard WW2 hex and counter affair. You also begin to notice the terrain, which is particularly nasty and as you start moving units to get to certain positions, the advantages and disadvantages of certain positions becomes crystal clear.

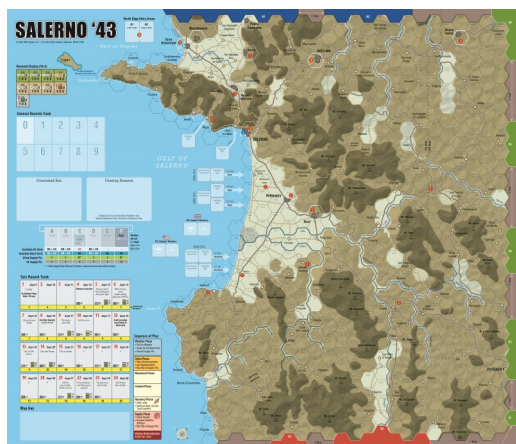
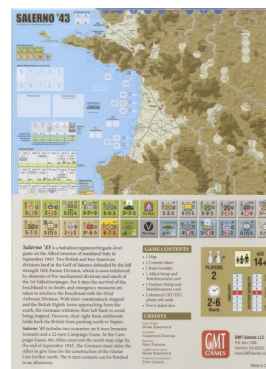
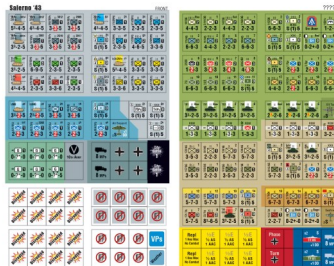
The Allies land a powerful force, but there are just enough Germans to block them from making major progress too quickly. It's also tempting for the Germans to launch a series of counterattacks on the beachheads, despite the Allied air and naval support. For the Allies, just getting to the first roads that lead out of the open area is a major challenge as well as expanding the port capacity. The reason for this is simple in that while the Allies have more and more troops showing up, they are limited in supply points. These points are used to enable artillery to fire in support of attacks as well as in the defense. The Germans have a stable supply, but the Allies don't.

More and more German units arrive, including armor and panzergrenadiers, which definitely don't help the Allies in their drive towards the various objectives! On top of that the weather can limit Allied air/naval support as well as prevent supplies from

reaching the shore. The combat system is fairly unusual in that there are a series of modifiers that shift the odds, then the results are usually coupled with step losses, so by the middle of the game there are a lot of units barely hanging on. Once you've done a combat or two things get pretty easy after that.

The game has a short scenario which goes 8 turns and is perfect to learn the game while the full campaign is 24 turns, but with few units on the board, each turn goes by fairly quickly.

This is the perfect game to learn the series, especially if you're thinking about trying one of its bigger brothers, such as Ardennes '44 or Ukraine '43. The game can be set up and played quickly, so it's great for face to face play or even solo. The good news is that apparently this is the first of three games on the subject, so more Italian front games are on the way.



Adjust Your Contrast by Rob Coleman

Workshop

Games Workshop's contrast paints have been out for quite some time now and you are seeing them pop up in abundance across the wargaming hobby. As a



'remedy' for unpainted armies, they are enabling gamers to pump out large quantities of figs in much less time than before. That said, I think they are a little misunderstood.

You can find various YouTube videos on folks singing the pros and cons of the line, and other companies (Army Painter, etc.) have jumped into the mix. I would postulate that while you can just slap them on over a white/light grey undercoat, you don't necessarily want to. In almost 2 years' worth of using them to paint they almost always work best over a base color. As a sort of heavy wash/glaze, they will tint the underlying color. Depending on the contrast paint this can give you a larger variety of colors and a richer color, than if you use them solo.

The other key takeaway I've found is they are best used for wet blending. If you just slap them on you will often be left with the pigment pooling in places, and the model having weird blotches/streaks. Personally, I like to very lightly water down most of the colors, and then paint another color over top, blending it in.

In the photo below I used Skeleton Horde and an off white to paint the tunics of my archers, which has given them a



warm look. I started with an ivory basecoat, then using a very slightly thinned Skeleton Horde cover, then I went back

over with ivory while it was still wet. This was followed by highlighting again with plain white.

Conversely in the below photo, I used a white undercoat, Apothecary White (again lightly thinned), and then went back over with white. It has given the



troopers nice contrast at the joints/ridges in their armor, while producing a colder white than the archers above.

The reverse is also true for these Death Troopers and Darth Vader who were first painted a lighter grey color, then Black Templar. Finally using a darker grey I smoothed over any pooling and worked my way up for some



light highlights. This has given them more depth than otherwise and is less stark than GW's old edge highlight technique for black models. I'll note that Vader's light saber used a red base, a red contrast, and then slowly added white in which was blended along the shaft. A coat of gloss and I have a very nice-looking lightsaber.

This doesn't have to be limited to black and white, everyone of the knights in the image to the right had a base color applied, then contrast paint for reds/blues/greens/yellows. Then vary-

ing shades of the same colors were applied over top to get some nice, smoother colors.

I still use inks, I still try and blend in other fashions, add highlights, etc. However, when covering large areas or if you have troops en masse, these really speed things up. I can paint 5 guys in a unit of 16 with various bits of green on different parts of their clothing, use two different shades of contrast, and go back over with greens/creams and get a somewhat unified, but different results (depending on my desire). Thus, don't look at them as the answer, but a tool in your arsenal. Something to help give depth to figures but meant to be used solo somewhat spar-



ingly (I generally tend to only do small bits of brown leather where I don't go back over in some fashion).

I'll leave you with some clones and a jedi for Fistful of Lead. The colors used for these figures were Apothecary White,



one of the Blues, Skeleton Horde, Nazdag Yellow, and Basilicanum Grey (oh, and some Wyldwood on the bases, one of the few I've tried and not liked).



What is now known as the “AVL” system, which is short for A Victory Lost from MMP Games, continues to grow with more games in the series from Revolution Games (Poland Defiant, Königsberg, and Across The Narva), then to Three Crowns Games with Stargard-Solstice and now Tolling The Bell. All of the games share a similar game system, one map, counters, one reference card, rules, etc. They are all chit pull games with around 10 turns, that play fairly quickly and are of medium complexity.

The newest in the series, Tolling The Bell, covers Operation Spring Awakening, which was one of the last German offensives during WWII. The Germans assembled an impressive array of armored formations for one last drive to achieve several objectives, from trying to reach Budapest to retaking various oil fields. The operation was ambitious in scope, especially for the time of year that it would be taking place in.

As with all of the other games in this series, the game comes in a zip lock bag and has the bare minimum in terms of components. You get a 22 x 34 map, two



by Revolution Games. The map covers the area around Lake Balaton, which is about halfway between Zagreb and Budapest. There is an interesting font used for the cities and towns, but other than that the map is definitely functional.

The set up for the game gives you a good idea of what is about to happen. The Germans are going to basically hold or slowly advance on two fronts while in the north there are massive armored formations ready to go. The Russians are spread pretty thin, but the mud and the fact they count as being fortified on the first turn, means that the Germans are going to need to do some break-in operations to get the offensive rolling as well as getting things straightened out up north (each formation is literally intermixed with others). In fact, the traffic jam up north will consume a good deal of the German first two turns! Trying to get things sorted out and pointed in the right direction of the objectives will take some good luck with the chit pull as well as some patience.

As to be expected, the Russian front line literally crumbles, but the mud rules prevent decisive German breakthroughs. The objective cities/towns have counters on them with one side showing the German victory points and the reverse with the Russian victory points earned. This is a nice touch and easily shows players where you should be heading or trying to defend. The Germans really need to go all out on the first few turns as the random events in this game can really shake things up. However, not knowing what is coming in terms of the random events, how fat to push things, and should a reserve be formed are all questions that the Germans have no answers for, at least in the first part of the game.

By the 4th or 5th turn the Germans should have a good chunk of the objectives, particularly in the NE area of the map. The challenge shifts to the middle and south of the map where the German forces don't have a lot of combat power and the terrain is challenging. Surprisingly, here is where the Germans will win or lose the game, which is something not quite apparent until well past the halfway point. There aren't many Russian forces in the area, but the Ger-

mans don't have a lot of armor either, so getting to the few objectives will take some good planning.

As with most games in this series, the number of chits each side gets to pull varies greatly turn by turn. In Tolling of the Bell the Germans start out with quite a few chits, then it goes down. The Russians only have a few at the start, but then they start to go up as their counteroffensive gets rolling. At one point the Germans will roll the random event where a large chunk of their forces get withdrawn to move off board to face a Russian threat in some other sector. I thought the German formations should have had a stripe or some marking on them, as trying to find the 15 or so units spread across the map was a challenge during game play. This leaves the Germans spread pretty



thing and most offensive operations come to a grinding halt.

Sure enough, large Russian formations appear along with some generic command chits, which lets the Russian choose some of these formations multiple times. It then becomes a race for the Germans to redeploy the defenses and hold onto the objectives they have, particularly in the NE where most of the new Russian units arrive. The last turn or two are desperate for both sides and the chit pull will greatly influence things.

While this game fits in well with the rest of the series, I'm not sure if it's as good as the others. While definitely challenging, the number of special rules and the large withdrawal of German forces can turn the game upside down. The designer was definitely trying to fit this battle into the system and sometimes it work and sometime not. Still, a good, but not great addition to the series and an unusual topic.



sheets of larger style counters, two reference cards (back printed on the front and rear cover sheets), and the rules. The counters are in a matte finish, which is a big improvement over the glossy ones that were in Stargard-Solstice. The map is definitely functional and as I have commented previously, probably not as sharp as the ones in this series produced

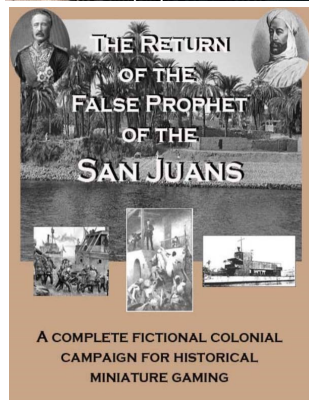
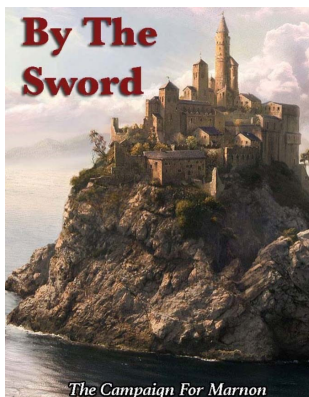
WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play a wide variety of games in 1/300th, 10mm, 15mm, and 25mm, including Age of Reason, Age of Discovery, Age of Eagles, Fire & Fury, General de Brigade, Warmaster Ancients/Medieval, TSATF, Phantoms, Mustangs, Saga, Battlegroup Panzergrenadier, Saga, Ronin, BKC4, board wargames, and more...

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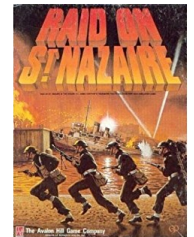


Be sure to check out our various campaigns for rules such as WMA, TSATF, and BFE II on our web site.

Well, the games are really coming fast and furious right now. I just received five games I've had on pre-order for quite some time, including EFS: Army Group Center which must have been at least 10 years in development! I still have the redesign of Battle for Normandy, a supplement to Red Storm, and other games in other series still on the way. Modern publishing/printing now makes it seem like games are springing up out of the ground at a moment's notice! A new game comes out, then you quickly see that not one, but two or three modules are already under development. Gone are the days of getting a game, playing it for a year or two, then hoping for a supplement or sequel. Instead, today that is sort of the unwritten rule. Many gamers haven't even played the original game yet and are already excited about the new material, figs, or boxed set coming out next for the game!



Which now leads to the question about how many times will I play these new games? My guess is maybe one time for many and/or one or two scenarios for others. This leads to even more questions such as should I have ordered these games, what games should I sell to make room, who else in my group is interested in playing these, and many others. It's now at the point where it's so easy to get games that you don't think about the long term issues any longer! Gamers, like most hobbyists, can't resist the latest products and many of us have project plans that go way beyond our actual capacity to achieve them. While I probably buy too many games, I'm a relative lightweight compared to many gamers who spend 3-5 times what I do each year! While I have the inclination to order all kinds of other games, Kickstarter projects, items off of FB Marketplace, etc., I've been at least trying to get games that I will at least play once. I feel sorry for those gamers who simply can't hold back on anything, which is why many of them have stacks and stacks of figures, terrain, games, etc., that they will never play.



So, where is the saturation point? Clearly this can't go on, at least in my case. I already sold off all of my Wing Leader games and modules as that was going to be a never ending series and frankly, it wasn't seeing much playing time. I have a feeling that there are a few other series I have that are going to end up going the same route. I also have collections of various older games that'll never see the table again, so why am I holding on to them? I think there comes a time in every gamer's hobby life where it could be time to let someone else enjoy things you've had for quite some time. Yet, new stuff keeps coming day after day, tempting you with more games and generating ideas for projects. I think that this might be that once in a generational moment where everyone needs to take stock of what they're going to be playing for the next few years and make some hard decisions about what to keep and what new items to purchase.

