

Warning Order

ISSUE #69

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FIRE & FURY ACW

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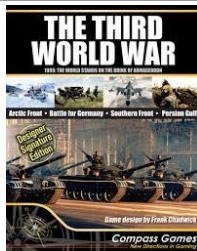
WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Warning order

To say that nostalgia plays a major role in gaming would be an understatement. The amount of revised editions, new interpretations, updated editions, etc., continue to be released into the hobby wild at a frenetic pace. However, for every Third World War from Compass Games, which is a remarkable new edition, there are all kinds of games, rules, and figures that should be buried forever.

Many gamers who gave up on so many rules and game systems for various reasons, then try to revisit them years later, with limited success. Whether it is that they now have more expendable income, missed out on when a game first came out, good memories of playing something decades ago, or just have a passing interest in the topic, nostalgia is a huge part of the gaming hobby.

Granted, this has more to do with gamers who lived through the hobby in the 70s and 80s, but gamers who got started in the 90s and early 2000s are approaching this phenomenon quicker than they would think! It's almost a rite of passage in the



hobby, where you will either continue to go down previously explored paths or give up on something entirely. More often than not, things don't turn out quite how you would think or like them to!

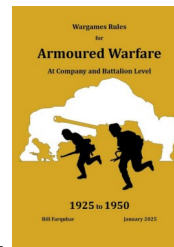
Later on in this issue I discuss a return to fantasy gaming where I note that I picked up a copy of Avalon Hill's Elric board game (first put out by Chaosium). What is there not to like? First off, it's based off of the Elric series of stories, which are some of the greatest fantasy fiction of all time. Second, it's Avalon Hill, so the quality is usually pretty good, and third, it's fantasy combat on a global scale in an interesting setting. I clearly remember this game and how it competed with Divine Right, with both generating good memories.

Now, more than 40 years later, it simply is not

a very good game. The rules have so many holes and produce so many questions that the game is almost unplayable. How we got through this in the 80s is beyond me, but most gaming groups are not going to be tolerant of these kinds of shortcomings in this day and age. Elric and Avalon Hill fans want to like this so bad, but this is not a good game and pretty much the entire system should be scrapped and redesigned.

Last issue I talked about getting the latest version of the WRG WW2 rules. Many, many fond memories of playing these back in the day, so I started to go over them to relearn the movement, firing, and artillery systems. I had dreams of running a game for an upcoming gaming night and maybe even a short campaign. Then I re-read the rules...Sad to say, but yes,

our group would never get through one game without a lot of effort. The wall of text, the endless charts and tables, run on sentences, etc., plus the effort that it would take to teach everyone rapidly made me see that time had passed these rules by. (cont. on p3)



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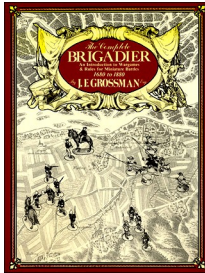
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Special points of interest:

- Three Hail Caesar battles featuring the first use of our new Syracuse forces.
- Two BKC IV battles set in 1944-45.
- Reviews of the two new Three Crowns Games WW2 Operational Series games.
- Reviews of Alesia and Purple Haze.
- Several battle reports for various rules.

Nostalgia & Gaming: Not Always a Good Thing (cont.)

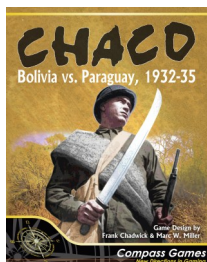
(cont. from p2) I bought the Complete Brigadier set of rules after a review and some battle reports in the old Courier magazine back in the early 80s. The system was quite novel for its time and I built up armies for the Mexican-American period. While it was challenging to play, the system is probably one of the better sets of rules that focus on command & control. It wasn't a great game for group play, but it always held a special place in my heart.



Recently, I saw it staring at me from my rules shelf. I pulled it down, remembering the excitement from first getting it and those old Courier articles. I started reading through them, then thinking about what periods it would be good for, then thinking about which scale of miniatures I could get to create some new armies for the rules. Wait. Stop. What was I doing? This wouldn't be popular in the group (just finding the rules for purchase would be a challenge), new armies would be a lot of money and work, and these rules had their day. Nostalgia gave way to common sense.

Gaming nostalgia, however, can strike any gamer at any time! It can cause bad decision making, spending who knows how much to reignite a flame, and can quickly suck you down a rabbit hole that distracts you from your current projects. With most gamers being completest as well, this can result in purchases of a game or set of rules, plus all of the supplements! Once you've reacquired everything from your hobby past or feel that you missed out on something, there is usually a nauseating feeling that maybe these things aren't as good as they were.

Take for example, the recent craze with bringing back all kinds of board wargames (which I've written about from time to time in these pages). Compass Games must have been able to get some of the GDW rights as they have been putting out a lot of their older titles. Chaco, Burma, and a WW2 collection that included the Series 120 games 1940 (Fall of France), 1941 (Operation Barbarossa), and 1942 (Japanese South Seas Attack) have all been reworked and recently released. Gamers posted on



Facebook and many other forums about how excited they were, how come their games haven't arrived, hopeful for all kinds of changes, etc., creating a weird level of excitement.

While Compass is to be commended for reprinting the games plus doing graphical upgrades for the maps and counters, this is a case of nostalgia going a bit too far. They were average games in the 70s and they're still pretty average today! Yes, just because the map boards have 10 colors now instead of 3 doesn't change the game system or rules. There are much better games on all of these subjects now and my guess is that most gamers who buy these are going to play them once, realize that they're the same average games that they played back in the 70s, and put them on a shelf never to be played again. They'll then tell themselves not to do that again, but a few days later when one of the game companies announces a reprint of similar games they'll pre-order it, having forgotten everything that they said they weren't going to do!

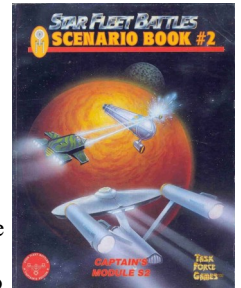
One of our club members is the owner of Trenchworx and we often play at their production facility. One gaming night we came across the first batch of Spencer Smith Franco-Prussian War figures that they had been working on for a re-launch. Having remembered Spencer Smith figures from the 70s and 80s, all of their ads in various magazines, etc., a tidal wave of nostalgia hit all of us! The figures were crisp, clean, and while basic, looked pretty good. All of a sudden I was thinking how could I produce some brigades, what rules would we use, and how would this project come together as we had discussed possibly playing Franco-Prussian War multiple times over the years.

I figured that I would need about six 24 figure battalions a side, two artillery pieces per side, and a cavalry unit or two per side to get started. Then I added up what that order would cost. Yikes. That size of forces would be around \$1400 and would barely be enough for 3-4 players, plus the painting time alone would keep me occupied for the next year or more



on top of everything else I was already doing. My nostalgia balloon was rapidly deflated by reality!

From time to time I think about getting back into Starfleet Battles, which still brings back fond memories from the early 80s. All night battles, campaigns, endless tactics discussions, etc., were all part of many of our gaming lives back then. Nearly everyone in our group loves Star Trek, so it would be an easy sell. However, you then go to the ADB web site and are quickly overwhelmed by what that system has become, which is basically a hobby unto itself. You see all of the SSD books, rules expansions, Captain's Logs, scenario books, miniatures, and more. A nasty thought then creeps into your mind that you will need to pretty much sell off most of your gaming stuff and just play this! Once again, back to reality.



I think for many of us it is wanting to get back to the basics. If you've been in the hobby for more than 20 years, things used to be so much simpler. There weren't a lot of new games, Kickstarters, miniatures for every period and scale, plus there was a real passion for the hobby. Nostalgia through old sets of rules, miniatures, and board games help us connect with that past and the endless hope that the hobby can get back to what we once thought it was. Great memories, longstanding friendships, and the excitement of being in the hobby is sometimes hard to come by in this day and age. Buying these older items or wanting to try them again is part of that nature of getting back to what used to be.

The reality, however, is that many of these things that bring back that wave of gaming nostalgia weren't that great to begin with! This is at times hard to come to terms with. In most cases today's figures are better, rules are illustrated, systems are streamlined, terrain is much improved, and what was a garage factory hobby has gone commercial. Yes, things weren't always better back in the day, but that doesn't mean that you can't get a warm memory or two when you see gaming items from that time period today!



The Russians had an infantry battalion at the railway buildings near the town. There were (9) stands of infantry, two MGs, a mortar unit and a 45mm AT gun. The relief force was split into two groups. The first consisted of a T-34/85 tank brigade with (12) T-34/85s and a company of mech infantry (4 infantry stands). The second force was a recon battalion with (2) T-34/76s, (2) BA-45s, (1) 45mm AT gun, (2) stands of infantry in trucks, plus they were supported by (3) IS-2s. Definitely a powerful force with good mobility.

Back to the Eastern Front in 1944-45 for another Blitzkrieg Commander 4 game. Yes, we sometimes complain about the rules now and then, but in the end everyone knows how to play, we can get in a game in under 4 hours, and usually (stress the usually part) everyone has a good time. The idea for the scenario was that during a breakthrough in this sector of the front, a Russian infantry battalion snuck through and has established itself near a railway station. Their accompanying armor was destroyed, but now fresh Russian forces are racing to link up with them and consolidate the position.

Meanwhile, the Germans were sending in forces to launch a counterattack. They had a strong position in the town at the crossroads, with more armor and panzergrenadiers coming up shortly. If they could hold on and counterattack the Russians near the rail line, they would be able to form a defensive line and defeat the Russian armor that was attempting the link up.



The Germans had an infantry battalion in the town consisting of (8) infantry stands, (2) MGs, (1) mortar unit, and (1) 75mm AT gun. The relief forces were in three groups; #1 had a company of (3)

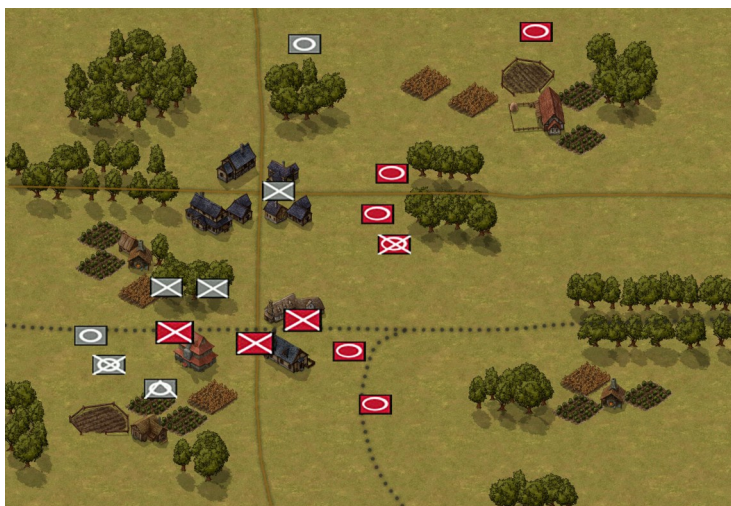
Panthers and one Tiger, #2 had (3) Stug IIIs, and #3 had (3) PZ IVHs and a company of panzergrenadiers (3 infantry stands). One reinforcement group would arrive each turn starting on Turn 1 at either road entrance near the German held town. Both sides had limited artillery support.

On Turn 1 the Russians sent the T-34/85 brigade down the center and right flank of their drive towards the town while the recon battalion would go down the left flank and try to link up with the Russian infantry in the railway buildings. The victory objectives were fairly simple; i.e., whoever controlled both the town and the railway buildings would win. Any other result would be a draw. The Germans moved some of their infantry

and support weapons out of the town and got ready to attack the Russian infantry nearby.

On Turn 2 the Panthers and lone Tiger came on and immediately got into a multi-turn armor battle at maximum ranges. This started a long running engagement that saw a T-34/85 and a Panther knocked out relatively quickly, then a series of hits and suppressions, but neither side refused to withdraw. On Turn 3 the Stugs moved up to engage the IS-2s that were

threatening the flank and trying to link up. The artillery of both sides was scoring some hits, making any movement dangerous as the observers found the range. Turn 4 would see a (cont. on p5)





(cont. from p4) lot of action as the Germans were now in position to start their attack on the railway buildings.

First off, however, the Stugs engaged the IS-2s, knocking out two of them as the rest of that force fled to cover! The Stugs were doing really well and with the rest of the T-34/85 brigade stalled along the road, things weren't looking good for the Russians. Then the Russians failed several command rolls and things really started looking bleak! The long range armor engagement continued, but the Russians were showing little, if any progress.

Turn 6 changed things greatly. First, the German infantry who had been in a firefight with the Russians at the far end of the railway buildings, launched a close assault...and lost everything! The PZIVHs and panzergrenadiers, which were

going to reinforce the town now turned to flank the railway buildings instead. The remaining IS-2 and the recon battalion's 45mm AT gun started knocking out the Stugs, while on the far flank the Panthers were now on fire and the remaining Tiger blundered and advanced into the fire of the T-34/85s.

The panzergrenadiers put in a close assault and they were also pushed back, while a second German infantry assault was thrown back as well. The Russian recon units linked up with the railway defenders and the Russians were now in a pretty good position. The other T-34/85s and mech infantry got unstuck and were now nearing the outskirts of the town. The Tiger was knocked out and the Russian right flank was now secure. The Germans decided to make a last counter-attack to fend off defeat.

However, at the worst possible time they failed multiple command rolls. The remaining Stugs were knocked out, the PZIVHs were under fire, the panzergrenadiers did not have the strength to continue the attack, and the Russians were getting set up to overrun the town. After assessing things it was decided to call the game as a Russian victory.

On the positive side we had none of the weirdness that sometimes accompanies our BKC IV games! The end result was a close run affair for both sides that showed off the advantages of the BKC system. We do need to make some more contoured terrain as we have run into some really long range armor battles that you might not actually see in Eastern Europe. We're still struggling to find the right balance of artillery, but for this night it turned out to be a pretty good game.



Engagements 65: Freedom of Navigation

Situation: Blue is a native insurgency that has recently taken over a desert kingdom/country. They are now actively trying to block navigation along the main river with a fort positioned on the river bank. Red, who has various locations along the river now cut off, must make an attack to knock out the fort and restore freedom of navigation along the river.

Period: Designed primarily for the Colonial period, but could be used for early WWI actions as well.

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

Terrain Notes: The open ground is relatively flat, with patches of scrub that should limit movement in some locations. The village is a combination of wood and stone buildings. There is a fort at A along with various buildings and farms, which is in an area of vegetation with palm trees and shrubs. The hills are low rises that should be treated as rough ground. The river is impassable except for the gunboat and steamer. The river is at flood stage, so the banks of the river are relatively flat and do not provide concealment.

Scale: The scenario is designed for any scale, but if 28mm is used the table may need to be expanded to a 5 x 8.

Red Forces:

Road Column

- (4) units of Imperial infantry
- (4) units of Colonial Askaris
- (1) MG
- (1) artillery section
- (1) cavalry unit

River Force

- (1) Gunboat
- (1) Transport w/ (1) Imperial infantry unit

Set Up: Red's Road Column enters on Turn 1 on the road from the south edge of the board and must deploy from column formation. The River Force is at anchor, just outside the range of Blue's artillery located at the fort at A.

Red Orders: Attack Blue's positions at C and seize the fort at A, which should then allow the River Force to proceed up

the river. Both forces should then combine and seize the village at B.

Blue Forces: Blue has four groups of forces; the first is located at the fort (A), the second in a blocking position at C, the third in the hills at (D), and finally, the fourth at the village at (B).

Fort (A)

- (2) artillery sections
- (1) unit of infantry
- (1) rifle armed unit of infantry

Village Force (B)

- (2) units of infantry
- (1) rifle armed unit of infantry

Blocking Force (C)

- (4) units of infantry
- (2) rifle armed units of infantry
- (1) cavalry unit

Reserve Force (D)

- (6) units of infantry
- (1) rifle armed unit of infantry
- (2) cavalry units

Blue Orders: Use the forces at C and A to hold off Red's forces for as long as possible, or weaken them so that when the Reserve Force attacks they will be unable to complete an assault on the village at B.

Blue Set Up: The Village Force is located inside of the village and surrounding area. The Blocking Force at C must be within 12 inches of the hills and crossroads. The Reserve Force at D can be located anywhere in the hills at that location. The force at the fort must be inside the walls.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules:

- Red has the first turn in the game.
- Unless classed as a rifle armed infantry unit, all of

Blue's infantry are armed with spears or swords, with some having shields as well.

- Red's transport ship can land the infantry unit anywhere along the river bank. It takes one turn to disembark the infantry.
- The blocking position at C consists of rifle pits for the rifle armed infantry and 12 inches of zeriba (thorn brush wall/obstacle)
- The Imperial units should be rated much higher than the Colonial units or any of Blue's units.

Victory Conditions: If Red seizes the village at B it is a victory. Any other result is a defeat for Red.

Variants: There are a large number of variants that could be added to this scenario:

- Give Blue an addition artillery section and fortification at B.
- If the gunboat proves to be too devastating, assume the river banks are much higher, blocking LOS.



Engagements 66: Tightening the Siege

Situation: Blue has one of Red's major port cities under siege. The siege has been unsuccessful as Red still controls one half of the harbor as well as a road to the city, enabling supplies and reinforcements to continue arriving. Blue has secretly built a pontoon bridge across the harbor mouth and will transfer troops to the other side to tighten the siege by cutting off all road access. Red is assembling a relief force off map, but it won't be ready for a few more days, so the pontoon bridge needs to be destroyed to give the relief force more time.

Period: Designed primarily for the Horse & Musket period, but could be used for Ancients or Renaissance actions as well.

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

Terrain Notes: The city is a combination of wood and stone buildings with high walls and watchtowers. The wooded areas are light woods, but will limit movement. The hills are low rises that should be treated as rough ground. The harbor is impassable except across the pontoon bridge. There are several farms in the area as well.

Scale: The scenario is designed for any scale, but if 28mm is used the table may need to be expanded to a 5 x 8.

Red Forces:

- (8) units of infantry
- (2) units of light infantry
- (2) artillery batteries
- (1) unit of heavy cavalry
- (2) units of light cavalry.

Set Up: All of Red's units begin in the city and may exit out through one or both gates (where the roads meet the walls).

Red Orders: Attack Blue's positions at A and/or D, then move to destroy the pontoon bridge.

Blue Forces: Blue has three groups of forces; the first is located at the hills (A), the second waiting to cross at C, and the third holding the siege lines at (D).

Hills (A)

- (1) artillery battery
- (1) unit of infantry

- (1) unit of heavy cavalry

Crossing Force (C)

- (4) units of infantry
- (2) units of light infantry
- (1) light cavalry unit
- (1) artillery battery

Besieging Force (D)

- (4) units of infantry
- (1) unit of light infantry
- (2) artillery batteries
- (1) light cavalry unit

Blue Orders: The forces at C need to cross over quickly to reinforce A, then push on to take the road exit at E while at the same time holding on to A. Units at D can be used to move across to B and A, but don't thin the force too much or it may become a tempting target for Red to quickly overrun the siege lines.

Blue Set Up: The Hills force is positioned in and around the hills at A. The Crossing force at C may start with two units in column on the pontoon bridge marching to B with the remaining units in columns waiting to cross. The units at D are in any formation in and around the siege lines.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules:

- Red has the first turn in the game.
- Infantry units are generic, but could be a mix of line, grenadiers, garrison, etc., according to the army lists in your rules.
- Blue cannot attack the city, so Red does not need to hold back any forces to protect it. It is assumed that the walls and towers are still garrisoned by other troops.
- The pontoon bridge can hold any number of troops in column.

Victory Conditions: If Red can get an infantry or cavalry unit to the pontoon bridge it can be destroyed by having that unit remain stationary at the bridge for one turn. Red wins if the pontoon bridge is destroyed.

Variants: There are a large number of variants that could be added to this scenario:

- Give Blue a gunboat/frigate or two on the other side of the pontoon bridge for fire support.
- Allow Red to sortie a gunboat/frigate from the city to provide support for the attack.
- Increase Blue's forces by a few units, but give Red a 4-8 unit relieving force arriving at E on turn 5 or 6.



Hail Caesar Learning Game

Battle Report

We had recently completed The Battle of Magnesia using GMT's Simple GBOH system, so there was still some interest in the period from the other two gamers that I had played that scenario with. I was then asked to put on a Hail Caesar game as I had the exact same armies in 28mm scale that we had just used cardboard counters for. However, one gamer had never played a miniatures battle before and the other had given up most of his miniatures years ago. How was this going to work?

Stepping back from our usual Hail Caesar games where we throw everything and the kitchen sink in, I started to think about what was the best way to go about this. While most of the regular gaming group has played Hail Caesar 5 or 6 times, plus some have the rules, here we would be starting from scratch. For starters, everyone would need a series of reference charts, then a list of their unit stats. I decided to not use any cavalry or weird units like scythed chariots, artillery, or pick units with too many special rules. That would keep things pretty basic and the game play would be pretty much a straight ahead battle which would hopefully show off the strengths of the system.

We used a 6 x 4 table with very limited terrain to force the action into the center. The Romans would have two Republican legions, each consisting of two Hastati, two Principes, two Velites, and one Triarii unit, plus each legion had one additional skirmish unit (Spanish and Numidian). The Seleucids would have two divisions of four pike units each plus two skirmish units each. One of the Se-



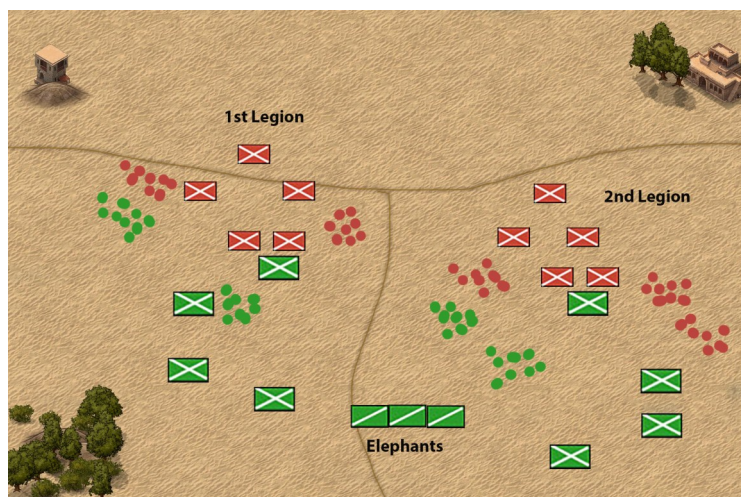
leucid divisions also had three elephants and both sides totaled right around 300 points.

Now on to the game explanation. We started with the unit stats and how ranged and close combat worked. Then it was on to the command system, which despite its simplicity, can take a few extra minutes to explain. The victory conditions were then examined, but basically it was a last man standing type of scenario meant to show everyone how to actually play the game. Time for a few questions then it was on to the first turn with the Romans starting out.

Before the game began, there were several questions and comments about how were those tiny Roman units going to stop the mass of pike in front of them! True, when counting up the Roman force you got 130 figures with commanders included. The Seleucid pikes alone numbered 320! If Hail Caesar got anything right, it was the fact that the rules give the Republican Roman units a tremendous punch and the ability for the players to use the checkerboard formation that served them well during the expansion of their empire.

However, after the first few turns it looked like half the battle might need to be cancelled due to a lack of interest between the combatants! While the 2nd Legion moved out quickly, most of the Seleucids and the 1st Roman legion could barely move. It wasn't until the 3rd turn that any ranged fire was exchanged at all. The Romans were having difficulty deciding if their Velites should stay as a compact unit or go into open order, which is a decision that many Republican Roman players usually face during a game.

Two Roman skirmish units died quickly, then one of the Roman Velites got into trouble and things looked good for the Seleucids, even though they were barely moving and were (cont. on p9)





(cont. from p8) getting themselves into trouble with their inactivity. The Romans were on the move now and clearly past the center of the board. If things kept going as they were, they would be able to pick off the pike units as they moved up, which is exactly what happened.

The two new players to Hail Caesar quickly saw that the huge frontage of the pike units was a disadvantage and surmised that two Hastati units could take on one of the huge units while doing some serious damage. They quickly engaged the leading pike units and drove them back, then followed up on their attacks. In no short order the Seleucids lost two pike units for only a few hits on the four Hastati units.

While the Seleucid skirmishers were doing well and inflicting hits on the Roman skirmishers and Velites, the main

battle was taking place across the length of the board. The Hastati, carrying some hits, piled into the next Seleucid pike unit while the Principes moved to engage any other coming up on the flanks. Throughout the game, the number of hits that the Romans caused and the amount of saves that they succeeded with was staggering! In one combat the two Hastati units caused 8 out of 10 casualties (the Seleucids only saved 3) and then saved 5 of the 6 hits caused on them! Yes, the Seleucid pike unit broke and fled the field.

All of a sudden, things were looking grim for the Seleucids. The Guard simply would not move, the Romans were rampaging through the center, and the reserves were drying up fast. The one Seleucid highlight was the elephants who smartly maneuvered and ran over two Velite units who had strayed too far for-

ward, but the damage was being done elsewhere. The Principes were now engaged and were having the same luck that the Hastati had earlier. With five pike units destroyed and the Romans with few losses, it was the end of the game as the Seleucids fled the battlefield. The Triarii had not even been used at all!

A good learning game that ended well for the new players. The Seleucids could never quite get going and against the Republican Romans you need to put pressure on them. Letting those small units maneuver all over the place and pick the fights of their choosing is a death sentence for an opposing army, which is what happened here. Between set up, rules explanation, then the game and clean up we spent about three hours, which is pretty good. Next time we'll add some cavalry.

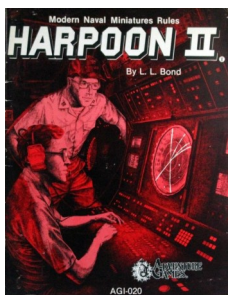


Memoirs of a Miniatures and Board Wargamer Pt. 56

Paperwork & Wargames

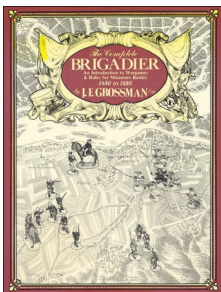
Name one thing that 90% of gamers hate with their games and the answer is more than likely to be about paperwork. Whether it is creating army lists, drawing battlefield maps, tracking hits on rosters, etc., it is a level of complexity that seems to interfere with the premise of getting on with the game. It's gotten to the point that when a gamer opens up a boxed game, pages through a new set of rules, etc., and sees any kind of unit roster or orders sheet, they emanate a low groan!

"Back in the day", however, unit rosters, written orders, and tracking hits/damage was all the rage! Many, many rules over the 70s and 80s involved paperwork and some required you to go purchase some spiral bound notebooks as you were going to be doing some writing! Basically, wargaming paperwork comes in three formats; army/unit rosters, written orders/objectives, and tracking hits/damage. You could get into designing dungeons D&D, worlds and starships for Traveller, or campaign maps, but for now we'll confine our discussion to the first three.



Unit or army rosters are not a new thing and most gamers have come across them at least a time or two. Most new sets of rules still include blank army rosters such as Warhammer 40K and Fantasy, Midgard Heroic, Hail Caesar, and so on. You look at the army lists, fill out the unit stats, add up the points, then spend a lot of time tweaking the lists! Many gamers, however, now use army list creation apps and still others just copy the army lists and circle what they have. Also, most of today's rules make this as easy as possible. In the 70s and 80s this simply was not the case!

Most of the rules were black and white text

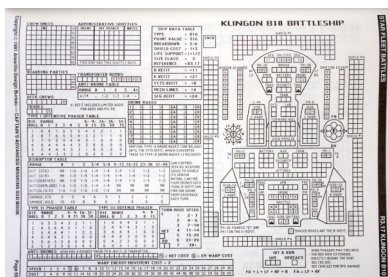


with very few illustrations for anything. Army lists usually came in separate books and again were simply just lines and lines of texts. It was up to you to grab a piece of paper and write down what units along with their stats comprised your army. Sometimes this would require looking back and forth between the rules and the army lists, which could take a few hours. Just filling out several ships for each side using Harpoon 2 for the big Saturday game could take all week!

The next section of paperwork dealt with orders and objectives. Today's games with objective markers, break points with unit losses, etc., are a relatively new phenomenon. Back in the 70s, 80s, and even early 90s, both sides would usually have to write down their objectives or mark them on the maps that were provided to all players. Naturally, this created its fair share of arguments! I can remember players in heated discussions about what were or should be actual objectives in a game and if one side or the other had achieved them.

Then there were the orders part of many rules. Believe it or not, some sets of rules required each player to write down orders for their units each turn. If you're thinking that this caused some arguments by itself, yes, you would be correct! Some gamers would take quite some time to detail them down to each inch of movement while others left them as vague as possible to take advantage of any opening. It wasn't too bad if there were just two or three gamers, but when you started getting into that 6-8 player bracket there was a lot of time spent on paperwork. For many of today's games units just do whatever you want them to with few, if any strings attached.

Rules such as The Complete Brigadier were built upon this order writing along with others. While it was their focus, these type of rules never really caught on. In fact, as we got to the end of the 80s and into the 90s, most gamers were about ready to give up on the orders writing while many simply avoided any rules that featured it. You



could tell that miniature wargame rules were changing and the hobby with it. The days of writing orders and objectives were numbered.

The one thing that still survives to this day is tracking hits/damage. Games such as Starfleet Battles, Ogre, Full Thrust, and many others made their living off of this concept and it was a necessary evil. Damage sheets have always been a part of sailing ship games, space combat, WW2 surface actions, and many more genres. It was a little more acceptable if the company provided the ready made damage sheets (ex., Starfleet Battles), but

if you had to create a whole series of them then that was a different story. Today there are all kinds of markers or things just take a hit or two then they're gone. However, for many naval and space rules, damage sheets will soldier on.

Could games that combine unit rosters, written orders, and damage sheets make a comeback in today's hobby? Not a chance. Today's gamers really resent paperwork and

while they may have to fill out an army list for a tournament, that's about where things end. Objective tokens, hit markers, etc., are the nature of today's gaming and we're not going backwards. Even the reworked version of Battletech just uses damage sheets and those are even much more concise than the old ones!

The truth was that we all had a lot more time back in those early days of gaming. Reading the rules, designing a scenario, drawing the



map, then meticulously writing the army lists and unit stats was just a normal week before the big game on the weekend. Even then, after years and years of doing this, all of us started looking for some way NOT to do this! Thus was born simpler rules, consolidated damage,

gaming tokens, and more that made our games much easier to set up and play. Does anyone really want to go back to those days? Probably not. While the times and games were memorable, the paperwork was not. I do think, however, that we're at the sweet spot now and any further refinements are going to make the games too simple.

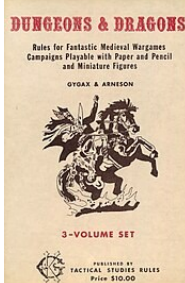
Blast From The Past Pt. 55: The Lord of the Rings & Gaming

Back in the 70s, most of us from that era got into gaming through Dungeons & Dragons, or even if you weren't into it, you definitely knew what it was. The correlation between D&D and The Lord of the Rings was very strong, even from the start of what would become an empire for both franchises. Naturally, there was an urge to do fantasy gaming, paint miniatures (even possibly armies), and find books and movies that would inspire you on to greater things in the hobby. Again, there were only a few TV channels, the Atari 2600 was the only gaming platform, and there wasn't much else to do!

When the Lord of the Rings animated movie came out in 1978, it proved to be the perfect launching point for gamers to really get into fantasy gaming. While it only told half the story using a very unique style, it was just throwing fuel onto a fire that was already in most of us. We had been getting started in D&D, re-reading the LOTR series, and had been watching the hobby magazines for ads about fantasy figures.

However, there really wasn't much to go on in 1978! Minifigs was producing "not LOTR" miniatures, McEwan Miniatures had a fantasy range, Ral Partha was just getting started, and fantasy rules/board games were hard to come by. The level of frustration was at an all time high. There was a growing segment of D&D players who wanted to expand their horizons, but there was literally nowhere to go. We wanted board games, miniatures for our D&D sessions, the ability to create armies, and more material to expand our fantasy gaming.

All of a sudden, we got what we wished for. In this day and age it seems strange that you wouldn't know a product was out for a while, but back in the 70s it wasn't unusual to find/purchase a product that came out a year or two before! You were reliant upon local hobby shops and/or seeing ads in hobby magazines, which meant you usually blundered across



things in a most haphazard fashion! One Saturday there's nothing at your local store that you hadn't seen before and the next there's an entire range of Ral Partha fantasy figures!

One day I walked into the local store and there was the Battle of Five Armies game, Lankhmar, and SPI's War of the Ring. I couldn't afford all of them (mowing lawns and working at Baskin Robbins part time), so I bought Battle of Five Armies, the separate SPI Sauron game, and then a friend bought Lankhmar. We went from doing our regular D&D session that weekend to playing three different fantasy board games. Times were almost too good!

This was the start of an incredible run of fantasy gaming. We were still painting up GHQ micro-armor for NATO vs. Warsaw Pact games, ships for Harpoon 2, and playing other historical board games, but fantasy took up a lot of our hobby time. D&D came out with the monster guide and player's handbook, which I still feel to this day catapulted that game into the hobby stratosphere. Modules were coming out from TSR while other companies started creating their own RPG systems. For miniatures, Ral Partha was expanding their line with all kinds of single figures, multi-pose packs, and specialty figures. Grenadier was cranking out single figures and boxed sets as well. Superior came along and offered some incredible single piece fantasy figures. All of a sudden, you went from just the Minifigs line and a few scattered figures to comprehensive lines that covered anything you could think of.

Still, however, everything was judged by our experiences with The Lord of the Rings. When Orcs came out from one company or the other, there were hours long discussions if they looked like what Tolkien described. Were the Ral Partha hobbits the right size? What would forest trolls look like? Was that armor what the Elves wore when fighting Sauron? Yes, we had time on our hands to solve these philosophical dilemmas of our age! However, that was part of the fun and

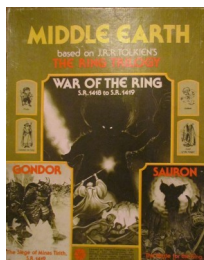
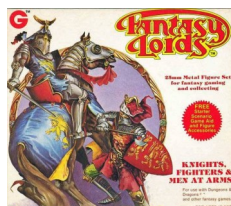
while it seems silly today, it could sometimes get deadly serious!

In previous look backs I alluded to the fact that fantasy army level combat was the one quest that we never really came to grips with. One gamer in our area had a huge fantasy army based on the WRG Ancient rules that would go up against other ancient armies. It was tolerable, but didn't evoke the spirit of mass fantasy combat. A few other systems came and went, but usually we just gathered up all the single figures we had and did huge Chainmail battles on a 4 x 8 table. Right when we were slowly transitioning away from fantasy a new set of rules appeared; Warhammer Fantasy. We all know how that turned out!

Fantasy board games were still something that never quite took off for us. Avalon Hill put out Elric, SPI Ares had Albion, TSR did eventually put out Divine Right (which recently made a much needed comeback), and Yaquinto had Beast Lord. There were also several micro-games from Metagaming, TSR, and Task Force with fantasy themes. Nothing seemed to match the grandeur and scope of the SPI War of the Ring game, despite its flaws. To this day, that game still holds a special place in my gaming heart and I doubt I will ever let it go!

By this time we were moving into that strange place at the end of the 80s and into the 90s. Gamers were moving on, getting married, starting careers, and time, which we had plenty of for so many years, starting becoming a precious commodity. We turned towards shorter board games, historical periods, a short stint with WH40K, etc., and fantasy gaming got left behind. Even when Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings movies came out, there wasn't really a need for many of us to get back into fantasy gaming and it seemed that the magic (so to speak) was gone.

Now look at today. Warhammer Old World, Conquest, Kings of War, etc., are going strong and fantasy miniature gaming is a huge segment of the hobby. Divine Right is back, The Fantasy Trip returned bigger than ever, and Burning Banners was hugely successful. I guess fantasy gaming never really left after all!



My love for fantasy board gaming began when I found a copy of *Battle of Five Armies* at the local gaming store back in 1978. I had just finished reading *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*, so this was definitely great timing! The idea of huge armies fighting battles, but with elves, dwarves, orcs, dragons, etc., was something too good to pass up. Unbeknownst to me, this would be the start of an on and off again love affair with fantasy board wargames that would continue on to this day!



The big problem back in the 70s and early 80s was just trying to find fantasy board games. SPI did have their *War of the Ring*, which at the time was the standard to which all fantasy wargames was being held to. However, only SPI really had the capability to do something to that level as most game producers were small operations. Add to that the fact that 90% of fantasy gaming was D&D and other RPGs, which made fantasy board wargames hard to find.

However, they were out there. SPI put out *Sorcerer*, which is also famous for its multi-colored hex map. Despite the fact that staring at the map for too long could lead to long term mental defects, the game wasn't too bad. Chaosium put out *White Bear Red Moon* and there were a few other entries into the field, although



again, they were pretty hard to find. When TSR and Task Force Games got into the micro-game format, there were a few fantasy games in those series. Finally, Dwarfstar had a few strong entries with *Barbarian Prince* and *Demonlord*, plus

Yaquinto released *Beastlord*.

Many of us played these games solo as it was hard to fit them into endless RPG sessions, NATO vs Warsaw Pact, WW2 Eastern Front battles, etc. If you could get a group of 3-4 to play one of the longer fantasy board games it was a good year! Mainly they gathered dust on gamer's shelves or were set up on tables while you did a solo turn here and there. They were often discussed with your gaming friends, but then most of us went

back to the other topics. Fantasy board wargames just never seemed to get the impetus to continue moving forward.

During what I call the Great Lull in gaming at the end of the 80s and early 90s, I did not touch a fantasy board game for probably a decade, being involved with WH40K,

Space Hulk, micro-armor, and Harpoon. Fantasy board gaming was probably at its low point and I really can't think of any games that came out during that time that I played or kept through the years. Many gamers have these "phases" and this was definitely one of those. You don't just all of a sudden hate fantasy board gaming and sell everything, but rather it passes into the background for some time.

Finally, during the late 90s I took SPI's *Lord of the Rings* out for a play and started to wonder why I gave up fantasy board games for a while. However, then just as quickly it went back on the shelf to be replaced by *Age of Reason*, *Empire*, *Fire & Fury*, *Command Decision*, etc., along with painting all the miniatures for those. You don't realize how time passes in the hobby until you start thinking about how long it has been since you last played something! Just a few weeks ago we were talking about a *Boilers & Breechloaders* game we did with my 15mm Nile steamers and gunboats, then realized it was over 15 years ago!

As my children got older and my gaming budget grew, I started hunting down some old fantasy board games here and there including some I had owned previously. I got SPI's *Sorcerer*, TSR's *Saga* and *Vampyr*, and the remake of Dwarfstar's *Dragon Rage*. All of these spent a few weeks on the gaming table, then through the years I would try to play them at least once every few years. Fantasy board games had something of a resurgence with all of the *War of the Ring* movies and games, but in terms of true wargames, they were still far and few between.

Over the last year, two games have come along that have rapidly changed the paradigm. The first is *Burning Banners* from Compass Games. This game, featuring beautiful map boards, breathed some fresh



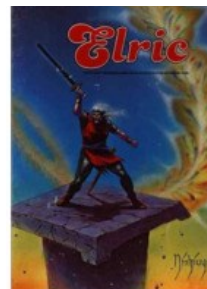
life into this side of the hobby. Our gaming group played it several times and are now anxiously awaiting the sequel, which may not be out for a few years. The game quickly sold out and was rushed into a second printing, showing that there was definitely a pent up demand for this type of game. Again, there is something about fantasy armies waging campaigns across an unknown world that seems to draw in gamers.

The other game was the re-issue of *Divine Right*, the classic TSR game that had been very difficult to acquire for quite some time. The third edition as it is known, was a huge boon for fantasy gamers, including many who remember long gaming sessions of this back in the 80s. The newest version uses the same map, but with upgraded components, plus there is the promise of a DRX package sometime soon and the long worked on *Scarlet Empire*. Then *Dragons Down*, the spiritual successor to Avalon Hill's *Magic Realm* appeared and there will be supplements for that here shortly. All of a sudden, fantasy board wargaming is alive again!



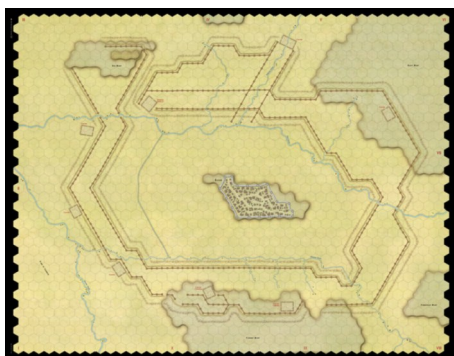
Will this usher in a new age where there are more and more fantasy board wargames produced? Probably not, although that would be welcomed! For our gaming group, however, this did bring back memories and everyone gladly jumped in and played when we offered to run these games on our regular gaming night. While they are not as fast playing as many of today's games, they were still a fun experience and should see more plays in the future.

So, is this another phase in my hobby life? It does appear that way and who knows how long it will last. I'm anxiously awaiting the *Scarlet Empire*, the *Natives* supplement for *Dragons Down*, and the next *Burning Banners* game, so this might go on for a few more years! In the meantime, I just found a good copy of Avalon Hill's *Elric* to keep me on my fantasy track until the other games come out...

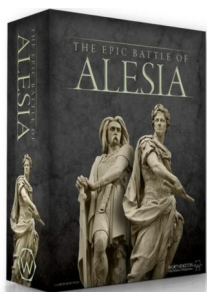


A game that has stood the test of time is Avalon Hill's Caesar at Alesia. The unusual situation with a Gallic force trapped in the walled city of Alesia, surrounded by a ring of fortifications, then a second ring to keep any relieving force from interfering was a stroke of genius by Caesar. It also makes for an exciting battle. That game is now nearly 50 years old and with the current trend of reworking old designs, you had to assume that this was certainly on the target list. Finally, after all of these decades, Worthington has issued a new version that aims to improve upon the original.

First off, this is a pretty thick and heavy box! The reason for this is the large (close to 3 x 4) mounted map board, which definitely takes up more space than the original. Upon closer examination, however, you can see that this version clearly delineates the defensive works, inner/outer walls, and various other terrain hexes. The result is a much cleaner and clear version than the older game, which is great news for gamers who enjoyed this through the years.



After that you get the thick, larger counters with rounded edges, which again is showing the deluxe treatment. The Romans and their various allies are in red and marked by legions, plus the forts are brown, which can be placed by the Roman player. The Gauls are now in two colors; a blue for the besieged force and green for the relieving force. Again, this is a huge improvement over the original. You also get a screen to hide the counters on the off-map chart (this should have been thicker than paper), two sets of rules, and two sets of player reference cards. All in all, not much to complain about and a superb package which updates this game into the 21st century.



The object of the game if you're playing the Romans is to prevent the Gaul leader Vercingetorix from breaking out of the siege. If you're the Gauls, then you must punch through the outer and inner walls to get your leader to safety (i.e., off the board). There are a lot of challenges for both sides here. Trying to maintain a double wall of defenses in the face of a determined enemy is not easy. Likewise for the Gauls in picking a place (or places) to attack, then coordinate the breakout.

Facing the Gauls you have the defensive works before the walls, where if a Gaul unit ends up there at the end of their movement they are destroyed on the roll of a 6 (on 1D6). Then there are the Roman forts, which if manned can engage units out to 3 hexes. Then there are the archers and slingers, not to mention the units of the legions manning the walls. The legion units roll on the Pila Table against any adjacent Gaul unit, so plenty of Gaul units die just by missile fire and depending upon how the Roman player is rolling, there could be a good sized stack of dead units!

That's Ok as there are a lot of Gaul units! When someone uses the term "barbarian horde", it is definitely applicable to this game! I know many gamers are probably thinking that it might look easy to attack at two points (inner and outer) at the same time and punch through rather quickly. However, the besieged Gauls have to draw a chit with a number of 1-4, which represents how many turns from the current turn that they can actually move out from the town. This makes it difficult to time the supporting attacks where you might be close to punching through, but then draw a 4, meaning 4 turns later the besieged units can move out to attack, but by that time the Romans might have sealed up the hole.

Once the Gaul units are in the zone of control of a Roman unit (or vice-versa), melee combat is mandatory. Now here is where you get into some old school gaming where the combat table is odds based with retreats and advances. The Romans are doubled on the walls, so they are tough to push off, but the trick is making them counterattack, which comes from two results; Melee and Battle Rages. The Romans will usually have to counterattack at low odds and that usually results in them retreating.

Not my preferred way of doing things, but it works for the game. Also, there is a lot of dice rolling each turn.

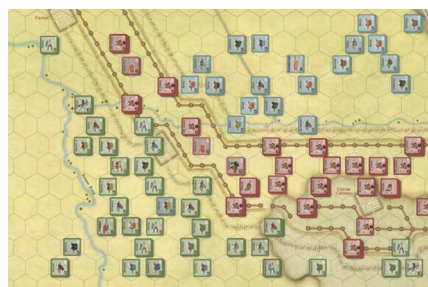
There are two what are called "assault periods", each of which con-

sists of 12 turns. If at the end of the first assault period the Gauls have not broken through, then both sides reset, get some of the casualties back, then try again. Yes, the game is going to be several hours if it goes the distance (24 turns), although the second assault period has much fewer units, so the game turns go by much quicker.

The real challenge is the set up for the Roman player, which may take a few games to get it right as just placing the forts and who should go in them is tough. Likewise for the Gaul player, who needs to decide where to attack and with how much. Too many units can create a traffic jam, while too few units gives the Romans a chance to kill off a lot of units with missile fire. There are so many strategies that involve placement of units, point of attack, do you go for a killing strike in the first few turns, or do you play the long game and gradually wear down the Romans until an opening appears?

This is a wonderful remake of an older, but still popular game. The rules have been cleaned up, the Roman fort fire adds a new dynamic, and the overall feel of the game is much better. If

you're thinking of upgrading one of your Avalon Hill games, this would be a great choice.



WW1: Doesn't Have to Just be Artillery

Rob Coleman

It came as a big surprise to me when there wasn't a big push for WW1 gaming circa 2018. Being the 100th anniversary, it seemed like a no brainer for someone like Warlord Games to push out a supplement to Bolt Action for WW1. Alas, no, the only thing in recent memory, and it came and went, was Flames of War.

Recently I wondered why that is, and perhaps it is because in most of our popular imaginations the Great War is all trenches and artillery. This is a shame, and like all wars not indicative of everything going on. Wings of War did a good job, once upon a time, at depicting a simplified aerial combat system, but what about small scale actions on the ground? It is with that in mind that I started looking at Fistful of Lead and eventually Scouts Out!

Fistful of Lead (FFoL) is something we've played quite a bit of (in various forms), but Scouts Out! was something new. Thinking to pick up a copy and see if there were any good ideas that I could lift for use in a FFoL game at a later point, I purchased a copy. As an example, our gaming group has never played Muskets and Tomahawks, but the sub-



I did use English Uniform Brown and German Feldgrau, beyond that standardization doesn't appear to have been as true, particularly late war. By then both sides were pushing whatever they could

into production to kit out their soldiers. As an example, what the British would call puttees (or as a medievalist Winigas), the German's adopted as leather for high boots became scarce.

They adopted

these in a multitude of colors (from brown to green to gray) as a way to support their legs. As a wargamer this gave me license to pick a contrasting color for visual appeal and still be 'historically accurate' (even reenactors, when you find their photos, wear a variety of colors). Thus, if you want into historical gaming but fear rivet counters complaining over things, WW1 can be an interesting place to try out something with a little more variety. Nothing too crazy, but no one should complain over just the wrong shade of brown.

The second part to that, is there

are always loads of skirmish ideas for any war. Indeed, for every Waterloo type battle there are dozens of small scale unit actions that tip things one way or the other throughout the war. In this war, you could represent a salient that broke through the lines and a unit got lost and now has to get back to friendly troops. Perhaps you need to recover a captured Mark IV/V tank from a village behind enemy lines. Maybe you need to escort said tank through a forest in the fog to join an offensive a few miles down the road. Perhaps you are a raiding party that slipped over the wire in the middle of night and needs to capture an enemy officer. You can easily play with trenches or without in any of those scenarios, no artillery and futile waves of men needed. Think of the rather brilliant film 1917. The two soldiers scout out a deserted trench, and for gaming could easily stumble on a ambush party. Alternatively when the hero works his way through the bombed out town at night. Force A might be trying to slip back through while Force B is gradually alerted and tries to stop them.

It is precisely this which Scouts Out! attempts to mimic. The rules are very short and simple, something that I could teach my son in a few minutes and get a reasonable game in under 2-3 hours. We played with three objectives (Apples, Butter, and Charlie, using the phonetic alphabet from the Great War): a crossroads, weapons/ammunition in an orchard, and food supplies in a barn. Control of any objective would net two victory points (VPs), and Scouts Out! has the added bonus of if you capture an enemy you get one vp.

My son played the British Expeditionary Force that was on a raiding mission, and I had the token German resistance. The British started behind the church, coming up a side road (cont. on p13)



plots are a great idea to port over into other games.

So I went about building terrain and two squads of minis to try a game out with my son. In another article we will talk about that and musings on scratch vs buying purpose built items later. Suffice to say 10 Brits + 1 Lieutenant vs 10 Germans + 1 Lieutenant was pretty easy to get up and going (even if cutting off the pill bases was a pain on the metal minis).

In terms of the topic at hand, it was interesting trying to research colors for both sides during the First World War. In short, within certain constraints, you don't have to 'get the shade right'. While





(cont. from p12) while Germans started in the trench at the edge of town (apologies as some terrain is only partially painted at this point, but the author wanted to give it a go and see how it would play out). Initially the Brits split in two sections, one coming up through the wheat fields across from the church and one coming up through some farm fields to push into the heart of the village. The krauts meanwhile made good use of the sturmtruppen special rule (+3" movement) and quickly seized both the barn and the orchard before commandeering the village shop.

The Brits were caught in the field, and some deadly fire from the Germans saw three leading soldiers get mowed down by the LMG (they were bunched up, and we played that if figures were spread apart the shooter could not spread the

shots around if targets were beyond about 2" from the nearest figure). This was a travesty for the Brits who had been setting up to use the Mad Minute special rule but to no avail (BEF forces with rifles can ignore the rapid fire penalty if they don't move).

It looked like it might be smooth sailing from here, but the dice started to run cold. The German forces did manage to take out the Lewis gun before failing most of their subsequent wound rolls. In short order the Brits hit on a stroke of luck and began to down krauts both left and right. The side force managed to slip into the town with only one casualty, while the Brits in the field cut down Germans coming in across the river.

In a dramatic turn the British sergeant and a private charged a defending rifleman outside the shop and promptly took him prisoner after winning the close combat handedly. I like this rule, as it feels like a thematic version of Ronin's cutting off heads rule. On the next turn we called the game as all but three Germans were dead (and one of these captured), and the British held the crossroads and the Germans held nothing (having to continually commit these meager forces in a vain attempt to ward off the highly accurate Mad Minute fire from the British).



It was a satisfying game, and felt appropriate for a small unit combat. It could easily scale up for 30-40 minis a side, include things like flame throwers, snipers, or HMGs without issue (all of which are on my painting table as we speak). The game is deadly (appropriate when one looks at the casualty rates for armies trying to figure out new weapons and tactics), customizable, and the forces have just enough variety to keep them

different without breaking things. It would be easy to adapt some of the ideas, such as taking prisoners to FFoL should the forces ever get big enough to run a Bigger Battles game. Plus, even with only most of the terrain done it looks great and visually appealing, a requirement for any good wargame.



Scouts Out: Raids & Reconnaissance 1914-1918

This is a relatively new set of rules covering small scale actions during World War One. The scale is 1:1 and can pretty

much be used with any scale, as long as the figures are based singly. You will also need at least a 3x3 play area and some D6s. The main part of the rules involve army creation, or the force that you will use in either attack or defense. There are lists and characteristics for all of the major armies, even including Austro-Hungarian units!

Once your forces are ready then it's on to the mission. The system is a bit of Fistful of Lead, The Sword & The Flame, and others mixed into one. Combat is decisive, so there will be a lot of casualties and a victor determined quicker than in most skirmish games. A one on one game will probably last an hour, but with a lot of forces and several players on each side, it could go on a bit longer.

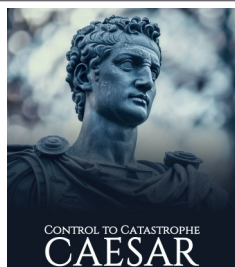
There is also an expansion out for the rules that adds in gas, night fighting, and a lot more. The system is fairly light, so players with some individually based WW1 figures should be able to get into the game quickly. This system would be great for trench raids, prisoner rescue missions, intelligence gathering, and a lot more.



Control to Catastrophe: Caesar

Rules Review

Ancients is still one of the most popular periods of historical wargaming, no doubt from the large amount of figures available in multiple scales as well as 100+ sets of rules. Each gamer, however, seems to have different interpretations of how ancient warfare was conducted, thus there are many sets of rules out there to cater to just about every interest. Into this crowded period comes a new set of rules; Control to Catastrophe: Caesar.



CTC as we'll refer to it here, was designed by Christopher Leach, who also designed the well regarded set of Colonial rules, Battles For Empire. The CTC book is impressive (if you get the physical version), with many images of ongoing games as well as diagrams to help explain the rules. The book has a table of contents and an index, so finding the necessary rules during a game is fairly simple. You also get some sample army lists and a few scenarios (more are available through Wargames Vault). In short, there isn't much to complain about in terms of the publication's quality.

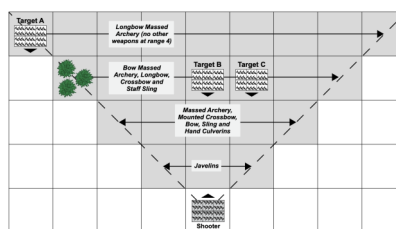
As you page through the book, you do notice that this set of Ancients rules is unlike many others that you may have played and/or seen. For one, you will be using a gridded playing area, similar in vein for To The Strongest. The grid regulates movement and combat, but can be adjusted for the scale of your figures. In terms of basing or unit sizes, you can pretty much use any existing armies that you have. One box on the playing surface holds one unit, which makes things pretty easy, although some way to designate the shallow, medium, or deep depth

of a formation would be helpful.

All units have a Combat and Control Value (CCV) ranging from 2 to 6, with a 6 being those rare, elite units such as Alexander's Companions. The CCV represents how many dice (D6) the unit will use in combat and the number it must roll or lower to pass control or catastrophe tests.

Here's where making some unit labels/cards might be helpful as trying to remember the unit values or paging back and forth through the army lists might be a problem.

The sequence of play uses an IGOUGO type system, where you dice off for initiative at the start of the turn, then you try to rally units. This is followed by moving units, then the shooting phase, and finally, the melee/combat phase. Once you get the hang of what is going on with the game system, the turns can go pretty quickly, so even large battles with plenty of units can be resolved in a few hours, making the system ideal for those who are interested in campaigns.



one box move or turn. This also solves the frontage issue that is seen in many games as all players can clearly see which unit is in which box. Trying to get the right combination of units to attack certain enemy units is the trick here and it is a challenge that will take a few tries to get right.

Combat is certainly novel, with each unit rolling a number of dice with a list of modifiers. This will generate a number of hits on each unit involved in the combat. Once a unit reaches a certain number of hits it is shaken and this could be the start of some serious trouble. If a unit hits its Catastrophe trigger it must roll versus its control number or if the difference in casualties exceeds its Rupture number it must roll as well.

Failure on either results in a Broken unit and it is removed from the game. Quick, decisive, and things get pretty chaotic once melee is joined.

If you followed the two playtests our group did in previous issues, then you

LATE ACHAEMENID PERSIAN
Brigades and attached Generals: 4
Army defeated with the loss of 6 Heavy Units Broken
167 points

Unit Type	Number	Size and Hit Points	Triggers Shaken: Catastrophe (Rupture)	Combat and Control Value	Order Density	Base Combat Dice and Shock (7)	Notes	Points
Heavy Foot: Kambanes	0-2	Medium: 6-12 (3)	Average: CCV 4	Massed Order Foot	4		Spear and Bow Heavy Massed Unit	10
Heavy Foot: Greek Mercenary Hoplites	1-2	Medium: 6-12 (3)	Average: CCV 4	Close Order Foot	4		Spear Momentum CT +1 Well Armoured	11
Heavy Cavalry	3-7	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Average: CCV 4	Massed Order Mounted	4		Spear	8
Mounted Lights	1-3	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Brittle: CCV 3	Loose Order Mounted	4		Javelins	7
Mounted Skirmishers: Horse Archers	1-3	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Brittle: CCV 3	Open Order Mounted	3		Bow 360 Missile Reliant	7
Foot Skirmishers	0-2	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Brittle: CCV 3	Open Order Foot	3		Javelins	6
Foot Skirmishers	1	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Brittle: CCV 3	Open Order Foot	3		Bow Missile Reliant	6
Scythed Chariots	0-1	Shallow: 3-6 (2)	Average: CCV 4	Massed Order Mounted	4	+2 Shock	See rules Section 13.3	9



know that we thought these rules are certainly worth a try. The command and control system coupled with the gridded mat is a unique experience, plus you can use almost any based armies that you have. There are separate army lists that cover pretty much any army from Egypt all the way to the Wars of the Roses. It will take a while to get the terminology down and your first turns might be a bit slow, but it is an interesting view on ancient miniatures battles.

2.4 MISSILE RELIANT UNITS AND MELEE

Units that relied on Shooting but found themselves at a disadvantage when engaged in Melee are defined as Missile Reliant Units and these are noted in the Army Lists. These include Units of missile troops armed exclusively with bows (and longbows), crossbows, staff-slings, and hand catapults. These Units sometimes lacked shields or armour and did not have the support of robust Melee fighters like spearmen or dismounted men at arms intermixed within their Unit.

Note that some missile-armed Units were equipped with a variety of weapons and were quite at home fighting at close quarters. These Units are not classed as Missile Reliant; this is noted in the Army Lists.

2.5 ORDER DENSITY AND BASING

The Order Density of a Unit should (or could) inform the way you base your miniatures on their stands. As implied by the nomenclature, a Close Order Unit should have more figures attached to its stands (and arranged in a more orderly fashion) than an Open Order skirmisher Unit whose fewer figures should be dispersed and irregularly positioned.

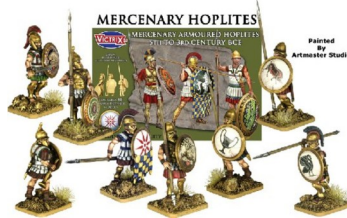


It was finally time to start looking for an opponent to the Republican Romans, which came down to Carthage, Iberia, various barbarians, or as something totally outside the box, Syracuse. Another member of our group had some figures for Saga representing the various Greek forces and had decided to enlarge those forces for a Syracuse army. That made the choice easy as I would have to only a) paint up less than a dozen units or so, and b) I could use some of the Seleucid auxiliaries I have.

The first thing to do was to take a look at the Syracuse army list in one of the various Hail Caesar books. As suspected, most of the army was either mercenary or unarmored hoplites. Ugghhh...more blocks of heavily armed troops in close formation. I remember the 320 Seleucid pike which psychologically scarred me from ever trying that again! After that there seemed to be some one off units for Etruscans, Spanish, Campanians, Gauls, and skirmishers. Their army was simply all kinds of various mercenaries drawn from the Mediterranean areas. Fortunately, most of the figures were readily available from several manufacturers, so it was time to get down to how to get this thing going.

I figured that I would need at least four hoplite units, so I settled on two mercenary units, one bodyguard unit, and one unit of unarmored hoplites to form the core of the division I would assemble. After looking at the various manufacturers I saw that Victrix was having a sale, so I put together an order for a few bags along with several sheets of LBMS transfers. If you're just going to do a few hoplites, then painting the shields is viable. If you're going to be doing 120+ hoplites, then decals or transfers is pretty much the only way to make it look halfway decent!

Assembling the Victrix hoplites is pretty easy, but time consuming. I decided to do four units of 32 figures each, with units being 8 wide and 4 deep to



give that look of a phalanx. I found it easier to do 8 figures at a time and having learned my lesson from the Seleucid pike, I went with two bases per unit. Easy to move and store, but gluing and flocking 16 figure bases was pretty challenging. When the final unit was completed I still had enough figs left over to do a 5th unit, but by this time burnout had hit hard and that was set aside for now.

For a temporary break I painted up the skirmisher units, which with each being 8 figures was an easy task. I've found that when you're struggling to paint it's good to do some small or easy units. Once completed it adds depth to your forces and can get you ready to tackle the next task in your project, which for me this time would be the Gauls and Spanish. I used some Crusader Samnites for the Campanian light infantry (close enough) along with various other manufacturers for the archers and javelin armed units.



Now it was on to those special units that you only get one each of in the army. This would be one 24fig unit of Spanish medium infantry and one 32 figure unit of Gauls. Both Victrix sets give you a lot of variety in terms of heads, helmets, spears/swords, and arms. While this gives the unit a lot of character, painting and positioning them on the unit stands is a definite challenge. The LBMS transfers for these are fantastic.

However, they will take some work, especially cutting out the weird centers for some of the shields. Then you have to mix and match paint/washes for the edges of the shields. Certainly a lot of work for these special units, but they are needed for the army list. I would

like to do a unit of Etruscans, but at this time there aren't a lot of options that don't cost quite a lot for just one unit!

For now I'll use some of my Seleucid cavalry for our upcoming games, but probably at some point I'll add a few



units here and there, just so I don't have to pull out the Seleucid storage bins when we need to do a Syracuse vs. Rome game! Etruscans are still on the list and probably several more units of unarmored hoplites. That's probably down the road as I've found that painting the large units for the Hail Caesar rules can lead to burnout. 32 figs per unit (hoplites, phalangites, barbarians, etc.) is a lot of work, then you look at it and say to yourself that it's just one unit! A lot of gamers will say that you could change the figure/basing size, but the bigger units look right on the tabletop, even if it is more expensive and they take longer.

Now all we need is a Carthaginian army, but that's a topic for another day...



BKC IV: Salvage Operation

Battle Report

We always do a game on Memorial Day and this year was no different. We decided to go back to the late Eastern Front and do something a bit different this time in terms of running what could be termed a “negative objectives” type scenario. While both sides are usually trying to win, here the outcome would be determined by the roll of a D100, with one side trying to increase the % they need to win, while the other is trying to keep that % as low as possible. This is a great way to give both sides a chance at victory where the forces are uneven, inexperienced players, or you simply aren’t sure if the scenario is going to work out at all!

It’s late fall in 1944 and the Russians have multiple breakthroughs all along the front. A sole German infantry battalion is in a pretty solid entrenched position outside of a city. While fighting is raging in the city, the Russians are moving to cut off the rest of the Germans in the city itself. A large column of German wounded and ammunition is also moving into the area and needs to get across the bridges at the end (German held) of the game board. The Germans are going to launch a counterattack to push the Russians back long enough to get the trapped infantry battalion and the wounded/ammo column across the board and over the bridges. The Russian players were simply told that they need to get to the bridges at any cost



and force the Germans to blow them. In the end this worked well as the Russians weren’t concerned about destroying the Germans or lying in wait for the column of vehicles.

German Forces

- Infantry battalion of (9) infantry stands, (1) MG, (1) mortar, and (1) 75mm AT gun [entrenched on the hill]
- (3) Stug IIIG [behind the hill near the city]
- Kampfgruppe A: (4) Pz MkIVH, (2) Tigers, (1) 88mm AT gun
- Kampfgruppe B: (3) Panthers, (4) Sdkfz 251s w/panzergrenadiers, (1) 75mm AT gun, (1) truck w/(2) MGs,

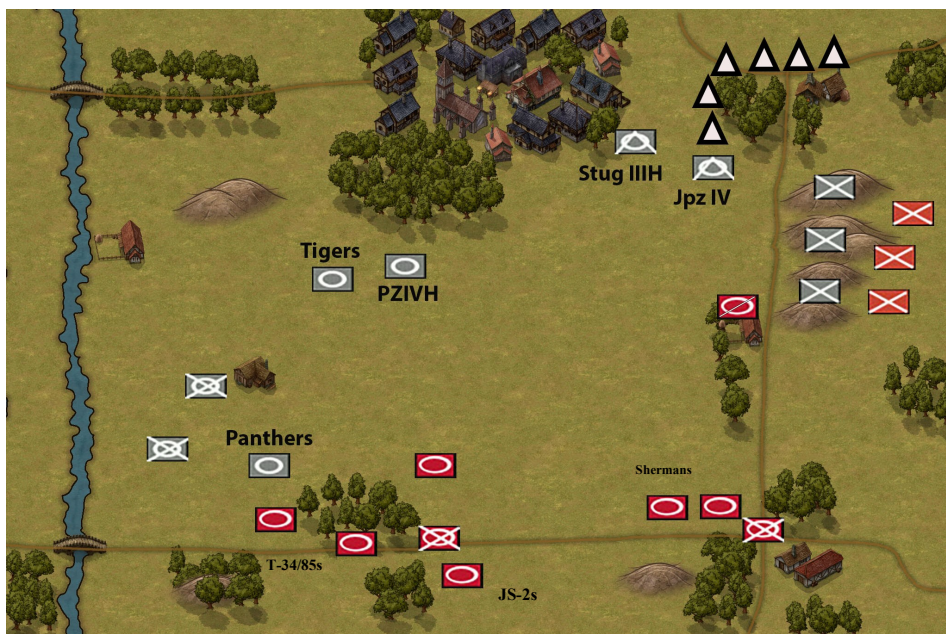
(1) Sdkfz 251/22, and (1) Sdkfz 251 w/mortar.

- (1) FAO w/(2) batteries of 105mm artillery
- (6) Sdkfz 251s and (5) Sdkfz 250s w/wounded and ammunition along with an escort of (3) Jgpnzr IVs [enter top right corner on Turn 2]

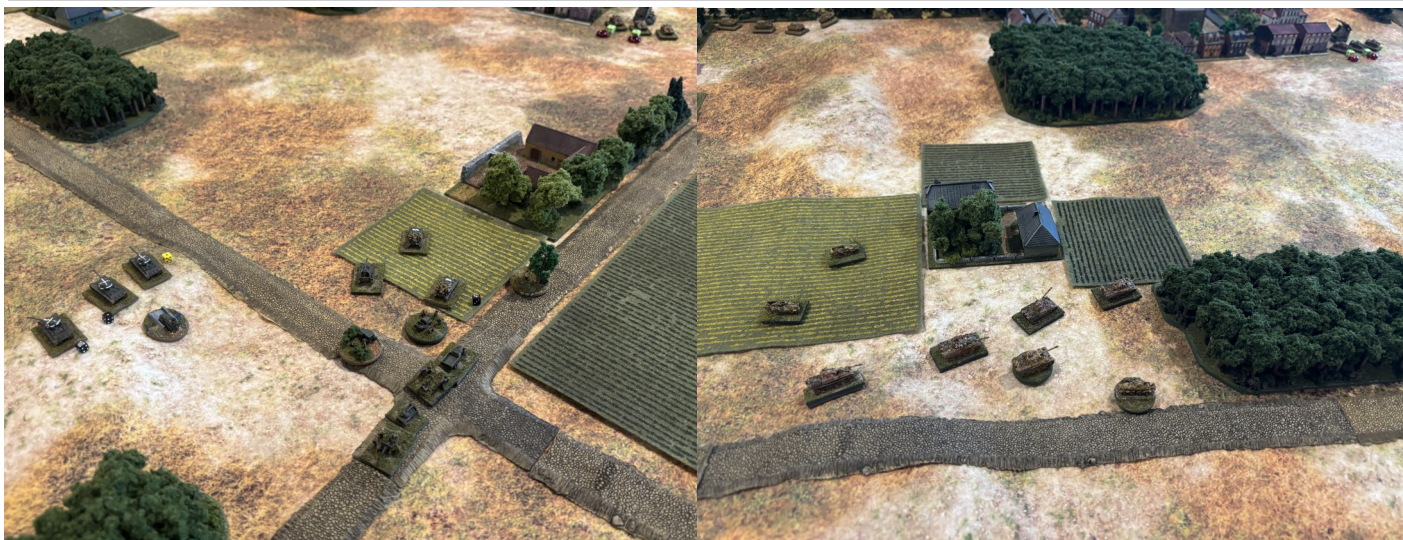
The two German kampfgруппes were allowed to enter from either bridge on Turn 1 to begin their counter-attack.

Russian Forces

- Recon battalion consisting of (2) T-34/76, (1) SU-76, (1) 45mm AT gun, and (1) MG [at the crossroads]
- (3) JS-2s [at the crossroads]
- T-34/85 Brigade consisting of (12) T-34/85s and (4) trucks w/infantry [enter from lower right corner on Turn 1]
- Sherman Brigade (remnants) consisting of (6) Sherman 76mm and (2) trucks w/infantry
- Russian infantry battalion, consisting of (6) infantry stands, (2) MGs, (1) mortar, and (1) 45mm AT gun [see Special Rules]
- (1) FAO w/(2) 122mm artillery batteries. (cont. on p19)



This is the scenario status around Turn 6, where the Russians are desperately trying to break through to the bridges while the Germans contemplate how to extricate their front line troops. The Jgdpnzr IVs have broken out from the forest, still escorting all of the halftracks with wounded and ammo (white triangles) and are now engaging the Russian recon unit and the Shermans at the crossroads. The German armored kampfgруппe consisting of PZ IVHs and Tigers is now breaking out into the open after failing multiple command rolls. Meanwhile, the Panthers are determinedly holding on, taking on the full strength of the Russian T-34/85 tank brigade along with some JS-2s. The Russians kept throwing themselves at the defenders and finally broke through to one of the bridges, forcing the Germans to blow it and making it vital that they still hold the other bridge.

(cont. from p18) **Special Rules**

- Units could try to cut across the city, but each turn in the city area they roll 1D6 and on a 4, 5, or 6 they get sucked into the city fighting and are considered to be eliminated for game purposes.
- The Russian infantry battalion will always attack the Germans entrenched on the hill. When one stand/unit is destroyed it returns at the edge of the board the following turn. At some point (and maybe after some casualties) the German players will recognize that they need to withdraw from the hill and move towards the bridges! Also, the Russians get (1) 120mm mortar attack on the hill per turn as well.

- If a Russian stand/unit reaches either bridge the Germans can blow it on a D6 roll of 1-5. On a 6 the bridge doesn't blow up and if a Russian stand/unit crosses the bridge the Russians automatically win.

Victory Conditions

At some point either the Russians will run out of troops, or can't stop the Germans. The other way the game ends is if both bridges are blown. At that point the Germans score percentage points for the following units that did cross the bridge or would be able to when the game was called:

- (3) points for each Stug IIIG or Jgdpz IV (possible 18 points)
- (1) point for each stand of the infan-

try battalion (possible 12 points)

- (5) points for each Sdkfz 250 or 251 with the wounded and ammo that cross. (possible 55 points)

There's a possible 85 points for the Germans if everything crosses successfully. The Germans then roll D100 and if the number is less or equal to how many points they got across it is a successful operation and they win the game. The Germans have a powerful armored force and should punch through to rescue at least some forces (or at least that's how the scenario was designed!

The Battle

In what was a shocking blow to all of us, everyone had really good command rolls the first few turns! (cont. on p20)





(cont. from p19) The Russian recon battalion moved quickly to a farm compound in the face of the German Stugs and this started a battle that would go on for multiple turns. The JS-2s took up position on a slight rise to provide cover while the T-34/85 brigade raced down the road. The Germans moved up quickly as well, with the Panthers heading towards a gap. The Russian infantry battalion attacked towards the hill, but was met with a hail of fire.

On Turn 2 the T-34/85 brigade got a miraculous three orders in a row and piled down the main road and were met by opportunity fire from the Panthers. This started a 4-5 turn armored melee between the T-34/85s, the JS-2s, and the Panthers along with their supporting 75mm AT gun and Sdkfz 251/22. All of the mechanized infantry on both sides fled to cover! Meanwhile on the other side of the board the Germans on the hill were gleefully cutting down the advancing Russian infantry until they realized that more and more kept coming onto the board. They finally got the hint that they

couldn't stay there for the whole game!

The Shermans had been moving up slowly and failed several command rolls, but they finally got into position just as the Jgdprz IVs came into view with all of the halftracks piled in behind them. At this time the Russian players had no idea about the scenario and thought it was more German mech infantry coming to reinforce the hill. The Stugs were still fighting, despite the amount of shots coming at

them. Both sides were now engaged all over the board.

The second German column had problems moving up as they were going to come to the aid of the Stugs and the defenders on the hill. Around Turn 5 they finally started to move into the open area and engaged some of the T-34/85s posted to stop just that sort of thing. The Panthers were giving better than they got and were actually holding off all of the Russian armor, thanks to some incredible saving throws. The Russians (who did a good job all game of pressing the attack on the bridges) took a gamble and raced the mech infantry company around the flank through a curtain of fire to get to the bridge. They actually succeeded and the Germans were forced to blow the bridge. One down for the Russians and one to go.

Unfortunately for the Russians, they were beginning to run out of strength. The Stugs finally were knocked out, but not before having accounted for multiple Russian vehicles and they were the real stars for the Germans this day along with the Panthers. The Shermans never quite got going, although in the end they took out the Jgdprz IVs, but took such horrendous losses themselves that they were essentially knocked out of the game.

Their mech infantry secured the cross-roads and that was as far as they could go.

The JS-2s were all on fire as well as most of the T-34/85s. Once the German armor got rolling in the open areas they pretty much defeated anything that came up against them, which again, was how the scenario was supposed to work. There was only one remaining Panther and some mech infantry who survived the insane armor melee along the main road. With most of their armor burning and no chance to either get to the second bridge or to stop the German column from reaching safety the game was called. After adding up the points, the Germans found that they had scored a total of 69. A German player rolled D100 and the result was a 69! The Germans had squeaked out the narrowest victory!



The game did not go as everyone thought it would! The Panthers and T-34/85s getting into a several turn melee so early surprised everyone, as was the ferocity of the battle. No one tried going into the city and the artillery really did nothing the entire game, which was also unusual. Both sides had their moments with good and bad die rolls, but things seemed pretty even. BKC IV does have a few flaws here and there, with one being units keep going probably far longer than they should.

If you have never tried one of these types of scenarios you should give it a go sometime. Both sides usually have a chance, no matter how good or badly they do, so to some extent it offset some of the luck factor. After the success of this scenario we'll probably see something similar down the road.



Vietnam games exist in a strange spot in the wargame hobby. While there are some good games such as *Down-town*, *Fire in the Lake*, etc., the topic doesn't seem to translate well onto the tabletop, whether that is board or miniatures gaming.

While gamers have an interest in the topic, they are usually quickly distracted by more *Operation Barbarossa* or *Battle of the Bulge* games! Taking an entirely new path, Phalanx Games has come out with *Purple Haze*, which is a combination of wargame, Euro game, and a bit of RPG all in one.

The first thing you notice is the size of the box and it is large. The reason is that there are a lot of dice, tokens, boards, reference charts, cards, and booklets. Just sorting through the box you can see that most everything is pretty high quality and there is a lot of it! We'll start with the two sided map, which shows you the area that your squad will be operating, plus there is a separate, smaller city map. Both maps are gridded with terrain symbols and they will be used to mark the location of your squad during an operation.

From there you have a lot of cards that feature individual Marines, weapons, skills, encounters, wounds, and more. Many of the cards have a lot of icons, so it's going to take some trial and error to figure things out during game play. Then there are several colors of dice and all kinds of different sized tokens. The tokens are used to mark cover on the combat board, enemy fighters, enemy tactics, weapon ammo, equipment, and much more. Fortunately, everything makes sense as you move through the rules.

Speaking of rules, there is the main set and then a Marine's guide, which is sort of a quick start approach to the game.

The rules, as with many Phalanx products, have all kinds of graphics and examples of play, which definitely makes the game easier to learn. There are also several large reference cards that go over combat, the turn sequence, and most



importantly of all, the icons that are used on the map, cards, tokens, etc. Finally, there are the nine mission booklets and a log. Everything here is great quality and you get your money's worth in terms of components.

So, how does one play *Purple Haze*? While you can play the game solo (it would take some time and work), you can also have up to four players. My guess is that the 3rd and 4th players won't have much to do and the sweet spot seems to be two players. The first thing you do is start with the first mission and the player who is the squad leader chooses one of three motivations. This will determine how their performance is scored over the campaign. There is no winning or losing, merely how well your squad does over the nine missions.

You start by randomly dealing three Marine cards, then assigning a specialty to one of them. Specialties are squad leader, infantryman, radio operator, corpsman, engineer, and scout. This gives your squad six men, all with unique stats. As you can guess, the replay value here is pretty high as each time you would start a campaign you would probably get six new Marines. From there you hand out equipment. Each Marine has a load capacity, so they can only carry so much. There's M-16s, Sniper rifles, M79s, M60s, plus ammo, flak vests, rations, grenades, and more. Trying to equip the squad will definitely create some discussion as to who gets what!

You then open the mission booklet and position the tokens on the map followed by creating the five card encounter deck. There is usually one objective, but more may be added as you go along. The turns consist of the squad

leader setting the point man, then moving on the map or bivouacking to rest/eat/heal. Each thing you do takes time, measured in 15 minute increments and stamina. Now

here's the challenge; can you navigate to the objective in time and with any stamina remaining? What seems so simple soon turns into a nightmare. Encounters, secondary objectives, events, etc., all push down your stamina and take up valuable time, meaning you may have to spend some time in the jungle over night, where the threat levels go up significantly. All the while, the mission book guides you along to decision after decision that need to be made.

When combat does occur, you move to the unique combat board. Hard and soft cover is placed under enemy and members of your squad. Each Marine can then activate twice per combat and can do two things during each activation. Whatever you do costs initiative points, so when the marker crosses

over to the enemy side, a tactics token is uncovered, followed by a randomly drawn combat chit, which details how the enemy will shoot at you. A very clever system that will take some getting used to, but the danger for the squad is real and just surviving the firefight will take some thought as well as luck.

Once the mission is completed (or not) you roll on tables for what happens in between, which are usually encounters during R&R! Then you get replacements if anyone was seriously wounded or KIA,

you re-equip, then its back out into the jungle. You keep doing this through nine missions where at the end of things your performance is judged. This is definitely not a game that you will finish in a night!

If you figure 90 minutes-2 hours a mission, then this will take multiple gaming sessions. If you complete this campaign Phalanx already has four more campaign boxes ready to go for you!

This is an interesting and unique experience. There are elements of RPG and Euro games here, set against a backdrop of a Vietnam era wargame. The booklets are full of 1960s terminology, descriptions of fighting in the jungle, and the game really does make you seem like you're on patrol in 1967-68. The heavy handed use of icons will take some work, but this is one of those games that every gamer should try at least once.



Reaching The End of Your Hobby Life

I was contacted by Jim Lancia, a gamer who had been in the hobby since the early 70s. Now at the age of 88, it was time to part with his miniatures and games, so after reading this magazine and visiting our club's web site, he graciously decided to donate these things to our gaming group. His hope was that his gaming items would live on in the collections of other gamers and still serve some useful purpose rather than seeing them end up in the trash! So, on a late spring day another gamer in my group and I drove out to meet Jim and his wife, who were passing through the area, then transfer the gaming items to my car. It was definitely one of those sad and joyous occasions, where Jim was sad to have to give up on the hobby, but happy that they would prove to be useful to our group. While sorting through all of the books, figures, magazines, etc., I thought it might be a good idea to get Jim's story about his experiences in the hobby to share with others.

1. How did you get into gaming? As long as I can remember I have been interested in miniatures. I remember at the end of WW II, on a walk down town with my aunt, passing a store window and seeing a whole row of small metal armor models. I was so excited, my aunt bought one for



me which I kept for years. Later, as a teenager, I purchased some small metal WW II aircraft and a 1200mm Japanese Mogami cruiser. So, in the early 70s, when a recent acquaintance showed me some 28mm Napoleonic figures he was using in games, I was hooked and purchased some Prussian cavalry figures from Jack Scruby, a copy of Column, Line, and Square rules, and I was on my way.

2. What was your favorite period and why? My first gaming period was Napoleonic simply because my gaming friends played them. At the time, the only rules we knew about were Column, Line, and Square. My favorite period was our American Civil War. I suppose it began when I was about 5, when visiting my great-grandmother, my mother told me when she was a little girl, Lincoln was president. Our public library's children's collection contained a Civil War history book complete with engraved pictures which I remember checking out and reading many times. When a set of

CW rules came around, I began painting Union and Rebel armies which eventually grew to about 1,000 figures. My favorite rules were John Hill's Johnny Reb. When I had quit war-gaming, I sold them at a local convention. My next favorite was the Seven Years War. I was building armies for that period when old-age caught up to my painting skills.

3. How often did you game and did you game and did you belong to any clubs along the way? I never joined a club. I had a several friends in the hobby and we played whenever we could.

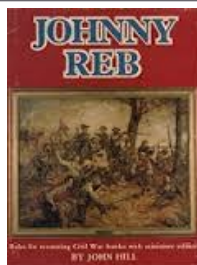
4. What are your best memories of the hobby? My best memories are of games I set up and hosted at conventions: Civil War and WWII 1943 North African Tunisia periods.

5. What are some of the changes that you've noticed in the hobby through the years? Rule books began to proliferate. So many gamers began to chase each new set of rules, so that games could never get played smoothly. It definitely began to interfere with gaming and I began to lose interest. *(This is certainly a cautionary tale that many gamers have noticed in recent years.)*

6. Why did you decide to get out of the hobby? I got out of gaming for many reasons. I moved to Reno 20 years ago and couldn't find any historical war-gamers. I still painted and played at conventions. I got older and my hands, eyes, and memory began to lessen, and I just stopped. I had all this "stuff" that nobody seemed to care about. I discovered your magazine, was impressed, and the rest you know.

7. What will you miss most about being involved in the hobby? I miss playing, painting and collecting. I guess I miss it all.

We were fortunate that Jim thought of our group when he decided to get out of the hobby! There was an incredible collection of well over 1,000 painted 25mm Napoleonic figures on top of several painted formations for the Seven Years War and some DBM armies, all of which will be put to good use. On top of that, there were books, rules, bases, unpainted figures for multiple eras, Strategy & Tactics magazines (with the un-punched games!), and more. Jim's hobby items will live on to fight another day!



What To Do With Your Stuff?

I'm sure that all of us at one time or another have wondered what happens to your rules, figures, games, terrain, etc., when you decide to either move on from the hobby or reach the end of your days. The obvious answer is to of course sell and/or give them away to fellow gamers in your club or area. If you're making out a will it would be a good idea to detail who gets what or your wishes for your hobby stuff. If not, chances are whoever is cleaning out your stuff will put everything in the trash (we've hears of this happening several times!). You can also sell things to other gamers via these options:



Ebay has been around a long time and there are many,

many gamers who look through the listings each day. Finding the right category, paying the fees, keeping multiple listings straight, and finally, shipping everything off is a challenge. You will make some money, but there's a lot of work to be done.



Facebook Marketplace

Facebook Marketplace can be a great place to sell your

hobby items, especially as there are no fees involved! Finding the right group on Facebook can be a challenge and your posting can move down the page pretty quickly, then get lost in a mass of listings. Still, if you have some sought after items, they will usually go pretty fast.



Noble Knight will purchase entire collections, rules, books, and more.

You're going to lose probably 50% of the value of those items, but it will be a single, fairly smooth transaction and then that's it.

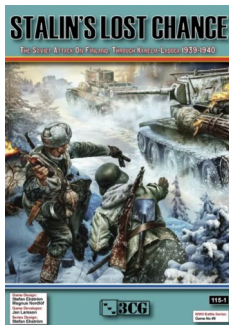
I'm sure that there are other places, forums, etc., where your hobby stuff could find a new home. Hopefully, gamers reading this will share their ideas.

One of the more interesting game series out there right now is the WW2 operational series from Three Crowns Games out of Sweden. All of the games owe their lineage to *A Victory Lost* which features a chit pull mechanic and a +2 MP penalty to enter or leave ZOCs. After that, however, each game has enough chrome and unique situations that any similarity ends pretty quickly. The first few games in the series were produced in the U.S. under Revolution Games, then back to Sweden, which has resulted in different graphical approaches.

This installment in the series addresses a long neglected front for WW2 gamers, which is the Russian-Finnish war of 1939-1940. I can only think of some ASL scenarios and one or two other games on the subject (GMT's *Red Winter* and AP's *Blood on the Snow*) that I've seen over the last 10-15 years. This is good news for WW2 gamers as it's always interesting to explore new battles and/or campaigns, especially with a playable system.

The game, as all of the others, comes in a large zip-loc bag. There is a 22 x 34 map, two sheets of counters, a rules booklet, then two cards for terrain and combat tables. The counters are larger and thicker than their Revolution Games counterparts, plus they are pretty colorful, with stripes denoting the commands that they belong to. The font for the numbers might not be everyone's cup of tea, but they are readable and work for game play. There are no set up cards, so you have to hope that some gamer produces some (there are several for the games in this series), but the set up overall isn't that bad.

The map shows the Finland-Russia border on the eve of the campaign. There are of course a lot of forest hexes, but the heavy forest is only slightly darker than regular forest, so sometimes you need to move the counters to see what they're in! I've mentioned before that I'm not a fan of the font they use for the hexes and town names, but that's a small complaint. There are a lot of lakes, rivers, etc., plus roads and tracks that gamers need to become familiar with. Finally, there is a turn record



tracks and boxes for the air units. Overall, the map is functional, but the grayish tone of everything may not be to everyone's liking.

At it's heart, these are classic hex and counter games. There is an air segment where the various air units are returned to play, or if used on their strongest side, move up one step towards returning. Then you have a random events phase, where actual events are sort of forced on you, but not necessarily on the historical date. Luckily, there is a track on the map and counters for the events as this game has more than most others in the series. Then you get to the engine behind the game system, which is the chit pull.

Each side has a number of chits that it can pull during a turn. A chit is pulled, then you check if all of the colored striped units belonging to that headquarters are in range. If they are, they are then activated to move and fight. Combat is odds based and aircraft can be thrown in to shift the odds. Modify the odds by the terrain, then roll a D6 to determine the result. Usually there are step losses and retreats, although the attackers do take losses, particularly in low odds attacks. Most counters are double-sided, so you simply flip over the strongest unit to its weaker side. Again, this is pretty simple and it can play faster than it looks. For example, if you have a division holding a section of the map and its chit is drawn first in the turn, the units might not need to move or attack, so then its on to the next chit.

However, this is where things can get a bit frustrating at times. During the first few turns if a side has four chits in the

cup and is allowed to draw 4 chits that turn, everything gets a chance to move. Later on the in game, however, when you have 8 chits in the cup and can only pull 5, you sometimes see critical sectors unable to move, plus coordinating attacks can be a challenge.

This is probably the longest game in the series and it at least in my memory, probably has the most chrome attached to it. First off, the supply rules are brutal, due to the nature of the conflict and the terrain. If you're not on a track or road, you're out of supply! This forces you channel everything down certain avenues and the Russians have a hard time using their huge forces. The next thing are all of the events such as snow, first freezes, and much, much more. Even though

there are markers to track things you have to keep referring to the rules. These events can then trigger new phases in the sequence of play where some winterized units can move at the end of the turn and other units out of



supply, isolated, etc., have to check for frostbite which can result in a step loss.

At some point a lot of the Russian divisional chits vanish, to be replaced by corps chits that give the Russians a bit more flexibility. Keeping track of these things, plus the special events, supply rules, etc., made this game much more challenging to play than other games in the series. On top of that, there are some 30+ counters that have the wrong reinforcement number on them, so you need to play close attention to the reinforcements listing in the rules. Also, the medals on the victory point location markers should use national flags instead of that country's medals.

In summary, this is a good addition to the game series and a very unusual conflict that few gamers are probably aware of. It is going to be a longer game and there will be a lot of flipping back and forth through the rules to understand all of the events, terrain, command, etc. These games are great for solo play as the chit pull mechanic does a great job of simulating a second player.



The Great Battles of the American Civil War (GBACW) series by GMT Games continues to be one of their most popular series. While there are many different sizes of battles, ranging from the full three days at Gettysburg to some of the smaller ones in Death Valley, there aren't a lot of "learning" scenarios or a chance to finish a battle in under a few hours. By Swords & Bayonets aims to solve that problem.

Even though the game only covers four of the smaller battles during the ACW, there are still a lot of components. First off, there are two back-printed maps with the familiar GBACW graphics that feature some unusual terrain. Then you have two sheets of counters that contain all of the markers and combat units. GMT surprisingly supplied a counter tray and depending upon how you use it, you can just about get all of the counters into that one tray. If you have an additional tray you can easily separate out both the Confederate and Union divisions. A stack of combat tables, scenario displays, then the rules, exclusive rules, and an example of play booklet complete things.



Another in a long line of well done games is the summary here with very little to complain about. The rules, however, while not approaching the level of War & Peace, are starting to get thicker and thicker with each iteration. Most of this is of course due to closing up loopholes, clarifications, more examples, etc., but the rules will take a few reading sessions to grasp. The exclusive rules cover all sorts of peculiarities about the battles as well as problematic terrain types. Finally, the play book goes over each as-

pect of the rules and if this is your first time with a game in the series (or if you've only played a few scenarios of other games in the series) this is invaluable.

The four battles covered are Big Bethel, New Bern, Mill Springs, and 2nd Rappahannock Station. All of these battles were chosen for multiple reasons, i.e., they can fit on one map, have a limited number of turns, and the command structure is fairly simple. This makes learning the series much easier, although after playing some of these one does wonder if it would be better to jump in and try some of the larger games just so you can know the rules better. The commands are all color coded and the set up is fairly quick for these smaller battles. Simply find the right color in your tray or bags, then set them up according to the scenario. Usually there's only a few units so it goes fast. While the battles are fairly small, the scenarios offer optional units and extra turns to show the approach to battle, alternate strategies, or some "what ifs", which certainly gives the game some replay value.

For those unfamiliar with the GBACW system, each strength point represents 100 men or 1 gun with each turn being an hour. Units can be in one of three modes; advance (the most common), attack, or march. All three have specific rules about what you can or can't do each turn. The heart of the game is the command structure, where each corps determines its efficiency, or how many activation chits the various commands get (usually 2-4) for the turn. Each time an activation chit is drawn, all units from that color can move and/or fire. While it is simple in theory, when playing the game it becomes a challenge trying to keep everyone in command range.

Small arms and artillery fire is handled with a D10 along with a host of possible modifiers. There is a chart with the various types of weapons as this game is a bit more tactical than one might think. Disorder is a common result and when you take a second disorder result that's where the fun really begins as units can start having some serious problems. Melee is again done with all kinds of modi-

fiers that cover strength, disorder, flanks, quality, etc. Once you get the hang of the system you can move through the activations pretty quickly each turn.

There are of course rules for extended formations, refusing flanks, all kinds of terrain penalties, and much more. The good thing about these smaller battles is that there are usually less than 20 units on each side, which lets a gamer try things



out and become familiar with the system before moving onto the larger games in the series. The command system, which plays a prominent role in most of the larger games, only plays a small part here, which again is great for learning how things work.

This entry into the series is ideal for solo play as well, since the chit pull mechanism functions well as a replacement for a second player. For those who already play GBACW, then this game is great for teaching another gamer who may be interested. I can actually see further games of this size as there are quite a few ACW battles that would fit this format, plus many gamers simply don't have the table space or time to do Gettysburg, Shiloh, and others on a regular basis.

The only disappointing thing about the game was that even before gamers had it in their hands there were a few pages of errata and corrections. While the play book is a great idea, releasing it with errors doesn't exactly help things! Overall, this game is worth the money if you have an interest in the ACW and would like to get started in the world of GBACW.



In this issue we have not one, but two of the WW2 Operational games from Three Crowns Games to review. Desert Duel is the 10th game in the series and unlike the other games in the series, this package contains two games. The first game, A Most Bitter Blow, covers Operation Battleaxe in June of 1941 where the British snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. The second game, Fighting Hard, is set in June of 1942 and covers the Battle of Matruh.

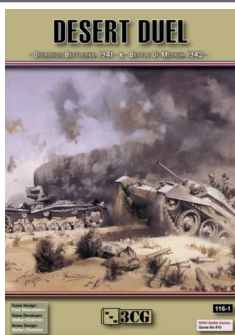
If you've played Dance of War, which was a previous game in this series covering another battle in North Africa, then you pretty much know what to expect in terms of components, especially since some of the same units are in both games! Unlike that game, however, this one contains two games. Three Crowns definitely tried to make each game a self-contained unit and in most places succeeded.

For starters, there are two 17 x 22 maps, two sheets of counters, two sets of rules, and three play aid cards. There are some shared counters that are used to mark out of supply units, pinned, etc., but



the counters for each game have their own unique symbol, which greatly aids in organization and set up. This is a great idea that more companies should use, especially when there are multiple games in a box or package. The separate rules are also a great idea, although they could have had a common set of series rules, then just the exclusive rules separately. The good thing about doing it this way, however, is that you can see the exclusions, new rules, etc., as you progress through the main rules of the game system.

The maps are very similar to the previous Dance of War game. It's hard to find beauty in any North Africa game and these are no exceptions. Plenty of yellow, tan, and brown to go around! The roads are clearly marked as are the other terrain features such as fortifications. If



you've played other games in the series you will need to go over things like villages as their effects have changed for this game. The maps are functional, but aren't going to win any awards. The only real complaint are the victory point markers, where the medals on each side need to be replaced with British and German insignia, which would be a welcome sight. Overall, you get a lot in this package and everything is perfectly functional.

Everything listed in the Stalin's Lost Chance review in this issue pretty much applies here. The driving engine of this game series is the chit pull mechanic. The turn starts off with aircraft returning to operational duty, then random events, which depending upon the roll can be minor or give one side an advantage for a turn or so. Then you get to the chit pull phase where you pull a command chit, then all of the units that belong to that formation can move and attack. You then follow this up with the supply and reinforcement phases. For each turn there is a number on the turn track that shows the amount of activations each side gets. If you only have four chits and the turn number lists four activations, all of your commands will get to move/fight that turn. However, there may be some turns where you have 6-7 chits and can only use three or four of them.

For these games, much like Dance of War, the British had a large number of brigades with small units in them. For this game you can draw a chit where you can pick one of the two or three colors listed. This is good and bad in that you can choose which brigade/formation to activate, but it means that in many turns not all of them will be used. While this does give the game plenty of chaos and unpredictability, trying to coordinate attacks or retreats is difficult at best.

Both battles are fairly straightforward contests, with lots of little British units

facing off against weak Italian forces, but backed by some powerful German armored units. Move, attack, shore up the lines, decide where to use the limited air support, etc., are all features of this game and with fewer units than other games in the series, it plays pretty fast. One game only has 6 turns, so it is ideal for learning the system.

The one down side to these games as the series has progressed is the amount of chrome added to each game. While the first few in the series had some turn related events or special units, it seems like as

the series moves forward there are more and more special rules. Some of this could be due to the fact that you need to find battles that will fit the game series format and those battles



had some unusual things that occurred. Regardless, you will need to keep the rules handy and you do find yourself forgetting many of them.

In fact, there should be on one of the reference cards a checklist of special or turn related rules, just so the gamer doesn't pass them by. With the random events, fortifications, minefields, critical battle markers, attack brigades, etc., you will find yourself missing things during the first play as you discover things in the rules when looking for other things! There's nothing overly complex about the system and it is fairly easy to learn, but as you move through the games in the series you can clearly see more and more chrome is being added.

At the end of the day, what you have is probably the best way to get introduced to the game series. Two battles, one of which is only six turns long, plus low counter density, means that you can take your time and figure things out before trying something large such as Across The Narva or Stargard Solstice. The components aren't going to win any awards, but then again it is North Africa and terrain art can only take you so far! Also, these games are great for solo play as the chit pull mechanic is easy to implement and keeps things interesting, no matter what the battle is.



The Seleucid Plan Worked...Kind Of...

Battle Report

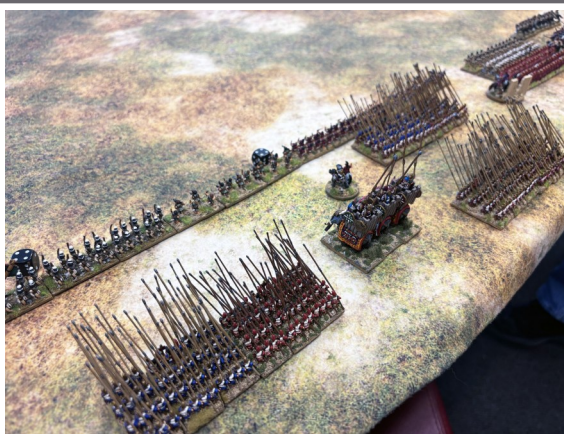
We usually do a Warmaster Ancients game several times a year. There's several reasons for this, with the usual ones being that we know the rules pretty well, it plays fast, and everyone usually has a good time. Out of all of the armies that we have for this period, we do usually report on our Seleucids vs. Roman battles the most as games involving those armies can hold 5-6 players. We also have Crusaders, Saracens, Normans, Assyrians, Hittites, Egyptians, a German Renaissance army, and finally a large Samurai force. We just need to expand those armies for larger games! Also, probably the last time we use the Sicily Country mat for WMA as the colors along with the small scale figures looked a bit wonky!

The Roman army of 2,000 points featured the usual legions in the front line backed by auxiliaries. Several units of archers, skirmishers, and then a force of cavalry rounded out the force. The Roman cavalry is usually in small numbers



as the idea is for them to buy time so that the legions can do their dirty work and win the game before the flanks are lost. The self supporting legion rule makes this version of the Romans particularly tough customers in melee, with them often taking more hits, but winning the battle, then destroying their opponents in the follow up rounds.

As noted in past battle reports, the Seleucids have a bewildering amount of options available to them if you've painted the miniatures. We have about four different 2,000 point Seleucid army lists to choose from and this one would feature only one unit of elephants along with two heavy cavalry and one cataphract unit. The mainstay of this army list would be the six pike units, two units of



imitation legionnaires, two units of thorakites, four units of archers, and skirmishers. Definitely an infantry based list where the cavalry would threaten the flanks and hold things up while the phalanxes did their dirty work in the center.

However, the Seleucid side came up with a complex battle plan that would rely on a bit of deception. Using the deployment system to the best of their advantage, the Seleucids put both cavalry heavy divisions in their center and on their right flank. This left the phalanxes and elephants somewhat in the center, but heavily on the left flank. The idea would be to pin the Roman center and left while the phalanxes moved in and finished off the Roman right. This would require a lot of coordination and most of all, good command rolls. Naturally as what usually happens in WMA, things did not quite go as planned!

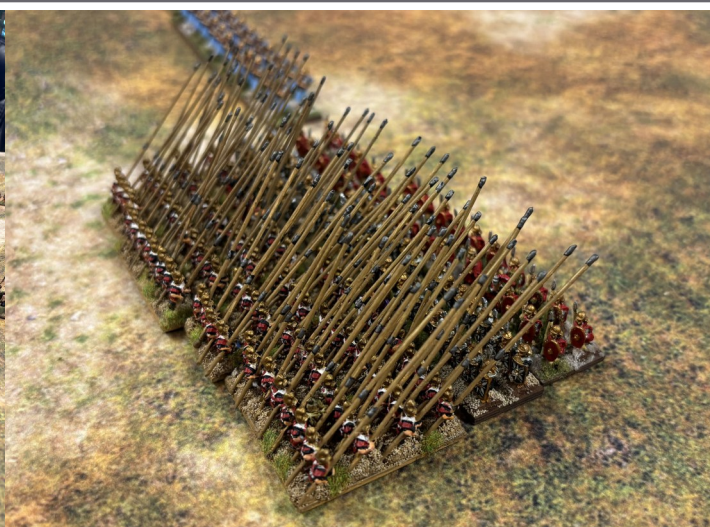
The Romans came right out and just about hit all of their command rolls during the first few turns. As always, we started joking that we might have to start the game over again as the Romans were going to win before things ever got started! Again, however, the Romans ran into their own command and control problems, which gave the Seleucids the chance to catch back up, which they kind of did. The Seleucid cavalry began to move towards the center of the board to threaten the Roman center and left, while

the phalanxes and elephants began moving forward as well. The Romans started the festivities with archery and artillery fire, so they drew first blood with a couple of Seleucid stands lost as a result.

The main action began on the Seleucid right and right-center, where the Seleucid heavy cavalry and Roman cavalry started to mix it up. Despite the Seleucid cavalry being pretty good, they were being held up by the Roman skirmishers, archers, light cavalry, and other assorted units. Both sides started to lose stands and while the Romans had to pull back to shorten their lines, the Seleucids bad cavalry command rolls meant that any advantage they had was instantly washed away. This pattern repeated itself over several turns and clearly, the battle was not going to be won on the Seleucid right or center-right.

The Romans figured out what was going on with the Seleucid battle plan (actually, it had fallen apart) and started moving the majority of the legions towards the side of the board where the Seleucid phalanxes and elephants were located. While they maneuvered towards each other, the action continued on the other half of the board where both sides now had their archers, skirmishers, legions, medium infantry, and cavalry units all engaged along the front. Both sides were losing a lot of stands, but there were no real breakthroughs as most units were now down to at least two stands. This action kept going for several turns and each time one side or the other had a chance to blow the doors wide open they failed their first command roll of the turn! Things were definitely turning into a war of attrition! (cont. on p27)





(cont. from p26) Now the Seleucids on the left flank began moving towards the inevitable clash in the center. The weird thing was that only about half of the units on that side moved up! At least two units of phalanx, a skirmisher unit, one archer, and one light infantry unit barely moved the entire game! The other units, however, crashed into the legions, starting a multiple turn battle that see-sawed back and forth. By this time both sides were well over halfway to their break point, but the Seleucids were doing better than it seemed.

The legions did have their moments, however, and definitely took a toll on the Seleucid infantry. Meanwhile, the rest of the Seleucid army was engaged in their war of attrition, with both sides losing stands here and there. By turn 8 the Romans were in trouble, although things

could reverse themselves at a moment's notice as we've found out before in WMA! There were very few fresh units and this of course made command even harder (in WMA each stand loss to a unit causes a -1 penalty to the command roll).

The Seleucid pike and elephants were taking their toll on the Roman legions. While the legions are tough customers, especially in the first round, their die rolls in the succeeding rounds weren't even doing 50% hits or saves. Slowly, they were pushed back and saw casualties mount. The final few fresh cavalry units were thrown into the fray, but the battles just caused more stand losses to both sides. On the surface, it seemed for most of the game the Romans were winning, but when you started counting up stand losses they were behind! Going to Turn 10 the Romans decided to go all out.

The Romans sent everything forward that would move, despite stand losses, and tried a death or glory charge to turn the game around. Again, however, a series of bad command rolls prevented any kind of breakthrough or follow up to finish off some units. The Seleucids saw their chance and started picking off damaged units, which resulted in the Romans reaching their break point and the Seleucids emerged victorious.

The Seleucid player who came up with the battle plan claimed that it worked as the Seleucids did win! The battle had some crazy swings of fortune and a good chunk of the Seleucid left never even got engaged! Again, it was a lot of fun, but the command system can be frustrating at times. We're going to try a hidden deployment at some point and see how that works.



Hail Caesar: Syracuse Army First Time Out

Battle Report

With enough units for a pretty sizeable Syracuse force (around 500 points), it was time to initiate them on the wargaming table. While we had used the Republican Roman army several times, no one really knew what to expect from a hoplite based army. We usually do big Hail Caesar games on holidays or over the Christmas break, but for the regular Friday gaming night it was decided to keep the terrain simple and just get down to the battle!

The Syracuse army was arrayed with the following commands:

1st Division: (1) unit of bodyguard/hoplites, (2) mercenary hoplites, (1) hoplite levy (Syracuse citizens and militia), (1) unit of Spanish scutarii, (1) unit of mercenary Gauls, (2) units of skirmishers, and (1) battery of artillery.



2nd Division: (2) mercenary hoplite units, (3) levy hoplites, (2) light infantry units, (2) units of skirmishers.

3rd Division: (1) medium Greek cavalry unit and (2) light cavalry units.



The Romans were broken down into the following commands:

1st Legion

2nd Legion

3rd Division: (3) units of Oscans, (1) unit of Campanian hoplites, and (1) unit of skirmishers.

4th Division: (2) Roman cavalry units and (1) unit of Numidian cavalry.

Each legion was broken up into 7 units (hastate, principes, and triarii) along with one additional allied skirmisher unit.

Both sides had the makings of a simple battle plan, i.e., go straight at the enemy! Without ever having played with a Syracuse army it was hard to say what was going to happen, plus the cavalry of both sides was pretty mediocre. However, that is how the battle started out, with the cavalry of both sides going after one another! This was to set off a series of charges and counterattacks that was to go on for pretty much the entire game with no clear winner on that flank.

One of the more perplexing elements of this battle were the Syracuse commander on the right flank with the biggest and best division, then the Roman commander with one of the legions and the Italian allied division. That entire flank was an enigma shrouded in a mystery for most of the game! The Syracuse commander failed his first command roll of the turn for 8 consecutive turns! We thought that it was probably some kind of gaming record in futility and we've been gaming for almost 50 years! The only thing that saved the Syracuse right flank was that the Roman commander on that side failed his first command roll of the turn on 6 out of the first 8 turns! Basically, that entire side of the board sat around exchanging artillery and skirmish fire for 8 turns.

In the center the hoplites advanced on one of the Roman legions with the skirmishers getting out in front and doing their usual dirty work. The problem for the Syracuse hoplites was that every time they charged, the next unit to charge in a synchronized assault would fail its command roll! This let the Romans do their usual "ganging up" with their small units, which would drive back then finish off the hoplite units one by one. The Roman small units, while a bit brittle (Stamina of 4) pack a punch and when you combine two of them on one enemy unit you get 10 dice in a charge, which can be devastating.

By Turn 8 the cavalry of both sides were worn down with everyone having taken 3 or 4 stamina hits. The center was not looking good for Syracuse, but they still had more units to pile into the fray, and on the far right it was (cont. on p29)



Hail Caesar: Syracuse Army First Time Out (cont.) Battle Report



(cont. from p28) a virtual standstill. There was still plenty of time for each side to get going, plus there were a lot of fresh units on both sides that could tip the balance one way or the other.

Finally, the Syracuse right started to move, then they attacked across the front lines. Through a series of incredibly good die rolls the hoplites crashed into the awaiting Oscans and pretty much obliterated the front lines. All of a sudden the Syracuse right flank was surging ahead in steamroller fashion. Another unit of Oscans and the Campanian hoplites moved up, producing a hoplite vs. hoplite battle that was the trademark of Classical Greece history. The Syracuse hoplites were victorious and after a few rounds of follow up combat the Italian allied division was thoroughly defeated and Syracuse was in control there.

Now the crisis point came for the Roman side. The cavalry battle was still ongoing as both sides used their exhausted units for one more push that never quite seemed to finish off the other side. Both sides would rally, then charge again with almost the same results. In the center the Syracuse hoplites were taking a beating and their light forces had been defeated, but the Roman legion there had taken some serious damage and was hesitant to push their advantage.

With the Italian allies defeated, the Syracuse forces turned their hoplites towards the center and the second Roman legion. Faced with hoplites to their flank, Gauls and Spanish to their front, plus skirmishers, the end was in sight. After carefully considering their options, the Roman commanders decided that they would need to withdraw, leaving the for-

ces of Syracuse in control of the battlefield.

A very weird, but fun game of Hail Caesar! While the cavalry battle and infantry fights in the center were ongoing, the really good units of both sides were sitting still. When they both got going it was the command rolls and a few great combat sequences that saved the Syracuse side. We had kept the terrain to a minimum as no one really knew what to expect, so we may go with a defensive battle next time.

While it was a lot of work (and money!) to get a new army to the table, I think that it helps breathe some new life into a set of rules or period that the group likes to play. You can only play Romans vs. Seleucids so many times! If only we had a Carthaginian army...



Fire and Fury: Bentonville

Battle Report

In the dying days of the American Civil War, Sherman's army was marching through North Carolina on its way to join Grant and the Army of the Potomac. With about one month to go before the war actually ended, Confederate commander General Joseph Johnston decided to strike Sherman at a place of his choosing. Sherman had long been operating with two "wings", the right wing being commanded by General Howard and the left commanded by General Slocum. Johnston decided to deliver a devastating blow to Slocum's wing and thus the Battle of Bentonville occurred.

Due to time and space considerations, we selected a scenario that covered the initial Union attack, then the massive Confederate attack that followed it. Historically, the Union attack failed, then a good part of Slocum's command was rendered combat ineffective until Howard's forces came up to rectify the situation. With this scenario's limited scope, we felt it would work best for what we had available.

We had enough forces to have three Confederate commanders and two Union for the game. Then we came to the biggest problem with many ACW and French & Indian War battles; how to simulate large areas of forest! We decided to use the woods that we had to outline the handful of open areas that were on the actual battlefield. We then placed a few more trees in other areas to give the appearance of a heavily forested landscape. The trick as always was to leave room for

the troops to deploy, make it look as good as possible, and alleviate having to remove model trees all night long.

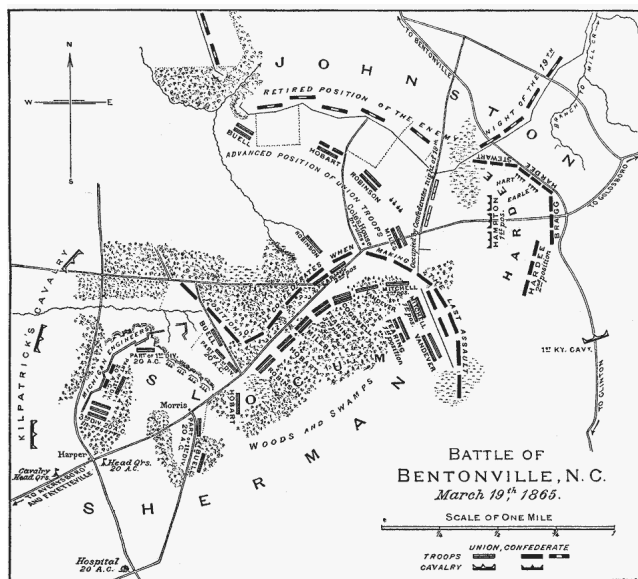
The Union commander who was over Carlin's and Morgan's divisions was true to form, trying to replicate the attack by Carlin's units on a lightly fortified Confederate line. Just looking at the setup everyone could see that any kind of Union attack had a very low chance of succeeding, but that's never stopped gamers before! The attack went in and was repulsed fairly easily. Those units fell back while the Confederate forces came out from behind their breastworks and pursued.

This was the first sign to the Union players that they were in trouble! Morgan's units came up in an attempt to get into good positions in the middle of the board, but more and more Confederate forces kept arriving. With the firing range on most of the board being around

4 inches due to the forest, trying to get to the open areas was a challenge. The Union forces of Carlin and Morgan were now clearly being swept up into a larger battle with one huge problem; there wasn't much behind them! The Union reserve division wasn't due until turn 4 and things were looking grim already.

We took stock of the situation, which brought up one of the huge problems of playing a historical scenario and that is being able to see everything in front of you. In the actual battle the attack on the Union left didn't really start until around 3pm, but here it was 1:30 or so and the Union flank was going to get crumpled up and the game would be over in one more turn. The Confederate commander on that side, knowing that there was nothing in front of him pushed forward far quicker than his historical counterparts. We discussed the situation and in the interest of fair play and wanting to have an enjoyable game, it was decided to have the Confederate forces on that side of the battlefield halt to "reorganize". That gave the Union forces a one turn shot to sort themselves out and put up a defense.

The Confederate attack was really developing now as they pushed the leading Union forces into an L shape. On the Union right the Confederate kept attacking, but couldn't make any headway at first. However, with each exchange of fire or attack the Union forces got a bit weaker. A strong Union counterattack on turn 5 stabilized things on that flank, but trouble was brewing. (cont. on p31)





(cont. from p30) The Union reserve moved up into position right when the Confederates emerged from the forest and tried to cave in the Union left. The first attacks were stopped, but the long term prognosis wasn't very good. In the center there were some sharp exchanges of fire that were damaging to both sides, but the Union was still hanging in there, trying desperately to form a good defensive position to at least give themselves a chance.

On the Union left the Confederate luck vanished for a turn as two strong attacks were stopped cold. Both sides on that flank were now no longer fresh and casualties were mounting for the Union side. After looking at the casualty count from destroyed stands the Union was already past 25% losses by turn 6 while the Confederates were probably closer to

10%. Things were not trending well if you were a Union player this night!

The crisis first materialized in the center where the Union got hit by a few flank attacks that didn't do much than push those units further back down the main road. The Union was losing a lot of stands on turn 7 and 8, plus the situation was going from bad to worse. The Union reserve was now engaged and being pushed back. If this broke the entire position would collapse and Slocum's command would be in serious trouble. On the Union right the forces there were still somehow holding on as both sides had taken a beating.

The last part of turn 8 and turn 9 confirmed what everyone thought in that the game was as good as over! On the Union flank the units there were spent and down to their final few stands. One more good

push might be it for the Union on that side. In the center the units there were fighting to their front and flank, so the end was not far away. Finally, on the Union left they were being pushed back and losing stands each turn. After taking a look at the frightful Union losses (probably 40%) the game was called as a Confederate victory.

While it was a lot of fun, the Union should have scrapped any historical ideas and just went defensive from the start. This does bring up a problem with the historical scenarios in that the players know and can see too much, not to mention trying to get the terrain right! What was needed was some hidden movement, rules limiting Confederate coordination, etc., but that is a lot of work as well. In the future, we'll examine these kinds of scenarios a bit closer before we start!



Hail Caesar: King Edward Attacks the Center

Battle Report

We decided to run a six player Wars of the Roses game almost at the last moment, where we would be using a 6 x 4 table. That meant cutting out a lot of the forces that we regularly use, but we would still need to have enough for several players and so that the game wouldn't be over in an hour or two! Also, with set up time, take down, dinner, getting to where we had to play, etc., that meant a scenario that would be about as simple as they come.

In the end, the scenario was pretty straightforward. It started out as needing to take two of the three objectives (farm, middle of the road, and the ridge on the Lancastrian right/Yorkist left) by the end of turn 10. Halfway through the game, however, we saw that due to some bad command rolls, several of the divisions were just getting moving! We quickly changed to where you needed to break two of the three opposing divisions and this ended up working well. Although many gamers don't like to change scenario parameters midway through a game, the idea is to keep things competitive and have fun, so this changed worked out well.

Each side had three divisions, with most divisions having three infantry units consisting of 2-3 household units (mix of bow and bill), 1-2 heavy infantry units, two units of skirmishers/arquebus, and a unit of dismounted men at arms/knights. Each side also had one light cavalry unit and a battery of two medium guns. Each division basically had five units, so if any of them lost three units it would break, so



this would make things a bit easier to keep track of during the game.

Both sides didn't really have an original battle plan outside of going straight at whoever was in front of you! Clearly on the far side of the board where the ridge was, that was an objective that needed to be seized quickly. For one, you got a +1 for defending the ridge (since it would be uphill for an attacker) and two, it blocked line of sight. It also had the unfortunate side effect of whoever was on top of the ridge was going to catch a lot of arrows coming their way!

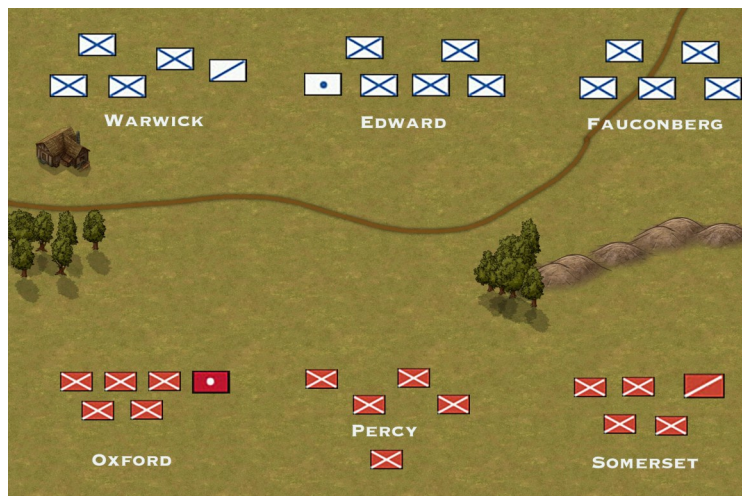
Warwick got one unit to go three moves on the first turn, but then no one else moved! This left one unit to get shot at by two different units plus the artillery! In the center and near the ridge both sides cautiously moved out. By turn 3, however, both sides threw caution to the wind and the battle was on. The Lancastrians crested the ridge and started a

massive archery duel while Somerset's light cavalry looked for an opening to exploit. Fauconberg, however, who was having a hard time getting his troops to move gladly stood there and shot at the Lancastrians on the ridge. In the center Percy and Edward squared off, maneuvering their forces to get into contact with as much support as possible.

Now there was combat across the entire board. Oxford's front line troops were doing well, but half of them didn't move for much of the game! The artillery was pounding anything that came close, but at long range they couldn't hit anything. In the center Edward and Percy were really going at it. Charges and counterattacks raged across the center,



leaving many units damaged and things didn't look good for either after a few turns. Near the ridge there was a furious exchange of archery and both sides were getting disordered, fell back, then re-engaged. While Somerset held the ridge he couldn't make any progress to do down it at all. (cont. on p33)





(cont. from p32) Warwick kept pressing Oxford and at one time both joined their front line units for some massive melees that swung back and forth. Oxford, sensing an opening, moved up more troops to overlap Warwick, who failed some command rolls at the worst times. Edward and Percy were now down two units each, so whoever lost the next one would break. Finally, on the ridge, Somerset's forces launched an attack, but were beaten back. They had lost two units and weren't in good shape either. By this time every division had lost one, if not two units. We were getting to the decisive part of the battle and units were scattered all over, making command difficult.

The game could have gone on a bit longer except for one thing, the number of failed rally attempts! Both sides, particularly the Lancastrians, failed roll after roll, so many units remained shaken

when they were shot at or attacked again. First, Percy collapsed in the center, losing his third unit due to a bad break roll. Warwick then broke as Oxford kept pressing and was the only command in reasonably good shape. Near the ridge, Somerset moved back up to the ridge, but failed a few break tests and his division broke as well.

With two of their three divisions now broken, the Lancastrians were forced to concede. It went right down to the wire as both sides had a lost several units and most commands were on the verge of breaking the last few turns. The lone exception to this was Oxford's command, which was still in good shape and could have held out a bit longer. The battle had seen some desperate fighting, particularly in the center where neither Edward or Percy would concede anything!

The battle did show that we really need to start using the Arrow Storm rule from the Wars of the Roses supplement. This give each bow armed unit only three volleys per game, which would have prevented a lot of the shooting that went on for 10 turns! With this rule once you're out of arrows it's time to go to hand to hand, which would have greatly changed things during the battle. Still not sure how our forces, which are based for the WOTR rules in the 2nd edition rules, would work with this rules as the supplement changes a lot of the units.

We do like the period as its colorful and there's a lot of melee. In the future we'll probably start using some of the rules from the supplement, especially the ones for artillery, the various personalities, weather, and more. Of course, doing a campaign someday would also be an awesome goal.



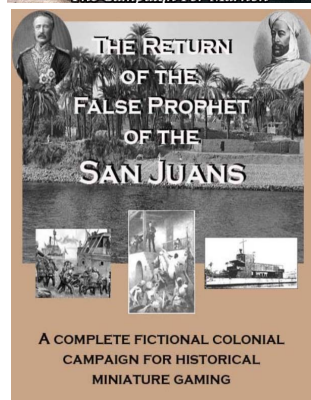
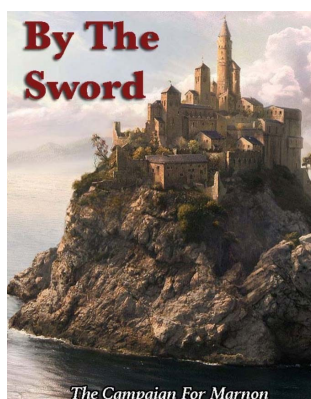
WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play a wide variety of games in 1/300th, 10mm, 15mm, and 28mm, including Hail Caesar, Age of Reason, Age of Discovery, Age of Eagles, Fire & Fury, General de Brigade, Warmaster Ancients/Medieval, TSATF, Phantoms, Mustangs, Battlegroup Panzergrenadier, Saga, Ronin, DBA, BKC4, board wargames, and more...

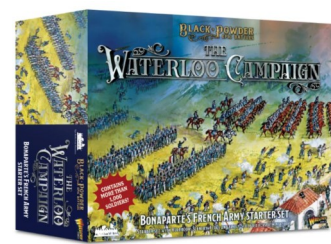
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One of the more interesting developments in the hobby has to be the rise of the “epic” series being put out by Warlord Games. At this time there are sets for 1815, Hannibal vs. Rome, Pike & Shotte, ACW, and Revolutionary War. Of course, these games use variations on their own Black Powder and Hail Caesar rules, with the rules cleverly being included with the larger boxed sets. The starter sets alone have enough figures to keep one busy painting for quite some time, but if that’s not enough there are all kinds of cavalry, artillery, infantry brigade, and officer sets that you can add on to expand your forces. Also, they are in a non-standard 13mm scale, meaning that not much in the 10 or 15mm ranges of miniatures will fit with them, pretty much forcing you to come back to Warlord Games for additional miniatures.



Whether or not that is shrewd marketing or forcing gamers to play their games with their miniatures is a debate for another day. What is definitely occurring is that they are continuing to expand the range into other periods, so you have to think that it’s only a matter of time before Seven Years War, Zulu War, the Sudan, etc., are represented in this scale. Not all of the various periods will probably sell in the numbers that the first ones are, but you have to figure that more periods will be offered. For those just getting into the hobby or looking for a set of rules that can be used for multiple periods, this nicely sets itself up as a one stop shopping service for the hobby. If you’re interested in the ACW, buy a boxed set, add on some additional units, and there’s no need for you to look elsewhere for terrain, rules, painting guides, etc., as everything is self contained. Regardless of your view of Warlord Games, this is a pretty smart way to get gamers to support your company for years to come.

Where this begins to get interesting, however, is what is going to happen to all of the gamers that already play these periods? Many are not going to give up playing Age of Eagles in 15mm, General de Brigade in 28mm, Age of Reason in 15mm, and so on. However, when they retire from the hobby, extreme old age, etc., who will pick up and carry that flag of playing non-Warlord Games historical miniatures? That’s a good question because many gamers coming into the historical side of the miniatures hobby are only going to know Flames of War, Black Powder, Bolt Action (how long before an epic WW2 set is released?), and Hail Caesar. The days of Johnny Reb, The Sword and the Flame, Age of Eagles, Battles for Empire, and so on seem to be numbered. There will always be gaming with other rules, but it looks at this time that they will definitely be on the fringe of the hobby as we go forward. While many of us back in the 70s and 80s thought it would be good to someday have some universal sets of rules, none of us thought this is the way it would happen!

