

WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

# Warning Order

ISSUE #26

SPRING 2010



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RENAISSANCE BATTLE REPORT  
GENERAL DE BRIGADE BATTLE REPORT  
2ND ANNUAL WMA TOURNAMENT  
BOARDGAME REVIEWS  
PLUS ALL OF THE REGULAR FEATURES



# Warning Order

## Northwest Frontier

When it comes to colonial wargaming, the Northwest Frontier (NWF) is usually far behind the Zulu War and the Sudan in terms of popularity. All you have to do is look at the choice of figures in many colonial ranges and it becomes fairly obvious that the NWF has the fewest choices. You can also see this in terms of Osprey books, rules, boardgames, and more. What is unfortunate about this is that of all the colonial periods the NWF offers probably the most options for gaming scenarios!

England was heavily involved in the NWF for almost a century and fought a variety of actions, from simple skirmishes for a hilltop observation post to full scale battles involving tens of thousands of



combatants. So why the lagging popularity of this interesting aspect of Victorian era colonial wars? This article will talk about some of the reasons for this, the types of actions that can be gamed, the availability of figures and rules, and how you can get started in this interesting era.

One of the reasons that the NWF isn't as popular as many other colonial periods is the one thing that you would think would be a strength, which is the



length of the British involvement in the NWF. However, this can be a problem as the army fought there in several different uniforms, from the old 1840-

1850s uniform to the red and blue uniform seen so prevalent in the Zulu War, to the khaki with puttees in the 1880s, and finally the WW1 tropical dress. Choosing a period upon which to base your army can be difficult for some gamers, especially in terms of selecting a figure range to provide all of your needs.

The second issue is information about the NWF and this isn't always easy to come upon. Sure, there are the books by Churchill and Barthrop which can be found anywhere, but after that you really have to look around. Also, many of the books on the period spend a lot of time on the tribal politics and try to cover almost a full century of involvement, which isn't exciting to many gamers.

Uniform info isn't too difficult to find as any guides for the Sudan or Boer Wars can be used since many of the British forces that fought in those campaigns were shipped from the NWF and vice versa. Finding information on the Pathans is not as critical either, since their dress is very similar to many of the Arab forces

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### Special points of interest:

- *Age of Discovery battle report*
- *General de Brigade battle report*
- *The 2nd annual WFHGS WMA tournament*
- *Several board game reviews*
- *Editorial on the next FOW*
- *Regular features*

## Northwest Frontier (cont.)

that fought colonial powers during the 19th century.

The two big obstacles in this period besides the smaller ones previously mentioned are finding the right rules and terrain. Although there are quite a few rules sets out there for colonial gaming, the question is which set is right for you or your gaming group. Much of this depends upon whether you are trying to



game skirmish actions or big battles. I've found that over the years most rules do one or the other well, but rarely both. With the costs and time of preparing armies you usually need to focus on one or the other. You can also base your figures in such a way that you can play different rules at different scales with the same figures.

So what should a set of NWF rules have in it? The first is that the rules need to represent terrain, particularly hills, villages, and rough ground well. Afghanistan has some of the most unforgiving terrain on the planet and this figured into many of the operations and campaigns in the NWF during this era. If your rules just gloss over the terrain, then it's time to look for another set. The rules should also feature better than average artillery for the British and their Indian allies. The batteries used in the NWF could sometimes only carry a few rounds per gun each, so every shot had to count. The Indian artillery crews were legendary for putting rounds on the target usually with the first shot!

In terms of melee, the Pathans should be better than average in their willingness to close with the enemy. Maybe not as fanatic as the Dervishes and Fuzzies, but better than a 50% chance. However, the reverse should be true when they are charged as the Pathans did not like to stand up to a bayonet charge by the British, Indians, or Gurkhas.

Naturally, the British and Indians would have better morale and staying power as there really was no alternative but to stay and fight it out. Surrender was definitely out as the Pathans didn't take prisoners and withdrawal was extremely difficult in the type of terrain that most battles were fought over. This meant that the British and their allies either went down fighting to a man or were tenacious enough to take their objective. This is of course, quite a broad generalization, but in game terms this is how most colonial games end up being fought!

For skirmish games the most popular set of rules is *The Sword and the Flame*. It has been discussed over and over not only in this magazine, but in countless other sources, so the reader can easily find out anything he or she needs about this set of rules. We have also used the *Colonial Skirmish* rules (in the blue cover) which is man to man with each turn being a few seconds. It is a radical departure from most sets of rules, but it can prove to provide a unique and entertaining game.

For large battles there are several sets of rules, including a TSATF spin off called *800 Fighting Englishmen*. If your figures are already based for TSATF then you can quickly set things up for this set of rules. Another good set is *Battles For Empire*, which will have a greatly expanded second edition out this year.

This set of rules features company sized units with a Fire & Fury type movement system. We use them for the Sudan and have had several great games with these rules. The new set of rules on the block is *Black Powder*, which uses a Warmaster type command and control system. There is a Sudan scenario in the rules, so it should be easily adaptable to the NWF.

I should also mention that our group has a set of NWF campaign rules called *Valley of Fire*, which is available on the same site where you download this magazine. *Valley of Fire* has a full color map, counters, and rules designed for a full fledged campaign that can be used with TSATF or many other colonial rules.

In terms of figures there are so many that it would be impossible to describe everything that is available. If you are into 6mm and 10mm there are ranges that can be adapted to the NWF. For 15mm there is a large variety of British that can be used for both the early and late period NWF. Surprisingly, however, there are few choices for Pathans in 15mm. Everyone makes Zulus and Dervishes, but once again the Pathans don't get a lot of love!

The biggest choice is in 25mm where you have Essex, The Perrys, Redoubt, Old Glory, Castaway Arts, Empress, Tiger, and more. Many of these ranges and those from other manufacturers can be mixed and matched with little difficulty. The hardest decision as stated earlier is deciding what period to do. If you're a sucker for the red coated British, then Empress and several of the Perrys figures can make an excellent army. If you're into khaki and the (cont. on page 14)



# Surprise River Crossing

# Age of Discovery Battle Report

When we have no idea what to set up for a game we often turn to doing a Renaissance battle using the Age of Discovery rules. I think because the period is colorful, unpredictable, and it is quite the change from the usual fare. Only a few of the group had played in a similar “surprise bridge crossing” scenario before, so I thought it would be a good idea to run this scenario again.

Basically, there is a swollen river in early Spring in Italy with both sides encamped on opposite sides. One side, in this case the Imperialists, decide to break the deadlock and cross further down the river and attempt to surprise the French on the opposite side. This is based upon a historical battle and although the forces we used weren't from that battle, the situation was similar.

The Imperialists had two Spanish pike units, three German pike units, two Italian pike units, one unit of heavy cav, two units of light cav, plus a few batteries of artillery. The French had three units of Swiss, two units of Italian pikes, two heavy cav units, two light cav units, and two batteries of artillery, including one of heavy artillery that once placed could not be moved.

The Imperialist were able to place one permanent bridge anywhere along the length of the river. Then the French and Swiss set up their forces to guard the river and could not be closer than two pike moves from the river itself. Finally,



the Imperialists were able to place their makeshift bridge anywhere on the river and start their forces next to the bridge. Also, the French had to roll to activate their units (simulating that they were in camp and surprised) once the game began.

The Imperialists decided to guard the bridge with a pike unit and two units of light cav, then launch the main attack across the makeshift bridge at the opposite end of the river. The French spread themselves out along the river, hoping to buy time for the heavy units to transfer to the area of the main attack. With both sides set up and the strategies ready to, the game began.

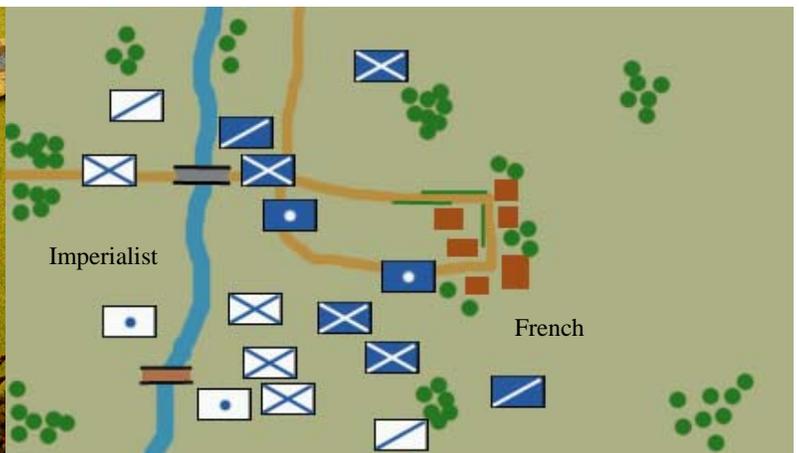
With the bridge placed a few units of German pike advanced across the bridge and took up defensive positions. The French started to activate their units, but

only had two units able to move on the first turn. Both of these started to move towards the newly placed bridge in an effort to delay the advance until the remaining French forces could mobilize. During the next few turns the Imperialist position on the French side of the river grew stronger while the French continued to get pieces of their army moving. Now it was a race to get an active defense moving to cut off the surprise advance before it could organize an effective attack towards the town.

The French forces on the far right flank, however, could see that they would not be able to make it to help with the defense of the town. They decided to attack across the permanent bridge and try to reach the enemy camp which would help force a withdrawal and save the day.



They initially got a small force across, but the Imperialist reaction was swift and they were quickly engaged in a battle that would last several turns and end up destroying several units on both sides.





Now the main action began near the town. The German and Spanish pike engaged the Swiss pike while the cavalry charged and countercharged across the open areas. The pike contests went several rounds, with the Imperialists getting great die rolls and slowly grinding down the Swiss. The French artillery caused some damage to the advancing Imperialists, but the build up of Imperialist forces was now threatening to swamp the defending French with numbers.

Finally, one of the Swiss pike units, down to less than 50% strength, routed and with it several other French units joined in, creating some massive gaps in the French defense. The cavalry charges on this flank had been draws, but they prevented the heavier French cavalry

intervening at this crucial moment. Although the German and Spanish pike had been bloodied, they emerged the victors of the battlefield and the way was now open to the town. The remaining French defenders tried to rally and organize a final blocking force to prevent defeat.

At the other bridge cavalry units and pike units clashed in close quarters, doing incredible damage to each other. Both sides had units break, then rally and counterattack. Finally, the French were driven back across the bridge, although the Imperialist forces took a beating as well.

Back near the town the Imperialist advance rolled on. The French counterattacked with light cavalry, but they were driven back and although the Swiss ral-

lied they were unable to stop the remaining German and Spanish pike units. Not only that, but a few fresh Italian pike units were in position to flank the town and the French had no reserves left to deal with this threat. At this point the game was called as an Imperialist victory.

The Imperialist were smart to place the bridges as far apart as possible, which presented the French with the problem of having to cover a wide area for the defense of the river line. When the main attack came, only about half of the French army was able to respond. The gambit almost backfired when the French launched their own attack across the other bridge, but once that failed the end was in sight. Another good Renaissance battle with an interesting twist for the set up.



# Desert Encounter

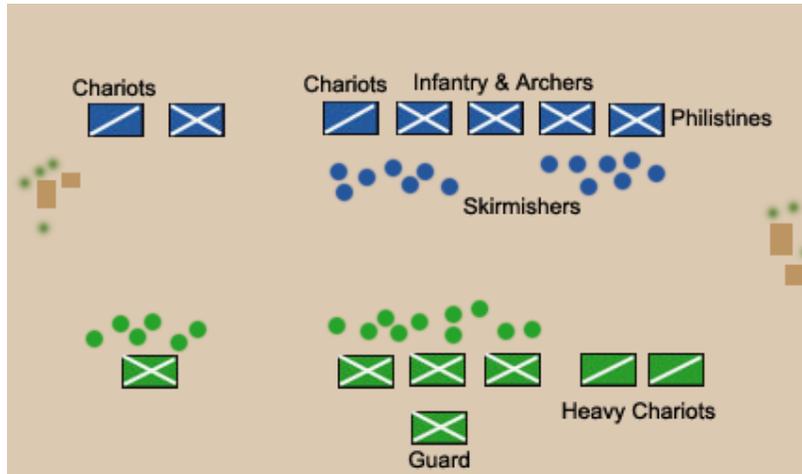
# WMA Battle Report

We had a night where all of our plans fell through, so when we need a quick game to set up at a moment's notice the game of choice has become Warmaster Ancients. For this battle we decided that we had not used the Assyrians and the Egyptians for quite some time, so we went back to the Biblical era for a 1500 points per side battle.

The Egyptian forces featured a large number of infantry, backed by archers, skirmishers, Sherden, and Philistines. The main striking force were several units of chariots with some chariot runners. The Egyptians decided to hold on their right flank and make the main attack down the center and left, trying to bring their weight of numbers to overwhelm the Assyrians.

The Assyrians had a good mix of infantry, archers, and cavalry plus the four horse heavy chariots which we affectionately refer to as "Biblical Panzers"! The Assyrians were set up to probe on the left flank, hold in the center, then hit the Egyptians hard on the right flank.

Both sides did not get off to the best start as most of the commanders failed their command rolls, so only a few units got moving. By the third turn, however,



things were beginning to happen as both sides battle plans began to unfold. The Egyptians deployed several brigades of infantry with a lot of archers out in front of their positions while the chariots moved to cover the flanks.



The Assyrians also began to move the center and the right flank units, but the left flank continued to make little, if any progress. In fact, this is what ended up costing

the Assyrians in the end as the left flank units could not get moving during the entire game.

By the fourth turn there was an ex-

change of archery as the archers and skirmishers of both sides began to engage each other. The drive backs began to make the lines falter and many of the brigades came apart. The Assyrian heavy chariots charged in on the Assyrian right, crushing an infantry unit and running over a unit of chariots that decided to stay and fight.

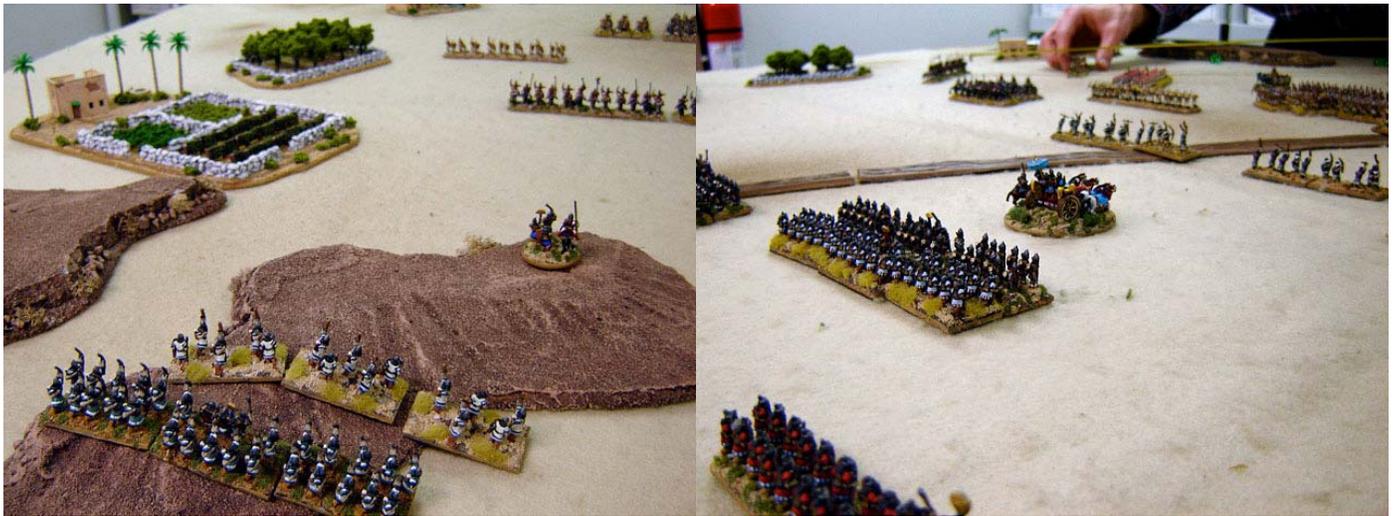
The Assyrian heavy chariots at one point in the mid game looked as if they were going to run through

most of the Egyptian army and win the game singlehandedly! They crushed a unit of archers the next turn and then they ran into the Philistines, which was bad luck.

Now normally the Assyrian chariots would make short work of the Philistine infantry, but not today! The Assyrians had horrific die rolls and the Philistines had incredible rolls, knocking out two stands of chariots. The next turn Egyptian archers and a counterattack by the Egyptian chariots finished off the Assyrian heavy chariot units. While they had done some serious damage to the Egyptians, this was a huge loss and would cause the Assyrians to look for a different avenue to victory.

Both sides now began to redeploy forces in the center where the battle would be decided.





The Assyrians now needed to come to grips with the Egyptians in close combat where their armored infantry could do more damage, despite the advantage of the Egyptian numbers. With the Assyrian left still barely moving, the Assyrian infantry, including the Guard, surged forward.

With the heavy chariot threat now removed, the Egyptians could move the forces from that flank to the center. This gave them a large number of archers and they started to use them to good effect. The Assyrians formed up again and again, but many attacks were delayed by drive backs and confusion results from the Egyptian archery fire.

By the seventh and eighth turns the Assyrians were in position to attack and they hit the center of the Egyptian line. Their armor helped them some in melee

and they began to whittle down the Egyptian units. The Egyptians, however, weren't going down without a fight and they counterattacked throughout the center of the battle area, creating a large series of melees.

By this time both sides were near the breaking point. If the Assyrian left flank could get in on the action their additional units could prove to be decisive. However, every attempt to get them to do anything had not met with success and when they finally did get moving it was too late!

The Assyrian Guard units were now committed to the battle in one final attempt to break the Egyptian army. They along with other Assyrian infantry attacked the remaining Egyptian infantry units. Through a series of bad die rolls and timely counterattacks by the Egyp-

tians, the Egyptian line held and the Assyrians lost their last unit needed to break. At this point the Assyrian army was forced to withdraw, giving the Egyptians a hard fought victory.

Overall, it was another great WMA game and for some reason the games between the Assyrians and Egyptians almost always come down to the last turn or one side or the other needing to destroy one more unit. It is a classic battle between quality and quantity, with the better armored Assyrians trying to hold off the masses of Egyptians. I think that WMA, while fairly simple and with basic army lists, is able to get this period right better than many ancients systems I've tried. There is a wide variety of units available to each side, plenty of army options, and the command & control system makes this one of our favorite games to play.



# Memoirs of a Miniature & Board Wargamer Pt. 13

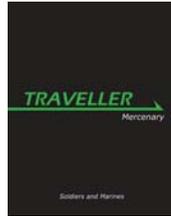
## Stuff I Never Should Have Sold

As with most people in this hobby, I find it hard to focus on just a single area in gaming. Then, after you've been in the hobby for almost 35 years you can look back and reflect upon all of the stupid decisions that you've made! As many of you know by now, I occasionally dabble in fantasy and sci-fi, so that along with historical miniatures and boardgames means that I've seen my share of stuff come and go. These are some of the things I wished I had held onto.

"Back in the day" I got into role-playing along with historical miniatures and boardgames. Besides D&D my friends and I also played Traveller, Gamma World, MERC, Star Frontiers, and a bunch of others. I sold my boxed set of original Traveller books for a hefty sum several years ago and a copy of issue one of the Travellers Aid Society for \$120 to some guy in Vegas. Still, I think back upon the great times I had with these things and wonder why I got rid of them.

Of course, I had a lot of boardgames, particularly at a time when the NATO-Warsaw Pact thing was quite popular. A few games, such as NATO Division Commander, GDW's Third World War series, and more got sold off when I came to the conclusion that since the world had changed then these games were now obsolete. Now, however, looking back I realized that some of these were great games and I should have kept them! Games like Fortress America, Invasion America, and others were fun to play and are now worth a pretty good price on Ebay!

This also applied to the science-fiction board games that I had as well. The GDW version of Imperium was one of my favorite games and when I got sick of sci-fi for awhile I sold it, which I regret now. The same goes for the original copies of Ogre, Melee, Wizard, the Dwarfstar games, and many more. They gave me years of enjoyment and then I got rid of them on a whim, usually



while cleaning up or consolidating down in an attempt to stay organized. However, in gaming you must realize that this is futile as more and more items continually get added to your ever growing collection!

The same could be said for miniatures rules, of which I've had plenty in my day. Copies of WRG rules, Newbury, old sci-fi and fantasy sets, Tractics, first editions of many popular sets and more. For some reason I equated newer with better and figured I didn't need the old ones anymore! However, some of these older rules still had some great ideas, scenarios, and can provide inspiration when you're in a gaming or painting slump.

But the worst for me is all the miniatures and armies that I've sold over the years. I started out with John McEwan figs such as Amerons for Starguard and dwarves for D&D. Those got sold when I got into ACW with 1/72nd plastics, then later Ros and Heroics 6mm ACW armies. Those got dumped when I discovered 15mm figs and so on. Instead of hanging onto armies I dump them to fund the next big project, to upgrade the figures/armies, or to experiment in a different scale.

I had 500+ NATO and Warsaw Pact vehicles, 15mm Mexican-American armies, old Stone Mountain 15mm ACW, two collections of 15mm WW2, and two GHQ WW2 armies that all went the way of Ebay or in trades for you guessed it, more miniatures! What's weird is that I sometimes come back to these periods in the same scale I got rid of!

I once had a 500+ figure collection of 25mm Ral Partha Sudan figures that I sold because 15mm would be better and it was getting hard to find the Ral partha figs, not to mention that they didn't match up with anything. What did I do? I started 25mm Northwest Frontier using some of the proceeds when I should have just

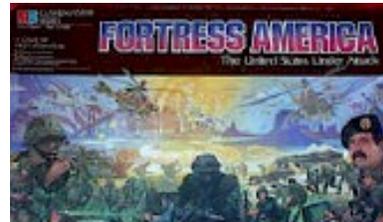
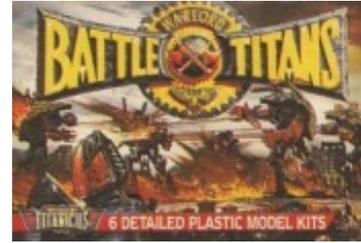


kept the collection and used it for other things or sets of rules!

This also applies to the sci-fi side of things as well. I started played WH40K when Rogue Trader came out and built three armies for it. Each army had over 150 figs plus vehicles, so it was a pretty sizeable investment. When the rules kept changing I got angry and sold them off, swearing I would never try it again. I then got into GW's epic system with huge armies, about a dozen titans, and a ton of terrain that I made. I broke even on the sale of the figs, but I wonder what they would go for now? I've also tried Heavy Gear, Warmachine, and Full Thrust. Each time I accumulate good sized forces, then either the period loses interest in the area, we find out that the rules aren't that good, or we move on to new periods. Instead of hanging onto the stuff I usually put it on Ebay and use the proceeds for yet more gaming stuff!

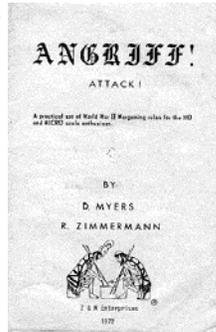
Now it could be said that if I had kept all of the stuff I've collected over the years that I wouldn't have any room in my house and that would be a valid argument! You could also look at the thousands of hours of painting and assembling the armies, saying that it was all a waste of time and you may have an argument.

Personally, I think that this is the situation that many gamers find themselves in. They love the hobby and with so much out there right now, it is difficult, bordering on impossible, to stay focused for very long. Yes, I think of the money spent, the hours used to paint the figs or learn the rules, but I look back on this stuff with fond memories. Do I look back and want to kick myself for getting rid of my Gamma World and other valuable items? Sure. However, there's new periods out there and games that need to be played, and yes, I'm sure somewhere down the road I'll sell off more stuff!



# Blast From The Past Pt. 12: Your First Miniatures Rules

Does anyone remember their first set or sets of miniatures rules? I had started out in boardgames with SPI's Sixth Fleet way back in the summer of 1976, but several guys in the local club played miniatures. I instantly fell in love with this side of the hobby, although I didn't really get going on my own collections for a few years afterwards.

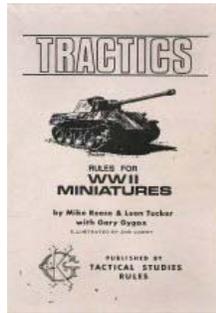


ready to be rolled for!

As with any new gamer, I also had a love affair with knights and the medieval period. Naturally this meant the old TSR rules called Chainmail. Chainmail was pretty basic, even in those days, and pretty much everyone had played them at least once. This made games pretty easy to set up and turns went fast, enabling us to put huge amounts of figs on the board for giant sized battles and sieges. It was definitely one of those fun sets of rules that's in the class of The Sword and Flame.

At that time there was a company called Atlantic that sold really cheap 1/72nd scale WW2 tanks and figures. The urge to resist was instantly squashed upon seeing them in the local hobby store, so I went home with a stack and a set of rules I had found called Angriff. You have to remember that back in this time there wasn't the plethora of gaming rules that there are now. You could say that I was lucky to have even found a set of rules at the local store at all!

Fortunately, I had been able to understand SPI rules, written in the legal terms that only wargamers can love, so the rules weren't as bad as if I had been a complete beginner. Those first few games, played on a small table with no terrain with my brother is what set me down this current path.



From there I kept collecting boardgames from Avalon Hill and SPI, but still doing a few games of Angriff here and there. That changed when I played my first micro-armor game. This really got me going and at that time there were few rules available and with realism being the order of the day, yes, I ended up playing Tractics. Now Tractics would have no chance of succeeding in today's gaming world where simplicity and speed of play are the dominant features of a set of rules. Not only did a ten turn game take eight hours, but it was expected! When one side started firing the other side would go get lunch or something on the assumption that by the time they got back the necessary calculations would be

I was also a big ACW fan, having owned Bruce Catton's Army of the Potomac series. For some reason I bought Newbury's ACW rules and used them with first the Airfix ACW armies and then Ros Heroics 6mm figures. Again I was fortunate in that one gamer I knew played WRG Ancients a lot and since I was a regular opponent I was used to the rules and charts. Well, Newbury's sets of rules were definitely WRG clones, so the "legalese" didn't bother me that much. Armed with scenarios from one of the Tony Bath books and the scenarios in Battle magazine, then Military Modeling, I ran dozens of ACW games for our area before converting to Johnny Reb in the early 80s and 15mm as the preferred scale.

Then it was back to WW2 when I obtained a copy of the WRG skirmish rules. It started a renewed love affair with 1/72nd scale vehicles and figures that blossomed into a few years of gaming in this period again. The rules were fairly simple, open to a lot of interpretation, and were pretty much black text on a couple of sheets of paper stapled in the center, but for a group of guys in their late teens it was lot of fun.

Finally, what self respecting gamer in the earlier stage of his gaming life wouldn't be attracted by science-fiction? When I moved to Utah from California there was this wonderful little shop in SLC called McEwan Miniatures. Not only did they cast and sell their own figs, but there were regular games and the first games day/mini-con I ever went to was there.

At that time the most popular set of sci-fi rules was put out by McEwan called Starguard. There was an entire series of armies, with many of the figs resembling stormtroopers or rebels from Star Wars! There were also aliens, heavy weapons, and anything else to get you to take the plunge. The rules were fun (again, complexity, rosters, etc., were just natural things you dealt with in rules) and it catered to the sci-fi gamer in those days.



As the years went by these sets of rules were lost, sold, or replaced by the newer wave of commercial rules, much to my dismay. They represented an age where there was a definite passion in the hobby. Reading about armor penetration in Tractics, changing formations in Newbury rules, or skirmishers in WRG Ancients was just a given. Sure, there were complaints and arguments, but that was all there was for most of us, so you took those things in stride. Gaming on Saturday was the perfect end to an entire week of prepping for a scenario, painstakingly painting a few more figs to squeeze in, reading up on the rules, or perish the thought in today's hobby, reading a book about the period or battle to be fought.

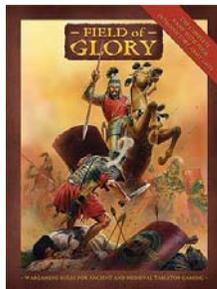
Yes, these rules were printed on nothing more than a plain piece of paper (some were even poorly typeset!) with a cardboard cover that if you were lucky had a drawing or piece of art on it. In comparison to today's rules they were primitive, many were overly complex, no index or contents for that matter, and definitely no pretty pictures or eye candy. They weren't advertising figures, more books due out soon, or a web site. Questions had to be sent by mail and errata was basically a new version of the rules if they ever got around to it.

But, they were a labor of love and there was a passion for the hobby in those pages, which in reading today's glossy productions, seems to be missing.

Anytime Flames of War is brought up you can be assured that its supporters and detractors will come out in droves to either say it's the greatest game to have ever been designed in the hobby or the worst thing to have come along in a long time. Regardless of what side you take, there is one fact that remains and that is the game has been extremely successful. You have well produced books, a massive website with forums, tons of figs, new products coming down the pipeline, and lots of eye candy.

What this leads to are the inevitable discussions about what rules set or period will be the next Flames of War. Modern gamers are really big into what's the latest fad so that they can jump onto the bandwagon. Speculation about what could be the next FOW pops up on a lot of discussion threads and usually provokes some interesting comments, ranging from it can't be replicated to all of the reasons why period ABC will be the next one. So, let's take a look at what period could be the next FOW.

**Ancients:** You would think that this would be a contender. LOTS of army choices, many of the armies need limited painting, and it fits ideally into the FOW model of being able to put out endless books on each army. The problem? Ancient gamers are pretty entrenched and they don't want anyone telling them pike formations should be such and such so that they need to buy special figs or have some gimmicky rules for each army. Also, so many gamers have armies for this period based for other rules that it would be hard to convince them to change. FOG tried and didn't succeed.



**Napoleonics:** Now here's another contender that probably won't make it for the same reasons as stated above. Too many gamers have rules that they like and have based their armies for. Not only that, there's been a surge in new rules for this period lately that would make it difficult to get traction for a FOW type rules set. Then there's the painting issue as painting a battalion of legere is much more difficult than a platoon of Shermans.

**ACW:** Now here's a period that in my opinion (and I'm a big ACW fan) has been stagnant for awhile. Yes, there are two sets of rules (F&F and JR II & III) that have big followings, but there's always room for one more. The main problem is that an FOW business model wouldn't work well as there's only so many books that you could produce for two similar armies.

**Seven Years War:** Similar to Napoleonics in that most gamers have rules they like and are unwilling to rebase their figs. Do you see a pattern emerging?

**Naval:** Now here's an area where a FOW type system could succeed. One set of basic rules, then books for everything from Roman galleys up to modern destroyers. There is the potential for a lot of figs, campaigns, etc., but naval gamers are far and few between, so the chance of this catching on like FOW is going to be remote.

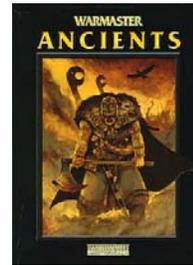
**Renaissance/ECW:** Definite possibility given the large number of army books that could be produced along with figures. The main problem is that existing gamers might not change over and there is clearly an obstacle in painting some of the more difficult units such as gen-darmes and pikes. Also, there's no way to get the kind of audience that WW2 has.

**Colonial:** Another good possibility, but you need to paint masses of native opponents, which could be a problem for the ADD generation of gamers.

**Air Combat:** This may have been a possibility before the success of Wings of War. Now, most gamers into this period will probably stick with that or their current set of rules. Also, like naval gaming, there is definitely a small audience that wouldn't expand rapidly enough.

You can see by some of these suggestions that there are huge obstacles for any period besides WW2 to have the success that FOW has had. WW2 has a lot of advantages for an FOW type system and Battlefront took full advantage of it. First, painting the figs is easy, even for a

beginner. Spraying Sherman tanks olive drab and painting the tracks a steel color can be done by almost anyone. Second, the wide variety of vehicles used in the war is ideal for selling every variation and then some to gamers who need them for their army. Also, breaking up the periods into separate books, army lists, etc., provides room for growth that most other periods don't have.



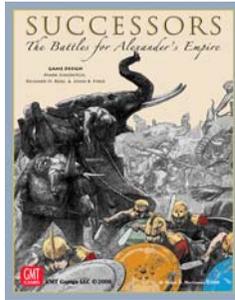
WW2 has one more important advantage that most periods don't have and that is assembling armies. Let's say for example that you need to do a WW2 FOW force and a

FOW Napoleonic army for a tournament (using some of the sample FOW type lists I've seen for a Napoleonic variant). For the WW2 list you go out, buy three packs of Shermans, a pack of jeeps, some self propelled guns, then go home, assemble them, spray them olive drab or desert tan, add a few details, and you're done. Virtually any gamer with limited painting skill can do this and it's pretty common for the FOW crowd.

Now take the FOW style Napoleonic force. You need four units of infantry, one of lights, one cavalry regiment, and a battery of guns. Probably around 150 figs total, some with different uniforms and/or facings, which is going to take considerably longer to prep and paint. This is where I think the huge difference is in finding another period for something similar to FOW. WW2 is easy for gamers to pick up, easy to build armies, and easy to paint. You're honestly going to tell me that FOW gamers can't wait to paint (24) 15mm Hussars of the Guard?

In the end I think that Field of Glory is probably as close to an FOW type rules set that you're going to see. Battlefront caught lightning in a bottle and exploited it to the full extent, which has proven to be successful. However, the dizzying numbers of rules sets for other periods, the entrenched gamers in those periods, and the need to do quite a lot more painting adds up to FOW being one of a kind. New rules will continue to come out, but it is doubtful that anything will ever be regarded as successful as FOW.

Successors, along with Hannibal, must rank up there with some of the best card driven wargames ever designed. Not only that, they were some of the first wargames to use a card driven system and have held their popularity over a few decades and several versions. GMT has now released the third edition of this popular game and since I have a Successor army for Warmaster Ancients I thought I would try the game out.



The box is pretty heavy as there is a 22 x 34 mounted mapboard in it with stunning artwork. The movement spaces, boundaries, etc., are all clearly laid out and most of the necessary tables that you use are also printed on the board. The other things I like is that there is a holding area for the fleets and various markers that I found were a great reminder about various parts of the game as it was being played.

You get several counter sheets with a wide variety of markers. There are round markers for territory control in four different colors for each faction, square counters for the combat units, and then long rectangular counters for fleets, plus various other markers for royal family members, sieges, and more. It's a good thing that they give you several plastic bags to store the counters as it does help to separate all of them! Finally, there is a deck of 70+ cards for events, operations, etc., plus several cards for the generals who are trying to succeed Alexander.

The rules booklet is in color and features an entire sample turn at the back of the book, which really helps you out if you have never played card driven wargames before. I found the rules were pretty easy to grasp and after a few sample turns I felt that I could show others how to play fairly quickly. Any questions were resolved by checking through the folder on Consimworld and by re-reading the appropriate



section, but I saw nothing that was too difficult to understand.

Successors has five turns in a complete game, although players can win an automatic victory through the accumulation of either victory points or legitimacy points. Each turn is broken into five rounds, where each player/faction must play a card, then move their forces. Now here is where it gets interesting as there are so many options it can overwhelm first time players. Cards can be used to train troops, discarded to upgrade fleets, played for extra movement, or played for the event on the card. Then, during movement you can forego movement to build a combat unit, move your forces, or do a combination of moves and sieges/subjugation attempts.

Naturally, this creates a lot of chaos during the game as you have generals running around with their armies trying to control provinces, besiege important independent strongholds, and build up forces to protect against roving independent armies and your rear areas from unrest. Add to this the part of the game that deals with heirs and it comes across as Britannia meets Kingmaker! Not only that, the faction starting in Babylon has control of Alexander's body and can take it to Pella to bury it and this can earn you almost enough legitimacy to win the game. However, everyone in the area is going to try to stop you, so doing this could be one of the more difficult things in gaming!

Combat is very interesting as if one player has more legitimacy than their opponent, it could cause royal combat units to sit out the battle! Which ever side loses takes a massive body blow as most of your army gets dispersed and doesn't come back until the start of the next turn! This can create massive openings for your oppo-

nent to exploit, but the good news is that you can build up a defeated army pretty quickly, so you're never really out of the game.

One other feature about this game that I like a lot is that each game can be entirely different from the next. Each player (in the four player game) gets two random generals, which means that your faction could be split on opposite ends of the board, which creates some unusual strategies and paths to victory. The event cards as well add another dimension to the randomness and it would take several plays of the game to really learn what is the best strategy as the chaos swirls about you. I think that the game does a good job of capturing this turbulent period and



from my readings of the era it has some pretty good history behind it.

Now this is not to say that the game is perfect. It will take some getting use to using the prestige and legitimacy parts of the game along with the royal family/heirs. Also, there is only one set of tables/charts when it would have been best to have had at least two for a four player game. Also, the two player game is more about empire building and very little combat takes place other than sieges, so I would only play this if you absolutely can't find one or two more players.

The four player version is where the game really shines, though. There are enough variations in starting positions, cards, and options to have multiple games without any of them being the same, which to me is the mark of an interesting game. I highly recommend Successors and look forward to playing it many times.

## 2nd Annual WFHGS Warmaster Ancients Tournament

For the first time last year we held a Warmaster Ancients one day tournament. It was such a success that we decided to do it again this year! We pick a day, meet for breakfast or lunch, then play several games in a quick format that produces a clear winner.

There are four of us who are heavily into WMA and we have a total of seven armies with a few more being built as we speak. Each player gets to choose an army of up to 1,000 points, then we give each player three territories from the campaign system in the second WMA book. These territories usually give each player an additional three units, meaning each army generally has between 12 and 17 units, which is just about right for this kind of tournament.

The terrain is set up by all of the players and is designed to add a little bit of scenery, but the center is usually kept open. Each player plays three games and we shot for a target of getting each game done in 90 minutes. The length of the game is determined as in the rules by a die roll, then the players dice for sides and deployment. The winner of the tournament is done by the most victories, but in case of a draw, then it is determined by how many victory points (in terms of casualties caused to your opponent) each player has accumulated. This also works well as it determines who gets the Master of Mayhem award for causing the most casualties during the tournament.

After each game a new territory is rolled for and the winner gets to take the

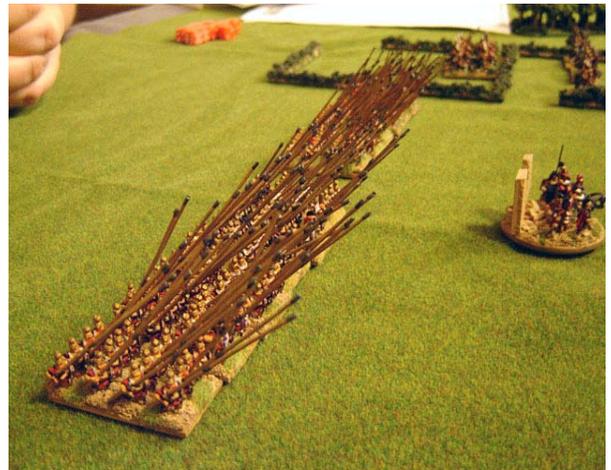
new territory or one of his opponent. In this way the winners acquire new territories, but everyone still has at least three to use. Those who have more than three are able to pick the best three to use in the next game. This sounds time consuming, but we've got it down pretty good and players move from game to game pretty quickly.

This year we had Vikings, Romans, Seleucids, and for the first time Indians. Naturally, this produced some interesting matchups! We had used all of the armies before in several games over the last year or so, but this was the first time using Indians, which was the army I had just painted and it ended up



being a big mistake as I had no idea how to play them!

The Vikings and the Seleucids were definitely out for blood this time and took both of the first games. The Romans then defeated the Indians and the Seleucids defeated the Vikings for the second set of games. Finally, the Vikings defeated the Romans and the Seleucids took care of the Indians in a very bloody battle that went down to the wire. All of the battles were well played and several of them went down to the last turn with both sides going for the last unit to force a with-



drawal or to get a few extra points at the end. The final results were:

1st Place	Seleucids-Mark
2nd Place	Vikings-Dave
3rd Place	Romans-Gary
4th Place	Indians-Matt

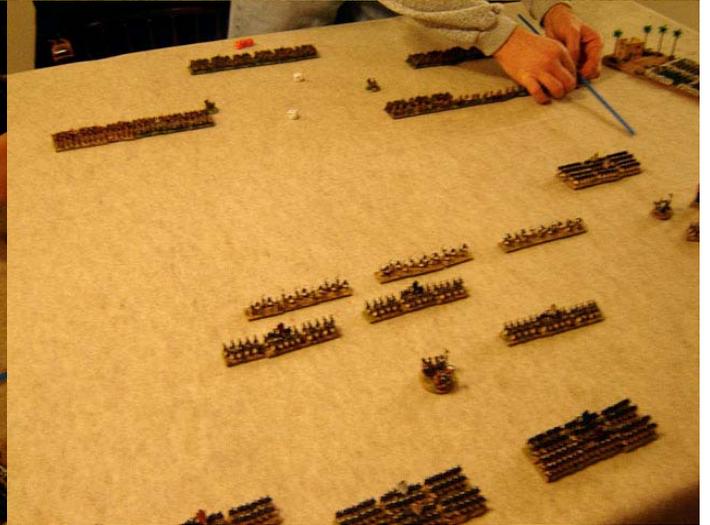
The Master of Mayhem award went to Dave for inflicting the most casualties with his Vikings.

A few observations on the battles and armies for this year. First, the Seleucids were a well balanced force that because of the mix of cavalry, pikes, and skirmishers are able to hang in there with pretty much anything thrown against them. The Romans are similar, but some bad die rolling at the worst possible times really hurt them. The Vikings are really destructive in close and if you allow them to get into too many melees with you then your army is going to probably lose. Their only defeat was to the Seleucids who used their mobility to spread the Vikings out and attack at different points. Finally, my Indians could do nothing right, so the jury is still out on them. The Indian general gave about three successful orders all day! Then, when my elephants did charge, they rolled something like one hit out of 15 or 16 dice!

Overall, it was another great tournament and gaming day. Three games in around five hours and a lot of fun. Hopefully by next year the Normans, Saxons, and maybe another new army will make an appearance.



## 2nd Annual WFHGS Warmaster Ancients Tournament (cont.)



## Northwest Frontier (cont.)

later period, then you need to mix and match various manufacturers. Several also sell figures for the regular Afghan army to add some variety to your army or scenarios.

Also, as stated above, terrain is a huge obstacle for the NWF. You can easily use almost any Arab style building, so items from Crescent Root Studio or JR Miniatures will fit right in here. The hard part is simulating the rocky hilltops, endless cliffs, passes, and scrub areas to give the appearance of an unforgiving landscape. Also, just because many pictures (even today's video from Afghanistan) show a desert/scrub view doesn't mean that you should assume that's how the entire country is! There are rivers, pine forested hills, and villages with farmland and trees dotting the landscape.

This is one of the more unique periods in that terrain was one of the critical deciding factors in many battles or skirmishes. Planning a long operation



through snowy mountain passes, fighting over a critical observation point on a rocky hilltop, or trying to seize the only bridge in one hundred miles over a gorge can feature prominently in your scenarios. While in most gaming periods it is usually critical to meet and destroy the enemy, here it is controlling terrain objectives.



This leads us to a discussion of what kinds of scenarios can be played in the NWF. Most Zulu war scenarios revolve around raids by either side or trying to lure the Zulus into battle. Much

can be said about the Sudan, where the British tried to lure the Mahdists into open battle on their terms.

These kinds of scenarios can also be part of the NWF, but there are far more opportunities here. One of the most common operations was to punish a tribe for attacking the British or violating terms of a treaty. A British force would assemble, march through hostile territory and either enforce the terms of the treaty or burn down the village! This leads to ambushes, seizing observation points long the lines of march, or attacking a well defended village.

The villages ranged from a few small buildings to being completely walled with a stone watchtower, which would make an ideal centerpiece for any scenario. Attacks across bridges, raids against supply caravans, sieges against forts, and more can all be played out in the NWF. For over a century there were thousands of small actions involving a platoon or less up to relief forces of over a thousand trying to fight their way through to a besieged town or fort.

If you're into cavalry actions then the NWF will offer something unique for you. The Bengal Lancers and Guides cavalry units were constantly involved in raids, recon, rear guard actions, and more. In many of these actions they fought dismounted, so it is entirely possible to have a British force of nothing but cavalry units on a mission.

I think that this is where the NWF shines as a gaming period. By building a force of British, Indians, and/or Gurkhas, you can pretty much use them for almost any kind of scenario. Also, scenarios that are designed for other periods will easily translate into the NWF such as delaying actions, scouting missions, or full scale assaults. The possibilities are endless with the NWF and gamers only need to use their imaginations to come up with a scenario.

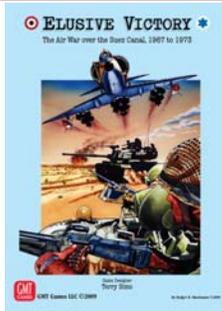
So, is the NWF set to become the next big thing in gaming? Maybe. New rules sets such as Black Powder and the upcoming 2nd edition of Battles for Empire along with maybe some plastic boxed sets could breathe some new life into this exciting period. Yes, the Zulu War and the Sudan get all the publicity,



but the NWF in my opinion has far more gaming opportunities than both of those periods combined! If figure manufacturers decide to expand their existing ranges, a few new Osprey titles on the era emerge, and some of these newer rules sets take hold, you could see NWF emerge as a popular period.

Hopefully this article has wet your appetite to try out the NWF. After all, what's not to like? Gurkhas bravely defending a hilltop post, Bengal lancers skirmishing with an advancing Pathan horde, or a screw gun battery unlimbering in the midst of a hot and heavy firefight to save the day for the British Empire! By painting up a few units of Pathans and using your existing British forces you can try out this exciting period and maybe you'll get hooked like I did!

Several years ago I gave a very positive review to a new game by GMT called *Downtown*. For the first time, as far as I could recall, you were able to plan out massive airstrikes in the jet age against a defense consisting of fighters, SAMs, and AAA. It was a complex, sometimes long, and paperwork intensive affair, but it worked and was one of the most interesting gaming situations I've had.



about dogfighting, but rather conducting an operational level air campaign.

Each counter represents a flight of from one to four aircraft. Generic counters are used on the map until these flights are detected, then the real counter is put out when they are visually identified.

This does a lot for the fog of war and the addition of being able to generate dummy counters can cause some anxiety for both sides. Each side also gets to set up its own airstrikes, from assigning aircraft for SEAD, strike, armed escort, CAP, and recon to marking their ingress and egress routes on planning map. As I stated above, although there are rules for air to air combat, the player's focus is on how to conduct a raid against enemy targets.

Both sides also have SAMs and AAA defenses, which for the Egyptians, are quite considerable. Which radars are on, who is being tracked, SAM launches, etc., are accounted for in the game and although it adds another layer of complexity, it make the game even more challenging. There are also rules for airfield operations, BVR combat, CSAR ops, jamming, and far more than can be described here. Again, there are a lot of rules and there is some paperwork involved, but once the game starts playing it is remarkably smooth.

There are also a large number of scenarios, ranging from the opening airstrikes of the '67 War to the massive day long operations of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Some of the scenarios are ideal to learn the system as they only involve a few flights per side with some of the air defenses while others can involve multiple strikes and a full array of defenses, which could take the better part of 6-8 hours. The good thing about many of the scenarios is that the targets are selected

off of a table plus the number and type of Egyptian aircraft is variable, so there is good replay value for this game.

Unlike *Downtown* where each scenario was the USAF or USN launching a strike against North Vietnamese targets protected by a few flights of enemy aircraft and a lot of SAMs and AAA, this is an entirely different situation. Both sides are planning airstrikes, escorts, CAP missions, and setting up their defenses at the same time. This is much more challenging than *Downtown* in that both players sometimes have to attack and defend at the same time.

The designers did a good job on the orders of battle and have accurately portrayed the wide variety of aircraft that saw action in this theater. There are early French aircraft like the *Mystere*, the famous *Mirage III*, the *F-4E* and *A-4* from the 1973 actions, plus all of the usual Russian aircraft like the *SU-7*, *Mig-17*, and *Mig-21*. The air defenses include *Hawks*, *SA-2*, *SA-3*, and some *SA-6s*, plus light and heavy AA. Also, you get ground units for targets in the actions near the Suez Canal for some of the 1973 scenarios.



This is definitely a worthy addition to the *Downtown* system. The game has excellent components, a wide variety of scenarios, and it will appeal to the modern air combat gamer or anyone interested in the Arab-Israeli Wars. It is not for everyone, however, as the rules are not simple and there is some paperwork involved. Setting up your raids, filling everything out, then playing even a medium sized game will take 4-6 hours with some of the big scenarios perhaps going double that time.

What you do get though, is an excellent simulation of modern jet combat at the operational level. It is a unique gaming experience that puts you in command of multiple flights of aircraft against a determined enemy.



# General de Brigade: French Assault

# Battle Report

By this time you've probably figured out that we play the Napoleonic period in two different scales with three different sets of rules! While we usually play Age of Eagles and most of our stuff is based that way, we do have some members who like to do a smaller scale, so we every now and then do a game of General de Brigade.

This scenario featured a French attack into a prepared Allied defense. It was to be a pretty large game with a lot of stuff on the board featuring the Prussians, Russians, French, Poles, and Saxons from a fictional early Spring 1813 battle. The French had two divisions initially, then a third division of Poles and Saxons would come on later. Also, most of the French cavalry would come on much later, after the Prussians and Russians had been pushed back from the deployment areas. The Allies had two Prussian divisions, two Russian divisions, a cavalry corps and a lot of artillery.

The terrain featured a massive hill which was currently being held by the Prussians along with artillery. A smaller hill overlooked the bridge crossing the stream at the middle of the board, then the stream was surrounded by marsh and some woods at the extreme French right. The terrain didn't appear to be a major obstacle, but it definitely turned out that way!

The French decided to attack the hill on the left, pound the Allied center with



skirmish lines and make way for the main attack. This was partially successful, but the French skirmishers took a beating.

On turn 6 the main French attack began, with two divisions entering in battalion columns and trying to get into a position to launch a bayonet charge. The Russian and Prussian artillery batteries opened up on the columns while the French batteries swung into line to either counter-battery or softening up targets for assault. The French continued to take casualties and the French on the right flank began to understand that the marsh was a horrendous obstacle that was going to slow up the advance.

One of the French artillery batteries that was engaged in a long range duel with a Russian battery broke and ran. However, it had reduced the Russian battery so much that when a second French battery engaged it the Russian battery was destroyed, opening a gap on the hill. The Russians immediately tried to run two battalions

two batteries, then cross the stream and attack on the right as well. A sound plan except that the marshy areas would end up creating major movement problems for the French. The Prussians and Russians defended forward as far as possible, with the cavalry corps and a division of Russians, including some grenadier regiments held in reserve.



up to fill the hole.

The game started with a special five turn "pre-scenario" phase where the French skirmishers came on board early in an attempt to drive back the Allied

On the French left a brigade of infantry hit the Prussian artillery and infantry in a series of attacks in column. The Prussians lost an artillery battery and one





of the Prussian battalions was driven back in rout. This caused the entire brigade to fall back, surrendering the hill to the French. Two French brigades had been bloodied, but one of the main objectives was taken and things were looking pretty good for the French side.

The French now tried to move up supporting artillery and infantry in an effort to make the hole even bigger. The Prussian division general on that side had been killed which meant that the brigade on that side was without leadership for several turns and was a prime target to exploit the current French advantage.

But, here's where a series of events would plague the French all evening. A second attack was a dismal failure and

the retreating battalions piled into others coming up behind them, creating quite the mess and a huge traffic jam. By the time it got sorted out the Prussian forces had rallied and moved back into a strong defensive position.

In the center a huge artillery duel between the Russians and French had ended up with the French victorious. However, crossing the bridge and deploying for an attack on the hill in the center was proving difficult as the Russians were tenaciously defending it. On the French right crossing the

stream and marsh under fire was definitely a slow affair. A heavy battery of Prussian artillery dominated the area and was causing casualties to the French as they struggled across the marshy areas.

The 3rd French division (cont. on p18)





(cont. from p. 17) consisting of Poles and Saxons now entered and went right for the spot where the Russian artillery battery was destroyed. The Poles reached the position shortly after two Russian battalions arrived to plug the gap and they attacked in column. The attack struck the Russians hard, driving them back down the hill towards the road and it looked as if the Allied army may be split in two.

However, yet again fortune was not with the French side in this game. The follow on attack was bloodily repulsed, causing the Poles to recoil back to the top of the hill. The Saxons continued to move up while the artillery unlimbered and started to shell the Russian counterattack, driving the Russians back yet again.

In the center the French finally get sufficient forces across the bridge and begin to attack the hill nearest the bridge.

The Russian battalion hangs in there for several turns and finally routs off, leaving the French in charge of the hill. The two French batteries are quickly moved to the hill to unlimber and they get ready to support the next French attack into the remaining Russian and Prussian defenses.

The French right, however, has been taken out of the game. Despite finally getting across the stream and repulsing one cavalry attack, the Prussian heavy battery continues to maul the leading French units. A second cavalry attack strikes a French battalion and pushes it back over the stream, crating another traffic jam with units milling in the rear all in a state of faltering or rout. With this the French right is finished and pretty much that flank falls silent.

The Russians begin to move up the reserve division along with a cavalry corps. The French cavalry corps is still

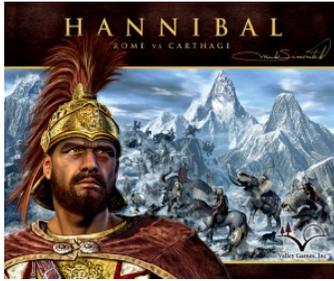
stuck just off board with the leading elements about to enter, but there is nowhere to deploy as the French have not gained enough ground to let them loose.

This is where the game is called, although there are still another ten turns left until darkness and the end of the game. The French took the first objective pretty easily, but then the attack bogged down and could never really get started again. In the center the French had also driven into the Allied defense, but had taken significant casualties and could not press any further. On the right the entire French attack had collapsed and was out of the remaining part of the battle.

It was a good game and the French certainly had their opportunities. It just seemed that every time the French did something spectacular, it was immediately followed by a disaster, which created some wild swings in the game.



Earlier in this issue I reviewed the excellent Successors which came out decades ago by Avalon Hill. Well, Hannibal was the predecessor to Successors and it was also released by Avalon Hill a long time ago. Both games have similarities beyond their original manufacturer in that they have similar concepts, pieces, and have been re-issued a few times.



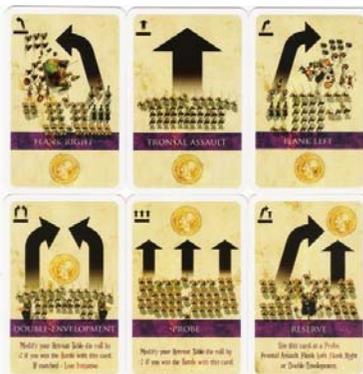
countersheets for the combat units, referred to as CUs in the rules, and political markers to show control over the various points on the board.

Each turn consists of several impulses where each player plays a card for the ops number to move generals with forces, add combat units, for the event on the card, or to place political control markers. This is what makes the game fascinating and is a common theme in many card driven wargames and that is what to do with your card. There are so many options and needs, that it will take a number of games to get a good feel with what to do at the right time.

This latest version of Hannibal is from Valley Games who acquired the rights to reprint some of the old Avalon Hill games. If you're familiar with Valley Games they definitely take a "Euro" approach to their products, and it shows. The box is good sized with some nice artwork and there is a lot in it!

The first thing that you notice is that the map is mounted, but cut into large puzzle-like pieces that fit together. The map shows all of the area from Spain across northern Africa to Italy, where Rome and Carthage waged this campaign. Hannibal uses a point to point movement system and the map is clear and easy to use. You also get two sets of cards and again, these are very nicely done. The first deck is used for battles and depicts formations/tactics that are used during combat. The second deck consists of event cards. The event cards are rated for the number of "ops" each side can do or they list an event that can be played. The cards are further color coded by a symbol at the top to signify which side can use the card for the event listed.

Like Successors, the generals are portrayed with cardboard cutouts that are mounted on plastic stands. Each general is further rated for rank and battle, which makes it important to have certain commanders lead larger armies or undertake critical campaigns. Then there are a few



The Romans are hampered by having to elect two consuls each year who serve as the generals of the army, plus they will usually take a proconsul as well. The consuls are randomly chosen, which means some years you have good ones and some years not so good. The Roman player needs to make the best with what he gets each turn and try to hold the Carthaginians until Scipio Africanus and his legions arrive on turn 6. At this point things can get tough on the Carthaginians if they haven't opened up a wide lead in the game.

Each turn both sides move forces around the board, use sea movement, place political markers, attempt to siege cities or subjugate unfriendly tribes, and move to battle enemy forces. Again, there are so many options that new players may feel overwhelmed at times.

Battles are handled in a very unusual way through the use of cards. Each side gets a number of cards depending upon their general and combat units in the battle. Each card shows a formation/tactic and when played, must be matched by the other side. If it is

matched, then the other side gets a chance to counterattack. This goes on until one side cannot match the card and they lose the battle. Losses are expressed in combat units and depending upon the situation can be minimal or catastrophic. It is definitely an unusual way of dealing with combat and it is one of the few games I've played where I've seen it used.

So naturally what you have in this game is a very chaotic situation, which is again very similar to Successors. The cards for movement and battle add some randomness that makes planning difficult and combat an uncertainty. Players must constantly be willing to adapt and change their plans as their fortunes swing from



disaster to victory at various times throughout the game.

Hannibal is a very good game, but I think it still is not as good as Successors. Successors can be played by 2-4 players while Hannibal is designed strictly for two players. The one thing that Hannibal has going for it over Successors is that it is easier to learn and plays faster, especially compared to a four player game of Successors. If you buy either game the great thing is that you can then easily transition to the other game as many of the rules and concepts are similar.

Finally, both of these games that were reviewed in this issue are ideal for miniatures based campaign games. The events, movement, politics, etc., are easily used and the mapboards are perfect for this. All you have to do is replace the combat system in both games with your favorite miniatures rules for battles and sieges and you have a winning combination.



### WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play Age of Reason, Age of Discover, Age of Eagles, Warmaster Ancients, Blitzkrieg Commander, Sword and Flame, Battles for Empire, Phantoms, Sharp Practice, Wild West, and too many more periods to list here!

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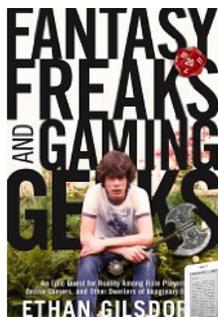
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*A lot has been made about all of the new rules that are coming out right now, particularly for the Napoleonic period. In the last few months you've had Republic to Empire, LaSalle, Napoleon, Black Powder, and more. In many ways this is similar to ancients and WW2 where the quest for the "perfect" rules rolls on and it follows an established pattern. Lots of pre-publication hype, the initial offering, enthusiastic reviews by fan boys about how this set of rules will change the hobby forever, a Yahoo group starts up, tons of threads on TMP, but then a year later most of the players are back to finding another set of rules. Only now the costs of some of these rules sets are making it a hefty investment, so any detractors or naysayers are instantly the subject of plenty of ire as gamers have coughed up a good sized chunk of cash and they don't want to find out that the rules they just bought aren't very good. Personally, I've chosen Age of Eagles and am sticking with it as it portrays the period as I think it should and it's fun to play. I will play one of the new sets of rules if someone else sets up the game and there lies the huge problem in the gaming hobby. The early adopters to these sets of rules want most of us to rebase our figs, throw out our old rules, and gladly accept their new gaming bible with no questions. My advice; try these new rules out and if you like them then by all means have a good time. However, don't just accept them as the best ever just because they're new!*

## Fantasy Freaks & Gaming Geeks

## Book Review

Ethan Gilsdorf, a travel writer and former Dungeons & Dragons gamer, goes on an epic quest to rediscover fantasy role-playing. Ethan was in a D&D group throughout his teen years and discusses what it was like to play fantasy back in the 70s and 80s. He describes how it was an integral part of his life and how he kept all of his rules, maps, and more in a large blue cooler.



the conventions, people who do live role-playing in the SCA, and basically talks to anyone who is interested in fantasy role-playing of any kind. These interviews provide a remarkable insight into the gaming and role-playing culture, with Ethan basically describing what makes these people stay with their chosen hobby. It is a fascinating look at what most gamers already know, but told through a fresh set of eyes that makes for an interesting read.

Now in his early forties and as part of a series of articles he had to write about the Lord of the Rings films, he goes on a journey of re-discovery to see if fantasy role-playing is still going strong. His journey goes around the world to Tolkien's residence at Oxford then to Gen Con, and into many gaming stores as he attempts to see if there is still life in this part of the gaming hobby.

You do realize how far the fantasy role-playing hobby has come, from mimeographed rulebooks and maps on graph paper to the professionally produced books and supplements of today. He spends some time going over the history of AD&D, which I myself found fascinating, to what some of the giants of the hobby are doing today.

For myself (I was a big D&D gamer for many years in my youth) it was a

journey back in time. The days of meeting your friends for a game night, playing until dawn while drinking too much soda and eating M&Ms by the bucketful, and talking about upcoming adventures all seemed to come back to me. From the description of his gaming group it sounds like we were not alone!

He concludes his quest by finding his old blue cooler, complete with all of the stuff from his teen years. There's some great pictures in the book, including the blue cooler, which really added to the narration of his journey. By the end of the book he's left wondering if he should get into gaming again and where does he go from here.

Overall, I thought it was a very interesting book, although his writing style may not be for everyone. As he described all the games, his friends, the hours spent making maps, characters, etc., it took me back to my early gaming days for some great memories.

He interviews local gamers, gamers at