Warning Order

ISSUE #45

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Building a 28mm Seleucid Army

I can't remember how I acquired them (probably a trade, freebie with a purchase, etc.), but I had a box of Warlord Macedonian phalangites sitting on my shelves. Now I already have a 10mm Seleucid army and there's no one else in my group who has 28mm ancient armies, so this was really s strange decision to press forward with this project. I had just finished playing GMT's Pax Romana and GMT's Successors is one of my favorite games, so there was no inspiration really needed. So I took out my copy of Hail Caesar and started reading about basing units. That led to this article and an ever growing Seleucid army.

The Seleucids are one of the quintessential Successor type armies, ruling over what would be modern day Syria and Iraq with their empire extending far into India, Persia, and up to the borders of Egypt. At different times they fought the Romans, Parthians, Indians, and the various other Greek Successor states. It is also a very colorful army full of flavor, featuring heavily armored cataphracts, pike units, elephants, imitation Roman

legions, various types of skirmishers, and much more.

The beautiful part of choosing a Seleucid army is that the major parts of it can be used to form the nucleus of other armies such as the Ptolomeic, Bactiran Greek, or other Greek Successor forces. This makes the army versatile and with a few more units it can be used to provide fresh opponents for other armies in your gaming group.

No Successor army went into the field without a number of pike units, called phalangites. My Seleucid army would be no exception, so that seemed like a good place to start.

After going over all of the choices for pike miniatures, of which there are quite a few, I went with the Warlord Games Macedonian Phalangite boxed set and as I stated at the start of the article, I already had one sitting around. My goal was to build and paint up this first unit, seeing if this boxed set would then be the first of many or would I need to look elsewhere.

You get 40 miniatures in the boxed set, which for around $32-35 is a pretty good deal, especially since they come with multiple heads and have four poses. The only issue is that there are no command figs and while the shield decal sheet is nice, I decided to order some of the LBM transfers

Inside this issue:

Special points of interest:

- *Several battle reports using AOR3, Warmaster Medieval, Saga, BKC2, and Fire & Fury ACW rules.*

- *Two new Engagements scenarios.*

- *How to article on a Samurai era peasant cottage.*

- *Game and book reviews.*

to make some different units. After adding those things in your boxed set cost jumps to around $50 to make one unit.

I went with 8 figures per stand with a 2 figure frontage and four ranks. One unit would be five stands, or 40 figs, which is definitely an investment in time. The assembly is pretty easy and I spent a bit more time as I tried to paint the unit as if it was on campaign, meaning that there would be different colors for tunics, helmets, armor, etc. The LBM transfers are a pain to put on, but when finished they look pretty good. I did the command stand first, then batches of two stands (16 figs) to finish the unit. After seeing the first unit finished I could see that one wasn't going to be enough so I was determined to start a second unit.

However, common sense intervened (this rarely happens!) and made me think about doing basically the same figures over and over again for another few weeks. After remembering that there were Galatian allies in the army list I got a box of Warlord Games Celts and got started on those. Once again, they are fairly easy to assemble, but there's no command figs so that's a few more dollars on top of the cost of the boxed set.

Once they were about halfway finished it was time to do a few things. First, I started to assemble the first few stands worth of figures for the second pike unit. Second, I started accumulating packs of units to be used for skirmishers and starting work on a unit of Cretan archers. Now some gamers can't multitask like this and prefer to focus on one unit at a time. While I've tried that I can get bored at times if there aren't multiple things to keep my interest level up, so I have no problem painting some Galatians, moving over to build some pike figs, then painting up parts of the Cretan archer unit. As the army begins to take shape and you see multiple units getting finished, it can serve as a driving force to keep going.

In regards to the phalangites, as mentioned above, there are no command figs
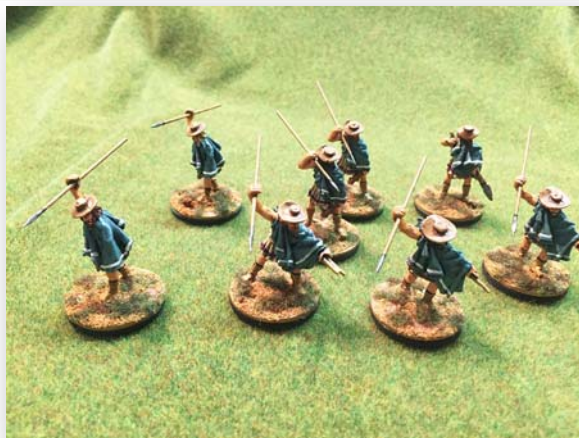
in the box, which is a bit strange, but fortunately they are sold separately. A few of the figs are in sort of leaning forward/ to the side kind of pose where they continually fall down while sitting on the painting table. These few complaints, aside, however, the boxed set produces a nice 40 figure unit that looks great when completed.

I purchased several packs of skirmishers through Warlord Games to be used with this army. Besides the Cretan archers above I also ordered some Thracian peltasts, slingers, and some javelin armed troops. These are sold 8 to a pack for around $17-20, depending upon who you order them from. The figures are a bit unusual in that they are much more slender than the figures in the boxed set or the Greek command packs that I ordered. My first guess is that they were done by different designers, but as long as you keep them in their own units you won't notice the difference when the army takes the field.

Next up were the Galatian infantry and cavalry units, of which you can have one of each in the Seleucid army list. I used the Warlord Games Celt boxed sets for both, which gives you a 40 figure infantry unit and a 10 man cavalry unit. Again, the infantry boxed set does not

come with command, so that's another pack that you have to order separately. Both boxed sets went together easily and the variation in heads, shields, weapons, etc., is great as you can make the units look like a mob.

The biggest problem here was just trying to find out information on Galatians serving with Successor armies. That they served there is no doubt, but what they wore is subject to a lot of interpretation! The few eyewitness accounts refer to them having white shields with blue stripes, so I did multiple variations of that for both units. I assumed that the rest of their dress would be similar to what they wore in their tribal areas and the various frontiers that they fought on. You really can't go wrong with them as so little was recorded about their service with the Successors. They were a bit slower than the phalangites in that having to paint each one in different colors to give them that "horde" feeling took extra time.

After my second pike unit it was time to take another break and paint some different figures. While the pike units look great finished and are the core of the army, they take me almost a month to just finish one unit! I ordered a pack of elephants and cataphracts from Old Glory to

see how they compare. Certainly the price is hard to beat as if you belong to the Old Glory Army you get 40% off the regular price! (cont. on p6)

Although we regularly play BKC it's usually been with the Russians or the British going up against the Germans. Finally, after hearing promises that the Americans were coming for a few years, Gary finally produced his army on game night. This would be an interesting contest as while the British have some U.S. equipment, the makeup of the units was completely different.

The scenario would be a U.S. attack with an armor heavy force into the German defenses, which were centered around two key villages. The U.S. would get a draw if they captured one of them and a victory if they were able to get both. There was a stream going up most of the center of the board that could only be crossed at a bridge that split the German defenses, making it ideal for two players!

The U.S. forces consisted of two battalions of armor, complete with supporting mech infantry, recce forces, and artillery. The U.S. entered from the opposite end of the board and would get a free first order, which would at least get all of their units onto the board on the first turn. After that there would be normal command rolls.

The German forces were a mixture of various kampfgruppes, with one being armor heavy while another had panzergrenadiers backed by assault guns. The Germans did have artillery support and some mortars mixed in with the village defenders. While some of the German forces were very good, there was definitely a shortage of them to go around for the defenses.

The U.S. strategy was to direct strong forces towards the village on the German left while pinning the remaining defenders on the German right. Once the left hand village was secured those forces would join in on an attack to seize the second village. Due to the terrain and how the Germans had organized their defense, the scenario actually became two games in one, as each U.S. layer squared off against their counterpart holding one of the villages.

The German strategy was to defend each village with the panzergrenadiers and AT guns that were available, while the heavier armor slugged it out at long range. The artillery would try to deny the main approaches and channel the attackers into killing zones for the German armor. The main obstacle for the German defenders was just trying to deal with the numbers advantage that the U.S. forces had.

The U.S. forces moved out to the attack on the first turn, definitely making a strong effort towards the left side of the German defenses. The Germans opened up with long range gunnery, knocking out one of the advancing Sherman platoons. The U.S. retaliated and soon both sides were pouring fire into each other at extreme range. The U.S. Forces continued to advance and that's when the German artillery made it's presence known.

The first barrage caught some of the U.S. recon and armor out in the open and slowed the advance. The artillery then shifted to hit the armor companies coming in through the gap in the woods. As you can see by one of the images on the next page, several armor *units were put out of action* plus it suppressed their command stands for several turns. The artillery hit that area for three consecutive turns, bringing the U.S. Advance to a crawl. At this point in the game, the Germans were (cont. on p5)

(cont. from p4) definitely winning as the U.S. advance had stopped and the Germans had taken some casualties, but the defenses were intact.

Then the game turned around quickly as the U.S. armor started to slowly knock out the German armor and anti-tank units. The first U.S. mech infantry attack went in against the German held village on the left, clearing out one side of the road, then they finished taking the village on the following turn. The German defenders fell back to a series of farm fields behind the village, but came under heavy fire.

On the German right there was a desperate defense of the village by the German panzergrenadiers. The U.S. infantry attacked through the woods, but they in turn were counterattacked heavily by the Germans holding the outskirts. The battle see-sawed back and forth with both sides taking heavy casualties.

Meanwhile, the U.S. armor continued to make gains, albeit slowly. The German armor continued to slug it out with the Shermans, knocking out several, but slowly getting ground down in the process. By turn 10 there was little armor to help with the defense of either village. The German artillery, which had been so instrumental in holding up the U.S. attack at first, had vanished or when it did arrive, scattered with no effect.

The U.S. forces made one final push, securing both villages and driving the German defenders back to a few pockets of resistance on the board. With no rein-forcements and most of the panzergrenadiers gone, there was little hope of counterattacking so the game was called as a U.S. victory.

For a hastily thrown together scenario it worked out pretty well! While at first it looked as if we had given the German defenders too much stuff, in the end it seemed to have been finely balanced. We also were able to get into some close assaults with the infantry, which is a lot of fun and there were several exciting counterattacks. We still seem to be able to prevent the massing of armor fire, which can skew the results at times, but things did work out to provide a very interesting and close run scenario. Next time it's back to the Eastern Front and massed of Russian armor!

Building a 28mm Seleucid Army (cont.)

(cont. from p3)There are a large number of choices available for elephants from several manufacturers with quite a lot of variation in poses, crews, towers, etc., so why did I choose Old Glory? First, I wanted to see how they look in terms of scale and the second reason is that you get two of them plus crews in one bag for a pretty good price. Although I wasn't necessarily trying to go with the cheapest price or best bargain, there's no sense in overspending if there are good alternatives!

The two elephants went together pretty well and when painted look pretty good. You don't get a lot of crew with the elephants and I had to provide the shields for the towers, but for the price these elephants are a good deal. I used one of the Warlord Games skirmisher packs I had to provide the elephant guard seen in the figures. Hail Caesar uses fairly large base sizes for elephants, so I went with the diorama look by adding extra figs to the bases.

The cataphracts are also an unusual unit, but again there are few recorded uniform notes, so you can pretty much let your imagination run wild when painting these. The Old Glory figures as they come will fit on the horses, but as with a lot of OG cavalry they aren't very secure. There are two solutions to this problem. The first is to pin them, which works, but the horses look a bit plain. The second is to use green stuff and create some saddles and horse cloths, which is what I went with. While definitely harder and more

time consuming, the finished efforts are worth it and makes this unit stand out in the army.

Next up and again as I was trying to delay getting back to painting phalangites, I decided to paint up some command stands. When I ordered the cataphracts from Old Glory I also ordered a bag of Greek command, which are actually pretty nice figures and look great once finished. I ordered the Warlord Games pack that had Alexander and his father, then added some OG figs on the stands. First off, the Alexander and Philip figures are giants! They easily dwarf the OG command pack figs, but I was able to use some balsa scraps, glue, etc. to raise those figs up a bit on the stand so that it wasn't too apparent. Whatever the reason, the Warlord Games figures don't have a lot of consistency when it comes to size and thickness.

Next up was a unit of light cavalry or horse archers. Again, there are so many options that you really can't go wrong here. For purposes of this article I thought I would try a box of the Wargames Factory Persian Cavalry. It seems that this line was sold off to Warlord Games, but I was able to find a box on Ebay. The first thing I noticed when I opened the box is that you do get a lot of stuff! There are 12 horses, saddles, torsos, and a wide variety of arms with spears and bows. Only one issue; no heads! Thankfully, someone on TMP had some extra infantry heads and I used those, which worked out fine. Assembly

and painting definitely took some time as there was no uniformity of appearance and that's how I wanted this unit to be. My intention was to have a Seleucid army that looked like a wide collection of local forces, so going with Persian horse archers made sense. If I had to do it again, however, I think I would have just gone with some Old Glory figures.

At this time the new Macedonian elephant came out from Warlord Games and with free shipping at that time I decided to get one, then later added a second one. The kit is part resin and part metal, but goes together fairly easily. One of the elephant's ears didn't mold right and the tower on its back didn't fit that great either, so it wasn't without its problems. The big selling point for this kit is that you get a crew of five (the figures are pretty good) and the elephant is kind of in an "action" pose, so it looks pretty good finished. With the tower it is certainly larger than the OG ones I had and it was more work, but in the end they look pretty good!

After that was finished it was back to phalangites and creating the third unit. I still haven't decided how many pike units I'm going to end up with once everything is finished, but for now I'm thinking I will need at least four. The interesting thing about the pike units is that the more that you do the slower they get painted! I will have to do a unit (cont. on p7) of

Building a 28mm Seleucid Army (cont.)

(cont. from p6) Silver Shields (elite pike units in Successor armies) at some point.

While I was doing this I was able to pick up a box of the Victrix peltasts and slingers for a good price on Ebay as regularly they're about $52 plus shipping as finding Victrix at a discount anywhere is a challenge. The box comes with enough sprues for 8 slingers and around 48 peltasts or javelin armed troops, which is a good deal. I finished the unit of slingers while I was working on the third pike unit and they look pretty good, even if a bit static in their poses.

The peltasts would be in two units of 24. In the Seleucid army list they can be either used as units of infantry or they can break apart into skirmishers, so the unit is
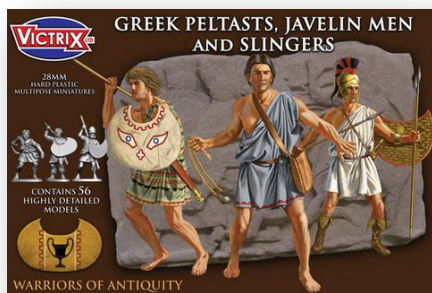
quite flexible on the battlefield. I'm going to go with an 8 wide by 3 deep formation and I ordered some movement trays from Litko as having to move 48 individual figs each turn would slow things down in the game! The figures are hard plastic, go together quickly, and have a variety of heads, arms, and weapons. After finishing the first unit I've come to the conclusion that this unit has been the hardest one to finish so far! The figures are pretty basic and there's not much to paint, but two things about them create some challenges. First, using the LBMS transfers on the shields, painting the shields to match, etc., takes up far more time than I thought it would. Second, arranging them so they will all fit on a movement base is difficult as the poses along with the unusual shield sizes is a problem. The unit looks great, but was

far more work than I thought it would be!

Naturally, as is my luck, Warlord Games recently came out with a Successors starter army with 100 pike figs, 8 heavy cavalry, and one war elephant. I've seen this deal as low as $100 for the box (which is what I paid for one), which is a great deal. This will give you a good starter force for the period then you can add in extra units as you go along.

So this is a good start to my Seleucid army. Three units of pike, one unit of Galatian infantry, six skirmisher units, two units of peltasts/light infantry, three elephants, three command stands, and three units of cavalry. All in all it's about 300 figures that I completed in about 8 months. When you consider I didn't do that much over the Christmas holiday season, it sounds a bit faster! I think if there was someone else in my group or a regular opponent who had an army to go up against I think I would have finished

either these faster or have had more by now.

What's the future of the army? Well, for starters I need some scythed chariots, more cavalry, and some artillery. I would like to add a unit of Thorakites and probably enough pike units so that I have six of them. On top of that I might get some Indian infantry and cavalry to convert the army into a Bactrian Greek army by swapping out various units. Painting more pike units doesn't thrill me greatly, but it's one of those things in the hobby that's going to be needed and I may as well get it over with sooner rather than later!

As far as painting goes this army is not the hardest I've ever attempted, but it's not that easy either. I'm going with a campaign look so whenever you do that it certainly adds a few more hours to each unit. The skirmishers are pretty straightforward, but the pike units do take time. Getting the LBM transfers onto the shields is a step that will add another hour to each stand of 8 figures. They look great when done, but aren't as easy as decals!

Are there any regrets or second thoughts on building this army? There are a few, but nothing earth shattering. Deciding to base things entirely for Hail Caesar may be a problem if I can't find any opponents or the rules fall out of favor in the area. Rebasing a large number of figures was a natural thing for me over the hobby, but as I get older it definitely has lost its appeal! Using so many different manufacturers had its pros and cons, but I guess I was trying out various companies and also trying to give the army it's "traveling circus" look that it was known for.

So now I have a Successors army and the next project is to build a Republican Roman army, which I think will make for an interesting opponent. Hopefully I can get some others interested so I don't have to go the solo route again! (more pictures on p31)
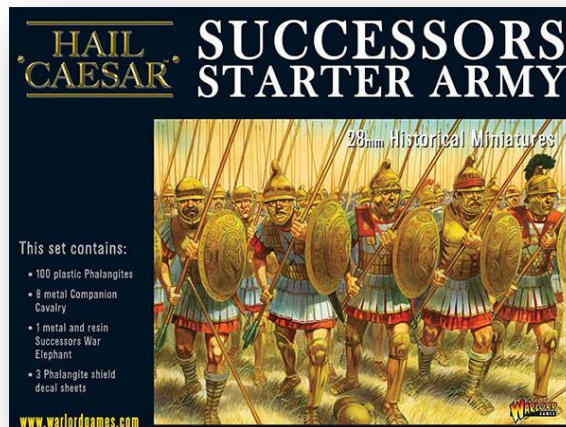
It's been awhile since we've had an Age of Reason battle report in these pages. Most of this was due to waiting for the new 3ed edition and also that we play way too many periods and couldn't get back to this one! Finally, with the 3rd edition in our hands we set out to see what had changed in one of our favorite sets of rules.

With only four players, a longer than planned dinner, holiday traffic, etc., we decided to do a fairly small 2 player game with about 20 SPs a side (basically 1 SP per unit), which also gave everyone plenty of artillery to use as well. I had brought Prussians and Gary brought his French, so those were the forces that we were pressed into using. Since we ere pressed for time I just set up a generic board with a few objectives and just enough terrain to make things interesting. We also decided to forego the new system of rolling for each unit to see if it is better or worse than its rating in the army lists.

We had a simultaneous deployment (to once again save time) and there weren't too many surprises here as both sides committed cavalry to their flanks with the infantry and artillery in the center. Both

sides had roughly 5-6 cavalry units, with the rest being infantry which included grenadiers. The Prussians also has a siege gun and a unit of skirmishers.

The biggest change to AOR was that there is now a limited command and control system. Most units would need to stay within 8" of their brigade commander while better rated generals would have a larger radius (we use the 25mm charts with our 15mm figs as we found that the 25mm movement/firing works best). This meant that you wouldn't be seeing units running freely all over the game board anymore, forcing players to use the more historical Seven Years War deployments.

As with most of our AOR battles (and 7YW battles in general), the action began on the flanks where the Prussian dragoons on the left were decimated by their French counterparts, losing two flags in the process! On the Prussian right things

were in a stalemate after multiple charges left both sides weakened and back where they started. The infantry brigades then began their advance while the artillery tried to get itself into position.

The first major infantry action occurred on the Prussian left, where an infantry brigade supported by two units of hussars tried to storm the village. They were met by a hail of fire and the first attacks were repulsed. Both sides then tried a few turns of artillery bombardment, which while causing casualties did little to resolve the situation. The Prussians rallied in front of the village, charged again and overran the artillery positioned there. They quickly fanned out to take the entire village, forcing the French infantry brigade to realign itself to face the new threat.

Over the next few turns both sides launched several attacks, with a few French infantry charges breaking the Prussian lines, only to be thrown back by cavalry and artillery. By this time both sides had taken a beating, but more was to come. The Prussian cavalry was finally victorious on the right, but had suffered massive casualties and were several turns out of position to help

(cont. from p8) in the center. On the Prussian left, the cavalry battle there was a stalemate, with every unit there under 50% and both sides retreated back to their start lines.

This started the action in the center where the Prussian infantry brigade, arrayed in lines with supports, calmly awaited the approaching French, then opened up with artillery and musket fire. Both sides swapped several rounds of firing until the front lines were so damaged that fresher units had to be rotated in.

By this time we had played 8 turns and the French were nearing their withdrawal check. The Prussians had two of the objectives and were contesting the third. Even though the game probably

had a few more turns to go, the outcome was obvious and the game was called as a Prussian tactical victory.

It was a fun, fast moving game that shows you don't always need a lavish scenario and days of preparation for! Not that it doesn't help a times, but this was a quickly formed scenario that played out closely. The French were very aggressive, which worked on one flank, but doomed them in the center.

How did the AOR 3rd edition rules fair? Pretty good all things considered. A few modifiers have been changed and how the firing works out after units suffer casualties was a bit different, but overall we thought the changes were OK. This brings me, however, to a point I brought up during the game several times.

First, except for a few instances the game did not feel like a 7YW battle. There is something wrong with the artillery system in AOR and using artillery for opportunity fire against cavalry charges at times seems out of place. In fact, both sides were guilty of positioning their artillery to get in a few free shots before the other side charged, which runs contrary to things I've read about the period. We also had the weird situation of an understrength French infantry battalion repulsing a Prussian hussar charge by remaining in line.

We'll give it another try or two and the problem could just be us, using ACW tactics a hundred years earlier! The game is certainly fun to play and looks great in 15mm on the tabletop.
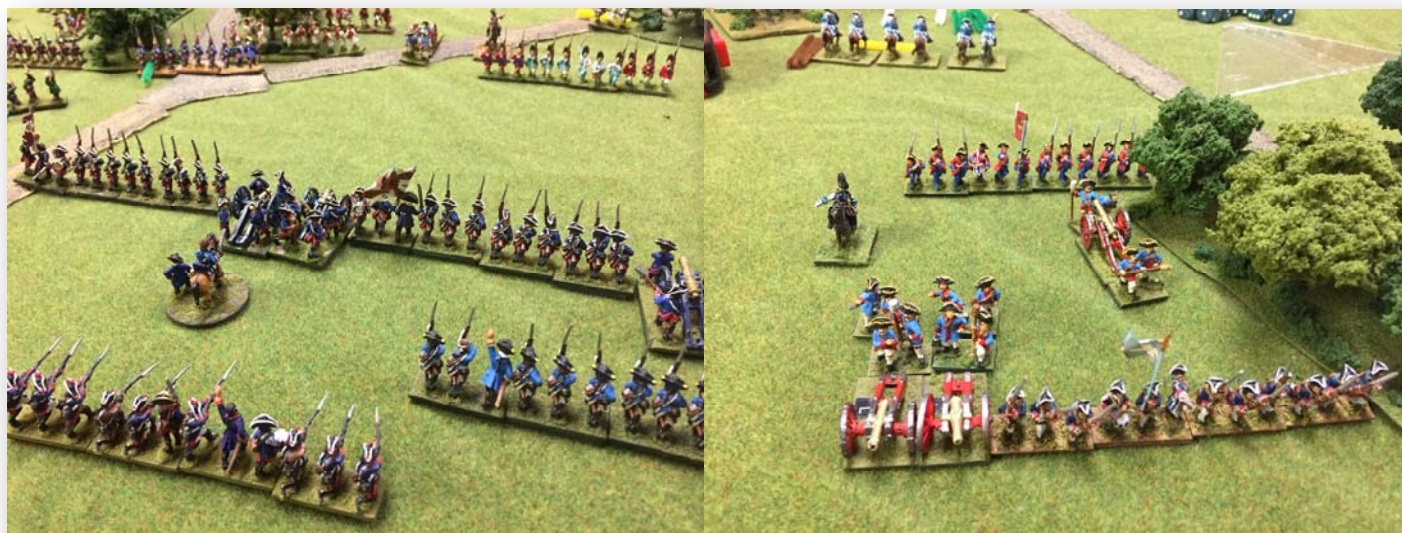
When I reviewed the first game in this series, Wing Leader: Victories 1940-42, I noted that it was definitely a unique design and much different from other air combat games. The second game in the series, Wing Leader: Supremacy 1943-45, builds upon that first game, enhances the system, and gives gamers a ton more scenarios and aircraft.

For starters, the box is much heavier than the first game, mainly due to the mounted board! As per usual, the components are up to GMT's extremely high standards. The counter sheets, rules, scenario book, etc., are all very well done and there is little to complain about here. Although a separate game in its own right, the components here are interchangeable with the first game, so you pretty much get extra sets of markers and charts.

If you've played the first game then the rules changes in the 2.0 version won't be anything major. If you're just starting out then the 2.0 version is pretty easy to get through. As I stated in the review of the first game this system is not hard, but it is so unlike anything that you've previously played that you not only need to read through everything twice, but you need to put pieces on the board and see how things work.

For one thing, this game is not about individual aircraft in any sort of a dogfight, which is what most air combat games are. It's also not one of the designer's other operational air combat games such as Downtown or The Burning Blue as it is far less complex and easier to set up. The Wing Leader series occupies something in between where several squadrons on each side are trying to accomplish missions.

Each counter represents a flight of aircraft (one aircraft is pictured) or a squadron (shown by having two aircraft on the counter). Most scenarios will have multiple flights and/or squadrons, which is where the organizational display comes in handy. Here you are able to track the squadron's ID number, radio net, quality, bomb load, hits, and more. During the game this display becomes extremely important in keeping track of modifiers for the various combats that will erupt across the board.

One side will be the attacker, whether it is the Japanese trying to sink a carrier, Russians attacking convoys, or U.S. forces on massive bombing runs, these forces will move to accomplish their mission while the defender tries to intercept. Fighter flights and squadrons are assigned to intercept, sweep, or perform close escort missions. What type of mission squadrons are assigned to affects their flight profile and what they can or cannot do in a turn.

I've found that the approach is one of the more interesting aspects of the game. Trying to visually detect the enemy, then passing it on to the others of your side is a unique and challenging part of the game. Detect too late and you will have to put your squadrons in bad positions. Flying bombers is fairly easy as they are usually slow moving and stay in a straight line, so most of the action reverts around the fighters.
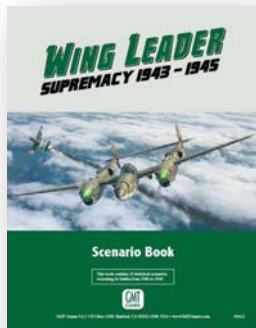
Once contact is made, then the real maneuvering begins as both sides try to get their squadrons in the most opportune positions. When two opposing counters meet in a grid then combat ensues. You add up a series of modifiers and roll the dice, which results in a number of possible hits. A second roll is then made against the firepower of the aircraft to determine if there are any actual losses (shot down).

Here's where things get interesting as squadrons get low on ammo, suffer losses, and lose cohesion. Each time there is a combat the modifiers get worse and worse, usually for both sides! This makes dogfights into attritional affairs and at some point squadrons begin to break and head for home. It's entirely possible to have 7 or 8 squadrons slug it out for several turns and both sides only have 1 or 2 planes shot down!
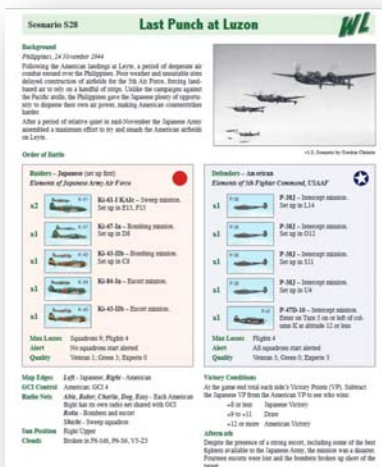
This is what may be tough for some gamers who are used to decisive results in their games. It's not uncommon for both sides to have a bad day, shoot down only a few planes, then not hit anything with their bombs, but you've played for several hours. The counter to this is that if you read books on air campaigns this was not an uncommon occurrence, same as squadrons getting out of place, heading for home, forgetting their escort assignments, etc., all of which are seen in this game.

There are plenty of scenarios here for everyone's tastes and more are coming out all the time. If you want to see FW-190s and jets against B-17s, B-25s going against Japanese ships, carrier strikes, or just Battle of Britain engagements, then there is something here for you. There are simple intercept scenarios with only a few counters to massive battles with aircraft counters all over the sky! If you're tired of one on one dogfights then you should move onto this series. Again, GMT and the series designer should be complemented on another outstanding product.

Although I have a sweet spot for the U.S. Civil War as a gaming period, having played Johnny Reb and Fire & Fury for quite a few years, plus owning several games on the ACW and over 100 books, strategic games on the subject have fallen flat. Usually I fall back on the GDW/Phalanx A House Divided where you can play the entire war in a few hours, but other than that I haven't really been interested in others such as the SPI/DG War Between The States or VG's The Civil War.

I have, however, been playing quite a few Mark Simonitch games and when I received The U.S. Civil War from GMT Games as a Christmas gift, I got started on it that day! First off, this is a heavy game! It comes in the big GMT box and when you open it for the first time it definitely is a beautiful game to behold. For one thing, there are two mounted mapboards, which when combined cover operations from east Texas and Arkansas all the way to Philadelphia and upper Florida. Unlike many other strategic Civil War games, this one focuses only where actual battles were or could have been fought, which seems to be a running theme in the game. While many strategic games of all eras often give you a chance to change history, create strange alliances, fight battles in unusual places, etc., in
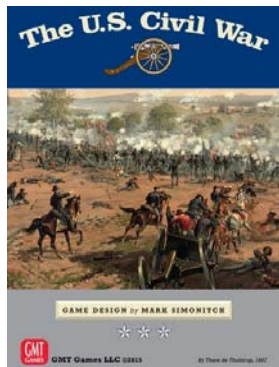
this game you will be limited by either what happened historically or what might have been possible. If you're looking for a game system where Robert E. Lee takes Boston or California, this isn't the game for you.

The remaining components consist of two sheets of counters, player aid cards, action cards, and rules. As is usual for GMT these items are well done and the rulebook is easy to read and it includes a large number of examples of play, plus details about some of the river hexes, ports, and fortresses.

The sequence of play is unique in that each player rolls a D6, with the high die getting initiative, but the difference is how many actions you get per round, with four rounds per turn and four seasonal turns per year. With each action you can move armies, transfer generals, build fortresses, and more. Basically, you're not going to be able to do everything you want each turn, so there needs to be several strategic decisions made each round. Not only that, but before the action rounds start there is a very important strategic movement phase where each side can use rail, road, and river movement to position their forces for the coming turn.

There aren't a lot of units on the board and for the first few turns there is a shortage of leaders, but each round is critical to the success of both sides. There is too much to do and not enough units, leaders, or turns to accomplish your goals. The action cards are also an interesting mechanic as they can give positive modifiers in combat, extra movement points, amphibious invasions, and more. The problem here is that some of

them can only be used in certain theaters (the map is broken down into three separate theaters of war).

Each general can only carry so many strength points, which again poses logistical challenges. In combat, you can use multiple generals, but only if there are more than 6 strength points of units there and it uses a very unique and interesting combat table. Losses are by strength points and retreats cause demoralization, which can be disastrous at times.

The crux of the game is that the Union must take resource locations each turn according to a schedule or lose the war. You can see by the reinforcements that arrive each turn that the South is going to get overwhelmed at some point, but if the North can't take these locations each turn and their plans are frustrated, the South can win. Although the North has massive resources at their disposal, trying to coordinate them is a tough challenge.

The game also includes an advanced version which uses a separate naval system, which while adding some complexity, also adds a lot of realism and something else for the Union player to worry about. There are several scenarios that focus on specific years plus the full campaign game, which could definitely take a full day of gaming or more.

In summary, this is an outstanding game. As with many Simonitch designs, everything has been carefully laid out, playtested, reviewed, and things flow together smoothly. Just when you think you've found something wrong, it actually turns out well! There are so many strategies and options here that it could take several games to try all of them. This is a game where the South is at a disadvantage, but the North is forced to act, which creates a unique dynamic. This isn't a free for all campaign, so some gamers may not like having their hands tied at times, but overall this is a very well designed game that plays smoothly. Highly recommended.

Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 32

First Time Trying a New Game

For myself and many other gamers, trying new rules and games is a big part of the hobby. The number of new items that keep being produced means that at some point there will be something new that you or your gaming group will have some interest in. Now that's not saying that everyone will like the new game, including yourself! Through the years I've spent in the hobby I've experienced the highs and lows of new games, with the ultimate result being that I keep trying new things, despite my past experiences!

For whatever reason some games just click with you and your group. That would be the experience I had with Starfleet Battles when it first came out. At that time gamers were starved for sci-fi wargames and the fact that it was coupled with the Star Trek universe made it an easy sell. For almost five years we played weekly games, campaigns, amassed huge miniatures fleets, and more. I think even if the trial game that we played had failed, I think we would have given it several more chances to succeed as I think we *wanted it to be a success.* I think that factors a lot into what we eventually end up spending our time and money on in the hobby.

Another case in point would be Warfare in the Age of Reason. The Seven Years War sounded great, there were lots of articles about fictional campaigns in the magazines of the day, and Essex had a great line of 15mm figures, plus one member of our group had acquired a Russian army. We painted up enough for a four player game and the first battle went extremely well. Within two years we had six armies and were playing massive battles. Inside of five years we had enough armies for a Sport of Kings campaign and we still play to this day.
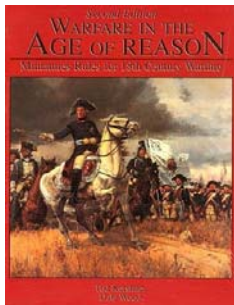
I often think about what if that first battle had gone horribly wrong. The interest of the group in this new period was hanging on a thread when the game began. Was it the rules and how we presented them? Was it how the armies looked? Or was it just that the period, the figures, and the rules clicked in just the right way to get everyone in the group involved?

For every success, however, there were numerous failures. Although failure is probably too strong a term for some of these games, they never seemed to stick or generate interest. My first game to not generate interest was GDW's Striker. I remember buying the rules, then investing in quite a few of the Martian Metals range for this game, followed by a few months of painting. Thinking that this was a slam dunk for the group I was taken aback by how little interest it generated. I think the fact that the rules weren't exactly simple, there weren't a lot of figures available, everyone was into other things at the time, and you had to spend a lot of time setting up your forces doomed the game.
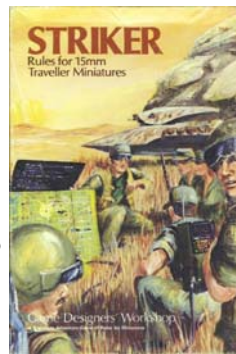
For me this was a rude awakening! How could someone spend that much time and money setting up a game, only to have it rejected? This taught me some valuable lessons in the hobby that I still carry with me to this day. The first is that just because you like a game doesn't mean that others will. Second, don't push something if you can clearly see there isn't any interest. Third, don't blame other group members or take it out on them if it fails. Finally, start small and choose periods or armies where if things go badly you can sell or trade them!

Another thing that helps is if the group really loves a period, but can't find the right set of rules. This happened to us with Age of Eagles. Burned out on Empire,

which we had played for well over a decade and just coming off some disastrous playtests of From Valmy to Waterloo, we were asked to playtest Age of Eagles. It was an instant success and filled the need for the group, which shows that timing is everything, even in the hobby!

At the opposite end of things are first time games where nothing goes right and one of those would be the first and only time we played Piquet. The scenario didn't work, the cards came up wrong, and the presenter had the attitude of "this is the greatest game you'll ever play and you should be thankful I'm running it for you" kind of attitude. Probably one of the worst nights of gaming I've had in 40 years! No one ever mentioned that set of rules again.
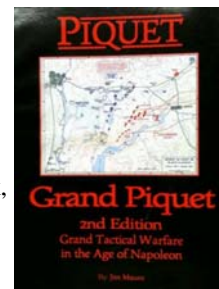
Finally, there are times when a game just isn't the right match for the group. One of those would be FOG Renaissance. A beautiful set of rules and probably more historical than what we regularly use for this period. The problem was that everyone really needs to own and have read the rules to get the most out of it. The time spent on our one playtest showed that any type of large game was going to take multiple sessions and we don't have a set place to play, so leaving up the games would be a problem. I was definitely into the period, but everyone else will play, but didn't want to spend a lot of time going through yet another set of rules, so we abandoned them.
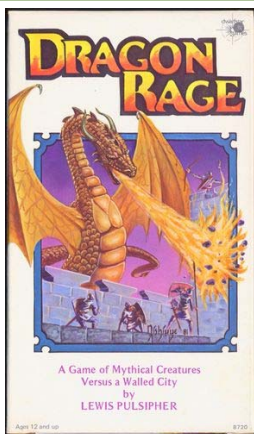
Will this pattern continue? No doubt! I think as you get older and more experienced there are fewer failures as you can take steps to alleviate problems that you can see coming up the road. We'll see what happens when we try Hail Caesar or Bolt Action soon.
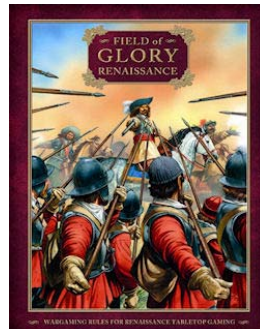
Blast From The Past Pt. 31: Dragon Rage-Then & Now

During the late 70s and early 80s there was definitely a "microgame" craze led by the success of Metagaming. Several other companies jumped in, including SPI, TSR, Task Force Games, OSG, and even Heritage Models (which was a miniatures company) with their Dwarfstar line.

The Dwarfstar games were right in the middle of the board wargaming world, being larger than the microgame format at that time, but not full sized games that SPI and Avalon Hill were putting out. The series of games focused on sci-fi/fantasy, came in a flimsy box, and basically no one at the time knew what to make of them! I
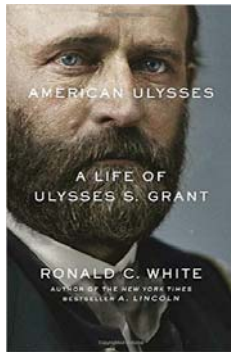

remember playing a few and at that time thinking they were pretty good for the price, but the hobby was growing quickly and you didn't seem to have the time to invest in the smaller games. If I was smart I would have bought several of each as they go for close to $100 per title on Ebay now!

You can still actually download several of the games and print them yourself, plus there are some very nice redesigns of these games, bringing the graphics up to date and enhancing the counters, maps, charts, etc. To my knowledge, only one of the games actually got a full fledged, published redesign and that was Dragon Rage by Flatlined Games.

The original game came in a paper

thin cardboard box (most copies on Ebay cite the bad shape the boxes are in), had a paper map, a sheet of counters, and a small rules booklet. If you have any games from the early 80s, then you know what to expect in terms of graphics, which for the time, weren't too bad! There was basically one battle and that was with dragons trying to take out a fortified city. The game was definitely an unusual one for the time, with most offerings being Warsaw Pact vs. NATO, RPGs, or Star Wars/Star Trek type games.

The new version of Dragon Rage is an entirely different beast. First, the game board is not only mounted, but is double-sided. The first side shows a reworked version of the original fortified city while the reverse side has an Orc village. The next thing you notice are the counter sheets, of which there are three. The pieces are very thick, are prepunched, and have rounded corners, similar to what you see in many "Euro" style games today. Not only do you get the original units and dragons, but now there are Orcs, different monsters, markers, and more. Finally, there is a quick start rules booklet with the original scenario where two dragons attack the city and the complete rules with all of the extra scenarios, new units, and more.

The basic scenario is a good place to start. The human defenders get one wizard, one hero, plus several cavalry, archer, and infantry units. If the game goes further than ten turns then more infantry arrive as reinforcements. The attacker gets two dragons that can fly, land, attack units, and twice per game can breathe fire. The objective is for the dragons to destroy so many locations on the map that are worth a varying number of victory points while the defender is trying to simply kill the dragons.

The game play is pretty simple, with the dragons flying around, then landing to attack the buildings and any defenders that come into view. The defenders rush

to the various locations under attack and try to inflict wounds on the dragon's wings, legs, and head. The wizard gets a number of spell points that can be used to create fog, a whirlwind, lightning strikes, or raise the moral of units near him for close combat against the dragons.

The additional rules cover armies of giants, T-Rexes , Rocs, and Orcs, plus scenarios where humans attack the Orc village, allies attacking either location, rescuing a princess, and there's even a campaign and tournament system. The game isn't the cheapest, ranging from $50-75, but you do get a lot of gaming goodness in the box.

Are there some issues? Yes, the rules need to be rewritten as there are some holes along with critical info in weird places. The games, while short, tend to be a bit repetitive after awhile as they come down to getting a few critical die rolls to defeat the monsters. Overall, however, this game is worth a few hours of your time. It would be nice someday to see the remaining Dwarfstar games get this kind of upgrade as they deserve more respect than they originally received.

You would think by now that every possible detail about the life and times of Ulysses S. Grant would be known by now and there wouldn't be much of a story left to write. Author Ronald C. White, however, with his book American Ulysses, shows the reader that they really don't know as much about Grant as they thought.

I own well over 100 books on the U.S. Civil War and I have to confess that most of my reading on Grant has focused on his time in the ACW, the campaigns, and how he ultimately did what no other Union general could do and that was defeat Robert E. Lee. I knew something of his background, family, and a little about his Presidency, but after going through this book I realized how much I didn't know!

The book can be broken down into three parts; Grant's childhood and pre-war years, the Civil War, then finally the Presidency and final years. While the Civil War part of his life is what most people think the author would naturally focus on, here it is given the same treatment and level of detail as the other aspects of his life. In fact, it is his younger years that should be the focus as you can see his mannerisms, attitude, etc., were formed and then matured as he went along in life.

The early years is one of the most fascinating parts of the book. While most readers want to skip these parts and get right to the Civil War era in his life, this is an excellent look into what made the man. The author covers his time in school, working for the family, and the number of times that they moved, which seemed to be a natural part of life in the early years of the country. Again and again I was astounded by how many times people in the book moved on to different towns and homes.

Between moving, school, and learning new trades, Grant was pretty busy in his formative years. The parts about his education showed that he had a profound interest in reading and the theater, which crop up from time to time throughout the book. Eventually he gets accepted to West Point, which again provides some interesting pages about his time there along with the people he served with, many of whom would become his opponents on the battlefield in years to come.

Involvement in the Mexican-American War, postings to California, and marriage take up the next section of the book. These naturally are the events leading up to the start of the Civil War, where Grant starts out with meager assignments. Contrary to popular belief, he did not start out as a general or commander of all of the Union armies! Instead, you get a good look at his progression through the ranks, although very fast due to the Union looking for anyone who displayed even the most average competence.

Grant eventually ends up under Halleck, which is an interesting story under its own weight, and this sets the stage for the campaigns leading up to the capture of Ft. Donelson and Vicksburg along with the Battle of Shiloh. These first major battles are explored in depth, going over his relationships with other officers, the high command, and essentially how to get the job done in an area that didn't have the best transportation routes. The author provides interesting insight into a general who knew what he wanted to do, could organize large operations, then almost through sheer force of will get the job done.

Naturally this leads to ever bigger commands, eventually seeing Grant transferred back East to take command of all of the Union armies. The book does go into great detail about his relationships with other generals, particularly Sherman and Sheridan, President Lincoln, and a who's who of famous military leaders. The book delves into the politics of the war and why it took so long to remove incompetent leaders or why certain objectives were chosen. The amount of things that Grant had to do each day and how much he was in command of is ex-plained in details that are staggering to comprehend for a time where communication was just beginning to become faster, but where there were still significant delays.

After the end of the war, the book goes into Grant's rising political status and his campaign to become President. This also is a fascinating look at a man who wanted to do what he felt was right and what the nation needed, rather than a vainglorious pursuit at immortality. His administration and time in office would surely take up several books, but again the author focuses on the more important aspects of that time, which includes the accomplishments as well as the problems that nagged him during his stay in the White House.

From there it is on to a global tour where he was treated as a celebrity as he visited many countries on a trip that was over a year. His final days were spent reading and spending time at home, followed by his death and funeral, which was attended by a long list of important characters from the pages of U.S. history.

If there is one book that you are going to read about Ulysses S. Grant, then surely this is it. The book is faster paced than you would think, includes surprising details about a man you thought you knew, and is a fantastic one volume summary of his life. I was struck time and time again about how much I didn't know, but this book does a good job of highlighting things that provides insight into the man and his times. Highly recommended.

Doing Everything is No Longer an Option   Editorial
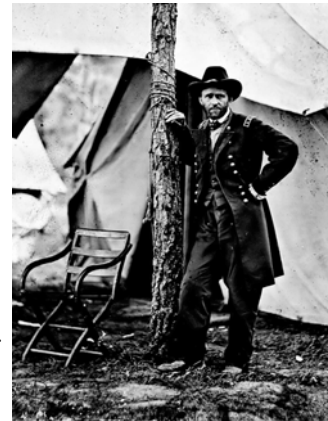
When I first got into the wargaming hobby back in 1976 there were a lot of choices (at least to me!) about what to play. There were board games by Avalon Hill and SPI, GHQ micro-armor, D&D was just getting going, and a lot of Airfix 1/72nd scale things for WW2. As I became more aware of companies like Ral Partha, Heritage, and so on the next few years it seemed like the hobby was endless.

Having said that, however, there was the feeling that you could do almost everything at that time. Paint up a few units for WRG ancients, some GHQ micro-armor for club games, some Heritage or Empire 15mm for ACW, and get a few board games each year. You could basically show up on club day/night and be ready for almost anything. You felt connected to all of these periods, had the rules for most, and if something sprang up it was a group effort to get that new period off the ground.

Even in the 90s, which is where I think that the hobby got to an important crossroads, there was still that feeling that given some time, you could play all of the popular periods. Essex and Old Glory had 15mm covered, there were some good rules such as Command Decision, Age of Reason, Sword & Flame, etc., and you could always find at least a few other gamers that had the same interest as you.

As I stated above, the hobby seemed to have reached a crossroads in the mid to late 90s. Go down this one path and continue to make WH40K Rogue Trader stuff, keep improving existing periods, expand ranges, etc.; basically, keep doing what was working for the next few decades. Everyone seemed happy, there were some great gaming memories being made, even if you weren't into the Seven Years War you had plans to do it, and gaming life was good.

The hobby, however, went down a new path. Hundreds of new rules sets, figures in every scale, enough terrain offerings to fill a supermarket, racks and racks of paint, new game systems, and more poured into the hobby. Not this was such a bad thing as more choice is always good. What gamer doesn't want better paint options, terrain in every scale, figures for every ancient army, and so forth? As with all things, however, it comes with a price.

That price is that you no longer feel that you can do everything. That's not to say that some gamers don't try. I see many of them buying every new thing that comes out with the result that their houses are packed with things that they will never get to. In fact, I think at some point it's going to have the opposite effect in making gamers cut back, which is what is happening with the cable/satellite industry. You reach a point with choice where people start deciding too much is a hassle and they go back to basics.

For myself, I find that is where I am at in the hobby. I'm no longer interested in new sets of rules. If someone wants to test something out, that's fine by me, but I think that there's little chance I purchase them or would re-base figs for them. I feel by this point I have the rules that I want and will stick with them. If others can use the figs I have and how they are based for a new game I will help out. I'm not getting games to the table that I would like to see played more often now, so why would I be excited to start something new? A perfect example of that is Battles For Empire, where I have almost 1500 15mm figs, terrain, gunboats, etc. and it's one of my favorite games. I think it's seen the table three times in almost five years!

Too much choice also has the effect of not being able to get people interested in periods or new rules that you may be interested in if you could get a group project together. I've loved fantasy wargaming for a long time and recently came across Kings of War. Some fantasy battles and/or a campaign would be something I might break my "no new rules" directive for. However, I would probably end up being the only one painting an army! Everyone else is too busy buying, painting, and playing other games! Same goes for the new Age of Valor system where I've wanted to do Franco-Prussian War for more than 20 years and I already have all the terrain.

However, getting everyone on board, buying and painting figs, etc., and not having some new system or range of figures distract everyone in the process seems to have very slim odds of success! Back in the day that thing happened as well, but it was a few years down the road after everyone was established in that period. Today, the distractions could start as early as 24 hours after everyone agrees upon something!

The doing everything theme seemed to be a catalyst for the hobby in the 70s and 80s, but is definitely gone today. I think back to the connections that you had with almost all gamers then and how little you care about what others are doing today, mainly because the chance of them doing anything you're familiar with is low. What use to be a fraternity has turned to a mass of people wandering through a hobby that perhaps is too vast.

My advice to new gamers is to pick one or two periods and go heavy into them and then have one or two where you can contribute where needed. Don't get distracted by the never ending arrivals of new games, rules, figs, etc., and just focus on a few things. You'll amass sizeable armies, have fun, and stay grounded for as long as you're in the hobby. If not, you'll end up being like most gamers where their interests are a mile long and about an inch deep.
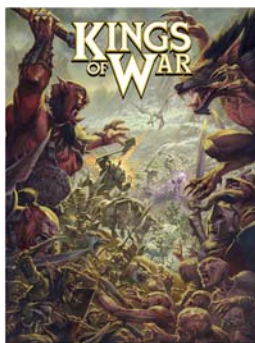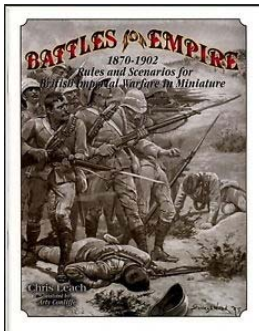
Our first test of the AOR 3rd edition (earlier in this issue) rules went well, but we wanted to try again quickly to be able to see what had really changed and was it worth switching from the 2nd version. There were a number of concerns about a few things, but we weren't sure if it was the rules or simply us playing things wrong!

Mark had a recent copy of The Wargamer's Annual magazine that had a scenario that looked suitable for the Seven Years War. With only three of us available this time it seemed like with a little modification it would be just right for a quick AOR game. Mark had arrived earlier to set the terrain up so all we had to do was select our units and get ready for deployment.

The Prussians would be the attacking force and had two infantry brigades as well as two brigades of cavalry. The infantry was mainly average line, but there was one unit of grenadiers, one unit of skirmishers, and one unit of militia that would be good for support, but not much else. The cavalry were a mix of hussars and dragoons, which were posted to the flanks. The Prussians had very limited artillery, with just one battery, which is a huge change from the massed batteries that we usually see in our games!

The French had two infantry brigades as well, but smaller than their Prussian counterparts. They also had two brigades of cavalry and one artillery battery to round out their forces. The one thing that they did have, however, was a solid position on a hill at the end of the board with earthworks that was the main objective for the Prussians with a lot of open ground in between.

The Prussian plan was to have the cavalry guard the flanks while the infantry moved up the center. The first brigade (with the better troops) would move up slightly to the left, then oblique up the hill for an attack that would hopefully turn that flank. The second brigade would clear the town, then feint an attack in that direction up the hill to draw off the French forces. Naturally, the French weren't going to just let that happen and had posted one infantry brigade at the top of the hill with another directly opposite the town, plus the cavalry on the flanks.

This battle, like many others we've recently fought (more on this later), started out with a cavalry engagement on the Prussian left, where the Prussian rolled poorly and got rolled up. Both Prussian units fell back or routed with heavy losses, while the French rallied back (a good new rule) to their start line. The Prussian infantry on that flank now had to advance cautiously with a flank guard, which was not in the original plan! On the Prussian right the dragoons emerged from the woods and were charged by the French cavalry. Not as bad as the left flank, but the dragoons were chased off and out of the action for several critical turns.

The second French infantry brigade now saw an opportunity and counterat-

tacked, catching the Prussians just coming out of the village. This started a battle that would go on for several turns, with the Prussians not daring to venture too far forward for feat of being caught by the French cavalry.

A few turns later the Prussian first infantry brigade was ready to begin it's attack. The defeated Prussian hussars were back and guarding the flank. There would probably be one more battle there then the main attack could begin. It was pretty much one spread out French brigade on the top of the hill that would get hit by a concentrated Prussian brigade. The battle could still be salvaged if things went right for just a few turns.

That was not to be, however, as the Prussian cavalry lost again on the left. The victorious French cavalry then quickly overran the Prussian battery which found itself alone and caused the infantry brigade to reconsider its options. On the Prussian right the

dragoons returned, counterattacked, and were run off again, leaving the Prussian second infantry brigade to its fate.

The Prussian infantry was holding their own in a series of firefights until a few units failed morale and had to fall back. With the Prussian cavalry defeated, one of the infantry brigades in tatters, and four units of French cavalry probing the flanks, there was no way the Prussians were going to take the hill so the game was called as a decisive French victory.

This started a discussion about how for the last several games we always start with a cavalry battle on the flanks, then one side gets crushed, and with that one side is forced to detail half of their infantry as flank guards, which ruins the game! We sat around talking about this for quite

some time and then hit what we felt was the answer. For years we played on large tables, usually one that was 8 x 6 and even using the 25mm charts for 15mnm figures it meant that if a flank got crushed it would be several turns before cavalry could intervene elsewhere.

However, due to our gaming circumstances now, we're playing on 6 x4 tables (usually) and sometimes 8 x 4. Using the 25mm charts (which was recommended in the original rules) the cavalry move too fast, the artillery has too long a range, and battles aren't being fought as they historically should be. The answer? It was staring us right in the face; use the 15mm charts! So, for the next time we try AOR it's back to the 15mm charts and we'll see if that helps any.

As far as the AOR3 rules go there are some good things and some bad things after our second battle with them. The Rally Back rule and command & control aspects work well. The extra die for morale grades in melee and the upgunned artillery are causing way too many casualties than we use to see. Also, we're still getting used to the new way morale grades are assigned along with the new army lists, so the jury is still out on that aspect of the rules.

This started out as an interesting battle, then turned into a slaughter. The cavalry victories so soon into the game ruined the scenario, which looked interesting. We'll try the 15mm charts next time and see if that improves things with a new scenario.

It's been awhile since we did a Crusades WMM battle, so with Rob having recently read about the end of the Crusaders campaigns in the Holy Land, we did a loose recreation of the final battle to seize Egypt. The Crusaders and their Arab allies were facing two different Egyptian armies in this battle, where the numbers of the Egyptian forces would be matched up against the better Crusader forces.

We matched the order of battles as best we could, making sure that at least the point totals would represent the actual ratio of troops that were available to both sides. The Crusaders featured several units of heavily mounted troops, crossbowmen, foot knights, and several units of Arabs that were attached for the campaign.

The Egyptian forces relied heavily on mounted troops, with quite a few units of heavy cavalry, skirmishing light cavalry, and bow armed units. They were backed by a virtual sea of infantry units, although many weren't very well armored. The Egyptian leaders were not as good as their Crusader counterparts and were spread thin, but the Egyptian force had a 12-8 advantage in break points and any losses to the skirmishing cavalry units would not count against that total.

Naturally, with a huge advantage in numbers, getting them to all move at the same time was a challenge for the Egyptians. The first few turns were spent just getting their forces out into the middle of the battlefield. The Crusaders, however, were not going to just sit there and wait for the Egyptian forces to attack at their point of choosing! They launched a series of what could be described as pre-emptive attacks, throwing the Egyptians into disarray. One Egyptian commander in particular could not get his forces to move for four straight turns!

The Egyptian cavalry responded, attacking everything that moved in an effort to wear down the Crusaders better mounted forces. On the Egyptian left the Crusaders had a series of bad combat rolls which resulted in two of their really good units taking a beating. The Egyptian forces on that flank, however, were too weak to carry the fight into the main defensive line of the Crusaders as the crossbow units were taking their toll of any unit that advanced near them.

By the mid point of the game both sides were pretty even, but time and numbers were on the side of the Egyptians. Slowly and surely, the horde of Egyptian infantry began to approach and get itself sorted out. Meanwhile, the Egyptian heavy cavalry was able to get itself into the action, charging every unit that they could, which tied down the Crusader forces and caused casualties, bring them closer to their break point.

By the 7th turn the Crusaders were in an ever shrinking defensive perimeter. It's a credit to Gary and Rob for not calling the game early, but rotating units in

and out of the front lines in an effort to stave off defeat.

The Egyptians, however, had numbers and weren't afraid to use them! The cavalry kept up its relentless attacks all along the line while the infantry moved up for the final attacks. Several waves of Egyptian infantry crashed into the Crusader lines, taking frightful casualties, but causing just enough in return. By the end of Turn 8 the Crusaders were in deep trouble and they tried to counterattack at a number of places, but failed to score any resounding victories.

The end was now in sight as more fresh Egyptian infantry arrived to plunge into the attack. The last few fresh units of the Crusaders were forced back and finally ground down until they hit their break point. It had been a close game for quite some time and the Crusaders had their chances early while the Egyptians were having command issues. Once the Egyptian commanders started to make their command rolls there was a massive host of units for the Crusaders to deal with.

We've only briefly experimented with historical battles using WMA or WMM, mainly because the points system means the larger force will usually win. This battle, however, gives one pause in thinking if there are scenario specific objectives that the system could work. I think that there would need to be some serious tweaking of the orders of battle, command ratings, etc., but it's something worth exploring. Everyone had a good time and we finished a quite large battle in under three hours!

Several views of the battle where the outnumbered Crusaders continued to fall back into an ever shrinking perimeter. Despite being outnumbered, the casualty totals were pretty close up to the last turn of the game.

Engagement 17: Flank Attack Timing

Situation: Red has a very strong position, with defenses guarding a critical town and the approaches to it. Blue has been planning an offensive to take this town and has been massing nearby. Red has caught wind of a possible attack and is moving forces to reinforce the defenses. Blue hopes to break through with the aid of a flank attack, then isolate the town before Red can bring up more forces.

Period: Ancients to late 19th century is preferable, but with modifications mechanized forces could be used. The longer ranges and lethality of modern weapons would need to be taken into account by possibly enlarging the game board.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are fairly low, but block line of sight. The town is a mixture of wood and stone buildings. The woods are light woods, but do block line of sight. The fortifications marked on the map will each hold one infantry unit and one battery of artillery.

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

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

On Board at Start:

5 units of infantry

1 unit of cavalry

2 units of artillery

Reinforcements:

4 units of infantry

1 unit of light infantry

2 units of cavalry

2 units of artillery

Set Up: Red's forces can set up anywhere up to the red line. Units can begin the game entrenched up to the limit of the fortifications.

Red Orders: Prevent Blue's forces from isolating and taking the town. Use the reinforcements to counterattack any

Blue units that break through the front lines.

Blue Forces: Blue's forces have been split into two groups for the attack. The first will attack and pin the forward defenses while the second launches a flank attack. However, the second force has just marched into the area and is having difficulty reaching their positions.

Entering Board at Start:

7 units of infantry

2 units of artillery

1 units of cavalry

1 units of light infantry

Flanking Force:

4 units of infantry

2 units of cavalry

2 units of artillery

Blue Orders: Attack Red's forward defenses to keep them occupied until the flanking force arrives. Once that force is on board, move to isolate the town from Red's oncoming reinforcements, then finally attack and seize the town.

Set Up: Blue's starting forces enter the board at the arrows on Turn 1 in any formation.

Blue Flanking Force: The flanking force is acting off of written orders and has become disoriented in regards to where they are to enter the battlefield. Units have become strung out and are trying to maintain communication. Each turn until the flanking force arrives, roll 1D6 and on a 6 the flanking force appears. Add +1 to the roll each turn, so on turn 3 the roll would need to be a 4, 5, or 6. The turn the flanking force arrives also determines

where it enters the board.

Turn 1 or 2-Enter at A

Turn 3 or 4-Enter at B

Turn 5-Enter at C

Turn 6-Enter at D

Red Reinforcements: Each turn Red rolls 1D6 for *each* unit to see if it arrives on the road leading to the town. On a roll of a 6 the unit arrives with a +1 modifier for each turn.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn.

Game Length: 12 turns

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

Victory Conditions: Blue needs to seize the town while not suffering more than 50% casualties by Turn 12. If Blue seizes the town, but has more than 50% casualties then the game is a draw. Any other result is a Red victory.

Variants: There are a large number of variants possible, starting with larger forces and playing surface. Reinforcements could be added to Red to balance out the game, especially if Blue is fortunate where the flanking force arrives on the first turn or two. Troop quality could be adjusted to also affect the play balance. The flanking force could also show up piecemeal, making it more challenging for Blue.
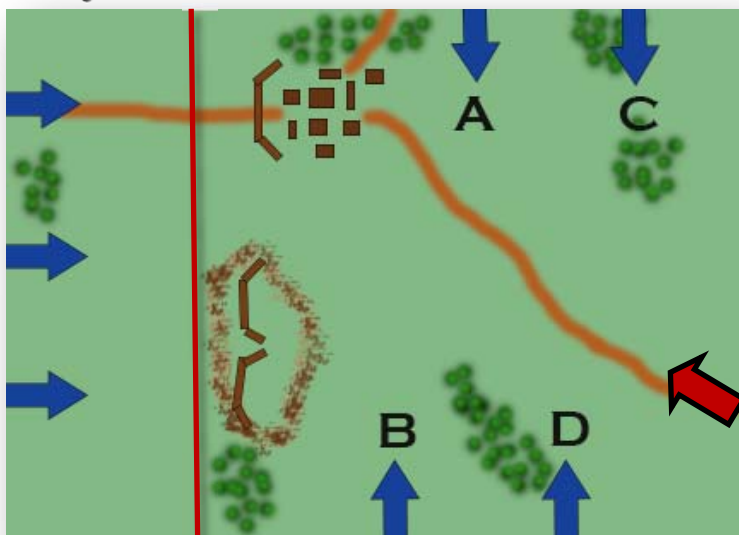
Engagement 18: Surprise River Attack

Situation: The Spring rains have flooded a river that Red has been guarding since both sides went into winter quarters, postponing the new campaign season. However, Blue sees this as an opportune time to launch a surprise attack and has stockpiled supplies to build a bridge across the swollen river.

Period: Ancients to late 19th century is preferable. With modifications mechanized forces could be used, but the table would need to be enlarged to account for longer ranged weapons.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are fairly low, but block line of sight. The two towns are made up of a mix of wood and stone buildings, plus they could have fences, walls, adjoining fields, etc. The woods are light woods, but do block line of sight. The river can only be crossed at the ford and that should be extremely slow due to the flooding.

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

Red Forces: Most of Red's forces are in winter quarters or off board. There is a small force that has been left behind to guard the river and most of that is entrenched. There is one cavalry unit that is blocking the ford and to provide early warning of an attack.

On Board at Start:

2 units of infantry

1 units of cavalry

1 units of artillery

Red Reinforcements:

6 units of infantry

2 units of cavalry

2 units of artillery

Set Up: Red's on board forces set up where marked on the map.

Red Orders: Stop Blue's forces from seizing the towns and/or exiting the board.

Blue Forces: Blue has decided to launch a surprise attack and has prepared bridging supplies to cross the river. The bridge, however, may have problems with the flooding, so crossing sufficient forces and making a successful assault could be challenging.

Blue Forces:

10 units of infantry

3 units of artillery

4 units of cavalry

2 units of light infantry

Blue Orders: Set up the bridge then cross over the river as soon as possible. Once you have sufficient units on the other side of the river, attack Red's forces with the goal of seizing both the towns. Where possible, exit forces off the roads leading to the two towns.

Set Up: Blue must first place the bridge on the river, then set up his units in any formation on Blue's side of the river. One unit may start on Red's side of the river, representing the force that snuck across to secure the bridge.

Initiative: Blue is first each turn

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: Each turn Blue must

roll for how many units can cross the bridge. Due to the flooding, the bridge is unstable and needs continuous repairs and work. Each turn Blue rolls 1D6 with the following results:

1: 1 unit may cross

2-3: 2 units may cross

4-5: 3 units may cross

6: Bridge is damaged and no units may cross this turn.

Red's Reinforcements: Red's units are in winter quarters and will need to arrive as soon as possible Red has seen Blue massing for an attack and has sent messengers for the units to arrive as soon as possible. Roll 1D6 for each unit of Red's reinforcements. That is the turn number that the unit will arrive. Roll a second D6 and that is where it arrives (numbers marked on the map).

Victory Conditions: Blue needs to exit at least three units (or the equivalent in units) off of either road on Red's board edge by the end of Turn 12. This will be enough force to make Red break off the siege and save the city.

Variants: Allow Blue to place a second bridge and/or have Red's reinforcements arrive sooner (maybe 1D6-2 turns). You could also allow Red to place defenses

With four of us confirmed for a game and having to play at the local store, we needed something that could be completed to a reasonable conclusion. We chose to do Fire & Fury ACW because not only is it popular with the group, but there are smaller scenarios that fit our needs for this night. After looking through the scenario books and checking with our inventory of figures, we chose The Battle of Corinth.

When we first looked at the terrain required the battle would fit great on a 4x8 or 6x8 table. Unfortunately, the big tables were in use for an event on Saturday, so we had to make do with a 4x6. No big deal as we just cut out some of the Union rear deployment areas and a little off the sides. The next issue were the large number of roads that crisscrossed the battlefield. In F&F roads only help you if you're trying to re-deploy over long distances or move troops up in a hurry, which probably wasn't going to happen here due to the terrain. With time an issue we skipped the roads.

Next up were the rivers and as I had only brought a big one, that was used to delineate the major water obstacle on the map and it worked as it reminded everyone that you could only cross at the rail-road bridge! We also didn't have any train tracks (something that we are going to look into getting for upcoming battles) so we used the vinyl roads to represent those. After getting the forces organized, going over objectives, etc., we were finally ready to play.

The Confederate plan was to basically bludgeon our way through the Union front line defenses, then tackle the various redoubts in an effort to capture the town of Corinth. Although the Confederates had two cavalry brigades, due to the early war structure they were attached to the two infantry divisions that were assigned the worst part of the terrain! This made them effectively useless in the battle. The Union would be bringing up more and more troops so the Confederates needed to hit hard and get into the open areas.

The terrain, however, proved to be more of an obstacle than the Confederate side (which included me) realized at the time. The river running down the middle also meant that there would be no reinforcing either side unless the one crossing could be seized, which would take a miracle. Also, with only one battery of artillery and limited fields of fire, the Confederates would need to do this with infantry alone.

The Confederates piled into the woods and rough terrain, but were immediately attacked by Union forces on the Confederate right. Not content to just sit back they threw themselves with reckless abandon at the Confederates before they could deploy in one of the few open areas. The first attacks succeeded, but they were thrown back themselves by a strong Confederate counterattack. The remaining few turns were spent trying to move up and keep things sorted out in the terrain that was a huge obstacle.

The Confederate attacks then went in as a series of coordinated assaults. At least three times in the first few turns the Confederates were on the verge of a major breakthrough, dealing

(cont. from p22) massive defeats to different Union brigades. Each time, however, the Union forces counterattacked and drove the Confederates back to their starting positions. The Union began to reinforce their position, creating successive lines of defense with units in reserve.

The Confederates tried again, probing for weaknesses in the Union lines. Once again, the Union forces counterattacked where possible, disrupting the Confederate attacks. In the center a Confederate brigade punched through, opening a wide hole that unfortunately the units behind them could not exploit (bad movement rolls) and the Union counterattack sealed the breach. On the Confederate left another attack wiped out a dismounted Union cavalry brigade and forced back the

infantry in that area. However, the Confederates could not win two melees in a row and were again pushed back.

By this time the Confederates were thoroughly frustrated. The Union attack on the left had come as a surprise, but the inability to make a breakthrough after several huge wins in hand to hand combat was a major concern. The Confederates moved forward again, desperate to get out of the rough terrain and into the open areas. Another series of charges went in and achieved initial success, but through a combination of bad movement rolls, not being able to roll good twice in a row, Union forces rallying, etc., the Confederates were still trapped in the rough terrain.

The scenario was supposed to be 14 turns long (about 7 hours of real time) and we had reached Turn 10. Looking at the situation the Confederates weren't too excited about their prospects of winning the battle. While ahead in casualties, several brigades were now worn and spent, plus the terrain was a serious issue. The Union position had shrunk back, but was a series of strong semi-circles that would be difficult to break through. At that the game was called as a Union victory.

A great scenario where both sides had their chances. There were charges, counterattacks, out of ammo units, desperate defense and more that all make for a great gaming experience.

Samurai Era Peasant Cottage by Rob Coleman   Workbench

Our gaming group has played Ronin a number of times now, and it is an excellent, but simple system. My daughter is turning seven and Ronin seems like a great system to start her out on. She loves math, and the simple modifier system will be right up her alley. As such, I entered a contest around terrain building to keep me motivated. The contest was to use cardboard/paper/cardstock and one of the bonus categories is to keep it on a CD. This would be a good chance for me to try a few things, such as lighted terrain.

It is easy to make larger terrain pieces and the CD will also force me to scale things down a bit, plus be more in keeping with a peasant's cottage. I could include a few touches to accentuate it, but still overall keep it small. I think I said it before in a different article, but having something that is all your own is highly satisfying. It can be a slog to make it in the end, but you'll have a nice piece of kit that no one else does. Thus, I hope this article will inspire you to make some custom terrain for your table. It will use some ideas that are already out there, and hopefully interpret them in a way to inspire you to adapt a concept for your own use.


To begin with, sketch yourself out a plan. Here you can see I am choosing a simple L shape building. There will be a water barrel out front and I will make some bamboo trees to add accent to the piece. The plan doesn't need to be perfect and you don't have to stick completely to it, but having something is very helpful to visualize your end result as well as help guide your hand as you build.

If you will notice, the initial design

had sliding doors on one wall, and an entrance on another. During the design of each wall, that would change as you will see later on. However, this gives a good feel for what I'm intending to

do, and the picture above will give you a sense of scale. Small, humble, but home to some poor ditch digger.
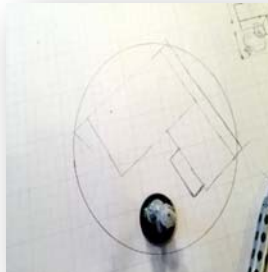
One of the first things I did after mocking up my plan was go out and look up some photos of bamboo. I have a terrain making guide from a famous company and I wanted to double check their bamboo before starting mine. It was a good thing I did, as their color scheme was backwards. They used a dark green 'trunk' with light green bands. Real bamboo is dark at the bands. This makes sense if you think about where the coloring would be deepest. Usually it has a lighter band around this dark ring, but the joint ring is dark.

There are, of course, multiple ways to achieve this. I choose an easy and slightly ironic one, in that I used bamboo barbecue skewers to make my bamboo trees. I started by spray painting them all a uniform green that I had lying around the house. I then followed that up by painting a very watered down light green around it in thick bands at regular intervals. The bamboo pales right before the joint, and then in the middle of that add a dark green band. At that point I cut them into irregular lengths to give the trees a more realistic aspect.

When cutting, I recommend using an X-acto or similar hobby knife, then slowly rolling it around the trunk. I tried it with some heave shears, but the cut was ragged and it damages the paint at the end. The hobby knife yielded a cleaner, smoother end without damage to the paint. You can add your leaves at the top and call it done at this point if you want. I wanted to add some character that you don't usually see in a bamboo tree and

model some of the off shoots that can occasionally form. For this I used some sea moss that I have used in the past to make other types of trees. Using a very small bit and a pin vice I drilled a couple holes in the side and inserted some sea moss that I sprayed green. I flocked that with some Noch leaf litter, and used a similar shade of green foam for the top leaves.

For a first stab at it, I am very pleased with the results. The moss is a bit fragile, so be aware if you try something similar. However, it gives the tree a look and feel that most gamers won't duplicate.

To add a little more color to the base, I want to make a water barrel. Getting something round can be tricky, so I dug out a number of round slotta bases that I will no longer use (I've moved to steel fender washers for my bases). Using a Perry Miniatures Japanese peasant for scale, I stacked up the bases, alternating which sides I glued together in order to (cont. on p25)

(cont. from p24) them aligned. I then also turned them on their sides and rolled the combined structure while the glue was still hardening to double check my alignment. A slim layer of card went on the top, with another slim layer around the bases. This would provide a flat top to pour in faux water when the barrel was complete and provide a consistent base for the planking around the sides.

Now the planks could be made from anything, but in keeping with the competition rules I used card. This is also helpful as you can more easily cut down a single plank to make the fit correct. Cut a long rectangle and then score it at regular intervals to make the individual planks. To top it off, use regular typing paper and cut thin strips to make the bands for the barrel and run a bead of glue around the inside where the top of the cylinder meets the planks/wall. This will help the faux water from leaking down the sides.

The walls were cut out of cardboard

and a shoe box. I recommend using graphing paper to mark out your walls. The straight lines and set grid pattern is highly useful when diagramming your pattern. In the end, I did not trace the pattern onto cardboard, but you can. I used it to check my walls and overall design, plus it caused me to move some bits around as noted above. By drawing out a pattern, it was obvious I had to change where the sliding doors went and how I had replacement windows originally placed. I cut the walls, and then using masking tape put the walls together to make sure it all fit.

When you draw onto the cardboard, be sure to include any additional lines/info

that you will need. In the case of this cottage, I would need to know where the planking along the bottom needed to come up to and where the cross planking went.

Once I was confident that it all fit, and after the walls were glued together, I put it on the base and dry fit the trees in order to be sure they would work how I had planned. Remember the old adage, measure twice, cut once. I've made the mistake of running down a path farther than I should have, then ended up having to fix issues that would have been solved through

a more rigorous check process.

At this juncture, I measure out the 'corner posts' using the previously mentioned shoe box. To make them stand out, I choose to make them double deep, so that they would sit out further than the bottom and cross planking. Be sure you get good, clean edges if doing this. Having the planks non-square would make a dual layer difficult and would make alignment hard. On the flip side, you will see that I have not smashed the planks together tightly. This is so that once painted they will appear to be wood planks and not be a seamless mass.

To get the roof right, I used a card paper flyer to cut out the various pieces and taped them together to see how they would lay on the building. A roof is easy to mess up and I had to cut out three extra pieces to get the fit right. Once I was happy with it, I cut some cardboard cross sections so that there would be some physically stability to the roof. Before calling it good, it was of course fit to the building to make sure the dimensions were all correct and that it (cont. on p26)

Samurai Era Peasant Cottage by Rob Coleman   Workbench

When affixing the fake fur, glue it down first and let it dry. After it has adhered to the roof, paint it with watered down glue. This will help seal it up and let it be painted easier. The other bonus is that you can then texture the fur to have some of the lumps/breaks you see in thatch. Use the brush to push the glued fur back up and then pull it back down. It will leave it rough and 'broken' if done right making the fur look even more like actual thatch.

To make the water in the barrel I used a plunger that came with one of the bottles of kids medicine we bought ages ago. This let me control the flow of the faux water into the barrel and avoid any spillage. Now, you can just use the faux water, but I highly recommend you don't leave it at that. Put a few drops of brown or green ink into it and swirl it around.

Japanese houses also often have a top roof rafter, which is nice for modeling, as it will hide the seam at the roof line for you. The other tip is that I used a window film made for model railroads to fill in the windows. This fuzzes out the glow from the tea light and means that I don't have to fill in the interior with stuff. Below you can see the final result of paint, weathering, and the addition of 'water'

There you have it, a custom piece of terrain that is lighted to add some unique character to a table top. It is small and thus easy to store while still having a lot of color and char-


(cont. from p25) would look right once I put the fake on to make the thatch.

Once I was sure the roof fit, and would sit right, I affixed the trees. You may notice that I have not affixed the roof to the cottage. My original plan was to have a removable house, but I quickly found that to be impractical, and for this reason the roof is not attached. The house was permanently mounted to the base and the roof will be the access point for the light.

acter while looking great on the tabletop.

This is another great example where gamers can create terrain that you would not ordinarily find commercially available. Although it does take some time, the results (as seen above) can produce a very interesting piece that sets your

Vikings & Anglo-Danish Invade!   Saga Battle Report

Game Length	10 Turns
Special Rules:	
Shipwreck	For each non-warlord Viking/Anglo-Danish unit roll 1D3, the unit suffers this many casualties before the start of the game. These men washed overboard in the storm that ran their boat aground. Any Hearthguard unit with 2 or fewer remaining models may join any unit of Warriors. These models retain their attack values of Hearthguard, but otherwise count as Warriors for armor/fatigue purposes.
Rain Squalls	During the first 4 turns, any model or unit wishing to fire a missile weapon must roll 1D6. On a 5 or 6 they may fire normally, on a 1-4 the wind and rain is too heavy to shoot this turn.
Warlord Rules:	
Viking	Raider: While the warlord is alive, any unit can activate with any saga dice
Anglo Danish	Hero of the Viking Age: The warlord generates 3 saga dice instead of 2
Norman	Scouts: Levy generate saga dice
	Wounded: The warlord generates 1 less attack dice
Victory Conditions	Normal Victory conditions apply. If the Norman's win on points they have scattered the crew sufficiently to capture the money and burn the ship. If the Vikings/Anglo-Danes win they have driven the Normans off, make repairs, and reach their destination.

After the Normans decimated the Saxon aristocracy at the Battle of Hastings, a new leader rose from the ashes to lead the armed resistance to Norman occupation. Hereward the Wake rallied Saxons to form a steady and stubborn band that made their base in Ely. The cathedral in Ely was surrounded by swampy fens that stymied the Norman forces, until a bridge across the swamps could be built enabling the Normans and their mercenary forces to break the defenders.

Our story to date has seen the Normans struggle to contain the resourceful Saxons. Unable to contain them in the swamps, but able to deny them a major break out route, the Saxons have slipped through Norman lines in small numbers to rendezvous with Danish warriors. They have smuggled out several chests of silver to pay for .
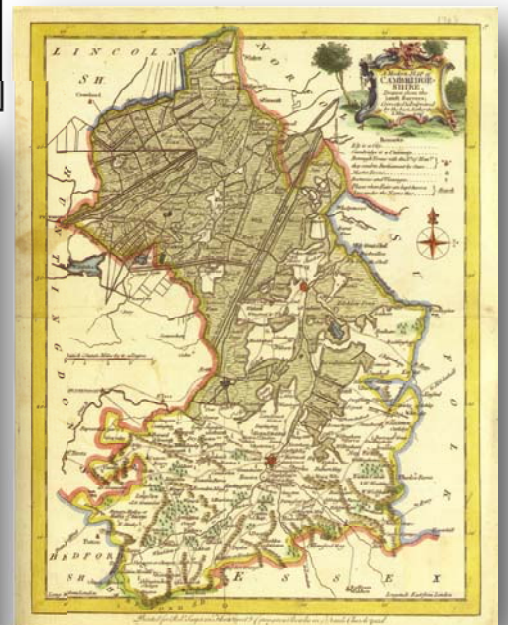
The Battle of Hastings decimated the ranks of the English nobility and put William on the throne, but did not give him total control of the country. It would be years before the Normans completed the conquest, a period what is generally not readily talked about much, but offers a wealth of possibilities for skirmish games.

Saga is a brilliant set of rules, which actually has a deep and challenging to master strategy based around fatigue and the battle boards. Each faction has similar base units, but fights differently based on said battle board to give them a more historical and thematic flair. Age of the Wolf and the new expansion Aetius and Arthur both have rules for running campaigns, but shouldn't be the limits of your imagination. We've used some of the special rules for generating your own heroes and then setup our own running story based on the battles of Hereward the Wake and the defense of Ely.

Our initial battle saw the Saxons trying to find a reliable route through the fens to enable larger forces out to sally against the Norman lines and thus relieve some of the pressure. While they failed to locate a route suitable for a major force, they did find a smaller path that they could use to smuggle out some chests of silver to hire mercenaries and bring in supplies. In the follow up, the Normans intercepted them just as they were about to reach the coast, but were heavily mauled, including the Comes taking several wounds in the battle.

The scenario for this Friday picked up where we had left off. Treacherous seas and storms, something not uncommon in medieval sailing (Henry the 1st would lose his son in relatively calm seas, touching off the civil war between Stephen and Matilda), had caused the Vikings to shipwreck not far down the coast. A Norman patrol had found them attempting repairs, and the so recently vanquished lord came looking for revenge. Scenario rules are given on the previous page, with some ideas to improve on them based on our play through.

That may help, although the scenario itself seemed fine enough, but the dice rolls for the Saxons (Anglo-Danish) and the Vikings were abysmal. To start off

they rolled high when rolling for men lost at sea during the storm and several units started off down 2 or even 3 men. The Normans started off with the Flemish Mercenaries and their levy archers near a few coastal building, while their main force came on along the West road and a small force coming in from the North.

As the storms had not fully abated yet, the Norman shooting was stymied on all four initial turns due to rain and wind. However, the combined Viking/Saxon

forces struggled to exploit this deficiency with the worst rolls we've seen in a long time. In the initial melee of the game, involving a warlord and a combined hearth-guard/warrior unit (see special rules at the end), they manage 3 hits to the Flemish 6, and the Flemish proceeded to save 1 of those to beat off the Vikings. In the follow up conflict the Vikings again came off the worse (cont. on p29)

(cont. from p28) for wear, and in a following Saxon assault the Flemish still had 2 men left after beating off their attackers yet again. Meanwhile the Norman milites that had come in from the North steamrolled a unit of 7 Vikings, saving the one hit inflicted on them and dropping the Vikings to 2 men.

On the other flank, the Normans finally figured out how to counter the Anglo-Danish using Intimidation to block their moves, and got a unit of milites and the comes into conflict, only for both sides to roll horribly and miss most of their attacks. Backing off, the milites came in for a second go and wiped the walls with their foes.

Back in the center, the Vikings finally finished the Flemish off, but having been ground down and with two full units of Hearthguard mauling them badly the game was called. All told the 'English' managed very few hits, despite massively outnumbering their foe's attacks on several occasions. It seems that the pope was right and that God really was on the Norman's side as they thoroughly trounced their foes! All in all though, it brought up a good discussion about how to tie Saga in with another game we love to play, Warmaster. Saga provides an excellent opportunity to play small actions that feed into games using large scale armies. The events can be used to dictate how those games go.

For us, this will mean a Norman assault on Ely, with the defenders demoralized and out of supplies. The Norman comes will avoid disgrace, and may show up again. After all, the harrying of the North is still to come, and maybe our fearless Saxon (Anglo-Danish) warlord isn't quite dead yet either.

In retrospect it would have perhaps been better to just go with an all Viking or all Anglo-Danish force for the invaders. This would have enabled them to put more saga dice down on their boards. Giving them two warlords helps balance out losses due to the storm, but cutting dice in half meant the two defenders were putting fewer abilities on the table. It may not have mattered, given the rolling, but if we run a similar scenario again it is worth considering.
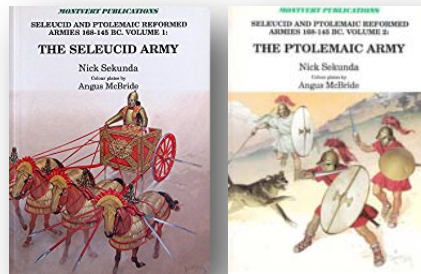
Seleucid Army Resources

Many gamers who are just getting into Ancients look at the Successor armies and with their masses of pike units, heavy cavalry, and elephants are instantly entranced. When they go to paint their forces or chose which units to add, however, they're met with a number of obstacles. The first is the composition of Successor armies and then the questions about did they have uniforms, what color were the standards, shield designs, and so on.

There's no easy answer to this and despite being one of the most popular periods in history there is little known about Successor armies unless you are willing to spend either a lot of money on books or research time in an academic library. What I've done here is to list and discuss some of the more readily available resources for the gamer just starting out in this exciting period.

First, I'll be talking about Successor armies, not Alexander's forces, although at the start of the Successor Wars most of the units had served under him. Also, the Greek forces in some of the first battles in Greece and lower Europe still had hoplites and no elephants. The Successor armies that most gamers want to try to build were those used in Syria, Egypt, and the frontiers of what were Alexander's empire. These are the armies with thousands of phalangites, cataphracts, elephants, mercenaries from across the known world, and who ended up not only fighting the other Successors, but the Parthians, Indians, and Romans!

Naturally, the first place that many gamers look is to Osprey. Unfortunately, the offerings that they currently have all focus on either Alexander's forces or the Macedonian armies after his death, which were quite different than the Successor forces outside of Greece. However, the color plates will give you a great start on how to paint the armor and weapons that were used in many units of the Successor armies. There is very little information in any of these about standards, shields,

musicians, or anything else outside of the standard pike infantry and heavy cavalry units.

Next up are what are termed "the Sekunda books", by Nick Sekunda, which are difficult to find and not cheap when you do! However, they are very good resources as they focus on the Seleucids and the Ptolemaic armies, who were the longest surviving empires of the Successors and mortal enemies. Here you get color plates of the various forces that made up these armies and the subtle differences between them. You also can see how the units evolved from Alexander's time to their ultimate demise at the hands of the Romans.

Another great book, but very hard to find is the Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars from the old Armies & Enemies series from WRG. These books came out at a time when Ancients gaming was almost sacred, so they are more about putting out information about the period than uniform plates. They do, however, have line drawings of just about every type of unit that served in the armies of the period and for that alone this book is invaluable. It currently sells for quite a lot on Ebay when available.

If your into detail then the next two books should be essential reading. The Wars of Alexander's Successors are broken into two distinct books with the first one being on the commander and thir

campaigns, then the second book on battles and tactics. The first book is definitely dry reading, but essential to understanding the politics, empire building, and who was who during this turbulent era. The second is a wonderful description of the armies who fought the Successor Wars along with descriptions of the critical battles.

Finally, I would like to recommend the GMT Successors game, which is a wonderful strategic overview of the Successor Wars. Along with being a fantastic game, you can learn a lot through the event cards, geography of the campaigns, and more.

I think it is important to note that most of the artwork that we do have is just that, an artist's impression of what they have read about in some of these sources. There was an eyewitness account of one of the Successor armies parades through Daphne in 166 BC, renderings on Alexander's sarcophagus, and some accounts of units in Egypt. Not much else is known about the dress of the various units that were in Successor service.

This naturally lets the gamer run wild with color schemes as no one can really tell you that what you chose is wrong! What colors each individual pike unit wore, what their standards were, and so on have been lost to history, which is weird when you think about how much is known about other periods. Again, try to remember that what you see in the color uniform plates in books and online sources are just guesswork. I would suggest however, that since the campaigns were long affairs that you paint your units with a lot of variation in colors and limit standardization.
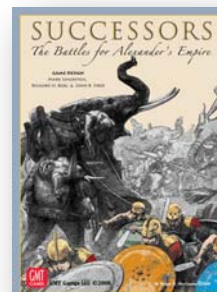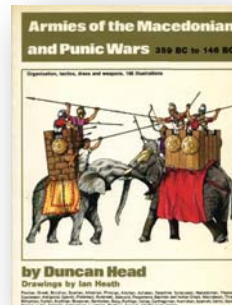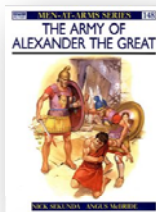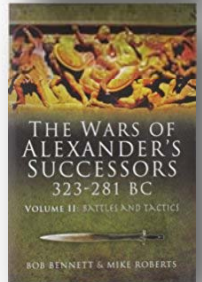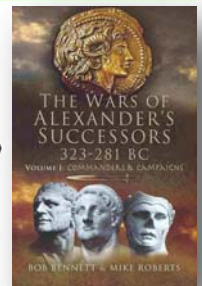
Building a 28mm Seleucid Army (cont.)

From left to right: Warlord Games Philip & Alexander figures mixed with Old Glory command, Warlord Celt cavalry used as Galatians, Warlord Games Macedonian war elephant, Warlord Games phalangites, Victrix peltasts, and finally Warlord Games Thracian peltasts.
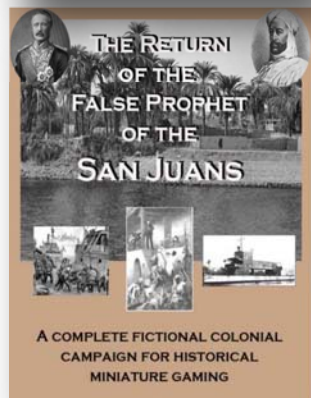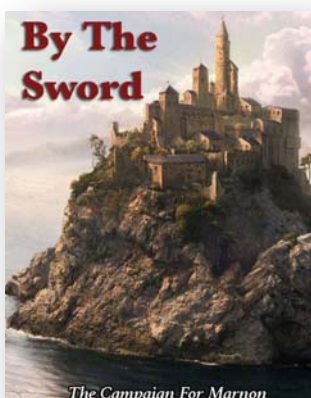
I suppose that "light" wargames have always been with us, but today there seems to be an ever growing number of them. By light (or today's term Euro games) wargames I mean ones where there is a historical conflict, but the game system is fairly simple, has high quality components, can be finished in under two hours, and is designed to appeal to the masses. I remember years ago having someone at a game store talk me into playing a few scenarios of Memoir '44 and Battle Cry. I think we finished four games in around 3 hours, which is pretty good for any wargame, light, medium, or heavy! Yes, the games were about WW2 and the ACW, but beyond that there wasn't much depth. Strategy was built around the game system, not using any kind of real world tactics, and was pretty random in terms of the cards and dice that drove the systems. I could see why they were successful as for non-wargamers or only those with a passing interest in the period I'm sure it filled a niche.

I have had other experiences with these kinds of games over the last few years, having played Command & Colors, Star Wars Armada, Wings of Glory, and many others. To me they illustrate a crossroads in the wargaming hobby. Down one path lies games like Mare Nostrum, which is definitely a high quality product, fast playing, and covers the struggle for supremacy in the Mediterranean over the centuries. A great game and fun to play, but in terms of history not so much. Down the other path is GMT's Pax Romana, which covers basically the same era. The difference here would be the rules (much longer), the play time (definitely much longer), and while the components are GMT's usual high quality, they pale in comparison to Mare Nostrum. However, Pax Romana is significantly more historical than Mare Nostrum and there is far greater depth in the game play.

But does that matter anymore? Wargaming used to involve some heated debates over simulation, realism, the history presented, and so on. That seems reserved today for only a small percentage of gamers as the hobby as certainly moved on/progressed/grown/insert your own term here. The beauty of the problem is that there is no wrong or right choice here, as both kinds of games fit well into the hobby and there's plenty of room for everybody. I just find it interesting why gamers make the choices that they do in terms of time, commitment, and how much interest they have in a particular era. It used to be that many gamers would own a copy of a game that was to be played, invested time in reading the rules, then you could sit down and not have to explain every last detail. Today, one player usually owns the game, teaches others, you have a fun two hours, then everyone goes back to their other games. It is a weird dynamic right now, but light or "Euro" wargames seem to be the current trend.