Warning Order

Issue #49

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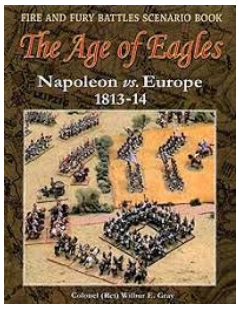
WFHGS

Scenario Design for Today's Gamer

One of the problems that many gamers run into today is that of scenario design. Outside of the usual "Take 500 points each and start there" type of game or most of the poorly designed set ups in the rules, there is very little thought that goes into scenarios. Much of this is probably due to time constraints or the tournament/points type mentality that has been growing by leaps and bounds in the hobby for quite some time now. Whatever the reason, well designed or for that matter, any kind of design other than start at opposite edges scenarios seem to be in short supply today.

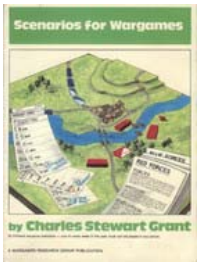


This article is simply a few tips and tricks about creating a scenario for your usual game night. These are just a few guidelines and other items that should be thought about if you're searching for more than the normal points driven standard set up that is featured in most games. As always, feel free to mix and match any ideas here with the rules that you and/or your group uses.

Fortunately, there are many rules that have scenario books such as the excellent one produced for Age of Eagles that have maps, orders of battle, set up info, and more. Also, there is a wealth of information available online and several older general scenario books. These are all great resources for how to design your own scenarios.

Number of Players

Surprisingly, this is one of the simple items that scenario designers miss and miss often. If you're going to have five or six players that night, giving each one a 20 man unit in a Sword and the Flame game is going to make for a quick night! Likewise, if you're planning for four players and six show up, is your scenario flexible enough to expand quickly, or is there plenty of units to go around?



A good rule of thumb is to design the scenario so that each player has enough units to keep themselves occupied, but not overwhelmed. This way, if more players show up, you can easily pare down some units from each player for a new command. For example, in a Hail Caesar game you set it up so that each player has seven units, with three players a side, which is plenty for a single night game. Another player who can all of a sudden make the game shows up. No problem, just take one or two units each from the existing three players on side to create a fourth command.

Now this could be hard to do if you've designed a very elaborate scenario with specific units, assignments, orders, etc., but that is something that should be planned for. Gamers have varying commitment levels from my experience, so it's always good to prepare for both more and/or less players if it happens. This will also heavily depend upon how many figs you have available, board size, etc., so these are things to keep in mind as well.

Duration

Another issue that seems so simple upon reflection, but many gamers don't think about it when setting up a scenario. You don't want to finish a game in 90 minutes if there is a four hour block of time for game night as everyone will end up sitting around or wondering why you didn't plan two games. Likewise, you don't want to play Antie-

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Special points of interest:

- *Engagement mini-campaign and two new scenarios.*
- *Saga, WMA, AOD, and AOR battle reports.*
- *Game reviews for several new board war games.*
- *A look back at the War of the Ring in the gaming hobby.*

Scenario Design for Today's Gamer

tam with 1:20 scale rules on a 6 x 16 table, thinking you'll get through it in four or five hours!

If your gaming group regularly sets aside a five hour block, then try to design your game for around 3 1/2 to 4 hours. With late arrivals, set up, rules explanation, talking about the latest superhero movies, etc., and then taking down the game, that should fill a five hour block. You should have already thought about if the game goes longer than you planned. Can the group leave the game up? Is there interest for a second night? If it finishes early, is there time for a smaller scenario? These are things that the scenario designer needs to be thinking about before the first die is even rolled.

Don't forget to take into account the rules that you are using. Is this the first time that your group has used these rules? How many members own the rules and have read them? These things sound simple, but are often conveniently forgotten about when planning a scenario. If it's a simple skirmish game where the rules are explained in five minutes and there's one or two charts, things might go pretty easy. If it's a hefty set of rules and only one person has read them, it could be a long night. I remember several years ago trying to teach our group FOG Renaissance and I was the only one who had read the rules. It wasn't a disaster, but after five hours we had staggered through only about three turns!

Preparation

OK, here's a subject that makes gamers cringe. If you're playing a period that everyone knows and has gamed countless times before, then you can skip this part. An example of that would be when our group plays Warmaster Ancients. Everyone has the rules, has played 20+ games, has their own charts, etc., so it's not a problem. However, if it's a set of rules your group has never tried or the scenario is elaborate, then some preparation time is probably needed.

The one thing most game night scenarios overlook is a planning map. Often the terrain is laid out for the gamers and then after setting out the units the game begins. However, it's always good to have a hand out of the maps so that teams can refer to it during the game and in particular the planning process before the game begins. Likewise with the orders of battle, especially any reinforcements that are coming in. Finally, having a set of charts for each player should be mandatory. Often you can't print out every single chart or table in a set of rules, but the basics such as sequence of play, movement, combat, morale, etc., should readily be available for each player.

Now often this means extra work for the scenario designer or that person who needs to coordinate the gaming night. A good rule of thumb is to start prepping about 3-4 weeks out, which not only gives you plenty of time, but breaking apart the game prep into small chunks makes things much more manageable. I've found over the years that a well produced game with a lot of preparation usually works out well and the extra work is rewarded. However, most gamers, including my own group, usually don't decide on what we're playing until about 48 hours before the game is scheduled!

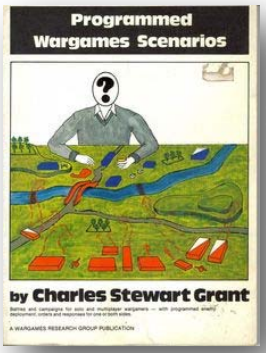
Objectives

If you're going to use a points based, meeting engagement type of battle, then scenario design and of course objectives are not needed. While this is definitely a large percentage of most gaming nights, objectives can definitely add to the battle and can be the focal point of the scenario. Depending upon how many players there are and how many hours are available, objectives can run from the simple to complex, multiple paths to victory type scenario. You probably don't want to have a "take that hill" objective where there are twelve players in a six hour game, nor do you probably not want to have ten objectives with all kinds of parameters for a two player skirmish game. Getting the right number and type of objectives is critical to the success of the scenario.

First, when choosing the objective(s) it must be something that is challenging, but not impossible. Cutting through a Tiger battalion across open ground with a company of Shermans isn't going to work. Challenging, yes, but not likely to succeed! Work out the parameters for reaching or attaining the objective as if you were on one of the sides. Are there sufficient forces to achieve the objective? Are there enough turns? What could go wrong? Then, reverse and ask the same questions if you were the defender. Usually, this results in some tweaking of the scenario's forces, game length, and objectives, which is a good thing.

Don't underestimate points driven or negative objective type scenarios either. We often run scenarios where you need to accrue a certain number of points to win the game or convert it into a D100 roll to win. Even if one side has a bad game they still have a chance at victory! A scenario where you have to cross a border on a punitive raid, but if you stay to long you lose is an example of a negative objective. Feel free to get creative with your objectives as it can turn a dull, bland, points driven slugfest into an interesting evening.

Finally, don't forget about all of the gamers who have gone before you. There are some excellent scenarios in both books and gaming magazines that have some great ideas. The books by Charles Grant are a great inspiration and scenarios from Military Modelling, Wargamer's Digest, Battle, etc., have a treasure trove of ideas. Many of these issues can be found online or fairly cheap on Ebay.

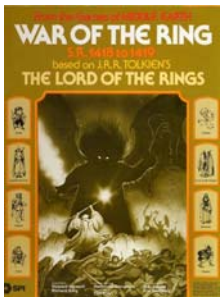


Here is a short checklist that should be reviewed before presenting your scenario on gaming night. Run through these items and see if they all work into a cohesive game. There are many ways to do a scenario and with so many game systems out there right now with their own set ups, it's tempting to ignore these simple things, but I would advise against it.

Scenario Design Checklist

1. Number of Players
2. Duration
3. Rules? Experience Level?
4. Preparation-Maps, OBs, Charts
5. Objectives

Blast From The Past Pt. 35: The War of the Ring in the Hobby



While we take for granted today that the Lord of the Rings is and has always been an integral part of wargaming (as well as role-playing), this was not always so. The LOTR and Hobbit movies certainly had a lot to do with its resurgence in pop culture and was a boon to gamers, but back in the 70s the books by J.R. Tolkien were the little known basis for a huge surge in the hobby.

Whether the arrival of Dungeons & Dragons or just a need for fantasy wargaming is responsible (or perhaps both), Tolkien's four books became the de facto bible for fantasy gamers in the mid 70s. When Minifigs started to produce 25mm

fantasy figures (followed by Ral Partha and Genadier) based off of the books, things really began to take off. Skirmishes, role-playing with miniatures, and even entire armies based for WRG Ancients or other similar rules began to make an appearance.

Most gamers had either read the Tolkien books or at least knew of them, so game companies found a willing audience. The explosion of role-playing, especially D&D, gave fantasy gaming a boost that would carry on to this day. Wargamers, not wanting to be left out, looked for ways to incorporate the huge surge in fantasy role-playing into their section of the hobby. There had previously been a Battle of the Five Armies board game in 1975, but still nothing about the War of the Ring.

That changed in 1977 with SPI's War of the Ring, which at that time was not only a huge undertaking, but a gamble that it would not only do well, but would be looked upon favorably by gamers and fans of the books. The game was sold with two different box covers, with the second being referred to as the "white box" version which featured the character art from the 1978 Lord of the Rings animated film. There was also a Games of Middle Earth version, which had the folio games Sauron and Gondor included. The game was initially sold in the standard SPI flat pack, but boxed versions were also produced.

For gamers such as myself who were in high school at the time, this game became the Holy Grail! Saving up enough money to get one, let alone the version with all of the games, was a serious goal. At the time I was only able to accomplish buying the Sauron folio game, which along with Gondor were sold separately. While fun to play, it was not the main game everyone was looking for. When I did finally acquire a copy, my reaction was mixed. Yes, I could game out the War of the Ring, but it wasn't what I thought it was going to be. At that time, there were few reviews, no online images, etc., so you took your chances when purchasing a game.

SPI's War of the Ring was both a military wargame and a character driven quest/search game. You could play them separately or combine them for the entire campaign. While the rules weren't that complex, it was so different than most games that it took a few readings of the rules and several plays to get it down. The wargame part of it is similar to many operational level Napoleonic games, with stacks of strength points and leaders marching around the map, then fighting battles over critical spots. Meanwhile, the Fellowship is trying to destroy the ring while the Sauron player is trying to stop them.

The game did its best to try and capture the feel of the books. There were counters for Dol Amroth,, all of the orc units, events, searches by the nazgul, and much more. The game could often play out like the books, but any time dice are involved, things can change rapidly as was the case here. Some players found loopholes in the rules and killer strategies as SPI's playtesting was famous for missing things.

Probably not the greatest game ever made, but it's not that bad and most gamers interested in the Tolkien saga should give it at least one play. The Sauron and Gondor games were part of the SPI folio series, meaning small maps, a sheet of counters, and a few pages of rules. The games were so-so and had nothing to do whatsoever with the main game other than being in the same genre. Both games were mainly military operations with fantasy units substituting for the modern or WW2 counters that these SPI type games usually had. Despite all of that, SPI's War of the Ring still survives to this day and does well on Ebay!

By 1979 you not only had SPI's War of the Ring, The Lord of the Rings animated movie, and Tolkien's books all being republished, but role-playing was at its zenith. Many figure manufacturers were now coming out with rangers, elves, wizards, orcs, and a lot more. The miniatures side of fantasy gaming experienced a huge explosion of interest and products. The War of the Ring greatly influenced this as gamers sought figures that fit their image of Gandalf, Aragorn, and other characters from the books.

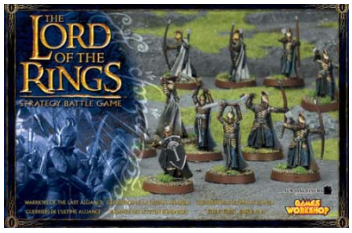
Likewise, wargamers moved into the fantasy realm as well. I can remember massive Lord of the Rings type skirmishes with Chainmail or the D&D combat rules. I participated in several "Men of the West" ancients battles pitting armies similar to those in the Tolkien books using WRG or other ancient rules. Fantasy wargaming was alive and well Units of orcs, skeletons, trolls, kobolds, and more lined up to face armies of rangers, elves, and knights. Many rules authors started to add fantasy forces to their army lists, which acted as a blessing that it was OK to use fantasy figures with what were historical rules!

I recall owning and painting quite a few of these miniatures, which by today's standards weren't great! (cont. on p5)

Blast From The Past Pt. 35: The War of the Ring in the Hobby

(cont. from p4) However, at the time it was all there was available and since there weren't really films or for that matter artwork, you had to accept that a ranger figure from Minifigs, Ral Partha, Superior, etc., was probably what Tolkien had in mind! The rise of fantasy gaming as well as the increasing number of fantasy fiction that came out in the 70s and 80s caused game companies to expand out their offerings and soon the Tolkien theme was pushed into the background.

With the rise of Warhammer and the decline of fantasy RPG in the late 80s and 90s, the Tolkien type of fantasy was pretty much way down the priority list of most fantasy gamers. Orc armies, elves, undead, etc., took over fantasy gaming for quite some time. Each company and set of rules that emerged portrayed their fantasy forces in a much different light and if you had never read any of the Tolkien prose then you would assume that yes, Orcs had crazy war machines, dwarves had cannons, and all kinds of other stuff that most fantasy purists had a hard time dealing with. That's not to say it wasn't popular, as multiple versions of Warhammer would attest and billions of miniatures sold, but fantasy gaming had turned into WH40K, but with swords and magic!



Naturally, all of this changed when Peter Jackson released the first film in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. All of a sudden, Tolkien was hip again. Books, calendars, cups, action figures, video games, and more flowed into stores (and pop culture) for the next decade. All of the books were reprinted, many with new artwork, maps, and more. Overnight, people couldn't get enough of Tolkien or his fantasy creations. Naturally, this rolled over into the wargaming hobby as well.

First up, you had the license that Games Workshop acquired to produce a Lord of the Rings wargame. Rather than use an existing system (Warhammer) they created an entirely new skirmish based rules system. This was good and bad. Good in that it was something new and if you were just getting into gaming then this is all that you had to learn. Bad in that it turned off those Games Workshop fantasy fans who already knew Warhammer. The figures, while very well sculpted, were done in a more true to life scale, so no bulging biceps, huge swords, and incredibly strange creatures that normally exist in Games Workshop's domain.

Of course, Games Workshop did what they do best and put out numerous boxed sets, additional units, blister packs, and so on, trying to stretch out the series as far as it could possibly go. If you're paying that much for a film license you may as well go all out to recoup the costs, which is what they did. While sales were supposedly very good and a lot of product was moved, the theme seemed to be short lived. Whether it just got swept up in the avalanche of new gaming products coming out each year, the novelty wore off after the movies ended, or gamers moving on, you don't see too many LOTR games being played today.

The other item that has done well was the War of the Ring boxed game that was sold in several formats along with all of the boxed supplements. Boasting an impressive map, beautiful cards, playing pieces, and more, it was designed to appeal to the mass public as well as established board gamers. Huge sales, more product, etc., and it is still today thought of as one of the better LOTR games. Not really a Euro and not a true wargame, so it is hard to class. My own experience is that it is similar to Risk, but with a lot more added on! You could go broke buying all of the supplements, cards, specials, etc., that are currently available. Unlike many LOTR items, this is still being played on a regular basis by quite a few gamers.

You also had LOTR Risk, but it was basically Risk with Middle Earth territories! Not too much to get excited about, but great for families or those with just a passing interest. The one good thing was that unlike actual Risk, the game was able to be finished in a few hours! Games Workshop also released a Battle of the Five Armies boxed set using 10mm figures and an offshoot of the Warmaster Fantasy system. Why there was never a 10mm LOTR system is beyond me as I think many gamers (including my gaming group) would have bought it in a heartbeat. You would have been able to have huge Middle Earth battles, which definitely appeals to wargamers.

From having barely anything in gaming terms back in the 70s to the over saturation today, The Lord of the Rings has come pretty far in hobby terms. Where one could only imagine what orcs would really look like in miniature to seeing boxes of them stacked in hobby stores just shows you how far the series and the hobby have come. Where the SPI game was truly groundbreaking back in its day, it pales in comparison to the games that have been recently available. From the crude Minfigs pig-like orcs to the beautifully sculpted Games Workshop versions, the quality of the products has improved immensely as well.

Are we entering another phase where the LOTR theme will be forgotten about by gamers as was in the 80s and 90s? Probably not. Interest will certainly die down, but the difference between then and today is that with the Internet you can easily order anything if you want to delve into that part of the hobby at any moment. With the return/rise of role playing yet again, there may be more interest out there than most of us suspect. Have we seen the last of the LOTR items in the hobby? Again, probably not. Another company will get an idea about a game series and as long as they can acquire a license you'll see more items. Whatever the future may hold, LOTR has been an exciting part of the hobby.

Forces	Units
Roman	1 Warlord
	1 Centurion (Warlord with -2 att)
	2 Mounted Hearthguard
	2 Foot Warriors
	1 Levy with Manuballista
Saxon	1 Warlord
	1 War Banner
	2 Foot Hearthguard
	4 Foot Warriors
	1 Levy with Bows

Special Rules	
Javelins	All Roman units in the fort may use javelins at a range of M+S (10") until they have engaged in melee, at which point they can no longer use javelins All Saxon units have a once per game use of javelins at normal range
Ladders	All Saxon Warriors and Hearthguard have 1x ladder per unit A unit may place its ladder at the end of a movement which touches the palisade A unit may make a 'charge' up the ladder with a single model per ladder within 2" of the central ladder. Up to two defending models may attack the model climbing the ladder and vice versa. If the climbing model wins, move the next model in the unit up and repeat. If the climbing model loses, move it back down the ladder and the combat is over. If the combat is a tie, fight again until either the defender or the attacker wins
Bows	Any unit in the Limes Tower may use bows out to a range of L+L (24") Units within S (4") of the exterior of the palisade or gate cannot be targeted.

Deployment	
Saxons	Saxons may deploy anywhere behind or even with the tree line, either side of the river
Romans	Romans deploy the Centurion, both Warrior units, and the Levy in the fort The Roman Warlord and both Hearthguard deploy on turn 6 on the path, up to L (12") from the edge of the board

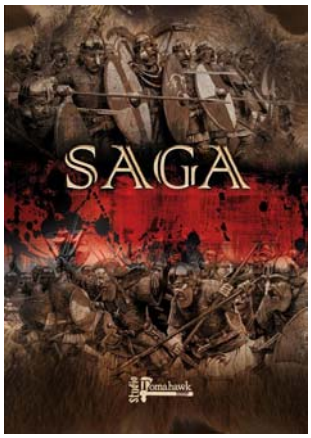
Victory Conditions		
Total Saxon Victory	3	Invasion! – Saxons eliminate the defenders in the fort and kill the incoming Warlord
Major Saxon Victory	2	Raid! – Saxons eliminate the defenders in the fort and either their Warlord or Banner Survive
Minor Saxon Victory	1	Pillage! – Saxons eliminate the reinforcements but fail to take the fort. Both Warlord and Banner survive
Draw	0	Blurred Limes! – Both Romans and Saxons achieve an equal victory level
Minor Roman Victory	1	Orderly Fallback – Romans capture the bridge over the river and eliminate the enemy Warlord or Banner
Major Roman Victory	2	Unbroken Limes! – Romans retain control of the fort and eliminate the Warlord or Banner
Total Roman Victory	3	Romans retain control of the fort, Roman Warlord survives, Romans control the bridge and eliminate either the Saxon Warlord or Banner
Total up the Saxon Victory Points and subtract the Roman Victory Points to determine the final result.		

Of the six of our usual group, only 3 were available, and as I had just finished up a Dark Age fort we broke it out along with my Late Romans, and my newly finished Saxons (with a few loner units from my Anglo-Danes/Vikings). Saga is a great game to play with small to medium numbers of people or when you aren't after something really big. By and large we played version 1, even though v2 is out. I'm not sure about a lot of the new changes, and the original version plays very well.

The board has a river which cuts down the east side with a single bridge across it and for tonight I did not setup the small ford down stream, so there was only one crossing point. The south side of the board had woods and a path entered from the North on both the East and West side from which the Roman reinforcements would come on. The fort and tower sat on the West side, about 10-12" from the tree line. The Romans deployed first, with the manuballista above the gate with the Centurion, the warrior units spread along the East and West wall, and the remaining levy in the tower to provide archery support.

The Saxons had one warrior and one hearthguard unit across the river, with the rest strung along the tree line before the fort. They won initiative and came out of the woods still fired up from the previous nights mead and promises of a poorly defended fort filling their heads. The Romans attempted some desultory fire with a few initial casualties from the manuballista and the bow armed levy. Not a lot, but 3 Saxons went down as the swarm approached the defenders. If they could manage to whittle them down over the next turn or two, maybe the Romans might stand a chance against a sea of ladders.

Alas that wasn't to be, over the next several turns the Roman missile fire dried up quite drastically, while the Saxon levy slowly started trying to find Romans silly enough to poke their heads out. Shockingly, the first Saxons to close in and hurl javelins managed to fell several defenders. By this point neither side was using many abilities, being content to move forces and fling pointy sticks at each other, with the Saxons giving about as good as they were getting.



The Saxons elected to try to overwhelm the defenders and deployed most of their ladders on the SE corner of the fort. The Romans would get one last round of javelins off before the barbarians started shoving swords in their faces. Alas, it wasn't much help, and by now the mnuballista could only fire ineffectively at the Saxon levy as the rest of the Saxons were out of the firing arc or too close to aim at.

he initial Saxon attempt caught the Romans a bit off guard, as they were a little too strung out, enabling a Saxon to get onto the wall, then kill off several defenders in the process. Still, all hope wasn't lost as the defenders manage to whittle off a couple figures before the rest of the ladders hit home and the Saxon bull rush wiped out the east flank. By turn 4 and 5 it was looking very grim for the Romans. The east wall was over run, with the west wall having to slide along to try and plug the gap. The Saxon levy were managing to land hits on the ballista crew, and the tower levy could only manage a few shots at the one or two expose Saxon units.

Two Saxon units made it relatively unopposed over the wall, and at this point the Roman player was starting to see the wisdom in battleboard abilities as Scuta helped the remaining Roman warriors plug at least some of the gap while the ballista was finally killed under a black cloud of Saxon arrows.

We weren't sure the Roman could hold out much longer when the cavalry showed up. They made a

(cont. from p7) mad dash across the bridge and slammed into the Saxon warlord with several abilities primed to help them. Then, it seemed Woden was with their foes as all four hearthguard were cut down for what seemed far too few Saxon bodies. The Roman warlord was forced to flee while more Saxons poured up the wall, dropping into the courtyard in preparation to storm the tower.

The centurion, in true Roman fashion, grimaced and prepared to sell his men dearly in an effort to plug the remaining ladders. While the other mounted hearthguard changed directions and swung around behind the fort to link up with the Roman warlord. A mostly untouched Saxon unit stormed up the tower, killing the levy with only minimal losses. Still, the plucky centurion and his squad where fighting hard and nothing the Saxons could do would dislodge them. At this point the Roman warlord slammed back into the Saxon warlord for try number two, and this time was successful, killing off a host of warriors and the warlord himself. It cost the Romans, losing all but one hearthguard and their warlord, but it was a badly needed safety valve release that let the centurion and crew head up the tower.

In a quick change of fortune they killed off the Saxons who had just stormed it, while the Saxon levy killed off the last Roman hearthguard. Still, the warlord maneuvered to try and kill the banner before having to retreat to the bridge to hold out to the end.

It was a surprising turn of events that saw a 3 man unit of Roman warriors and their Centurion hold the fort in the end. Only 3 Saxon warriors were left, and the levy out of position to save the day in turn 10. It was very close in the last few turns. The Saxons definitely had the bodies, and a lot of success in killing foes. However, the Romans just refused to capitulate and ended the game with a total victory. Full possession of the fort, control of the bridge, and killed the enemy warlord with their own still breathing. It was perhaps a hollow victory, as there are always more Saxons waiting to pour over the Lime and heavy losses in Roman manpower could not be borne as easily.

In retrospect, the Saxons were perhaps a little too cautious with the banner. Had it been closer, it could have been drawing down fatigue and the Saxons would have gotten a lot more bodies over the wall. It would have been put it in danger of Roman missile fire, but we felt could have been the deciding factor in what was very nearly a total Saxon victory.

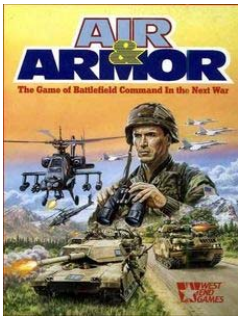
Having played Saga several times, the use of the battle board is critical to success, but most gamers get caught up in what the situation is on the board. By that I mean that you need to think about what you're going to try to accomplish that turn, which unit has which skills, then when the dice are rolled try to use the abilities the best you can to achieve that goal. This needs to be done EACH turn, but that's not what usually happens.

Gamers being gamers, you usually choose the skills/combo that would seem to do the most damage, but that's not always the best choice. Having played hundreds of skirmish games over the years where the goal each turn is maximum carnage, Saga can be frustrating in terms of the dice rolled and what to do with them each turn. However, that's part of the challenge and what makes Saga a better than average game.

Memoirs of a Miniatures & Board Wargamer Pt. 36

What Was I Thinking?

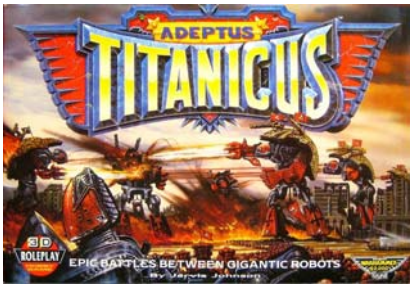
If you're a gamer and have been in the hobby for any length of time, you will experience a number of regrets. Not buying the first printing run of a game or rules that then sells out, missing out on an online sale, starting a period and selling everything off only to start it again, and so on. It seems that when you're a gamer each victory is matched by a disappointment or regret! I've been in the hobby for over 40 years now and have had a number of regrets as listed below.



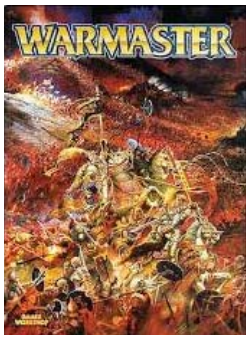
One of the biggest regrets I've had was getting rid of all of my modern micro-armor and NATO vs. Warsaw Pact board games when the Berlin Wall fell. All of a sudden everything that you had put into a period for years seemingly came to an end. Interest in my gaming friends went down the drain and I was stuck with shelves of the stuff along with no desire to go further. Little did I know that I could have used the micro-armor today with the resurgence in interest in that period and that many of the board games are collector's items, plus some were just good games.

On a similar note about ten years ago I had wanted to get back into modern micro-armor, so I ordered and painted up some Indian and Pakistani forces for a future war scenario. I was unable to find a set of rules I liked, I wasn't sure what the interest level of my group actually was (should have considered that first), and as the forces grew larger I began thinking that I was sinking a lot of money into something that might not ever get played. So I sold everything. Sure enough, a year or so later Cold War Commander came out and I would have been ready to play on the first day!

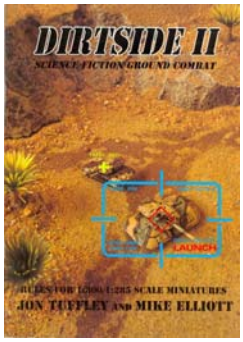
My love/hate affair with Games Workshop has spawned a number of regrets, but the greatest is abandoning Adeptus Titanicus and its Space Marine cousin. I had a large force of titans, with many customizations and unique variants, terrain, and two entire armies of infantry, tanks, artillery, etc. We played huge battles for years and everyone had a great time with it. Then came the inevitable change of rules, scale, platoon sizes, etc., and in fits of rage we all got rid of our stuff.



The exact same thing happened with Warmaster Fantasy, also from Games Workshop (see the trend here?). We quickly created several armies, participated in tournaments, and we're thinking of doing some sieges and maybe even a campaign. Then, you guessed it, GW stopped the game, gamers abandoned it, and we sold our stuff on Ebay for a pretty good price. Today, we want to use fantasy armies with Warmaster (we love the system) or for a fantasy campaign and guess what? We don't have them anymore! I won't even go into what happened to my three armies for WH40K.



Then there were the huge armies of Ros Heroics ACW I painted 30+ years ago and sold when 15mm became all the rage. They would have been great for trying out new systems, rebasing for rules others had in the group, or even as campaign markers today. This doesn't even include the 1/72nd Airfix and Esci ACW forces I had prior to those! Sometimes as gamers we get so caught up in the "wave of the future" that it blinds us to the fact that we should keep our older figures as someday they may come in handy. I think one of my biggest problems is that when I get on a project I can paint to a schedule for whatever time is necessary to get armies to the table, so I am definitely part of the problem!



The list goes on. Two complete armies and terrain for Dirtside II, which were pretty good rules, but took some time to play. There wasn't a lot of interest in that period at the time and when I needed funds for another project they got sold off. Likewise with Warmachine where I had a pretty large, well painted faction. We had some fun with it, but you could see that the company had designed it as a bottomless pit, so more and more stuff came out and it turned into another arms race. This is another lesson to younger gamers in that you shouldn't get frustrated when these things happen and if your group is happy with the game, keep playing it. Often, however, we as gamers abandon a project sometimes a little too quickly. The amount of distractions in the hobby, however, makes it easy to think you need to get out of one period and into another. You don't have to participate in the arms race, which in today's gaming world seems to be a recurring theme with a lot of games.

Other regrets? Too many to list here! Selling off my boxed set and supplements for GDW's Traveller (even though I made good on Ebay!), giving away my air combat games in the 80s when I got sick of the topic, selling off hundreds of ships for Harpoon when they could still be used today, and so on. WW2 is probably the one period where I've painted and sold the most, often in the quest for the Holy Grail of WW2 operational combat. I had a force in 1/285, then 15mm, another in 1/285, toyed around with some 1/200 or 10mm, back to 15mm, then finally settled on 1/285th with BKC2. All of that time and money spent for reasons I cannot fathom today!

Will the regrets continue? Undoubtedly. "Back in the day" you had to mail order or accumulate forces slowly, so you had a lot of time to think things over, try out some sets of rules, and then get excited about a new project that required you to sell off your current one to fund something else! Today it is much different. You can wake up, get excited about doing 40mm Seven Years War for example, then have several hundred miniatures, buildings, and mats at your doorstep within the week! If you already have a SYW force in 25mm put it up for sale on TMP, Facebook, Ebay, etc., and it's gone in a few days. My advice, don't do it. Keep those forces until you're really, really, really sure you can live without them.

It's been awhile since out last Renaissance battle, so once again it was time to break out the Warfare in the Age of Discovery (AOD) rules. Despite all of the rules that are out there for the period, we still prefer AOD as it does a great job of simulating the chaos that was present on Renaissance era battlefields. I had to come up with the scenario so I decided upon a meeting engagement set in and around 1525, which usually gives both sides plenty of heavy cavalry.

The Imperialists had a pretty good sized force, made up of the following units:

- 4 German pike
- 2 Spanish pike
- 2 Italian pike
- 1 German heavy cav, 2 Spanish heavy cav, and 2 light cav units
- 2 medium and 1 light artillery units

Obviously, the German pike units were the main striking force, but they were backed by quite a few supporting units.

The French force had the following units:

- 4 Swiss pike
- 2 Italian pike
- 4 units of arquebus
- 2 Gendarmes
- 2 Heavy cav
- 2 light cav
- 1 heavy and 1 medium artillery units

Each side organizes their units into three "battles" and then the turn sequence table is consulted. The roll meant that the Imperialists would have to deploy two battles first, followed by one French, then the final Imperialist, followed by the final two French battles. This made the French change their plans from matching strength against strength to trying something a little more innovative! They would try to crush the center while isolating the wings.

The Imperialists decided to attack the French left, hold in the center, and delay on their far left. The German pike would hopefully overwhelm the defenders, then they would press on up the hill and seize the French camp, hopefully forcing a withdrawal. This naturally changed heavily once the French were fully deployed and they saw what the true situation was!

The game began with the Swiss moving up in positon to attack the Spanish and Italian pike, followed by all of the French heavy cavalry moving up the center. The German pike began to advance against the French left, but ran into artillery and arquebus fire, which slowed them down for a turn or two. With everyone now in position the real battle opened up and the mayhem/chaos began.

The map below shows the situation after turn 2 with the French heavy cavalry having split the Imperialist army in two. The German pike had chased away or destroyed several of the French arquebus units (the infantry symbols represent multiple units). The center becomes a swirling series of melees as heavy cavalry units charge and countercharge. *(cont. on p 11)*

(cont. from p10) Casualties were piling up now for both sides and the Imperialists were trying to rally their cavalry to block the French advance. Combined with a few suicidal charges and help from the German pike units, the French cavalry were stopped with serious losses. The Imperialist cavalry, however, were in serious shape as well and only the light cavalry units seemed to be combat effective.

The French heavy artillery then scored a hit on one of the Spanish pike units, that promptly turned and fled! A few of the other units that saw the rout went shaken and all of a sudden the Imperialist left was in peril. When a Spanish artillery battery tried to return fire it blew up, which only added to the Imperialist difficulties that turn!

Unfortunately, this was the point where we had to call the game. We had a late start and the store we were playing at was closing in about 15 minutes, so we had to start packing up, which was a shame as everyone was having fun and the battle still had a ways to go. The Imperialist players thought that the French had the advantage and would probably prevail, but the French players weren't so sure. The withdrawal factors at that time were tied and with the rules anything could happen, so yes, there was a small chance that the Imperialists could still prevail.

This battle confirmed once again what a unique gaming period that the Renaissance truly is. All kinds of interesting units, lots of color, crazy things happen all over the battlefield, and it's certainly a lot of fun for everyone involved. You can only count on the Swiss, Germans, and heavy cavalry units to actually perform well while all of the other units can either perform incredible feats of courage or run at the first shot!

We definitely need to get this to the table again and sooner rather than later. While the AOD rules have a lot going for them in terms of recreating the period, they definitely need an upgrade. Parts of the rules need to be clarified, examples of play need to be added, some illustrations would help, and the army lists need to be greatly expanded. Having said that, however, they get the job done and the unusual firing, melee, and morale systems (all done on the same table) is a stroke of genius. If you get a chance, try the Renaissance period!

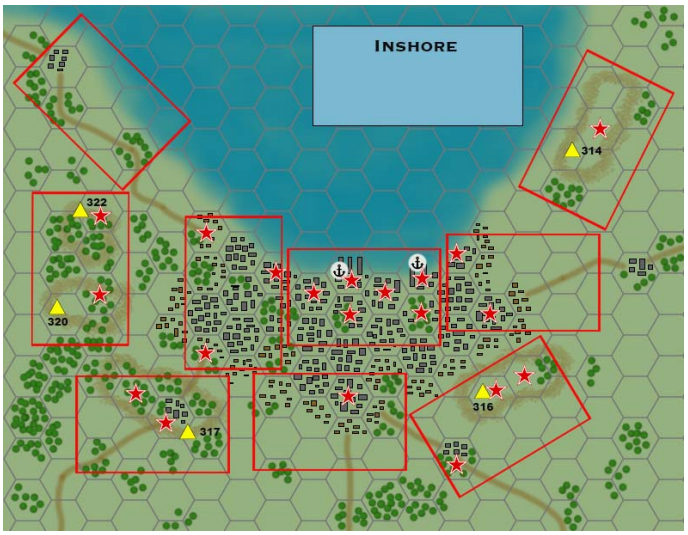
Escape to the Sea is a mini-campaign representing an evacuation under fire from a port, surrounded on multiple sides by a victorious enemy. The campaign is slightly more complex than some of our previous Engagements scenarios and other mini-campaigns in past issues. The campaign is suitable for two players all the way up to group play as there are multiple commands that can be handed out to players.

As the campaign begins, Blue has suffered a number of defeats and finds itself trying to salvage their precarious position. One of Blue's larger forces has been trapped in a large city that fortunately has a port. Red, having destroyed or driven back most of Blue's forces in the area has now cut off Blue's remaining escape route. The only option is a dangerous evacuation by sea.

Blue has set up defenses in the areas surrounding the city and has begun fortifying positions in and around the city. With refugees continuously arriving and a possible shortage in shipping, Blue may have to defend the port for quite some time in an effort to save as many units as possible. Blue's air forces are hard pressed on other fronts, so they may or may not be able to provide sufficient air cover for the evacuation.

Red's leading forces have reached the area just outside of the city and will begin consolidating for an attack. Other forces that have penetrated deeper into Blue's territory have turned back to seal off any escape routes, trapping Blue in the city's immediate vicinity. Red will begin at once to probe the outer defenses, looking to gain control of vital hills and road junctions that will shrink Blue's perimeter and provide jumping off points for further attacks. Red's air forces will be available to provide ground support for attacks as well as preventing ships from entering the port.

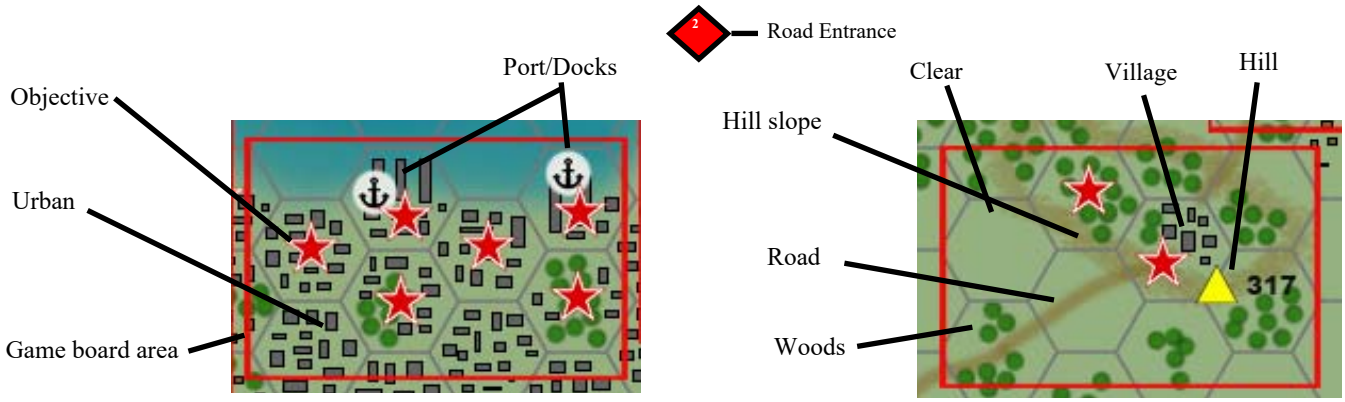
For Blue it is a series of decisions about how long to hold onto the outer areas, how many ships should be sent into the port each turn, where to counterattack, and basically trying to stop Red from reaching the port area. Both sides will need to determine how far to push operations each turn and the best path to victory.



This is a chit pull campaign system and is flexible enough to be used with virtually any WW2 or Modern period miniatures rules. If you do mainly skirmish gaming you can see it as a series of fights for critical areas while if you regularly deploy regiments or more on your gaming tables then there will be some massive slugfests. The scale, unit sizes, time, etc., are all flexible to fit whatever rules that your group uses.

As always, the main idea is to run the campaign so that it produces some interesting battles. It is also an opportunity to break from the usual gaming fare, where both sides have an equal number of points for the battle. With this campaign their will be assaults against fortified defenses, urban battles, counterattacks, and more, which are again things that you don't always see in your usual club games. The campaign rules are guidelines, so feel free to add in any house rules, but the main idea is to have fun with it and fight interesting battles.

The Map



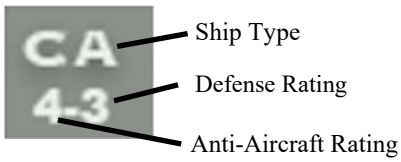
Counters

Combat Units

Activation Chits

Air Support Markers

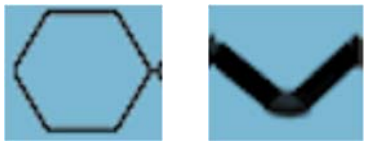
Naval Markers



Hit Marker

Escape To The Sea uses a large number of counters to represent the various fortifications, combat units, ships, etc., that will be involved with the campaign. For those gamers who do not like using counters, feel free to print a larger version of the map, laminate it, and just use dry erase markers to keep track of these items as the campaign progresses.

Fortifications



Heavy Light

Misc. Markers

Refugees marker

Victory Points markers

Control marker

Control Markers

Each game board area must have a control marker designating which side controls that area for victory purposes. The last side to have forces in that area is assumed to control that area. At the beginning of the campaign Blue controls all game board areas.

Sequence of Play

Each turn of Escape to the Sea represents one day of real time with the full campaign game representing three weeks. Each turn follows a standard sequence of play.

1. Air-Naval Phase

A. Both sides roll for air points.

B. Blue moves ships from the At Sea box to the Inshore box on the map and vice-versa. Ships already in the Inshore Box can load refugees and/or combat units if there are functioning docks available at the end of the turn.

C. Roll for initiative. Each side in initiative order places one fighter or bomber on a game board area or the Inshore Box. Continue with placement until all fighters and bombers of both sides have been placed.

D. Resolve air to air and air to sea combat.

E. Ships in the Inshore Box can move to the At Sea box.

2. Movement Phase

A. Determine number of activation chits

B. Activations

3. **Combat Phase**-Resolve combat in all game board areas where there are opposing forces.

4. End of Turn Phase

A. Fortification Segment-Blue rolls for construction points and places fortifications.

B. Evacuation & Refugees-Move refugees and load ships at docks.

C. Reinforcements & Replacements-Both sides roll for replacement points. New forces are placed in the designated locations or in the case of available ships they are placed in the At Sea box.

D. Victory Point Segment-VPs gained and/or lost are calculated for the turn.

Prepare For Play

Set Up

Each player should have a copy of the map for planning purposes as well as a copy of the charts and tables. There should be one master map that is maintained by both sides or a referee if one is available. You can print out a larger map if the players feel that is needed for the campaign. There are two ways of marking forces on the map; the first is to use the counters provided and move those on the map as needed. The second is to laminate the map and then use colored dry erase markers to show the positions of the various units.

Set the game record tracks (At Sea box, construction points, turn track, and victory points track) near the map where all players can clearly see the status of the tracks or which ships or in the At Sea box. The counters can be glued to art board, chip board, or some other type of material, then cut out and used to mark positions on the map and various game tracks.

Using the campaign set up at the end of the rules, place all of the designated units in their starting positions. Place any units noted as reinforcements on the turn track as a reminder for when they are scheduled to arrive. Blue may then place any number of available ships in the Inshore and At Sea boxes. Play then proceeds with the Turn 1 Air-naval Phase.

Scale & Units

The forces and rules available to the players will certainly determine what scale should be used for the campaign. Escape to the Sea is designed to be played at any scale, as long as the players have sufficient forces to represent all of the units that could be involved in the various campaign battles. While it would be rare to see all of the units in a single, huge battle, the players do need a good representation of the forces available and that are likely to be at any one battle.

If using a system such as Blitzkrieg Commander, for example, each unit in the campaign could be a battalion with a number of companies and attached platoons. Higher scale rules systems could have each unit function as a brigade or regiment. If using Bolt Action, then each unit could be a platoon and the battles would be large skirmishes rather than larger, more operational level battles with other rules.

The campaign assumes that players will assign unit strengths before the campaign begins. While it is easier to start with full strength units, it would be more realistic to have most units at various strengths, representing the losses suffered in battles up to this point where the campaign starts. The players can come up with a system to show losses for the various units if they feel they would like to start the campaign that way.

Air-Naval Phase

Overview

During the Air-Naval Phase of the turn, both sides will conduct placement of the air and naval units, then resolve any combat in areas where both sides have forces. Air units will also be allocated to support battles in the upcoming turn. Blue will also allocate all ships to either be At Sea or placed at the Inshore Box where they can either provide fire support for Blue's ground forces or evacuate units and/or refugees.

Air Points

Blue's forces are operating from distant airbases and not only have to provide air cover/support for the campaign area, but for ships at sea as well. Red is at the end of their operational tether, so both sides air support will be quite random each turn. Depending upon the rules used, each fighter or bomber unit can represent an individual aircraft or a group/ flight of three or more.

At the start of each turn, both sides roll 2D6 to determine the number of air points that they will have available for the coming turn. The results are expressed as two numbers, with the first number representing the number of fighters available and the second the number of bombers. A Storms result means that their respective airbases are experiencing weather that would prevent flight operations for that turn.

Air Support (2D6)

Die Roll	Blue	Red
2	Storms	6/5
3	1/0	5/4
4	2/0	5/3
5	2/0	4/3
6	2/1	4/2
7	2/1	3/2
8	3/1	3/2
9	3/1	3/1
10	3/2	2/2
11	3/2	2/1
12	4/2	Storms

Naval Movement

Movement of naval units is restricted to the At Sea and Inshore boxes. Each turn Blue can move ships from the At Sea to the Inshore box and vice versa. The At Sea box is simply a holding area for the number of ships that are available to Blue each turn. Ships in the At Sea box **cannot** be attacked.

Ships located in the Inshore box can be attacked by Red's air and artillery units. Blue's ships that are in the Inshore box may be called on to provide fire support during ground battles in that turn. Ships must also be in the Inshore box to load units and refugees for evacuation at the end of the turn. On the following turn those ships that have loaded units and/or refugees remain in the Inshore box until the end of the turn. During the Air-naval Phase of the next turn they may move to the At Sea box.

Ex. On Turn 4 Blue moves one DD and two TR into the Inshore box from the At Sea box. They survive Red's attacks and at the end of the turn load several units. On Turn 5 the TRs must remain in the Inshore box and if they survive they can move to the At Sea box on Turn 6.

Initiative & Air Unit Placement

Each side rolls 1D6 and winner can either begin placing available air units one at a time or choose to go second. Each side then places one of his available air units in either the Inshore box or on one of the game board areas, alternating placement until both sides are out of air units.

Ex., Red goes first in the turn and places a bomber unit in the game board area to support a Red attack later in the turn. Blue responds with a fighter unit and then Red responds with a fighter unit to protect the bomber unit already there. Blue then places another fighter unit in the game board area that will hopefully give his side an advantage in the upcoming air battle.

Air to Air and Air-Naval Combat

If there are opposing air units in either the Inshore box or any game board area then air to air combat occurs. The side without the initiative puts forth one of their aircraft units and then the initiative side must match it with one of their own. This continues until one side or the other is out of aircraft units. If one side has more air units than the other side, the additional units (usually fighters) can be combined against one or more opposing air units or in the case of bombers, they can be screened from combat.

Each air to air combat consists of two rounds. Once the aircraft are matched up against each other each side rolls 1D10 and consults the following table. Bombers will only participate in air to air combat if there are more opposing fighters and a bomber must be matched up against a fighter. Fighters can choose to ignore opposing fighters and go straight for the bombers, but any escorting fighters get one free shot with a +1 die modifier.

Air to Air Combat

Defender			
Fighter	1-6 Miss	7-8 Abort	9-0 X
Bomber	1-4 Miss	5-7 Abort	8-0 X

Bombers roll 1D10 against each fighter and on a 9 they force the opposing fighter to Abort and on a 0 it is eliminated.

X=Aircraft unit is eliminated

Abort-Air unit is removed from the board

Aborted fighters and bombers are simply removed from the game board for the rest of the turn. Aircraft that are shot down are recorded for victory point purposes. After two rounds of air combat if there are any bombers remaining or if there was no air combat, they may then attack any ships in the Inshore box or they will participate in ground combat during the combat phase of the turn. Play then proceeds to surviving bombers attacking ships in the Inshore box.

Air-Naval Phase (cont.)

Surviving bombers in the Inshore box must undergo anti-aircraft fire before they can attack any ships in the box. Anti-aircraft fire attacks each bomber separately. Total the anti-aircraft ratings of all ships in the Inshore box, then roll 1D6 on the table below.

Naval Anti-aircraft Fire

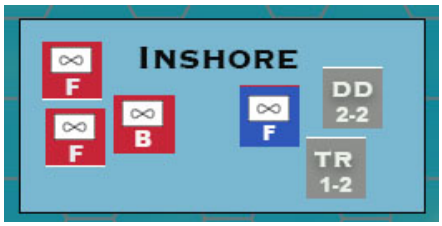
1D6	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	1A	1A
3	-	-	2A	1A/1X
4	-	1A	1A/1X	2A/1X
5	1A	1A	2A/1X	1A/2X
6	1X	1X	1A/2X	3X

#/A=Number of aircraft that Abort

#/X=Number of aircraft shot down

After naval anti-aircraft fire is completed, surviving bombers can attack any ships in the Inshore Box. Each bomber selects a target then rolls 1D6. On a roll of a 5 or 6 the target ship is damaged. Roll 1D4 and note the damage with the hit markers provided or on a piece of paper. If the number of hits on a ship EXCEEDS the number on the ship counter, it is sunk and removed from the campaign. Damaged ships must withdraw from the Inshore Box to the At Sea box, where they may later return to action.

Two Red fighters are escorting a bomber to attack ships in the Inshore Box. In the ensuing air to air combat both sides lose a fighter. Blue then fires anti-aircraft at the remaining Red bomber, rolling a 4 on the 1-5 line of the chart since there are 3 factors of anti-aircraft, which is a miss. Red then selects the DD as the target and the bomber rolls a 5, scoring a hit. Red then rolls 1D4 and gets a 2, which does not sink the DD unit, but it is seriously damaged. It must immediately withdraw to the At Sea box and a die roll will be made to see when and if the DD returns in the campaign. The TR unit is now free to either proceed to the At Sea box or to one of the port/docks locations.



Damaged Ships

For each ship that is damaged and moved to the At Sea box, roll 1D6+2 for each hit sustained. That is the number of turns that the ship is out of action for. Place the ship counter on the turn track as a reminder for when it becomes available again. In some cases this could be longer than the number of remaining turns in the campaign at which point the ship is simply removed from the campaign. *Ex; On Turn 4 a TR unit suffers two hits, so it is damaged and not sunk. Blue rolls 2D6+2 and ends up with an 8. The TR unit is placed on Turn 12 where it will become available again.*

Formation Activation & Movement

At the start of the Movement Phase each side puts all of their available activation chits and the two End Act chits into a cup. A player from either side then draws the chits out of the cup one at a time until either a) all of the formation chits of both sides have been drawn, or b) both End Act chits have been drawn, which means the Movement Phase is completed. This does mean that in some turns not all formations will get a chance to move.

When an activation chit is drawn, all units that are color coded as belonging to that formation may move. Units have the following Movement Point (MP) allowances:

Infantry/Militia/Artillery **4 MP**

Armor/Mech Infantry/Self-propelled Artillery **6MP**

As a unit moves on the campaign map it expends MPs to enter each hex. Units may not exceed their movement allowance. Blue units CANNOT move into any hex that is not part of a game board area. Blue units must begin and end their movement in a game board area. Red is under no restriction. There are no stacking rules for this campaign. Both sides must stop moving a unit when it enters any hex in a game board area if that area already has enemy units present. This ends the movement for that unit and a battle will be fought in that game board during the Combat Phase.

Terrain Costs

Clear	1MP
Road	1MP
Woods	2MP
Hill Slope	+1MP
Village	1MP
Urban	2MP

Turn End

When both End Act chits have been drawn the turn ends, even if there are activation chits for formations still in the cup. Play proceeds to the End of Turn Phase.

Disengaging

Both sides can move out of a game board area occupied by enemy units when their formation's activation chit is drawn. The procedure is different for the Red and Blue sides. If a Blue unit wishes to disengage, there is a +2 MP cost, but the unit may then immediately move to the closest hex in an adjacent game board area. Red may also disengage units, but there is a +1 MP cost per hex and this is paid hex by hex until Red's units are out of the game board area. Unlike Blue, Red's units can move into non game board area hexes. Units cannot disengage into game board areas that are not under their side's control. *Ex.; Blue draws an activation chit for the formation (two infantry units) holding Hill 317. Red has moved into the game board area with overwhelming force and so Blue decides the better part of valor is to disengage. The game board areas to the NW and E of Hill 317 are under Red's control. The Blue units will spend 3 MPs (1 for the woods hex and +2 MP to disengage) to move to the first hex in the game board just north of Hill 317 and their movement is finished for the turn.*

Combat Phase

If there is a game board area where units of both sides are present, there is the possibility of combat. Both side have the option of fighting a battle in that game board. If one side decides to have a battle, then combat ensues by following the Combat Phase sequence. If both players decline it is assumed that forces of both sides are actively patrolling and skirmishing in that area, but there will be no large scale action that turn. The side that started with control of that game board area at the beginning of the turn is the defender. The exception to this is if the side that controls the area opts for a battle and the other side in the area does not, that side is then the attacker for the upcoming battle (this would be considered a counterattack in that game board area).

Combat Phase Sequence of Play

1. Set up the game board
2. Place Fortifications/Allocate Air & Naval Support
3. Determine Set Up & Deploy units
4. Conduct the Battle
5. Recover Losses

Game Board Set Up

There are two ways to set up the game boards for each battle (they should be either 6 x 4 or 4 x 8 depending upon the table space that you have available). The first is to have a third party set up the terrain to match what the hexes are in the game board area. For example, if a hex is predominately urban, then that should be the primary feature in the corresponding area of the game board. Both sides are free to add factories, farms, streams, roads, etc., as they see fit to make the battle as interesting as possible or to use their available terrain in the most effective way possible.

The second way is for the players of both sides to place terrain in an alternating method of deployment. Each side sets up the terrain in a square foot of their choosing, trying to match what the hexes in the game board indicate. This will give both sides latitude to "customize" parts of the battlefield by adding additional terrain features. *Ex.; It's Red's turn to set up one of the parts of the battlefield and they choose a hex featuring a hill slop with a village. Red sets out part of the hillside, then places a village with a small farm nearby that has a short, tree lined road.* There should be a mechanism where the opposite side can challenge how the terrain is set up, but again, the idea is to get the predominant terrain on the map in some way represented on the tabletop.

With both methods it is extremely important that the finished tabletop be recorded in case there are additional battles in that game board area.

Place Fortifications/Allocate Air & Naval Support

If there are fortifications present in the game board area, they are now placed on the tabletop as close to what is represented on the map as possible. The defender should clearly state to the attacking side what the fortifications are and their stats according to the miniatures rules being used. Both sides then announce if they have air support and/or naval fires support present. Again, assign values and/or when the support can be used according to the miniature rules being used for the campaign.

Determine Set Up & Deploy Units

This is the hardest part of the Combat Phase and it will take some common sense as well as translation of where the units are in the game board area. Both sides should discuss and where possible come to an agreement about the forces that will be used, where they are initially located, etc. The defending side sets up first, followed by the attacking side. If the miniatures rules that are being used for the campaign uses objectives to determine victory, then these should be laid out and agreed upon now.

Once both sides are set up, play begins with the first turn of the battle and continues until one side retreats, calls off the attack, a time limit is reached, or victory is achieved by seizing objectives.

Ex., Three Blue units are defending the Hill 317 game board and will be attacked by two Red infantry units with an independent armor unit. The Blue units will begin deployed in the woods and village on the hill with the armor unit in reserve. The two Red infantry units may begin deployed for battle near Blue's positions with the armor unit entering the road into the game board area. The actual deployments are up to the players on each side and an agreement would need to be reached on a few things, such as how close can Red's infantry units be from Blue's initial positions? Can Blue spread out their units to adjacent hexes? If the sides cannot come to an agreement, consult the rules you are using for the campaign regarding set up or roll the dice to decide.

Conduct the Battle

Using the miniatures rules selected for the campaign, conduct the battle with the forces that are present in that game board area. Use the victory conditions set in the rules, whether that is break points, withdrawal factors, seizing objectives, etc., to determine the outcome of the battle. Of course, the defender or attacker can decide to withdraw from the game board area if they so desire. At that point the battle has ended and both sides proceed to the next step in the Combat Phase.

The losing side MUST withdraw to an adjacent friendly controlled game board area. If there are none present then that force surrenders. If a force withdraws to an area where a battle is to be fought, it should be placed into a reserve area where it cannot participate in the coming battle, but it must suffer the fate as the other friendly force in that area (retreats, surrender, etc.). Adjust control markers to designate which side is currently in control of that game board area.

Recover Losses

After each battle there is a chance that each side will be able to recover some of their losses, which represents wounded returning to duty, tank recovery, rallying broken troops, etc. Each side rolls 2D6 on the Recover Losses table and applies the result immediately.

End of Turn

The End of Turn Phase proceeds in this order:

A. Fortification Segment-Blue rolls for construction points and places fortifications.

B. Evacuation & Refugees-Move refugees and load ships at docks.

C. Reinforcements & Replacements-Both sides roll for replacement points. New forces are placed in the designated locations or in the case of available ships they are placed in the At Sea box.

D. Victory Point Segment-VPs gained and/or lost are calculated for the turn.

Fortification Segment

Blue rolls 1D6 to get the number of Construction Points (CPs) which may be used to build fortifications. There is a marker that can be used to track the number of CPs on the provided track. CPs do not have to be used each turn and can be accumulated from turn to turn. CPs are used to purchase fortifications in addition to those that Blue starts the game with. Fortifications may be placed in any game board area that Blue controls.

There are two types of fortifications; Light and Heavy. Light fortifications should consist of a series of foxholes and/or trenches with sections of barbed wire and a limited area of mines. Using the miniatures rules selected for the campaign, designate before the campaign begins how each type of fortification will be designated on the game board. Heavy fortifications should consist of trenches with firing positions, bunkers, barbed wire/obstacles, and mines. Light fortifications cost 3 CPs per marker placed while Heavy fortifications cost 6.

Evacuation & Refugees

Each transport can evacuate two units/refugees. These units must be present in a hex marked with the docks/port symbol at the end of the turn where they are then loaded onto the transport(s). In the following turn the transport(s) will then move back out into the Inshore Box where if they survive a turn they are then assumed to have successfully evacuated the units and Blue is awarded the victory points for those units.

Refugees represent large groups of displaced civilians who are fleeing the fighting. There are 12 refugee markers that start at varying places at the beginning of the campaign. Refugee markers move 2 hexes per turn, regardless of the terrain. If at any time a Red unit moves into their hex they are considered captured or dispersed for game purposes. Blue scores victory points for each refugee marker that is safely evacuated. If refugees are present in a game board during a battle, for game purposes they are considered to be in hiding, so there is no need to represent them on the tabletop. If Red controls the game board area after a battle where refugees were present, roll 1D6 and on a 1, 2, or 3 the refugees retreat with the Blue forces and on a 4, 5, or 6 they are removed from the game.

Some gamers may not want to play with this aspect of the game (civilians in wargames) and they can certainly choose not to use the refugee markers, but give Blue the chance to earn victory points in another fashion to compensate for not being able to evacuate the refugee markers.

Reinforcements & Replacements

Reinforcements are only available for Red and are shown in the Starting Forces & Reinforcement Schedule section. These units arrive on the indicated turn at specific locations. Replacements represent additional manpower and equipment arriving for Red to continue the offensive or for Blue it represents wounded returning to duty, ad hoc units, local reserves, etc. Each side rolls 1D6 per turn and can then use the points acquired. Depending upon the rules you are using, a replacement point could represent bringing a unit up to strength, replacing lost armored vehicles, etc. Both sides should agree before the campaign begins how replacement points should work. To save time and record keeping, it is recommended that the points can be used for any unit currently on the campaign map.

Replacements

D6	Red	Blue
1	0	0
2,3	1	0
4,5	2	0
6	3	1

Victory Conditions

Only Red scores Victory Points (VPs) during the campaign. At the end of Turn 21 total up the VPs and consult the table on the right to determine the level of victory.

The victory levels are designed to reflect the effect on the greater war in that theater. A catastrophic loss by Red, for example, would mean that most of the Blue forces escaped and will be able to fight elsewhere.

Players should feel free to adjust the VPS and levels to reflect player experience levels or the scope of the campaign (fewer turns, more units, etc.)

Victory Points

Objectives (each)	+5
TR sunk (each)	+5
DD/CA sunk (each)	+10
Blue aircraft destroyed (ea.)	+2
Refugees evacuated (each)	-3
Blue units evacuated (each)	-5
Red aircraft destroyed (ea.)	-2

Victory Level

150+	Decisive Victory
125-149	Major Victory
100-124	Tactical Victory
85-99	Draw
60-84	Tactical Defeat
40-59	Operational Defeat
0-39	Catastrophic Loss

Optional Rules

Artillery vs. Ships

If artillery units occupy Hill 314 or 322, they can fire at ships in the Inshore Box. Historically, land based artillery is not very good against ships, but they can make life more dangerous for them. You can either use the rules for the miniatures battles to determine the chances to score damage on the ships or allocate a number of factors and create your own table.

Hidden Movement

The campaign would definitely be more challenging if there was hidden movement. However, this requires a referee and a lot of record keeping along with a mechanism about how to handle contact between opposing forces as well as intelligence gathering. Previous systems in Warning Order and on the WFHGS site have hidden movement systems in their campaign rules, so this could be a source for ideas.

Extended Battles

Rather than forcing the losing side to withdraw, battles can continue in following turns, representing a slow grinding process in the urban area or to seize critical positions. You can see that some game board areas have multiple objectives, so these can be fought over in a series of battles instead of awarding all of the objectives to whoever controls that game board area.

Variable Entry

Instead of going with the starting forces and arrival schedule, create a table that would randomize the position of the starting forces and where the reinforcements arrive.

Large/Small Transports

Use varying sizes of transports with some that could potentially take up to four units and/or refugees or some smaller transports that can only hold one unit. Both sides need to agree on the size of the larger transports before the game begins.

Additional Units

Both sides could add extra units, go with more armor, include special forces or airborne troops, etc., to match what they have available.

Additional Terrain

Using Photoshop or some other graphics program, the terrain for the campaign could be modified. Airfields, a wider harbor, and more could be added.

Relief of the Siege

For those wanting a longer campaign, you could add a relief force to Blue that would attempt to cut its way through Red's siege of the city.

Designer's Notes

I've always been fascinated by fighting withdrawals and with playing historical miniatures campaigns. The opportunity to combine both was just too good to pass up! In my opinion there simply aren't enough campaigns being played by miniatures gamers these days, so anything I can do to help out on that front is worth the effort. Campaigns with your gaming group are definitely one of the great gaming experiences in the hobby and every gamer should at least try it once. Even if it fails (most do end in failure for one reason or the other) they often provide some interesting (and unequal) battles and the planning sessions really stand out.

The first thing I should clarify here is that this campaign is a "game kit". By that I mean that there is no way that it will be able to account for all the situations that are bound to come up during your campaign. While board wargames can try to write rules to cover every possible occurrence, tactic, etc., and are usually balanced through extensive playtesting, miniatures campaigns are not. The effort it would take to assemble painted forces, then run through a several months (possibly) campaign multiple times would be staggering.

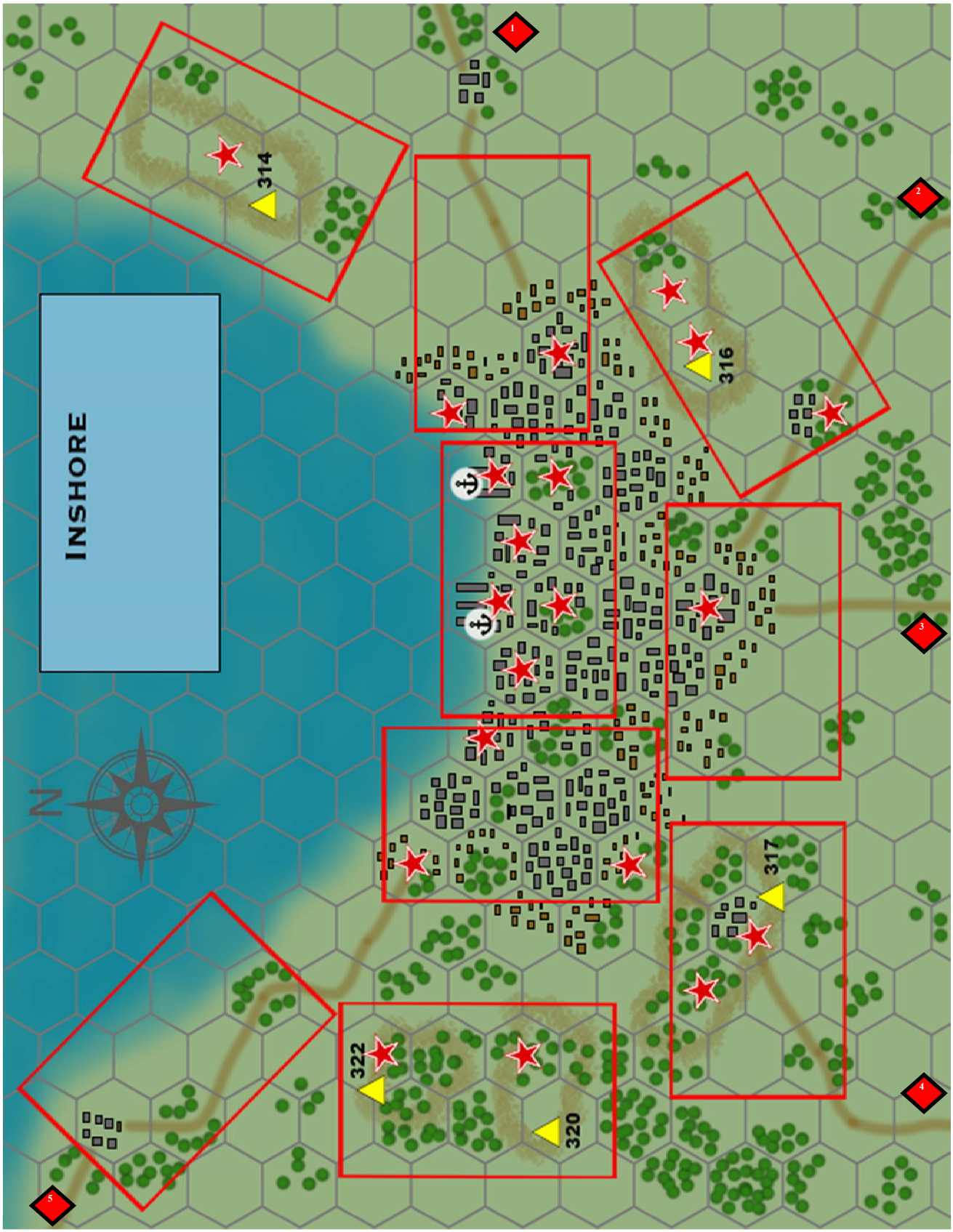
The situation is basically one side is losing a war and has withdrawn to a port. They will attempt to withdraw as many forces and refugees as possible in an effort to continue the fight in another area and/or front. To do this the campaign needed to show several things, including a city type siege/defense, withdrawal to shorter lines and counterattacks, evacuation by sea, and how difficult it is to do these things when you don't have air superiority.

The one aspect of this campaign that will get a lot of questioning is the idea of "game boards". Why not just use the hexes and if a club has a 4 x 6 table, then let them use all of the terrain and units in those hexes? From my experience with miniatures campaigns, it is the translation from map to the tabletop battlefield that causes the most problems for gamers. Why can't his unit be included, where are these units entering from, did anyone map this area the first time, and so on are the usual questions in a campaign.

With the game boards there is no question about what forces are available for the fight and what the predominant terrain is. With a campaign system that involves air support, naval transport, urban combat, and more, I wanted to design something that would be easy to use for gamers. There are already so many things going on in this campaign, that adding a fight over what terrain and units would be used for the battle seemed unnecessary. This is the first time I've used this type of thing for a miniatures campaign, so I am definitely interested in any feedback.

Again, this is a "game kit", so if you don't like the rules for combat losses, retreats, etc., change them! If you want to fight out the air battles with a board game or some other rules, by all means go ahead. The important thing is to have a planning session before the campaign begins to iron out with your gaming group the rules that you are going to use, what's changed, and basically how you're going to conduct the campaign. An hour or so spent talking things over at the start of the campaign will save hours of grief later!

This will be the second Engagements campaign set in the modern or WW2 era and both are vastly different. If the game board idea is well received I may do a fictional airborne campaign next. If it's not well received then it's probably back to the drawing board and maybe a completely different era!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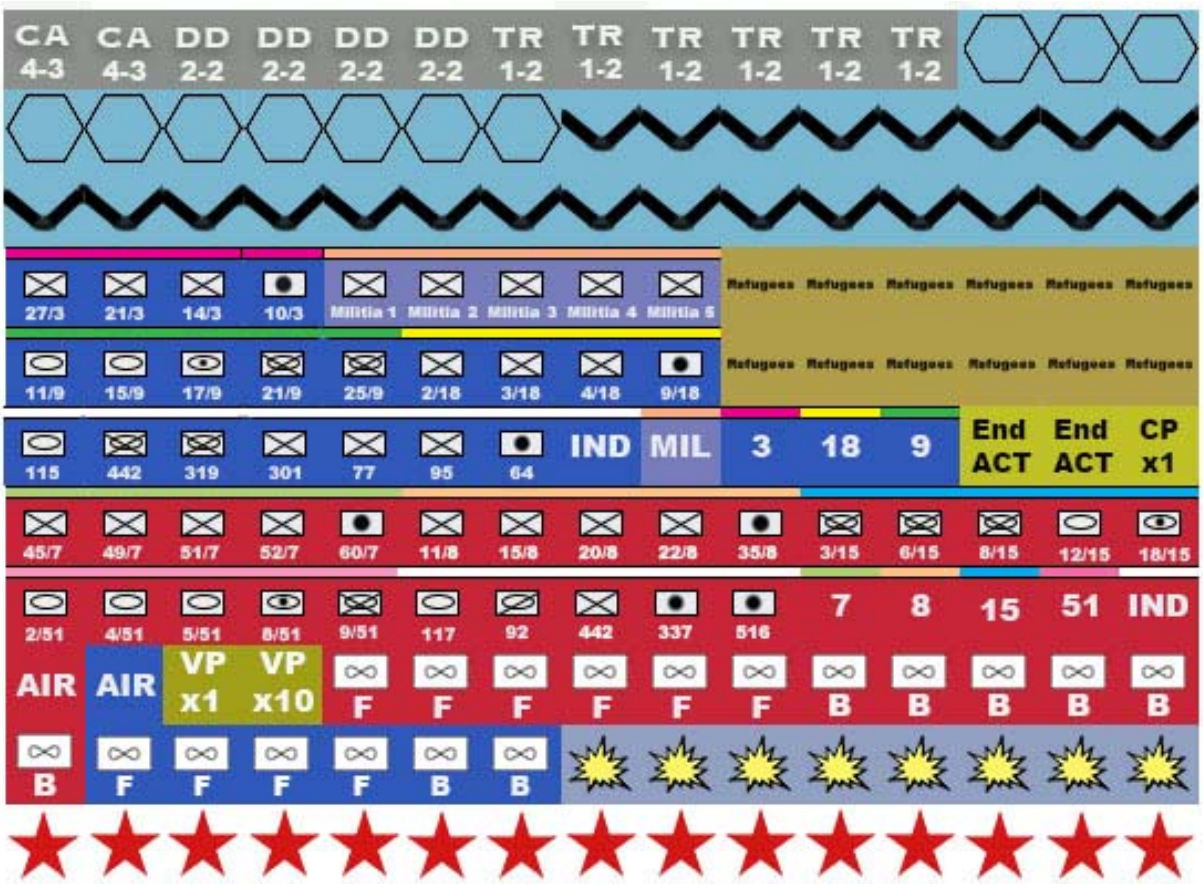


At Sea

Turn

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

Construction Points

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Victory Points

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Air Support (2D6)

Die Roll	Blue	Red
2	Storms	6/5
3	1/0	5/4
4	2/0	5/3
5	2/0	4/3
6	2/1	4/2
7	2/1	3/2
8	3/1	3/2
9	3/1	3/1
10	3/2	2/2
11	3/2	2/1
12	4/2	Storms

Replacements

D6	Red	Blue
1	0	0
2,3	1	0
4,5	2	0
6	3	1

Terrain Costs

Clear	1MP
Road	1MP
Woods	2MP
Hill Slope	+1MP
Village	1MP
Urban	2MP

Recover Losses

2D6	Result
2,3	10%
4,5	20%
6	25%
7	30%
8	40%
9	50%
10	60%
11,12	70%

Losing side –1

Winning side +1

Air to Air Combat

Defender			
Fighter	1-6 Miss	7-8 Abort	9-0 X
Bomber	1-4 Miss	5-7 Abort	8-0 X

Bombers roll 1D10 against each fighter and on a 9 they force the opposing fighter to Abort and on a 0 it is eliminated.

X=Aircraft unit is eliminated

Abort-Air unit is removed from the board

Naval Anti-aircraft Fire

1D6	1-5	6-10	11-15	16+
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	1A	1A
3	-	-	2A	1A/1X
4	-	1A	1A/1X	2A/1X
5	1A	1A	2A/1X	1A/2X
6	1X	1X	1A/2X	3X

#/A=Number of aircraft that Abort

#/X=Number of aircraft shot down

Starting Forces & Reinforcement Schedule

Blue At Start Forces

Deploy anywhere on the campaign map:

3rd Infantry (all), 18th Infantry (all), Militia 1, 2, 3, 115th Armor, 442 Mech, 77th Infantry, 4 Heavy & 10 Light fortifications.

Refugees: Place 2 at ports/docks and remainder at any road entrance.

Turn 1

Road Entrance 3: 319 Mech, 301 Infantry, 64 Artillery

At Sea: 3 TR, 2 DD, 1CA

Turn 2

Road Entrance 5: 9th Armored (all)

Turn 3

Any game board: Militia 4,5

Turn 6

At Sea: 3 TR, 2DD, 1CA

Red Reinforcement Schedule

Turn 1

Road Entrance 1: 7th Infantry (all), 117 armor

Turn 2

Road Entrance 2 and/or 3: 15th Mech (all), 337 Artillery

Turn 3

Road Entrance 4: 8th Infantry (all), 92 Armored Recon

Turn 4

Road Entrance 5: 51 Armor (all), 442 Infantry, 516 Artillery

Note: Command chits for formations entering as reinforcements are put into the activation pool at the start of the turn that they are scheduled to arrive.

3rd Infantry
14/3
21/3
27/3
10/3

9th Armored
11/9
15/9
17/9
21/9
25/9

18th Infantry
2/18
3/18
4/18
9/18

Independent
115
442
319
301
77
95
64

Militia
1
2
3
4
5

Blue

7th Infantry
45/7
49/7
51/7
52/7
60/7

8th Infantry
11/8
15/8
20/8
22/8
35/8

15th Mech
3/15
6/15
8/15
12/15
18/15

51st Armored
2/51
4/51
5/51
8/51
9/51

Independent
117
92
442
337
516

Red

When Hannibal originally appeared from Avalon Hill it was definitely one of those events that would shape the course of the board wargaming hobby. Card driven wargames had been introduced previously with We The People (also from Avalon Hill), but Hannibal helped solidify its place in the hobby and has remained extremely popular through its various iterations. Phalanx Games recently released a third edition of the game that also includes a new game called Hamilcar.

Hannibal & Hamilcar was a Kickstarter project, which as usual is good and bad. There were a number of items that were included as a result of the Kickstarter, but whether it was worth it to get in on this or wait for the retail version remains to be seen. Kickstarter wargame projects also seem to give gamers unrealistic expectations, which definitely seemed to be in play throughout the design and shipping phases of the game. In the end, however, everyone who did back the project received a large box full of various components.

First off, there is the beautiful, double sided map board, with one side for each game. On top of that you get quite a few counters (mostly round), a few hundred cards for events and battles, plus the 36-40mm generals set along with cards for each general. There is also a rule book, scenario book, and a play book, so there is quite a lot here. Not only that, there were two supplements plus a giant play mat that were also made available. The

supplements came in very small boxes and had one general figure plus a few cards, which made me wonder why they packaged/marketed things this way instead of just including them in the original game box. In summary, the components are pretty good and I'm sure you could find something to complain about, but I thought the overall presentation was good.

The rules are pretty easy to grasp, but learning how to play well is definitely a challenge. I've played Hannibal at least a dozen times and have never done well at it, but it's a lot of fun! The game revolves around the few leaders on the board and the forces that they have under them. Rome has superiority at sea, so Carthage is pretty much tied to a land campaign except for a few events. There are a number of circles on the board where political control markers are placed to show who owns that space. The spaces are part of larger areas called provinces and it is the control of those provinces that determines the winner in the end.

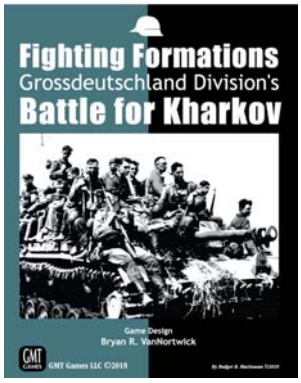
The turns begin with each side receiving new troops then the Romans need to select a pro-consul followed by two new randomly selected consuls (generals) for that turn. This does have the effect of limiting what the Romans can do as some aren't that great and you need to just survive the turn with them! Since forces can't move without a general, campaigns are usually pretty limited each turn. Cards are then dealt to both sides and play begins. The cards can be played for the event on the card, for political control, for operations by generals, and some can be used to generate a combat unit.

Yes, the cards are the crux of the game as they determine how many forces you can move, obtaining additional forces and leaders, used to seize political control in empty spaces, or just for the myriad of events (good and bad) that can affect the game. Using the cards for the right thing at the right time is almost an art form and you can spend a lot of time debating with yourself about what the best course of action is!

Once two forces are in the same space combat ensues. This is done by handing out a number of cards to each player depending upon how many combat units there are, general's tactics rating, allies, event cards, etc., then the attacker plays a card. The defender then has to try to match the card and can counterattack, becoming the attacker in the next round. Once a player can't match the card played, the battle is over, losses are figures out, and there are political consequences in terms of spaces lost. A longer procedure than most games, but it works well and there is combat only every so often. At the end of the turn you compare how many provinces each sides controls and remove the difference in political control markers. Here's where things can go downhill pretty fast!

Once you add in sieges, elephants, attrition, tribes, etc., you have quite the game and it has very high replay value. Hamilcar deals with the first Punic War and has additional rules for naval warfare and supply trains, so while it is similar in some ways to Hannibal, it plays much differently. In fact, you flip over the Hannibal board and use the reverse side for Hamilcar. Also, while the previous two versions of the game basically had one scenario, there is an entire scenario book for those who wish to focus on certain aspects of the campaign or who are interested in a shorter game.

Is this the definitive version of the game? Probably so. Good components, an extra game included, plastic figures and more make this a worthy purchase. I'm not sold on all of the extra scenarios, variant cards, etc., as I have questions about the playtesting of those and the proofreading could have used some extra effort. Overall, however, this game is worth your time and money to play, as well as learning about the Punic Wars along the way.

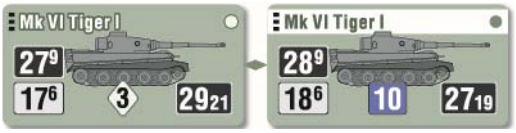


Several years ago, an innovative game system emerged from GMT called Fighting Formations. Designer Chad Jensen, fresh off the success of the Combat Commander series, decided to go off on a different route with his next game series. It was envisioned at the time that there would be multiple boxed sets focused on the WW2 battles of several famous divisions. The first one out centered around the early East Front actions of the Grossdeutschland Division, which was not a full division at that time.

The game had maps similar to Combat Commander, cards for the various assets, some markers that looked like those in CC, but it also had some new items such as an initiative track, vehicle silhouettes on long counters, circular counters, sighting markers, and more. In essence it was a whole new game system that focused on command & control along with swings in initiative during a battle. This had the immediate effect of alienating many gamers who thought for some reason that this was going to be a larger scale Combat Commander with vehicles!

Instead, the battles were more combined arms affair, edging closely into operational level territory with various platoons, batteries, and heavy weapons units that often translated into battalion sized actions. Knowing which orders to use, how to give your opponent the initiative at the right time, managing command markers, etc., definitely took a few plays to figure out. The combat system was also unique, using a series of opposed die rolls that generated hits, which in turn led to drawing a result out of a cup. There were quite a few moving pieces and some gamers never could wrap their heads around the entire system.

Years later, it is now looked at in a different light. So much so, that when this supplement was announced it quickly hit its P500 number and my guess is that if it had been a different division the numbers would have been even higher. I believe that gamers have come around to the system and certain elements of the game make it stand out more so than many other games on its scale.



The Battle for Kharkov could easily have come in a zip-lock bag, but GMT provided a box anyway. Inside the box are several new maps, a sheet of counters, and a playbook with scenarios. The playbook also includes a complete order of battle for GD along with historical notes on the fighting near Kharkov. All of the components are very similar to those in the first game, so there is no need for upgrades, special rules, etc, that you've been seeing recently with other games. The components are of the now standard GMT quality, so there's little to no concern in this area.

By scanning the counter sheet you instantly see that the years being represented are different than in the first game. T-34Cs, SU-76s, German 75mm AT guns, and of course Tigers all make their appearance. You can also see from the stats on the counters that these scenarios might play a bit differently as the armor and weapons are now much more deadly! In the first game it could be hard at times to destroy tanks, setting off endless exchanges of fire with little results. Not so here as a hit from a Tiger is almost certain to go through any armor.

The 10 scenarios focus on the fighting in and around Belgorod and Kharkov in 1943 and 1944. During this time, Grossdeutschland was active in the defense, counterattacks, and finally the retaking of Kharkov. Most of the scenarios deal with various GD units being used in a "fire brigade" type capacity, counterattacking to restore the defensive front against a variety of Russian forces. From Cut Off in early February 1943 where GD units get overtaken by the advancing Russians to A Change of Orders in early 1944 where GD units get sent in to seal a breach in the lines, there is a wide variety of actions here.

The one thing I really liked about the scenarios in Battle for Kharkov is that they are all of a manageable size, something that was a small problem with the first game. In fact, I would suggest using these scenarios to teach others the system as many of them are short affairs with few units. The other interesting note on the scenarios is that some of these will be a huge change for most gamers who are used to only all armor battles or slugfests with the more popular units. Fighting Formations teaches you that sometimes you have to use the flak batteries, engineers, random armor units, etc., to carry

out a mission because that's all there is in that sector at the time. This can be a real challenge for gamers and a refreshing change of pace.

Overall, this is a good supplement and by sticking to a theme (Kharkov) I'm sure it made it easier on the designer/developer! It does raise, however, the question of whether or not in the future they will continue to release supplements based on the same division or just put everything out for different units. GD also fought on in East Prussia late in the war, so will there be another boxed supplement for that or will a new formation be introduced?

Hopefully, we'll get some new formations as I think seeing some new counters, maps, etc, would help drive interest in the series. Regardless, this is a very good supplement and if you already own Fighting Formations it is a must buy.

If you recall from the last issue, the Romans completely trounced the Seleucids. No matter what the Seleucids did, the Romans had a counter for and coupled with some horrific die rolls, it was one of the easier victories we've seen in the around 100 games of WMA we've played! Some of this no doubt, lies with how the Seleucid army is constructed and with the huge variation in forces it's hard to pick a winning combination.

This was one of those Fridays where our planning fell though and with only three of us, we decided to do a 1500 points per side of WMA, matching the same two foes from the last issue; Imperial Romans and Seleucids. Yes, not the same Romans that actually fought the Seleucids, but the beauty of the WMA system is that all armies match up well.

The Romans were going to go with the same force mix that they've been using for several years and in multiple tournaments, so no surprise there. Legions, backed by auxiliary infantry, formed the core of the army and were basically in the center. The few archer units were deployed on the Roman left, with skirmishers and some cavalry on their right. In a slight change from previous deployments, the heavier Roman cavalry was deployed in the center, which threw off the Seleucid deployment at the start.

As the owner of the Seleucids I have several army lists of varying point sizes that I bring along. I've mentioned before that I usually have a "heavy" and "light" list with the big difference being how many elephants and cavalry are in each force. With almost 2500 points of units now in the Seleucid collection, there's a lot to choose from! In an effort to throw something new, I decided to go with a new list with a wild variety of units.

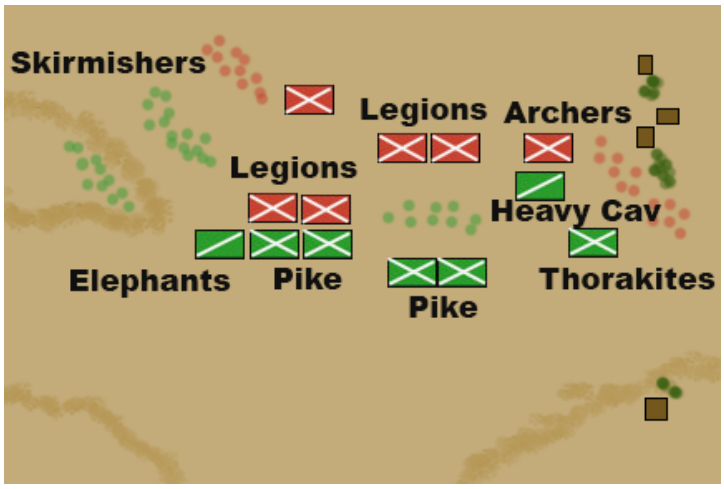
The first thing is to have pike units and there were four of those that were deployed in the center along with several archer and skirmisher units. The heavy cavalry and thorakites were deployed on the Seleucid right, while the light cavalry (including some camels!) and two units of Galatians were on the left. Finally, the elephants were in the center to back up the pikes as I figured I could shift them to any threatened sector. Galatians are classified as warbands, meaning they do great if they are winning, but lousy when losing! They are, however, cheap, and I rarely use them, so this was a big departure from the standard set up.

The Seleucids went first and in a shocking development, moved all of their forces! The idea was to advance quickly, pin the Roman flanks, then crash into the center with the pikes, elephants, and heavy cavalry, which would hopefully focus on a few units to do the maximum amount of damage. Due to the number of skirmish capable units, the Seleucid break point was only 7, so while the skirmish infantry and cavalry were expendable, I would need to be extremely careful with the core units in the center of the board.

By turn 3 both sides started to exchange archery fire and the light cavalry were moving in and out each turn, getting in a few shots here and there. Finally, on the Seleucid left there were a series of charges by the light infantry and skirmishers that cleared out several units. All of a sudden, there was one unit of Galatians looking at the flank of the advancing Romans, who could not get turned around in time.

The Galatians crashed into the flank of one of the legions, wrecking it and the supports with that unit, then proceeded down the line. By the time the Galatians were spent, the Roman right was in tatters, which was going to force the Romans to play catch up in terms of break points. The Seleucid left was wrecked as well, with most units down to one stand, but they had done their job well.

The action now shifted to the Seleucid right, where the archers, thorakites, and skirmishers got into a several turn back and forth duel. The Romans were not helped by their bad die rolls with shooting, but they delayed the Seleucid advance by drive backs and disordering units. In what seemed an eternity, the Seleucid heavy cavalry finally moved up and launched an attack on the Roman left. The cataphracts and guard cavalry hit one of the legions, simply obliterating it, while the thorakites attacked and destroyed the archers. When the Seleucid right flank pulled back to reorganize they had suffered some losses, but (cont.)



By Turn 6 the Seleucid Gauls have already pushed several Roman units back, destroying themselves in the process. The Seleucid heavy cavalry launches a successful attack against the Roman flank, destroying most of the Roman archer units. The Seleucid pike and elephants form up into an almost unstoppable combination.

(cont.) they had more than inflicted double their stand losses on the Romans.

At this point the Romans were still in the game. While having one flank crushed and the other having suffered severe losses, they had inflicted some pain on the Seleucids as well. The Romans were halfway to their break point of 10, but the Seleucids were only at 2 1/2, but with a break point of 7 it could easily swing in the Romans favor with a few good turns.

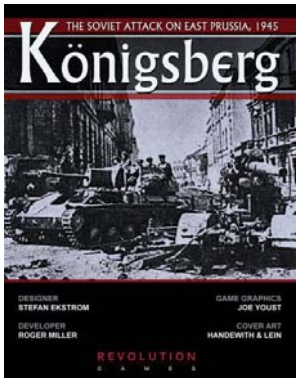
Unfortunately for the Romans, things went from bad to worse. Feeling that they had to seize the initiative they went on the offensive. There were still fresh legions and their supports in the center, so now was the time to hit the Seleucids and break their pike units, then mop up the scattered remains of the army. It was a good plan, except that it needed a series of good command rolls for it to occur, which did not happen. Part of the center advanced and tried to contact the Seleucid pikes, but failed.

Two of the Seleucid pike units charged and by a stroke of luck/placement, the elephant unit joined in. This produced an astounding 30 dice in the first attack, which obliterated the leading Roman unit, then they charged into the supports where with the pursuit and 9cms of push back gave them 39 dice in the second round! All of a sudden there was a huge hole in the Roman center!

In the next turn the pikes, elephants, heavy cavalry, and whatever else could be found piled into the remaining Roman units, inflicting huge losses across the board. When we got to the Roman turn it was clear that it was over as the Romans had already went past their break point and the game was called as a Seleucid victory.

The Romans really didn't do anything wrong, but circumstances and bad die rolls at the wrong time did them in. The Seleucids finally got that opportunity to deliver a massed pike charge backed by elephants which is pretty incredible to see and probably painful if you're on the receiving end! In the end it was a fun game, win or lost, and including set up, playing, ,and take down it was only 2 1/2 hours.

Is this the beginning of Seleucid dominance in WMA? Have I found the "magic' army list? Probably not. I'm sure the Romans will tweak some things and in the next game my traveling circus will fail all of its command rolls!



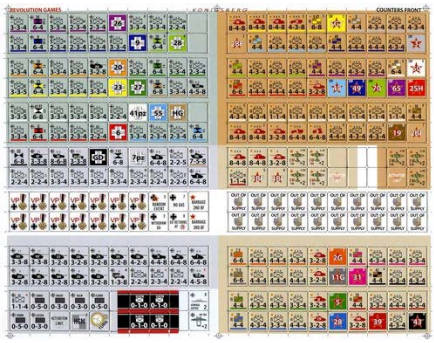
There are a number of smaller game companies out there in the hobby and one of the more well thought of is Three Crowns Game Productions. One of their games was on a little known topic dealing with the final Russian attacks into Eastern Prussia called Konigsberg '45. The game quickly sold out and was then a revised version was put up for pre-order on the MMP web site. Having failed to hit its P500 number the game rights were then handed off to Revolution Games, who has also been producing some smaller wargames.

The new version is called Konigsberg-The Attack on East Prussia 1945. The version I ordered arrived in zip-lock format with a 22 x 34 map, a sheet of counters, a cover card that doubles as a reference card on back, and a set of rules. While the components are minimal, this shouldn't fool anyone into thinking that this is not a good game. The standard size paper map is well done and covers a large area of East Prussia. The counters are color coded by formation, easy to read and understand, and there are sufficient markers for out of supply, activations, VP hexes, and more. The rules are minimalist, but functional. I was surprised that there was not a separate card with the combat results and terrain tables on them, but they are available to be printed. So far, so good.

If you've played any of MMP's "Victory" series or any SCS games, you'll be able to pick this up and get started in no time at all. The rules are pretty basic and take the chit pull system seen in A Victory Lost and A Victory Denied to the next level by putting all available chits into the cup as well as event chits. As you will see this certainly creates some additional chaos, but the rules are easy to understand and within the first few turns you'll have most of the system down. There is some chrome and you need to pay attention to some of the special rules. My guess is that on the first play you may miss some things and if the rules get revised someday, a few examples might help things out.

The sequence of play is pretty easy to remember as at the start of the turn reinforcements and replacements arrive, then you set the limit on the number of activations each side can get (the Russians are split into two "fronts", with each getting their own limit). For example, if the German activation limit is 4 for a turn, the first four German formation chits drawn are allowed to conduct operations, even though there are sometimes a dozen or so available to be drawn. Chits are then drawn one at a time from the cup until each side hits its limit, then you reach the end of the turn.

When a formation's chit is drawn, all units from that formation and within command range of the formation's HQ, can move and attack. Each HQ can also activate a number of independent formations as well, so the placement of these units can be critical to each side's success. Managing the chaos of the chit pull can be frustrating at times, but considering the German command situation and the Russian logistical problems during this campaign, the system works quite well in simulating the confusion, missed opportunities, and chaotic nature of the operations.



The combat system is also quite easy to figure out and is your standard odds based and roll a D6 type of table. The results are usually in terms of step losses and retreats, with the terrain, particularly the fortifications all over the map limiting retreats. Air units can be used for either a 1 or 2 column shift, although if used for a 2 column shift they may not come back for a few turns. There are also artillery barrages that can occur through special chits where each Russian front gets a number of free attacks on the 2:1 table which are useful in forcing the Germans out of strong defensive positions.

There is some chrome in the rules but nothing that adds any additional length or complexity to the game. The issue in my plays seemed to be remembering to use the special rules or having to look them up. First, there are a number of special chits such as "No Gas" or a Random Event chit, that can have affects each turn. Grossdeutschland's units (some of the more powerful German units) can get removed and then possibly return later in the game. There are rules for the 7th Panzer, which had no actual units assigned to it, Admiral Hipper providing fire support from the sea, and other odds and ends that add flavor to the game.

Obviously, the Russians are trying to break through the initial German defenses before a second line or reserves can be formed. The Germans are desperately trying to shift formations to other critical sectors and are fighting a huge delaying action. The Germans will lose a lot of units as in some areas they simply get overwhelmed, but somehow they keep finding one more unit to throw in the path of the Russian attack. The chit draw makes things nerve wracking for both sides; the Germans need a specific chit to plug a hole while the Russians need a certain chit to expand a breakthrough, but they never seem to get drawn at the right time!

For fans of the Victory Lost or SCS game series, this is a must have. The game is finely balanced, chaotic, but yet it plays fast and is a lot of fun, plus it is on a fascinating, but neglected topic. The rules could use some examples, a little color, and some well done reference/game charts would certainly help. In summary, however, this is a fine little game that no East Front gamer should miss out on and it has great replay value.

With many game companies moving to Facebook along with more and more gaming news as well, I thought I would join two of the more prominent groups on that site. The first is just the general Wargamers group, which has grown by leaps and bounds over the last few months. The second was the Wargamer's Marketplace, which is probably bad for me considering how much time I spend on the CSW Marketplace and Ebay! Just going through the posts on the first day I joined brought up some interesting realities in the hobby.

As a frequent visitor to The Miniatures Page, Boardgamegeek, Consimworld, etc., I'm pretty aware of what is going on in the historical miniatures and board game parts of the hobby. However, even I was surprised by several things I noticed in my first hour scrolling through those two groups, which represent a pretty large sampling of wargamers. I've often commented in this magazine about too many rules, different versions of games, the golden age where everything is there for you and so on. Upon further review, I think I underestimated that by a factor of two or three!

First off, the amount of games for sale, especially still shrink wrapped, is pretty amazing. When you go to Ebay you expect this as most entries are companies or someone trying to get top dollar. On the Facebook group, however, people are just dumping games with the prices all over the board. Many of the games probably just arrived to their owners that week! Gamers are literally ordering games on P500 lists, purchasing them, getting them in the mail, then selling them off within a few days of their arrival. The question needs to be asked, "What is causing this?"

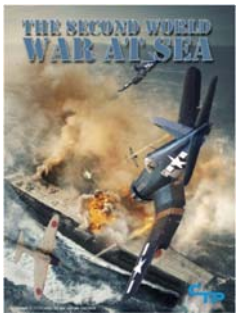
I think you have to look no further than the other Facebook group I recently joined, which is essentially a continuous scroll of gamers showing off games they are playing, what they're working on, what is in development, new game announcements, and more. Where on other forums such as BGG, CSW, and TMP for example, you can pick and choose what you want to read or focus on, here it is just keeps scrolling and scrolling with no end in sight. While you had a general notion that the hobby has grown and that there is more product out there now than ever, you never could really grasp the width and breadth of it. It then finally hits you like a tidal wave that maybe, just maybe, there is too much.

New game companies from Poland, designers banding together to form another new game company, beautiful Japanese wargames, magazine games, new sets of miniatures rules, game development updates for yet more games coming out, plans for new releases, etc. This is on top of the large number of games already coming out from Compass, GMT, MMP, and more! It is overwhelming and at the point of over saturation. I definitely see why there has been a sudden surge of "Where do I start?" threads across the gaming world. Day after day brings more and yet more, with an almost unrelenting assault on your hobby desires as well as your wallet.

Now this is not the fault of the game companies. Obviously they wouldn't be producing all of these games, creating new companies, putting out new miniatures, rules, and supplements if there wasn't interest. If a game hits its preorder number it will more than likely get produced and hopefully the game company make a bit of profit to continue on. Once a company ships a game, all they can hope for is that the game gets played, it is well received, and the gamer comes back to order more from them. Obviously, gamers are ordering more and more games with the game companies pushing more and more product. But are these games getting played?

From all the shrink wrapped copies that are for sale, I think there is a large segment of new games that aren't seeing the tabletop. I think this goes for historical miniatures as well where it is easy to order new rules, terrain, and figures, but getting them to the tabletop seems to involve far more commitment and discipline than most gamers have right now. Whether gamers are planning on playing them in the future, get distracted by other new games coming out, no time due to real life, or they had second thoughts on a game system, there is an issue here. This doesn't even include how many open the game, push a few pieces around or play the game once where it unceremoniously gets dumped into a stack of games never to see the light of day again.

The reason for that? You guessed it, more new games coming out! I probably play more games per year than the average gamer, but I make it a point to at least play each new game once, with the hope that I will come back to it at some time. Most gamers never even get that far, but continue to order more new games. The other issue that is cropping up here is that many are complaining that they can't play a game twice, that some systems take too long to re-learn, and that they want to get to game X, but game Y just arrived and that takes precedence. In the 70s, 80s, and 90s gamers thought there were a lot of games, but when you bought one you would sometimes play it several times. Now most games are lucky to hit the table once.



Again, I'm not sure the game companies see this as a problem. New games are continuously being created and sold, so for them things are good. For gamers, however, we seem to have entered a cycle where many are afraid of missing out on a new game, so they order everything in sight. We haven't even talked about another issue and that is you're lucky to find someone to play with who is interested in the same game you are!

That were in a Golden Age is undeniable in terms of the number of games coming out. What the long term trend for this is, however, is up for debate. Meanwhile, the posts for recently received games for sale continues to roll on.

Engagements 23: Infiltration

Situation: Blue has come up against a formidable defensive position that Red has set up in this operational area. Blue decides to infiltrate the defenses with infantry and engineers during the night, hoping to clear an opening for a dawn attack that will hopefully catch Red by surprise.

Period: WW2 to Modern.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are very low, but will provide cover to units beyond the crest and benefits to any unit defending on the hills. The villages are a mix of stone and wood buildings. The red line from the top to the bottom of the map are Red's defensive works. They consist of a trench and several fortified areas with an anti-tank trench in front of sections of the trench (marked by the red X's).

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

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

On Board at Start (Trench):

4 units of infantry

1 unit of armor

1 unit of mortars

On Board at Start (Support):

1 unit of armor

1 unit of mech infantry

1 battery 105mm (off board)

Reserves:

3 units of infantry

1 unit of mech infantry

2 units of armor

1 unit of mortars

Set Up: Red's at start on board forces set up with the Trench forces deployed in the trench and/or forts and the Support forces within 12" of the trench. The Reserves are placed in the numbered locations, with no more than two units at each location. The initial locations of the Trench force should be written down (hidden deployment).

Red Orders: Prevent Blue from breaking through the trench line and exiting forces off of Red's side of the board.

Blue Forces: Blue's forces have been split into two groups for the attack. The first group will infiltrate the defenses under cover of night and clear a path for the main attack at dawn. The main attacking force is off board and will enter on Turn 1.

Infiltration Force:

2 units of infantry

1 unit of combat engineers

1 unit of heavy weapons

Main Attack:

2 units of infantry

6 units of armor

4 units of mech infantry

1 armored recon unit

1 unit of mortars

Artillery Support: 1 battery of 105mm (off board) and 1 battery of 155mm (available on a roll of a 5 or 6 on 1D6 each turn).

Blue Orders: Create a gap in the defenses for the main attack to pass through. Once through the defense line, proceed to exit as many units off of Red's edge of the board as possible.

Set Up: Blue picks an 8" spot along the trench line and any Red forces at that location are considered destroyed. Blue can also clear a 6" gap of anti-tank ditch as well. Roll 1D6 for each unit of the Infiltration force and on a 6 it was destroyed in the attack. The surviving forces are placed within 6" of the breach in the trench line. Play then proceeds to Turn 1 where Blue's main attack enters from the board edge.

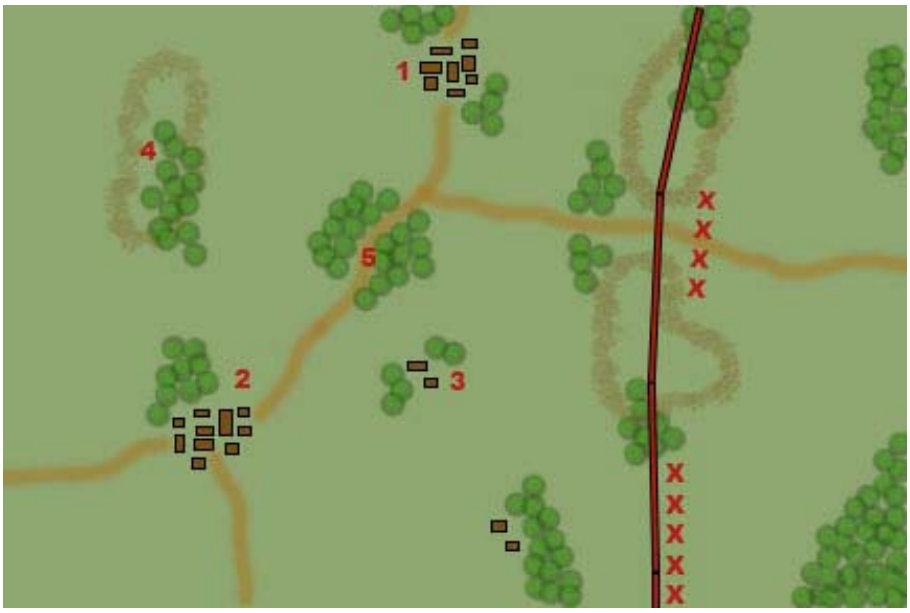
Red Reserves: Each turn, roll 2D6 and the numbers generated activate those locations. If a unit is not activated it can still defend itself. *Ex., on Turn 1 Red rolls a 4 and a 6. There is no location marked 6, so only the unit(s) at 4 can activate.*

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: Red can place two forts along the trench line that are revealed after Blue's infiltration attack. The forts should be at least one level of fortification higher than the trench and can include vehicle firing positions.

Victory Conditions: Blue needs to exit at least six units off of Red's side of the board for a victory.

Variants: Increase the number of units of both sides and the board size for a larger game. Airstrikes and additional artillery support could be added as well. Allow Red to add barbed wire and minefields if it is too easy for Blue to execute its attack. A completely separate game could be fought just for the night action, so the breach might be larger or smaller, depending upon how successful Blue's attack was.



Engagements 24: Emergence

Situation: Blue has been expecting an attack from Red for several days, but the main Red attacking force has eluded detection. Blue has a strong position anchored on a large swampy area thought to be impassable. Red, however, has managed to move their force through the swamp and is now almost in position to launch an attack that will hopefully catch Blue unable to respond in force. Blue's scouts finally detect Red as their vanguard enters into the open.

Period: Primarily for Horse & Musket, but could be used for Ancients/ Middle Ages by adding light infantry/ skirmishers and substituting other units for the artillery batteries.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are very low, but will provide cover to units beyond the crest and benefits to any unit defending on the hills. The villages and farms are a mix of stone and wood buildings. The swamp area consists of marshy ground covered with forested areas and is impassable except for the numbered positions on the map.

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

Red Forces: Red's forces are divided into three groups which will emerge from the swamp based upon a D6 roll.

Group 1:

4 units of infantry

1 artillery battery

Group 2:

4 units of infantry

1 artillery battery

Group 3:

3 units of cavalry

1 horse artillery battery

Set Up: Roll 1D6 for each of Red's Groups, which is the number on the map where that group will emerge from the swamp. Units emerging from the swamp can be in any formation and within 6" of the location on the map. Roll a second D6 for the turn of arrival; 1 or 2 is Turn 1, 3 or 4 it is Turn 2, a 5 is Turn 3, and a 6 is Turn 4.

Red Orders: Emerge from the swamp and quickly attack Blue before their defenses get organized. Seize two of the three objectives (marked by stars on the map).

Blue Forces: Blue only has a small force guarding this flank and is out of position to meet the attack. Blue is quickly moving additional forces into the area to help with the defense.

Initial Forces:

2 units of infantry

1 unit of cavalry

1 artillery battery

Reserves:

Roll 1D6 each turn

Roll	Unit
1	Artillery battery
2-3	Infantry
4	Cavalry
5	Pick any two units
6	No reserves this turn

Reserves arrive by rolling 1D6; 1-2 the unit appears on the west road entrance, 3-4 on the southwest road entrance, and on a 5-6 on the north road entrance. If one or more road entrances is blocked, that unit arrives at any open road entrance the following turn.

Blue Orders: Delay Red for as long as possible while the reserves arrive. Once sufficient force has been assembled, counterattack where possible to drive Red back to the swamp.

Set Up: Blue's initial forces must set up within 12" from the blue line marked on the map. Blue's initial forces cannot retreat further than 12" from the blue line until at least Turn 3.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: Any unit driven back into the swamp takes additional casualties (loss of a stand, morale grade, etc, depending upon rules used). Any unit that routs into the swamp is considered destroyed.

Victory Conditions: Red needs to seize two of the three objectives for a victory. Any other result is a Blue victory.

Variants: Increase the number of units of both sides and the board size for a larger game. Restrictions on the movement of Blue's initial forces could add additional chaos to the game as well. Red could have to roll for each unit or group that is moving through the swamp for delays, fatigue, or missing units, which could offset any additional restrictions placed on Blue's forces.

The scenario could be used with Ancients by replacing and/or adding light infantry or skirmishers to both sides. Elephants or chariots could be used to replace some of the cavalry units as well. Blue could be given entrenchments if both sides feel that they would be overwhelmed too quickly.

F-4's Triumphant! Phantoms Battle Report

We had decided to do a Phantoms game with four players, but when one was unable to make it, then we had a dilemma. First, two against one games don't end up well that often in gaming! Either you end up running fewer figures than normal, which isn't fun for everyone, or one player is overwhelmed by having to run more than they probably should! In this case I would have to run four Migs plus the game charts, so this would be interesting in any case.

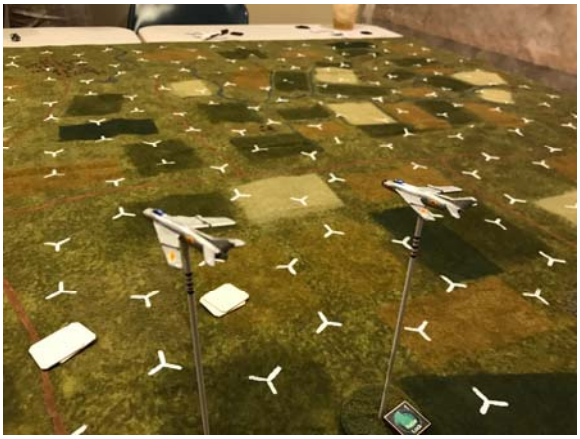
For the uninitiated, Phantoms is a modification of the Avalon Hill board game Mustangs. Mustangs uses a series of maneuver markers, which are placed in front of the aircraft miniatures, then when the aircraft reaches the marker, it performs the maneuver along with any associated speed loss/gain. The miniatures version uses brass tubes cut to different lengths to represent altitude and we use 1/300th scale aircraft for our games. Not the most realistic set of jet combat rules out there, but the game looks good, is a lot of fun, and you can teach a group of new gamers in just a few minutes. All of the rules, aircraft data cards, and charts are available for free from the WFHGS web site.

This was a pretty standard scenario, with the F-4s coming onto the board for a MIGCAP mission, covering for a strike further off the map. The Mig flights, which consisted of two Mig-19s and two Mig-21s, were on an intercept course for the U.S. aircraft in the vicinity. The Mig-21s had two AA-2 Atolls each while the Mig-19s were cannon armed only. The F-4Cs had their full complement of AIM-7 Sparrows and AIM-9B Sidewinders.

We usually don't use the spotting rules as it can slow the game down, especially when you're sometimes playing with 10-12 jets on the board. Having to check, re-check, and either mark or remember who has spotted whom can add at least an extra hour to the game. Yes, it's more realistic, but usually only half the group or convention gamers are interested in that level of realism, so we usually end up dispensing with it entirely. However, due to only three of us in the game and the F-4Cs having powerful air search radars, it helped to balance things out. We used an actual Vietnam rule of engagement (ROE) where they had to visually identify the enemy before firing.

The Migs flew straight for two reasons; first, it was realistic as they wouldn't stray too much from the flight path until contact, and two, I had to run all four Migs, so it made things easier! The F-4s split into two flights and began locking up targets with their air search radars. The Migs, now alerted, began to diverge their flight paths to take on the separate groups of F-4s.

After a few more impulses the Migs finally spotted the F-4s and began maneuvering.

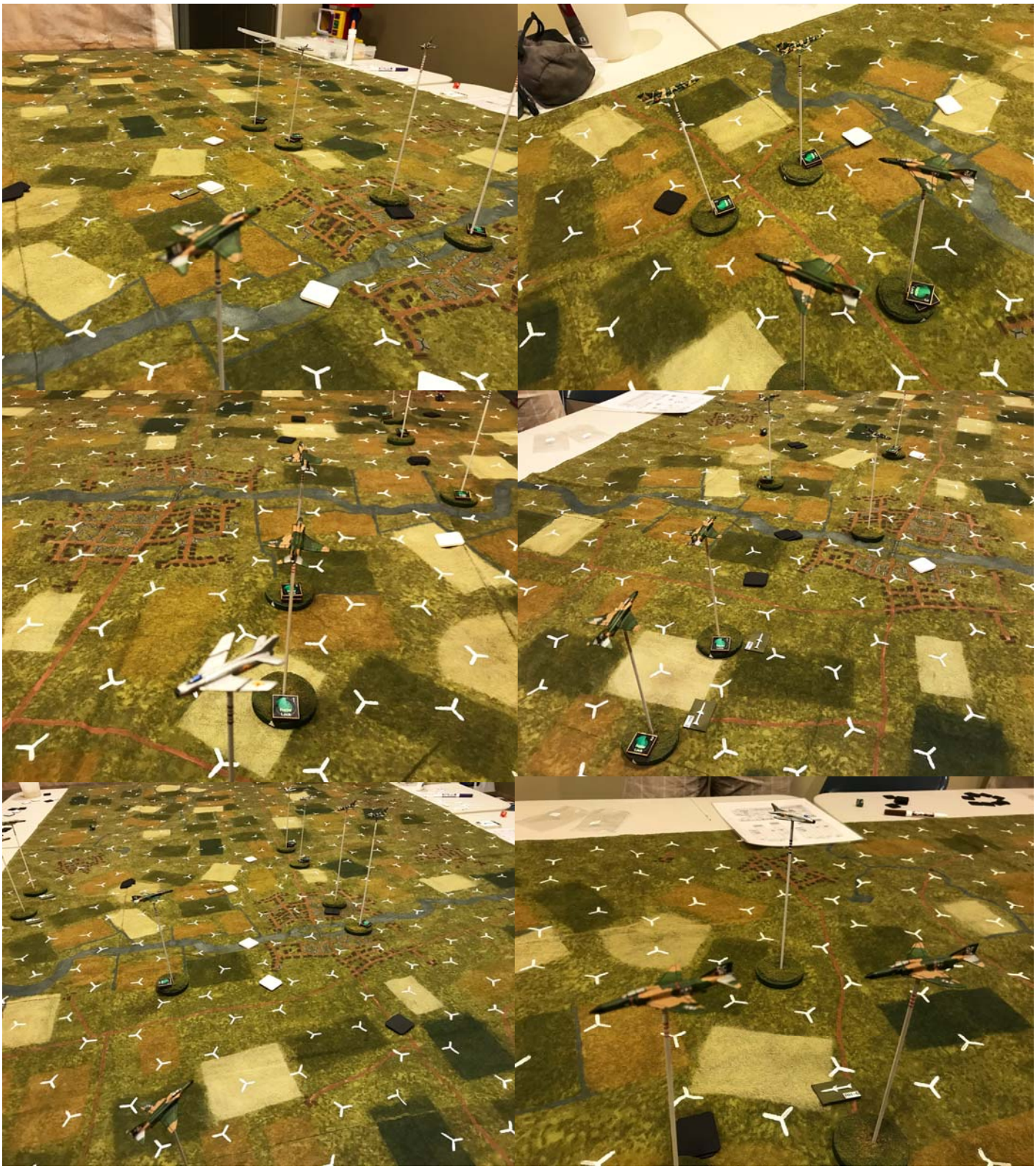


One pair of F-4s finally spotted the Mig-19s and just outside of the Sparrow's minimum firing range fired two missiles. One of them fell off the launcher and failed (we use an optional rule/chart for this), but the second one flew true and the resulting critical hit sent one of the Mig-19s spiraling to the ground in flames. The F-4s turned and volleyed off three more Sparrows, but the remaining Mig-19 barely escaped with its life.

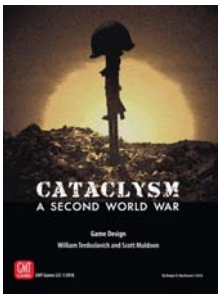
Meanwhile on the other side of the board the Mig-21s and F-4s began to maneuver against each other. The F-4s completed a loop and came right behind one of the Migs, but the AIM-9B failed to launch in what would have been a perfect shot. The Migs turned sharply away, but found themselves caught between two groups of F-4s. The Migs did take an extreme off angle cannon shot, but it missed. The F-4s kept coming and accelerated, moving behind one of the Migs where they were able to get off a good cannon shot, which shredded one of the Mig-21s. Now it was four against two and the Migs were in serious trouble.

The Migs actually did well the next few turns, keeping just outside of the missile envelopes while continuously searching for an opening to get off a shot. The F-4s had more problems with missile launches and the Migs dodged a few more Sparrows. For the Migs it was getting time to bug out and head for home. Too late, however, as a missile found the remaining Mig-19 and that was the end of the game.

For the F-4s it definitely was a good day! Three Migs downed for no loss is a pretty good result. As the Mig player I wish I had given the F-4s more of a challenge, but running four jets and the game charts sometimes forced me to take the simple choices, which you can't do against the Phantoms, which have huge advantages in power and weapons. We did the game finished in about three hours, which is pretty good and in the end everything worked out well. I'm planning on painting up some Mig-15s and F-86s for a Korea action by the end of the year.



Six more views of the action showing the four F-4Cs engaged against the Mig-21s and Mig-19s. The models are all 1/300th from C in C, Scotia, and Enola Games. The terrain mat is marked with five inch hexes to regulate movement while all of the markers are from various files from the Air Pirates Yahoo group.



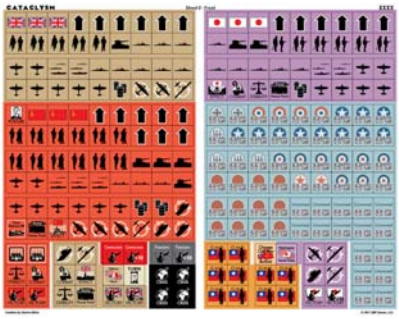
If you're a wargamer then you've probably noticed by now that there are a lot of WW2 strategic games out there. From World in Flames to Unconditional Surrender to Third Reich, there is no shortage of ways to simulate/game WW2. Over the years I've played quite a few of these and while many are fun and I'll gladly play again, nothing so far has matched the unique experience of playing Cataclysm.

Cataclysm: A Second World War is a new entry into the WW2 ETO/PTO type game arena and many gamers are referring to it as a "sandbox" where you can test varied strategies for the powers in the 30s and 40s. That a war will break out is given, but who is involved, to what level, and what the outcomes will be are left to the gamer and will change during each game. There are so many options, strategies, crises, etc., that each game will take on an entirely different character, even sometimes replicating the actual events of WW2.

Cataclysm is up to the usual high standards of components from GMT, with one exception and that are the paper maps. This game deserves mounted maps and while there is an upcoming P500 option for them they should have been in the first printing. The rules, play book, reference cards, cubes, counters, etc., are all very well done. The rules are well laid out and they attempt to explain concepts that most gamers have not experienced before. They are not always successful, but the effort is there with plenty of examples. The play book is exemplary and includes a few turns of a sample game along with all of the scenarios, strategies, designer notes, and an index. Other than the maps, there is very little to complain about here.

Cataclysm begins in 1933 and features two year turns. With units representing fleets, thousands of aircraft, and armies, we are talking about high level strategic warfare. If you're hoping to control the production of individual carriers and panzer divisions, you've purchased the wrong game! While the campaign begins in 1933, there are several scenarios that focus on Europe, the Pacific, events leading up to WW2, and more. Many of these only take a few hours and are suitable for solo play or two players, while the full campaign can hold up to five players.

The game focuses on the political stability, effectiveness, and commitment level of the major powers. Juggling all three of these is the trick in Cataclysm and not paying attention to any of them can lead to defeat. A power can easily move from stable to collapse simply through a series of Home Front checks! Commitment measures how many offensives and units can be purchased with resources and as you move from Civilian to Total War you can purchase more and more war effort, but you will collapse at some point. Effectiveness measures how many dice you roll for various functions. In Cataclysm you take the highest die roll, so a country at Effectiveness 3 gets three D6 and you usually need to get a 5 to pass many of the game's functions.



At the start of each turn the major powers (Germany, England, U.S., Italy, and Japan) count up resources, check commitment, and purchase forces/offensives. These are mixed into a cup with several Crisis chits, flags (political actions), Civil War resolution, etc., then they are drawn out one at a time. Each power can hold one unit or flag in Reserve and can interrupt the chit pull to play it. Once the third Crisis chit is drawn the turn goes into a Sudden Death phase, which could end the turn quickly, with some chits still left in the cup and they move to the following turn. The chit drawing part of the game is nerve wracking to say the least!

Crisis chits can produce assassination attempts, civil wars, stability checks, and more across the globe, adding yet another level of uncertainty to the game. Flags allow countries to place control cubes in countries such as Denmark, Romania, etc., use propaganda at home to increase stability, and much more. You can also create alliances, increase commitment levels and perform special functions. The political side of the game can easily be the difference between victory and defeat.

Combat usually involves both sides rolling dice with modifiers for carrier superiority, air superiority, restricted terrain, etc., and results are in a number of losses. Each loss must be taken care of by either losing a unit, flipping over an upgraded unit,, or through retreat. Most combats will result in a series of retreats and too many losses will result in a triumph or disaster, which could impact a country's stability. Using offensive chits and their associated actions is a skill all its own and will take some practice. Deploying units for an offensive, blocking advances, and handling retreats is certainly more unusual than in most wargames.

When everything is combined, you have all the elements to create a second world war, although not necessarily how it turned out historically! As Japan, do you want to knock out the Russians in 1937? Should the Germans ignore the Russians and go all out in Europe? How much support should be thrown into civil wars around the globe? Balancing out production, stability, political opportunities, offensives, etc., is a challenge, especially with the continual chaos swirling around each theater.

The only thing I found wrong with the game is that you have the nagging feeling that you're playing things wrong. The concepts are new, there are a ton of options each turn, and you will need to reread sections of the rules. Even if you are playing things wrong, you'll have a great time doing it! Cataclysm is certainly unlike any strategic WW2 game that you've played and I look forward to several more games of it in the future.

For an opponent to my 28mm Seleucid army I decided to go with Republican Romans for several reasons. First, they were a historical opponent to the Seleucids as well as other Greek and Successor armies of the time. Second, they could be used to face Carthaginians, Iberians, Celts, and more if I wanted to expand my armies someday. Finally, Victrix had boxed sets for the legions and each box had enough figures for one legion in Hail Caesar terms.

However, the one thing I didn't consider was the very real lack of information on Republican Roman armies! There is very little out there and most of it is conjecture, so if you think you're

going to find all kinds of painting guides for this army you are sadly mistaken! Not only that, but army composition is another thing and finding the right manufacturers for various units is also a challenge.

Fortunately, Victrix offers a great starting point for anyone considering a Republican Roman army in 28mm. They offer three plastic boxed sets; a standard legion, Italian allied legion, and a legion in early chainmail. From these boxed sets you can pretty much create any type of legion that fought Carthage all the way to smashing the Seleucid dynasty near the end of that era. The other great thing about these sets is the price, where depending upon who you order through, you can get a box for around $45-55, which in the current state of the hobby is pretty good.

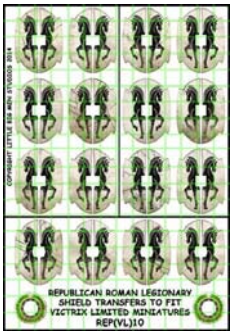
Each box has the capacity to make 60 figures, which using the Hail Caesar basing system gives you two units of Hastati, two of Principes, one of Triari, and two units of Velites, all at 8 figures each. Other game systems that use different basing methods and number of figures might not get the same number of units, but again, this boxed set is great for the basic troop types of the army.

There are a large number of sprues, each with several bodies, arms, scabbards, spear types, and shields. My suggestion is to first sort things out as various parts that you may need for one unit can be found on several different sprues. Going over things more closely you can see that there are a few officer figures with armor over both shins, standards, animal skins for the velites, and different style headdress for the legion's soldiers. About the only thing you need to worry about are the Velites and making sure that you are selecting the right arms, heads, etc.

Assembling the figures is not really that difficult. One figure is cut from the sprue, select the arms/weapons, choose a head, then finally a shield. I paint all of the shields separately and then attach them to the figure in the final step, which makes things much easier when painting. Selecting the weapons at the start was challenging as you need long spears for the Triari, pilum or sword for the legionnaires, then javelins for the Velites. They don't look the same on the sprue, but I found myself continually counting how many I had left and always trying to determine what I could use with each unit.

The big thing I ran into with the first unit of Hastati that I did was that I needed to position the arms so it looked they were either preparing to throw or throwing their pilum, with the shield protecting their side, so that they would all fit on the base. After a few stands I finally got the hang of it and it got easier as I went along.

I also used the Little Big Man Studios (LBMS) transfers on the shields, which are good and bad! First, you paint everything white, then attach the transfers, then I ink/wash the surrounding color to match the faded transfer colors. The result is a beautiful set of shields that look very professional. The bad? Cutting out each shield, taking out the center of the transfer, trying to attach them to the shield, then sealing them afterwards. This definitely takes some time, so I did them in small batches, but you can't argue with the result.



Overall, these boxed sets are well worth the money. You get a very good range of figures in each box with a variety of heads and weapons that gives you some latitude in creating your units. The figures are well sculpted, go together fairly easily, and when painted look fantastic. The different heads give the units that "non-uniform" aspect of the early Roman armies. I also recommend the LBMS transfers and they have a number of sets to give your legions different looks.

If you recall a few issues ago we reviewed Age of Reason 3rd Edition and did a playtest game, which caused considerable discussion and then as is our want, we went on to other things! However, the Seven Years War is one of our favorite periods so we knew it was only a matter of time before we came back to it. With Friday's game approaching and still not having chosen a period yet, everyone thought it might be a good time to revisit this new edition of AOR once again.

We had been using 15mm figs with the 25mm charts for well over 20 years as "back in the day" that was sort of recommended for large games. In the past we had fought several games with 8-12 players and up to 40 units a side, so the 25mm ranges and movement kept things going at a brisk pace. However, with most of our games now 3-5 players and around 20 units a side, the 25mm charts started to create a ton of issues. For one, the cavalry on the flanks would charge on the second turn and more often than not, there was a decisive victor, with that force then turning to threaten the flank of the loser and the game was pretty much over. So, after a fruitful discussion we decided to go back to the 15mm charts for this game.

The scenario was set up as a major French attack on a Prussian held position. The Prussians had two brigades, each of four battalions, in position behind a low stone wall that ran along the ridge of a hill in the center and right of the Prussian deployment. A third Prussian brigade was deployed in around a large village, while two brigades of cavalry guarded the left flank. A fourth infantry brigade was on the move as reinforcements and would enter via a road behind the Prussian positions at a yet undetermined time.

The Austrians had a major challenge ahead of them. Not only did they have to go uphill against an enemy behind a stone wall, but there was a small creek in front of the position that automatically disordered any unit crossing it. However, the French had a lot of combat power, with five infantry brigades and three cavalry brigades, plus artillery support. If the French could overwhelm the Prussian left, then turn towards the Prussian open flank, it would definitely force them out of their very strong position. The Prussian strategy was to delay on the cavalry side of things and try to inflict enough casualties on the infantry that the French main attack on the hill would fail.

The French moved out quickly, with an infantry brigade crossing the creek and then trying to get formed up for a try at the hill. Right away the French had underestimated the disorder condition combined with Prussian artillery fire from the hilltop. The first French brigade took horrendous casualties as it advanced while the other brigades moved up. The other French infantry units converged on the village where they ran into some deadly fire as well. The French cavalry moved into position to start their charges to clear out the Prussian cavalry. By the start of Turn 4 the main attack began.

I don't know what it is about towns/villages in Seven Years War gaming, but they have historically caused the most arguments in our gaming group. Tonight was no exception! The rules really don't clarify medium and large villages plus there are no examples of how to handle multi-sided combats. This is probably why Seven Years War generals avoided villages! We came up with some house rules, but even those really didn't solve things and in fact created some weird situations. Anyway, the French attacked the village several times and despite suffering the loss of a few battalions were able to take the village, although the Prussians moved up two battalions for a counterattack.

The cavalry fight was just getting going, with a series of charges and countercharges, but no serious defeats. While each side could claim some victories, the

results tables weren't kind to either side and units kept falling back, rallying, and re-entering the fray. The French advantage in numbers meant little here as there was insufficient space to deploy all of their forces. By Turn 6 both sides were down to 50% strength on their cavalry forces that were engaged, but the issue on that side of the battle was still in doubt.

At the hill the French changed tactics. The new strategy was to send a brigade across the creek and advance it even in disorder to soak up cannon ball and infantry fire. Meanwhile, the remaining fresh brigades would advance up behind and get themselves formed up for the attack and start moving around the Prussian right to extend their line to the breaking point. In response the Prussians moved their reserves to (cont. on p 37)

(cont. from p 36) meet this new threat. The Prussians were now strung out with no reserves. If the French broke through at any point the game would be over.

The French pressed on, attacking the Prussians at several spots. Prussian artillery and defensive fire tore huge holes in the French formations, but the they kept coming. Several battalions did reach the Prussian lines in a series of charges (note: it is very hard to charge as infantry in the Seven Years War), but were thrown back. On the flank the cavalry were still going at it, but most of the formations were wrecked. There would be a decision there soon, but it might come after the French army broke from casualties. At this point we were at Turn 9 and had been playing for 4 1/2 hours, plus we couldn't continue the game, so a decision needed to be reached.

The French were at their first withdrawal check as they had just hit 25% casualties. They had taken the village, lost a flag but gained one, and had no routed units on the board. They easily passed the first check, but concluded that they simply did not have the strength to take the hill, so the game was called as a Prussian victory.

A hard won victory for the Prussians as the French had done everything right, but couldn't advance anywhere on the board without taking serious casualties. It was a good scenario, but there were two factors that were not accounted for in the design. The first was that the creek was a major obstacle, not a small terrain item! Being disordered in the face of the enemy with the Age of Reason rules is a death sentence. The second is that the new version gives the Prussians a +1 on their infantry fire while they are still fresh (no lost stands), which was a killer for the French. Again, both sides played well and the French had a number of chances to win the game, but in the end the Prussian firepower on the hill was the difference.

In terms of the rules, the 15mm charts worked well with no major cavalry victories on the 2nd turn, which had been normal operating procedure for us for quite a few years! We felt that the artillery is a bit overpowered, more so than what we've read about with battles in the period. Also, the rules for villages need to be greatly expanded at some point or we need to consign them to the flanks or rear where they don't play a part in the fight! We'll definitely try this period again soon and can hopefully get back to a Sport of Kings campaign again in the future.

WASATCH FRONT HISTORICAL GAMING SOCIETY

Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play a wide variety of games in 1/300th, 10mm, 15mm, and 25mm, including Age of Reason, Age of Discovery, Age of Eagles, Fire & Fury, General de Brigade, Warmaster Ancients/Medieval, TSATF, Phantoms, Mustangs, Saga, Battlegroup Panzergrenadier, BKC2, board wargames,and more...

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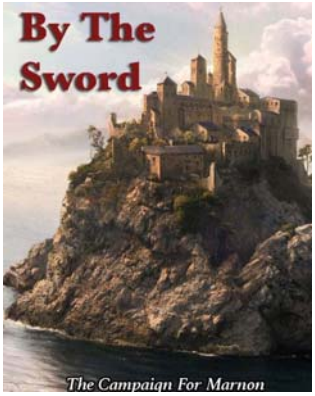
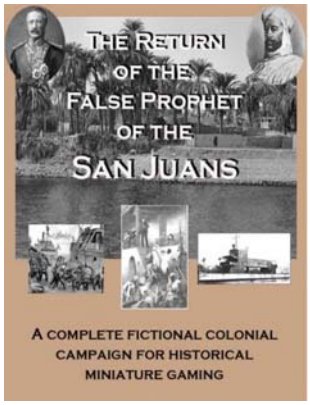


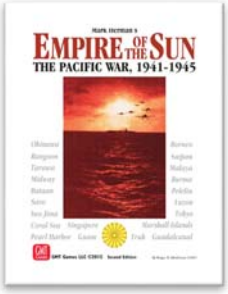


Be sure to check out our various campaigns for rules such as WMA, TSATF, and BFE II on our web site.

You're really beginning to see a new trend in the hobby emerge, and that is the game companies putting out 2nd or revised editions. Now this could be good or bad, depending upon the game. Some revised or 2nd editions are pretty good as with GMT's Ardennes '44 where the original map was expanded to two maps, thicker counters, and the latest version of the rules. Other companies, however, put out new versions in the sole effort to get you to purchase more product. Star Wars X-Wing is a great example of this where you can certainly continue to play the first edition, but if you want to upgrade to the second edition then you need all of the new cards, rules, pieces etc., which is almost as much as just buying a whole new game! Twilight Imperium from FFG didn't even try to offer upgrades for the 4th edition. You just had to choose if you were going to continue playing the 3rd edition or drop $120-150 for the new one.

Usually the purpose of a new edition of a game or miniatures rules is to correct some problems, explain some sections in a bit more detail, add new information, and basically to improve the game overall. That is not what is happening today in most circumstances and many companies are following the old Games Workshop routine of changing rules and supplements so that gamers are either forced to stick with what they have, or dump it and buy new product. Naturally, the game companies want gamers to be so enticed with the new edition that they will move to it, buying the latest rules, army books, miniatures, and accessories. It's a good and effective business model, but gamers don't have to play along, although many do. At some point you have to make a decision about continuing to play the old version, which isn't a problem if you're in a gaming group with the same philosophies, or move onto what everyone is playing, which is the latest version.

GMT Games has lately been offering a number of update kits to its revised games, which is probably the best way to go for gamers. You often get the latest rules, any changed components, etc., for a lesser charge than just purchasing the new version. However, even they created an issue with the upcoming 3rd printing of their popular Empire of the Sun game. In an issue of C3I, which is GMT's games magazine, there was a learning game for the system called South Pacific. I paid $35 for the magazine and was happy with the 4 turn learning game that was included. Not a month later GMT announced that it would be included in the 3rd edition printing of the full game! I should have skipped the second printing and the magazine issue and just went with the 3rd edition.



Game companies aren't going to stop this formula unless there's a serious revolt by gamers and it doesn't look like that's happening any time soon.