# Warning Order

## In This Issue

BKC-Russian Attack

Looking back-50 Issues

Ancients Campaign

Engagements Scenarios

W F H G S

# Warning Order

# Looking Back at 50 Issues

Growing up in the hobby meant reading plenty of hobby related magazines. From Strategy & Tactics to The General to sections in Military Modeling, gaming articles were a constant adrenaline rush. The battle reports, club articles, scenarios, etc., all made for interesting reading. Not only that, here were gamers giving their time to provide some inspiration, general information, tips, and more for all of us in the hobby.

When I decided to launch Warning Order back in 2000, the idea was to just have a newsletter that our own club here in SLC, Utah could look back upon. I don't think that in any way, shape, or form did I expect to still be putting out issues 18 years later! In fact, there really wasn't even a plan for a second issue! The response from the club was favorable, so I decided to press on further.

To say that the first few issues were to say the least crude, would be an understatement. Again, at the time it was designed for a small audience of 8-10

gamers with similar interests who had played in some of the games or who were at least interested in the rules. If I had known then that there would be a global audience and gamers would be going back to the first issues, I probably would have tried harder!

As the issues progressed, some new things were tried, failed, tried in other formats, and so on. The magazine had always been a trial and error type endeavor, so there was no set format. Take whatever images from the club games, add in a map or two, throw in some reviews, and publish the final product. When the club web site started to get more traffic I had forgotten that the club magazine links were on there. All of a sudden, I was getting emails from gamers around the world telling me what they liked, didn't

like, and what they would like to see. Instead of choosing the smart option and folding the magazine right there and then, I was determined to press on and improve things!

With each progressive issue more content was added, there were featured interviews with game designers, the battle reports were expanded, and there were discussions about rules. The regular columns and editorials started to come along, followed by scenarios and the occasional campaign. All of a sudden, Warning Order became much more than just the club newsletter. Unfortunately, it also had the effect of making each issue an undertaking and a serious commitment in time. So much so that at some point the decision was made to just go to three issues a year.

Around the 25th issue I reached a crossroads. Shut the thing down, declare victory, and ride off into the sunset was definitely on the table as an option. The other was to make the magazine the best I could for as long as possible. The thing that (cont. on p3)

## Inside this issue:

## Special points of interest:

- *Review of Hail Caesar and two battle reports using those rules.*
- *Battles For Empire 2 battle reports and scenarios.*
- *A complete fictional Ancients campaign.*
- *Two new Engagements scenarios.*
- *BKC2 and WMA battle reports.*

# Looking Back at 50 Issues (cont.)

(cont. from p2) seemed to influence me was magazines were falling by the way side, many club web sites weren't even being maintained, and it looked like the hobby needed help. I decided to stay around for another 25 issues and then I would reassess when I hit Issue #50.

At that point the magazine became a bit more formatted, with a full color cover, editorial, two regular features, the back page final word, board game reviews, and more. This did make setting up each issue a bit easier, but they also started getting longer, which was a problem. Now some of that is my fault as I have a lot to say (just ask any of my fellow club members!) and I have a genuine urge to show other gamers what we're doing and to help them along. When I started thinking about having a long term impact on the hobby I went back through my collection of magazines to see what I could do to really help gamers. The answer to that question was to provide the occasional campaign game system and the Engagements scenarios.

While most comments I get are favorable, it is usually the editorials that come in for the most scrutiny along with accusations that my hobby glass is always half full. I made the decision long ago in that if I had an opinion on the hobby, even if not popular, that I would publish it. I reasoned that if the editorials always agreed with everyone, what was the point of an editorial? I could just jump on any of the forums and participate as a fan boy of a particular game company or rules system. To this day I still refuse to take the easy way out on the editorials and I prefer to just write it as I see it, even if others want to point out how wrong I am! Many have said that they read the editorials first!

Each issue is certainly a labor of love.

I do the layout, most of the images, writing, maps, etc., all by myself. If we do a few board game nights in a row, that means no battle reports and the issues go longer until publication. Getting enough images for the web site and magazine are a challenge, as is processing them and laying everything out each issue. Yes, there are some days where I just about post that it's over and I'm never doing this again! Thankfully the crisis usually passes quickly and it's on to the next article.

The campaigns that have been in the last 10 or so issues were and continue to be a difficult decision. Making maps, counters, charts, etc., then writing rules for the campaign that are coherent and at least playable is a challenge. This last issue was held up several weeks due to the campaign rules that simply would not come together. I finally reached upon a solution to several aspects of the game system and was able to finish the rules in the space I had allotted. I have a ton of ideas about campaigns and consider them to be the highest form of miniatures gaming, but sometimes my enthusiasm for them clashes with reality.

I should also mention that in the 18 years and 50 issues I've been doing this, I have only received a handful of products for review. This is one of the main reasons that my reviews, particularly for board games, are usually positive. The reason is that I usually research the game before buying, it's my own money, and I'm not going to invest time into a game if I'm not interested in it! If you're ever wondering why game or rules such and such aren't in the magazine it's probably because either a) I wasn't interested, b) I couldn't afford to throw money at something and see if it was any good, or c) I was already spending time with some other game or rules set! If I was getting more freebies there would probably be a lot more unfriendly reviews!

The one thing that has kept me going all though these years is the kind words and positive feedback from gamers all over the world. From just a simple thank you to questions about terrain and/or figures, the email comments certainly show that gamers are reading it and there is interest out there, even in this age where everything is digital and quickly forgotten. Some have even said they print off each issue and store them in 3-ring binders! However, as the years have progressed, there's fewer and fewer comments.

So, after raising four children, a job change, two weddings for daughters, four cars later, several computer upgrades, multiple editions of rules, painting thousands of figures, and so on, here we are at Issue #50. That I got this far was certainly improbable and it's hard looking back now on the first issue that started this insanity. All of the changes, work, ideas that were scrapped, etc., seem like eons ago with perhaps this final issue now in front of me.

I think the biggest question is what role does this magazine play in the hobby as a whole now? To that I am unsure. The emails I've received are slowing down, with the overwhelming feeling that Warning Order is awash in a sea of gaming products. No one has the time to download and read it as they are so busy chasing after the next shiny thing to come out. There are so many rules, figs, periods, board games, etc., coming out that chances are nothing in the issue pertains to what most gamers are into right now.

That may be the case and if so, it may be time to go out on top, happy that I at least got to #50. Can it go on? Sure, but where and in what direction is the great unknown at this point. It was a long, strange ride, but I feel it was worth it!
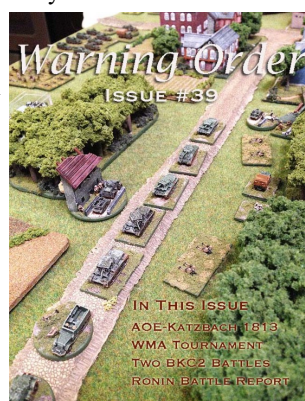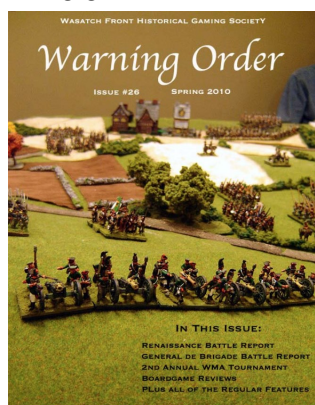
# BKC2: Russian Armored Attack

<div style="text-align:right">

## Battle Report

</div>



With the disaster that was BKC3 behind us or at least until BKC4 comes out later this year, we decided to continue to play BKC2 for the time being. Personally, there was not much wrong with BKC2 except the army lists needed some tweaking, but I (and most of my group) thought it was a great set of rules. The issue with this set of rules (as well as many others) is that you need to do some scenario prep, which we often forego due to various reasons, but more on that later.

Late War Eastern Front is always a good choice as there is plenty of heavy armor to go around. We initially thought there might be 7-8 players this time, but when game time rolled around there were only 5, so the commands for everyone got a bit larger. This did seem to slow us down and prevent the full game from being played, but overall it still worked out.

The scenario takes place west of Konigsberg in early 1945. The Russians are driving on the city and the front lines are torn in several places. A Russian recon force has seized a vital river crossing and more mechanized forces are on the way to exploit it. During the night, however, a German counterattack re-took the crossroads that cut the road to the bridge, so a large Russian attack was planned for first light to break through and get to the bridge.

The Germans had a company of PZIVHs in the town guarding the crossroads along with a company of infantry and one 75mm AT gun. A company of Stugs, two companies of panzergrenadiers, a company of Panthers, a recon company, and a mixed company of Marders and JGPZ IVs were in route towards the battle area, but where they would arrive and when was randomized. This gave the battle a more chaotic feel, which seemed to be historical for the attack on Konigsberg. There were also two batteries of 105mm off board in support.

The Russians were scattered across the board at the start of the game. A Russian recon force backed by a company of T-34s was firmly established at the bridge. A Sherman battalion was split in half after the night attack and was in the area of the town/crossroads. A powerful force of T-34/85s and mech infantry was moving up the road to the town and finally, there was a unit of IS-2s that had gotten lost during the night and needed to get back into command range. There were two batteries of 122mm artillery off board in support as well as some BM-13s that could help if the corps support die roll was made (5 or 6 on 1D6).

The Russian plan was to converge on the town and quickly seize the cross-roads, then link up with the Sherman battalion followed by pushing to and over the Russian held bridge. Units would be detailed to cover the flanks against any German attacks, using the IS-2s for long range support. The German plan was to hold for as long as possible, then counter-attack when the heavy armor showed up, blocking the road to the bridge.

The first few turns were spent getting everyone's commands straightened out and calling in artillery barrages. The Germans received the unit of Stugs, which immediately went into the attack on the Russian forces holding the bridge. The leading elements of the Russian attack had command problems, but by the third turn it looked like they would overwhelm the Germans. However, they



were underestimating the German defense of the town, which would prove to be quite considerable!

The Russians pressed on, running into fire from the PZIVHs while they tried to spread out. The first of the German anti-tank units arrived along

(cont. from p4) with the German recon unit, which immediately launched a counterattack against the Russian Shermans in the area. By this time there were confused melees and long range duels across the board. Every time it looked like the Germans were about to break, something happened to keep them in the game.

By turn 5 the Russians were still holding the bridge and had cleared out some of the resistance in the town and crossroads. However, more panzergrenadiers arrived to bolster the defenses and the last two PZIVHs were taking everything the Russians could throw at them. In fact, they became the stars of the night, holding steady against an onslaught of IS-2s, T-34/85s and artillery barrages! By now, there was no safe part of the game board as any time you moved there were units that could shoot at you from both sides, making any kind of maneuvering extremely dangerous.

The Russians barraged the town again and pressed ahead, finally curving around the town and starting to break out towards the bridge. Just for a few moments there was a chance to end the game as a Russian victory. The Germans, however, continued the attack as more reinforcements became available. They kept the pressure up on the Russians, which in turn forced them to deal with each new threat that arose. By turn 7 the game was a 50/50 proposition at best for the Russians, who continued to filter past the town, now down to one lone PZIVH and some infantry that were somehow still holding on.

Once the German Panther company arrived things changed rapidly, even though their first few turns were underwhelming. However, when the game was finally called they were in strong position on a hill overlooking the main road. Getting past this would probably result in severe casualties and this is where the game was called due to time.

We called the game a draw, but the Germans had achieved what they wanted, which was to hold the crossroads and await reinforcements for a counterattack to block the road. The Russians could never get their numbers advantage to work in the early game and once the Germans reached parity it would have been a difficult, but not impossible task to win.

Finally, we need to do a better job of scenario prep. Airstrikes, scheduled artillery, etc., need to be included. Also, we need to make data cards for each battle to save time looking things up over an over, but it still ended up as a very fun night.

# Engagements 25: Recon in Force

**Situation**: Red's offensive has caught Blue by surprise, but after some initial success Red is unsure about where Blue's main line of defense is and is unsure of where to strike next. Red has bulked up one of it's reconnaissance forces and sent it on a mission to penetrate Blue's lines and determine where Blue is planning on making a stand.

**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 river has two bridges marked as 1 and 2 on the map that can support vehicles, but infantry can cross at any point along the river. The woods are light, but would be a severe impediment to mechanized forces.

**Scale**: Can be used with any rules and any scale. Forces are listed as units for those who use platoon or 1:5 scale rules.

**Red Forces**: Red's force begins the game off board, but will enter at the road entrances marked with an R. They consist of various recon elements that have been reinforced with additional combat commands in case Red need to fight their way through Blue's defense.

**Recon force**

(2) light armored car recon units

(2) heavy armored car recon units

(1) light tank unit

(3) recon infantry units w/transport

(1) anti-tank/ATGM unit

**Support Force**

(3) armor units

(3) mech infantry units

(1) combat engineer unit w/transport

(1) med artillery unit (off board)

**Red Set Up**: Red's forces enter initially at the roads marked with a red R. They must be in column for the first turn, but are free to move in any direction and/of formation beginning Turn 2.

**Red Orders**: Red is to advance quickly and penetrate Blue's front lines. There are three primary objectives:

1. Determine Blue's main line of resistance.

2. Exit forces at the road board edges marked with a red arrow.

3. Hold one of the two river crossings.

**Blue Forces**: Blue's forces have been falling back upon reinforcements and are determined to make a stand, even if temporary to relieve pressure in other sectors. Blue must reorganize its scattered forces and determine where the main line of resistance will be. **Roll 2D6 eight times to determine Blue's starting forces.**

| Die Roll | Unit |
|---|---|
| 2 | Armor |
| 3 | AT/ATGM |
| 4 | Recon |
| 5 | Mech infantry |
| 6 | Infantry |
| 7 | Infantry |
| 8 | Mortars |
| 9 | Armor |
| 10 | Mech Infantry |
| 11 | Engineers |
| 12 | Militia |

**Artillery:** 1 battery 105mm (off board)

**Blue Orders**: Organize a defense quickly, then try to contain Red's probing attacks. If possible, counterattack to hold the river crossings and prevent Red's forces from exiting the board.

**Set Up**: Blue rolls 1 D8 for each unit in its starting forces and places it within 6 inches of the corresponding numbered location on the map in any formation.

**Game Length**: 12 turns

**Special Rules**: Both bridges are not wired for demolition, but if Blue has engineers and they spend 2 turns at a bridge the bridge can be destroyed on a D6 roll of 1-5.

**Main Line of Resistance**: After the starting locations for all of Blue's forces have been rolled for, any line (A, B, or C) that has 4 or more units automatically becomes the main line of resistance. Blue MUST keep at least 4 units within 6 inches of that line during the entire game. If there are two lines that have three units, Blue can choose either, but must move a unit (s) there to reach at least four units on that line.

**Victory Conditions**: Red achieves a tactical victory by achieving two of the three objectives listed earlier. If Red achieves all three objectives it is a major victory.

Road exit: At least three units must exit at the roads marked by the red arrows.

River crossing: Hold the crossing.

Determine main line of resistance: Identify (visually or fired upon) by four different units all along the same map line.

# Engagements 26:  Rough Terrain Defense

**Situation**:  Red has launched a major attack on Blue, but part of the plan is for one of Red's forces to get through a pass in rough terrain, then break out on the other side to flank Blue's main body.  Unfortunately, the rough terrain is ideal for defense with no alternative except a frontal assault.

**Period**:  Horse & Musket.

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

**Terrain Notes**:  The hills are steep and while the forests are light, they do provide cover (see special rules).  The villages are a mix of stone and wood buildings.  The red line from the top to the bottom of the map shows where Red's forces can deploy.  The Blue line is the furthest point where forces and/or defenses can be deployed.

**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.

**On Board at Start:**

12 units of infantry

2 units of light infantry

3 units of cavalry

3 batteries of artillery (1 is heavy)

**Set Up**:  Red's forces can be set up in any formation on or to the left of the Red line marked on the map.

**Red Orders**:  Exit as many units as possible off the road on the right side of the game board.

**Blue Forces**:  Blue's forces have been split into two groups for the defense.  There is a group that is holding the pass and steep terrain while a reserve force was waiting near the road entrance to deploy once Red's plans were known.

**Main Defense:**

4 units of infantry

1 unit of light infantry

1 unit of cavalry

2 artillery batteries

Both batteries may start in improved positions as well as two of the infantry units.  These positions should be considered as better than normal cover, but they are not heavy fortifications.

**Reserve:**

4 units of infantry

1 unit of cavalry

1 artillery battery

**Blue Orders**:  Hold the pass as long as possible and prevent Red from exiting units that might flank Blue's main body on another battlefield.

**Set Up**:  Blue's main defense group begins anywhere to the right of the blue line on the map in any formation.  Reserves are set up as below.

**Blue Reserves**:  Two of Blue's reserve units begin the game in column at the fork in the road near the pass exit.  Blue had found out Red's plan and has been quickly transferring troops to the threatened sector.  The remaining reserve units enter one at a time on the road beginning on turn 2.

**Game Length**:  12 turns

**Special Rules**:  The hilly terrain surrounding the pass is very steep and there should be severe movement penalties for crossing each elevation.  There should be flat areas such as near the hilltop town where movement would be much faster as well as the road down the hills.

If your rules use fatigue this would be strongly suggested to add to the scenario.  Also, to balance out the scenario Blue's starting forces on the board could be hidden due to low visibility because of the forests and elevation changes.

**Victory Conditions**:  Red needs to exit at least 6 units off of the road by the end of the game.  Any result less than 6 units is a Blue victory.

**Variants**:  If attacking proves too difficult for Red, allow a die roll each turn to find a path through the hills to speed movement and/or a few turns of artillery bombardment to soften up the defenses.

Weather could also play a factor and can be used as a balancing mechanism.  Light snow would benefit the defender while rain would aid the attacker in getting closer to the defenses without being seen.  A night attack could also be tried, although the rules for those in most game systems are far more trouble than its worth.

WW2 or Modern periods could be used for this scenario, although the lethal weapon ranges might necessitate a different ratio of forces.  Airstrikes could be used by the attacker to force the position while minefields could aid the defender.

Finally, the scenario could be modified for the Ancients periods by using the army lists in your rules to adjust the forces available to each side.  The use of skirmishers, archers, and light/skirmish cavalry could seriously erode the effectiveness of the defense, so Blue may require additional forces to balance out the scenario.

**Situation**: The frontier is aflame as more and more of the Sudan falls to the Mahdi's forces. An Egyptian outpost along the frontier has not been heard from in several weeks and the Egyptian authorities fear the worst, so an Anglo-Egyptian force is assembled to investigate. The force commander, fearing an ambush along the road, has taken a path across the desert and has emerged in the vicinity of the Egyptian fort, which is under siege by the Mahdi's troops. Quickly reorganizing his command, the Anglo-Egyptian force advances towards the fort and to engage the enemy.

**Map Notes:**

- The hills are fairly low, but are an obstacle to LOS.

- The brush areas are strewn with rocks, making it rough ground that conceals all troops not within six inches of the edge of the area.

- The red area is where Anglo-Egyptian forces enter the board.

- The entrenchments are at least 18" inches from the fort.

- Scenario is designed for an 8 x 4 or 5 table. If you have a smaller table you may have to adjust the Mahdist reinforcements so that they receive additional troops as the long march across the table is what will give them time to assemble an attacking force.

- The fort is loop holed, has a trench, few openings, etc., meaning that it would be very hard to attack and the defenders get a +3 in melee. *Basically, the fort is an integral part of the scenario and should be immune to attack until the British threat is dealt with.*

**Anglo-Egyptian Order of Battle**

1st Brigade

4 units British infantry-1st rate

Battery (2 sections) 9lb. Smoothbores-1st rate

2nd Brigade

1-unit Naval Brigade-1st rate

1-unit Royal Marines-1st rate

2 units Highlanders-1st Rate

Cavalry Brigade

1 squadron 9th Hussars-1st rate



1 squadron Egyptian cavalry-2nd rate

1 squadron Egyptian camelry-2nd rate

Fort

2 units Egyptian infantry-2nd rate

Various civilians and civilian transport

Force notes:

- The Egyptians at the fort are low on ammo and can only fire if charged.

- Feel free to replace the British troops with Indian, Egyptians, Sudanese or whatever units your gaming group has.

- Each brigade has one commander.

- There are two ammunition mules available.

- Anglo-Egyptian forces can enter the board in any formation.

**Mahdist Forces**

At Start

2 units rifle armed-3rd rate

6 units sword and spear armed

Make on roll on the random reinforcement table-see below for where troops deploy.

Reinforcements

Roll each turn on the random reinforcements table for the Dervish army. Then roll 1D6 for each unit that arrives and they enter within 6 inches of either side of the marked location on the map.

**Special Rules**

- Once an Egyptian or British unit get within rifle range of the fort, the Egyptian garrison and the civilians may begin to evacuate the fort.

- The civilians can be represented by wagons, baggage camels, extra figs, etc. They should move no further than 9 inches per turn no matter what the roll and if contacted by a Mahdist unit are considered destroyed.

**Victory Conditions**

The Anglo-Egyptian side must get at least 50% of the civilians off the board where they entered on Turn 1 without having more than 4 Egyptian and/or British units destroyed. The Mahdists are trying to prevent the Anglo-Egyptian side from achieving their evacuation. The game may also end earlier if one side or the other feels that they are unable to achieve their objectives.

**Options**

- To balance the game, adjust the Mahdist reinforcement rolls either up or down, depending upon the experience of the players and the size of the table. Another option is that the Mahdist side cannot roll for reinforcements after a certain turn or only on every other turn. You could also add more units to the starting force already on the board.

- The character traits for commanders is highly recommended to be used here.

One of the hardest aspects of Victorian Colonial wargaming is trying to balance out the forces so that both sides have a competitive game, particularly with the Sudan.  British firepower can be devastating with even average die rolls and most game boards do not have the depth/width to allow for an overwhelming number of natives to surround or hit the British from various points at the same time.  If using Egyptian forces the task is a bit easier as they are far more unpredictable, but balancing out the game is still a challenge.

When I designed the Relief of a Fort scenario on the previous page, it first went through numerous iterations before the final version which is published here.  How many units should the Egyptians start with, the size of the besieging force, terrain, etc., went through several changes and when I saw the size of the actual gaming table it went through a few more!

For the Anglo-Egyptian side things are actually fairly simple; march across the board to evacuate the fort while not being destroyed in the process.  For the Mahdist side, things were a bit more complex than usual.  In most of our



games it's a mad rush to get enough forces in position to attack the Anglo-Egyptians all at once to hopefully crack the defenses somewhere.  With this scenario, however, the random reinforcements and entry points would give the Mahdist side a number of decisions about when and where to attack.

The Anglo-Egyptian plan was fairly simple, but reflected the personalities of the two commanders.  This is always an interesting part of our games and there's no way you can prepare for it when designing a scenario!  One of the British brigades would advance in square, covering the left flank and try to reach the fort.  The other brigade was formed up into a flying column that would try to get to the fort, but cover the right flank, which looked like the most trouble might come from.  The cavalry brigade would strike out and try to reach the fort first if possible, but their main job was to threaten any concentration of native forces and give the other units time to form a defense.

The Mahdist commanders decided to keep the units besieging the fort in place in case of a breakout, but start slipping a few units through the town and towards the main hill, then see what develops.  The rest of the plan would depend upon how many units arrived each turn and where.  There would be opportunities, but usually the key to playing the natives is to be patient, which is probably the worst trait for wargamers!

We also used the optional traits for commanders rule and while most commanders either didn't have a trait or the effects were negligible, one did produce a funny, but critical result.  The commander of the Anglo-Egyptian cavalry brigade was rolled up as a bigot, which was a huge problem in that two of the three units were Egyptian.  The –1 modifier definitely came into

play several times, resulting in their inability to use their full movement.

The scenario began with the Anglo-Egyptian force advancing onto the board slowly and then on the second turn the various brigades moved off to their assignments.  The Mahdists did get two units on the first turn and then a great roll to get four units on the second turn.  All six moved under cover to await their chance to charge.  By turn three the cavalry had moved far past the infantry (probably too far) and the second British brigade was strung out, so the time for the Mahdists to strike was now or never.

Two rifle armed units popped up and began firing at the two British infantry companies providing a flank guard, which started a several turn firefight.  The



British hussars and Egyptian cavalry were caught off guards by the appearance of the various units, so they turned and charged the nearest ones!  Colonial cavalry in the Sudan never really did that great, which was true to form here.  The Egyptian cavalry rolled poorly and took numerous hits in the first melee, then recoiled into another enemy unit and were wiped out.  The hussars held out for as long as possible, fighting up to three Mahdist units in a succession of melees that saw two of them destroyed, but in the end the hussars were destroyed as well.

By this time the square was halfway up the board and the remaining two unengaged British infantry companies were doing their best to protect the flank of the square, but were under pressure as well.  One infantry company stood like a rock, beating off successive charges through firepower alone.  Meanwhile, (cont. p10)

(cont. from p9) the other two British infantry companies were keeping the Mahdists in the scrub on the Anglo-Egyptian right busy. They had taken some hits and had run out of ammo several times (really bad rapid fire rolls), but were dealing some serious damage to the rifle armed native units. The Mahdist reinforcements, which so far had been sending a unit or two per turn suddenly dried up, right at the worst time! For three successive turns there were no additional units when they could have been used to keep up the pressure.

A new Mahdist force sprung up from behind the square and attempted to close, but bad die rolls left them stranded in the open for a few turns and they were met by long range firepower that destroyed a camel unit and forced the other two foot units to shelter behind the wells. The

Egyptian camel unit reached the vicinity of the fort and the civilians plus their Egyptian infantry escorts started to evacuate the premises. The camel unit dismounted and came under attack. Backed by firepower from the advancing square, two native foot units were beaten back and the path to the square for the evacuees was kept open.

By this time the Anglo-Egyptian was in pretty good shape. Several Mahdist units were dying or in the process thereof, plus the route to the square and then off board looked secure. There were still some Mahdist forces around, but the remaining Anglo-Egyptian units would be able to clear a path back to the edge of the board. At this point the game was determined to be an Anglo-Egyptian victory, despite the loss of most of the cavalry brigade.

This was a really fun scenario that was closer than it looked. The terrain provided good cover for sneak attacks and the aggressiveness of some of the British units played into the trap that the Mahdist side tried to set. I mention tried because the random reinforcements roll provide some opportunities, but then was the nail in the coffin later in the game when none appeared for quite some time.

This would have been a more interesting game if only Egyptian forces had been used as the British infantry units, if given a chance, can really devastate native units with their firepower, even though the rapid fire rule hurt them in this game more than it helped! This game did certainly inspire us to play BFE far more than we do. Next year I'm going to add some Indian cavalry and Suakin type redoubts for more variety.

*Several more images from the battle, showing the square advancing steadily towards the fort while the British "flying columns" try to screen the square from an ever increasing number of Mahdist units.  All figures and terrain are 15mm, with 24 figs per unit using 25mm base sizes, which gives the native troops that "horde" look.*

A few months ago while I was perusing Boardgamegeek and seeing some of the gaming rooms that were posted, with hundreds of games stacked in various shelves, it got me to thinking about the future of the hobby for myself. Add to that the endless stream of games coming into the hobby and the over saturated marketplaces, along with our group unable to make a decision about what to play each Friday night, and you have quite the perplexing problem. You come to the realization that this can't go on forever.

When I started my consolidation project I had armies for 12 different periods and at least two dozen sets of rules along with terrain for all of them. My philosophy was to always have armies and terrain for whatever game I decided to get into so that I was never dependent upon others. This right here encompasses at least three decades of painting and accumulating forces, sometimes for multiple scales in the same period! While I've painted several armies in the past few years and then sold them, most notably French & Indian War, Warmachine, Sharpe Practice, etc., I still have quite a lot with plans to do more! This doesn't even include the 250+ wargames and stacks of history books that I own!

The thinking all along as I've progressed through the years in the hobby is to accumulate forces for campaigns, open up new periods for gaming, add terrain for every type of encounter, and then when entering into retirement I could play a wide variety of games and never get bored. On top of that there is the little collector in every gamer that prods you into impulse purchases or seeking the final few elusive models/games/books in a series that drives you onward. However, this is all a pipe dream.

Yes, the reality of the situation is something that most gamers, especially in my age group, really don't want to address. The fact is that all good things must come to an end, some dreams are unattainable, and that time is not limitless. This is where I find myself now in the hobby.
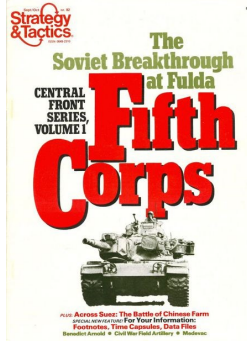
As I look at my shelves bursting with games, I had to ask myself if I was really ever going to play some of them again. I tell myself that when I retire or all of the kids are moved out that there will be time to revisit all of these games in their glory. This is a lie.

A great example of this is my ongoing quest to collect all of the GDW Series 120 games. To this date I have most of them and am only short a few to complete the series. I've played all of them in the last five years with mixed results. Am I ever going to play them again in my lifetime? Probably not. There are too many newer and much better games coming out, particularly in series that I am very interested in. So why keep them? Is it for nostalgia? An investment to turn a profit later (there's not much money in this!)? What is the point? The honest answer is that there is no reason to pursue this anymore and I should give them up to gamers who want to collect or play them.

Likewise with games like SPI's Central Front series, where it is a time consuming process to set up, play the games, try to get the other games in the series, follow the upgrade plans, etc. Why? The games are OK, but WW3 never happened and there are better games to scratch the WW3 itch that are coming out soon (Compass' reworked Third World War series for one). While allocating time to these games I'm missing out on playing better games such as GMT's Cataclysm, MMP's Angola, and many, many others. Yes, it has turned into a time vs. entertainment value issue and having more and more games is not the answer.

I just sold off all of my WW2 early war 28mm forces. I called off my grail quest for the perfect set of WW2 skirmish rules and the time spent on those figures was re-allocated to other things that I'll be playing more often. I'm seriously looking at getting rid of other armies, periods, and terrain as well, then focusing on just a handful of things to do well. Is this what I really want to do? Not really. Part of the enjoyment of the hobby was always to research new periods, start painting

interesting figures, seeing a game come together, etc., but today there is too much. Trying to get others onto the same page as you is like holding back the tide; it's not going to happen. For the last 40 years I've thought that groups that only played one or two periods was the dumbest thing on the planet. I'm beginning to think my judgement may have been premature.

My board game collection is getting purged as we speak. Most of the focus will be on keeping games in series that I want to play until the end times as being able to retain the rules in your head should be easier than trying to read and re-read rules for hundreds of different games. As for new sets of rules coming out, well, I'm not very interested. That's not saying I won't buy anything, but someone else is going to have to purchase, learn, then set up a game for me to try and if successful, I might go in with them. However, I'm not painting any new armies for them. My goal is to expand the forces and terrain for the games I really want to play, not to keep adding more and more periods to my collections.

This may seem like I'm down on the hobby, but that would be a misinterpretation. I love the hobby and still spend plenty of hours each week on it. In fact I just finished a two month project to paint the 40mm general figures that came with the new Hannibal game! However, there are limits and you have to know when you are beginning to reach them. I just saw the new Adeptus Titanicus boxed set and fell in love with it as I had huge Epic armies back in the day. However, the exorbitant cost, the need to purchase enough for my gaming group, and the reality that this would take time away from other games I'm into made me say no. It was a tough choice, but the right one, at least for me.

Yes, dreams in the hobby die hard. I'm still more than ten years out from retirement, but I can see that I have too much and some goals just aren't worth it. What's the point in holding onto games and miniatures if you're never going to play them again? Will I be sorry when I let them go? You bet. However, it needs to be done and I better get started now.
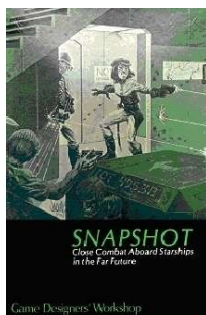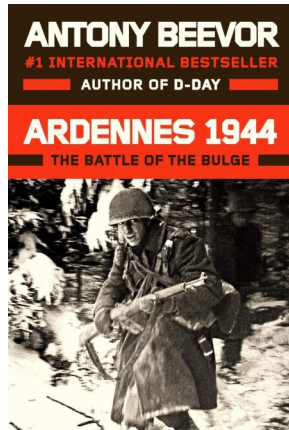
While I've read several of Antony Beevor's books, this one was a little more difficult to get through. First off, you would think that everything that could have been written about The Battle of the Bulge by now would have been, but obviously with this book I was wrong. Instead of a blow by blow, combat action driven history lesson, this book deals with more operational matters.

Not that this is a bad thing as most books I've read on the subject spend more than half the book describing the unstoppable German offensive followed by a few short chapters on the Allied counterattack, then a chapter on who was to blame for everything. Not so here. What you get is sort of refreshing in a way, focusing on the fact that the operation really never had a chance and after the first few days the handwriting was on the wall.

This kind of approach probably isn't going to win over many readers who see the battle as a last gasp, desperate drive by German armored formations, with each section of the battle overanalyzed. Instead, there are chapters on the German preparation, the actual attack, then a day by day overview of what happened, always with the premise that this was going to fail. That the Allies would contain it, destroy most of the German formations, etc., is taken as fact and it's merely who is going to come out of this with an enhanced reputation. This is a completely different tact than any other book I've read on the subject, which is both good and bad.

For some reason, the author takes every opportunity possible to bash Montgomery (highly deserved) along with Bradley and Patton. Naturally, this is going to ruffle some feathers of readers with an interest in the subject, but again, we're focusing on the operational objectives and strategic concerns of Eisenhower, sot he book is much different than those that have come before it.

One of the recurring themes in the book is the subject of the SS formations as well as prisoners on both sides. While many of us have suspected that prisoners were shot more than reported, this book takes it to a new lever. That the SS shot American prisoners at Malmedy is not in dispute, but their other deprivations during the campaign gets a closer look in this book, which were extensive. The Allies also shot a fair number of prisoners and the reader comes to accept that this was a particularly brutal campaign, more than you had been led to believe.

In the end, is this book worth reading if you already know about the campaign? I would think yes it is, but more so for the bits of information that you did not know and for a new interpretation of the operation as a whole. While I did not agree with all of the information presented here, it was certainly a refreshing look at a popular campaign.

Next up is Richmond Burning, which is certainly a different ACW book that what many are used to. While there have been quite a few books about the end of the Civil War, not many have recently been written about the fall of Richmond. I have read at least a dozen books on the end of the war, but the occupation of Richmond is usually given a few pages, then it's back to the military campaign where Grant's forces track down Lee's scattered army to Appomattox.

The book starts right out with the defeat at Five Forks and the Union attack at Petersburg, which ruptures the Confederate lines. This sets in motion an evacuation of the government, the burning of supplies, then looting, the business district catching on fire, then the first Union troops arrive. Each of these incidents is told through the eyes of the various participants, whether it is the mayor of the city, a long standing resident, or one of the final soldiers in the rear guard. These sections are usually a paragraph each and while they add interesting information,
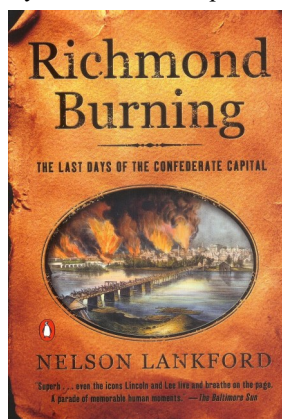
the jumping around from person to person can be distracting at times.

Once the occupation of the capital begins, a new segment of the book opens up that deals with Lincoln's visits, the political games, what each side thinks of the other, and trying to get the city up and running again. This section, while mildly interesting, really seemed long. I'm sure it helps to complete the narrative, but at times the book seems like it should have been the length of an Osprey Man At Arms series installment, rather than a full fledge book.

Overall, it's interesting, but only if you are really, really into the end of the Civil War.

Back in the day, there were books for ancient gamers that were considered to be bibles for the period. This was the WRG series "Armies Of", which chronicled various periods with tons of information that included battles, uniforms, summaries of the nations, and much, much more. To own one showed that you were a serious student of the subject and took your ancients gaming seriously! Also, at the time there wasn't much else out there, so everyone followed this series!

These books are now back in print and since I have a Successor as well as Republican Roman army I jumped at the chance to get one. They appear to be direct copies of the older versions, which works for me. Now this is not a modern published book with lavish art, maps, colored info boxes in the margins, etc. It is a bare bones, black and white, limited illustrations, work of someone dedicated to the period. If you crave information about the period, this is the book to have.

The armies, battles, and hundreds of different cavalry, skirmishers, legionnaires, etc., are all catalogued and described here, making this an invaluable reference. You will learn all about the smaller nations, alliances, obscure units, Italian hill tribes, and much more. This book is worth every penny and will be referred to over and over as I continue to add to my armies for the period.

# TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



## A FICTIONAL ANCIENTS CAMPAIGN

While there are many ancients campaigns that have already been published as well as board games that could serve as a backdrop for a campaign, most ancients gamers don't always have the right forces and/or armies for them. For example, an ancients campaign on the Roman civil wars is fascinating and playable, but doesn't do any good if your gaming group has Egyptians, Hittites, and Assyrians!

To The Ends of the Earth is a fictional ancients campaign that can be tailored to fit any era or whatever forces that you and your gaming group have available. There is a naval aspect to the campaign, but it can be ignored if you are featuring two traditional land locked armies. The forces are fairly abstract, so the army lists for any ancients rules system can be used with this campaign. Large forces, allies, etc., can all be integrated into the armies for both sides.

The map is broken into areas, which again, is for ease of movement and keeping the campaign as basic as possible. Many

campaigns can be detailed in terms of hexes, armies, supplies, etc., but this campaign is designed to form a backdrop for what would hopefully be a series of interesting battles for gamers. Area movement allows for clear identification of forces, creates natural choke points where battles will be fought, and prevents the campaign from becoming a "search for the hidden enemy" type exercise which will sometimes doom miniatures campaigns.

Several areas have a resource points value, which generates revenue for both sides to purchase more forces and ships if needed. This will give each side a chance



to recover from defeats on the battlefield and change emphasis from land to naval campaigns where needed or vice versa. Events can also influence operations, gathering resource points, forcing offensives, and more, which will add a bit of randomness to the campaign. There are also several optional rules to make the campaign as complex as you wish while still keeping the basic movement, combat, and production as simple as possible. Each gaming group will just merely need to choose which optional rules that they would like to add to the campaign or add your own.

The idea is to be able to play an ancients campaign in a reasonable amount of time and see that it generates battles, which is the cornerstone of the miniatures gaming hobby! A miniatures campaign is something that all gamers should attempt at least once while they are in the hobby as it can be a great experience. Unequal battles, decisions about force composition, where to move, large scale operations, etc., are all some of the things that most gamers never get a chance to do on their regular gaming nights.
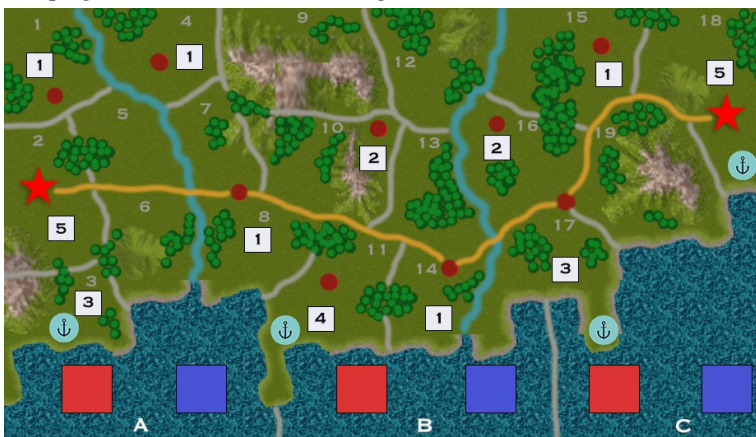
# Counters

**Warships** (W) and **Transport** (T) squadron markers. Warships are used to control sea areas and fight naval battles while Transports are used to move armies through sea areas.
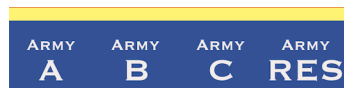
**Control** markers, which are used to signify which side controls either sea or land areas.

**Army** markers. **A**, **B**, and **C** are used for the main armies in the field and will conduct most operations. The **Guard** marker is stacked with one of the armies to show that Guard units are present with that army. **RES** is the Reserve army assigned to each side's capital.
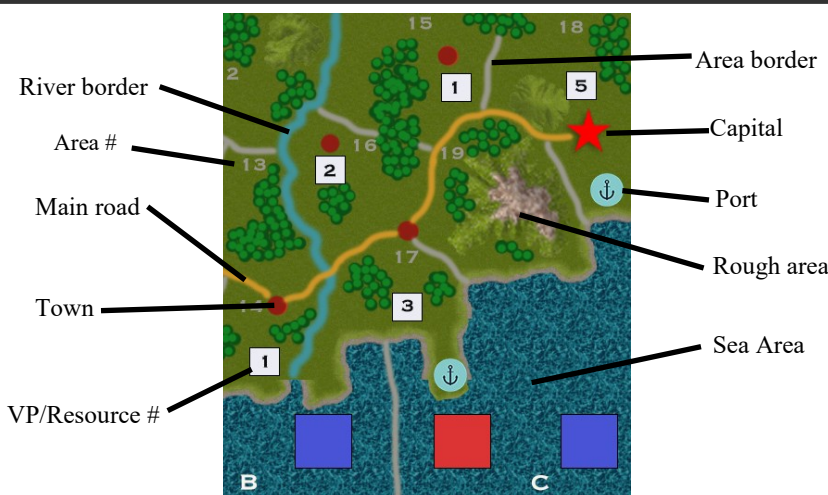
**Resource Points**, **Turn**, and **Victory Points** markers. These are used on the turn/record tracks to show the current turn, who is leading in victory points, and the amount of resource points available to each side.

Chit draw markers; one for each army used to regulate movement.

# Map



- Area border
- River border
- Area #
- Main road
- Town
- VP/Resource #
- Capital
- Port
- Rough area
- Sea Area

# Prepare For Play

The first thing is that you need to decide on the two armies that you will be using as well as the miniatures rules. Army lists will need to be prepared and points levels chosen depending upon your rules. Since this is a generic campaign, the size of the forces will be left to you to determine as only starting force ratios are given. Once that has been settled, decide upon which optional rules will be used for the campaign.

Next, print off copies of the map for both sides and maybe one larger map that will be used for both sides to see where each side's forces are, who controls which areas, etc. Mount and cut out the various markers that will be used to track resource/victory points, control of areas, army positions on the map, etc.

It is a good idea that both sides keep some kind of journal or log that shows where their forces are each turn, their

strength, battle losses, etc. This is great not only for a record of the campaign, but can be quite helpful in case there are any questions about what happened in a certain turn or if you can't get back to the campaign for a long period of time.

Allow each side a planning session, then set out the starting forces on the map from the Set Up section at the end of the rules and then you are ready for Turn 1.

# Sequence of Play

Each turn is strictly governed by the Sequence of Play. Both sides go through the list of steps that need to be performed each turn. When all of the steps have been completed, one turn has been finished and the next turn begins. Some turns may be longer or shorter depending upon how many activation chits each side purchases at the end of the previous turn. For both the Combat and Production phases both sides may perform these operations at the same time, but both sides should agree upon a format if there are concerns before the campaign begins. There are two ways of achieving victory, which will be discussed later in the rules.

1. **Select Activation Chits**: Place the corresponding activation chits of each army that will move this turn as well as the fleet activation counter into a cup or opaque container. Both sides place their warships and transports at sea for the coming turn.

2. **Activation Phase**: Draw a chit out of the cup and activate the corresponding army or ships within that side's fleet, which will allow them to move and/or perform other functions. Continue drawing chits until there are none remaining.

3. **Combat**: In any sea zone or land area where opposing forces are located, combat ensues.

4. **Production**: Add up the Resource Points (RPs) of each area controlled by a side and mark it on the Records Track. Each side is then able to spend RPs on ships, adding units to armies, and activation chits for the following turn.

5. **Victory Phase**: Add up each sides Victory Points (VPs) and subtract the smaller total from the larger one. Adjust the current VP marker on the Records Track by that amount.

# Activation Phase

During the Production Phase of each turn, both sides will need to determine if they will move their forces next turn. They do this by purchasing activation chits with their available Resource Points. The activation chits that are purchased are set aside until the start of the next turn, where they are placed in the draw cup for the Activation Phase of that turn.

Coordinating the movements of each side's land and fleet units will be difficult due to the chit pull mechanic. Your forces may get pinned down, blocked on the road and/or river crossings, or denied access via the sea. Using the chit pull to your advantage will be critical to your success in the campaign.

Land Movement

Each time an army is activated, it can move the following in a turn:

- Move two land areas
- Move into one rough land area
- Cross a river border area
- Move three land areas along the main road

## Activation Chits

Each army and fleet has an activation chit associated with it. To be able to activate that army or the various squadrons of a fleet, the activation chits for those units must have been purchased in the previous Production Phase. *Note: All army and fleet chits are available on the first turn of the campaign.* These chits are then placed into a cup or other opaque container where they are drawn out one at a time. Once all chits have been drawn out of the cup and those armies/fleets have finished their activations, the Activation Phase is completed and the turn moves to the Combat Phase.

## Activation Phase

When the chit for a corresponding army or fleet is drawn, those units are now eligible to move. Movement allowances are as follows:

- Move two land areas
- Move into one rough land area
- Cross a river border area
- Move three land areas along the main road
- Conduct naval movement with fleet squadrons

## Land Movement

When an army is activated, it can then



move a number of land areas as indicated above. Armies may move from one land area to an adjacent land area. If the land area that the army moves to is rough terrain (areas 9, 10, 19) then the movement for that army is finished for the turn. Armies cannot move into an area with a river border and cross the same turn except along the road. Armies must begin in an area with a river border, then during their move they may move to an adjacent area across the river.

*Army C moves into area 16 with its first move and wishes to cross the river border. However, armies must stop moving upon reaching a river boarder unless they are moving along the main road. On the following turn when Army C is activated it could then move into either area 12 or area 13.*

Armies may move three areas per turn if moving along a road. Since the road borders multiple areas, the side moving the army must determine which area the army will end its movement in. Roads are also the only way to move across a river border on the same turn.

There are no stacking limits in this campaign game. Players may stack as many armies in the same area as they would like. There is an optional rule for combining forces into one activation chit, which would allow for the armies to coordinate their actions better.

# Activation Phase (cont.)
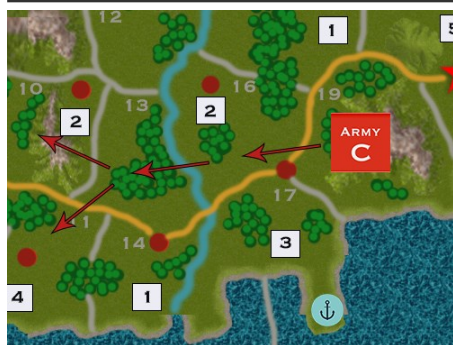


*In the above example, Army C has been activated and decides to move along the road, meaning that if it is not blocked, it could move up to three areas. It first moves into area 16 (although it could have moved into 17 as well), then to 13 (or 17 as both border the road) and then finally stop in either area 10 or 11. Army C can cross the river border in one turn since it is on the main road.*

### Blocking, Pinning, & Withdrawal

When an army moves into an area where there is an enemy army, that army must stop its movement for the turn and combat will occur in that area (blocking). Armies may also pin enemy armies by moving a second army through that area. The pinning force must be at least the same size or more (points/units) as the enemy army in that area. The second friendly army may then move through that area providing it has any remaining movement.

If an army that has not moved in the present turn has its activation chit drawn, it can attempt to withdraw from that area to an adjacent area that is not occupied by an enemy army. Roll 1D6 and on a 1, 2, or 3 that army may withdraw as long as the enemy army is of equal or lesser strength. If the enemy army is larger, then a 1 or 2 will allow the friendly army to withdraw.

### Armies & Sea Movement

Armies may use sea movement when their activation chit is drawn. The army must be in an area with a port and there must be transports available in that sea zone for the move. Even if a side's fleet activation chit has been drawn, an army can still perform a naval move.

When the army's chit is drawn, the army is assumed to have been loaded up in the appropriate number of transports. Warships can then be assigned as escorts and the force can then move as outlined in Naval Movement.

If the naval movement is not intercepted or a naval battle is won that allows the activated fleet to continue moving, the army is then landed on any coastal area and is finished moving for the turn. If there is an opposing army in that area then a battle will be fought there.

Armies that are forced to retreat can as an option be embarked upon transports providing there are a sufficient number of them in the sea zone that borders the land area where the battle was just fought. If there are insufficient transports for the entire force, then a number of points and/or units will need to be eliminated to make up the difference. The transports may not move from that sea zone, however, until that side's fleet activation marker is drawn.

### Optional Rule 1: Army Coordination

Using this optional rule will allow for larger forces and several armies to be moved at the same time. If two or more armies begin in the same area and a side has paid for their activation chits, put the chit of the larger army in the draw cup and set the other (s) aside. When that chit is drawn, those armies may now move at the same time.

### Transferring Forces

If two armies begin the turn in the same area, they may transfer forces from one army to the other and vice-versa. This is the only time during the turn where this is allowed. The transfer must take place before the first activation chit is pulled for that turn.

### Naval Transports

How many ships each transport counter represents will need to be decided upon before the campaign begins and will vary greatly depending upon what set of rules are being used. The number of transports needed to move an army can have a great effect on strategy, resource points spent, escorts, etc., so the group playing the campaign needs to think this through.

For example, if you're using the Warmaster Ancients rules you may decide that every 300 points of forces needs a transport. If one is sunk, then that army loses 300 points. Other campaign rules may require a list of what units are on each transport.

# Naval Operations

When the activation chits are added to the cup at the beginning of each turn, both sides are allowed to place any of their warships and transports out to sea. If ships remain in port, then they are unable to move when the fleet activation chit is drawn or when an army that needs to be transported by sea has its activation chit drawn. Both sides roll 1D6 and the highest roll has the option of placing their ships at sea first or last. Ships in port are unable to be attacked unless using the Optional Rule for attacking ports.

When the activation chit is drawn for the fleet of either side, the warships and transports can move anywhere on the map. When they move to a sea zone where there are enemy ships present, movement temporarily stops and an Interception roll is made by the side that has ships already in that sea zone. Roll 1D6 and on a 4, 5, or 6 the enemy fleet is intercepted and battle will be fought. Add +1 if the intercepting fleet is larger and +1 if that side controls a port adjacent to that sea zone. Interception is optional.

### Ports

To place your ships in a sea zone at the start of the turn, your side must control a port that is adjacent to that sea zone. At the end of the turn all ships must return to a port controlled by their side, no matter the distance. If there are no ports controlled by one side, then the ships are assumed to be lost, destroyed, abandoned, etc. Each side must maintain control of at least one land area that has a port or they will be unable to use ships.

# Naval Operations (cont.)

If a fleet is not intercepted, it can continue moving to another sea zone where it is possible that there could be another attempt at interception.

## Naval Combat

When an activated naval force moves into a sea zone where there are opposing naval forces, naval combat immediately takes place. Both sides match up their forces and roll 1D6 for each warship or transport. At the end of each round of combat both sides must determine if they will break off or continue with a second round of combat. At this point the activated naval force can continue moving.

## The Naval Combat Round

The side with the fewest ships or if the opposing forces are evenly numbered, the force that was already present in that sea zone begins by putting forth a warship or transport into the battle line (the battle line is just a space on a table or the map where the ships can be matched up), then the other side matches it with a warship or transport of its own. This process continues until one side or the other is out of ships to put into the battle line. At this point the side that has excess ships can double or triple up on an opposing ship. Transports are only put into the battle line if the opposing force still has ships left to allocate. Otherwise they may be screened and do not have to participate in combat.

Naval combat is simultaneous, so each warship or transport rolls 1D6 and eliminates the opposing ship on the following rolls:

| | |
|---|---|
| Warship vs Warship | 5 or 6 |
| Warship vs Transport | 4, 5, or 6 |
| Transport vs Warship | 6, then 4, 5, or 6 on a second D6 |

At the end of one round of combat, the side with the fewest ships must decide if it wants to fight a second round or withdraw. If a second or more rounds are fought, use the same process as outlined above. If a force decides to withdraw, it may either go into a port adjacent to that sea zone or it must withdraw to a sea zone that is closer to its capital. If neither of these options is available, then that naval force must either fight to the last ship or is destroyed.

Naval forces that were activated to move and had to fight a battle can continue to move if they are victorious in battle and there are no enemy naval forces left in that sea zone. The activated naval force could then move into another sea zone which might trigger another naval combat.

## Naval Combat Example
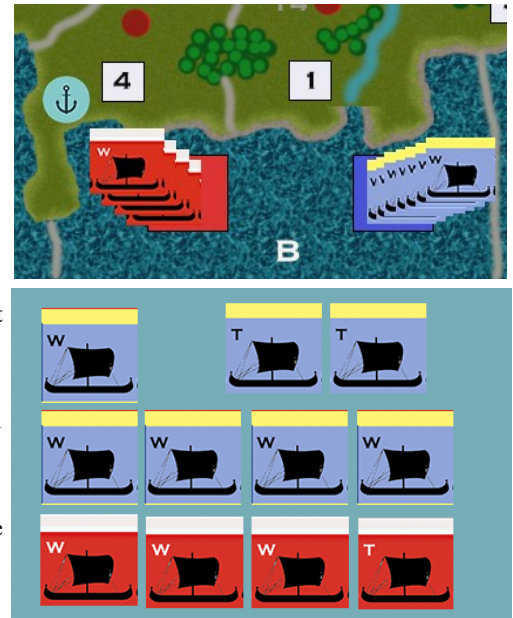


*Blue is attempting to land an army somewhere in Sea Zone A and moves five warships and two transports into Sea Zone B, which is already occupied by Red's ships, so a round of combat must be fought. Red sets out the three warships and one transport into the battle line since Red has fewer ships. Blue matches Red by placing one warship against each warship and transport, then doubling up on one of Red's warships with his extra warship. Blue's transports are screened at least in the first round as Red does not have enough ships to attack all of Blue's ships.*

*In the ensuing battle, Blue destroys two of Red's warships and loses two of his. Before the second round begins, Red has three choices; fight a second round at very low odds of success, retreat to Sea Zone A, or retreat into the port in Area 11. Red chooses to retreat into the port. Blue could either attack the port, which is pretty risky, or continue with the original mission to Sea Zone A. Blue continues moving to the next sea zone and if Red has ships there another battle is fought.*

# Land Combat

If there are opposing forces in any land area after all activations have been completed, land combat will occur in that area. Land Combat follows a strict sequence that must be followed for each area where opposing enemy forces are located.

1. Withdrawal
2. Terrain set up
3. Conduct the battle
4. Retreat & pursuit
5. Determine permanent losses

### Withdrawal

The army or armies of one side may wish to withdraw before combat begins. There must be an adjacent area free of enemy forces where the friendly army can retreat to. If there is no such space then withdrawal is not allowed and proceed to the next step in the combat phase. Roll 1D6 and if the result is a 5 or 6 the friendly force is allowed to withdraw. Add +1 if the force attempting to withdraw is larger than the force wishing to do battle.

### Terrain Set Up

There are several ways to set up the terrain and this should be decided by all players before the campaign begins. Select one of the options below, use a combination for certain areas, or create your own.

1. Have an impartial third party set up the battlefield terrain. This can usually produce unique battlefields that are fair to each side.

2. Use the predominant terrain in that area to form the basis for the battlefield, For example, if you were fighting in Area 11, you could have a section of coastline, the main road, a port, a town, and large sections of woods on the tabletop. You could also if you were fighting in that area, just have a section of coastline and the port as the main features on the tabletop, then roll for additional terrain items.

3. Roll for the terrain. This can also be done in a number of ways. The first and easiest is to have each side pick a number between 1 and 12, add them and divide by 2, which will give the number of terrain pieces that will be rolled for. Each side rolls for and places a terrain piece

with the defender going first until the number of terrain pieces is reached. The second method is to just roll a number of dice (2, 3, or 4) to determine the number of pieces that will be rolled for and placed on the tabletop, again with the defender going first.

| Terrain Table | |
|---|---|
| **Die Roll (2D6)** | **Terrain** |
| 2 | 18" Ridge |
| 3 | Walled farm |
| 4 | 12" river |
| 5 | Small hill |
| 6 | 8" of woods |
| 7 | Farm fields |
| 8 | 8" of woods |
| 9 | Large hill |
| 10 | Choose any |
| 11 | Marshy/rough |
| 12 | Pond/12" river |

Terrain Notes

- Small/large hill size needs to be determined by what terrain is available to the gaming group.

- Marshy or rough ground (player's choice) should cover a 12" x 12" section.

- Rivers can have fords or bridges (player's choice).

- Roads should be placed leading to farms, bridges, or predominant features that were placed on the board such as towns, ports, or capital cities.

Once the terrain has been set up, the defender (the army that was in the area first) chooses their side of the table to deploy on. Conduct the battle with your usual set of miniatures rules.

### Retreat & Pursuit

Once the battle has ended, the losing side must retreat. If the losing side was the attacker, then that force must retreat to the area from which it moved from to attack the enemy force. If that area is occupied by an enemy force (due to the movement order, the

**Optional Rule 5: Meeting Engagement**

Usually the battles will be fought as a series of set piece engagements, with the defender on one side and the attacker on the other. Using this optional rule will allow for a more interesting and fluid type of battle; the meeting engagement. In any turn where two opposing armies both moved into an area, a meeting engagement ensues.

Both armies are broken into three parts: an advance guard, the main body, and a rear guard. The advance and rear guards cannot be more than 50% of the army, but must contain at least 10% of the armies units. All three parts enter from one point on the tabletop, representing their line of march to the battlefield.

**Optional Rule 6: Generals**

Much like the optional rule for admirals, players could add generals to the two sides. There could be one overall general and then one general per army counter, including the Guard and Reserve forces. Depending upon the rules that you are using, they could have something as simple as a +1 in combat or certain characteristics as outlined in the rules.

**Ending Campaign Battles**

Nothing is as contentious in a campaign as how can battles end. Whether by destroying 50% of an enemy force or allowing to retreat after seeing the set up, how battles end need to be clearly defined before the campaign begins. There should be some kind of penalty for having to set up a game, then one side withdrawing before shots are even fired! Too many of those nights and the campaign will end quickly with bad feelings all around. Decide upon a method and then be consistent throughout the campaign.

# Combat (cont.)

losing force must retreat to a friendly area closest to its capital. If a losing force is unable to do either, it is considered to be destroyed. This means that a losing force cannot "retreat forward" or further away from its capital.

If the winning force has more cavalry than the losing force (determined at the end of the battle), then the winning force can make a roll to inflict additional losses on the losing force. There is a chance that the winning force could suffer additional losses as well. This roll is completely optional and is determined by the winning force. Roll 2d6 and consult the Pursuit Losses Table. The number to the left is the amount lost by the winning force and the amount on the right is the amount lost by the losing force.

| 2D6 | Result |
|-----|--------|
| 2 | 25/10 |
| 3 | 20/10 |
| 4 | 10/10 |
| 5 | 0/0 |
| 6 | 0/10 |
| 7 | 0/10 |
| 8 | 0/15 |
| 9 | 0/20 |
| 10 | 0/25 |
| 11 | 0/30 |
| 12 | 10/40 |

### Alternative Retreat Rules

For a possibly longer campaign, enable a retreating force to retreat through an enemy controlled area to the nearest friendly area, but there is a severe penalty for this. The losing force would need to make an additional roll for pursuit losses.

### Advanced Pursuit Rules

Modifiers could be built into the pursuit roll to account for a larger force or the ratio of cavalry left to both sides. For example, a losing side that has more cavalry units could hold back a pursuer more easily, so maybe a –1 or –2 modifier would be warranted. If the pursuing force had a significant cavalry advantage, then award them a +1 or +2 modifier.

# Production

### Advanced Production

Production here only covers the units and ships for a basic campaign. Players should feel free to add additional units or items to the list. For example, you could spend a number of resource points to turns a 1 Resource area into a 2 Resource area (farming, industry, etc.). Fortifying areas, building outposts, castles, etc., could all be added to make the campaign as detailed as desired. You could also add a maintenance cost to keep armies in the field and ships seaworthy, which would limit the size of both forces and make the campaign more balanced.

During the Production Phase of each turn, both sides add up the total number of Resource points of the areas that they currently control. To be able to claim an area's Resource points, that area must be able to trace a path through friendly controlled areas back to that side's capital or from a port to a friendly controlled port. If a path cannot be traced those Resource points cannot be used that turn.

Each side is then able to use their Resource points to purchase new units and ships. New units are placed in the capital and new ships are placed in any friendly controlled port area. Resource points can be held over from turn to turn.

### Resource Point Cost

| Unit | Cost |
|------|------|
| Militia Infantry | 1 |
| Infantry | 2 |
| Cavalry | 3 |
| Elephants/Artillery | 4 |
| Transport | 4 |
| Warship | 5 |
| Guard units | +1 |

*Those using points based armies will need to determine what each basic unit is worth and then modify the cost for archers, light cavalry, etc.*

# Victory Phase

### Longer Campaigns

Both sides can agree to fight longer campaigns where one side or the other needs to capture all Resource areas on the map. You could also add a peace and/or truce process where when one side gets so far ahead the war ends and then both sides re-arm for the next war. You can also add or subtract VPs based upon how many battles have been won or lost or the extend of the victories.

At the end of each turn there is a Victory Phase where it is determined if there is a winner in the campaign. There are two ways to win the campaign:

A) If one side or the other captures the opposing side's capital, they have won the campaign.

B) Add up the Resource points of friendly controlled areas, then subtract the smaller side's total from the larger side's total. Mark that number on the records track with the counter that is provided. If at any time one side or the other is 10 points ahead, that side has won the campaign.

*Ex. Blue has 18 Resource points in friendly controlled areas while Red only has 11 at the end of the turn. Blue is +7 on victory points, but while Blue is clearly ahead, Blue would need to take areas with at least three more Resource points to reach +10 and win the campaign.*

# Starting Forces

There are two set ups to start the campaign and players are free to choose either of them or create their own!

A) All armies begin in each side's respective capital city area. Place one control marker in the capital city area, then place three control markers in adjacent areas. The first control marker must be adjacent to the capital city area, but the second and third can be placed adjacent to the capital city area or the first control marker. Each side also begins with two fleets and two transports at any port area it controls.

B) Same set up as A above, but two armies may start in any controlled area to begin the campaign. The Guard force can be attached to any army.

Ex. Using set up B, Blue places a control marker in area 18, which is the capital. A second control marker is placed in area 19, which is adjacent to the capital city area. Blue needs a port, so places the next control marker in area 17, which is adjacent to 19. Needing a good starting place forward for his armies Blue then places a control marker in area 16, which is adjacent to 17. Blue then places Army A in 17, B in 16, C in 18 with the Reserve, and assigns the Guard to Army A. The ships are placed at the port in 17.

Players can experiment or modify the starting set ups to fit the number of players or the forces they have available. If the gaming group only has a few figures, but is painting more, then maybe only start with one or two armies per side. The number of control markers at start can also be increased or decreased.

# More Optional Rules Suggestions

Throughout the rules presented here there have been a few optional rules suggested, but the overall campaign system is very basic. However, with a little thought and effort, more rules could be added to increase the value of the campaign to the players. Here are a few that are possibly worth exploring.

1. **Siege Rules**-In areas with towns, ports, etc., armies could withdraw into fortresses that would have to be sieged. Each side could also have a number of garrisons assigned to certain areas.

2. **Hidden Movement**-Sometimes tricky, but keeping armies hidden can add greatly to a campaign. You can refer back to some campaign rules in back issues or from the WFHGS site on setting up hidden movement, scouting, etc. This will add some additional work, but it is definitely worth it.

3. **Naval Combat**-There are many ancient naval rules for use with miniatures that can be used to fight naval battles for the campaign. Just make each warship or transport worth 3 or 4 miniature ships for each battle.

4. **Neutral Forces**-Populate all uncontrolled areas with armies and forces that are neutral. Allow for diplomacy so that some could become allies or if invaded they join the opposing side.

5. **Invader!**-One side controls all areas while the other side is an invader from the sea. Reinforcements for the invader would need to be worked out, but it would create some interesting battles.

# Designer's Notes

As I've stated many times in the past, miniatures campaigns are the highest form of wargaming, at least in my book. Those campaigns I have participated in have always been fun (and a lot of work sometimes), but even if they are never finished they are always looked back upon fondly. Each gaming group should try at least one at some point while they're in our hobby.

This is a simple campaign suitable for

Ancients, although it could be modified for other periods. There are only a few counters, there is an easy to learn movement system, and the production system is designed to keep the units flowing to help create battles. There's nothing here really too complex and once you get a few turns going it's pretty simple.

You can certainly add more as in the optional rules section above. The campaign is pretty basic, so almost any type

of system from other rules can be grafted on. It is always important that both sides agree on any optional rules or changes as the campaign can be long, so you don't want any last minute surprises!

This is only one of a half dozen or so campaigns that have appeared on either the WFHGS site or here in Warning Order. If you have ideas for a campaign or something you like to see, please send us an email.
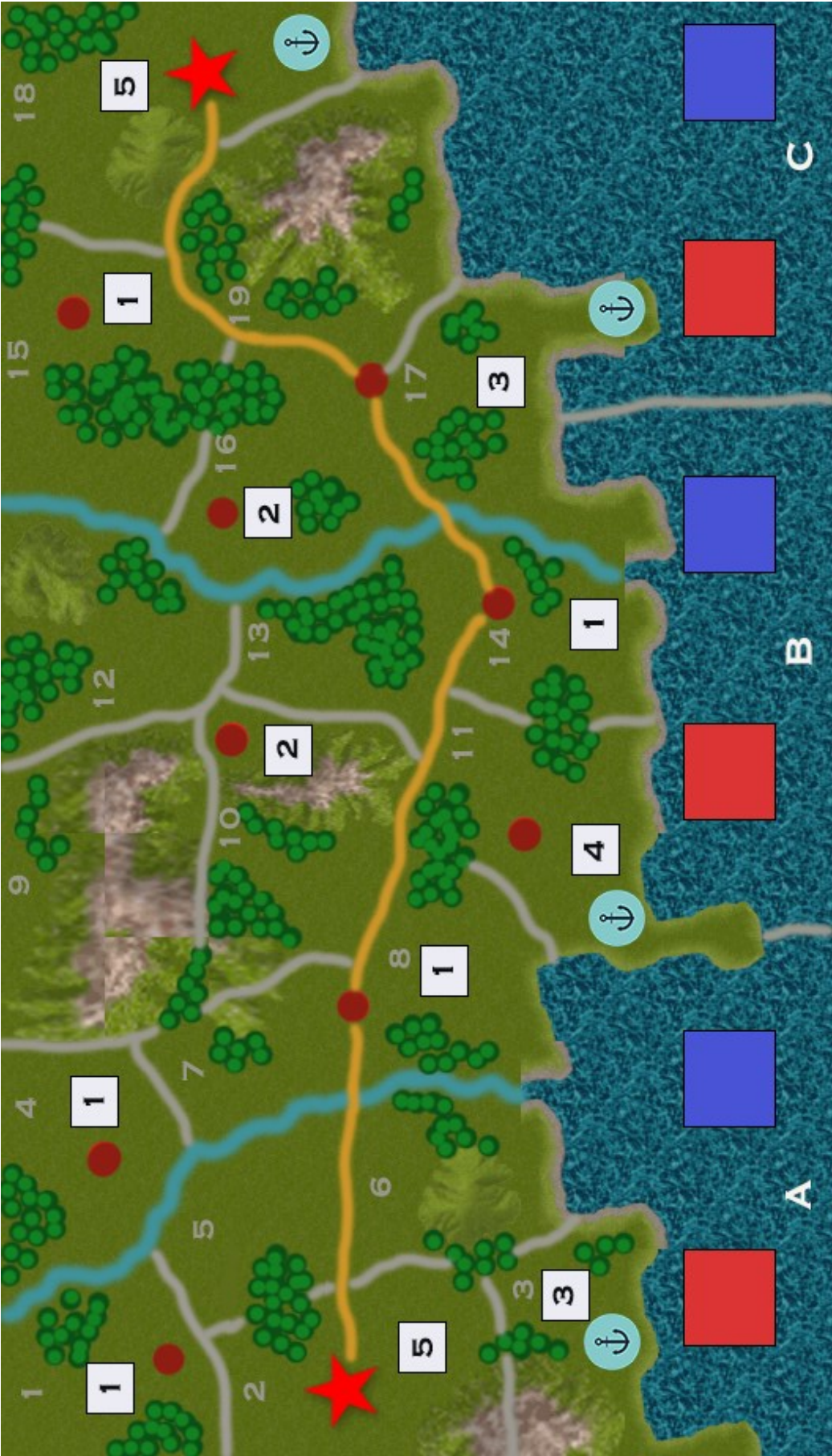
**Records Track**

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

# To The Ends of the Earth:  Counters
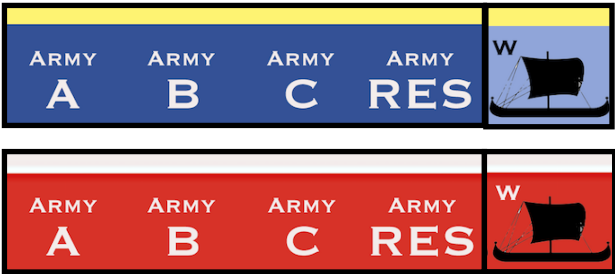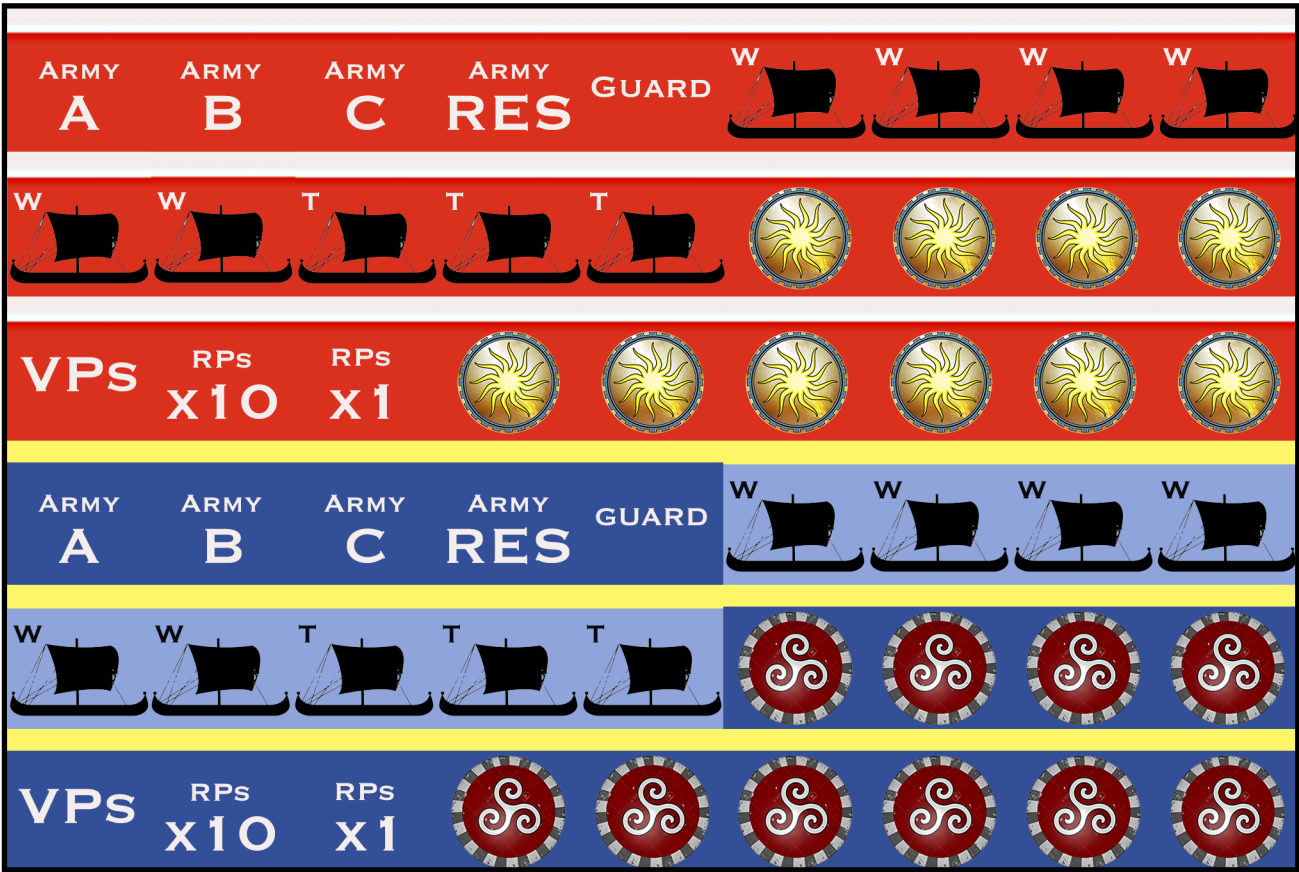


## Movement Chits

These additional counters are placed into a cup or other kind of container each turn.  Each time one is drawn, the force designated or fleet of that color may move.

# Memoirs of a Miniatures and Board Wargamer Pt. 37

## What's With All of the Bulge Games?

One of the stranger diseases that gamers get has to do with The Battle of the Bulge. Like a moth to the flame, most gamers cannot resist playing in a Bulge game, whether it's a year long monster game or a simple skirmish with the 101st Airborne, there is no way that 99% of gamers are going to walk on past that opportunity!

Those of us who have been in the hobby for quite some time probably recall seeing The Battle of the Bulge movie with Henry Fonda or the Bastogne scenes from Patton, which instantly provided inspiration to game this battle. My first gaming experience with this fascinating battle was a scenario run by someone in a gaming group using the old WRG 1925-50 rules and Airfix figures, then later again with GHQ micro-armor. This led to me blundering into the revised Battle of the Bulge board game by Avalon Hill.

Known as Bulge '81, this game has indeed stood the test of time and I still play it every few years. Probably not the most realistic order of battle, the map is pretty bland by today's graphical standards, and the weird rules all over the place can make for some headaches at times. However, for the first time I was able to finally see the famous roads, towns, choke points, and more where the battle happened. It was a game that you can easily teach and once you get through the first few turns with all the special rules, it starts playing faster.

From there I tried a few others and my one dream every time I opened a SPI catalog or mailer, was to get their monster Bulge game called Wacht am Rhein. The sheer size of it was enticing and something that big had to be good, right? Well, some gaming friends I knew that had the game explained the issues with
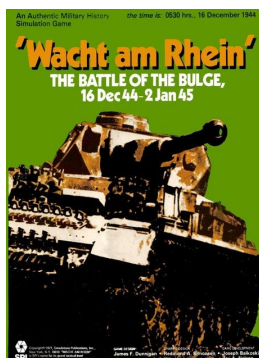
it, namely long set up and playing time, rules not really finished, questions about the playtesting, and so on. This game demonstrated to me that in the hobby, bigger was not always better!

Also, who can forget the Bulge scenarios in the Avalon Hill classic Panzer Leader? Yes, the boards weren't snow covered and the terrain was pretty generic, but the chance to use all of that heavy German armor was just too good to pass up! Even though I've had this game for almost 40 years, I still play those Bulge scenarios every so often. Definitely not the most realistic scenarios, but the fun factor is pretty high and shows how well designed most of the Avalon Hill games really were.
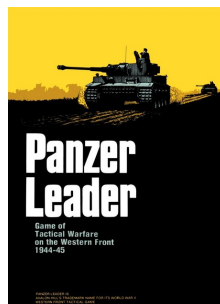
While I've played in some Bulge miniatures games, it's funny that I've never played in one that used a snow covered tabletop! This is one of the huge challenges in converting Bulge battles to miniatures. Gamers, in an effort to spread their resources as far as possible, aren't going to apply winter camouflage to their miniatures, invest in snow covered buildings, build or buy winter forests, etc., when it can't be used for Normandy, Market-Garden, or Italy games as well. This is why most Bulge miniatures games I've participated in are always on green grass covered surfaces!

Once at a convention I did see a gamer who had used the GHQ Terrain Maker hexes to make an astoundingly beautiful Bulge tabletop. The attention to detail with the icy streams, snow drifts, snow covered woods, etc., was simply amazing and he ran several scenarios during the weekend I was there, although I was unfortunately unable to participate. The big issue? Well, the board couldn't be used for anything else except that one scenario! Yes, he had built an incredible tabletop, but it couldn't be taken apart and rearranged. This was a huge lesson for me in always needing to design multi-purpose

terrain wherever possible.

So, what is the driving force behind the interest in The Battle of the Bulge? Is it the chance to use large amounts of German panzers? Desperate defenses in unforgiving terrain? The challenge of breaking through the Allied lines and racing to Antwerp? I think for many gamers it is similar to the appeal of Eastern Front gaming where there are large concentrations of armor and mechanized forces, which seems to really appeal to gamers of all ages. The what ifs of the battle also seem to generate hours of discussion, no matter how many times your gaming group has talked about it!

However, with the ability to research German records, correlate databases, casualty reports, numbers of tanks returned to action, letters, etc., modern historians are able to paint an entirely different picture. As I've stated before on some recent book reviews, the computer age has ruined history as we wanted to believe! In reality, the German plan had no chance to succeed. The need for secrecy, limited planning, poor road network, etc., all contributed to a glorious disaster that doomed the Germans on the Western Front.

For myself, I feel that I found the right Bulge game after all these years and it's the second edition of GMT's Ardennes '44. Beautiful maps, well researched OB, playable system, and just enough special rules to simulate the German attack all combine to be the perfect Bulge game as far as I'm concerned. I've played it twice in the last few years and will probably do so again this year as the game is too good not to play at least once a year.

Is this the end of the quest for Bulge games for myself as well as other gamers? Probably not. GMT has another Bulge monster game on the way next year and the highly regarded GTS series from MMP will have an approach to Bastogne game coming out. Will I get them? Probably, but when it comes to Bulge games I just can't help it!
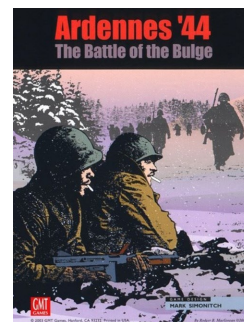
# Blast From The Past Pt. 36: Gaming Surfaces

I've talked about the evolution of terrain in the hobby a few times now, but almost all of the wargaming memories that I have always seem to have something about the terrain that was used for that game! It could be that I focus on the visual appeal of miniatures wargaming maybe too much, but even bad gaming nights or terrible scenarios can usually be salvaged by good terrain!

When I first got into the hobby back in the summer of 1976 (has it really been that long?) most of us were grateful to be playing on a green ping-pong table! Masking tape roads, hills cut out from wood sprayed green, and bags upon bags of lichen for forest was the norm. It wasn't until the next big evolution in gaming terrain that the hobby really took off and that was the model railroad grass mat. Yes, a massive improvement over the ping-pong table, but hills were still an issue and it was only marginally better than nothing at all.

Yes, there were some gamers, particularly featured in the pages of Miniature Wargames, White Dwarf, Military Modeling, and others that had custom terrain, which served as an inspiration to everyone and fueled our desire to make better looking games. However, these were definitely in the minority and if you look back at many of those old magazines you could see quite a few tournaments played on a green plywood board.

The next big leap was Geo-Hex and I remember getting my first set, which was barely enough to cover a 4 x 6. One of the proudest days in my gaming life, which quickly turned to confusion and uncertainty! Yes, you could make a 4 x 6 table with rivers, slopes, etc., but figuring out how to make the pieces all work together was a major challenge. The games looked great, but when most of your gaming is spur of the moment scenarios, spending over an hour trying to make the

pieces work for the game became a huge problem. Yes, you could spend more money to get more pieces, but getting them to fit back in the box was a huge issue as well, so more pieces was only going to compound the problem!

At the height of my frustration a new company from England appeared called Integral Terrain, who had these wonderful geomorphic terrain squares. Problem solved! I traded some sci-fi armies I had for a set and away we went, easily able to make any battlefield and a massive improvement over everything that we had before. Until you realized that you needed all kinds of squares with matching roads, hills had to be added, and finally, transporting 40+ squares everywhere posed logistics issues. Still, these squares (which are still in use today) spawned all kinds of imitation, from home made to other companies producing similar items, this set the terrain standard in gaming for well over a decade.

From there the hobby tried to go the ultra-realistic route which started either at Fall In, Historicon, or Cold Wars. This was where some ACW battles used a cloth laid over hills, then the entire cloth was doused in green flock. Finally, rivers were added as well as forests, towns, entrenchments, etc., and the look was very convincing. The contours, valleys, and so on had a photorealistic quality to them and was probably the closest thing to model railroading that the hobby got to. The problems? Well, there were several. First, you had to continually purchase flock and it got everywhere, making clean up a huge chore. Also, set up was a long, laborious process and you needed specific types of rivers and other items to lay down

on the flock itself. For convention or once a year events it was fantastic. For your Friday night games, it was more work than it was worth.

From the late 90s to around 2010 or so, the hobby was in a terrain funk. Gamers used everything they could think of, but most digressed back to terrain squares, plain wood tables painted green, or you went all out and created custom terrain. It was at this time that the terrain cloth really started to make an impact. Sure, this idea wasn't novel and many of us made our own, which wasn't the worst idea in the world. However, no one's mat matched others, so making big games was a challenge, the quality was uneven,

and you couldn't just go get one at your local gaming store.

Today that has completely changed as multiple companies now produce a massive variety of gaming mats. Cloth, vinyl, neoprene, and other materials are available in all kinds of colors for space, land, sea, fantasy, and more. They are simple to use, store, transport, and for the price they can't be beaten. For most gamers' needs, the terrain cloth is a gift from the heavens, enabling any gamer to set up a game quickly with little fuss. Plop down some buildings, trees, etc., and you are ready to play. The only thing limiting your selection of cloths is how much you want to spend.

Is this the final evolution in terrain for gamers? Probably not. I've seen some very impressive 3D printed terrain sections made from Arc-GIS files, but too expensive for gamers right now. Still, having gone from green ping-pong tables to beautifully made terrain cloths in 40 years time has been a great advancement; at least for me!

# Battles For Empire 2:  Two Fronts Attack & Defense

**Situation**:  The Mahdi's revolt continues to spread and has reached the surrounding area.  An enterprising Egyptian garrison commander has assembled a column to sortie out and collect the various outposts in the vicinity along with any civilians seeking safety.  Three days into the mission he ran into an ever increasing horde of the Mahdi's army and after several skirmishes has decided to return to the town.  The British have heard rumors of a disaster and have dispatched a gunboat with several units to reinforce the town as well as the Egyptian defense.  Both the British and Egyptian forces upon arriving in the area are shocked to find out that the remaining troops in the town have gone over to the Mahdi, and now the town must be retaken and prepared for defense.



## Map Notes:

- The river banks are fairly low and have some vegetation, but are an obstacle to LOS.

- The brush areas are strewn with rocks, making it rough ground that conceals all troops not within six inches of the edge of the area.

- The white arrow is where the Egyptian forces enters the board.

- The white rectangle on the river is a gunboat/steamer.

- Scenario is designed for an 8 x 4 or 5 table. If you have a smaller table you may have to adjust the Mahdist reinforcements so that they receive additional troops as the long march across the table is what will give them time to assemble an attacking force.

- The town is made of several large and small buildings, which will provide cover to any troops in the town.

## Anglo-Egyptian Order of Battle

### 1st Brigade

4 units Sudanese infantry-2nd rate

Battery (2 sections) Krupp guns-2nd rate

Civilians & baggage-10 stands

### 2nd Brigade

1-unit Bazingers/salve traders-3rd rate

2 units Bashi-bazouks-3rd Rate

### Cavalry Brigade

1 squadron Egyptian cavalry-2nd rate

1 squadron Egyptian camelry-2nd rate

### River Landing

2 units British infantry-1st rate

1 mountain gun battery (2 sections) -1st rate

Force notes:

- Feel free to replace the British troops with Indian, Egyptians, Sudanese or whatever units your gaming group has.

- Each brigade has one commander.

- There are two ammunition mules available, one for the Egyptians and one for the British force.

- Anglo-Egyptian forces can enter the board in any formation.

## Mahdist Forces

### At Start

2 units rifle armed, 1 each at reinforcement zones 2 & 4-3rd rate

2 units Dervish cavalry or camels at reinforcement zone 1

4 units sword & spear armed in the town

4 Dervish commanders-anywhere on board

### Reinforcements

On turns 1-10, roll on the random reinforcements table for the Dervish army.  Then roll 1D6 for each unit that arrives and they enter within 6 inches of either side of the marked location on the map.

### Special Rules

- The gunboat/steamer is a balancing tool for the scenario.  If there are insufficient troops, the Mahdists roll 4 units arriving as reinforcements several times, etc., it should be deemed that the river bank is low enough for the guns to engage targets.  As the game starts, however, the river bank and vegetation are too high for the gunboat to engage any targets on the other side of the bank.

### Victory Conditions

The Anglo-Egyptian side must retake the town while not losing more than 50% of their starting units.  If more than 5 stands of civilians and/or baggage is lost, the percentage of lost units drops to 40%.  Any other result is a Mahdist victory. The game may also end earlier if one side or the other feels that they are unable to achieve their objectives.

### Options

- To balance the game, adjust the Mahdist reinforcement rolls either up or down, depending upon the experience of the players and the size of the table.  Another option is that the Mahdist side cannot roll for reinforcements after a certain turn or only on every other turn.  You could also add more units to the starting force already on the board.

- Add entrenchments to the Mahdist force holding the town.

- The character traits for commanders is highly recommended to be used here.

- Add a second gunboat/steamer and more British units to balance out the game.

# Battles For Empire 2:  Two Fronts

Battles For Empire is certainly one of our favorite game systems, which is strange as we only play it every few years!  So, it was extremely rare to see it played two gaming nights in a row and have two battle reports in this issue!  After the first game in a long time went so well, it was decided to run another game as soon as possible, plus we had the advantage of playing in a space for this one evening that had plenty of room.

With two experience players and two completely new players to the system, we decided that I would play the British as it was a small force and I had to referee/ teach the other players the game at the same time.  The other experienced player took the role of the Dervishes while the two new players were assigned as the Egyptian column commanders.  After going over the basics of the rules, the Egyptian side set out their forces and the game began.

The Egyptian commanders decided to put the Sudanese brigade with some of the civilians and baggage in a square and advance up the road towards the town.  The Egyptian cavalry and camel mounted units would screen the advance while the second brigade of third rate troops would act as the rear guard.  All in all, not the worst plan in the world, especially for two new players.  The British would get



off the gunboat quickly, advance to the outskirts of the town, then try to clear the opposition with their firepower.

Things went wrong for the Egyptians right from the start.  Some bad command rolls created a traffic snarl at the worst possible time, forcing the Egyptian cavalry unit to have to delay its advance and



by the time it finally got going, a Dervish mounted unit appeared in the center of the board.  The Dervish units on either flank created a lot of concern, so the square advanced slowly, not wanting to trade their ability to shoot for movement, which in the end proved fatal.  On top of things, the Dervish commander received five fresh units in the first three turns, with one of them appearing behind the square.

This set off a series of battles.  The Dervish player, seeing his chance to cause maximum chaos, charged the Egyptian cavalry unit in the center of the board, which effectively blocked any advance in that direction.  The rear guard had to turn to face the new threat behind them and no Egyptian commander wanted to venture into the rough ground, which effectively limited their options the first few turns.  The rear guard units, despite being the worst quality units in the game (composed of Bashi-bazouks and slave traders) actually performed well, beating off several determined attacks throughout the game.

Meanwhile, the British had not gotten off to a great start, rolling a series of 1's for movement.  Again, the Dervishes, seeing their chance, moved out of the town to meet them before they could created a firing line.  The British moved over the river bank right into (cont. p28)

(cont. from p27) action and took major casualties from melee.  The mountain battery unlimbered and fired into the swirling mass, devastating one Dervish unit and driving the others back while the Naval Brigade unit fought from front to back against multiple charges.  Midway through the game the British force was down to 50% effectiveness and basically out of the game.

On the other side of the board the Dervishes were piling in fast and furiously.  Even the destruction of several of their units didn't slow them down as they kept closing into melee, doing a little damage here and there.  By turn 8 most of the rear guard was below 505 strength and the square had only moved about two feet.  The Egyptian cavalry finally gave way, crashing into the dismounted cavalry unit behind, disordering them just as they received another Dervish charge, which they barely held off.

By now, there were Dervishes on all sides and while the Egyptian Krupp battery started shelling Dervish units, things were getting out of hand.  Both sides could see that a few more well timed die rolls might be all that was needed to finish off the Egyptian force.  The Egyptians still had a chance to reach the town.  The Dervishes on that side of the board had been roughly handled by the British and were barely hanging on to the town, even though the British did not have the strength to do anything other than stand off and fire at them, with the Dervishes under cover.  All that was needed were some good movement rolls for the square and a bit of breathing space for the rear guard.

But that was not to be.  One of the rear guard units finally broke and the other two that were engaged to their front were in danger of being flanked.  The Egyptian camel unit in the center was in danger of being hit on two sides, but the moment of truth had arrived for the slowly advancing square.  Two fanatic charges hit the square at the same time and in some really bad die rolling, all 8 shots at the attackers missed!  The Dervishes crumpled up two sides of the square and the game was effectively over.

A well fought out game that saw some desperate actions across the board.  The Dervishes did extremely well on their reinforcement rolls, which kept constant pressure on the Anglo-Egyptian side.  The firing was actually pretty good, right up to the last turn when things really fell apart.  Next time we may try an attack on a walled town.

*Several images showing the various stages of the battle, from the opening advance of the infantry and Egyptian cavalry screen to the final attack on the square.  The series of Dervish cavalry charges that tied up the center of the board had a huge effect on the outcome of the game and prevented the Egyptians from using their long range firepower to their advantage.*

Ancients rules, much like WW2 rules, form the basis for perhaps the two most popular periods of miniature wargaming. Although not as confrontational today as it was in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, the mere mention of any set of ancients rules would set off a storm of arguments, strong feelings one way or the other, and a list of what was right or wrong with that set of rules. Today, however, there are so many rules out there that most ancients gamers aren't even knowledgeable about two or three, let alone 50 or more!

Several years ago there was a new entrant into the ancients rules field from a new company at that time called Warlord Games. The rules were Hail Caesar and they came out at a time when Warhammer Ancient Battles, the most popular set of rules for the period, had pretty much collapsed for a number of reasons. Into the fray came a half dozen new sets of rules and today, several years later, Hail Caesar seems to have emerged victorious, at least if you have 28mm ancients armies. Yes, other rules are definitely being played and this is by no means a criticism of those rules, but Hail Caesar seems to still have somewhat of a following even with more and more rules coming out to compete with it.

I've been in the hobby long enough and have played the ancients period for quite some time that I've seen many of these rules come and go. I started out with WRG 5th and 6th, played Newbury Fast Play (certainly a misnomer there!) Ancients, Airfix's rules, DBA, Warhammer Ancients, etc., and for the past 10 years have focused on Warmaster Ancients (WMA). My interest in Hail Caesar was two fold; for one it was advertised as a sort of evolution of Warmaster Ancients, and second, I was building two 28mm armies and they looked like a
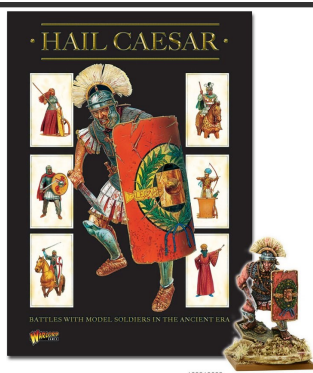
good fit. After playing WMA I was interested in any set of rules where you did not take off individual figures or have to track "hero" stats for some units/figures.

The rulebook itself definitely shows its roots in the Warhammer/GW style where text is matched up with a lot of photos which not only serve as inspiration for painting figs, but entices you to try the system as well. The book is broken into various sections, going into unit sizes, types of units, basing, sequence of play, then into the various phases of the turn. You have initiative, command/orders, shooting, and combat phases in an IGOUGO format. Right from the start you notice one thing that continues through the entire book.

That would be the "conversational" tone of the rules with sidebars and boxes about swords, recipes, obscure quotes, and more. If you come from the WRG/FOG crowd and are expecting rigid, terse prose, you may want to not even pick this book up! Much of the rulebook is based upon suggestion, from base sizes to number of figs in units to how to rate the various armies and commanders. This isn't the first time it's been used in a set of miniatures rules, but it does take it to new heights. When gamers complain about this set of rules, this is certainly one of the items on the list.

One of the good things about the rules is that they are scale agnostic, meaning that pretty much any size of figures as well as existing armies can be used as long as both sides are based similarly. By differentiating units into tiny, small, standard, and large sizes, you can easily use anything from 6mm packed on bases to singly based armies for Warhammer Ancients in 28mm. However, there's also a small problem here in that if two opponents think that their Romans should use different sized units for certain periods, there's going to

have to be some negotiation on what gets used. In fact, I've seen numerous discussions online about how many figs and/or bases should there be for certain units with answers seemingly all over the place, which can complicate matters to no end.

If you've played Warmaster or Warmaster Ancients, these rules use a simple, but pretty effective command and control system. Each general or leader rolls 2D6 for each unit and if equal to or under his command rating that unit can move. A failure means that leader cannot issue any further orders. You could also issue a unit consecutive orders if you could make the rolls, which had modifiers for number of orders received in the turn, how far from the leader, etc. Hail Caesar takes this system to the next level, where each player nominates a unit, verbally outlines what he wants to do with it, rolls dice, and if successful gets to move one, two, or three times. There are no additional orders, the 12" command radius is set as a limit, and the system is quite unpredictable.
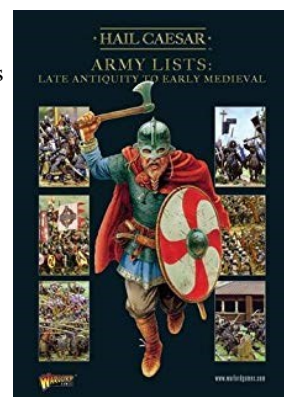
Units move 6 inches for foot or 9 for cavalry, meaning if you roll three orders that unit can make a pretty large move in one turn. There is, however, a proximity rule which prevents players from moving around the sides of enemy units and creating bizarre situations. Where WMA was pretty free-wheeling, in Hail Caesar things are a little more clear cut. You can still flank units, but it's going to take some work.

Shooting is pretty basic and again, similar to WMA in that each unit gets a number of shots, roll that number of D6s with usually a 4, 5, or 6 to hit, roll for saves, then conduct a break test. In practice this goes pretty fast and unless you're playing Agincourt or armies with unit upon unit of archers, shooting can be annoying, but with few exceptions it probably won't stop an attack cold. Skirmishers are more clearly defined in Hail Caesar and can certainly be killed if they roll poorly on their chance to evade formed units. This is <span>(cont. on p31)</span>

(cont. from p30) definitely one aspect of the game that is a huge upgrade over WMA.

Combat is again based upon a number of D6s to be rolled, with each unit rated for its Clash (first round) and Sustained (each extra round) values. Usually a 4, 5, or 6 is required to hit with a list of modifiers for charging, disordered, etc. After determining hits, most units with armor get saves, followed by determining the winner of the combat. The loser rolls on the break test table and applies the results. More often than not, there will be a second round and possibly additional rounds of combat in later turns. Friendly units also have a support rating so if they are touching the friendly unit they get to add that number of D6s to the combat. This makes placement of second line units and reserves critical in the game.

Once a unit reaches its Stamina level in hits, bad things start to happen and it probably won't last on the battlefield very long. Once half the units of a division have been lost due to combat, that division breaks and tries to fall back off the table. The combat system is definitely not the one D6 results of the old WRG type systems, but neither is it in the Warhammer roll handfuls of dice format. The system is fairly simple, keeps both sides engaged, and generally produces close results.

The remaining sections of the book go over the special attributes to units such as being Elite, Drilled, Stubborn, etc., which gives character to the various units of each army. There is a lengthy section of battle reports ranging from Egyptians to the Crusades, which are good and bad. They're good in that they provide sample orders of battle and give a good depiction about what the game should look like when your group attempts to play. They're bad, however, in that the basing schemes for many of the forces are all over the place, leading one to believe that they took whatever figs they had and used them for the battle reports. Also, some of the army list force recommendations were clearly modified to fit what they had.

This leads to a discussion about the army lists that are sold separately and the game in general. The individual books are certainly adequate and cover a lot of armies. There are some issues with the lists, which is a hallmark of every set of ancients rules! For example, the Republican Roman list has Gauls, Italians, Spanish, Numidians, etc., all on the list, but rarely did they ever all serve in the same force! Basically, Warlord knows what figures are out there, knows that gamers mix and match, paint up weird units, etc., so they constructed the lists to let them use whatever is available. The lists go hand in hand with the game in that if you don't like something, change it! If you feel that all generals should have leadership ratings of 9, make it so. If you think this division should be elite and stubborn, pay the points. Not the worst system by any means, but there are points in time while reading the rules and lists that you're wishing for something a bit more serious or authoritative.

So where does that leave Hail Caesar after several years of it being published? On the non-tournament circuit it definitely ranks at the top of the list with probably To The Strongest as the most popular ancients rules, especially if you play with 28mm figures. It's nowhere near as fiddly or dry as Fields of Glory, nor as free wheeling and destructive as Warmaster Ancients. Basically, it's the evolution of the Warmaster system with a wink and a nod thrown to Warhammer Ancients players. Not removing figures, a command and control system, faster combat resolution, etc., are all definite improvements on WAB. Stricter movement rules, better treatment of skirmishers, etc., are all better improvements over WMA.

During our first game it took a few turns to get the hang of the command system, especially after playing WMA for all of these years. After one or two combats we could see the various advantages of leading with certain units, using support at the right moment, and the danger of keeping units too close to each other. The one thing we kept missing are the unit attributes such as Drilled, Elite, etc., so that is going to take some getting used to.

There are some quirks here and there, but nothing that would prevent us from playing this a few times. We only have two armies for this set of rules at the present, but hopefully this will provide some inspiration to get a few more started!

After painting about 700 28mm figs over two and a half years, I was finally able to have enough stuff for a 4-6 player game of Hail Caesar. I've had the rules for quite some time just sitting on a shelf, so after referring to them on and off during the painting of the armies it was time to actually see them at work. At this point I still didn't have the proper percentages as suggested in the army lists, but at least there was more than enough to have a good sized game. Most of the gaming group was pretty much done with the single figure rules such as Warhammer Ancients, so Hail Caesar did have a natural appeal, even if it wasn't in the 10mm scale that we had been using for ancients for the last decade or so.

We decided to not do anything fancy for the first game, leaving all leadership values at 8, no optional or suggested house rules, and just going with the basic units. The board was pretty much flat with no terrain that would cause any issues, forces were set up within one foot of the edge of the board, and after going over the differences between Warmaster Ancients and Hail Caesar, we were pretty much ready to begin.

The Romans had the following:

- Two legions, each consisting of two Velite units, two Hastati, two Principes, and one Triarii unit. Each legion was classed as a division with its own leader.

- Each legion received one additional skirmisher unit and one legion had a

unit of Oscan medium infantry attached.

- A division of cavalry with one Roman medium cavalry unit, one Spanish, a unit of Numidian light horse, and one unit of Greek light cavalry.

Not a large force, but the smaller Republican Roman units (I use the 8 figure basing for small units) pack a serious punch, despite only having a stamina of 4.

The Seleucid force had the following:

- Six pike units with one being Guard and one unit of skirmishers.

- Two units of Persian and Red Sea Arab infantry.

- Two elephants with a unit of elephant guard.

- A cavalry division consisting of four units; Greek heavy cavalry, cataphracts, Tarantines, and Persian horse archers.

The Seleucid force definitely had numbers on their side with the six pike units alone totaling 240 figures. A large force, but a little slow and ponderous with good cavalry on one of the wings.

The game began

with both sides trying to figure out how to use the command system to their benefit and not wanting to get too far ahead. After several horrific command rolls the Republican Roman army pretty much just let the Seleucids come to them! The Seleucids had a hard time coordinating their cavalry, but were finally able to get their light horse out in front to engage the Numidians and Greeks that were coming towards them.

The action began with the skirmishes of both sides exchanging short and long range fire, then a series of attacks. This was probably for the best as we learned about the combat system by doing some simple shooting and melees with only a few dice per side. The skirmishers on both sides took a beating, then fell back to see what happens next. At that point

the pike blocks surged forward and the real battle began.

The pikes hit the leading edge of the first Roman legion and both sides took losses. The pikes pushed the Hastati back onto their supports then broke clean through. The Triarii stemmed the tide with an immediate counterattack, but they too were pushed back. The first legion Principes rushed forward to engage the second pike unit and pushed it back in a devastating attack. In turn it was counterattacked by a fresh unit of pike that pushed the Romans back. One final push by all of the pike units on that side of the board destroyed most of the legion, with the Velites and Triarri falling back to cover the huge hole that had opened in the center.

On the Seleucid left, the other pike units were going into the (cont. on p33)

(cont. from p32) attack, supported by the Persian and Red Sea Arabs infantry. One pike unit hit the Hastati and could get no push, then were counterattacked and sent reeling. The Hastati quickly followed up, destroying the pike unit and hitting the Arabs hard. The second pike unit slammed into the Oscans, crumpling them up in one turn and then turned to face the oncoming Principes units.

The cavalry battle continued with the heavy units on both sides unable to get into the fight, which was certainly due to the bad command rolls and limited room for maneuver. Both sides continued to exchange skirmish fire and there were a few charges, but the fighting there was not going anywhere fast.

In the center, however, the Romans became overextended and when the Seleucids counterattacked the Romans were so packed in that there were no reserves left to plug the holes. The Romans suffered a series of reverses and for the loss of one pike unit the Seleucids crashed through the center, effectively ending the game.

For a first try, there were positive comments all around. I had some trepidations about the command system since I was accustomed to the WMA style, but it seemed to work and no one really complained about it. There were some problems with the army lists for both sides. On one hand the Romans were constricted by what I had painted, so there weren't many options to begin with anyway. That will hopefully be remedied by painting more units! On the Seleucid side they could have used one or two fewer pike units and replaced them with more skirmishers or cavalry.

The combat system worked well and is engaging, sometimes producing multiple turn melees and in others disasters for one side or the other. We quickly learned that adding units as support was a double edged sword as it's great for the extra combat dice, but if the unit they're supporting suffers a catastrophe, so do they! Also, we forgot about many of the unit attributes, which could have radically altered the game, so that will take some getting used to.

Overall, it was a pretty successful first game. Despite only two of us having the rules, we were able to teach everyone the systems and answer most of the questions. As with any set of rules there are some issues here and there, but we felt we could live with those we encountered. Now it's on to painting more units and trying this again sometime soon.

Just a week later we basically ran the same battle as our first try with Hail Caesar, which was reported on a few pages before this battle report.  Each Thanksgiving we do a game on Black Friday, with some being pretty large and depending upon who is available, so me games are pretty small and only go a few hours.  All of us usually meet for breakfast, then go to where the game will be held and we're usually wrapped up by 4 or 5pm so that Friday night is still free.



Although I was working on a few new units I was unable to get them finished in time, so the order of battle is basically the same as the battle a few pages back.  Both sides did make a few adjustments to their deployments this time, trying to use the lessons learned in the first battle.  The table we were using was 4 feet wide instead of 5 like the first time, so both sides were going to get into action much faster than in the first battle.

This time there were three of us who had the rules, but as with many games owning the rules and having fully read them are two different things!  I had gone back and re-read sections to clarify a few things and the others had basically read how things are supposed to work, so the game definitely moved faster this time.  We still had to look up one or two things here and there to make sure we were doing things right, but overall there were fewer problems this time around.

The skirmishers got right into action and started exchanging fire almost immediately.  The cavalry moved up while the pikes in the center did likewise.  The Romans advanced in the center and saw their chance to act when the Seleucid left wing had command issues for a few turns, leaving the center out in the open.  The Roman units are small and can change direction in a heartbeat, so they were able to concentrate on a few pike units in the center.  This proved to be a winning strategy.

The Hastati and the first few pike units came to blows with heavy casualties for both sides.  The pikes fell back upon their supports, then renewed the battle, with both sides losing units.  The Princepes came up next, hitting some of the damaged pike units and breaking up the Seleucid center.  The cavalry on both sides skirmished and then in a series of charges dealt each other heavy blows before pulling back.  By the mid-game the light cavalry on both sides was shaken and the heavies were about to come to grips.

Another turn and the center of both sides was pretty much empty.  Both the Roman legion and the Seleucid pike blocks broke, meaning that the remaining units had to fall back (albeit slowly) from the board, leaving only the cavalry action on the right and the pikes/elephants on the left against the remaining legion left to resolve.  Both sides kept trying to get their skirmishers back under control, but command failures and blunders made the final few turns a swirling storm of chaos with the units that were left.

The heavy cavalry clashed on the right, with attacks and counterattacks as both sides tried to finish each other off.  There were successes, failures, ties, and basically a lot of casualties on both sides.  After three turns of constant action most



units were shaken, others were close to being shaken, and the Seleucids, while having the upper hand were barely hanging on.

On the Seleucid left, the Romans kept coming, despite heavy casualties.  The Persians and Arabs were hard pressed, but hung in there for a few
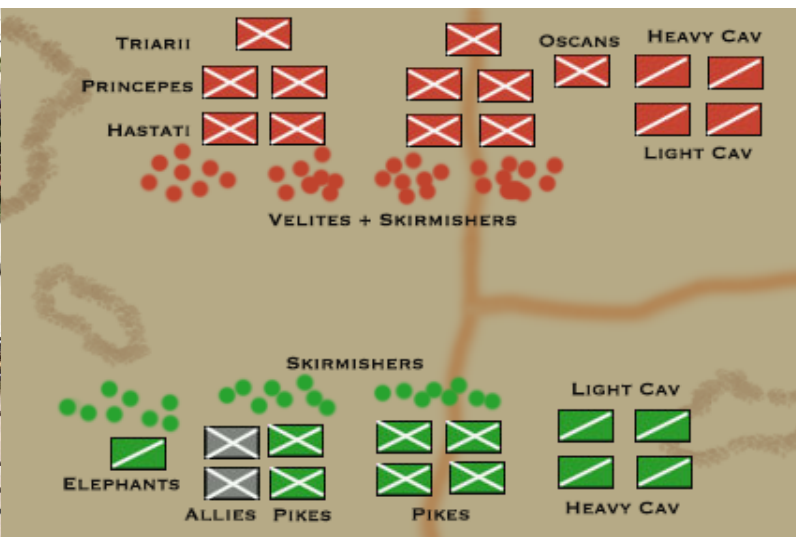
(cont. from p34) turns, which was long enough for the pike units to rally and get turned around.  Still, the final few Roman units pressed forward, breaking the two pike units and ending the game as a Roman victory.

There were some lessons that we learned here and there about this set of Ancients rules.  Using units for support is crucial, but where and when is the big question as if the main unit suffers a catastrophe, so do the supports!  Having damaged units fall back to rally is certainly a good tactic and was used here numerous times.  We did forget about some of the unit special rules, but overall did a better job at this than in the first game!

Things we really liked about this set of rules is that first off, it is a lot of fun and plays faster than you would think.  With set up, playing with all of the units we had, and then taking the game down, we finished in under 4 hours.  Skirmishers seem to feel just right with these rules, being a nuisance with a chance of doing something deadly, seemed to work well. Using them to the best of their abilities, however, is going to take some practice. The right combination of units on the front line and supports is also going to take a few battles as is using the cavalry correctly.  Still, for our first two battles Hail Caesar seems to work well for our group.

The next stage is to let everyone choose their own army list, which should make things more interesting.  For the first two battles I selected the basic units and used the generic stats in the army lists, so really no special skills/stats, etc., and we used all leaders having a general-ship rating of 8.  Basically I just picked standard forces and we played the games. Once I add some new units both sides will have plenty of things to choose from and can try out some new strategies, which should help to keep interest up in the rules.

What's next on the list?  First, I need to add enough cavalry to have some on both flanks.  After that, getting a Greek or Italian farm or some buildings for terrain would be good.  Adding a third Roman legion is a definite possibility, but the idea of painting more units that use shield transfers (although they look good!) is not very appealing right now.  However, I already have some Spanish cavalry, Numidian skirmishers, and Italian hill tribes, plus some Gauls.  This certainly means that I'm already halfway to having a Carthaginian army!

When we don't know what to play for the upcoming gaming night, we're out of time, and we're unsure of everyone's schedules, Warmaster Ancients seems to be our go to game.  It's easy to set up, no rules explanation is needed, we have army lists for 2, 3, 4, and more players, plus it's easy to transport with even the largest games usually completed in under four hours.

So it was with this battle, where the Seleucids (part of Alexander's Successors) would go up against the Indians in what was I'm sure for that time regular battles along the Seleucid frontier.  This would be a 2,000 points per side affair, so we're talking fairly large forces and we would continue the battle until someone reached their break point.  As is usual in these contests, the terrain is fairly flat with a few hills on the side which did not hamper movement and we started 20cm in from all sides.



The Seleucids went with a balanced force, which meant the following order of battle:

4 pike units

2 units of guard phalanx and hypaspists

2 units of guard cavalry

1 unit of cataphracts

1 unit of heavy cavalry

2 units of skirmish cavalry

2 units of imitation legionnaires

2 units of thorakites

2 units of skirmishers

4 units of archers

1 unit of elephants

There's definitely some punch here with the heavy cavalry and pike, but the cost of these high quality units meant a break point of only 10, so the Seleucids would need to hit hard and preserve their strength against a much more numerous foe.

The Indians had a much more simpler list:

12 units of infantry

8 units of archers

2 units of elephants

4 units of cavalry

1 unit of heavy chariots

2 units of skirmishers

This gave the Indians a break point of 14, which is a massive number in WMA terms.  Yes, their units were about as average as average gets, but there were a lot of them!

The Indian strategy would be fairly simple, advance and engage as many Seleucid units as possible in an attempt to grind them down and win by sheer numbers.  With most of the units having little to no armor, the Indians would take a lot of casualties, but they could afford them and the Seleucids needed to be far more prudent in combat.  Also, having 8 units of archers certainly gave the Indians a lot of firepower and the Seleucids would need to advance through a hail of arrows to close into melee.

For the Seleucids the main intent was to advance the pikes and elephants into hand to hand combat, striking their less armored foes with a massive blow that would tear open the center.  Hopefully the skirmishers and archers could keep the Indian archers busy just long enough for the pikes to do their dirty work.  On the flanks, the Thorakites, Imitation Legionnaires, and heavy cavalry would carry the load, striking where possible and preventing the Indians from reinforcing their center, which would hopefully be under pressure from the start.



As usual with our WMA battles, not much went according to plan!  While both sides moved out quickly on Turn 1, that's where things started to fall apart.  The Indian right flank refused to move at all, so they turtled up on the hill with archers in front and supports to the side.  The Indian left got split quickly, with half the force moving quickly and the second half still at the start line, which meant the leader for that side had to go back for a few critical turns to lead that part of the force forward.  The Indian center moved out quickly at the start, but then various parts of the line moved out too quickly, getting stranded in front of the Seleucid pikes.

The Seleucid right and center got out in front quickly, but the right flank had issues getting into position.  When the Seleucids started their attack on Turn 3, half of the Seleucid army was still moving up, but the hope was that it would catch up, which it never did.  By now the general skirmishing was erupting into large exchanges of fire and main units were getting ready to come to grips with each other.

(cont. from p36)  Here's where things began to get interesting.  The Indians in the center surged forward, hitting several pike units with a combined infantry and heavy chariot charge, which did some serious damage.  They got a bit carried away in the pursuit, which allowed for the reserve pike units to come up and take out several Indian infantry units, then continue the attack into the archers in the center, which opened up a hole in their lines.

On the Indian right, the Seleucid guard cavalry charged into the Indians in their defensive positions along the hill.  This set off a series of attacks and counterattacks, with both sides doing serious damage to the other.  The Thorakites and Iranian archers tried to help in support, but were continuously driven back by the Indian archery, which caused the loss of several stands.  By Turn 6 both sides on

this flank were pretty well wrecked.

On the Indian left the Indians were able to spread out among the hills and flanks of the Seleucids on that side of the battle, but simply could not coordinate their attacks.  Both sides exchanged archery and skirmish fire, but the melees were few and far between for quite some time.  The losses were evening out on that flank when the Seleucids went defensive, determined to help for one final push into the center of the Indian line.

Up to this point it had been a pretty close game.  However, but Turn 8 the Seleucids were in trouble and almost at their break point, plus they had few full strength units.  The Indians had suffered huge losses as well, but could afford it.  By the final turn of the game the Seleucids were down to two choices; attack

and do as much damage as possible, hoping for a win or a draw, or sitting back and hoping a defense would survive one more turn.  The Seleucid commanders consulted for a few minutes and attacked, failing several critical command rolls and leaving various units out in no man's land where they would be easy pickings for the remaining Indian units.

Another close game, but an Indian victory nonetheless.  The Seleucids could never coordinate their attacks, especially at the end and their flanks did a very mediocre job of engaging the enemy.  The Indians did just enough, counterattacking where possible and doing some damage in every melee, which is what did the Seleucids in.  A very fun and fast moving game that was enjoyed by all.  Including set up and take down, the entire affair was 3 1/2 hours, which is not bad for the large armies that were used.
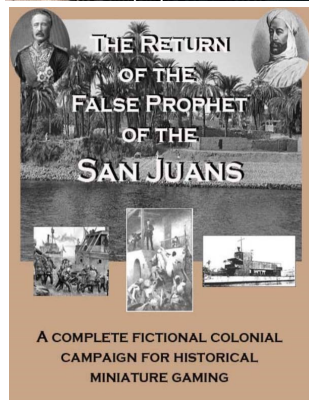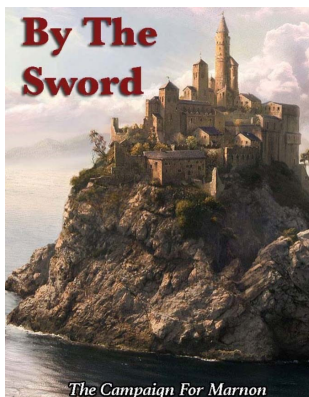
Be sure to check out our various campaigns for rules such as WMA, TSATF, and BFE II on our web site.

*I don't think I've seen so many gamers looking to "get out" of the hobby in quite some time.  I would have to go back to the late 90s when WH40K, WFB, and Adeptus Titanicus had taken the gaming world by storm, with huge battles every weekend at most gaming stores across the country, gamers buying huge quantities of figs, and life was good.  Then Games Workshop changed everything in terms of rules, figures needed, armies, etc., and gamers dumped their stuff, moved on to other things, etc., and the hobby settled back to its usual self.  Judging by many of the posts in various forums, postings on Ebay, Facebook groups, and so on, there are a large number of gamers moving on to other things.  I should be fair in mentioning that there are a lot of new gamers coming into the hobby at the same time.*

*Some of the reasons that are cited in these posts deal with the cost of the games, (which is certainly an issue), no one plays the same games as they do (yes, this is another common complaint), and the feeling that they are being overwhelmed by new product.  My brother has owned a card and gaming store for 30+ years and this was exactly what was happening in the late 80s and 90s in the sports card industry.  All of sudden, that hobby went from three companies producing baseball cards to four, then five, then an explosion of various sets, one time issues, specialty cards with jersey pieces in them, etc.  Collectors were buying everything in sight and the sports card hobby exploded across the country.  At one time there were something like 50+ sports card stores in Las Vegas alone!  Today there are only two….*

*What happened? Basically, it became too much effort to stay in the hobby.  Keeping up with the new sets, the various specialty releases, the rising costs, etc., turned something that was fun into a nightmare.  Are we seeing the same thing here with miniatures and board wargames?  Maybe.  I have to admit that I get that feeling as well every now and then that I'm being overwhelmed.  New rules, figure ranges, terrain, etc., keep tempting me to start new projects rather than finish the ones I'm involved with now.  There are voices in my head saying don't buy this game or the other as a new, improved version will be coming out sometime later and the first will be worthless.  I'm afraid to start a new period because who else am I going to interest in helping me with it when everyone else is involved with hundreds of other new games.*

*Could the hobby be heading for a market correction, much like what occurs with stocks every so often?  Sports cards and comics have had their corrections, rising to new heights in popularity only to see things come crashing down quickly to pre-boom levels.  All of the signs are there; hundreds of new board games coming out each year, figure ranges for every conflict in the history of mankind, new versions of games coming out with regularity, continual price increases, etc.  Can gamers sustain this kind of growth?  That is the great question before us now.  Our houses are busting at the seams now with gaming product that will never see the table and yet more arrives each day.  Can we continue down this path or will there be some changes?  Hard to say right now, but new gaming items keep coming out at a fantastic pace.*