

Warning Order

ISSUE #57

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**BKC IV WINTER
BATTLE REPORTS
GAME REVIEWS
NEW SCENARIOS**



Warning order

W F H G S

1942 Winter Armor Battle with BKC IV

The first winter battle we did using BKC IV was a big hit, so now that we had some more buildings, a rail station and railroad sections, etc., it was time to try this again. The forces we have at this time are for the winter of 1942 on the East Front. It is a bit limiting in that there are no Tigers, the Russians still have a lot of T-26s, most of the German guns can't do much against T-34s and so on, but that's part of the fun of it!

The scenario was an accidental meeting engagement. The Germans were trying to cut off a Russian city from reinforcements and supplies, so their objectives were the seizure of the rail station and then the village crossroads at the end of the board. The Russians, however, were launching their own attack to reach a crossroads at the German end which would enable supplies to reach the city.

Both sides had plenty of armor, limited artillery, and had to fight through a gap in the middle of the board. To simulate the city fighting, any unit from both sides that came within 15cm of the city area would take 1D6 attacks! That by itself forced the action into the gap between the city and the rail station.

German Order of Battle

- (1) panzergrenadier battalion
- (1) infantry battalion
- (1) PZIVF2 company
- (1) PZIVF1 company
- (1) PZIVD company
- (1) PZIIIJ company
- (1) Marder II company
- (1) Stug IIIF company
- (2) batteries 105mm artillery-off board
- Each company and battalion had a commander (CV8) with any two being (CV9).
- One ATR stand was attached to each infantry company

Russian Order of Battle

- 1st Armor Brigade
- (5) KV-1C
- (4) T-26
- 2nd Armor Brigade
- (9) T-34C
- (5) T-60
- (1) SMG Battalion/trucks
- (2) Infantry Battalions
- (3) Batteries 122mm Artillery-Off board
- One overall commander (CV8), two commanders (CV8), and two commanders (CV7)
- Each infantry battalion had two ATR assets attached.



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Special points of interest:

- Battle reports for BKC IV, WMA, Regimental Fire & Fury, and Battles For Empire II.
- Two new Engagements scenarios.
- A Q&A about Warning Order and the gaming group.
- Reviews of several games and products.
- Editorial on the rise of costs in the hobby.

1942 Winter Armor Battle with BKC IV (cont.)



Several images showing the defense of the rail station and village along with the initial approach to battle. Both sides got their heaviest armor into the center of the board very quickly, leading to a massive slugfest that would draw in more and more units.

1942 Winter Armor Battle with BKC IV (cont.)



These two maps clearly show that most of the action took place in the center of the board. This was a major armor slugfest that at one time or another sucked in every armor unit of both sides! The two Russian armor brigades are represented by four icons, which represent the different parts of the brigade while the German armor units are company strength with a commander. The Russian armor brigades were hampered by the lack of commanders all during the battle.

(cont. from p3) Besides having fewer commanders, the Russians had only scheduled artillery, so this had to be written down for the first 10 turns. After both sides had some quick planning sessions we were ready to begin.

The strategies for both sides were interesting. The Russians were going to hold the village and the rail station, the attack with everything they had, which mimicked their commanders usual play style! Knowing that they had the better tanks (for the most part-the PZIVF2s were pretty good), their idea was to wade into what everyone was already calling "The Gap" and take on the German armor. The Germans were going to race out and block the Russian armor while the infantry took the rail station. Once that was accomplished, they would press on towards the Russian held village.

When the scenario was designed, the idea was for a desperate fight around the train station with the Russians debating to reinforce it or not. Then the Germans would try to work around the Russians as they moved up, setting up a final attack on the village to seize the crossroads. With better command, the Germans could take on the Russian armor and have a reasonable chance of success, especially with an artillery FAO and a full strength panzergrenadier battalion. This thinking lasted less than one turn!

The reason for this? Our most aggressive players, who were in command of the PZIVF2s and the KV-1Cs, both rolled

snake eyes on the first turn (in BKC if you roll a 2 you get two successive actions) and moved right down the middle towards each other! By turn 2 there was already armor on fire, with the rest of the units moving up. The second Russian armor brigade had to roll to arrive, with a 1-2 being on the first turn, 3-4 on the second turn, and 5-6 on the third turn. They would arrive on the third turn, so for a few turns it would be the KV-1Cs and the T-26s on their own.

For the second game in a row, the KV-1Cs played a pivotal role. While they were fairly slow and had an average gun, they were literally monsters on the battlefield. Heavily armored and with a lot of hits (plus they ignore flank attacks), they drew fire like a magnet! Once they were engaged every German unit in the area went after them, setting off a multi-turn armor slugfest. While the Russians initially had the better of the fight, more and more German companies arrived to add to the carnage.

The panzergrenadier battalion moved up near the train station and dismounted around a walled farm area. Then this is where they stayed for the next several turns! Very bad command rolls happened at the wrong time (a not uncommon occurrence in our BKC games!) and just when the Germans really needed to capture the train station before more Russians could get there, the attack stalled. The accompanying PZIVDs, however, pounded the defenders, knocking out several infantry and MG stands.

The German and Russian artillery then started to land on target, suppressing command stands, inflicting hits on the infantry, and generally adding to the chaos. A few units during the fight in the middle wandered too close to the city and took fire, suffering several hits. By this time the cauldron in the middle was just getting sorted out, with the Germans getting the upper hand. Most of the KV-1Cs and T-26s were burning, but the German PZIVF2 company had taken a beating as well. Then the T-34s arrived....

The T-34s went right into middle and were immediately engaged by the remaining Marder IIs, PZIIIJs, and PZIVF1s. While the Marders could definitely inflict harm to the T-34s, the remaining German armor was only getting three shots per vehicle and with the T-34s armor, that was going to be a difficult challenge. This is where, however, the superior command and control values of the Germans started to pay off. Most of the German command stands were 8s, with a few 9s, while the Russians were 7s for the infantry units and 8s for the armor. The other issue was that the German command radius was 25cm, while the Russian command radius was 15cm. The Russians, however, could get a +1 to the command roll if every Russian unit under that commander did the same thing.

This pretty much cut out the maneuver aspect for the Russians. Instead, they sat there and slugged it out, while the Germans kept moving into new positions and firing, often with the (cont. on p5)

1942 Winter Armor Battle with BKC IV (cont.)



(cont. from p4) same turn. This allowed the Germans to cut the range (giving an extra die for shooting) and often get two or three orders per turn for each company. By Turn 7 the center of the board was littered with wrecked units of both sides, but the Germans were winning this war of attrition.

Meanwhile, the German infantry battalions had been hammered by Russian artillery and now had barely any strength to continue their missions. The Germans kept attacking in the center and finally succeeded in knocking out most of the remaining T-34s. The few that survived pulled back to the village crossroads to provide some armor support for when the Germans moved in that direction. However, the Germans still had some armor left, but their infantry was spent. Neither side had accomplished their objectives and were basically back to where they

started the game, so we determined that the battle ended in a draw.

While the game was fun and everyone got in on the action, it did point out to a number of issues with how we approach the game and some things we need to be doing better in the area of scenario design. First off, we just aren't good with infantry in this game, or for that matter, any WW2 operational level game! The German infantry battalion (non-motorized) should have been on the opposite side of the board where it could have attacked the rail station. The panzer grenadiers should have made a mounted attack or been saved for the thrust towards the village. Instead, both battalions pretty much remained in place and got cut up by artillery.

The other thing is this relentless urge to charge at the opposing side's armor

and get into a battle as soon as possible. Whether it's boring to sit on the sidelines, take up positions to await further developments, etc., we usually plow right in, which caused the swirling melee in the center. Artillery is the other thing in BKC that is hard to get right. One or two batteries might not do too much damage, but giving someone a battalion of artillery is usually a death sentence for opposing infantry.

The only way to correct some of these things is to really, really use the points system and let players pick their forces from a set value. However, this takes a lot of time and effort for game night, which isn't helped by the fact that we don't pick something until the day before! Still, everyone has fun with the system and we'll keep making small improvements here and there.

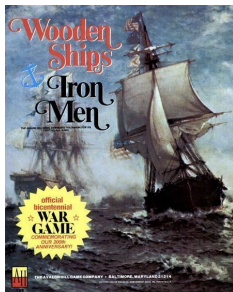


Memoirs of a Miniatures and Board Wargamer Pt. 44

The Age of Sail Game Quest

If you've been in gaming for any length of time, there is a certain allure to the Age of Sail that is hard to pass up. Many of us have participated in at least one or possibly many sailing ship battles, not to mention tried our hand at painting some of the miniatures. However, we never really seem to get to the campaign stage, expanding our fleets, or for that matter continuing to game the period on a regular basis. Usually, after watching Master & Commander for the umpteenth time there is an urge to break out everything for a game, but it's not the kind of period that first comes to mind when the group is planning out our next game.

Granted, "back in the day", there was pretty much Avalon Hill's *Wooden Ships & Iron Men*. One of the first attempts to realistically (however you define that term) portray sailing ship battles. Many gamers fought single ship battles, fleet actions, and more using this game and the associated articles in *The General*. To this day the game is still popular and gets a lot of play, despite its being well over 40 years old now!

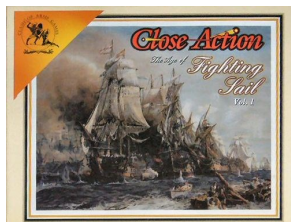


of Sail needed a shot in the arm, this was definitely it. Slowly and surely, more figures starting coming out from Davco, Skytrex, and others. All of a sudden, the Age of Sail was a popular period to game again.

Then just as rapidly, it dropped off the radar. Through the late 80s and 90s it was there, but hidden in the background. The rise of Warhammer 40K, Old Glory mass producing figs for every period, new rules for land battles, etc., all conspired to push sailing ship combat all the way to the back. Every now and then you would encounter an article here and there about a gaming group playing a battle, but they were far and few between. Our gaming group talked about it every now and then, but we were taken in by 15mm *Command Decision*, *Age of Reason*, and many other games that were rally getting going at that time.

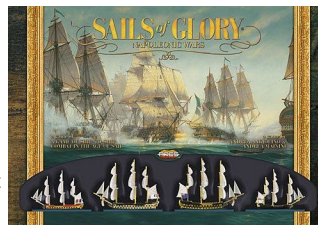
This became the new normal for our gaming group and I suspect for many others. There were now a few dozen sets of rules for the Age of Sail, miniatures in several scales, and there was some interest every so often in playing a game. This period then started to follow a pattern. Renewed interest, someone in the group painted up some ships, a new set of rules was introduced, we played a battle, then it was back to our other regular games. Rinse and repeat for now close to 30 years! There was a ten year period where we played *Heart of Oak*, *Signal Close Action*, and several others. Fun games, but if they got played twice in five years that was considered a success!

It was at this point where I thought I would get back into the period yet again. I purchased some more GHQ models, one of the Langton models in the larger scale, and some from another manufacturer (can't remember now). I painted a few, but at that time no one else wanted to play the period so they got sold on Ebay! I also obtained a copy of *Close Action* from *Clash of Arms Games*. Definitely not for the meek, but probably one of the best games on the period. The level of detail is incredible and at the same time frightening! I played a few of the smaller sce-



narios, but adapting this for a group game was going to be a problem. Larger fleet actions would probably take 8-12 hours of gaming time. Still, this is the only game that I've purchased and sold twice!

Another 5-10 year drought and we played another Age of Sail game, this time with the card models that came out for (at that time) a popular pirate game. No need to paint and you could adapt any rules to use them. After that we went several more years until one member of

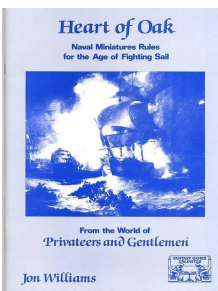


our group brought out *Sails of Glory*. A beautiful package to behold, it was essentially *Wings of Glory* at sea. We played a few

battles on one night and it hasn't made a return appearance.

Recently, we have played a few nights of battles using Osprey's *Fighting Sail* rules. A few guys still have the card ships, so they work well without needing to buy and paint miniatures. Fairly simple to get into and you can do a few battles in one night, plus it works for large groups as each player can run several ships. Litko carries all kinds of accessories for the game, so you can customize as much as you need. We'll see how much staying power it has as we go forward.

There are now far more rules, terrain, accessories, and ships available than ever before. We haven't even broached Warlord Games' *Black Seas* with all of their ship models. There are painting guides, pirate skirmish games with massive ships, and more that would take too long to go over here. However, the period today is still one that exists in the background of the miniatures hobby. Why that is would make for a good thesis! Gamers can't resist playing the game if it is set up and they're invited, but there doesn't seem to be much in the way of follow through. You play once, then maybe get back to it in another 5 years. Definitely one of the mysteries of the hobby.



For the miniatures enthusiast, however, a board game just wasn't going to do it. The main issue here was that there weren't a lot of companies selling sailing ship miniatures. The two biggest at the time (at least if I'm remembering right) were GHQ and Valiant. You usually had to mail order the ships and make do with the limited selection, or do the modifications yourself for what you needed. On top of that there was virtually no information on how to paint them outside of the larger plastic models, which was a completely separate hobby.

Renewed interest in battles during the Age of Sail came when *The Courier* did a six part series on the subject. I was so taken by it that I went out and ordered a half dozen GHQ models and I didn't even have a set of rules! There were some interesting articles, battles, reviews of rules, a campaign, and more. If the Age

Blast From The Past Pt. 43

H.O. Scale Plastic Figures & Gaming

If you've been in the hobby for a few decades like many in my gaming group (and apparently many of our readers judging from the emails we receive!), then you at one time or another have been tempted by H.O. or 1/72nd scale plastic figures. When the hobby was just starting out, the intersection of gaming and modeling was at its height, with model shops/hobby stores being beacons of light for gamers with their models, paints, reference books, etc. In fact, many gamers were modelers, so they naturally went to model stores for their gaming supplies.

One of those aspects was using 1/72nd scale plastic figures for gaming. At the time (70s and 80s), finding metal figs in stores was difficult, not to mention trying to find armies that you were interested in or specific figures for projects. The hobby was still growing and mail order was the name of the game, but there was one option that many of us tired; 1/72nd plastic figures.

Now there weren't a lot of choices back in the day! You were mainly stuck with Airfix and Matchbox along with their limited availability. There could be long periods of time before model shops restocked and it was not uncommon to go to a store and see the same unsold boxes week after week. However, they covered what at that time were the three big periods; ACW, Napoleonic, and WW2.

For a few bucks you could get a box of around 40-50 figures, which was a pretty good deal, especially if you were just getting into the hobby. Granted, there were some unusual poses and some figs that you would never use, but you could get a few boxes and make several battalions or regiments, depending upon the rules you used. The great thing was that back in the day 1/72nd figures were usually accounted for in most rules. However, the periods that you could do were limited.



The 1/72nd scale figures had a number of advantages besides being cheap. If you were into WW2 there were large numbers of vehicles from Airfix, Matchbox, Hasegawa, and many other companies. Buildings were readily available at model train stores, as were trees, grass mats, and many other terrain items. In an era where many gamers built their own terrain, the shortage of things like rivers, hedgerows, etc., wasn't seen as an issue. The only problem at the time was finding the right figures!

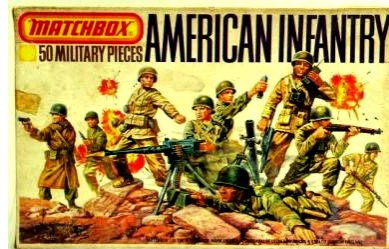
Then a company called Atlantic came along, offering Ancients boxes, cheap vehicles with only a few parts, and all of a sudden the scale really took off. However, it faded quickly as Atlantic didn't last long. On top of that, Airfix's financial difficulties, Matchbox's distribution issues, and the consolidation of many gaming and hobby stores left the scale in limbo. Years later Italeri and ESCI got into the game, releasing some fabulous boxed sets for all kinds of periods, but by this time it was too little and too late.

The reason for this of course was the rise of 15mm figures. All of a sudden you could get packs of figures you wanted with no throwaways, they were available for all periods, looked good, and many sets of rules were not catering to that scale. The heft and look of units had a lot to do with the change as well. There was no more buying Prussian Landwehr to convert to 1846 U.S. troops, shaving hussar plumes to make some esoteric Napoleonic cavalry unit, or taking arms and lances from one box and mixing it with another. Instead, you just ordered the 15mm figures you needed.

For many of us, this was a slow transition. For myself it happened with ACW, which is still a favorite period even to this day. I had acquired about 15 boxes of Airfix figures and spent a few years making units, trying rules (believe it

or not, we used Newbury's Fast Play ACW rules for quite some time), assembling buildings, and playing some games. When a friend showed me the Stone Mountain catalog and I got my first package from them, I could not get rid of the plastic armies fast enough!

Cleaning the plastic flash, prepping them, repainting the chipped parts where paint flew off when bent, limited poses, etc., were all of a sudden gone. True, they were replaced by new problems, but now you could try all kinds of periods. When Essex came out with their packs it was a huge sea change in the hobby that doomed plastic 1/72nd to what is today a very small faction of gamers. If Essex wasn't the nail in the coffin, the advent of the 100 figure bags of Old Glory certainly was.

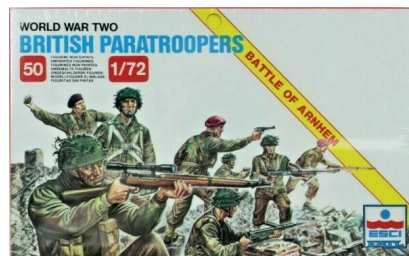


Today, 20mm (1/72nd) still exists with many new offerings. Plastic WW2 and modern vehicles are still available, although many have now moved into

more of the modeling than gaming side of a hobby. Any time you're paying \$20-25 for a Stug III and it has around 100 parts, I'm not sure that's for gaming any more! The advent of 3D printers also makes any scale, including 20mm, very practical. Just change the model file and you can print figures, buildings, etc., in any scale you want.

However, there is one thing that can't be replaced from back in the day and that is going to the local hobby shop and thinking about the *possibilities*. By that I mean standing there looking at the 1/72nd boxes stacked on the shelf, then carefully thinking about what they could be made into. Those two French hussar boxes would make a unit of Ottomans, or those figures with swapped heads would make Guides for NWF campaigns, and so on.

It was the stuff that hobby dreams were made of! Those days are long gone, but the memories of buying boxes of 1/72nd figures will always remain.



Engagements 41: Surprise River Crossing

Situation: On a quiet sector of the front, Red has moved various units to re-equip, receive replacements, and work on training. The river is well guarded and would be difficult to attack, so the chance of an enemy offensive in this area is remote. However, Blue has moved forces into the sector and is planning a blitzkrieg type operation.

Period: Designed primarily for the Modern/WW2 era, but could work with other periods with some adjustments.

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

Terrain Notes: The water obstacle is fairly deep and can only be crossed at the bridges, which Red still controls. The hills are gently sloped and are not a serious obstacle, but do give a height advantage. The woods are medium and vehicles can maneuver in them, but there should be severe movement penalties.

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

Red Forces: Red's forces consist of the units that enter the East edge of the board on Turn 1.

River Defense:

1 unit of armor
1 unit of mech infantry
3 units of infantry
1 battery of medium artillery (off board)

Quick Reaction Force (QRF)

1 unit of armor
1 unit of mech infantry

Garrison

2 infantry units

Set Up: The three infantry units are deployed one each in the fortifications marked 1, 2, and 3. The other two units are deployed east of the red line, but no nearer than 12 inches from the river. The Quick Reaction Force can start in either village. The Garrison are placed one unit in each village.

Red Reinforcements

These units show up on specific turns at R1:

Turn 2-1 unit of ATGMs/AT guns

Turn 3-1 unit of armor

Turn 4-1 unit of mech infantry and 1 battery of medium artillery (off board)

Turn 6-1 unit of infantry and 1 unit of armor.

Red Orders: Delay Blue's advance for as long as possible until Red's reinforcements can arrive. Counterattack where possible to prevent Blue from exiting units off the west edge of the board while holding onto both villages if possible.

Blue Forces:

4 units of armor
4 units of mech infantry
1 unit of AT guns/ATGMs
4 units of infantry
1 recon unit
1 unit of medium mortars
2 batteries of medium artillery (off board)
1 commando unit (see special rules)

Blue Orders: Quickly expand the bridgehead and overcome any organized resistance before Red's reinforcements can make a difference. As soon as possible, move forces off the west edge of the board for victory purposes.

Blue Set Up: All of Blue's forces will enter the board on Turn 1 at A1 and/or B1.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: Before Turn 1 Blue

selects either the bridge at A or B as the target for a commando action. The Red infantry unit deployed at either bridge (marked in red as 1 or 3) rolls 1D6;

1-unit is eliminated

2-4; unit falls back six inches from the fortifications and bridge location.

5-unit routs

6-unit stays in place, still fighting the commandoes for control of the bridge.

The bridge that is not chosen by Blue for the commando action is wired for demolition and can be blown at any time Blue approaches to within 6 inches of the bridge. On a roll of 1-5 the bridge is destroyed.

Victory Conditions: Blue needs to get at least 4 units (or the equivalent strength of 4 units) off the west edge of the board for a marginal victory. If Blue can get 6 units off the board it is a major victory. If Blue cannot get at least 4 units off the board it is a Red victory.

Variants: Airstrikes and air mobile forces would be fairly easy to add and give Blue some flexibility in expanding the bridgehead. The board could be expanded in size, especially in length and each side given additional units for a larger group game. The commando action could be fought as a "pre-battle" action instead of just a die roll. Also, Red could add minefields and Blue could add bridging engineers to balance things.



Engagements 42: Out of the Wilderness

Situation: Red has been threatening an attack against one of Blue's towns for quite some time. However, there are extensive defensive positions in front of the town that be difficult to overcome. Red has set forth a plan to send a force on a flank march through an area covered by marsh and forest with no roads. If the force can successfully navigate this area, some units may come out on Blue's flank and change the course of the battle.

Period: Designed primarily for the Ancients and Horse & Musket periods, but could work with other periods with some adjustments.

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

Terrain Notes: The hills are not steep, but should give movement penalties and good observation. The woods are light, but cannot be moved through by artillery. The terrain on the east side of the board should be considered rough and/or have extensive movement penalties. It consists of many small streams, marsh, and light woods. The town consists of several wooden and stone buildings.

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

Red Forces: Red's forces consist of the units that enter the East edge of the board on Turn 1 and the main attack force to the north of the town.

Main Force:

6 units of infantry
3 batteries of artillery
2 units of cavalry

Flanking Force

4 units of infantry
1 unit of light infantry
1 unit of cavalry

Set Up: The Main Force enters from the Red areas marked at the top of the map on Turn 1 or any turn afterwards. They can enter the board in any formation. The Flanking Force may choose one unit and start it at the location marked by the asterisk. For the other units, roll 2D6 and place the unit at that location on the game board. All flanking force units should be disorganized when coming out of the wilderness area or have to roll for disorganization to represent trying to keep cohesion in the terrain.

Red Orders: Use the flanking force to threaten the town, then when Blue moves units away from the defenses, attack with the Main Force and try to overwhelm one section of the defense. Destroy as many Blue units as possible and seize the town.

Blue Forces: Blue has two forces on the board.

Main Defense Line

6 units of infantry
2 batteries of artillery

Reserve

3 units of infantry
1 unit of light infantry
1 artillery battery
1 unit of cavalry

Blue Orders: Hold the defenses for as long as possible. Destroy the flanking force before it can reassemble, then use the surviving units to help bolster the defenses and contain any breakthroughs.

Blue Set Up: The units of the Main Defense Line must be set up within 12" of the defensive fortifications on the hills.

The Reserve force can be set up in the town or within 6" of the town.

Game Length: 12 turns

Special Rules: The fortifications on the hills should consist of trenches, embankments for the artillery, and obstacles

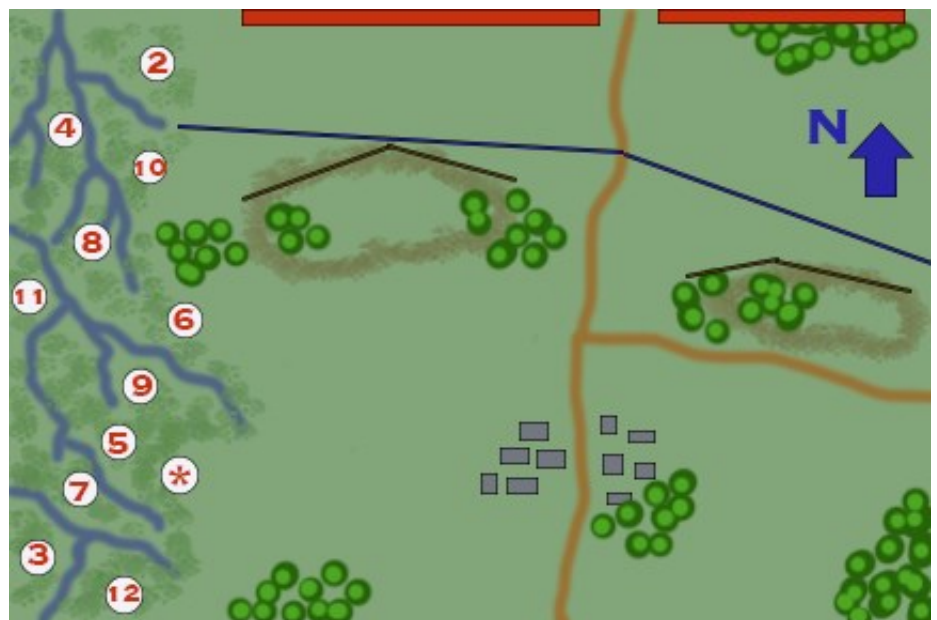
that would be difficult for any attacking infantry. The idea for the scenario is that the Blue force holding the defenses should be able to defeat Red's Main Force if it attacked. However, if units have to be moved to counter the flanking force, then there may not be enough to contain a major attack.

Victory Conditions: Red needs to seize the town and force Blue to withdraw from the board.

Variants: The obvious option would be to expand the board and add extra units to both sides. To balance out player skill levels, the Blue forces in reserve could be encamped and have to roll to see when they become alerted. You could also allow Blue to have one or two units near the wilderness area as flank guards.

Another option, especially for those who don't like the randomness of where Red's flanking units appear, is to roll 1 D6 and place the numbers on the map south of Blue's defensive lines. Red's flanking force could also all be cavalry units, particularly some that could be dismounted to act as infantry, which would certainly give the battle a different perspective.

Moving the battle to a more modern setting would be a challenge as air attacks, airmobile infantry, etc., would make the flanking force a bit problematic. Mines and pillboxes would certainly bolster the defensive lines, but the longer ranged weapons would make the flanking force's job a bit more difficult across open areas.



Warning Order Q & A

As the audience for Warning Order has grown over the years, from a handful of our club members for the first issues (which have not aged well!) to a worldwide audience now, there are always questions that get sent to me about the magazine and the gaming group. Here is an attempt to provide some more information about who we are, what we play, and why Warning Order comes out the way that it does!

Q: Where are you guys at?

A: Mainly from the Salt Lake City, Utah area, with some of us being as far away as Provo and Clearfield.

Q: Does your club have a place where you hold your meetings?

A: We did in the earlier days as there was a member who had a 12 x 6 table and room for about 12 attendees. Later we played at various local stores, but at this point it's completely random. We have access to the tables at GAJO in Sandy, but usually it depends upon how many can make it that night. We then see who can host and what size of game can we play.

Q: What is the size of the club?

A: The club at it's high point probably had 12-13 people, of which 8-9 would regularly attend. At this time we have 6 and we probably have 3-4 who come most nights. It doesn't sound like a lot, but it keeps us occupied. We would like to expand, but see below on why this is hard.

Q: Can anyone join?

A: The short answer is no, but we do

get a lot of people who want to. We usually invite them over for a game (it's surprising how many don't show up for the first invite!), ask them for a second time, then if things are working out they stay. This is harder than it sounds. For one thing, many interested gamers have their own ideas about things, have miniatures in different scales, or are just hard to get along with! We've been surprised by how many gamers show up for the first time and start telling us how things are going to be! They usually aren't invited back.

Q: How long are the games?

A: This depends greatly on the size of the scenario, but more importantly, where we can play. We do have one member's house where we can leave things up for two or three gaming sessions, which allows us to play some big games. Most of the time, however, we're looking at 3-5 hours, depending upon what we're playing. We have games like Warmaster Ancients, DBA, and Age of Discovery down to a science and can get set up, play the game, then take everything down in three to three and a half hours. Other games like TSATF, AOE, Fire & Fury, etc., can be five hour sessions. Unfortunately, gone are the days of us playing all night!

Q: What is the play style of the group?

A: Basically, just a bunch of friends having fun! We usually talk about sci-fi and war movies, football, new games we've seen, and insult the other players when they make a mistake or have bad die rolls!

That's not saying that we don't argue or have to check through the rules, but things get resolved pretty quickly and if in doubt we'll roll dice for it!

Q: How have the games that you play changed over the years?

A: When the group first got going we did a lot of Empire, Johnny Reb, and Command Decision with games sometimes going 8-15 hours over a few nights and with 9-13 players!

We also played several very involved campaigns that would go on for months at a time. Now we're looking at games that usually go 3-4 hours and everyone is ready to call it quits. Old age, full time jobs, time commitments, etc., have really changed the hobby for all of us.

Q: Over the years there seems to be more board wargaming going on with the group and in Warning Order. Why is that?

A: First off, the board wargame hobby has changed dramatically and there are some really, really good games out there right now. Not to mention some non-wargames like Terraforming Mars, Sentinels of the Multiverse, etc., that we play from time to time. Gaming is gaming. Whether that's with 15mm figures playing Fire & Fury or a six hour Twilight Imperium session, we're gaming and having fun with the hobby, which is all that matters.

Q: How do you keep all the periods that you guys play straight?

A: Well, we don't! I think we have armies for something like 20+ sets of rules spanning more than a dozen eras. Keeping it all straight is impossible, which is why some nights things go slowly while we try to remember the rules!

Q: Have you ever stopped playing certain games?

A: Yes. With everyone's interests constantly changing, we do experiment from time to time with things and some of them don't work out. The most notable would probably be Empire and Johnny Reb, which required multi-night sessions and everyone to really, really understand the rules. We've had armies for Warmaster Fantasy, Warmachine, 28mm Napoleonic skirmish, and more that simply fell out of favor or the games changed so much that we didn't feel compelled to keep up. As we've gotten older, there is a propensity to play what we're comfortable with.

Q: How organized are game nights?

A: Surprisingly, not much! We're all on a Gmail group, so really there's no excuses. More often than we would like it comes (cont. on p11)



Warning Order Q & A (cont.)

(cont. from p10) down to the Wednesday or Thursday before the game on Friday! While many of our scenarios work out in the end and maybe look good to the readers, that's more by accident than anything else. Occasionally, someone will really put forth the effort with maps, OBs, handouts, etc., but those are the exceptions rather than the rule.



Q: Do you ever play with any other clubs or groups in the area?

A: Some members belong to multiple groups, while others do one off games with friends. There hasn't been anything resembling a convention in our area for 25 years, so that was the last time that many of us played in multi-club games.

Q: Why are the editorials often of a glass half empty nature?

A: That's due to two things; the first is that's my nature! The second is that editorials are supposed to make one think and create discussion. If I wrote that 28mm is a great scale, who wants to read that? However, if I start talking about 32mm coming along and possibly replacing 28mm, now everyone wants to read that. Editorials produce close to half the comments I get about the magazine.

Q: What's with the wave of nostalgia?

A: For the most part, at least half of the group has been in the hobby for more than 25 years, with many of us now approaching 45 years! Every time we're playing a game and someone brings up something from the hobby past, that's fertile ground to write about it. While not everything from the past is good, with gaming there were some great memories playing games from yesteryear. Comments on features that explore older games usually run 90% positive, so it's something the readers want to see.

Q: Why are the reviews of books and games so varied? There doesn't

seem to be a pattern and most are positive.

A: The short answer is that we simply don't get many review copies! I would review things if they were sent to me! Instead, I usually have to purchase the item myself and if I'm going to do that then it will be something I want to play. I'm not going to drop \$100 on a Kickstarter game that I'm not excited about. I'm not going to invest in a set of rules and \$500 for figures in a period that I really have no interest in. For now this works OK as I'm not sure I would have time to review things I am interested in as well as things that I might have a slight interest in.

Q: Do you take contributions for Warning Order from outside your group?

A: Yes! From time to time I receive reviews or counter opinions which I will publish. They're pretty far and few between.

Q: Do the Engagements scenarios, mini-campaigns, and battle report scenarios get play tested or refined, then played again?

A: This is a very good question! The short answer would be no, which is what happens with most gaming groups. From time to time I have received feedback from some gamers who will play a scenario out anywhere from 2-6 times, trying to get it right! We see it in

a more general light as we have no idea what most gamers have in terms of terrain, figures, players, board size, etc., so we see ourselves as producing "guidelines" for a game! Some of the scenarios that are posted have been used in one form or another, but they're usually given more thought when writing them out than when we're trying to come up with something on game night.

Q: Are there periods or games that you would like to try?

A: Oh yes! We've talked about The Boxer Rebellion, Indian Mutiny, or even a Zulu campaign. There's discussions on painting more Spanish for Age of Eagles, Carthaginians for Hail Caesar, 1/285th forces for the Fall of France using Blitzkrieg Commander, and much, much more. The issues are always time, getting everyone to agree on a project, then painting up the miniatures, which is where things usually fall apart. Add to those things the incredible amount of items coming out each day and staying on course is impossible. The funny thing is that now in our old age, money is not an object!

Q: How much longer can Warning Order go on?

A: That's a good question! We certainly plan on playing games well past retirement, which for many of us is still several years away and for others in the group even longer. Doing the magazine does take a lot of effort, but the plan at this time is to keep it going as long as possible. You can't quit until all of your unpainted figs are finished!



WMM: Crusaders Run Amok!

Battle Report

After several Ancients battles and getting tired of seeing Romans, Indians, and Seleucids, it was time to move into the Medieval era. This meant bringing out the Crusaders and Saracens for another rematch. The Saracens have not done well in these battles, despite having large numbers of units, which probably mirrors history pretty well! Still, looking for something new we dusted off the Warmaster Medieval rules, selected two 3,000 points armies, and set the battlefield up.



We don't really have enough Crusaders at this time, so as usual we substitute Normans, which for the first few Crusades are pretty close! We do have some units of Templars, dismounted knights, foot soldiers, light cavalry, etc., so it gives the army a good appearance for battles in the Holy Land around that time. We definitely need to paint up some more Crusader knight units, local troops, etc.,

The Saracens had a massive force as well, also with a break point of 16. The reason it wasn't higher than the Crusaders is that in Warmaster Ancients you don't count skirmishing units and the Saracens had around 8 of those. The infantry alone consisted of 20 units, with 16 of them being standard infantry and 4 of them the fanatic Gazis. There were some archers and skirmishers that rounded out the infantry force. The cavalry consisted of 8 heavy cavalry units and 6 light cavalry units. The heavy cavalry were pretty well armored and had ranged attacks as well. A huge, but uneven force in terms of quality.



The Saracens massed their cavalry on both flanks, then put the huge blocks of some very average infantry in the center. There was a brigade of Gazis (fanatics) that would provide some impetus when everything attacked, but there were few missile troops and even fewer skirmishers. Clearly this is an army designed to hold with the infantry, then let the armored cavalry and Gazis finish off the enemy with their better attacks. It was a sound strategy and frankly, you can only fit so many infantry into an area!

to give the army some additional flavor, but that's a project for another day.

The Crusaders had a solid force with a break point of 16. Several mounted units of knights, a few units of mounted sergeants, and light cavalry provided the heavy striking power of the army. In particular the Templars, who in a charge would get an incredible 6 dice per stand in the first round! Added to this were infantry, a couple of units of dismounted knights, pilgrims, and a few units of crossbowmen. While smaller in number than the Saracens, the mounted knights provided some hard hitting power that would be hard to stop, plus their mobility meant they could shift to anywhere on the field fairly quickly.

The Crusaders were going to try something a bit different this time. Usually, they would match the Saracen cavalry on the flanks, trying to keep them busy while the foot closed. Once everything was close enough, the knights would launch some devastating charges, then the Crusader infantry would clean up the battlefield. That's worked for them a few times in our previous

battles and there was nothing to say that it wouldn't happen this night as well. However, they put two units of knights in the center (or close to the center) in an effort to try to break up the masses of Saracen infantry.

The game began with both sides moving out pretty quickly, then naturally the bad command rolls started to happen! Although they are treacherous, that is the one thing that our gaming group really likes about the rules is that there is some real chaos here and things don't always go as planned! By the end of turn 2 there were several cavalry units in range, so it was time to for the festivities to begin.

The skirmish units naturally ran away when charged, so once they were cleared out, the heavy cavalry units began to emerge, charging any suitable target. The first charges by the Saracens did some damage, but were repulsed with higher than expected casualties. The first cavalry charges by the knights were simply devastating, ripping a hole in the Saracen right and forcing the commitment of reserves. This was to provide the template for most of the battle, i.e., namely, the Crusaders would charge, create a hole in the Saracen lines, then the Saracens would need to plug the holes.

By Turn 4 the Saracens were taking a beating and were way behind in casualty points (or ahead-closer to breaking). They launched a series of counterattacks on the right that caused the Crusaders some problems and for a turn or two it looked like things might get back to being even. However, the Saracen counter-attack ran out of steam, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties. It was at this time that the Crusaders decided to open up another front. This is where the Templars came in and attacked in the center. (cont. on p13)





(cont. from p12) The two knights units hit a Saracen infantry brigade and simply crumpled the first unit in line. The knights followed up, killing off most of a second unit, then withdrawing before they suffered any stand losses. For two consecutive charges they were putting out 36 dice, which simply annihilates anything in their path! The only thing that saved the Saracen infantry brigade was some incredible saves by the infantry and some bad rolls by the second knight unit. This was a pattern that was repeated for a few turns, although some good Saracen rolls did whittle down the Templars strength.

By the mid point of the game, the Saracens had lost 9 break points and the Crusaders only 3, so the Saracens launched counterattacks across the board. There were a few successes here and

there, but also a few failures that left units isolated and exposed. The Crusaders would then move up and launch their own series of attacks, finishing off damaged Saracen units and driving the break point disparity even higher. After Turn 6 the Saracens were at 12 and Crusaders were only at 5. This was turning into a blowout pretty quickly.

In the center and Saracen left, the Saracens simply could not get any traction. A series of uncoordinated attacks caused some damage here and there, but there weren't the usual big runs by one side or the other that kept the game close. Instead, it was a series of attacks, the Crusaders striking back, following up, then the Saracens finding themselves in even worse position! By Turn 8 it was 15 to 8 and the Crusaders had their choice of which units to attack to get the Saracens

to 16 and the end of the game. At this point we called the game as it was clearly going to be a decisive Crusader victory.

There's not much to say at this point, but this isn't the first time the Saracens have been crushed. It might be interesting to see them go up against a Byzantine army, which might not have the same destructive power of the knights. The Crusader knights are hard to deal with and there's some thought that they might be a bit overpowered. The Saracen army list will need to be reexamined as what they're putting onto the battlefield at this point isn't working! That's not saying the game wasn't any fun, but the knights obliterating unit after unit did get a bit old if you were on the Saracen side! We're not sure what the answer is, but 3,000 point forces could be an issue as well, so we'll keep trying.



Back in the day, one of the games that really stirred the imagination of gamers was when Avalon Hill announced the publishing of War and Peace. Up to that time there was not much in the way of grand strategic Napoleonic campaigns for board wargamers. The game out and was an instant success, spawning large numbers of articles on strategies, variants, and more. However, there were some problems, especially the maps and with the grand campaign game, plus some of the rules needed work.



regarding them is the unusual color palette where the usual red for British, blue for French, etc., are in a subdued pastel style. Not terrible, but it does take a bit of getting use to. The one thing I was not too pleased about was that you only get one set of reference cards in the game when two are needed. You have this high quality package that costs at least \$100 and you only get the one three-sided reference card?

For a long time there was work on a 4th edition and various rules versions were published, which kept up interest. Finally, One Small Step Games and designer Mark McLoughlin brought us a new edition. Now that this has been out a while, a 6th edition with fixes from 5th, is now available. Not cheap by any means (well over \$100 with shipping), this is the ultimate edition of one of Avalon Hill's most popular games.

The rules are pretty basic and for the most part unchanged. Units move with leaders a certain distance (infantry can move 3 hexes and cavalry 4) and can then force march (subject to attrition). A stack of units adjacent to an enemy hex can attack it using the original combat system. You calculate the odds, add modifiers, then check a table for losses. Simple, effective, and highly attrition based, which means that after a few turns armies have lost a lot of strength points. You can also siege enemy units in cities with another simple system that works well. This part of the rules only takes up a few pages and is well illustrated with examples.



porated into the scenario guide. There is now an 1796-97 Italian campaign, the campaign in Egypt (which is great since there is now a Middle East inset map!), and a 1800 Marengo scenario. This greatly adds to the replay value of the game, plus gives fans of the game some new situations to try out. There is also a new mini-campaign covering 1812-1814 in various stages that looks quite interesting.

The big downside with the original game was that the two Spanish large scenarios/campaigns and the overall campaign game had a lot of issues. The main

problem with the Spanish battles was that the rules covering reinforcements, city capture, etc., made little sense and you were never quite sure if you were playing it right or not! For the most part this has been fixed with some tracks on the game map as well

as counters to help keep things organized.

The main campaign, however, in the original rules was a disaster and frankly, I'm not sure Avalon Hill ever intended to have it in the box or it sure did seem like not much effort went into it. Over the years there have been numerous gamers presenting fixes, but finally, this has been taken care of. For starters, there is now a separate campaign booklet. It covers alliances, replacements, and naval warfare. In fact, there is an entire naval sub-game in the campaign system that covers the world's oceans and that goes along with the new global naval map inset on the board. The campaign is going to take some effort and it will be long, but at least now you won't need to make up rules as you go along!

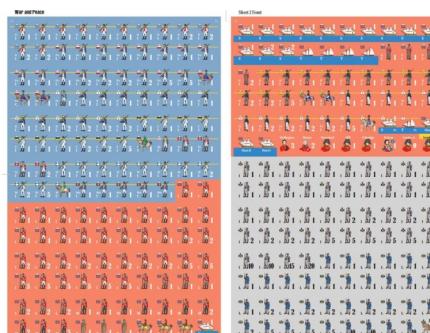


The first thing you notice is that this is a big, heavy box! The reason for that is the large, two piece mounted map board, which is a massive improvement over the original. Not only is there color (the original was mainly black, white, and blue!), but the rivers now run along the hex grid, ports have been moved out from the coast, and there are two strategic maps for naval operations and the Suez Canal area.

You also get a rules book, a scenario book, and finally, a set of campaign rules that cover the entire Napoleonic era. The game also has force displays, but only one set of reference cards which is a bit weird. The counters are again, a huge improvement, but my only complaint

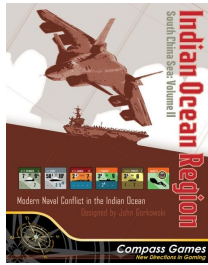
There is an optional combat system where you can pick a series of options, then compare it against your opponent's choice on a matrix. I thought it was a pretty interesting idea, but my regular opponent hated it! There are also some optional rules that cover cavalry charges and the commitment of the Imperial Guard. The base systems are easy to understand, work well in practice, and once you've done a few battles things start to really fall into place. If you've played the old version then you'll feel right at home with this one.

In terms of scenarios there are quite a few. Besides the ones in the original game that covered 1805-1815, there are now several from issues of The General that have been incor-



This is a complete package and a major improvement on the original game. The map, rules, counters, etc., are a huge step forward, along with new scenarios and a workable campaign. However, the game is not cheap and who knows how long it will be available. Get one now if you can.

There's several reasons why there aren't a lot of modern naval wargames. For starters, it's a complex subject and ever since the end of the Cold War, any future naval battles will be fought by much smaller forces. Coming up with ratings for weapons, force structures, viable scenarios, and then game systems to integrate satellites, drones, etc., is a huge challenge. While the 80s produced several modern naval wargames, there have been few since then and the latest is Indian Ocean Region from Compass Games.



game where in scenarios 4 and 5 (the largest scenarios in the game) each faction gets a handful of cards. It should be noted that there are five factions in the game; Asymmetric (Iran, Pakistan, Yemen), China, Indo-Am (India & the U.S.), Symmetric Gulf, and Symmetric Bay. There are cards that are good for some factions and not good for others. Each faction and/or player can discard or play one card, then some of the events will force a die roll to see if war begins. There's a lot going on here, but it's only used in two of the scenarios! Not only that, often you will get cards that your faction can't use.

The components look pretty good upon first inspection. Three 22 x 28 maps, several sheets of large, 3/4 inch counters, a deck of political cards, two player aid cards, and a rule book. The first thing you notice are the maps, covering the Persian Gulf all the way to the end of the Indian Ocean. When laid out these three maps will take up almost 6 feet! Many gamers might not be able to play some of the larger scenarios. The counters

represent ships, subs, aircraft, and some ground units for all of the nations in the region. There is a lot of info on the counters and the play aid



card as well as the rules has diagrams explaining what each rating is for. Overall, it's a good looking package, but will take up some space on the gaming table.

The rules are in full color and go over the game system, there's a detailed example of play, then the scenarios. The rules are sort of in logical order, but with no index there will be some flipping back and forth until you figure out what's going on. The main areas that you need to focus on are the movement and combat systems as that's where most of the questions are going to be coming from. The systems aren't complicated, but you definitely need to see them work during play to grasp what is happening.

There is a political element to the

Movement is pretty standard except for one interesting mechanism, which is intervention. If a ship comes within 5 hexes of an enemy ship it needs to make a roll to continue on. This can create some unusual circumstances, especially with the move order. Aircraft don't really move except to rebase, but conduct operations based upon their range. There are some interesting ideas here, but it looks like it was meant to be hooked into an interactive combat system, which isn't there.

Combat is the most complicated part of the game and again, the order of who conducts operations first and then the order of the types of combat can create some unusual situations. Each faction can declare what is a "focus" hex, then everything in reach of that hex can fire. The defender can also have other units in range of that hex help out, so what appears like a small clash can escalate into a large battle. You then go down the combat sequence, with anti-air first, then missile attacks, torpedoes, and so on. Again, this is a bit strange so like in Scenario #1 where the U.S. has to clear the Strait of Hormuz and where certainly the Iranian subs will be, the subs will get first shot due to the combat order.

You take the combat strength of the weapon, add 2D6, then if it beats the defense strength listed on the chart or if there is an area SAM system around



you would use its defense strength. This generally means you need to roll higher than an 11 in most cases. If you do then it will cause anywhere from 1-3 step losses with most units taking two step losses. In the above example in the Persian Gulf however, the Iranian subs have a torpedo strength of 3, then roll 2D6 and just have to beat an 8! Yes, most U.S. ships who enter that hex are going to the bottom of the sea.



There are five smaller scenarios (only using military turns) and two large scenarios (they use political and military turns). Surprisingly, there isn't a scenario that uses all the maps and all of the factions, which is a bit strange. The smaller scenarios are really quick and could be used to introduce the system to new players. There is a lot of chrome as well. Special operations, cruise missile strikes, tanker capture, paratroop drops on islands, Diego Garcia, mid-air refueling, and much, much more. While these things sound complex, they're not often used.

Unfortunately, there are some issues with the game. Some of the ratings seem off, which gives many average units a pretty good chance to inflict some serious damage. The political cards look good, but in practice I'm not sure what it adds and it's pretty random. Many units on the board really are never used, mainly due to the fact that there's no real geographic objectives. Tankers are a big factor in victory conditions, but there's no rules for them!

In the end, you're purchasing a modern naval game kit. The maps, pieces, etc., are all there for you to use, so maybe Compass Games was hoping that you would make up scenarios using what they gave you? Some gamers may not be amused with that philosophy, however.

The hobby is always in a continual change mode. Whether that is new scales, new periods, a new company with terrain never seen before, or just a whole new series of rules that affect how we base our miniatures for the future. While in the 70s, 80s, and part of the 90s things were pretty static, today with modern publishing and manufacturing techniques, there could be a seismic shift overnight. With the end of the pandemic now in sight, several other factors have entered the equation, of which two of them are inflation and shipping costs.

Shipping for gamers had been static for quite some time and even though the USPS flat rate box system was a bit more, all of a sudden everyone was shipping games across the country. However, the cost of the boxes went higher, international postal rates exploded, and before the pandemic struck things weren't looking great. Unfortunately, many gamers would like to go back to those days!

At the time of this writing (Aug 2021) shipping may be the nail in the coffin for some game companies or at the very least, greatly influence buying patterns. A box of 28mm plastic figs (for \$30-50) could run you as high as \$25-35 to have it shipped from England. I was selling some games on Facebook and a gamer in Germany wanted two of them, but that was before I told him it would be \$90 to ship them! I recently purchased some 1/300th buildings from the UK and the shipping cost certainly wasn't cheap. Gamers over in Europe are complaining about the shipping prices of U.S. games and sending anything to/from Australia needs to be accompanied by a boatload of cash to cover the shipping costs!

Many companies who used to ship to second parties to have them finish the shipping in certain countries or pool their resources together are now abandoning those efforts. A few game companies are getting to the point where they're not even going to offer overseas shipping. Several of the Kickstarter game projects that are produced outside of the U.S. are having the ships carrying the games stop



off in Europe first, then on to the U.S in an effort to cut down the shipping costs, which for the size of some of these games would be astronomical.

Then you have the cost of the games and figures themselves. Some boxed starter sets can be \$125-\$270 and contain less than 50 models! Even GHQ, who has some of the best models on the planet is not immune. I was considering getting back into modern naval, but a USN carrier and a three escorts with shipping could set me back almost \$90! There was an interesting Kickstarter science fiction game I was really curious about as our group likes Twilight Imperium, Space Empires, etc. With the add-ons and shipping it was going to be well over \$225. Now this is for something you've never played and it may only be played once with your gaming group, plus who knows if it was properly developed and/or play tested?

Now price and shipping to this point haven't slowed down the hobby, but you sense a seismic shift is coming. How long can gamers keep justifying huge shipping expenses or the rather large cost of a game that may never get played? This isn't a theoretical exercise or another "Warhammer costs too much post", but rather something that is happening in the real world as we speak. The question seems to be in the vein of where is this going? We haven't even mentioned increasing packaging costs, inflation, shortages of trucks/drivers, shipping container costs (up 400%), materials shortages, and whole host of other things that could influence the price of gaming items.

There's been hiccups in the gaming industry several times over the years and the hobby has survived. Not only that, it's grown and flourished to levels never seen before. Could this be a convergence of problems that might be too much to overcome? If you're

spending \$200 a month for game stuff and all of a sudden the costs go to \$235, do you just shell out the extra \$35 and go merrily on you way? Many certainly will. Do you cut back and only get 3/4 of the things you usually buy each month? How will this affect game companies in terms of what they offer? There are so many questions and while the can has been kicked down the road numerous times before, it might be too big this time.

Then there is the question of 3D printing, for which now there are files for buildings, ships, figures, accessories, and more, which are relatively cheap to print. At this time not many gamers have 3D printers, but could that change? I've seen gamers who would usually drop a couple of hundred dollars on buildings now printing their own. That's the loss of sales to some game company or companies. What happens when a lot of gamers start doing that? You're also seeing the rise of 3D printed copies of WH40K figs and others, plus a large number of files to make armies in pretty much any scale. All of those things take away sales from game companies. It's only a trickle now, but will increased prices force many more gamers into this area?

Now some of this may have a positive effect on game companies and the product that they are selling. When prices get too high or when the market gets saturated, gamers will start taking a closer look at the products, maybe budgeting a bit, and try to select something that has long term value. Right now gamers are buying pretty much whatever arrives new each day! This has led to poor quality control, errata, limited play testing, and development designed to get the product out faster to maximize sales. High quality products with minimal issues is certainly something to be hoped for and increased competition would be good as well.

It definitely isn't the end of the world and the hobby will survive. It's going to be interesting to see if gamer's habits change or if things continue happily on.



From time to time we do venture into the realm of science fiction gaming, although usually it takes the form of either Twilight Imperium or Space Empires. While many of us “back in the day” had armies for Starguard, Ral Partha sci-fi figures, Traveller forces, and even played Dirtside at one point, science fiction miniatures gaming is rare for us these days. However, one of the club’s members does have Galactic Heroes, a bunch of 15mm sci-fi figures, and terrain to go along with them.



This has been mentioned before in past issues, but the Fistful of Lead game system can be used for pretty much any kind of skirmish warfare, from the Samurai era all the way to firefights in a distant galaxy. Galactic Heroes takes the base game, then adds future weaponry, gadgets, etc., for a science fiction setting. The rules are a throw back to the old days, where you get the basics and then it’s up to the gamer to provide the additional accessories and/or improve upon the ones that come with the game.



Each player runs 5-10 figures, each with a card that has their stats. Each figure also has certain skills that allow for better shooting, ignoring wounds, etc., that adds some flavor to the game. Leaders and higher ranked figures naturally have more of these, making them tough customers. The game is played by handing out one card to each player for each of their figures. You then proceed from highest ranked card down (King of Spades, then queens, jacks, etc.). When you have the highest card, you pick a figure and it can perform two actions, such as move/shoot, reload/shoot, move/move, and so on. Simple, quick, and effective. You can get a four sided fight with 15-20 figures finished in under two

hours.

This was to be a three sided fight, with one faction humanoid, one faction similar to the Elites in Halo, and the third were the Hawkmen from Flash Gordon! All three factions were trying to retrieve a high ranking person who had crash landed near the town. There were special rules for how she would interact with each faction and how she would move/fight, which made things unpredictable. On top of all that, the town was a recent battlefield, so while the humans had all fled, there were still war robots wandering around who would fire on anyone!

The three factions entered pretty far apart, but that didn’t prevent everyone from at least getting a few of their opponents within striking range. Robots came out on the first turn and the combat was under way! Everyone began sniping at each other and one faction had the person of interest close at hand, but she fought back and escaped! Meanwhile, firefights were erupting not only between the factions, but with the wandering war robots.

Several figures went into buildings to search for various things, but no one found anything bad, especially since it was known that in one of the buildings there was a huge combat robot. The ranges started to drop as each side moved closer. Finally, figures started to drop from multiple hits and we had some of our first out of ammo events. The situation was confusing for everyone with the robot threat, trying to find the missing person, and making sure that the other two factions weren’t lining you up for a strike!

By the fourth turn or so, everyone had lost a few figures and were down to just a few here and there. Most of the robots had been destroyed and while everyone was now in close proximity, trying to move in the open was going to be really tough. The person everyone was after was finally spotted and set off a flurry of moves that signaled we were

close to the end of the game. With everyone realizing it was now and never, combat really got going.

Across the board all sides opened fire, charged into melee, and made a move for the missing person. Between running out of ammo, sniper fire, serious wounds, and more, the Hawkmen and the other alien faction lost track of things (or were too focused on killing each other!). This enabled the third faction to capture the missing person of interest and start moving them towards a vehicle that would get them off the board and win the game.



The other two factions now dropped everything and tried to intercept, but were too late and the game ended. With the set up, some brief rules explanation, and going

through the first turn slowly, we finished everything in just around two hours. The scenario was fairly straightforward, so we could have added more factions if we had more players for the game.

The system plays pretty quickly and everyone usually gets the hang of things within the first few turns. The ranges are fairly short, so you do need to get close to the enemy, which helps to force the action. You can also use these rules with any scale, so if you have some 28mm sci-fi figs sitting around you can certainly give these rules a try. The only issue at times is keeping track of the skills that each figure has, which in the course of the game can get lost in the shuffle. On to the next scenario!



Regimental Fire & Fury: Shepherdstown 1862

Battle Report

One of the final actions of Lee's Maryland Campaign in 1862 was the rearguard action at Shepherdstown or also known as Boteler's Ford in what is now the state of West Virginia. This battle happened during the Federal pursuit after Antietam, with Lee's army attempting to withdraw back over the Potomac River. The battle pitted the Union V Corps against the Light Division of A.P. Hill. The Union army had advanced perhaps a bit too far beyond the river in a reconnaissance by force, but then were hit by Hill's forces in a short, bloody battle that ended the campaign.

The small nature of the battle would lend itself to using Regimental Fire & Fury (RFF) instead of our usual Brigade level version of the rules. While very similar in concept, particularly with the movement and firing charts, there are

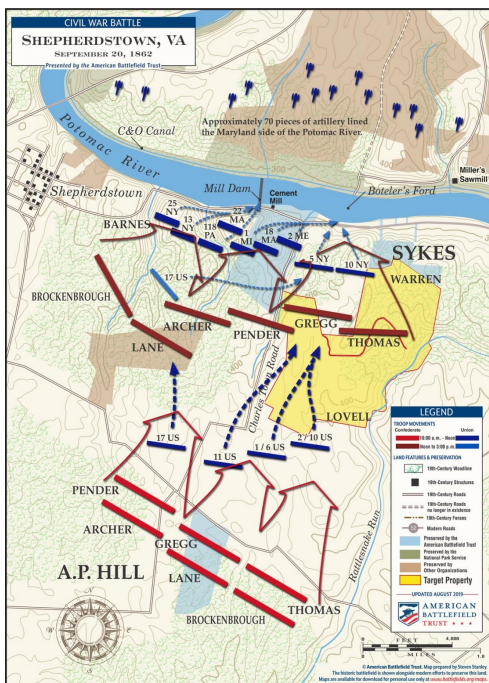


set to help out and forgot about it as well! So we needed to do an arts and craft session to get these things ready, which was amusing to say the least. Finally, with everything in place, sides deployed, etc., we were ready for the first turn.

units being in field column, trying to get maximum weight into the charge, while others started firefights. On the CSA left, one of the smaller brigades started to move through the wooded area to outflank the Union position. Surprisingly, the Union held on the first charge, being pushed back slowly. However, two units were in danger of being outflanked and pulled back to shore up the line. To simulate the number of artillery pieces on the Union side of the river, there was a special first turn bombardment that was expressed as fire points that were added to Union attacks.

The second turn was where things started falling apart. On the CSA right multiple units went in for flank charges, dislodging the Union units on that side of the battlefield. Other CSA attacks on that side made progress, but there was no breakthrough. On the CSA left one brigade put pressure on the Union center while the other kept moving around the flank. Finally, Union reinforcements showed up and started moving quickly down the road to fill in holes that were forming all along the Union line.

Turn 3 is where the problems for the Union reached a crisis point. Two of the units, battered by charges, finally had to pull back to the safety of the new Union forces just then arriving. The CSA was already halfway across the board on two sides and things weren't looking great for the Union. However, the Union was able to create a new line that was shaped like a "U" that covered both sides of the road, plus a few units, including a massive 18 stand Union regiment moved down the Union left for a counterattack. The CSA forces gathered themselves for one final push to break into the road defenses and end the game, but it wasn't going to be easy. (cont. on p 19)



differences in terms of formations, command & control, plus the various modifiers. It would take us a few turns to get used to the charts and modifiers, plus the maneuvering of the smaller formations.

While everything looked good and we had labels for all of the units, we overlooked the firing templates, forgot the markers, and a few other logistical necessities! How this happens to even the best planned games is still a mystery to me, but I could have brought along an extra

The leading Union brigade was in a bad position, covering a large amount of territory with its flanks in the air and no reserve. The second Union brigade was coming shortly, but the big question is whether or not the initial Union brigade on the board could hold long enough. For the CSA, A.P. Hill's Light Division had several brigades with multiple units rated as Crack, along with several leaders that would add modifiers to the movement table. However, they had a lot of small units, with the biggest being only 5 stands!

The small units would prove to be a curse and a blessing during this battle. They gave the CSA great flexibility in maneuvering as you could get multiple units to line up for charges against a single Union unit, but the down side is that they had literally no staying power and could get "spent" quickly. In RFF units start out as "fresh", then go to "worn", and finally to "spent". All units have a label describing to which brigade and division they belong to, along with a series of numbers such as 7/5/3. This means that while they unit has at least 7 stands they are rated as "fresh", which gives positive modifiers. When the unit has 5 stands left it is "worn", with no positive or negative modifiers. Then when the unit reaches 3 stands left, it is "spent", and that's when the problems (negative modifiers) really begin!

Hill's leading brigades moved out quickly and attacked, with many





(cont. from p18) The first CSA attacks go in against the Union forces holding the road and drive them back in one place, but they are repulsed in another. Meanwhile, the Union launches its own counterattacks on the CSA right, making some progress and causing damage to several units, pushing them to “worn”. A tense back and forth struggle erupts along the road, with both sides pushing each other out of the road, then losing it to counterattacks.

On the CSA left, the smaller units get locked into firefights and several charges against the Union troops in the woods. Despite several high odds charges, the CSA forces on this side are thrown back. The main issue for the Union is that there simply aren’t enough units to cover the entire front as the smaller CSA units keep trying to slip past them, which forces the

Union to constantly rework their lines in this area.

Back in the center and the CSA right, there are a series of firefights and charges, with neither side really able to strike a fatal blow to the other. By this time most units have suffered at least one stand loss, with several of the smaller units down to their last stand! The CSA continues to attack at every opportunity as their Crack troops modifier gives them an advantage. The Union line is still hanging in there, but the units in the road need to pull back to top shorten the lines.

More CSA charges break up several of the Union formations and by now both sides are on fumes, particularly in the center and on the CSA right. The Union counterattack, which seemed like it might succeed and end the game is now in trouble and is doing its best to just hold the

line and prevent the CSA from breaking through to the river. By this time it was nearing where we had to end the scenario and it was judged that the CSA would prevail in the end, although casualties on both sides had been much heavier than in the actual battle.

This was a very good scenario, but it felt weird with the small units and no artillery on the board! Once everyone got the hang of the RFF rules things started to move pretty fast, but it does take a turn or two to transition from the brigade level rules. The terrain certainly played its part, cutting down movement and firing ranges, which helped the Union forces in the woods. That the Union held out so long was pretty good as their position, especially at the start, did not look good! Overall this was a fun game and we look forward to trying the rules again soon.





Dune Imperium

Although Avalon Hill produced a Dune game well over 40 years ago, which was redesigned by Gale Force Nine a few years ago, that game was primarily about the battle for the planet Arrakis. With a two movie Dune coming out in 2021, another game has emerged about the struggle for the Empire as portrayed in the book and movies. Dune Imperium was one of the more popular games to come out in the last year or so and there are already a large number of add-ons that can be purchased for it.

First off, this is not a wargame, but a deck building and worker placement game that simulates a multi-faction struggle for a galactic empire. The board is composed of several areas that represent conflict zones, influence with the various factions, the planet Arrakis, and areas of the empire. There are a large number of tokens representing agents, spice (available only on Arrakis and the reason for the struggle), solari (money), and water. For such a popular game, the game pieces aren't great, but the rest of the components are.

Then there are cards...lots of cards. Each player (can be played solo, two player, or up to four) has a starting deck of ten cards. Additional cards can be purchased using influence points, but instead of being added to your hand they are put in the discard pile. This is a feature of "deck building" games as you try to get rid of bad cards to play the better ones. There is also a conflict deck and an intrigue deck.

Each turn, players place their agents using cards on the various board spaces. With each space is a reward in terms of spice, solari, armies, more cards, and so on. Managing all of this takes a lot of effort and the choices can overwhelm

first time players. At the end of the turn players use their remaining cards to purchase additional/better cards. Finally, combat is conducted in the conflict area and awards are given out to the first, second, and third places. The game ends when either a player reaches 12 victory points or the 10 card conflict deck is out of cards.

The game plays in about 1-2 hours, although our first try was about 2 1/2 hours as no one really knew what to do! There are so many choices in terms of where to place your agents, should you pursue an alliance with the factions, gain more armies, purchase certain cards, and more. You could easily play this a dozen times and see a dozen different results. The game is not hard to set up and play, but the number of choices at times can paralyze players. If you're looking for a fast playing four player game with a sci-fi theme then this would certainly be a good choice.

Twilight Imperium: Prophecy of Kings

The one thing that you can say about Fantasy Flight Games is that they do produce a quality product and Prophecy of Kings is certainly an example of it. This is the long awaited supplement to the 4th edition of Twilight Imperium, which has proven to be very successful. However, Prophecy of Kings is not just a little box with a few add-ons here and there, but this is a huge package that will drastically change the base game.

The idea behind this new boxed addition is that some of the races went off on an expedition and accidentally awakened the former rulers of the universe, who are now intent upon reclaiming their lost territory. This in turn activates various races who were sworn to stop them as well as others who see opportunity in this time of strife. The backstory is well done and certainly explains why there are all kinds of new races that can be added to the base game.

Naturally, this gives you new faction cards, new technologies, new planet tiles, and too many other items to mention here. Suffice to say, this just increased

the replay value by a factor of 100! You also get enough cards and tokens to have a 7 or 8 player game, which would probably be an all day affair. There are also mechs for each race, which is a new kind of ground combat unit and each faction's mechs have different traits.

Mechs, however, are not the only new items that are included. Hyper lane tiles can be added to the starting board for faster movement, new technologies for all races, additional promissory notes, "sleeper" agents, commanders/heroes, and much, much more. The amazing thing is that everything fits seamlessly into the original rules. Most of these items simply give you more options on top of the hundreds of options that you already had.

For myself, it took me a few days to build new faction boxes, trays for the 7th and 8th players, adding the new cards to existing decks, figuring out how to stack

the new tiles into the boxes, and so on. It definitely can create some anxiety as you're trying to figure out what to add, which items are replaced, where can things fit, etc. I think I spent the better part of a weekend just trying to sort things out, understand what had changed, and how to fit everything into the boxes!



For some gamers this may be too much. In fact, many TI4 players have already said that they are just sticking with the base game or that they will add a few things here and there, which is fine. For those who add in everything, it's going to certainly make what is already a long game longer. There's nothing overly complex here, but don't expect to understand what your opponent can do now with the new cards, mechs, tiles, etc.

In the end, this is what makes the game great. You can now play with up to 8 players and the combination of races and cards means that no two games will be alike. Again, for some players this may be a bit too much, but for others they're already wanting more! If you play TI4 then this supplement is highly recommended.

Quite some time ago I reviewed the Legacy Edition of The Fantasy Trip by Steve Jackson Games. This was a redesign/upgrade of the old Fantasy Trip RPG system from the 80s, but on steroids! Using the old Metagaming micro-games Melee and Wizard as its base, Steve Jackson designed an entirely new fantasy world for players to explore. This Legacy Edition came in a massive box, with adventures, counters, maps, redesigned Melee and Wizard games, plus a lot more. After having just the two games plus several of the adventures for almost 40 years, the amount of stuff coming out now for this game is truly astounding!

The success of the Legacy edition has certainly provided Steve Jackson Games with an opportunity to market more add-ons and they are taking full advantage of this opportunity. Phil Reed, who manages this project (along with many others) and Douglas Cole of Gaming Ballistic, are also contributing a large amount of add-ons themselves. Not to mention Dark City Games, who has a number of adventures for their own similar system, but it works great with The Fantasy Trip.

The one consistent item so far has been the Hexagram, which is more or less a magazine offering. In these issues you will find ideas for spells, characters, adventure hooks, and much, much more. The artwork is consistent with the rest of the series of game supplements and there is usually something of value in each issue. There's usually all sorts of good ideas in these issues and I've already found myself going back to them here and there for inspiration.

Steve Jackson Games has also put out two books of fantasy adventures and Old School Monsters, which is similar to the old Monster Manual from D&D. Depending upon which level you chose in the Kickstarter project, these books can come with counters and cards,



which are amazingly useful and saves a ton of time. The adventures are well thought out, have detailed maps, and the two books have enough material to keep a gaming group busy for quite some time. You literally don't have to do much like back in the old days as the cards and counters provide all the information that you will need for encounters.

There are also all kinds of card decks now available, which are very similar to those that were in the Decks of Destiny boxed set. Steve Jackson Games as well as Phil Reed have produced a series of decks, covering everything from outdoor encounters, arena combat, characters, and more. You literally just have to shuffle and draw cards for various settings, opponents, situations, treasure, etc. In fact, one could just use the various card decks and the map creation system (on the inside of the boxed editions) to create a random adventure.

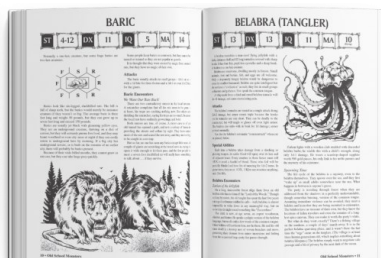
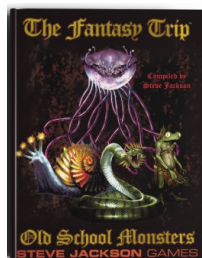
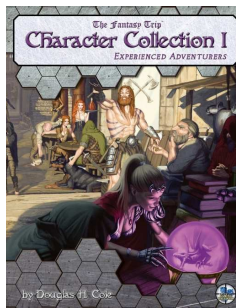
On top of all that, Douglas Cole from Gaming Ballistic has come up with a series of 10 adventures in booklet form along with cards and counter for many of them. A few of them are solo adventures, similar to the old Death Test, Grail Quest, etc., which are very good. The adventures along with the counters and cards are an effective combination, meaning that you can literally set one up in a matter of minutes. Gone are the days of reading through the adventure, preparing lists of items, making the characters, wondering what miniatures to use, and so on. Now you just use the counters for the characters and monsters, there's cards with all of their stats, and the hex pieces from the boxed sets let you make any map for each adventure.

Gaming Ballistic has also recently come out with four NPC, or non-player character books that cover magic users, outlaws, first time adventurers, and more. There are several dozen in each book, plus you can get the counters and cards for those as well, so they can be inserted into any adventure or when you need to populate a tavern or town without a lot of work.

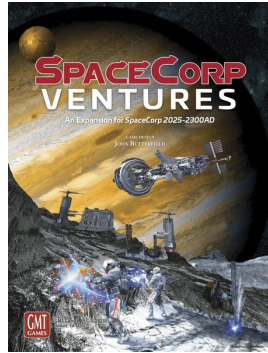
I haven't even mentioned the various play mats, dice, and other add-ons that have appeared. On top of all that, many of these Kickstarters send you additional products that may fit in with The Fantasy Trip material that you already have. For example, I received several issues of Delayed Blast, which is an unusual magazine that has tables you roll on for creatures, treasures, and more. Many other companies are producing additional adventure decks, maps, counters, and far too many other things to go on here. If you're into RPGs and/or The Fantasy Trip, you're ship has just come in!

This, however, leads to at least one issue, which is that there are so many things coming so fast that it is difficult to know what to pursue. Just keeping up with the stuff from Steve Jackson Games is hard enough and you'll need to set aside a stack of cash each year for the products that are coming out. Add to that the number of items made by other companies and you get the feeling that you are being overwhelmed. I finally had to call a halt to things when the character booklets came out as the extra cards and counters would have added another \$50-100 or so to the Kickstarter bill. In the future I suspect that I along with many other gamers may start cutting back as product is coming out faster than you can use it!

However, all of these are quality items and they greatly enhance the system. To see where things have come from back in the day is truly remarkable. From spending days making a labyrinth in the 70s to now having everything made for you has been a strange trip indeed!



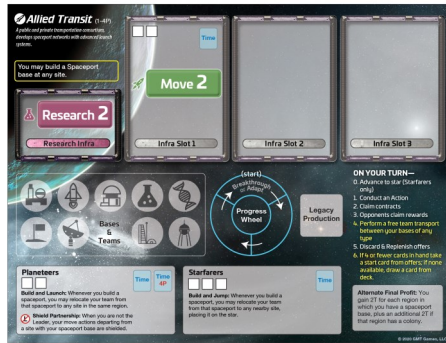
A few years ago a game seemed to come out of nowhere that was fairly successful. That game was SpaceCorp from GMT Games, which was sort of a corporate race into space with three different eras, lots of cards, and pretty good replay value. We played two games of it and while there wasn't any conflict i.e., war in the game, it was fairly fun to play.



they're molded in that new soft plastic material that many game companies have gone to. While the Warlord Games figures, particularly the horses are fairly thin, these figures are thin and light. When you pick up a base of them there is a noticeable difference between them and their metal brethren. Also, the plastic flash can be hard to clean and at times needs to be cut or sanded off. They were smart in that they included metal spears as this type of plastic probably wouldn't have worked well for spears.

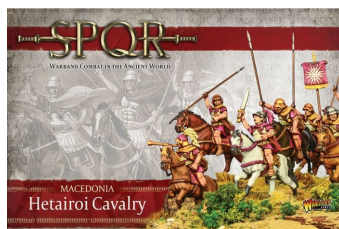
After what seemed like a long development period, a supplement has arrived called SpaceCorp Ventures. Surprisingly, it arrived in a box, yet there are just display sheets, about 20 new cards, two small rules booklets, and one token! Basically, this supplement just adds specific corporations to the game, much like the corporations in Terraforming Mars. Instead of everyone being the same like in the basic game, each corporation has its advantages and disadvantages, which should add some unpredictability to the current game set up.

The good thing about this supplement is that the cards are double-sided for the solo game, which is well thought out, so gamers can play in multi-player games or try to dominate the galaxy economically by themselves, all within the same system. A very well planned supplement that should keep this game going for quite some time.



Every now and then I expand my 28mm Seleucid and Republican Roman armies for Hail Caesar. I decided to do a unit of Thessalian heavy/medium cavalry and had got a pretty good deal on the Warlord Games Macedonian Companion Cavalry boxed set. The issue was that I needed another four figures for a unit of twelve. I looked around and decided to try one of the new SPQR boxed sets of Hetairoi Cavalry, which had six figures in it.

Basically, it's the same figures in the Companion Cavalry boxed set with one big exception;



The figures look fine painted up and mix well with the metal versions. This is an interesting trend and going forward I'll probably have to try some more different types of figures to see what works and what doesn't with this type of material.

Now that we've had a few winter battles using early East Front forces, it's time to move on to the later period. So for that I need some JS-2s, T-34/85s, SU-122s, and so on in 1/285th scale, which usually means multiple GHQ purchases. To illustrate how far the company has come in terms of quality and modeling, I recently made two purchases of GHQ figures.

The first was a pack of SU-85s that must have been from the 90s or early 2000s and the second pack was some JS-2s, which looked to have been reworked and in the latest packaging.

While both sets of vehicles were good, the JS-2s were definitely miniature works of art! The SU-85s were fine, but the engine gratings were hard to see, the barrels a bit flimsy, and the road wheels were there, but not well defined. They were still really good models and painted up well, but were not in the



same league as the JS-2s.

The JS-2s had the various engine gratings, tow cables, turret moldings, and more all sculpted onto the model. The fit was outstanding and when painted, they definitely stand out on the tabletop. How they keep continually improving is beyond me, but each year GHQ puts out newer and better models. Their last email had some truly impressive offerings, especially the modern armor, which is good considering that Cold War Commander 2 is out sometime soon and we might get into that period as well!

Occasionally, I'll pick up a fantasy miniature here and there to paint just so it breaks up the routine of painting 100+ Macedonian pike, French line infantry, or hordes of 1/285th infantry. As my collection of The Fantasy Trip modules, books, and accessories grows, I've been adding some figures to my fantasy collection for use with that game system. As many of you probably already know, there are thousands upon thousands of fantasy miniatures out there.



While looking through seemingly endless images on Google and listings on Ebay, I came across a Russian company called Fantasy Mini, who produces true 28mm scale fantasy figures. While the range is still quite small, the figures that are available are pretty impressive. Molded in a type of resin/hard plastic, these miniatures come with different heads, weapons, and well sculpted bases.

They are also a joy to paint and the finished product will definitely stand out from other fantasy figures that you may already have. So far I've finished a ranger, a female wizard, a male wizard, and am looking to add a few more here and there. Not cheap (around \$12-15 each), but they are amazing.

One of the best 4 player wargames of all time has to be Successors. First put out by Avalon Hill, then the very popular GMT version, this game has stood the test of time. When GMT said that it was not going to reprint the game, Phalanx picked it up and after a long Kickstarter process (scheduled for delivery in Oct 2020) it finally arrived in August of 2021.



For those who wish a little more background, Successors is a game about control of the known world after the death of Alexander The Great. His generals basically separated his kingdom into several parts, then proceeded to make war against each other in an effort to become ruler of not only Macedonia, but all of Alexander's previous conquests. The game features armies, fleets, political control,



treachery, and much, much more. It is a card driven game and with only a few turns, it became a very popular game.

The components are very nice and even though it's tough to outdo GMT, it looks like Phalanx has accomplished it with their version. The map is mounted and pretty sturdy, not to mention it looks really, really good. There are number of tracks now built onto the map, which will help during the game. There are also a large number of counters, markers, etc., that are of the thicker type and already rounded for you. You also get cards for the generals, then a Tyche deck (events, surprises, etc.) that are the size of the larger tarot cards. Finally, there is a rulebook and playbook, which again, are well put together with plentiful examples of play.

Depending upon what version you ordered, there is also a set of plastic min-

iatures for generals and personalities, a usurper's ring (marks who is ahead in the game), a funeral cart, tomb, and siege tower. All of these items are in the game as cardboard pieces (there are counters and standees for the generals), but the miniatures are a nice touch and are great as another option to play the game.

Since this is the 4th edition, the rules have been pretty well ironed out by now. While there are some minor changes to cards, locations on the map, etc., this is not a whole new redesign of a popular game. Most Successors players will be able to step right in and start playing with little reference to the rules. The main additions are a two player scenario, then several single turn scenarios for multiple players on top of the main 4 player game.

While there is a lot going on in this game and for many players it will take a turn or two to figure out what's going on, there is nothing here that is rocket science. The game consists of six turns, with five rounds per turn. Each player has five Tyche cards in their hand, of which one must be played each round. These cards allow for more generals, events, recruiting troops, and so on. There are also five cards placed face down on the map and one is revealed during each turn, which can at times upset your plans! Each player can then move their forces, conduct battles and sieges, train troops, and so on. A four player game with relatively new players could take 4-5 hours, which isn't bad considering the chaotic situation.

Players are trying to gain legitimacy and take over Alexander's empire. Capturing members of the royal family, winning battle, having the support of troops, etc., all add or subtract to each player's legitimacy track. Taking over Alexander's funeral cart or tomb also adds to this, so there is usually a multi-sided battle for various locations on the map. Add to that treachery, the events on the Tyche cards, ever shifting alliances, and more, makes this a

wild and unpredictable game!

Combat is relatively simple with a die roll, but adding the modifiers up for elephants, cavalry, general's ratings, Tyche surprise cards, various effects, etc., can make a sure combat all of a sudden turn into a disaster. The winner may take losses, but the loser could well have their army dispersed and its back to the drawing board! This is what makes this game so unique in that one moment it looks like

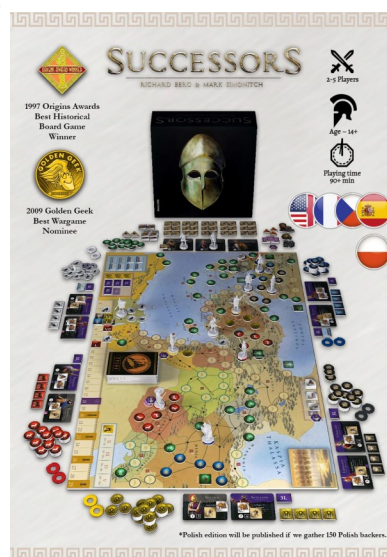


you might be ruler of the known world and in the next moment you're struggling to assemble forces for any kind of an army! It's one of the few games I've played where after a few turns a player was struck with several disasters and way behind, but came back to win the game.

Trying to juggle the generals that you have under your control, access to fleets, searching for legitimacy points, random events, training troops, and shifting front lines will keep players on their toes. The game has pretty good replay value in that no two games will probably be the same

and now with the addition of many single turn scenarios, there are far more options to play this than in the past.

This is probably the definitive version of the game and could well be the final version that gets printed. The game is beautiful, well laid out, and deserves to be played multiple times. If you're thinking about investing in a game about the ancient world, this would be a good choice. Not the simplest game by any measure, but well worth the time and effort.



BFE2: Sudanese Save The Day!

Battle Report

It's been a while since the last time we played Battles For Empire 2. After all of these years playing colonial battles it is sometimes difficult to come up with an interesting scenario that hasn't been seen before! While the British are colorful and have a lot of firepower, it was time to go back to the early campaigns, where the troops were a bit more unpredictable. This means early Egyptians, Sudanese, Bashi-Bazouks, and local militias!

The scenario sounds a bit complex, but in practice really wasn't. The governor-general of the province has led a cavalry sortie out to find the Mahdist rebels in the area. Meanwhile, a Mahdist gun section has been shelling the garrison and town each night. Thinking this might be the start of a major attack, the second in command takes charge! First, he orders all civilians to evacuate the town and they will be escorted to a place of safety. Second, he takes the best units from the garrison and moves them into position for a dawn attack on the Mahdist gun in the surrounding hills.

To win the game, the Egyptian side needed to do three things; 1) Escort the civilians off the board, 2) Hold onto the fort, and 3) Control the town. If they did only two of these things the game would be a draw and if they accomplished one or less that would be a major defeat.



Egyptian Order of Battle

Main Attack Force

(4) units of Sudanese infantry

Fort Garrison

(2) units of Egyptian infantry

(1) section of Krupp guns

Town Garrison

(2) units of local militia

Cavalry/Relief Force

(1) unit of Egyptian cavalry

(1) unit of Bashi-Bazouk cavalry

(1) unit of Egyptian camelry

(1) camel battery

At the start of the game (before Turn 1) the Sudanese units have come across what seems like all the Mahdists in the world boiling up out of the hills! The first turn began with an initiative roll, which the Egyptians fortunately won, allowing them to pull back a few inches and try to set up a defense. The cavalry brigade entered the board from the far end while the civilians started to move down the road (1D6 inches per turn).

The 13 Mahdist infantry units and three cavalry units attacked as soon as possible while others moved into position for follow on attacks. While a smaller force compared to most of our games, it was all in the same area while the Egyptians were spread out across the board.

The Mahdists came right over the hills and piled into the waiting Sudanese. Another group headed towards the fort and yet another group headed for the civilian column.

The Egyptian cavalry brigade, returning from its mission, sees the danger and moves to intercept. The Mahdist cavalry got caught in a traffic jam, but once they cleared it they headed directly for the Egyptian cavalry that was forming up for a charge. For the first few turns the Sudanese were hanging on, but just barely. They had repulsed all of the charges, but were badly damaged in the melees.

The Egyptian cavalry went into the attack, while the camels came to a halt



and their riders dismounted along with the camel battery, taking up a supporting position. The Bashi-Bazouks rolled really badly and fell apart, leaving a gaping hole on that flank while the other Egyptian cavalry unit did well enough to survive and counterattack. The civilians pressed on, with their infantry guard protecting the flank. (Cont. on p25)





(Cont. from p24) The Mahdists continued to press the attack, moving in fresh units to keep the momentum. The Sudanese continued to fall back, preferring to blast away at the enemy units in front of them. The Mahdists approaching the fort were now close enough for small arms fire and the defenders began to engage the approaching units. The Egyptian forces were now engaged on all fronts, even a sole Mahdist unit broke off and moved to attack the town's defenders.

Both sides were starting to suffer from attrition. The civilian column guards were fighting off an attack along with a unit of the town's militia. The cavalry brigade was fighting and dying to prevent the Sudanese from being flanked. The fort was preparing for a major attack and the Sudanese in the center were fighting for their very lives. This would lead to one highly critical turn.

The Mahdists rushed the fort, getting up to the ditch and pressing into the defenders, starting a two turn melee that would see heavy casualties on both sides. One Mahdist unit got almost to the civilian column, destroying an Egyptian infantry unit then charging the camel battery, which barely held on, defeating the charge. In the center the Sudanese were near the breaking point, but still holding on. The Egyptian cavalry brigade was now down to less than 50% strength, but still fighting.

The Egyptians lost a unit at the fort, but in the end it came down to a final series of die rolls that saw the final Egyptian unit defeat the last attacker! The column moved off the board, but without escorts as they had been destroyed. The town militia held against two attacks and the Sudanese, surprisingly, were still there in the center, defeating all attempts

to push them out. With the Mahdist strength rapidly depleted and not much chance to achieve any of the victory conditions, the game was called as an Egyptian victory.

This was a very exciting battle! Playing with 2nd and 3rd grade units is a lot of fun as you never know what's going to happen, plus they don't shoot well, unlike the British who mow down everything in sight! There were cavalry clashes, an attack on a fort, desperate defenses, and much, much more in the space of just three hours. Both sides did very well and there were a series of die rolls here and there that could have made things turn out much more differently.

Next time I think we'll involve some gunboats and an action along the river banks if for nothing else than a change of pace! Then, hopefully, some day we'll try a campaign.





Several more images from the battle. These are all 15mm figures from Essex, Old Glory, Blue Moon, Peter Pig, Minifigs, and some AB figs for the Bashi-Bazouks! We're using the 25/28mm basing sizes from the rules, but packing the bases with more 15mm figs, which gives a great massed look. Yes, lots of painting for 24 figure units, but it does look better for the Sudan.

SaltCon is probably the largest board game convention in Utah. In most years there is a huge spring event, followed by a smaller event in the summer. Due to Covid-19, all of the events last year were cancelled and while they tried to get the spring event off the ground this year, it had to be cancelled as well due to lingering issues. However, things have improved so the summer event was allowed to go forward.

This summer convention is a bit shorter, running on Friday, Saturday, and most of Sunday. The ticket prices are reasonable and it quickly sold out! There was a main hall with a large number of tables, a secondary hall with even more tables, gaming areas near the lobby, and a RPG room. With literally a few hundred games going on each hour, you could easily wander about and find something to play.

The exhibit area, which for the spring event takes up one of the gaming halls,



games in two days! While there were more wargamers than we thought there would be, you didn't see a lot of wargames being played. We're hoping for maybe a separate wargames room in the future as there were a number of people who came by who were interested in what we were playing.



In past years we had helped with a number of miniatures events, but this year it was strictly board games and we learned some valuable lessons about what to do in the future! We started out by doing a game of GMT's Grand Prix, which went well and took only a few hours. We broke for lunch and then came back after discussing some options about what to play next. I had brought along my copy of Twilight Imperium and Prophecy of Kings, so a lot of people stopped by to see if we were interested in running a bigger game. It's a convention

and it's supposed to be friendly, so we naturally said yes. Still not sure if that was the right decision!

and it's supposed to be friendly, so we naturally said yes. Still not sure if that was the right decision!

was confined to a main hallway with just a few vendors. SaltCon also features a clever idea with their offering of a "game library, where attendees can check out a game to try it. This was extremely popular and there were usually 10-20 people in there every time I went past! They also had the usual game swap room, but this year there were only a handful of wargames and unfortunately they were ones I wasn't too interested in.

Trying to run any game with 8 players is always going to be a challenge, made only harder by the fact that it was Twilight Imperium and three of us had not played the new Prophecy of Kings supplement. The set up time for 8 players was easily an hour, so finally by 4pm we were ready to go. We actually did two turns the first two hours and then broke for dinner around 6pm, then reconvened about 6:45, which is where things started

slowing down a bit. Fortunately, most of the group were experienced players and there was very little down time to look at the rules.

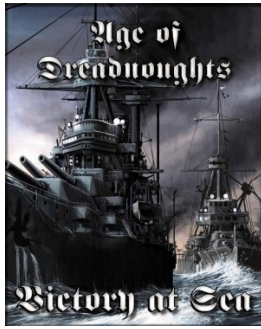
We almost had a winner at the 10pm mark (after 6 hours), but two of the other players launched suicidal attacks to slow down the player who was ahead! This made the game go on for another two turns and finally, around 12:10 am we finished! 8 hours for one game makes this something that we may not try again! While it was great to participate in it and say that you completed something like this, the last few hours felt like an eternity for those of us who were near last place!

On the second day we did a learning scenario to teach Combat Commander, which worked out great. Then, however, we committed the same mistake as the previous night and tried a four player game of GMT's Space Empires, with all of the rules, cards, etc. The result was that we called it quits after about 5 hours of play and we probably weren't even halfway done! Now it was still fun and interesting, but we could see that this was going to take some time and that there were just way too many options.

In the future, I think we're going with 3-4 hour wargames that are easy to set up/take down and that we can teach to others who might join us. Some of the games with all of the rules and supplements have turned into monsters that can be once in a lifetime experiences, but they really take a lot of effort. Games like Britannia, Angola, Successors, etc., are probably more suited for a convention format. Still, it was a good show and we got in a lot of gaming, but we definitely learned a few valuable lessons that we'll use next time!



Over the years we have played a lot of naval battles, from huge NATO vs Warsaw Pact WWII slugfests to the Age of Sail. Over the last 25 years or so that we've been a gaming group we have probably played 20+ sets of naval rules!



While we had played the original Victory at Sea system from Mongoose (now under the Warlord Games umbrella), it was quite some time ago, so we felt it was time to pull it off the shelf and try it again.

One of our members has quite a few 1/6000th ships for World War One, so it was natural that we use those. With that scale you can still fairly represent the size of the ships and a 4 x 6 table gives you plenty of room to have a group game. With four players and not having played the rules in years, it was decided that each player would run two dreadnaughts each, skipping the destroyers and most of the squadron rules in an effort to learn the movement, shooting, and damage systems on this night.

As with most of the systems in this game, there's nothing here approaching rocket science. Movement for example, is fairly simple once you figure out how to use the template. After an initiative roll to see who goes first in the turn, you select a speed, lay down the template, then move and complete your turns. At first it seems a bit confusing, but in practice during the game it becomes pretty easy.

Likewise for the combat phase. Each ship is rated for a number of turrets and their firing arcs. This is where the firing arc templates really come in handy as WW1 ships had all kinds of turrets on the ships that had limited fields of fire. Getting your ship lined up to use most of

them each turn is a real challenge! Each turret has a number of attack dice assigned to it. You check the range, go through a list of modifiers, then roll to see if you score a hit, comparing the number to how hard the target is to hit. Secondary weapons are in groups, often rolling 6-8 dice per side of the ship. There's no rolling for each individual weapon on each ship, so this abstraction definitely saves time.

Quite a few of even the larger ships have torpedoes in this era, so naturally if you can close the range you can certainly fire off salvos of them! Again and in keeping with the rest of the game system, there is a fairly simple method of doing this. You first roll to see how many of the torpedoes are on target, then to see if they hit. The odds aren't great, but if one does hit they do a pretty good amount of damage. However, you really need to get close and if there's large ships nearby that might not be possible.

Once you score a hit you then check for damage by again rolling a D6 and checking a chart which tells you what section of the ship you hit. A second D6 tells you how serious the damage was. Once again, this is a fairly easy system to use and it seems to do a good job rather than having continuous rolls about how serious the damage is. The damage can be ongoing, such as flooding or fires, weapons knocked out, ammo explosions, and much, much more. Naturally, some of the ongoing damage can make things worse, so once a ship really starts taking damage you're in trouble. Ships also track hits on the ship itself and on the crew. Once you hit certain thresholds more bad things happen.

Our battle, which was more of a training game than anything, had each British player with two battleships and each German player with the same. On paper it looked like a fair fight, but the better quality British ships definitely changed that! In fact, halfway through we had to

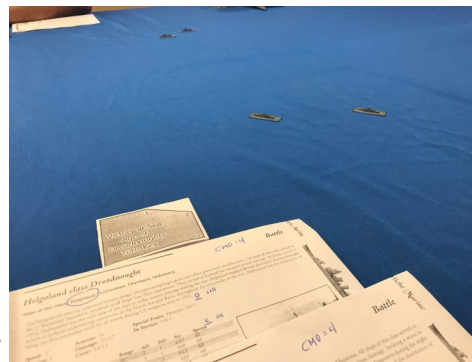
give each of the German players another ship each to even things out! Both sides moved in fairly quickly and there were some long range exchanges of fire by the second turn. Here's where the British advantage in hitting power started to show itself as the Germans took a pound-



ing and were having a hard time hitting back. By the sixth turn it was clear that the Germans were in trouble, with two ships damaged beyond control, another sinking, and the remaining three not doing much damage to their British opponents.

With nothing to lose at this point, the Germans pressed forward and launched torpedoes, sinking one British ship when it suffered a huge critical hit with its ammunition. After about three hours of play we felt that we had enough action under our belts to be able to do another game at some point. The Germans were losing this battle badly and would need to withdraw. In the future we would like to use destroyers, some of the advanced rules, and seeing how the system handles large battles.

So who is this gaming system going to appeal to? If you like Seekrieg, Harpoon, or Command at Sea, there's nothing here for you. There's no armor penetration, endless damage sheets, ship logs with pages of info, etc. Instead, this is a set of rules where everything gets boiled down into a simple system. If you want to get 10-20 ships out on the tabletop and finish in 3-4 hours then this is definitely something you want to look into. We had fun with the system, but depending upon what you like in terms of complexity, it might not be for everybody. You'll probably see another battle report shortly.



3D Printing for Tabletop Games

With all of the discussion and news recently about 3D printing, it's interesting that out of the blue there is a new book for gamers about the subject! Author Christopher Winnan has just put out a guide called *3D Printing for Tabletop Games*, which is available through Amazon as a free PDF file or \$2.99 in Kindle format, which is an outstanding deal.

Naturally, many gamers are going to ask themselves why they need a book when they can just buy a printer and get started, but that would be overlooking the incredible amount of information that is contained here. Coming in at well over 330+ pages (!!!), there are 38 sections that cover everything from the history of figure manufacturing to a listing of useful resources. There are sections on choosing a printer, the types of printers, large scale projects, buildings, and much, much more.

The format in the first section was mainly in text and the reader is left wondering if this is how the whole book is. Fortunately, this soon turns into plenty of images demonstrating all of the figures, buildings, game accessories, and more that are coming out and how they are made. While you get a chance to see 3D printed models on the web each and every day, I was surprised by how interesting it was going through all the sections and just getting an idea of what is truly out there. Even at over 300 pages you definitely get the sense that this book is barely scratching the surface about what is possible.

available at [White Bear Games](#) which use simple, but hold amount inspired by 1960s graphic design trends. Shure Oho has created an alternative set of buildings, which work for versions up to and including the 1999 version. I also like the buildings created by Leon Hender, sized to fit over the tiles in the 1970/84 version of the game, with initials to match the company names and heights, based on their stock values. Zachary Strohberg has created another set of buildings which will separate contemporary. Aspire sets to look like the classic version. Earlier versions of the Avalon Hill version came with beautiful etched plastic markers for the units, but the 2000 and newer versions have replaced them with simple cardboard tiles.



While Jo Pott has created a very simple set of the buildings for Panzer to replace the cardboard cardboard ship pieces that come with the game, they are not as impressive as the 3D printable crates and ships available at [Euros 3D Games](#).



Brian Yong Kim, aka Gamingjunk on YouTube, used [Bambu 3D](#) ([Bambu 3D](#)) to showcase 3D printing's amazing capabilities and recreate an epic field of the entire [Blitzkrieg](#) board. With the correct-detailed materials, recently raising nearly \$4 million, it is likely that we will see a lot more 3D



can be done in terms of gaming, from producing card holders, dice, etc., all the way to the most elaborate buildings, is well done and for the price it can't be beaten! Recommended if only to just glean some ideas for future projects.

Sarissa Precision 28mm Mediterranean Buildings

MDF/laser-cut buildings have been growing by leaps and bounds the last few years and represent good value for the money. As I was looking for some kind of Italian or Greek walled town, farm, etc., for my Hail Caesar games, I came across the 28mm Mediterranean line from Sarissa Precision. Not exactly the easiest range of buildings to



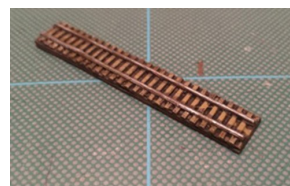
track down as your only options at this time seem to be to order them directly from the company or blunder into them every now and then on Ebay.

They fit together pretty well and once completed look good. The roof has the tiles scribed onto it, but it's more of a 2D presentation, but more than passable when painted and shaded. I've seen articles where gamers have replaced the roof with actual tile/card to make it more realistic, but that's a lot of work for minimal gain. There really is no painting guide, so you're left to your own devices about what colors to use, inks, shading, etc.

The interesting part of this range is that all of the walls and bases are designed to fit other pieces in the same range. There are wall sections, gates, sheds, and other buildings, so when pieced together they can form a large farm or with even more buildings and walls added, a small walled town. Overall, these buildings are highly recommended.

Leven Miniatures 6mm

Whether you're looking for 6mm railroad track, track buildings, bridges, city pieces or more, Leven Miniatures is certainly a



good place to start. I ordered some various pieces of track, various buildings, etc., for my winter BKC IV terrain and was pretty happy with their miniatures. All were crisp, clean, and reasonably priced, although the shipping from overseas is another matter!



Their online catalog features a wide range of commercial, residential, and rural buildings that would be great for any 6mm gamer. Highly recommended.

Downtown/Red Storm/Elusive Victory Aircraft and SAM Data Cards

One of the down sides to playing any of the GMT Downtown series of games, is looking at charts for aircraft information. Usually there is so much going on in the game that having to continually flip back and forth through the many tables to find how fast certain aircraft can go each turn is annoying. The Game-Crafter, however, now offers decks of



data cards for all three games, which retail for around \$12 plus shipping.

This is yet another in an ever growing series of fan made game accessories and these are most welcome indeed. The cards are well done,, colorful, and have all the data from the charts all in one place. I used them for a solo scenario for Red Storm and it made the game much easier to get through as all the information for the aircraft I was using on the mission were right in front of me!



These card decks are highly recommended and I look forward to seeing even more quality fan made game accessories.

Brigade Fire & Fury: Perryville 1862

Battle Report

Back to Brigade Fire & Fury (need to put the Brigade or Regimental in there since there's two sets of rules now for F&F!) and this time with four of us in attendance we went with Perryville from 1862. We weren't going to play the entire series of battles, but specifically the Confederate attack on McCook's corps. This would be played on a 5 x 5 table with a lot of terrain, but the forces were manageable and it looked fairly easy to set up.



member of our group was kind enough to print the unit labels on adhesive paper, but when we started cutting them out we realized it was on the wrong side of the

paper! So, we had to cut them out and use tape, which added a bit more time to the set up. We had dinner at a place that was a bit slow and so combined with the traffic it only added to the chaos. Finally, by a little after 8pm we were ready to start, when usually we're ready by 6:30 or 7pm.

That was our first mistake! For some reason we can really make some beautiful tabletops for fictional battles or when we're just throwing something together. However, when we have to do historical battles, particularly ACW, we just don't do a very good job. Trying to find the right lengths of rivers, roads, etc., is almost impossible, as well as trying to get the hill contours correct. In this case we only had blue felt to use for the dry river beds, and didn't have enough foam pieces to make all of the hills. In the end, we came up with something that passes for Perryville, but when we deployed the units we could clearly see that the terrain wasn't really that close to the actual map!

Then we had to organize the forces and there were some questions there. A

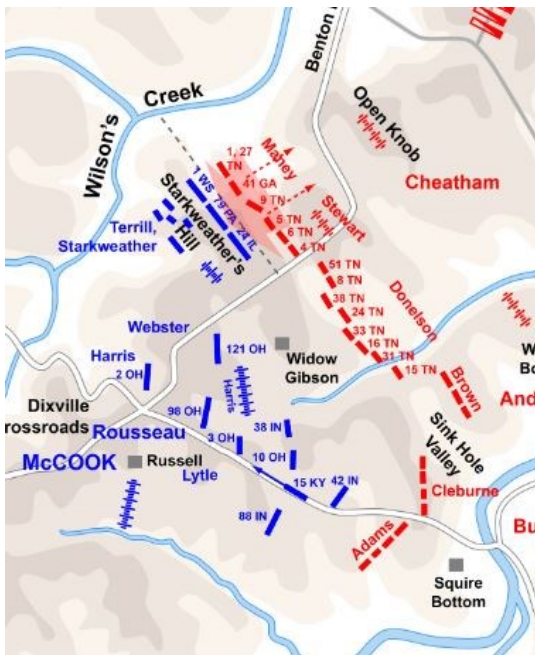
The battle is certainly interesting, with twisting terrain that prevents any massing of force. The Confederates have some good generals and officers, but getting the artillery into supporting positions was going to prove difficult. On top of that, the Confederate commands were jumbled and several other brigades were still off board. On the Union side it looked as if they were outnumbered due to how many units the Confederates had, but in reality the numbers were pretty close, but the Union had several brigades that were gigantic! In fact, one had an amazing 20 stands!

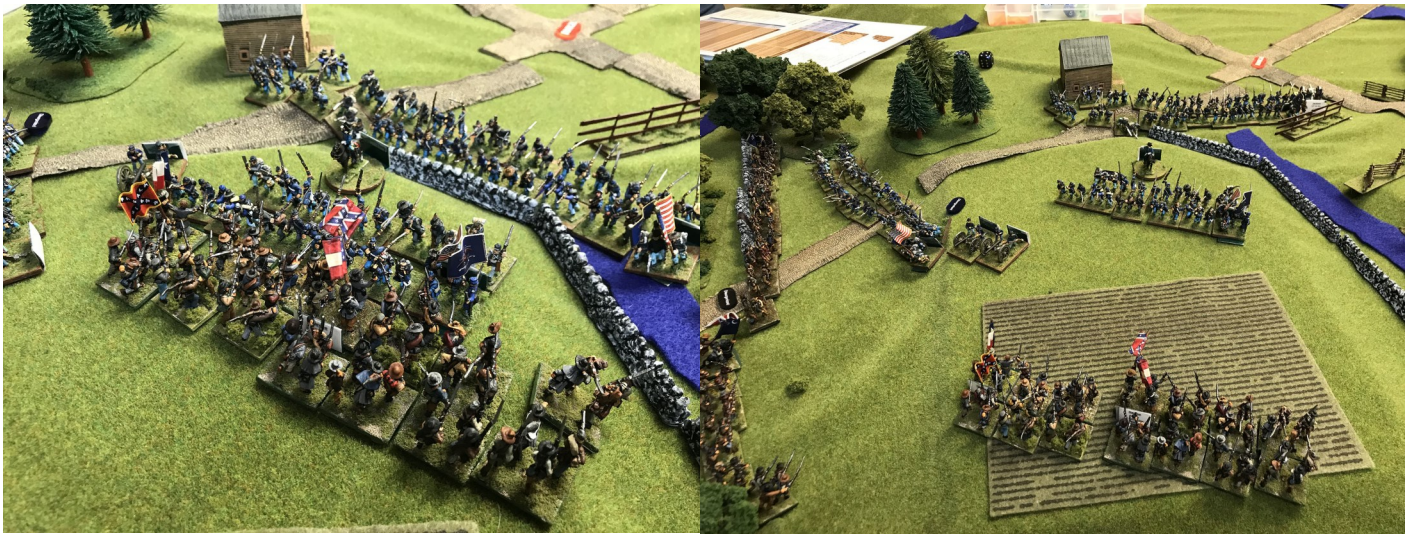
The Confederates went into the attack right away on both flanks, while they slowly moved up in the center. The issue as noted above was that the terrain, particularly the dry stream beds and forests, made it extremely hard to get a lot of combat power into one place, so the battle degenerated into several brigade on brigade actions. On the Confederate right the first attacks were repulsed, but on the left there was a success as the Union forces were forced back from a very strong position along a wall.

Both sides shifted some units and got ready for round 2, which saw more Con-



federate attacks all along the line, but this time the center and right made a bit more progress. A Confederate cavalry charge was stopped on the Union flank and another charge was thrown back, so the Union was doing fairly well at this stage, but it was a bloody affair. (cont. on p31)





(cont. from p30) The real danger for the Union occurred in the center, where two Confederate brigades attacked, were repulsed, then counterattacked again and this time forced the Union brigade to retreat. In its place the 20 stand mega-brigade moved up and stopped the Confederates, who by this time were getting worn down. The Confederates got another brigade in the form of Adams command, which was moving up to help threaten the Union right.

On the Union left, a bloody series of charges, repulses, counterattacks, and more left both sides weakened. However, one Union attack was checked and in the ensuing counterattack, the Confederates overran a gun battery. There were exchanges of fire all along the front lines and by the end of Turn 4 there were quite a few units that had entered Worn status,

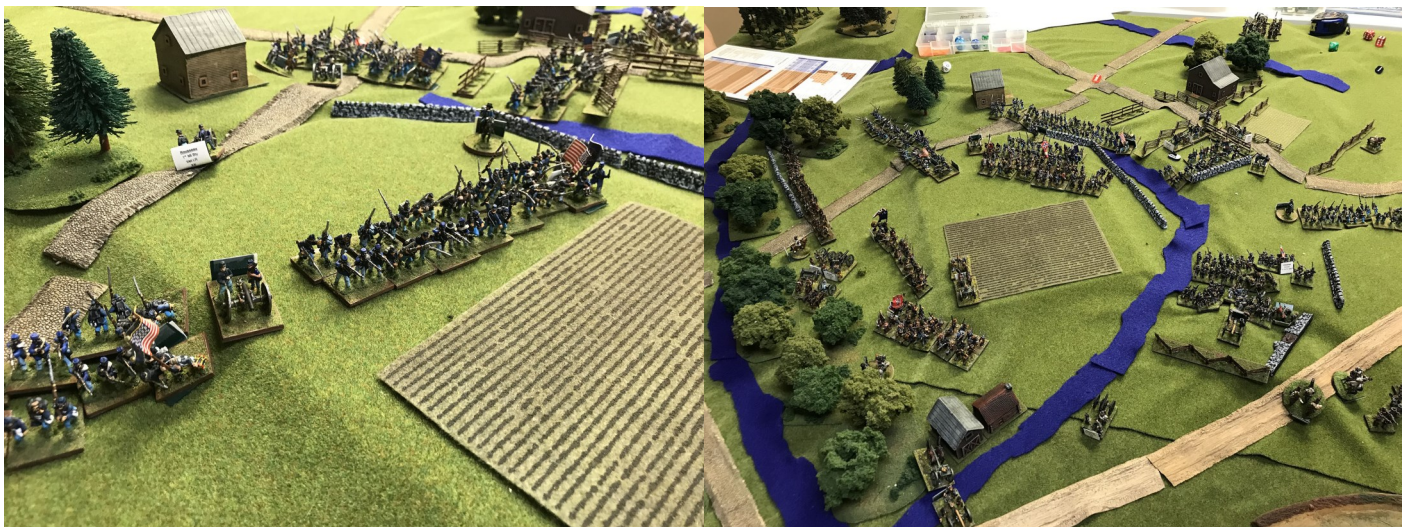
meaning that there bonuses for movement and hand to hand were rapidly vanishing.

The Confederates made one all out push across the front line, which had some successes here and there, but at the end of another turn not much ground had been gained and both sides took more losses, which replicated history nicely as this was a pretty bloody battle given its size. In some places the Union pulled back to shorten the defensive lines. The Confederate artillery was just getting to a few places where it could actually fire, so that would be adding to the carnage in the coming turns.

Unfortunately, we were done for the night, having played several hours and really not even halfway through the battle. We were confident in saying that the Confederates had the advantage at this point as the Union had retreated into a

half circle, but the question was whether or not the Confederates had the strength to make a breakthrough. The Union had some horrific die rolls in melee, but that usually evens out, so the second half of the game could have been much different. The terrain, as we expected, was a huge obstacle to operations and made attacking difficult.

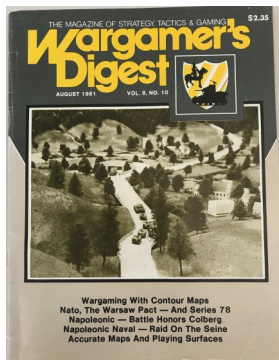
There were some lessons learned here, namely to be better prepared when doing one of the historical scenarios! We also need to work on the terrain presentation, which while certainly not terrible, could be improved. The GW green mats have worn out their usefulness and it might be time to get something with a bit more color that doesn't slide all over the place! We also encountered a few questions in the rules that we need to look for more detail. Still, it was a fun, but short battle.



40 Years Ago...

I'm always looking for BKC IV scenario ideas and from time to time I go through my old magazines to help me formulate some ideas. As I was finishing this issue here in August of 2021, I pulled an issue of Wargamer's Digest out of the stack. Lo and behold, it was an issue from August of 1981; 40 years ago to the month! So, I thought it might be a fun exercise to describe the magazine contents and journey back in time to see what was happening in the wargaming hobby.

Wargamer's Digest at one time was a pretty popular hobby magazine. There was of course The Courier, Military Modeling (which had a small wargames



So, you open the issue and after the editorial there is an interesting article about a Napoleonic raid on the Seine, which even today is an interesting topic! Not always, but in this case this is a well-researched article that goes on for several pages. Back in the day, gamers who wrote articles for Strategy & Tactics, The General, and many other magazine really spent a lot of time on them. They were usually multi-page affairs packed with information that you would have a difficult time locating without today's access to technology.

After that there was an article about adapting contour maps to wargaming. Again, back in the day, gamers were obsessed with realism and creating the best looking tabletop they could. My own gaming group experimented with all kinds of hills, cloths, foam, etc., in an effort to make our WW2 and Modern games more realistic. Here was an article talking about just that, using the Army's contour maps to create a tabletop for a game. The gamer who wrote this article found out the same thing that many of us did, in that this was far harder to achieve than it looked!

The article also showed what passed for wargame photography back in the day, which were black and white images of varying quality! In this article it's not too bad and you can see that there was a clear effort to make a pretty nice game table. Back in 1981 there weren't exactly a lot of wargaming terrain products, so you mainly used model railroading grass, trees, and buildings! Later on in this issue, however, there's an article where the gamers are using what looks to be a model railroad grass mat along with lego blocks for apartment buildings! Again, the quality was all over the place and at times you wondered if no photos were better than some of them, but you at least could see what they were going for.

Then we get to an article about NATO-Warsaw Pact battles and using Series 78. For those of you who don't remember, Series 78 was one of the first operational sets of modern rules, where one vehicle or infantry stand was a platoon. The problem is that the rules were never published (as far as I know) and were concepts, including supply trucks for all the units. Later rules such as Command Decision, took their inspiration from Series 78 and the organizational units were used by a lot of gamers.

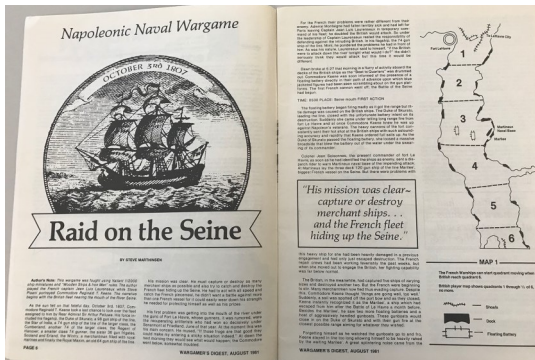
At this time in the hobby, modern micro-armor and 1/72nd scale models were in short supply. GHQ had the beginnings of what would be everything under the sun, but other than that you needed to order from Enola Games or Ros Heroics, with the quality being all over the place.



Most of the rules for this new era were very procedural and since there wasn't a lot known about some of the weapons systems, the ratings varied greatly from rules set to rules set! However, gamers and game companies saw the potential, so modern gaming erupted in terms of miniatures, miniatures rules, and board games. Anytime there was an article like this, which also included some maps and an order of battle, it was quickly copied at the local library and handed out to member of the club!

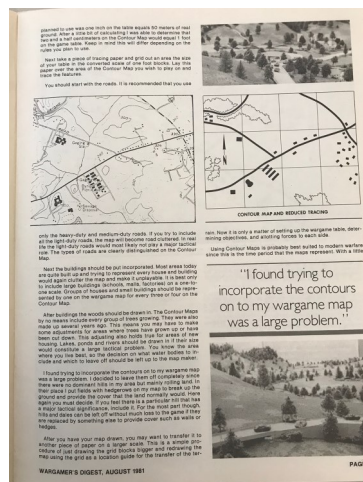
The article was pretty interesting as it was an after action report told as a fictional story, obviously taking a page from John Hackett's The Third World War style of combat action. It did however, stimulate interest in the period and I'm sure it caused gamers all over to set up the scenario and try it out on their own. For those who were into modern gaming at the time this was a great issue that basically had two articles about NATO-Warsaw Pact battles!

Then there was one of the most popular (cont. on p31)



section in it), Battle, and not much else unless you wanted to count Avalon Hill's The General and SPI's Strategy & Tactics, which were mainly for board gamers. There were some odds and ends, but finding them was a real challenge. Most hobby shops in the 70s and early 80s had magazine racks, so you would occasionally blunder upon a wargames magazine that you might like.

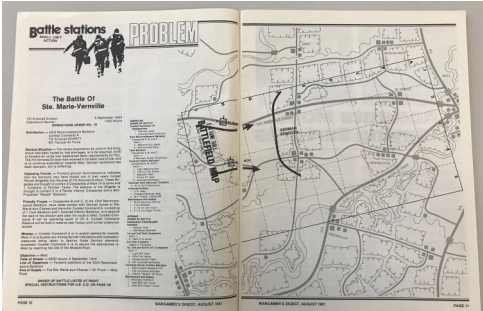
Without the Internet at that time, wargame magazines were a source of ideas, seeing what the latest releases were, and getting an idea about what was trending. New releases were a bit of a misnomer, because by the time you got the magazine, these items had been out for 4-6 months! Still, they served as a catalog of sorts, which again, gave gamers great ideas for future projects. In a time where wargame products and gamers were scattered, wargame magazines were the glue that kept the hobby together.



40 Years Ago... (cont.)

(cont. from p30) features in any wargame magazine and that was Battle Stations. These were operational battles set either on the Eastern or Western Fronts of WW2. They had a map for a 5 x 8 table (many groups used ping pong tables back in the day), orders of battle for both sides, and mission objectives. Many gamers today still use these for scenarios as they are timeless!

The only drawback is that they weren't always balanced! Many had roughly the same number of Panthers and PZI-VHs as attacking Shermans, not to mention the Germans were usually on the



defense. Many gamers, including our group, usually adjusted the forces to give a more balanced game. The great thing was that in each issue you got a complete scenario that was ready to go.

You just had to set up the board and forces to try it out.

Along with that, you also got a Battle Stations solution article towards the back that discussed tactics for both sides. While some of these were interesting, I'm not so sure they were always a recipe for success! In fact, one of the "solutions" I remember involved going off board, then re-emerging behind the defenses! For those just getting into the hobby, however, they were a great starting point and they at least got you thinking about how you would handle the battle.

There were Battle Stations for other periods (this particular issue had two; one WW2 and one Napoleonic), but they were fewer in number. They also didn't seem to be as well thought out as the WW2 ones. There were often times that I was a bit puzzled by the orders of battle and while several looked interesting,

you often wondered how they would work out as games. Occasionally, there would be a section called Pass in Review, which was a two page affair showing off figures that had just been released. The scale and types of figures were all over the place, but again, it gave you a good idea about new ranges, the quality of a company's figures, and more ideas for future projects. After that, you got to the fun part of the issue! That would be all of the things for sale through the magazine's own game store system.

There were several pages dedicated to Series 78 units, allowing you to buy the entire unit, from tanks to supply and recon vehicles. They were usually offered in three scales; 1/87 Roco, 1/72nd or 1/76th, or micro-armor. Not all units were available in all three scales, so mixing and matching was often a huge problem! Not only that, for the 1/72nd and 1/76th scale you had to build the models! Yes, this was back in the day where plastic models were often used for gaming. So, if you bought a panzer battalion in that scale you needed to build all nine tanks! This could be a good reason why micro-armor became so popular.

On to the next pages, which were more things for sale, but this time the focus was on rules. Even today it's great to go back and take a look at what was popular back then. Staples such as Empire and General Quarters were always there, but then there were some long forgotten classics such as Angriff, Fletcher-Pratt Naval Rules, and Wargamer's Guide to the English Civil War. There were books ranging from Squadron's In Action series to British tank markings. Other pages had adds for rules like Kampfgruppe,

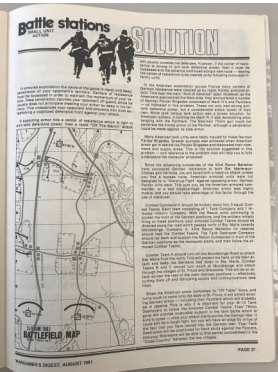
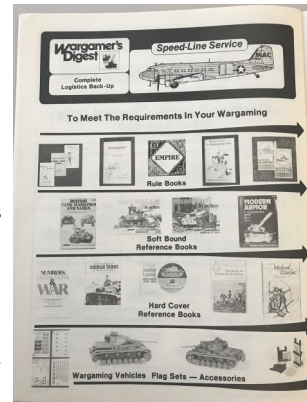
make your own figures from Prince August molds (who remembers those?), Jack Scruby figs, Mike's Models, and many more. Many of these things have gone by the wayside, but this issue brought back great memories.

The issue was then rounded out by a listing of gamers around the country who were looking for opponents or additional club members. It's great seeing so many who still played D&D back then! A few from our area still play in groups here today, which by itself is amazing. By the time you got this issue, wrote a letter, etc., that gamer you were trying to contact could have moved!

Finally, there was a list of hobby stores which was important at the

time. When you went on vacation or for a business trip anywhere near these stores, there was always a detour to go visit them! The back page usually had an ad for Squadron Signal or some other book publisher, but it was certainly a full issue.

As time passed, the magazine started to have problems. Sporadic publishing, some of the articles you had seen in previous issues appeared again to fill in space, and it had a hard time competing with the newer magazines which were full color and really changing the hobby such as Miniature Wargames and White Dwarf. As with many things in our hobby, failure to change with the times is usually a death sentence and by the end of the 80s for all intensive purposes the magazine was gone. Many of these issues are still around and provide not only scenario ideas today, but they give a glimpse at what the hobby used to be.



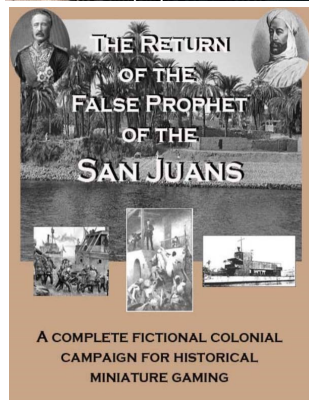
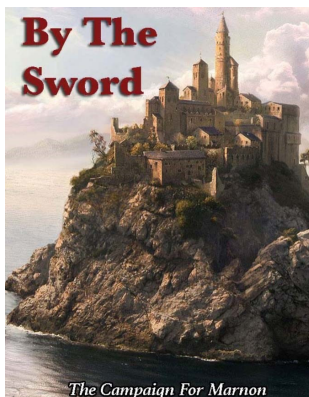
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Meets every other Friday night in the SLC, Utah area. We play a wide variety of games in 1/300th, 10mm, 15mm, and 25mm, including Age of Reason, Age of Discovery, Age of Eagles, Fire & Fury, General de Brigade, Warmaster Ancients/Medieval, TSATF, Phantoms, Mustangs, Saga, Battlegroup Panzergrenadier, Saga, Ronin, BKC4, board wargames, and more...

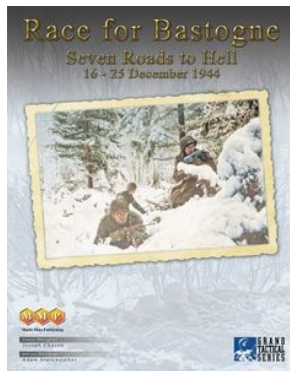
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Over the last year or so, there has been an interesting phenomenon occurring in the hobby. Whether it's due to the pandemic, influx of stimulus cash, society becoming more crass, or just a combination of everything, the patience level of gamers is at an all time low! You would think that with the incredible assortment of games, rules, miniatures, terrain, figures, etc., that everyone would be so busy with these things and their projects that worrying if something is coming out soon or not would take a back seat. Well, you would be wrong!

On forum after forum, gamers are displaying their displeasure with not only shipping times, but the development of games as well. Despite game companies explaining that they were short staffed, had people ill (and in some cases designers passing away), shortage of suppliers, transportation problems, and so on, all these gamers could ask is, "Where's my game?" They don't want to hear about problems, only why isn't a particular game in their hands! Did not someone tell them that there's a pandemic on? Even if the game is shipping, many want to know why so and so in a particular area of the country got their game first and how unfair all of it is. Let's be truthful here; many of these gamers are going to simply tear the shrink wrap off, look at the components or figures, then put it on a shelf for who knows how many years. Why does it matter if it gets there today or in three days?



But it does! Gamers threaten by saying if game so and so in a series isn't out for pre-order by a specific date they'll sell off the games in the series that they own. If games don't get to them within so many days of someone else getting it they want a refund. On top of all that they threaten to never buy from that company again and post nasty things on social media. The level of behavior is compatible with two year olds throwing a temper tantrum! This in turn seems to be forcing game companies to ship games before they are ready, leading to development problems, errata, and needing to send out replacement components.

Can't gamers look around and be happy with what they have? After all, it's a hobby, not life and death! Just because supplement 3 or game 5 in a series isn't out yet, it's not the end of the world. Pull one of the 500+ games or rules you have on your shelves and play that for a bit until the new items arrive. Speaking as someone who has been waiting over 10 years for GMT's EFS games to be reprinted, I don't want to hear about these issues! Many gamers need to get a life...

