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COMBINED OPERATIONS: WARGAMING WITH LAND, SEA, AND AIR FORCES

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FROM THE EDITOR

Well, it finally got us! After holding out for over two years *WiHQ* was finally awash with the Coronavirus in March, with five out of six office staff scumming to various levels of infection. Production of this venerable organ, and all associated online content, was seriously hampered by that pesky spiky virus as we coughed, sniffled, and ached our way into seclusion at various bolt holes away from polite society. But, with the spirit of the Blitz, 'Keep Calm and Carry On', and all that we managed to put together another belter of a magazine for you. It's not exactly the one we had planned admittedly; the finale of our Silver Bayonet Society campaign fell victim to the virus, and our Combined Operations theme has been somewhat curtailed by our inability to gather and game, but never fear because into the breach come several articles that are more than a match for those that didn't make it in (but will appear next month), and our theme still has enough legs to entertain you with wargaming content, beginning on page 30 with an examination of what Combined Operations is, and how we can then bring it to bear in our games.

So, coughing, spluttering, and cursing aside, we're sure we've pulled together another treat of illustrated wargames for you again this month, with plenty of painting (see the *Wi-Hammerhead* Painting Comp, page 36) and modelling (see *Transforming Ready Made Dungeons*, page 54) on the side.

Happy reading and rolling.

Dan Faulconbridge
Owner and Editor

This month's cover artwork is 'Army, Navy, Air Force' by Neil Roberts.

Below: Artizan Design's Soviets charge Bolt Action Germans in the battle for the Moonstrum Islands. See page 64 for more.



CREDITS

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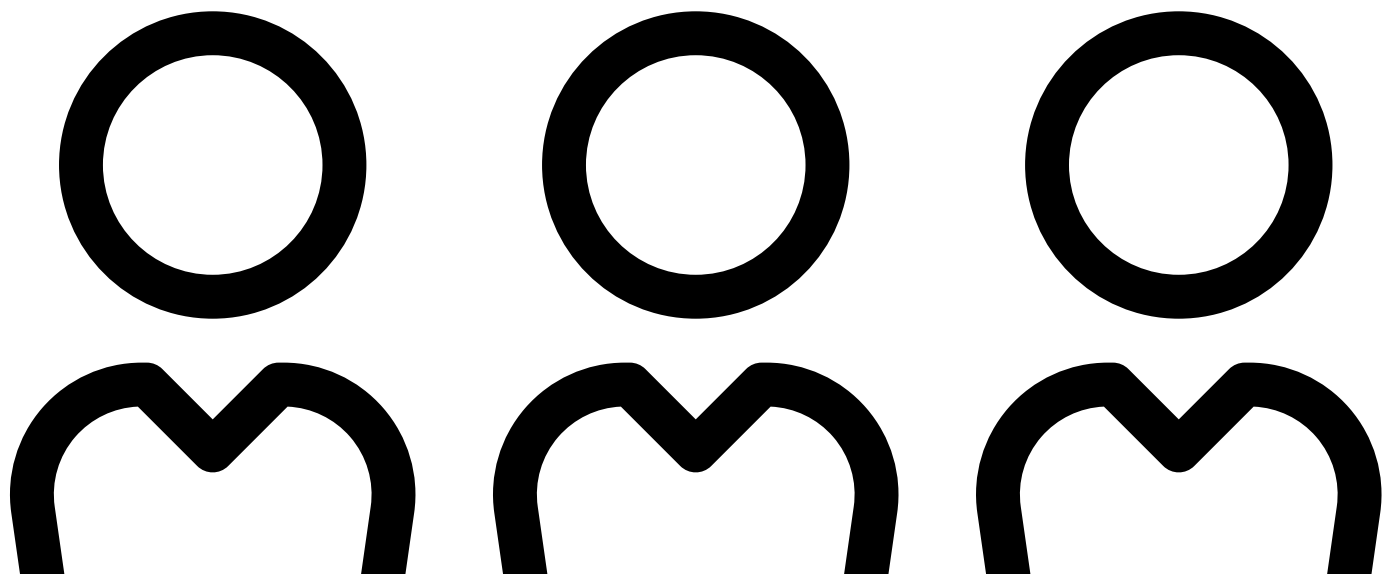
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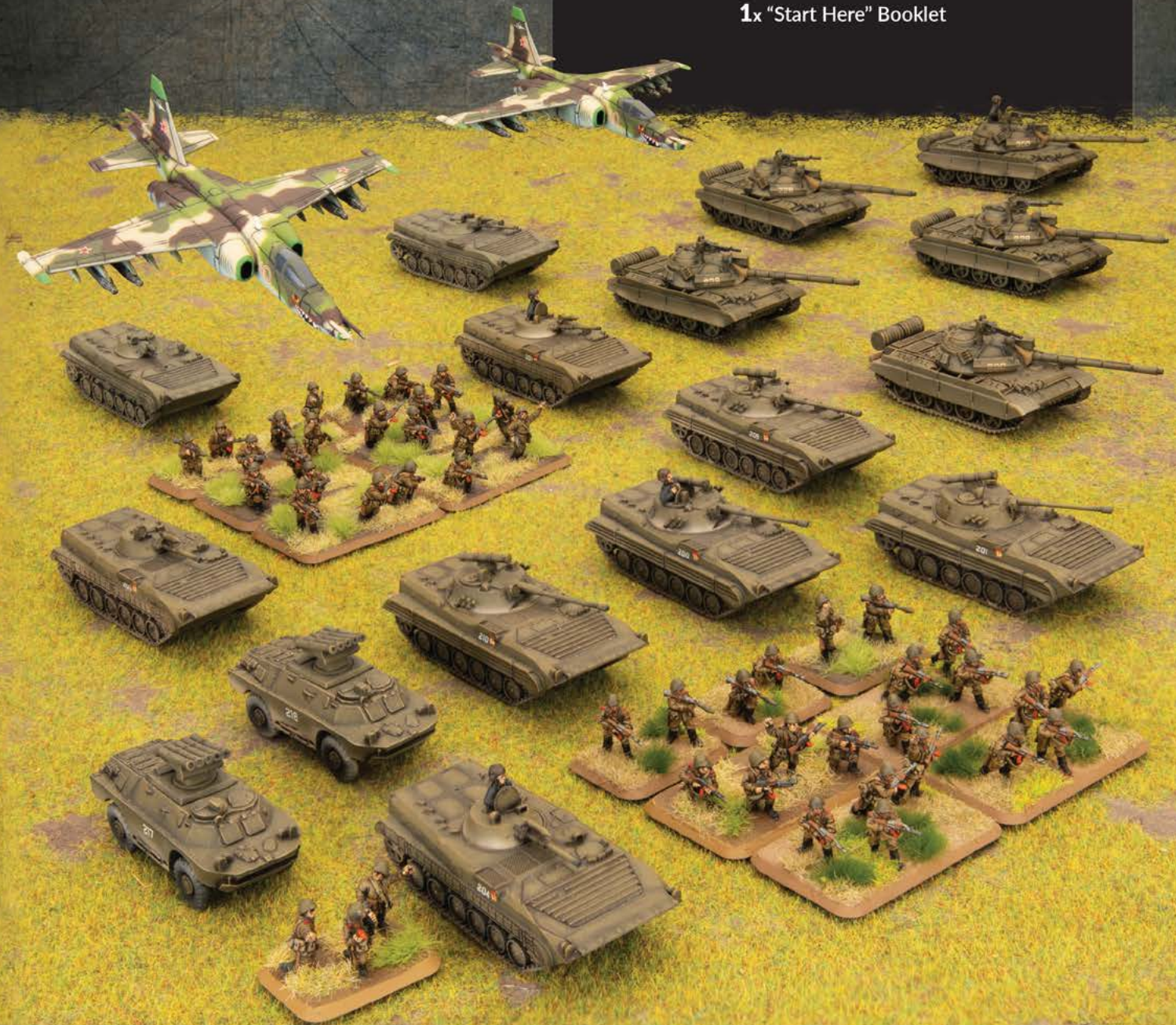
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QUICK FIRE!

Short, quick-read posts from *Wi* readers about their hobby projects, notes, news, and observations.

TAKING ON A NEW CHALLENGE

By David Bickley

Matt, my son, challenged me to take on a new project outside of my comfort zone - something that was not more 28mm metal figures in a real period. Reflecting on this, I decided to take up the challenge and after much web searching, I picked a small *Cold War Gone Hot* project set in the early 1980s. Being British, I chose to model elements of the B.A.O.R. and my pick was reinforced by a visit to family stationed in Celle with R.E.M.E. The project would be in 15mm, a scale I'd not worked on for something like 35 years, and I settled on plastic vehicles and infantry where possible; this is another unfamiliar area of the hobby for me.

I sourced the figures pre-Lockdown and got a good deal on several boxes of Battlefront's Team Yankee range to start the collection. I then picked up the Russian Infantry box from Plastic Soldier Company. There don't appear to be any B.A.O.R. British Infantry in plastic from either of those companies, so I have the metals from Battlefront. If plastic figures are released, I plan to replace the metals to keep the project homogeneous.

When I'd got all this organised, along came the Pandemic and Lockdown MK1. For some reason, I got cold feet with the Cold War, and the collection sat unnoticed and unloved until late last year when I decided to build a tank or two. That became the set and in no time the whole British and Soviet collection. Painting came in December 2021 when out of the blue a friend offered to paint the vehicles for me if I would apply transfers, base, and varnish them.



MORE **QUICK FIRE!** PLEASE!

Send us your Quick Fire! pieces and get yourselves a FREE magazine or Giants in Miniature figure.

Please get in touch with a photo or two and less than 500 words of text about anything similar to what you have seen in this column: so that's painting or modelling projects, rules, wargaming notes, and observations.

Send your emails to: wi@wargamesillustrated.net

Use the subject title 'Quick Fire!'.

Deal!

I set to acquiring terrain items and came across a company new to me, LaserCraftArt, who have a range of 15mm MDF kits of post-war and modern German buildings. I ordered small and large post-war German House kits and a rural settlement; they are simple to assemble and straightforward to paint. I also managed to find an old Architectural Heritage Rathaus in resin at Colonel Bill's. At this point I got carried away! I ordered more buildings from the range: Modern Apartment Blocks, an Office Block, and a run of three Modern Shops. I added further houses and shops from their WWII range, a factory I've yet to paint from Sarissa Precision, and a farm with a barn from Empires At War; Groß Bikelberg, a small German town, was born.



The venerable Scenic Effects rubber dirt roads that I carried back from a couple of trips to Historicon and Cold Wars in the '90s wouldn't cut it, so after much investigation I bought a 6'x4' mat from Geek Villain that was full of modern roads to cut out. There's still more to be done, but you can see my test terrain and the painted Battlefront plastic vehicles we have completed so far. When we might get to gaming is anyone's guess, but I'd hope by the second half of the year! When we do, I'll post it on my blog: talesfromghq.blogspot.co.uk



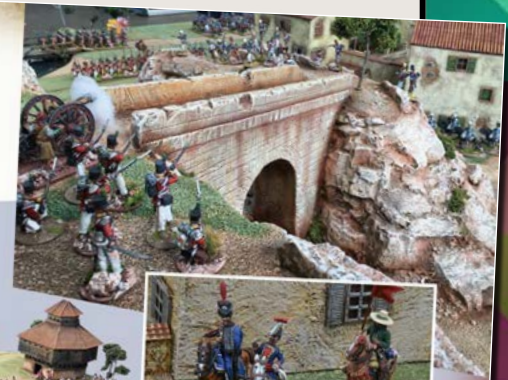
IN TRIBUTE TO IAN SMITH

By Dan Faulconbridge, *Wi* Editor

It was with great sadness that I recently heard about the death of UK wargamer and demo game maestro Ian Smith. Although I didn't know Ian well it was always a pleasure to talk to him about life and gaming when we meet at the various Partizan shows in Newark. *Wargames Illustrated* featured an interview with Ian regarding his fabulous 40mm Napoleonic *Sharpe* game in *Wi362*. As a tribute to Ian and his work you can see some photos of the game below and download the article from the *Wargames Illustrated* website.



"There are a lot of Sixth and Silver and Perry Minatures, a few Gringo 40s, as well as a new 'demon' line from the Honourable Lord Butler's Tail Company, plus quite a few that I've made myself and had put into models."



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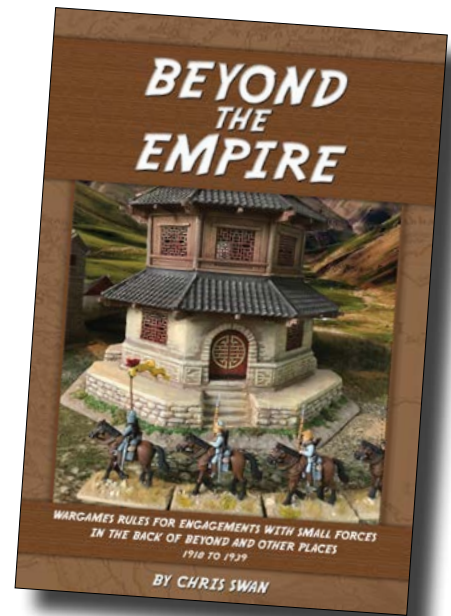
OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames stuff you need to know about

RULES, SUPPLEMENTS, FIGURES, TERRAIN, HOBBY GEAR, AND MORE

PARTIZAN PRESS - BEYOND THE EMPIRE

It's not long since we last looked at a Chris Swan book. His *La Cucaracha Mexican Revolution* rules were reviewed in *Wi410*, and we were impressed by the thoroughness on offer. His new ruleset is an equally dense offering that comes in a similar format, but this time he's taking on a different area and period. *Beyond the Empire, wargames rules for engagements with small forces in the back of beyond and other places, 1918 to 1939* is the book's not particularly snappy subtitle ... but if a picture is worth a thousand words, then the cover, showing Chinese lancers advancing behind a dragon banner, describes what's inside well. There's plenty of generally less-explored gaming options and exciting Eastern offerings within.



THE GAME

The game is divided into phases. In each phase the two sides take turns in randomly activating each of their units which then attempt to carry out their orders. Once that unit has completed its orders, play moves on to the next randomly selected unit and so on until all the units on both sides have attempted to carry out their orders, at which point the phase ends and the next phase begins.

The dice used are D10s with 1 representing disaster, 2-4 failure, 5-9 success and 10 an outstanding success.

When testing for Orders or Courage Tests each Leader or Unit uses their Order dice - 1 or 2 D10. Where more than 1D10 is to be rolled, the out-

come will usually be that of the highest dice score or that of the lowest. Some units with particular skills/traits may be able to reroll dice. When the unit becomes shaken it uses Reduced Order dice and is thus less likely to follow orders or any actions unless led by an officer, leader or character or has been given an opportunity to Rally and recover from the damage inflicted on it. When a unit shoots or fights in close combat they use their Combat dice for shooting or fighting. These can range from 1 to 5 depending on the unit and their weapons (see unit charts) with the possibility that each dice may hit. Some units with particular skills/traits will be able to reroll dice.



Beyond the Empire provides rules to cover the smaller conflicts in Asia between WWI and WWII; Asia in this case is everywhere from Southern Russia through the Caucasus and High Central Asia into China proper. Chris Swan makes it clear though that the rules can bleed both chronologically and geographically into similar conflicts, such as the Spanish Civil War or the French in North Africa. He even includes sample forces for *A Very British Civil War* and mentions other possible imaginary conflicts.

It isn't clear which Empire the 'back of beyond' is beyond, but these are rules for regions with little infrastructure, and in some circumstances, a very different way of life to what many of us are used to in our

history and wargaming. Broad steppe and plain are the order of the day, and the battles are fought between disparate forces, ranging from modern Western nations to troops that wouldn't be out of place a century (or more) earlier.

SAME SAME BUT DIFFERENT

The rules follow a very similar format to Chris' previous works, and the core mechanics will be familiar to anyone who has played his other games. Activations happen at random and are determined by card draw; your activated units attempt to fulfil their orders via the rolling of D10s with varying levels of success and failure possible. As the game goes on, units will take damage or fail courage tests, making them increasingly disordered. Once disordered units become less effective at passing their order tests, so you might want to bolster them with a character or get them to safety to recover rather than keep on trying to pass tougher reduced order tests. The nuance of the game, of course, comes with the new units and theatres of warfare available.

DETAILS

- SCALE: Any but 28mm and up are suggested for these skirmish rules
- PERIOD: Back of beyond
- PRICE: £19.50
- FORMAT: 116-page softback book
- AVAILABLE FROM: caliverbooks.com

Dice Score	Trait	Outcome
10	Inspirational	A natural leader who inspires those around him. Provided that he is not Shaken or Frenzied Down, any unit, crew served weapon or vehicle crew who part of his force and are within 12" of him can reroll a failed Courage test. However if he is killed or falls from the battle, and are within 12" of him must take an immediate Courage Test.
9	A Leader of Men	Known for his care of his followers. Any Unit led by him to within 8 paces, may reroll any Courage Test but must keep the second outcome.
8	Lucky	Blessed with Luck. He may reroll a dice roll during the action but must keep the second roll; he may use on himself or any detachment led by him or any detachment led by him.
7-4	Competent	All his training, skills and abilities have not made him anything other than competent.
3	Rabid-rouser or Disciplinarian	Keeps his men in line by fiery rhetoric or rules and regulations, mutually built and rally to. The Unit loses its post action while he is present.
2	Fearsome Reputation!	Known for his ferocious and bloodthirsty ways. Any unit he leads gains the Fearful trait so that any enemy charged by him must take an immediate Courage test.
1	Over-Confident	Known for his rash actions. Can reroll any failed Move or Wanting to Attack order ignoring any score of 1 and must also always follow up to close combat. This applies to the Leader or any unit led by him.

LEADERS IN COMBAT

Leaders normally only fight as part of a unit they are leading and add 1D10 to the combat dice of the unit they are leading but only if they choose to fight in the front line. If they do fight and the unit takes any 2 or more hits from combat, these may be on the leader. Roll the leader's action dice. On a 5+ the leader takes no hits. On a 2 to 4 the leader takes 1 hit, and if a 1 is rolled the leader takes 2 hits. If a Leader becomes separated they can be targeted by enemy Units either by being shot at or attacked in close combat. In these circumstances the targeted Leader takes any hits from shots or attacks made against them and they may shoot or fight back in their own right if they have not yet made an action or are holding. Alternatively, if they have not yet acted, they may opt to evade away in which case they may not shoot or fight but simply try to out distance their attackers.

The book begins with an introduction that explores the Russian Civil War in the south and east and the state of China following the breakdown of the Manchu Empire. Having set the scene, the rules cover the gaming basics: unit profiles, fire, movement, terrain, and all the other topics you'd expect. This is done in a well organised and easy to follow order and much of the information and systems rely on tables that players will cross-reference during gameplay.

TABLETASTIC!

There are a hefty number of rows and columns to check during the game: each type of order test has varied outcomes; there's a table for morale; leaders have traits to reference; unit cohesion impacts morale and is calculated via its own chart; terrain gets some rows, as does shooting, melee, and more!

We suspect these tables will entice some players with the depth of detail and narrative hooks they add to each dice roll but they may repel others - not everyone's a fan of regularly referencing tables during gameplay. Many of the results will eventually burn into the memory of veteran players but this is a game that most certainly needs the summary at the back of the book - ten pages of tables! Gameplay extras also come in the form of tactical, event, and search cards to vary your gameplay and a unit reference sheet to record the details of your force.

FICTIONAL FIGHTING

The book dedicates twelve pages to scenarios and covers eight varied options. They are all fictitious, but many take their inspiration from the kind of encounters you'd expect in the Back of Beyond. The first is a border clash between the Red Army and a Chinese Warlord, the second a punitive mission by the British against a native leader. The other six missions cover some set pieces that an action movie would be proud of: a convoy raid, a Chinese armoured train attack, USMC rescuing missionaries, a valiant last stand, a Hollywood romp with palaeontologists and bandits, and a Russian Civil War battle.

Rules for linking games into a campaign are included with strength recovery and reinforcements. These are all flavoursome additions and show the versatility of the rules.

All the forces have a leader and five units which makes for balanced games that are all relatively small - able to be played on a 4' x 4' table. The game is leader driven and this makes for intriguing gameplay that feels thematically correct - command and control are always an issue with these irregular forces. The way the rules



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

ORGANISATIONAL OPTIONS

The 'creating your force' section sets out Swan's stall and showcases the diversity available on the tabletop. Revolutionary, counter-revolutionary, and tribal forces are showcased and have heroes and special characters who can ride to battle on vehicles, horses, or camels. It's an almost dizzying amount of variety; these are not rules for those who like a stolid Western army, they are for gamers who will enjoy their force being commanded by 'Academics and shaman or Holy Men', ideally on a camel, perhaps riding in an armoured car, or even an armoured train! The more creative the better; pretty much anything is justifiable historically in this period. Units are simplified and divided into categories and sub-sets which means that the rules can cover everything from gurkhas to gun boats, tribal infantry to trains, sailors to sharp shooters, mercenaries to mobs, and much more without the need for hundreds of pages of profiles. Good stuff!


are written means that they are both comprehensive and adaptable, covering all troops types and all possibilities (see Under the Microscope).

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Additional rules like night fighting, barbed wire, and explosives are another familiar feature in Chris Swan's games, present here in one of the book's appendices. Another appendix covers other conflicts with rules for upgraded armour and anti-tank weaponry; even Orson Wells' 1938 Martian Invasion of the US gets a mention. When rules have enough breadth to bring in aliens you know you're onto something! The third appendix covers the special event cards mentioned earlier; these feature things you would expect of irregular forces: erratic supplies, missing ammo, broken down vehicles, etc.

This is a period that has a whiff of romance to it with forces like Dunsterforce, led by Kipling's childhood friend Stalky; Cossacks and Tartars being flamboyant and gallant; armoured trains and the occasional aircraft bringing fascinating technological progress to the battlefield. As a counterpoint there is also something of a stench of corruption to proceedings. It was a period of great social change with ethnic cleansing and villages put to the sword as a matter of routine. That makes for some gaming ground that is, at times, tricky to traverse, but these are events that should not be ignored or forgotten. These rules let us to do justice to the history, be it glorious or grotesque, on the tabletop. *Beyond the Empire* shines a gaming light on a neglected period and will hopefully bring new interest to the region and the era.

MOVEMENT & ACTIONS		
MOVEMENT RATES		
TYPE	MOVE/ADVANCE/EVADE	RUN/CHARGE
Man Handled Artillery	4 paces	Not Possible
Infantry / pack mules or man powered boats	6 paces	12 paces
Mounted	9 paces	18 paces
Armoured Cars & Wagons and Limbered Artillery	8 paces & 1 x 90 degree pivot	16 paces & 1 x 90 degree pivot
Cars / Trucks or Gun Boats	9 paces & 1 x 90 degree pivot	18 paces & 1 x 90 degree pivot
Trains	12 paces	24 paces
Most Types of Vehicles reversing	Straight back at 1/2 speed	Not Possible
Aircraft	18 paces & 2 x 90 degree pivots	36 paces & 1 x 90 degree pivot



EFFECT OF HITS: DAMAGE TO VEHICLES OR VESSELS			
DEFENCE VALUE			
VDV 0	VDV 1	VDV 2	VDV 3
Soft skinned e.g. car, truck, etc.	Improved/protected or very large soft skinned	Armoured Car or Train	Armoured Train or Armoured Gun Boat
ADJUSTMENTS			
Decrease DV by 2 if Target is	• Hit by a Artillery		
Decrease DV by 1 if Target is	• Hit by a Hand Bomb or Explosives or 'Perol Bombs'		
	• A vehicle in collision with a larger vehicle or crashed having run		
Increase DV by 1 if Target is	• Hit by a Unit or crewed weapon or a vehicle mounted weapon which made a Hasty Shot		
	• Behind or in cover		
	• Enclosed Vehicles with a VDV of 2 or 3 shot at or attacked with small arms		
	• Shooting at a flying Plane		
Increase DV by 2 if Target is	• Behind fortifications or in buildings		
	• Hit by an enemy weapon fired from a moving vehicle which is not vehicle mounted		

MODIPHIOUS ENTERTAINMENT - COUNCIL OF THE DARK BROTHERHOOD AND GIANT FROSTBITE SPIDER

Since Modiphius got the Elder Scrolls licence, they've translated the popular video game series to narrative tabletop battles in their game *A Call to Arms* and produced an ever-growing range of miniatures. The high-quality resin kits we're examining here explore some of the darker aspects of *Skyrim*, the best-selling video game from the Elder Scrolls series.

Wi Painter Callum has been paying close attention to these releases (he's our resident Elder Scrolls fanatic) and as soon as these figures arrived in the office, he started to reel off their names and backgrounds. The fact that he could recognise the members of the Council of the Dark Brotherhood - an organisation of skilled assassins - by just glancing at the sculpts shows that all the important nerdy details are present to satisfy the most ardent fanboy. Even to less invested eyes these are

clearly stunning, if rather intimidating, sculpts that have a huge amount of detail. They are true-scale 32mm, meaning that limbs are slender, hands are small, weapons are refined, and faces will require the pointiest of pointy brushes to do them justice!

These are all truly individual characters and represent some of the world's different races, so it's hard to pick out a favourite. Each has their own unique look, but a level of uniformity is created through the recurring style of the Dark Brotherhood's clothing and the detailed scenic bases that are included in the set. The figures look amazing, but that quality will probably be divisive. The crisp resin and relatively high price per-figure won't put off keen painters, but the detail and cost may prove more intimidating and off-putting to newer hobbyists who are used to one-piece metals that look far 'clunkier'.



The Dark Brotherhood's Nord leader Astrid is in a dynamic leap from a piece of rubble on her base and impresses with her unusual pose and the detail on her armour.



Festus Krex is a magic casting Elder who will challenge the painting ability of anyone who takes on the fireball being summoned.

Gabriella is in a bow shooting pose and shows off the amount of detail on these fine resin casts with clothing layered up and connected by fine stitching.



Nazir is a brave Redguard and has lighter armour than the rest of the group, which will please the more detail obsessed fans.

DETAILS

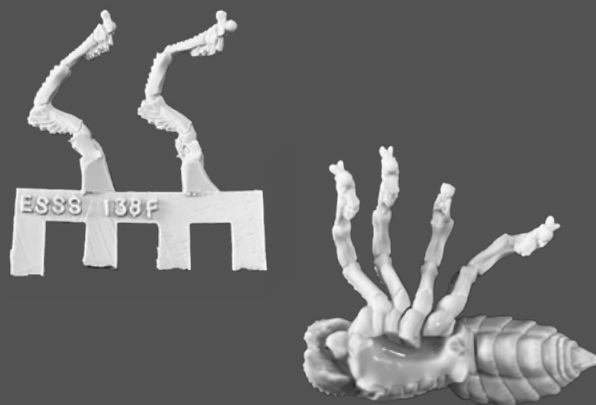
- SCALE: 32mm
- PERIOD: Fantasy
- PRICE: : £39 for the Council, £25 for the Spider
- MATERIAL: Resin
- WEBSITE: modiphius.net



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

A CONFUSION OF LEGS!

Putting the Giant Frostbite Spider together was a real challenge. No instructions are included with the kit and the legs come on several frames that, though numbered, have no obvious connection points to guide the build. The resin feeds are not particularly distinct from the leg parts either which meant it was almost impossible to trim the parts down perfectly. We removed more resin than we should have from some (and we are experienced kit builders) which left gaps when we eventually worked out the order of construction. These are hidden on the underside of the model but with everything else at such high quality we expected an easier job with construction.



Vezeera has far more refinement than we're used to seeing in lizardman miniatures. That's because his race, the Argonians, are integrated into the same societies as the rest of Skyrim's residents so have more of a 'human' look.



Probably the uncanniest miniature in the set, Babette looks like a Nord child but is actually a 300-year-old vampire and expert in alchemy. She's crouched over a body and hissing at an enemy.



The Giant Frostbite spider is a separate kit and a gruesome and dangerous looking creature with swollen proboscis at its maw and sharp angular details down its body and legs. We feel bad for calling it gruesome though; this could be Lis, a trained pet of the Dark Brotherhood, who Babette is particularly attached to.



ANVIL INDUSTRIES - HIGH-TECH DROP TROOPERS

If you're like the *Wi* team, you'll have a deep affection for 'bits'; that's what Anvil Industries provide, and they do it with aplomb. Sure, they have the usual character figures available, such as the Drop Trooper Pilot (shown below), but the thing they're becoming most known for is providing a plethora of detailed resin bits that can be treated as building kits for your hobby projects.

There are some keen kitbashers in the office - Project Manager James rarely constructs a model without delving into his collection of bits to add some extra details - so these Anvil options made our eyes light up.



The Drop Troopers have different legs, torsos, heads, arm sets, jetpacks, and weapons available to build your squads. It's easy to feel lost in the options, but thanks to clearly matched parts (arms are marked as sets) and weapons that fit neatly in place, it's tricky to make a bad looking figure. The look of these is rather like the *Doom* video game's main character, the Slayer, but with a little extra hard sci-fi layered on top.



Female Drop Troopers squad.

The parts come in male and female forms with distinct differences in physical stature visible but thankfully no obvious 'boob armour' elements present. The number of bits varies somewhat across parts, meaning you will need to plan meticulously before making an order or you'll end up with some extras. The later isn't a problem when things look this good; they will go into the bits box for a future project.

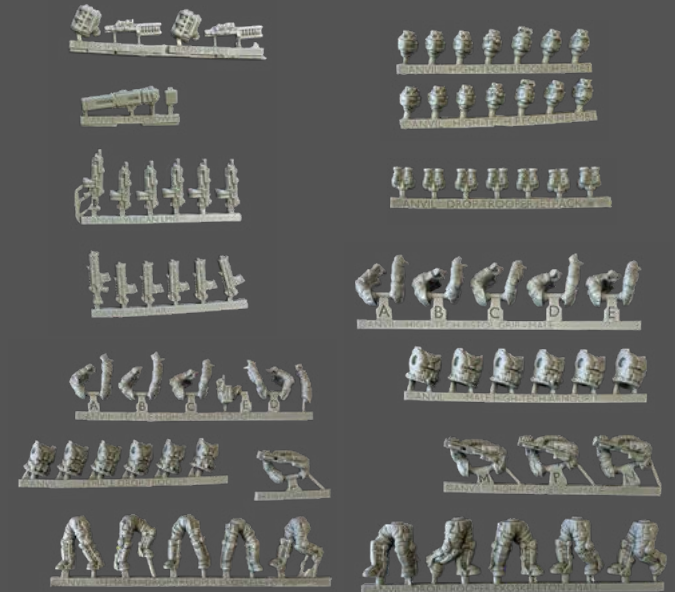
Prices are a little high compared to e.g. a big box of Perry Plastics - £3.50 for seven heads or six torsos, £5 for five sets of legs - but the goal here is to create detailed individuals for a small squad rather than ranks of figures. The end cost of



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

OPTIONS UPON OPTIONS

The real joy of Anvil Industries' offerings is that their parts are like a plastic frame on steroids, providing you with a huge number of options and bits to make varied models with a level of detail not found on plastic parts. The bits go together well, and they can be mixed across Anvil ranges (or with bits from other companies) to bring even more variety and options.



around £4 per-model is reasonable for more bespoke creations; if you don't want to scour the website for parts, you can buy bundled sets of Female and Male Drop Troopers, which is a handy option and saves a few quid.

If you like options, character, quality, and customisation in your figures, then these and the various other Anvil ranges (including more historically skewed options) will appeal. As they are 28mm heroic scale (with slightly bulked up limbs, weapons, heads, and hands), they'll also fit neatly with plastics from folks like North Star or Games Workshop.



Male Drop Troopers squad.

DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Sci-fi
- PRICE: Approx. £4 per-figure, £10 for characters
- MATERIAL: Resin
- AVAILABLE FROM: anvilindustry.co.uk

NORTH STAR MILITARY FIGURES - GASLANDS REFUELLED PUNKS

No doubt taking inspiration from Aunty Entity and her gang in *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, this latest 20mm(ish) Crew from North Star, designed for *Gaslands Refuelled*, comes in two packs: drivers and passengers, and warriors on foot.

The miniatures capture the punk look of the early 80s, bringing the obvious inspiration to mind - the *Mad Max* movies - along with bands like The Exploited, or even the Judge Dredd comic strip from *2000AD*. There's a good level of detail and character present here and that's down to the sculpting skills of Mark Coplestone (see more of his smaller scale figures on page 82) who has given these some serious attitude.

There's a mix of genders sporting towering haircuts that are more impressive for being maintained in the post-apocalypse! As with previous North Star *Gaslands* gang releases, the drivers and passengers are designed to fit in or on Hotwheels/Matchbox toy cars. There's impressive variation in the designs across the two sets of figures, and both the pedestrian versions and drivers and passengers all look impressively dynamic and angry.



Above: The gunner fits perfectly on the back of this converted Hot Wheels vehicle.

DETAILS

- SCALE: Roughly 20mm
- PERIOD: Post-apocalypse
- PRICE: £6.90 per pack
- MATERIAL: Metal
- AVAILABLE FROM: northstarmilitaryfigures.com



Above: NSPI0C18 Punks; the figures are roughly 20mm scale in keeping with the rest of the North Star *Gaslands Refuelled* range.

Right: NSPI0C19 Punks (Drivers and Passengers) includes two drivers, two gun-toting passengers, and one gunner designed to fit on toy cars.



HOBBY CORNER



Marc had already worked on some *Gaslands* vehicles as we're going to play some in-office games soon. These new punks were the perfect opportunity to add some extra character to his existing work.

Marc: I had painted my vehicles (converted using North Star's Implements of Carnage frame) incredibly grubby and rusty to look like they'd spent far too long in the harsh desert. These punks were a chance to add some colour pop to the tabletop. The girl ganger's paint scheme is based on House Escher figures and art from the Games Workshop game *Necromunda*. Sometimes you don't need to work things out yourself; there are great examples of colour schemes out there to be borrowed.

I gave the gunner a much more muted scheme to look like he's in leather. This felt more appropriate for a guy riding on the back of a vehicle and was more akin to the look of the characters from *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. I made sure the highlights were sharp and popped to give the material a slightly more reflective look.



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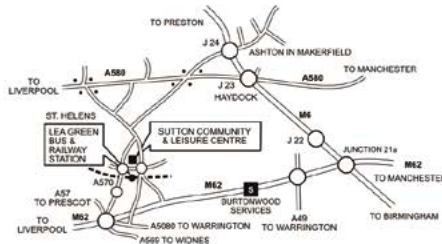
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RELEASE RADAR

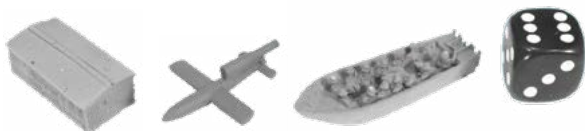


Dom Sore's our Release Radar operator, letting us know what wargaming wonders are on the way.

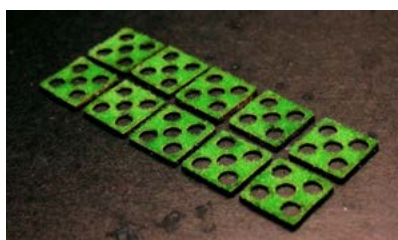
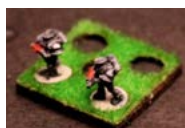
6MM METAL AND MDF

I begin with some new Scotia Grendel (scotiagrendel.com) releases in 6mm/1:300 scale. The V1 flying bomb, produced in white metal, is instantly recognisable despite its wings being overly thick (to provide robustness in such a small model). There is also an LCP(M) with troops inside, which makes a refreshing change from empty ones. This craft is based on a traditional Northumberland fishing boat called a coble and looks very different to most LCP craft of World War Two. A corrugated tin shack is a less mobile offering, but it will prove useful across more modern periods.

This month I have been viewing my Release Radar with enhanced clarity thanks to a new pair of glasses. What better way to celebrate getting some new specs than by peering at some really small things to put them to the test?

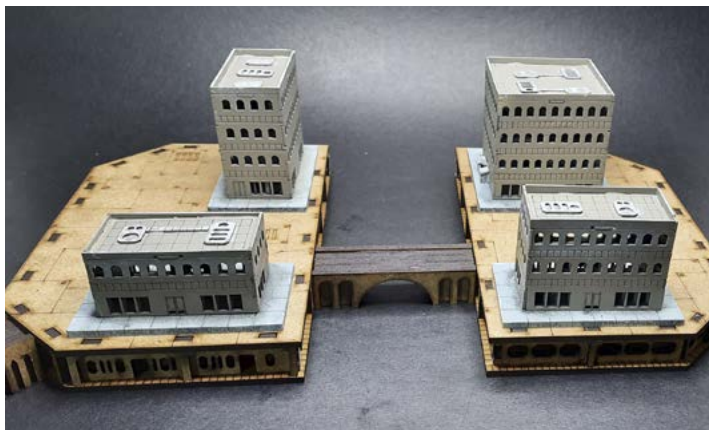


Above (Left to right): Shack, V1 Flying Bomb, and LCP(M) next to a dice for scale.



Above: Basing kit for 6mm figures.

Below: New City Tiles.



Iliada Game Studio (iliadagamestudio.com) is a Turkish company that produces a wide range of MDF kits in a variety of scales including 6mm, and that's what I'm interested in this month. First up is a basing kit for 6mm figures that comes in two forms: 40mm x 12mm strips, and 20mm squares. Consisting of three parts per base, these are cardstock main base, a second layer with handy holes, and finally, a layer of laser cut flocked sheets. These could be a very useful solution to getting figures based in a hurry, and they are making me want to crack out a very *Epic* game. Iliada has also released some new City Tiles in its sci-fi range. These are excellent kits that allow you to raise your 6mm city up from the pavement, and, though designed for sci-fi, they would be suitable for modern wargaming too as they look a lot like the sort of car park structures you often see as a base for larger buildings.

NIFTY NAVAL ARCHITECTURE

Things get even smaller with some 1/700 scale houses from Brigade Models (brigademodels.co.uk). You get 28 of these delightful structures in a pack and each is different (see right). That is a huge variety of tiny buildings that will fit your European gaming. Barns, shops, and inn type buildings seem to be present alongside various houses. In this scale, some clever painting and a little modelling will transform them into other structures too. They are designed to be scattered around the land in naval games, but I can see these making excellent scenery for air combat games as well, or if you want to make a fancy 3D backdrop for some photography projects perhaps.



Above: 28mm MDF Ship of the Line.

Going in completely the other direction in scale, there's an amazing new offering from Sarissa Precision (sarissa-precision.com) that will test the construction skills of all who wish to sail her. The latest addition to their naval offerings is a 28mm ship of the line. This is a large piece of kit - over half a metre long, and tall - which is perfect for any harbourside Age of Sail battle you may wish to refight. There is plenty of room on the deck for figures. I'm not sure you could use it for naval wargaming as your opponent is likely to be in another building down the road for scale purposes, but ship-to-ship boarding actions could be played out on biggies to accompany your smaller scale naval combat wargame of preference. It is made from a combination of MDF and Greyboard with space for 24 guns over two decks, both of which are accessible. The upper part of the ship is removable, as are the quarterdeck and forecastle, which will help out a little when storing it away.

WORLD WAR ONE DOWNTIME

To the First World War now. Scale 3D (scale3d.co.uk) is one of the new breed of companies that offer 3D printed resin options. These aren't standard fighting troops in the thick of the action (though there are some of those too) and that provides the option to add vignettes to the gaming table. Some of their offerings that caught my attention were the British figures cleaning clothes, French soldiers eating, and Brits taking pictures. Because they are digital files, they come in a range of scales; I am very interested to see what else they come up with.



Above: British soldiers taking pictures.



Left: French soldiers eating and resting.



PAINTING AND POKER

Ammo by Mig have produced a new Solution Box, this time for painting WWII German Winter Vehicles (migjimenez.com). The box (see below left) doesn't come with the vehicle, rather it provides you with the tips, processes, and materials you will need to produce realistic looking winter whitewash on your future projects. The surprise to me was that it only contains one basic paint; white, while the other items are there to help you create the depth needed: wash, chipping effect, oil, streak brushes, and texture effects. The 67-page book that is included takes you through the processes to get the best results with the products. If you want to follow along exactly, you could always buy the Ryefield Model 1/35 scale Tiger I Early Production kit the guide takes on. All the steps you need to follow are present, and you will be wowing your friends in no time by becoming a winter weathering wunderkind.



I don't know about you, but I am a sucker for a good gaming aid in just about any form, including MDF. The new card tokens (see right) from Warbases (warbases.co.uk) caught my eye; it takes a deck of cards and turns it into tokens. This will be perfect for various games that use card activation, and the MDF should prove more durable in the hands of clumsy gamers. You get a full standard deck plus two jokers at the high level of quality I've come to expect from Warbases.



NOT-NAPOLEONICS FROM THE PAST

A recent rerelease from Alternative Armies (alternative-armies.blogspot.com) offers the old *Deadloque* book as a download. This is the first time this *Flintloque* expansion (the not-Napoleonic game that melds fantasy with the concepts of Napoleonic warfare) has been available in a while. They have released the 5002 miniature set to go along with it. This collection of 17 figures, which can also be purchased separately, have been out of production for many years. Completionists who missed out first time around will be happy to snag this one! If you haven't looked at the *Flintloque* range before, then head over to Alternative Armies, there are some very nice figures available (examples below).



KNIGHTS AND COMMONERS

Claymore Castings (claymorecastings.co.uk) has added to its 14th Century knights range with four new figures: two mounted knights, a standard bearer, and a trumpeter. These are 28mm, made in metal, and come across two packs. The knights both have swords, and all the figures are on the move. I do worry about the trumpeter without a helmet, English bowmen would love that.



Above: Mounted knight and trumpeter.



Above: Gaerhart, Gertrud, and Gert.

At the other end of the social scale, but at the same size, are a family of commoners from King Games (dunkeldorf.eu). Consisting of a three-figure family, there's Gaerhart, Gertrud, and Gert; they come with a bucket and shovel. The wheelbarrow comes full of potatoes, though it could easily be something else. These are available as a set or can be purchased individually. If you like your little scenes on the tabletop, then they will be perfect for that and provide quite the talking point.

PARAS, POLES, AND PLUCKY ITALIAN WORKHORSES

Another bumper WWII offering this month, starting with Forja 3D (forja3d.es) who have a whole army for your delectation. If you were wondering where to increase the variety in your 28mm Polish army, then look no further! There are nearly 50 different options available from this prolific company (see examples below, including cavalry in helmets and caps, motorbikes, artillery, tanks, tankettes, infantry, and even an armoured train). Though impressive in its scope already, I suspect the range will continue to expand.

Blitzkrieg Miniatures (blitzkriegminiatures.com) have been releasing resin cast vehicles recently and have a Fiat truck and new halftrack. The Fiat SPA CL39 was the workhorse of the Italian army, though they never had enough of them, which contributed to their performance in the desert. Available in 1/48th and 1/56 scale this vehicle will suit any army as a troop transport or supply carrier. Sd.Kfz 251 1 and 10 Ausf B variants have also been added; these are the same basic kit with the 10 variant having the 37mm Pak 36 added to bring some anti-tank capability.



Above: Forja 3D AT rifle, observer, and sniper team.

Above: Forja 3D 75 Howitzer with C4P tractor and crew.



Above: Sd.Kfz. 251.

Below: Fiat SPA CL37.



I'll end with new metal figures from 1st Corps (1stcorps.co.uk) in its British range (see below right). These four new figures are all paratroops: two medics and a two man mine clearance team. The medics are not obviously medics but have enough little touches to allow you to differentiate; one is helmeted and the other is sporting a beret. The mine clearance team looks suitably engaged in the task at hand.

I am always on the lookout for unusual figures and new manufacturers, so if you think I am missing something give the *Wargames Illustrated* team a nudge and they will pass that on to me. If you know me already, then you can just bombard me via the usual routes. Until next time, fare thee well, and happy gaming!



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NEW BOOKS FOR THE DISCERNING WARGAMER

BY NEIL SMITH

Here we go again, gathering round the Maypole and pondering this year's intended beach books. As usual, this month we run through the historical wargaming periods to find that new project or bolster the one we are currently neglecting. But also, this month we have a couple of heavy hitters bringing out new books; so, sit up smartly, make yourself presentable, and let's get to it.

ANCIENT

When you mention the Roman Empire to most wargamers, they gaze into the near distance, envisioning steel-encased legions vanquishing barbarians from Scotland to Syria. Don Hollway's *At the Gates of Rome: The Fall of the Eternal City, AD 410* (Osprey) suggests, the real action might not be at Rome's peak but in its collapse. Here we have the Roman Stilicho and the Visigoth king Alaric, once allies then deadly enemies, fighting it out for all the spoils leading to the infamous sack of Rome. By then, Rome's army was semi-barbarian, a shadow of its former glory but still capable of putting up a fight under skilled commanders. These were also some of the last great campaigns in the West for hundreds of years, and as such an opportunity not to be missed for wargamers. Can you put together a polyglot army to stave off Rome's fall, or perhaps you might want to ensure its destruction from the barbarian perspective?

MEDIEVAL

For our medieval inclusion, I'm tempted to go with the colour and action promised by David Nicolle in *Medieval Indian Armies (1): Hindu, Buddhist and Jain* (Osprey). Instead, I'll tread more familiar ground with Zvonimir Grbasic's *The Templars at War* (Pen & Sword). If you don't know, this was a group of knights that protected Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land that became a legendary, fanatical military force during the Crusades. Grbasic narrates their organisation, daily lives, and history, including the battles in which they fought. There has been a tendency of late to wargame the Crusades at the skirmish level, but I still like the big battles, preferably in 15mm, because you get more



sense of the different types of forces on both sides and the contrasting ways of war they adopted. If that piques your curiosity, then this book might get you started on your own Crusade, or jihad.

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

We sail into some uncomfortable waters with our next book. *Dark Voyage: An American Privateer's War on Britain's African Slave Trade* (Westholme) by Christian McBurney follows the Good Ship Marlborough on its voyage from an America in revolt against Britain to the seas off West Africa to disrupt the British slave trade and deliver as much economic damage as possible. The Marlborough was wildly successful, almost closing the trade down completely. McBurney's book details all that but also considers the important role of American privateers in general. The nautical side of the Revolution is not a common sight on our tables, but here is a potentially fascinating campaign game with likely options for solo gamers. It strikes me that some of the mechanics for U-Boat rules could be adapted for this as the Marlborough hits British convoys without much warning. Throw a couple of Royal Navy ships into the 'what-if' mix and see where that goes.

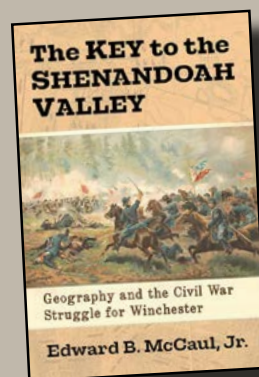
NAPOLEONIC WARS

Our Napoleonic book this month examines a group of men who, historically speaking, have been hiding in plain sight. Marc Geerdink-Schaftenaar's *Worthy of Praise: The Dutch Army in the War of Liberation and the Hundred Days 1813-1815* (Helion) takes a nuts and bolts look at this army who stood beside Wellington's British at Waterloo. The author not only tells their fascinating story, but also describes in detail their uniforms, arms, and equipment. He adds maps and orders of battle for their campaigns. This is a one-stop shop for the Dutch Army and everything we have come to expect from Helion's From Reason to Revolution series. I'm not sure why the Dutch don't readily come to mind when wargaming the Napoleonic Wars. I've seen Bavarian armies, Saxons, even Neapolitans on the tabletop, so the army that fought at Waterloo seems like an interesting choice to me.



AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

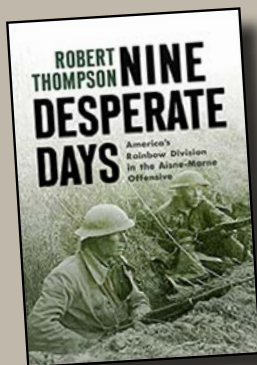
Terrain features prominently in most of our games, so you might think it self-evident that military historians would prioritise this aspect of war and battles. Some do, but for some it's an afterthought at best. That also brings me to a personal wargaming bugbear: the almost random placement of terrain as per the 'rules' so that Google Earth would break trying to work it out! Edward McCaul's *The Key to the Shenandoah Valley: Geography and the Civil War Struggle for Winchester* (McFarland) is therefore quite a treat in that regard. For those who don't know the ACW, the Shenandoah is an agriculturally rich, sweeping valley that points, in the words of one historian, like a 'dagger at the heart of Washington DC'. Whoever controlled the valley, could dominate the western flank of the eastern theatre. It follows that there was a lot of fighting here, including 326 engagements fought around the pivotal town of Winchester. That could keep you busy for a while! And once you have the terrain down, you won't need to worry about it too much.



AGE OF IMPERIALISM

In one of two rarely visited wargaming eras this month, we follow Richard Killblane's *They Were the Rough Riders: Inside Theodore Roosevelt's Famed Cavalry Regiment* (McFarland). This unit really was the stuff of legends. Led by a future US president and consisting of a mixed bag of American soldiers with limited military experience, the Rough Riders made their name in the Spanish American War and in particular at San Juan Hill. Killblane

tells their story from the men's perspective, promising a new way to look at this conflict. As noted, this is an underplayed war, yet it offers intriguing possibilities, not the least from following the Rough Riders and the whole curious expedition into battle. Killblane's book could be a useful starting point for a new project.



WORLD WAR ONE

Speaking of curious American expeditions, we are sometimes given the impression in popular culture that the American Expeditionary Force that hit Europe in 1917 swanned in and saved the day for the exhausted Allies. The Americans who survived *Nine Desperate Days: America's Rainbow Division in the Aisne-Marne Offensive* (Westholme), written by Robert Thompson, would certainly argue otherwise. This Division, the 42nd, endured 164 days in combat but none so brutal as the nine days from 25 July to 2 August 1918. This was a result of a deficient command who had very little idea of what they were getting themselves into and refused to listen to wiser Allied counsel. In many ways, they replicated the wasteful tactics of the war's static middle years with predictable results. The nine days capsule offers WWI gamers a tidy little campaign to get their teeth into, pitting old tactics against new. I suspect the smaller figure scales will be more rewarding for this venture.

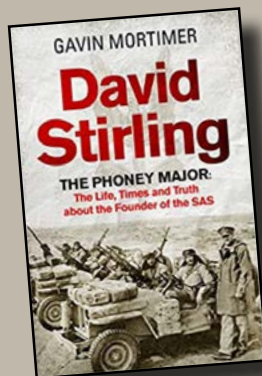
BETWEEN THE WARS

A rare foray for us into this period but a worthwhile one when you see who is leading the way. Antony Beevor steps away from WWII to bring us *Russia: Revolution and Civil War 1917-1921* (W&N). The Russian Revolution was far from a *fait accompli* in 1917, and a long civil war would determine the outcome. That involved contingents from a number of foreign nations, including British Imperial forces, who fought against Lenin's Red Army. This was a complex conflict, so who better than Beevor to tell this story? And I think if you are going to do this war justice on the table, you really do need to know what went on and who did what. There is also more wargaming support for the Russian Civil

War than you might suspect. My friend plays in 20mm plastics, which could be an affordable way to go given the various forces involved.

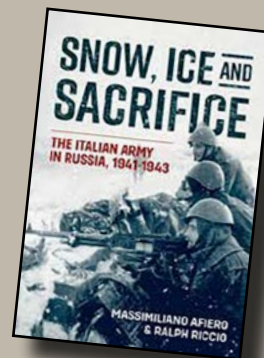
WORLD WAR TWO

There are some books published this month that are so connected they have to be dealt with in pairs. Take Brendan O'Carroll's *Fighting with the Long Range Desert Group: Merlyn Craw MM's War 1940-1945* (Pen & Sword), for example. Craw's story is extraordinary. He fought with the LRDG, was captured, escaped twice, returned to the LRDG in Italy, and fought out the war. It's the LRDG that interests us as wargamers. These were small units of specialist soldiers that ranged behind enemy lines causing mayhem with attacks on airfields, supplies, and other high value enemy targets. They also assisted David Stirling's newly formed SAS on several excursions, which brings us to our linked book. Almost everyone remembers Stirling as the hero who founded the SAS, a man worthy of all his accolades. But Gavin Mortimer paints a very different picture in *David Stirling: The Phoney Major: The Life, Times and Truth about the Founder of the SAS* (Constable). Was Stirling a grandstanding self-promoter, and does his second-in-command, Paddy Mayne deserve the credit? I don't know but reading these two books should be enough to get your wargaming juices flowing.



My 'must have' book this month is Peter Caddick-Adams' *1945: Victory in the West* (Hutchinson Heinemann). He begins in March 1945 and narrates the last 100 days of the war in Europe. This was no procession, but hard-fighting by exhausted troops at the end of their supply lines. Caddick-Adams is an outstanding military historian who makes kaleidoscopic surveys of his subjects informative and an enjoyable read. The late war in the West seems under-gamed to me once the Allies crossed the Rhine, but the German defence was often just as hard here as on the more popular Eastern Front, and well worth playing and reading about. If you want to game at the operational level or down in the mud with the soldiers, this could be the book for you.

Now that I have mentioned the Eastern Front, I just have space in this section to squeeze in *Snow, Ice and Sacrifice: The Italian Army in Russia, 1941-1943* (Helion) by Massimiliano Afiero and Ralph Riccio. This is a comprehensive overview of the Italian effort to support their German allies in their attack on the Soviet Union. They won then they lost, but as much as the Italians are maligned, they turned up and fought hard. Eastern Front wargaming enthusiasts should not let this book slip by, if only to escape the customary Tiger v T-34 battles that only form a very small part of the Eastern Front story.



VIETNAM

I am going to close this month with another two closely related books, this time from the Vietnam War. A bit like Caddick-Adams' book, Darren Poole's *Hunting the Viet Cong: Volume 1 - The Counterinsurgency Campaign in South Vietnam, 1961-1963* (Helion) considers a lesser-known period of the conflict in Vietnam: the brief period before it became a full-fledged American war. Poole takes a contrarian view, one I'm not fully on-board with yet, that rather than an escalating period of violence that South Vietnam could not cope with, the American-backed regime has the Viet Cong at the brink of defeat. The Diem government adopted the British Hamlet programme of their successful Malayan counter-insurgency to great effect but threw it away in their hubris and political incompetence. However, the Viet Cong operatives interviewed by Michael Robert Dedrick, in *Southern Voices: Biet Dong and the National Liberation Front* (University Press of Kentucky), might disagree with Poole's take on their war. Admittedly, these Viet Cong fought during the critical period around the Tet Offensive in 1968, but it's difficult to see how earlier fighters would have been any different. For wargamers, these books offer an opportunity to study the Viet Cong from both sides of the divide, which will undoubtedly add to your Vietnam gaming experience.

And that's all for this month but check out my reviews of new military history books on Facebook at Full Paper Jacket. Happy reading (and gaming)!

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SOLDIERS AND SAILORS OF BRONZE



After considering the different angles of our theme, Colonel (Retired) Bill Gray looks at combined operations in Western antiquity. The first article in this two-parter takes in the Sea Peoples and their early 'combined ops' against the Egyptians.

Nervous and perspiring troops charge from their landing craft toward the beach, becoming quickly drenched as they slip underwater and trip over unseen hazards while dodging an endless hail of death from the defenders. Offshore, mighty ships of war support the assault, bringing covering fire, ferrying reinforcements to the beachhead, transporting supplies, and keeping enemy naval forces at bay.

The mission - invasion. The technique - combined operations. The date - July... 332 BC?

Hopefully my sleight of literary hand has enticed you to take this fascinating trip down distant memory lane with me. This article goes way back to the beginning of the combined ops concept, starting some 4,000 years ago. But first let's change the pace, move away from a frantic beach landing, and clarify some terminology.

COMBINED WHAT?

Combined operations, or joint operations for us in the Colonies, is a phrase bandied about on the news a lot these days. Like most military concepts, there are a plethora of definitions, but one familiar to the author describes combined ops as the process whereby different branches (as in army, navy, and air force) of the armed services work together towards a common military objective. This is the traditional concept, but times change and now combined ops tends to describe coalition warfare where multiple countries work together towards said goal, or even the military working with civilian authorities during peace keeping operations.

Thus, combined ops differ from combined arms in two specific ways, though the terms are often used interchangeably. Combined arms are almost always tactical (i.e., battle or skirmish level) while combined ops tends to be found at the campaign level, though 4,000 years ago the forces involved were often very small. In addition, combined arms envision two arms of the of the same service working together - Gustavus Adolphus' use of commanded shot was combined arms due to its tactical nature and the fact that two branches of the same service (army - musketeers and cavalry) were the forces involved. On the other hand, had the proposed 1945 invasion of Japan (Operations Olympic and Coronet) taken place, it would have been combined operations because the principal actors were different services of the Allies' military (army, navy, and air forces) as well as a multinational effort.



Above: The combined forces of Hannibal (left) advance towards the legions of Rome. Figures by Gripping Beast.

Lest one think the idea of coalition warfare is purely a modern dynamic, remember that the ancient world had its own master, Hannibal Son of Hamilcar. Because Carthaginian citizens only joined the ranks if their homeland was directly threatened, Hannibal's forces were manned by mercenaries; warriors from allies or independent tribes who rallied to oppose Rome. There were allied Legions serving Rome to be sure, but these hailed from client states while most following the eagle were Roman citizens. Napoleon said he would "rather fight a coalition than be part of one," yet somehow Carthage made it work. And it worked well. When Hannibal crossed the Alps in 218 BC, he claimed an army of 20,000 foot, 6,000 cavalry, and a few elephants, but after defeating the Taurini tribe, all the nearby Gauls flocked to his standard and raised Hannibal's total force to well over 40,000.

In the beginning, most combined ops that took place around the ancient

Mediterranean can be categorized as primarily coastal in their nature, around a faction's littoral, and included raids, invasions, logistics, and sea control.

Given Icarus' wings failed advanced testing and the up-front costs of putting Apollo on the payroll would clean out most treasuries (aircraft also had yet to be invented), combined ops saw only ground and sea forces working together. Back then, it was more properly thought of as expeditionary warfare, and it exploded into history somewhere between 2000 BC and 1700 BC in the Middle Bronze Age.

THE SEA PEOPLES - COMBINED OPS PIONEERS?

The Bronze Age is when the Lukka people are first mentioned on the Byblos obelisk. The Lukka were one of several loosely confederated clans called Northerners by the Egyptians but referred to today as Sea Peoples. Based on Egyptian sources, about the only records we have, the Sea Peoples also included

the Peleset, Shekelesh, Denyen, Ekwesh, and very prominently the Sherden clan who gained quite a reputation as mercenaries. Until their final defeat by Ramses III c1175 BC, they were the scourge of the Mediterranean, even hastening the fall of the Hittites with their capture of Cyprus.

Many historians tag the Sea Peoples as the first practitioners of expeditionary warfare, albeit on a very small scale so far as numbers were concerned. The Sea Peoples were Bronze Age pirates and raiders, specifically targeting coastal locations for plunder, terror, and preemptive attack. The forces used were usually between 7 and 20 ships, or a total of between 400 and 1,000 men. Their normal doctrine was to head out to sea from forward bases for no more than seven days, then return home after another 13 to 20 days of pillaging. The idea was to strike hard and fast then vanish before local military forces could react. Contact with enemy naval forces

SEA PEOPLES EXCURSIONS C. 1280 - 1170 BCE





was to be avoided at all costs to the point of retreating from inferior numbers. If all went well, the marauders could return home with plunder and leave burning villages, smoldering crops, and enough bodies to provide a teaching point to their hapless adversaries. Their hit-and-run operations were so successful that the Egyptians referred to them as ‘people of the sea who live on their ships.’

These ships mimicked this doctrine in their construction. Ancient drawings show ships with a single mast and sail,

but no oars, though they were likely stored inside. A large paddle steered the ship, and the vessel was only partially decked. In other words, the ship had a single platform partly opened to expose the oarsmen below. Because the vessel was expected to take a lot of loot home upon the completion of festivities, it is doubtful that with oarsmen and crew, no more than ten actual warriors could be carried. Given the lightning way these clans conducted business, the design fit the mission quite well.

Above: Sea People's dress.

Of particular importance among the reliefs at the remains of Medinet Habu is one depicting a mixed group of Sea Peoples mercenaries among Egyptian forces who are fiercely slaughtering Libyans - either in Ramesses III's Year 8, or perhaps in his subsequent campaign of Year 11? They include Sherden wearing helmets topped with the disc-and-horns (1 & 4), and probably Peleset or Denyen/Danuna with their 'feather'-topped helmets (2 & 3). These 'tiara' headpieces had various degrees of face and neck protection, here probably made of leather scales. In the original relief from which these warriors are copied, details remain of round shields with small metal studs; these are similar to shields attested in some Late Bronze Age Achaean graves and represented on LHIIIC pottery. The mercenaries' weapons are iron-headed spears and bronze swords.

The basic garment of Labu warriors (5) was just a phallus-sheath of leather attached to a waist belt, but cloaks were worn that passed under the left arm and were tied up on the right shoulder. These might be made of bull-hide or (perhaps in the case of leaders) from the pelts of animals such as giraffe or lion. The feather plume worn in the hair was considered important and indicated different tribes and a man's status within them. The Libyans often decorated their bodies with tattoos or painting.

Artwork by Giuseppe Rava from ELI 204 Sea Peoples of the Bronze Age Mediterranean c.1400 BC-1000 BC © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com



Above: A colourised version of a relief from the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, showing a battle between Sea Peoples and Egyptians.

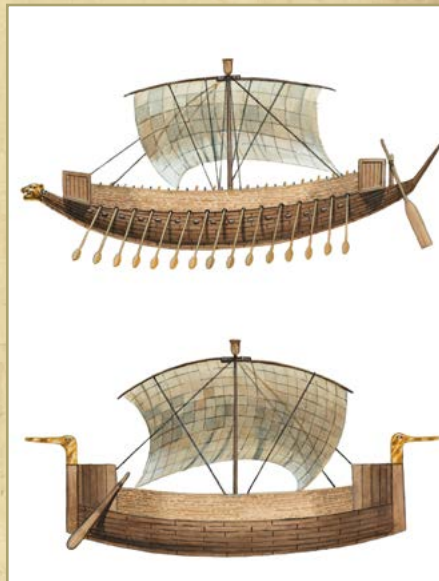
THE TROUBLES OF TAKING TO THE WATER

Warships, or to be more precise getting hold of figures for them, is likely to be the point of frustration for your ancient combined ops gaming. These models trend towards large fleet to fleet engagements such as the 480 BC battle of Salamis; thus, the models are quite small, often 1/600 to 1/2400 scale. That's great if you're running a campaign and want to put some atmospheric icons on the campaign map, but it's not so good for larger scale gaming!

For warships useful in skirmish or raid settings, Russian plastic model company Zvezda does make both a Roman and Greek Trireme, as does Academy and Atlantic, but finding them may be difficult. The new naval skirmish game *Thalassa* [see last issue - Ed] has some great options for 6mm but those won't be available for a little while. A more present option is Langton Models' resin and metal line boasting a 1/300 scale (120 mm length) Carthaginian Quinquereme. There may be others, but the lack of Bronze Age models is noted. Scratch built efforts are the norm, but that may be a push for many gamers wanting to dip their toe.

If you are ready to splash out, Master Ship Builders will sell you a beautiful 30 inches long, fully rigged, nicely painted, custom-built wooden model of Ramses III's flag ship for the bargain price of \$1,300, postage included (\$300 extra shipping outside the US). Given my wife is an accountant and I enjoy breathing, I've decided to pass... for now!

Right: Egyptian War Galley (top) and Sea Peoples Ship (Bottom). These ships are based on the relief of Ramses III at Medinet Habu. Artwork by Giuseppe Rava from NVG 196 Warships of the Ancient World © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com



But things changed and expeditions became larger, necessitating a modification in the type of naval transport employed. Thus, later images from the Medinet Habu temple (Ramses III's burial memorial) show ships with a distinctly Achaean flavor to include a railing to protect the oarsmen as well as small towers fore and aft for use as fighting positions. The single mast now had a crow's nest for observation, while the vessel had no prow. Overall, the ship suggests multiple decks, as opposed to one partially open, and the ability to carry up to 30 fully kitted out warriors.

Sea Peoples warriors were typical of many found during the Bronze Age, though the colorful clothes worn could shame a Napoleonic dress ball. They wore lobster type armor and helmets, and carried shields, while weapons included spears, javelins, swords, daggers, and maces. Yet their primary weapon seems to have been the six spoked, two-horse chariot carrying a driver and two warriors. These latter soldiers carried neither bow nor arrow, but instead spear and shield. They were protected by other spearmen that ran alongside, or in small proto-phalanx formations of four-plus men advancing to harass the enemy. The chariots were obviously influenced by Egyptian practice, but the lack of archers anywhere is significant, though not enough to deny the Sea Peoples could hang with the big boys of their day.



Above: *Sea Peoples Warriors* by North Star.

PLAYING THE WAR OF THE EIGHTH YEAR (AND MORE) ON THE TABLETOP

There are a lot of fine rulesets out there, of which *Field of Glory III* and *Hail Caesar* are typical. All are generally points-based and have some listing for Bronze Age armies and sailors; so things are as complete as anything can be in wargaming!

The Sea Peoples and their neighbors are found in the *Swifter than Eagles* companion book for *Field of Glory III*. In *Hail Caesar*, the Classical army list coupled with the *Age of Bronze* scenario book does the trick. In fact, there are several scenarios involving Sea Peoples with a raid, including a ship off the coast and a bathtubted battle of the Nile won by Ramses III. Special rules are provided for the nautical part of play here, so that's highly recommended.

Finally, *L'Art de la Guerre*, also lists Sea Peoples, Hyksos, Philistines etc, among its army lists.

THE WAR OF THE EIGHTH YEAR - COMBINED OPS' FIRST PROPER CAMPAIGN?

The War of the Eighth Year was one of the first examples of combined ops at a truly campaign level, albeit one that ultimately failed at the tactical level. This conflict occurred around 1175 BC, or the eighth year of the rule of Pharaoh Usermaatre Meryamun Ramses III, and was the result of long-term migration of the Sea Peoples southward.

Expeditionary Warfare meant a two-pronged attack whereby the land forces of the Sea Peoples coalition (Peleset, Sikila, Denyen, Weshesh, and Sherden) drove southward through the coastal regions of Anatolia, Syria, and Canaan. Supporting them offshore and moving in parallel was a large Sea Peoples fleet with an ultimate objective of the Nile delta. The fleet could not only launch its own military operation, but it could logistically support the land forces. Most importantly, it forced the Egyptians to simultaneously confront a mutually supporting land and sea force.

The expedition failed. The reason why was the superlative generalship of Ramses III, or so said the Pharaoh himself. When the Sea Peoples sacked the Hittite vassal of Amurru, that allowed Ramses III time to prepare. He took his army north and soundly beat the Sea Peoples at the frontier town of Djahy somewhere in what later would become Phoenicia. The Sea Peoples' army retreated to the coast for evacuation by their fleet, while Ramses III hoofed it back to the Nile to prepare an ambush to catch his nautical opponents unprepared. As the Sea Peoples' army disembarked in the delta, they were met by a hail of composite bow arrows from both

MINIS FOR THE SEA PEOPLES AND THEIR OPPOSITION

A little surprisingly, and indicative of the bounty of figure ranges now available, you'll not have too much trouble finding miniatures to represent the Sea Peoples, along with their regular opposition the Egyptians and Hittites, and some others.

The only paucity is at 6mm for the Sea Peoples, but even here Rapier Miniatures produce three sets at the scale - an ox cart chariot, swordsmen with shield, and spearmen with shield - while Heroics and Ros has a similar offering. Baccus 6mm pretty much takes care of everything else, while Magister Militum has a huge line of Chariot War 10mm figures, including several packs of Sea Peoples as well as all the other suspects. For 15/18mm, Magister Militum comes through again with 12 different listings for the Sea Peoples, and Essex Miniatures has some goodies, including two versions of the Sea Peoples' two-horse chariot.

For 28 mm, look no further than Warlord Games and Foundry Miniatures, the former having nine different sets keyed to their *Hail Caesar* rules, the latter another nine with a set of Egyptian and Nubian civilians for raiding the coastline.

Everyone else from the period is out there as well, even exotics such as Elamites. I mean seriously, who plays Elamites?



Above: Two Sea Peoples (left) and two Egyptians (right). The central two minis are by North Star, those either side are from Warlord Games. All nice looking sculpts, though you will notice quite a difference in '28mm' scale!

banks of the Nile. This forced their ships to retreat into a constricted area where maneuver was impossible. The Pharaoh's fleet - lurking downriver - emerged, rammed the Sea Peoples' ships, and boarded them to destroy their foe in hand-to-hand fighting. Given the Sea Peoples were already weakened by archery (for which they had no reply), a slaughter ensued. Ramses III had won the day due to his own brand of low-level Combined Ops genius . . . or so it was written.

The size of the operation and the close coordination of land and naval forces on both sides reflected a significant change for combined operations in the ancient Mediterranean. It would change again when King Azemilcus denied access to the temple of Melqart to the wrong person in 332 BC...

Bill will return next issue to examine how Alexander upped the ante at Tyre and what the Romans brought to combined ops options.



Above: Sea Peoples battle with Egyptians. Figures by Warlord Games.

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HAMMERHEAD

PAINTING COMPETITION

For the fourth year in succession *Wargames Illustrated* ran the Hammerhead 2022 painting competition, supported by Kalistra, and we've got photos of the winners for your delectation and dissection.

Single miniatures, units, monsters, and war machines were entered into the *Wargames Illustrated* - Hammerhead Painting Competition on the morning of Saturday, 5 March. The cabinets at our stand rapidly drew a crowd as Perry Miniatures 71st Foot Highlanders vied for shelf space with undead Games Workshop Sepulchral Guards; trolls went toe-to-toe with *Gaslands* cars and tiny 10mm Saracens, and we had to find new places to put the entries as cabinet space ran out!

Attendees headed off to take part in various participation games, indulge in some retail therapy, and explore the show's other offerings, but *Wi's* judges - Painter Callum and Project Manager James - were stuck to the stand with the tricky task of choosing a top three in each of the nine categories.

As one of the first shows back after various UK Lockdowns, attendance was high and the standard of entries in the competition was beyond anything we've seen before at Hammerhead. Categories such as Historical, Fantasy, and Sci-Fi Single Miniature received a lot of entries and made judging incredibly tough.

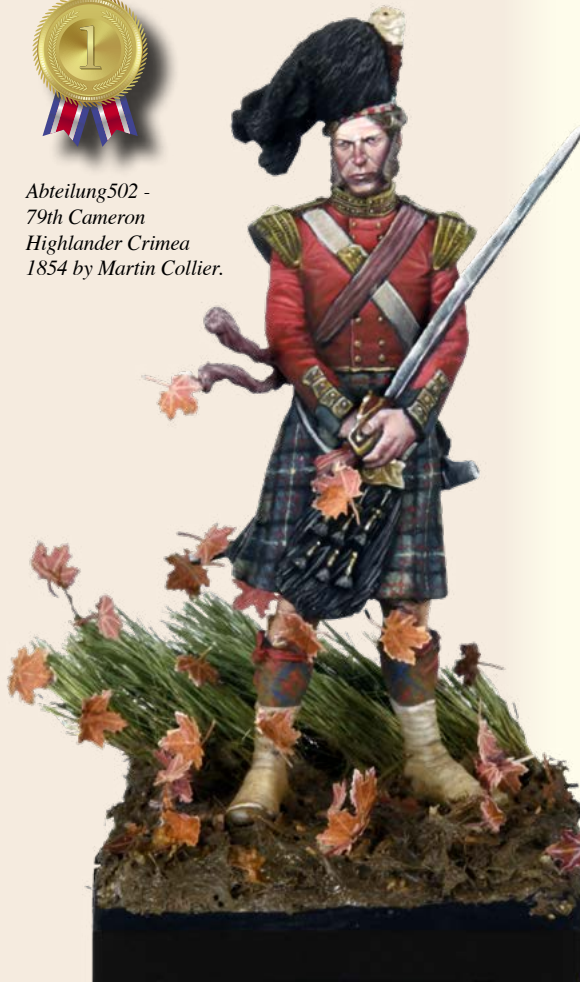
The eventual big winner was Martin Collier. He took first in the Open Category and all three Single Miniature categories, and his awesome troll conversion (Fantasy Single Miniature) was crowned our eventual Best of Show winner. Martin kept his trophies but turned down the prizes we offered him for the wins, instructing us to give them to the hobby youngbloods who had entered the Youth category. Thanks to his generosity Epic Napoleonic starter armies, Silver Bayonet units, and a selection of dragons joined the collections of the next generation of painters and gamers.

We'll be back next year for Hammerhead 2023 (world circumstances permitting) and hope to see you there!

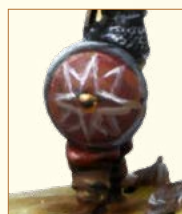
HISTORICAL SINGLE MINIATURE



*Abteilung502 -
79th Cameron
Highlander Crimea
1854 by Martin Collier.*



*10mm Saracen
by Fet Milner.*



*Infamous JT
Photographer
by Aaron Vayro.*



HISTORICAL UNIT/WAR MACHINE



*Perry Miniatures -
AWI British
by John Savage.*



*Victrix - Dutch Lancers
by Adrian Gilliland.*



*Grubby Tanks Germans
by Aaron Vayro.*



WINNERS OF THE OTHER CATEGORIES



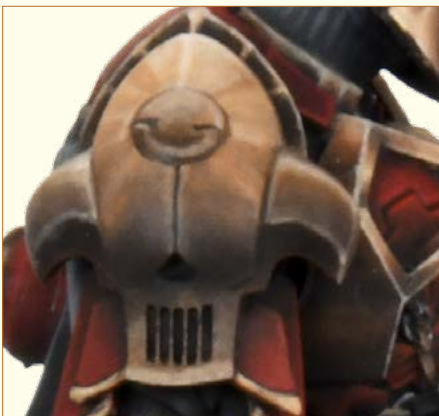
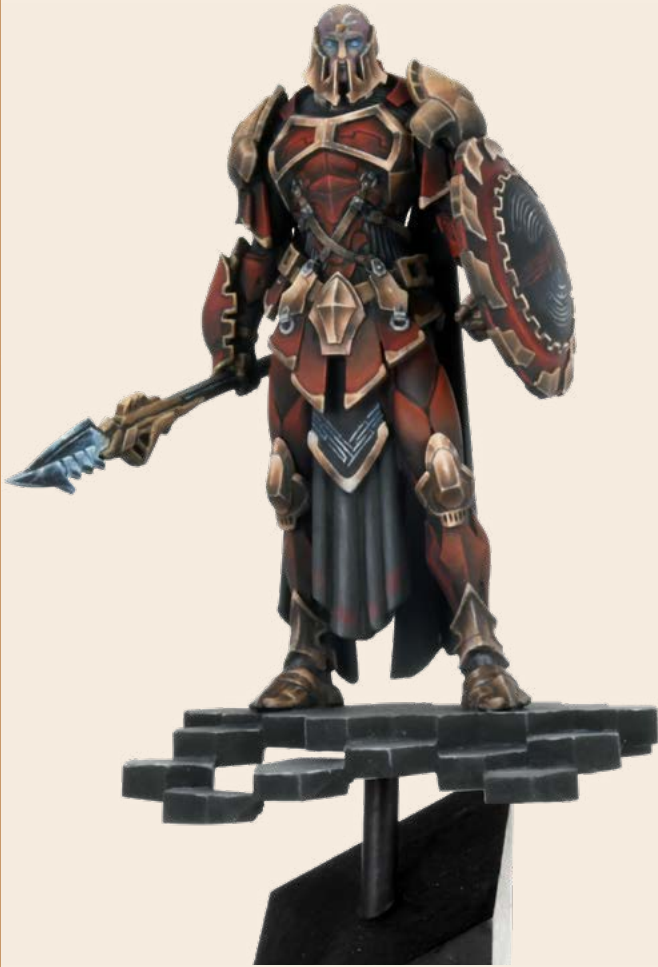
KALISTRA (HISTORICAL OR FANTASY)
*Knights of Dol Amroth (High Elf Cavalry)
by Matthew Leggett.*



YOUTH
*Games Workshop - Cursed
City Ogre by Edward Walker.*

SCI-FI SINGLE MINIATURE

Kimera Models - Ares God of War
by Martin Collier.



THE WINNERS

HALISTRA (HISTORICAL OR FANTASY)

1 st	Matthew Leggett	Knights of Dol Amroth (High Elf Cavalry)
2 nd	Joseph Walker	Elementals
3 rd	Joseph Walker	Ashigaru

YOUTH

1 st	Edward Walker	Ogre
2 nd	Mason Donohoe	Lord of Plagues
3 rd	Brandon Walker	Napoleonic British Drummer

HISTORICAL SINGLE MINIATURE

1 st	Martin Collier	Scottish Highlander
2 nd	Fet Milner	10mm Saracen
3 rd	Aaron Vayro	Infamous JT Photographer

HISTORICAL UNIT/WAR MACHINE

1 st	John Savage	Perry Miniatures AWI British
2 nd	Adrian Gilliland	Victrix Dutch Lancers
3 rd	Aaron Vayro	Grubby Tanks Germans

OPEN

1 st	Martin Collier	Elder Dragon
2 nd	Liam Hopkins	Stormcast vs Orruk
3 rd	Joey Fereday	The Trio


SCI-FI SINGLE MINIATURE

1 st	Martin Collier	Ares God of War
2 nd	Liam Hopkins	Howling Banshee Exarch
3 rd	Fet Milner	Infected Gangster

SCI-FI UNIT/WAR MACHINE

1 st	Liam Hopkins	Howling Banshees
2 nd	Aimee Joesbury	Chaos Knight
3 rd	Chris Flux	Crooked Dice Ming the Merciless

FANTASY SINGLE MINIATURE

1 st	Martin Collier	Troll - BEST OF SHOW - 
2 nd	Aimee Joesbury	Squig Rider
3 rd	Stuart Willis	Minotaur

FANTASY UNIT/WAR MACHINE

1 st	Chris Flux	Burrows and Badgers
2 nd	Ruben Lopez	Forest Goblin Spider Riders
3 rd	Stuart Willis	Beastman Warband

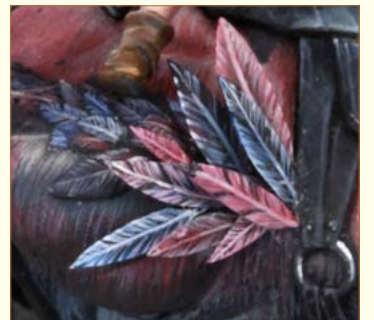
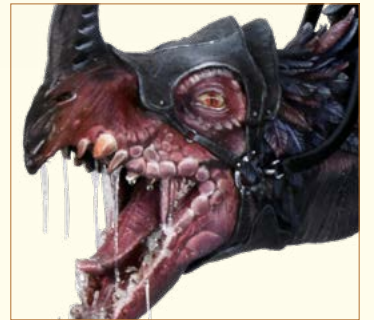
SCI-FI UNIT/WAR MACHINE

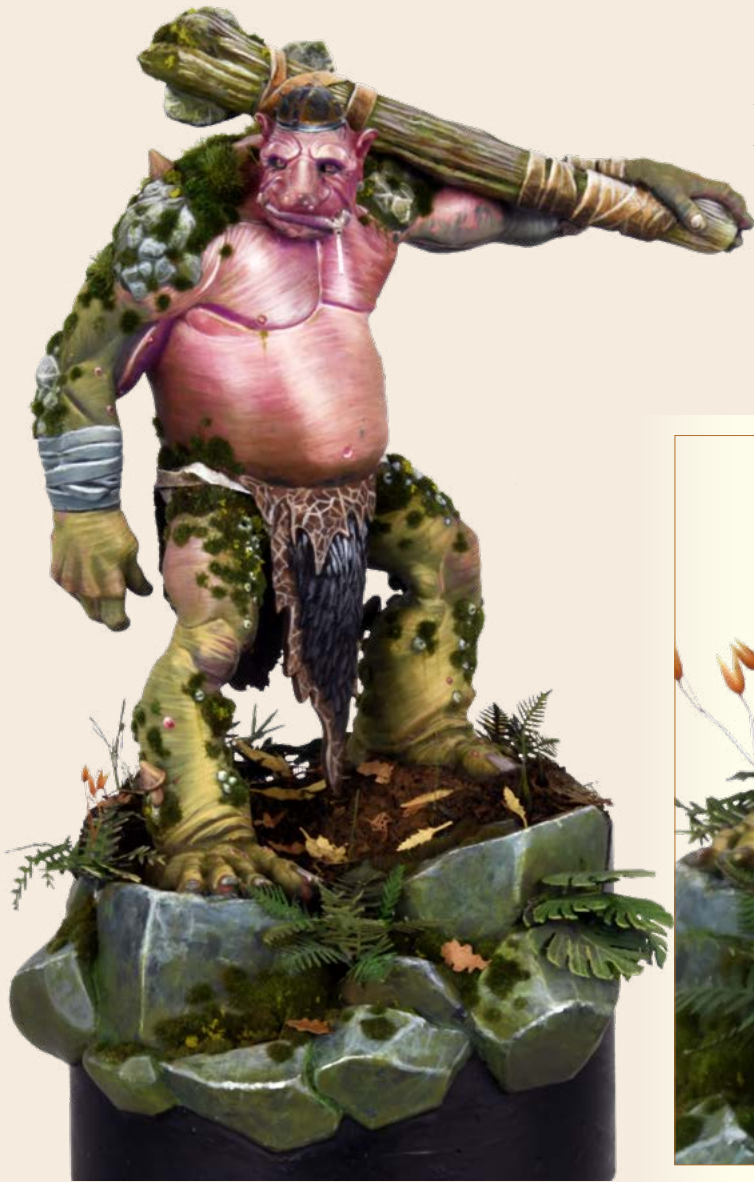
Games Workshop - Howling Banshees by Liam Hopkins.



OPEN

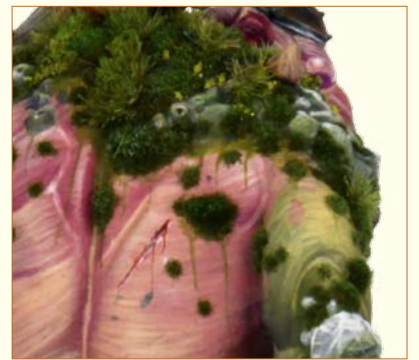
Dragonhead Models - Elder Dragon by Martin Collier.





FANTASY SINGLE MINIATURE

Dragonhead Models -
Troll by Martin Collier.



1st PLACE - FANTASY UNIT/WAR MACHINE

Oathsworn Miniatures - Burrows and Badgers
by Chris Flux.



BEST OF THE REST

3RD PLACE - OPEN

*Dragonhead Models -
The Trio by Joey Fereday.*



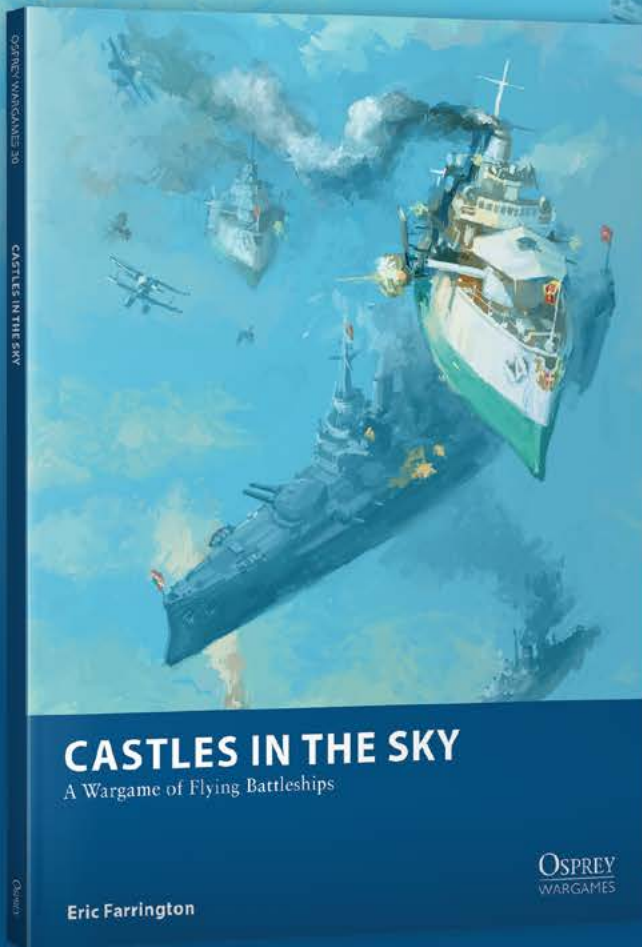
*3RD PLACE - FANTASY
SINGLE MINIATURE*

*Games Workshop -
Minotaur by Stuart Willis.*



*2ND PLACE - SCI-FI
UNIT/WAR MACHINE*

*Games Workshop - Chaos
Knight by Aimee Joesbury.*



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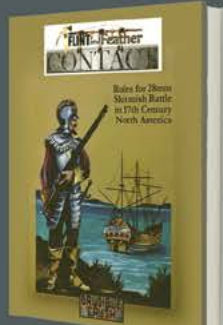
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A WILD GAMBLE

OPERATION LÉA



Karim Van Overmeire looks at Operation Léa in the First Indochina War. In examining the French attempt to bring armour, paratroops, and riverine operations together, we can learn about some of the challenges of combined operations in a war without fronts.

Despite capitulating on 15 August 1945, Japan still occupied large territories in Indochina, and trained and armed the communist-led nationalists of the Viet Minh. The Allied powers sent British and Chinese troops to Vietnam to put a stop to this, disarm the Japanese, and reestablish French control over their former colonial possession. The Viet Minh took them on; they soon found themselves facing their former allies too - Japanese units forced to turn against the Vietnamese. This happened against the background of the emerging Cold War and meant no escape from conflict for the Vietnamese, who presumably dreamed of being left alone to rebuild their lives after years of famine and chaos.

As soon as the French had their authority largely restored, the other nations exited the scene. The French government was primarily concerned with reconstruction; France was exhausted and had neither the means nor the desire to get involved in costly colonial wars. Consequently,

the French were prepared to make concessions.

Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Viet Minh, now tried to survive in an extremely delicate position, and for months the negotiations between the French and the Viet Minh dragged on. The Viet Minh strove for full independence and a socialist economy but that was far more than the French were prepared to allow.

A French attempt to take control over customs in the northern city of Haiphong, November 1946, led to a naval bombardment with numerous civil casualties. When the French demanded that the Viet Minh militia disarm, Ho Chi Minh ordered a surprise attack that failed miserably. The French had superior firepower, and their naval and air support proved the deciding factors. The Viet Minh were driven out of the densely populated northern delta region. They regrouped in the 'Viet Bac', a roughly

triangular region in the highlands north and northwest of Hanoi.

TO CUT OFF THE SNAKE'S HEAD

General Raoul Salan assembled a force of 15,000 men, including airborne, riverine, and armored forces; the principal aims of Operation Léa were to eliminate the leadership of the Viet Minh, destroy the remaining enemy units, and to establish a post line along the Chinese border. This would cut the Viet Minh off from their Chinese supply bases.

French intelligence had discovered that Ho and his staff operated quite openly near the village of Bac Kan. Thus, French paratroops would be dropped right on top of Ho's headquarters and 'cut off the snake's head'. In the meantime, a pincer movement would seal off the area with a mobile column following the road in the east and a riverine operation involving amphibious landings in the west. It was a textbook example of combined operations... at least on paper.

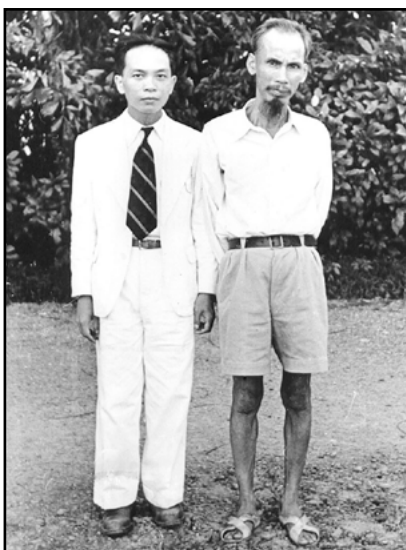


LESS THAN A METRE

On the morning of 7 October 1947, 19 transport planes dropped 700 French paratroopers in two waves on Bac Kan. Viet Minh intelligence had discovered the French plans, but the information reached Ho Chi Min only minutes before the first paratroopers hit the ground; he and General Giap barely escaped.

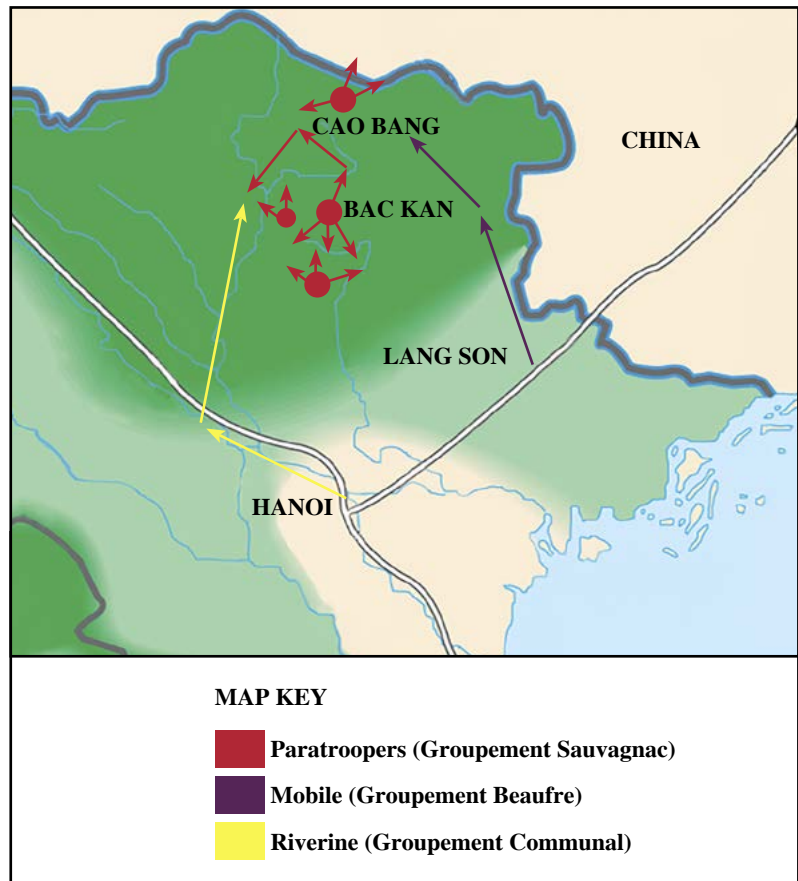
The story goes that they hid in a bush and a French paratrooper passed by less than a metre away without noticing them. One can only guess how history would have gone if Ho and Giap had not been able to slip away in time. The French paratroopers found Ho's correspondence, awaiting his signature, still laid out on his desk; they had come so close to achieving their aim!

That afternoon, 14 planes dropped a second wave of 230 paratroopers near the village of Cho Moi to block the withdrawal routes of the Viet Minh.



Above: General Giap (left) and Ho Chi Minh in 1945.

OPERATION LÉA, OCTOBER 1947



A SECOND JUMP

More drops were organised to secure the citadel of Cao Bang along with vital bridges, but the operation was not all plain sailing. An error in communications meant that battalion commander Fossey-François was dropped with one stick of his men on the wrong spot. A liaison plane collected the officer, who flew back to Hanoi, immediately boarded a new plane, and made a second jump the very same day! Also, one of the transport planes was shot down and its operation plans ended up in Viet Minh hands after the crash.

With the first shock of the assault over, the Viet Minh forces reorganized and surrounded the 1,200 paras who were now trapped in enemy territory. The French would have to fight until relieved; that would take longer than expected...

DELAYED!

The mechanised and armored column that formed the eastern pincer movement of the French attack started their 300km drive at Lang Son, just north of Hanoi. The column had to drive all the way north to Route Coloniale 4 (RC4) to Cao Bang then southwest down the RC3 to link up with the paras. On a map these looked like arterial routes running through a magnificently beautiful region; in reality, the French soldiers faced foreboding terrain. The road carved its way through jungle covered mountains, including the Léa mountain pass that gave its name to the operation - terrain that was ideal for ambushes.

Aerial reconnaissance showed that the Viet Minh had blocked or broken up the road in at least 130 places, and each obstacle could halt the entire column for



Above: Ju52 or AAC.1 Toucan diecast from Hobbymaster.

hours. Repairs were made during daylight so that the column could move on during the night.

After six days of painful progress, contact was finally made with a section of paras on commandeered bicycles looking for the column. As it turned out, the tanks fell three days behind mule mounted Moroccan infantry able to push ahead. Armoured breakthrough movements that worked well in the North African desert or on European plains fared badly in a mountainous jungle environment.

UNCOMBINED OPERATIONS

The French navy was responsible for the western part of the pincer movement. A total of twenty large and smaller vessels were gathered in Hanoi to transport infantry, armoured vehicles, supplies, and equipment over the Red River and its tributary the Clear River to rendezvous with the paratroopers. Along the riverbanks, small units were dropped off to catch retreating Viet Minh.

The start of the operation was delayed for two days as the Red River flooded, prohibiting the flotilla from passing under the Doumer Bridge. Once it got on the move, the force was continually under attack. The crew members probing the depth of the river with poles were favorite targets of Viet Minh snipers, and barges were also fired on with bazookas, mortars, and machineguns. On at least one occasion, the Viet Minh sent combat divers, though these were killed before they could do any harm.



Natural hazards slowed the advance further. Navigation was hampered by floating tree trunks and unexpected obstacles; the fast current, sandbanks, and lack of visibility forced the convoy to anchor for the night, while a heavily loaded LCT ran aground and its cargo transferred to smaller vessels. If the infantry ventured onto the riverbanks, they often met no opposition at all, but sometimes they were ambushed and took heavy casualties. The riverine force progressed at a slower pace than the eastern column; it was not until 15 October that contact with the paratroopers was established. In the following weeks, the navy remained active. Out of the engaged 20 landing crafts, seven were lost, including three through enemy fire. A quarter of the crew were killed or wounded.

COMBINED ATTACK

After the French forces finally linked up, the second phase of the operation could begin. This was a systematic cleansing of the area the French had now 'sealed off' to eliminate the remaining Viet Minh forces and destroy depots, weapon caches, training camps, and arms factories. Once more the geography hindered French effectiveness. The

mountainous and wooded topography of the region impeded them; troops were needed to seal off the perimeter, to garrison the best ambush spots, to guard the border with China, and to ensure the safety of the supply convoys that supported the operation. Incessant rains added to the misery and drained the offensive momentum.

The Viet Minh preferred to melt away into the jungle rather than fight. Most Viet Minh forces slipped through gaps in the French lines - Ho Chi Minh, General Giap, and their staff were some notable figures to slip into the trees. By mid-November, Operation Léa had come to an end, and although it was followed by Operation Ceinture in an adjacent region, French troops were soon withdrawn as they were needed more desperately elsewhere.



COMBINED OPERATIONS IN A WAR WITHOUT FRONTS

The French high command declared victory and claimed 9,500 Viet Minh casualties against 1,000 French losses. A more recent study of the French archives, however, puts the losses at 40 killed, 580 wounded, and 40 missing for the French against 793 killed and 168 prisoners for the Viet Minh.

There were some definite French successes: stores of captured supplies and weapons and of about 140 French and friendly Vietnamese hostages and prisoners liberated. A Viet Minh command radio and the propaganda transmitter of 'La Voix du Vietnam' were seized, as was part of the Viet Minh treasury, and the Viet Minh infantry training academy was destroyed. A decrypted message from Giap confirmed that the Viet Minh had lost two-thirds of their workshops and depots. It would take them almost a year to make up for the lost equipment.

BLOODY ROAD

Operation Léa gave the French officers a very real and costly example of how the best laid combined operations plans, with pincer movements between armour, paradrops, and riverine operations, could deliver meagre results in a war without fronts.

The Viet Minh had disappeared, but it was far from eliminated. Most of the time, the enemy had deliberately avoided combat and thus lived to fight another day. The net result of the operation was that the French now had to guard an enlarged area with the same number of troops, leaving the Viet Minh free to repeatedly attack isolated outposts.

The French held only the main roads and only by day; this was especially true along the Chinese border. The Route Coloniale 4 would soon earn the nickname of 'la route sanglante' or 'Bloody Road'. Many more troops were needed, but the French government was reluctant to send them.

The French-American war correspondent and historian Bernard B. Fall described Operation Léa as, "a wild gamble at finishing the war in one single master stroke", and it is tempting to view the operation as a predictable failure that paved the way for the ultimate catastrophe at Dien Bien Phu. This is to read history backwards. From the vantage point of 1947, French victory in Indochina was possible, and Operation Léa was a serious attempt at resolving the growing conflict in Indochina before it escalated into an unwinnable war.

A WEALTH OF STORIES

English-speakers should not be deterred by a fear of lack of information. As well as the usual slew of interesting history books that are available, a good Google search will give you access not only to many fine miniatures, but also to a wealth of stories, sometimes in French but often in English.

I can recommend the excellent website 'Indo 1945-1954' as a great starting point as well as the website of the Hong Kong Society of Wargamers. 'Mourir pour l'Indochine' is just one of the Facebook groups that brings like-minded souls together. As with many conflicts in this region, it's unfortunately harder to find firsthand reports from the opposing side, especially written in English.



Above and below: Figures from Empress Miniatures French Indo China range.



WARGAMING THE FIRST INDOCHINA WAR

While writing this article, I tried to determine why the French Indochina War is one of my favourite wargaming theatres, but it's ultimately very hard to pin down to just one overriding reason.

There is an incredible mixture of uniforms and equipment to keep the keen hobbyist happy: who fancies French paratroopers wearing British helmets and American kit, jumping out of JU-52 transport planes to engage Japanese-trained rebels with Russian arms? WWII *ImagiNations* anyone? If terrain making is your preference, there's hugely varied scenery too: the marshes of the delta through to paddy ricefields and trenches, then rolling hills leading to the steep mountains of the interior.

The composition of the CEFEO (Corps Expéditionnaire Français en Extrême-Orient) is fascinating, with French regular army units, Foreign Legion, Moroccans, Senegalese, and Vietnamese fighting side by side. The quality of the troops ranges from elites to hesitant militias, and both sides alternate between offence and defence over the course of the war. This drama leads to the culminating battle of the war, Dien Bien Phu, with volunteers still stepping forward at a moment when all was lost.

I think the real draw is the bewildering diversity and the fact that you can bring it all together in manageable numbers on the tabletop and in campaigns. The French propensity to use ad hoc units really does make things easy on gamers; you can pull from all sorts of armies based around the period. I urge you to give it a go, and with that in mind here are some gaming starting points.

FRENCH FORCES IN INDOCHINA

(1): *Sergent, 5e Régiment d'Infanterie Coloniale; Saigon, October 1945. This returning unit was equipped by the British in Ceylon. Shirt and battledress trousers are Indian-made in jungle green drill; so is the tropical version of the 'cap General Service', termed by the French the 'Gurkha beret' (pulled right here in a British style). All web equipment is British M1937; photos show No.4 rifles and Stens. The only visible insignia is an early example of the French M1945 left sleeve écusson of branch and unit, worn only by NCOs in the photo and probably bazaar-made; the fouled anchor of Colonial troops is in gold, identifying an NCO, and red double piping edges the top of the midnight blue diamond. (2): Adjutant, 1er Bataillon Parachutiste de Choc; Operation Léa, Bac Kan, October 1947. The 1er BPC jumped over VM base camps at Bac Kan on 7 October 1947. The 'M1949' bush hat was seen well before that date (along with the British World War II brown felt equivalent). This US Army HBT mechanic's overall is the so-called third pattern; US web equipment is worn with a British M1944 canteen; there are no SSMG pouches - magazines are carried in the pockets - as is this battalion's black beret with a silver badge in the shape of France; other Metropolitan paras wore a dark blue beret at this date with the TAP winged fist and dagger badge, and would adopt a lighter bleu du roi colour in May 1948. The boots are US Army M1943 'double-buckles'. The MAS.38 machine pistol, too light for battlefield work, was the only French-made SMG then available; Thompsons, Stens, and some German MP.40s were also used. This warrant officer wears no insignia; a Colt M1911A1 is holstered on his hip over the popular US M3 fighting knife - many other types were also seen,*



often cut down from bayonets. On his belt are French M1937 and US World War II issue fragmentation grenades. (3): Légionnaire, 3e Régiment Étranger d'Infanterie; northern Tonkin, 1948-49, a composite from several photos of small post garrisons. For most work and operations, the bush hat replaced the Legion's white-covered képi (here the M1930). The khaki drill shirt is worn with British jungle green battledress trousers and US web leggings over leather boots. The leather belt, braces, and pouches are of World War I vintage; a rolled poncho carries enough kit for a local patrol, and the rifle is the British No.4 Mk.I.

*From The French Indochina War 1946-1954
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ADAPTED RULES

The First Indochina War offers endless opportunities for platoon or company-sized actions. With some minor adjustments (that have already been written for you by others!), several sets of WWII rules will guarantee an exciting game.

I recently switched to *Poor Bloody Infantry* from Peter Pig, modified by some house rules, but I can also warmly recommend these great options:

- *I Ain't Been Shot Mum* (TooFatLardies) has specific rules and downloadable cards on the 'Indochina Ain't Half Hot Mum' website: indochine54.free.fr/scen/IAHHM.html
- *Crossfire* (Arty Conliffe) is modified by the *Contre Les Viets* adaptation by Peter Hunt, which can be found on the website of the Hong Kong Society of Wargamers: hksw.org/clv1.htm
- For a platoon-level game, *Allez Vous En* is an Indochina-supplement for *Chain of Command* (Too Fat Lardies).
- There are reports and pictures of *Bolt Action* players who have ventured into the swamps and jungle of Indochina in issue *Wi334* of this very magazine.
- I should also mention the new ruleset *Bohica* from Partizan Press, which focuses on the Vietnam War but is usable with the Indochina War and has a tease of possible Indochina War specific expansions from the author, Paul Eaglestone.

ASYMMETRIC WARFARE

The conflict clearly started with sides of dramatically different military might. The French had fighter planes, airdrop and airlift capability, tanks and armour, and better tactical communications at their disposal; the Viet Minh possessed rifles and machineguns, but they knew the terrain and wisely limited themselves to guerilla actions.

This is not to say that the early years of the war were totally one-sided. The French were always fighting with their logistics spread too thin, like a scrape of butter across a whole baguette. The French sometimes looked like Americans, they used American equipment, but they never had the near limitless means of Uncle Sam. The armament of the Viet Minh drastically improved; from 1950, the Viet Minh were sometimes better equipped than their opponents. The French even lost their superiority in artillery, as became painfully clear in the decisive battle of Dien Bien Phu.

The Viet Minh always had a major advantage in the field of intelligence as they generally enjoyed the sympathy of the population. In places where they were not welcomed, they resorted to intimidation. Meanwhile, the French always had to try to discern the difference between Viet Minh guerrillas and non-combatant peasants.

This offers vast opportunity to GMs running campaigns; evolving the dynamic between the combatants.

FROM AUSTRALIAN BUSH HATS TO FULL RANGES

I started my Indochina War armies by gluing the bush hats of Airfix WWII Australians onto the heads of US marines or infantry, but those days are long gone. Several companies offer a wide choice of figures and at various scales, and Vietnam War ranges can also be useful for figures such as civilians or VC with rifles.

28mm - Empress Miniatures



Full Metal Miniatures:



20mm - Elhiem, Liberation Figures, SHQ, Britannia, Platoon 20.

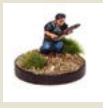


All figures shown here are Elhiem Miniatures.

15mm - Eureka:



10mm - Pendraken:



Some ranges that are well worth a look in those different scales include:

For Operation Léa, you'll have no problem finding M5 Stuart tanks, White scout cars, M3 halftracks, and GMC trucks trucks in your preferred scale. The French also fielded captured Japanese tanks, Hotchkiss H39s, H39s, and M4 Shermans in later years, M24 Chaffees, Chaffees, and M36 Jacksons, together with LVT4 Alligators, Bren carriers, Panhard and Coventry Armoured Cars, Greyhounds, Humber Scout Cars, etc. You may already have much of what you need lurking in your collection!

ORDERS OF BATTLE - HELPING YOU BUILD YOUR INDOCHINA WAR FORCES

FRENCH ORDER OF BATTLE

Groupement S (Lieutenant-Colonel Sauvagnac) - the paratroopers (1,200 men).

- 1 BPC (chef de bataillon Clauzon) Bac Kan
- III/1 RCP (chef de bataillon de Vismes) Cho Moi and Cho Don
- I/ 1 RCP (chef de bataillon Fossey-François) Cao Bang village and bridges
- A section of paratrooper engineers.



Left: Lieutenant-Colonel Sauvagnac.

Groupement B (Colonel Beaufre) - the mobile column (8,000 men).

- 3 REI (Foreign Legion Infantry)
- RICM with 15 M5 Stuart tanks, White scout cars, halftracks, GMC trucks
- BM/5 RTM (Moroccan, mounted on horses and mules)
- II/1 RIC (French naval infantry)
- III/69 RAA (African artillery)
- Elements of the RACM (Moroccan artillery)
- A combat engineer battalion supported by native workers.



Left: Colonel Beaufre.



Above: LCM Bassac.



Above: A White Scout car of the naval infantry (RICM).

Groupement C (Colonel Communal) - the riverine force (4,000 men).

- III/6 RIC (French naval infantry)
- BM/43 RI (regular infantry)
- Naval Commando Group 'Jaubert'
- Elements of the 69 RAA
- Armoured elements
- Engineer elements
- Two surgical antennas

These units, together with 200 mules, 30 trucks, and 2,500 tons of equipment and supply, were transported by three flotillas (Dinassaut 1, 3, and 5) lining up with 20 former American WWII landing craft: 2 LCI, 4 LCT, 7 LCM, 2 LCVP, 1 LCS, and 4 LCA.

These craft were poorly adapted to navigation on muddy rivers and incapable of amphibious operations as they could not operate on land.



AIR FORCE

- About 35 Ju-52 and Dakota transport planes
- Ground support by 12 fighters (probably Mark IX Spitfires)
- 2 liaison planes, 2 medical aircraft, and 2 observation aircraft.

Note: the Ju-52 (AAC1 Toucan, aka 'Julie') and Fieseler Storch (MS500 Criquet) were not spoils of war but new planes built in France based on the German designs.

Left: A Fieseler Storch (MS.500 Criquet) in Indochina.

The military abbreviations and nicknames that the French used so profusely add another layer to this interesting period. More experienced Indochina wargamers will know what it means when the Criquet spotted the Bawouan of the 5 BPVN near the Bisons east of the PA. For the uninitiated, here's a primer of the abbreviations used in this article:

- BPC: Bataillon Parachutiste de Choc
- BM: Bataillon de Marche
- RAA: Régiment d'Artillerie d'Afrique
- RACM: Régiment d'Artillerie Coloniale du Maroc
- RCP: Régiment de Chasseurs Parachutistes
- REI: Régiment Etranger d'Infanterie
- RI: Régiment d'Infanterie
- RIC: Régiment d'Infanterie Coloniale
- RICM: Régiment d'Infanterie Coloniale du Maroc (became the Régiment d'Infanterie Chars de Marine in 1958)
- RTM: Régiment de Tirailleurs Marocains.

VIET MINH ORDER OF BATTLE

Putting together an order of battle for the Viet Minh proved to be even more difficult task than for the French. My best guesstimate is that the Viet Minh had about 35,000 men in northern and central Vietnam, with 8,000 regular troops and at least the same number of local militia in the region that the French tried to seal off.

The regular troops included the best trained and hardened units guarding the headquarters. Four regular regiments were probably engaged:

- The 11th regiment in the Lang Son region
- The 72nd regiment in the Bac Kan region
- The 74th regiment near Cao Bang
- The 147th regiment in the region of the Khé pass.

Artillery was limited to 81mm mortars. There was a tendency to use the village militias as a first line of resistance, laying a buffer around the main force units.



Above: A Viet Minh unit early in the war.

So what are you waiting for? Get busy adding a few themed extras to your existing collections, take on this fascinating conflict, and experiment with combined arms versus guerrilla warfare.





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TRANSFORMING READY-MADE DUNGEONS INTO TABLETOP RUINS

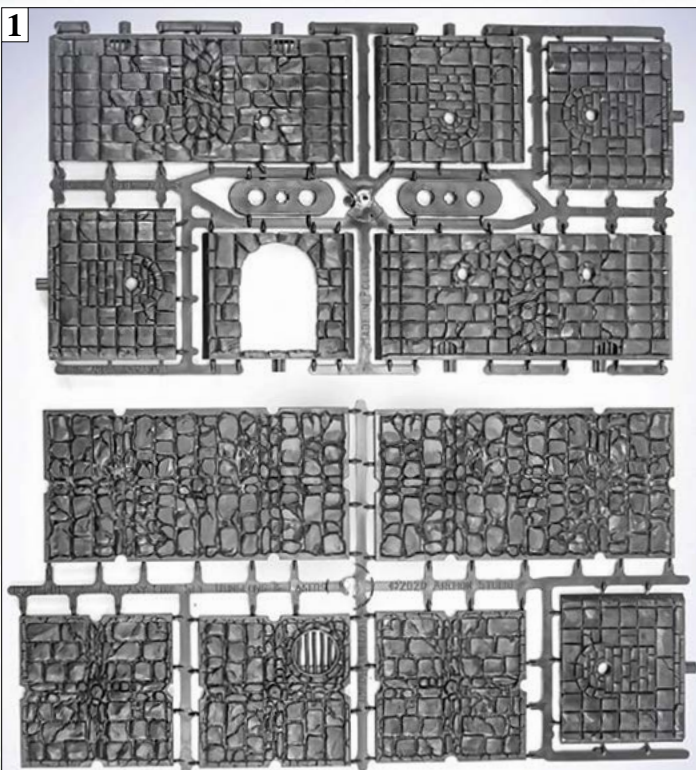


Above: Figures by North Star. Built by Geek Villain.

Wargames Illustrated's in-house terrain tinkerer Marc trains his tools on a plastic dungeon set from *Dungeons and Lasers*.

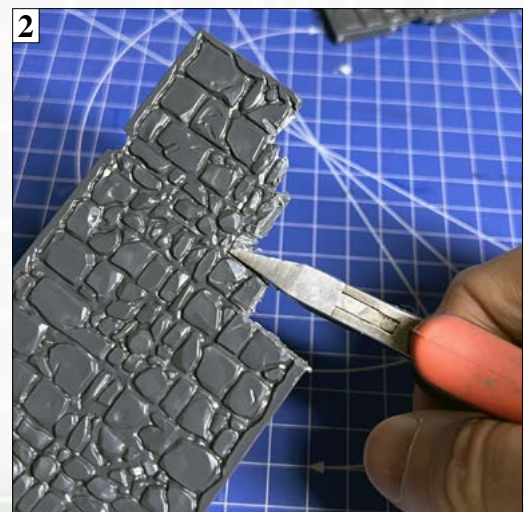
Having recently been introduced to *Dungeons and Lasers' Fantasy Customization Bits* (see *Wi410*, *The Silver Bayonet Society*), I was keen to see what else I could achieve with another set from the same manufacturer. Their *Fantasy Starter Set* makes cool RPG dungeon crawling options out of the box, but I wanted to transform it into wargame friendly terrain for *Frostgrave*, or indeed any skirmish level game that might benefit from scattered ruins.

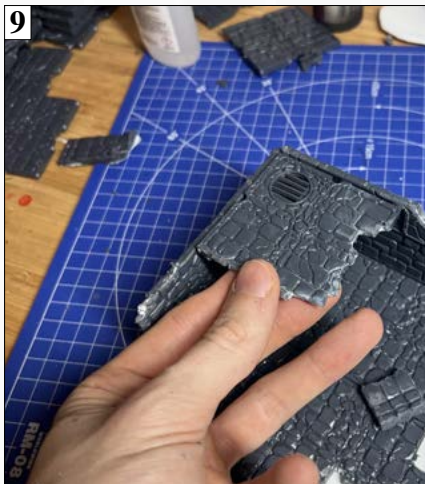
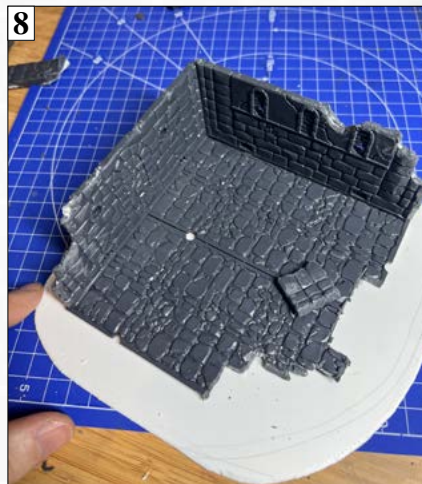
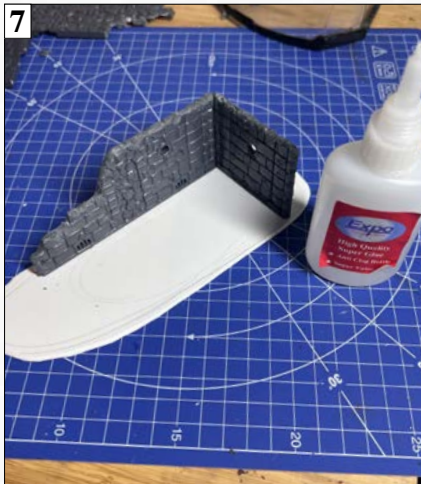
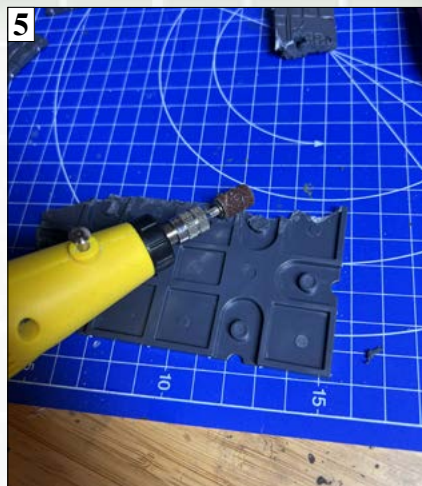
With rough plans sketched out, clippers in one hand, and rotary tool in the other (goggles and dust mask on), I started hacking away.



BUILDING THE RUINS

1. Here's what the walls and floor look like straight out of the box.
2. Using clippers, I removed any pegs then cut the floors and walls to size, intentionally leaving broken/jagged edges.





3. The embossed brick work provided an excellent guide for my cutting. If you end up with any leftover bricks you can hold onto them and use them as scatter on the bases of your ruins.

4. Using a rotary tool, I sanded the rough edges smooth.

5. I wanted to use some of the floor sections as wrecked first level floors for my terrain. In preparation, I cut then sanded smooth the edges that would be exposed.

6. 0.6mm plasticard cut to an appropriate size was used as a base for all the pieces. The edges were sanded to a taper using the rotary tool.

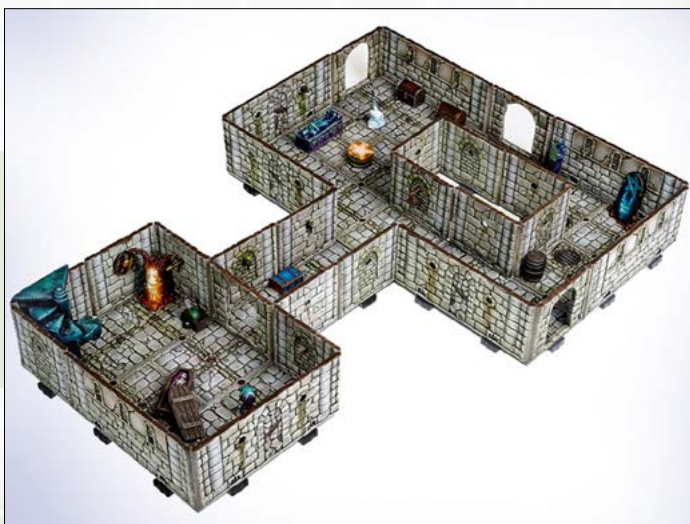
7. The wall sections were fixed in place using super glue.

8. I glued floor sections in place where I felt these were needed, or if they added texture and improved the look.

9. Additional floors were fixed in place at the top of the wall sections. I then added further wall sections above those.

SET YOUR LASERS TO DUNGEONS

Dungeons and Lasers make a wide range of hard plastic terrain and models. If you are in the UK check out North Star Military Figures for what's on offer.



10. Each piece of scatter terrain was completed to this step. I was able to build seven pieces using the contents of one Fantasy Starter set.

10



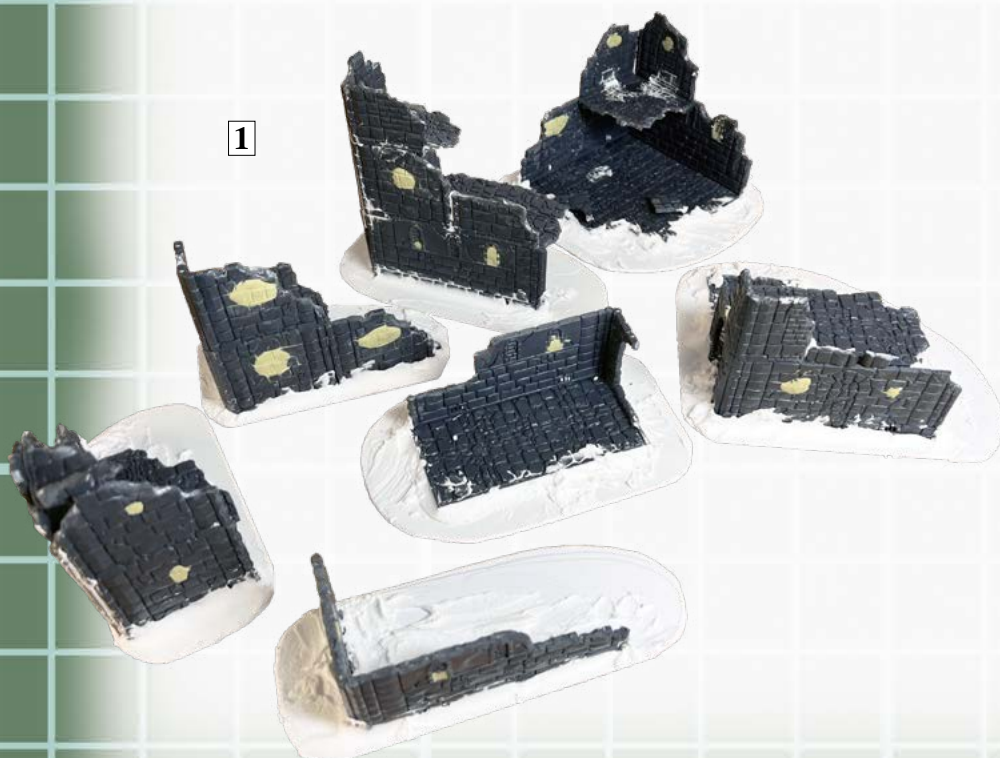
SIMPLE REPAIRS WITH MILLIPUT

Several of the wall sections contained circular holes, originally intended as insertion points for wall mounted torches, etc. While these work for the kit's original purpose as an RPG dungeon, I didn't want them in my *Frostgrave*-ish builds, so I filled the holes.

Milliput is a great putty for this. It's cheap compared to more refined two-part epoxy putties, it can be easily smoothed flat using water, the drying time allows you to carve in grooves to match the gaps between the block work, and should you need to it can be sanded smoother after it dries.



1



BASING THE RUINS

1. Standard DIY Wall Filler was used to build up 'earth' around the base of the structures and left to dry.
2. I then applied PVA glue around the edges of the ruins and liberally sprinkled Woodland Scenics coarse gray basing sand to cover.



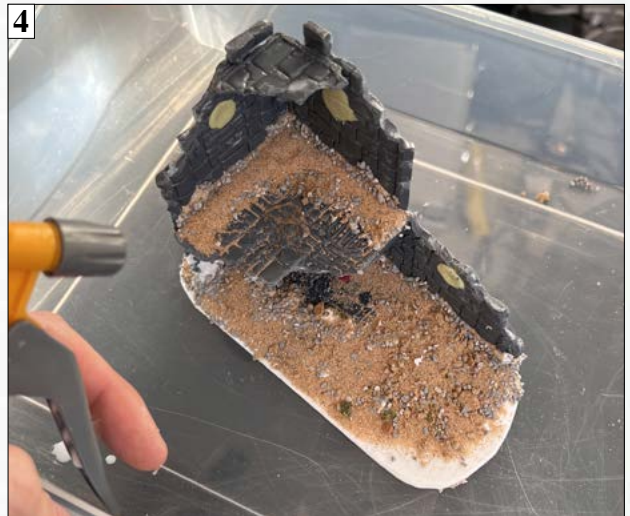
3



3. Each ruin was brought to this stage before going further.

4. Fine sand was applied over the base and along the edges of the ruins where rubble would collect. To fix it in place, PVA mixed with water was sprayed over and left to dry.

4



PAINING THE RUINS

1. Following the application of a black undercoat, I airbrushed a light grey to highlight the terrain. The spray is accentuated on the higher points that would catch light naturally.

1



2



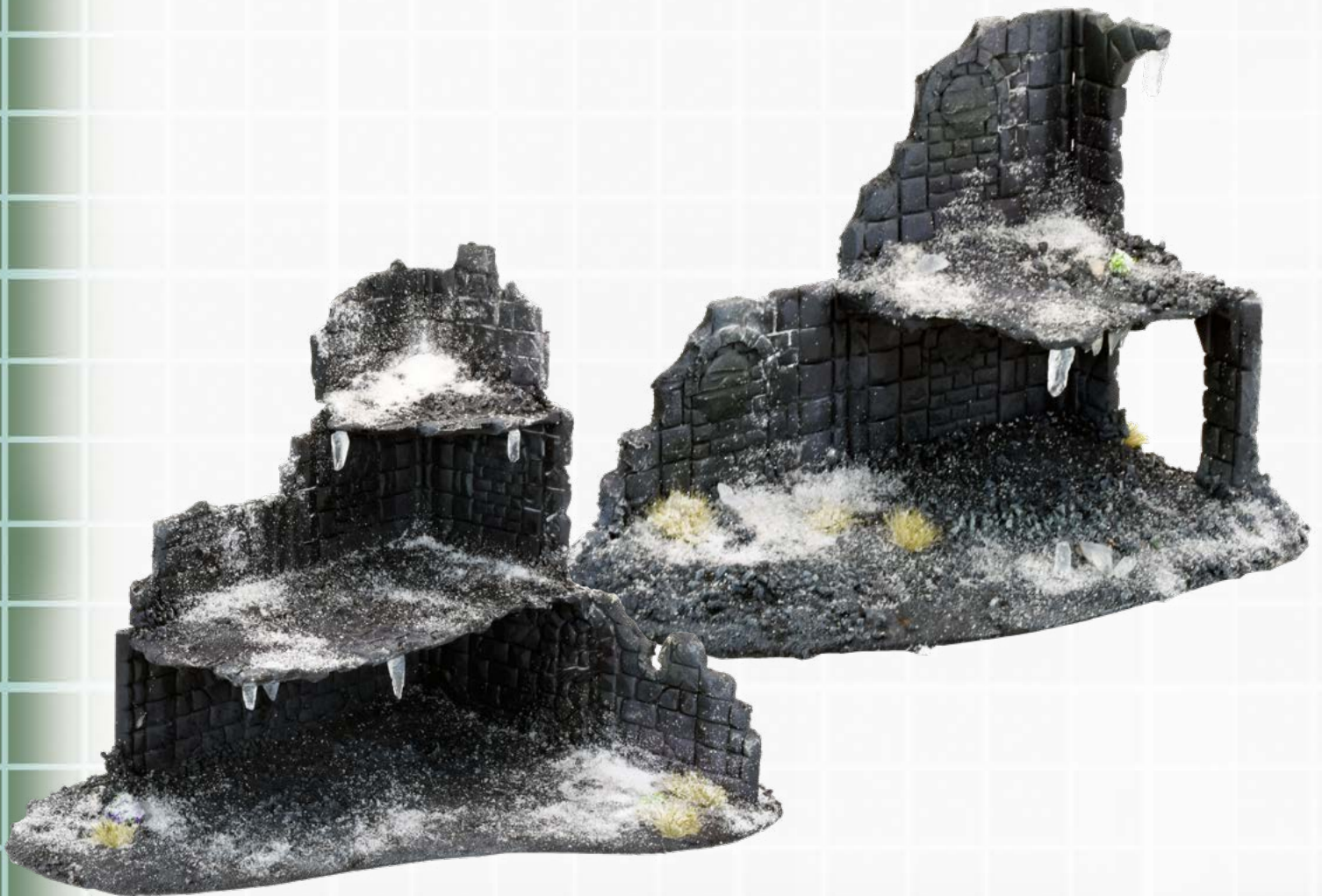
2. Ivory paint was lightly sponged onto the stonework to add texture. Although it doesn't show up too much in the pictures, I also added nuances of colour with glazes to break up the uniform grey tones.

ADDING FINAL DETAILS

1. *Frostgrave* is a pretty desolate world, so I wanted a hint of foliage to add interest. I glued static grass tufts in place before giving them a sprinkling of Green Stuff World Snow Flock.

2. Icicles were created by gluing Ice Chunks from Serious Play to the underside of the raised floors.

3. More PVA was applied to the bases using a brush, then Snow Flock was sprinkled over. A more graduated effect was created by spraying diluted PVA over this, causing some of the surrounding Snow Flock to also remain in place when knocked off.





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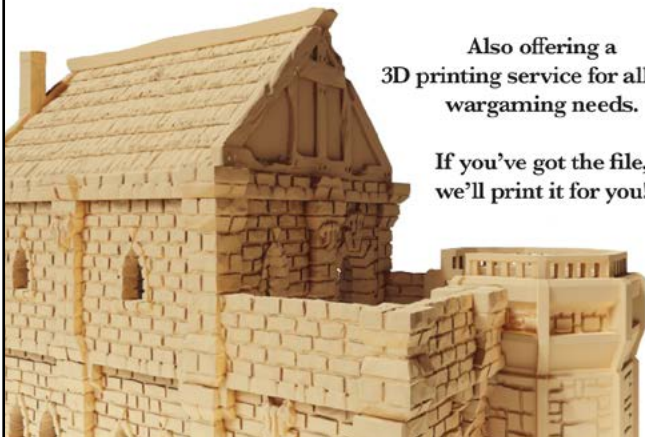

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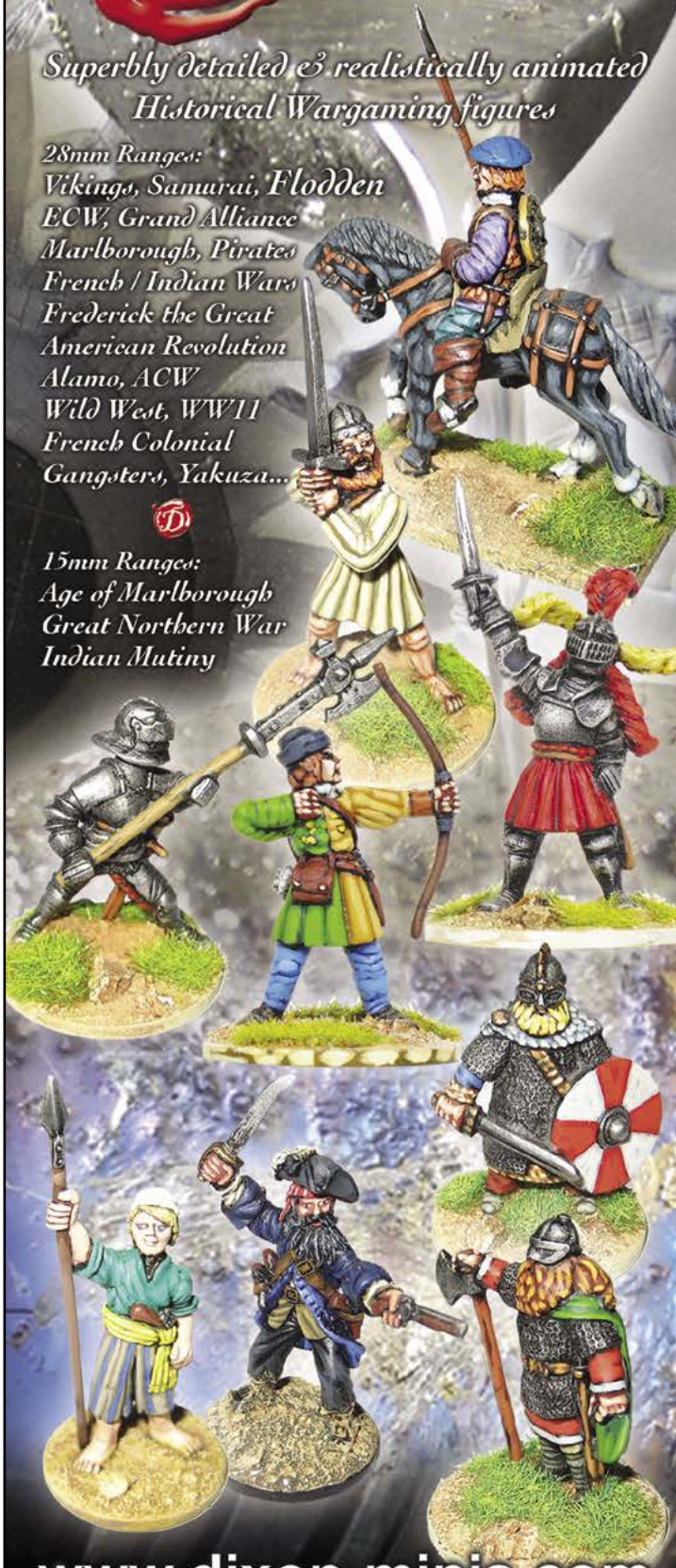
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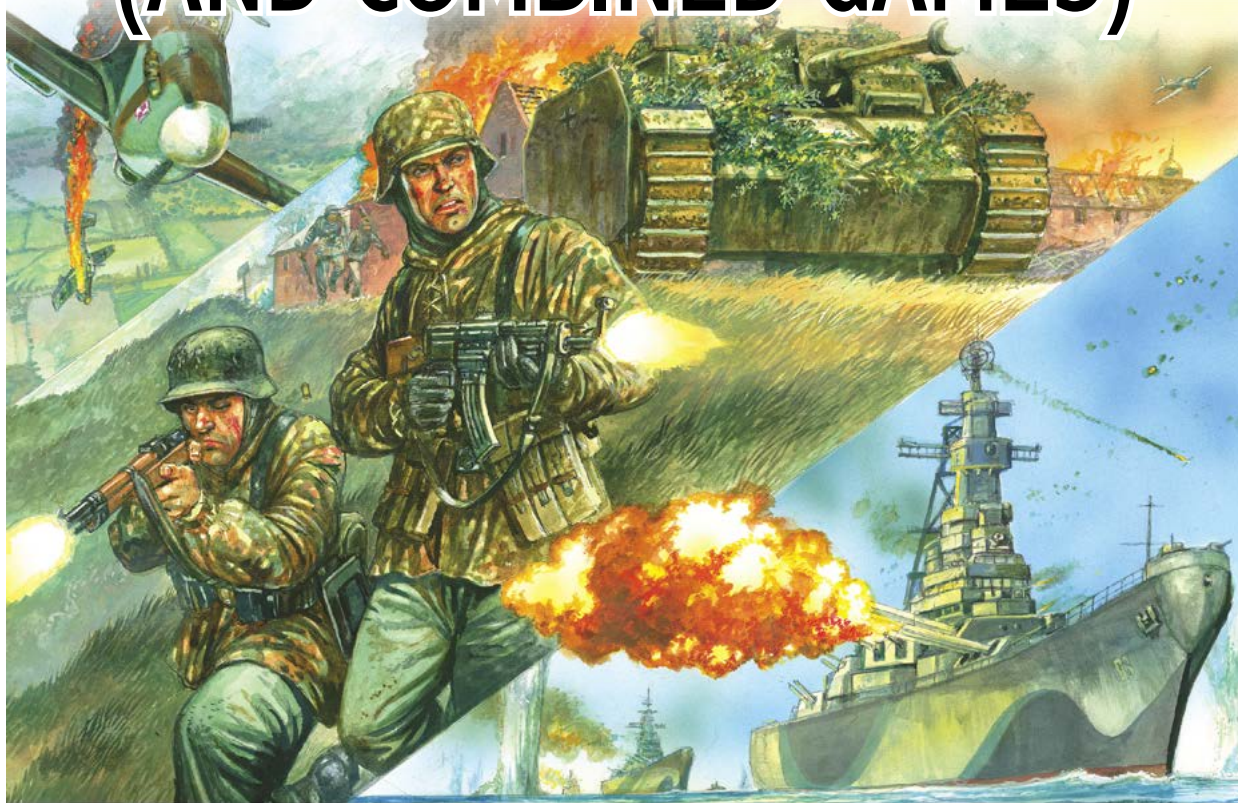
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French / Indian Wars
Frederick the Great
American Revolution
Alamo, ACW
Wild West, WWII
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Gangsters, Yakuza...

15mm Ranges:
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COMBINED ARMS (AND COMBINED GAMES)

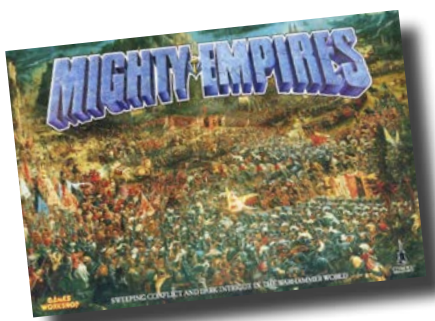


River Horse designers Alessio Cavatore and Jack Caesar talk to *Wargames Illustrated* about their new WWII campaign game, *Combined Arms*, created for Warlord Games.

Wargames Illustrated: *Combined Arms* is perfectly timed with our magazine theme this month, so thanks for that chaps! It's not quite a tabletop wargame in the traditional sense, but it is connected to various wargames and looks like it will add a lot of campaign options to WWII wargaming. Tell us a little more about it.

Jack Caesar: *Combined Arms* is essentially a board game campaign system that links together Warlord's *Blood Red Skies*, *Cruel Seas*, *Victory at Sea*, and *Bolt Action*. Warlord didn't just want this game to work with their existing products, it had to also work on its own, so there is the option of resolving the air, land, and sea combat in *Combined Arms* with a basic dice roll. For those who want to add further depth, however, you can choose to play those battles with Warlord's games instead. This allows you to determine the result on the tabletop and add narrative to your games and your campaign; win a game of *Blood Red Skies* and you'll be able to destroy a particular unit in *Combined Arms*, which will be of benefit to your troops in your next game of *Bolt Action*, and so on.

Alessio Cavatore: For those old enough to remember - the old geezers involved at Warlord and me - there's the classic Games Workshop game *Mighty Empires*, which is a happy memory for me not just because of the game itself, but because of the other campaign gaming activity it inspired. The intent with *Combined Arms* was to create something similar. I think the difference is that where *Mighty Empires* was about playing games of just *Warhammer*, our creation brings in four different games that can be played alongside *Combined Arms*.



Above: *Mighty Empires* from 1990 was a big inspiration to Alessio.



Above (left to right): Cultural centre/ commercial hub and Airfield/observation post.

Right: Factory/ supply depot.



Wi: The other difference, of course, is that *Warhammer* is fantasy; *Combined Arms* is based around real theatres of war. Did using real locations provide a design challenge?

JC: Originally the maps were generic, so we had one designed around a North Africa theme, but it didn't feature real towns or named areas. That had the benefit that we could create the map to work exactly how we wanted with choke points and terrain features to amplify play in whatever way we desired.

Changing the maps to real-world spaces meant we had to search out a landscape that did what we wanted and at the right

scale. Players instantly know how long it would take to travel across the distances when it's real. It was important that we chose the area of each theatre that offered an interesting balance between land and sea for both sides too. Having iconic locations present, such as Tobruk and El Alamein on the final North Africa map, helps create a more grounded story when it is played, but we worked out what made the game fun through our initial abstract maps.

One of those early maps was an island; having the ability to navigate all around it brought lots of interest because boats move four hexes, while land units move only one or two, so it allowed for different angles of attack. We then had to find a real map that matched those tactical situations.

AC: And in the end that one became the Pacific map and Guadalcanal, but we had options; it could have been Sicily as an example. That's where the choice of scale was tackled, and some maps are a very different scale to others, but that ultimately doesn't matter; what matters is the hexes. Going from one map to another is interesting in *Combined Arms* because the scale changes, sometimes dramatically, and so do the tactical considerations.



Above (left to right): Armour, aircraft and naval markers.

People's tastes vary; some want historical accuracy where others will sacrifice some of that detail if it enhances the fun. Jack and I tend to prioritise the gameplay while Warlord bring in that call for accuracy, and we find a compromise with the maps we have.

Wi: What locations did you settle on in the end?

AC: There's the Pacific with Guadalcanal, D-Day on our Northwest Europe map, and then North Africa that has landings from Sicily, Italy, and so on. There's an Eastern Front map too that, perhaps in hindsight, shouldn't have been the Crimean Peninsula. We had no idea at the time what would occur there!

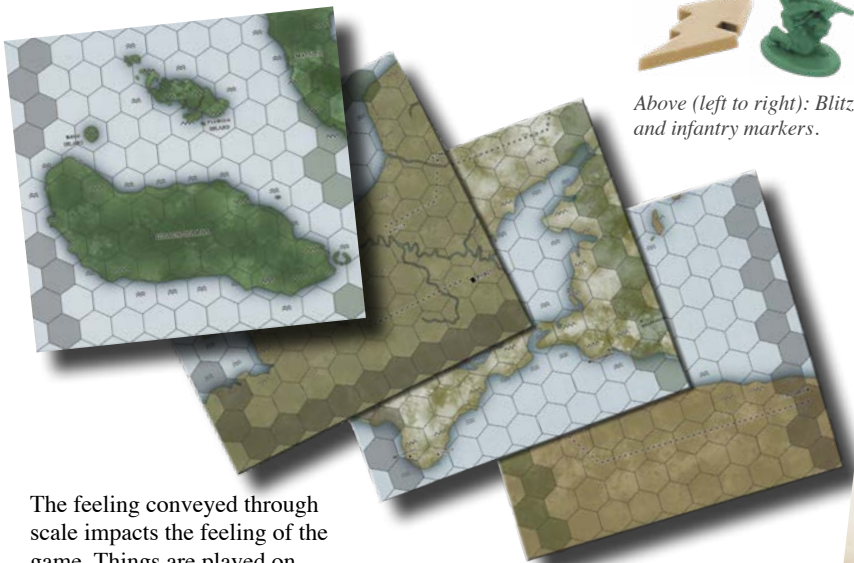
Wi: It seems that the game took a couple of years to make it through production. The plastic frame of objectives and units is stamped with a 2020 date.

JC: We chat stuff over and hammer out any points of contention. Alessio obviously has a lot of experience in wargaming, and I like to think I bring some modern thinking at times.

AC: Oh definitely! I'm old school, but Jack brings in ideas you might not traditionally see in wargames. Maybe I don't even think about the use of counters, tokens, and nice-looking cards because I'm thinking "I have a piece of paper, I can write things down".



Above (left to right): Radar station/communications complex and Fortifications/built-up area.



Above (left to right): Blitz and infantry markers.

The feeling conveyed through scale impacts the feeling of the game. Things are played on tactical maps, but it's easy to imagine a little settlement somewhere in the Western desert if things are zoomed in; you'll make up your own name for it. Once you zoom out, you immediately see the reality and those invented locations change to places like Tripoli or Tobruk.

There was a lot of consideration of the scale of *Bolt Action* too, of course, for when players combine systems. It's fine to be playing with a few platoons over a small town in *Bolt Action*, but if you show Stalingrad and the players have 20 guys and an armoured car that's a bit different! In those situations, you can just play a small part of that bigger fight with your *Bolt Action* figures.

JC: Yeah, there was something like a yearlong pause due to Covid and Lockdown, but that luckily came at the point after we had done our bit. If that had happened in the middle of creation, having to come back to design after a year out, it could have been quite a challenge. We've had to move playtesting of other projects to *Tabletop Simulator* due to the pandemic, but we had gotten *Combined Arms* sorted out before that.

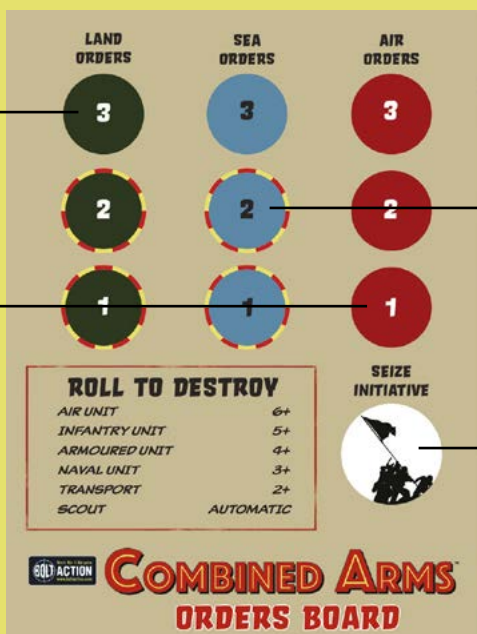
Wi: How do you two work together and how did you go about testing *Combined Arms*? Were there two levels - the board game itself and then how it interacted with the other Warlord tabletop games?



HOW THE ORDERS BOARD WORKS

ORDER COUNTERS PLACED ON THE TRACKS WILL ALLOW THE NUMBER OF UNITS SHOWN TO MOVE. IN THIS CASE IT IS LAND UNITS WHO MOVE ONE HEX. ROADS AND BLITZ COUNTERS ALLOW AN EXTRA MOVE.

THIS TRACKER ALLOWS AIR UNITS TO BE TAKEN FROM YOUR SUPPLY AND PLACED ON ANY EMPTY HEX. AIR BATTLES WILL OCCUR BETWEEN ADJACENT AIR UNITS.



THIS TRACKER ALLOWS SEA UNITS TO MOVE, AND THEY HAVE A FAR GREATER MOVE THAN LAND UNITS - UP TO FOUR HEXES. THE CHEQUERED BORDER MEANS THAT UNITS CAN MAKE CONCEALED MOVES BY PLACING TWO TOKENS DOWN AS POSSIBLE MOVES, ONLY ONE OF WHICH IS THE ACTUAL UNIT.

AN ORDER COUNTER PLACED HERE WILL ALLOW YOU TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE INITIATIVE AND GAIN MORE CONTROL OVER THE FLOW OF THE BATTLE.

Jack very much took the lead on the board game side of things, but when it came to the campaign elements in *Combined Arms*, which bring in the other four Warlord games, I dealt with more of that. I'm quite an expert on *Bolt Action*, maybe THE expert on *Bolt Action*, so it made sense that was my job! I had less experience with the other games, so Jack and I played with the starter sets and later talked to people like *Blood Red Skies* designer Andy Chambers. He gave us his feedback on how *Combined Arms* interacted with *Blood Red Skies* and on the overall feel and workings of the board game. He's an experienced game designer after all, so getting input from other experts was great.

Wi: How does the board game interact with the action in the tabletop games exactly?

JC: There are action cards that are used in gameplay, and some of these will be switched out if you intend to play battles with, for example, *Bolt Action*. Artillery support is a basic +2 to combat if you're just playing the *Combined Arms* board game; but if you're intending to play the battle as a wargame, the card will change to give you a free *Bolt Action* artillery observer. It was important for us to make sure that the wargaming bonus was substantive to the basic board game flat number bonus. There was a *Blood Red Skies* card that gave a very basic benefit, which allowed a pilot to keep experience when they went down, and that was given a buff because Andy fed back that it wasn't going to excite experienced players of *Blood Red Skies*.



Above: A game of *Combined Arms* set up and ready. Players have taken it in turns to place the five objectives before deploying. The Allies are ready to attack the French coast and have their four green army units (three infantry and one armour) and one sea unit in starting hexes on the British coast. The Axis player has their land (two infantry and two armour) and sea units deployed further back in their starting hexes and will need to move forward to control the objectives ahead. Each side has air support ready, starting off the map. The goal of the game is to secure all of the objectives or get to ten victory points first.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR RIVER HORSE AND FOR COMBINED ARMS?

AC: I'M SURE AT SOME POINT WARLORD WILL CREATE A WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN EVENT FOR THE GAME TO BUILD UP SOME COMMUNITY GAMING. WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING BOOKED IN TO EXPAND ON COMBINED ARMS; IT WILL OBVIOUSLY DEPEND ON HOW WELL IT IS RECEIVED; BUT IT'S MODULAR, SO THERE'S NO REASON THERE COULDN'T BE MORE AHEAD.

RIVER HORSE IS WORKING ON A BOARD GAME RIGHT NOW, BUT IN TERMS OF WHAT I'M WORKING ON FROM A MORE WARGAMING PERSPECTIVE, IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY, BUT YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS.

AC: The off-map artillery and airstrikes in *Bolt Action* work well to represent things like your force being boosted by nearby naval support on the *Combined Arms* map. It's just not possible to put things like planes and ranged artillery on the table due to scale and range. To make it fun, you need to change things so the gaming range is actually unrealistic.

Wi: Considering the complications that the interactions between different games could cause, the *Combined Arms* rules are succinct. They generally work through some simple card switches and bonuses if you want to add in wargaming, and the board game element is covered in about 20 pages of rules. Is that sort of simplicity difficult to achieve?

JC: I think that's the process, the skill, I guess. I think Jervis Johnson said that a game's finished when you're done taking stuff out of it, not when you're done adding things to it. Our company motto is 'sophistication through simplicity', and trying to reduce, reduce, reduce until you get a tasty 'game stock' is what we do.

AC: Excellent culinary metaphors aside, it's difficult! Many people, wargamers more than board gamers I think, have the perception that if the rules aren't lengthy and thick the game will be trivial and simple. That's just so inherently wrong. Chess is the one-word response to prove that wrong! The capacity of your brain shouldn't be devoted to understanding the rules, it should be focused on working out what your next move is.

JC: A wargame generally evokes a drama and story and puts the player in the boots of the general. In rules, you must evoke that feeling in as few words as possible. The same is true with *Combined Arms* but at a bigger campaign scale. We had to decide what we wanted the player to feel and

ALESSIO AND JACK'S PICK OF WWII'S COMBINED OPERATIONS

AC: THERE'S THE OBVIOUS ANSWER THAT I SUSPECT 90% OF WESTERNERS WILL GIVE YOU: D-DAY. IF YOU LOOK AT THE COORDINATION OF THE SEA ASSAULT, LAND ATTACK, AIR SUPPORT, BOMBARDMENT, PARATROOPERS, I THINK IT'S A CLASSIC, AND THERE ARE ALL THE MOVIES: PRIVATE RYAN, BAND OF BROTHERS, LONGEST DAY.

JC: THE ONE BEFORE THAT COMES TO MY MIND - LESS OF AN OFFENSIVE THOUGH - IS THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION. I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING IN THE TELLING OF THE STORY AS A GRAND VICTORY IN RETREAT. "WE DID IT, WE MANAGED TO GET OFF THE MAINLAND, HOORAY!", BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT'S A TRAGEDY.

AC: IT CERTAINLY HAS THE COMBINED ARMS FEEL WITH THE AIR WAR, THE SHIPS DOING THEIR THING, IT FITS.

make systems to support that: you are a strategic commander who doesn't have full information of what your enemy is capable of; there's trickery, concealment, and strategic objectives that change in importance as the game progresses.

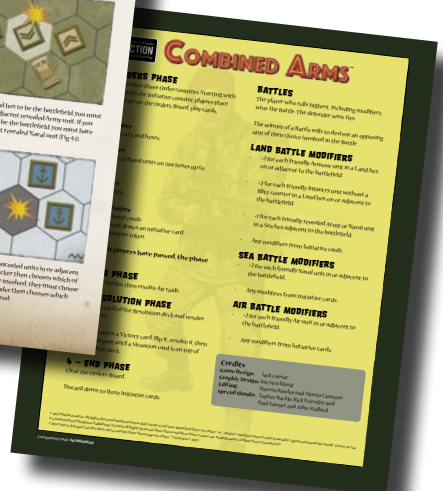
Wi: The objectives are a key element and get their own plastic hex counters. How do they work?

JC: The holding of objectives and working out when it's important to place your units to hold or capture an objective that's held by someone else is at the core of the game. Objective scoring is done through a card deck, and each turn the back of the top card will tell you what the weather conditions are. This will influence play that turn; at the end of the turn, you flip that card over and the next card may be 'score the Radar Tower', so whoever holds that objective will get a Victory Point. Once that's happened, it cycles out of the deck for a while and next it could be the Cultural Centre that scores. You then know that those two objectives aren't as important in the upcoming turns and must refocus your strategy to hunt for the other three objectives. This means players must shift focus constantly.

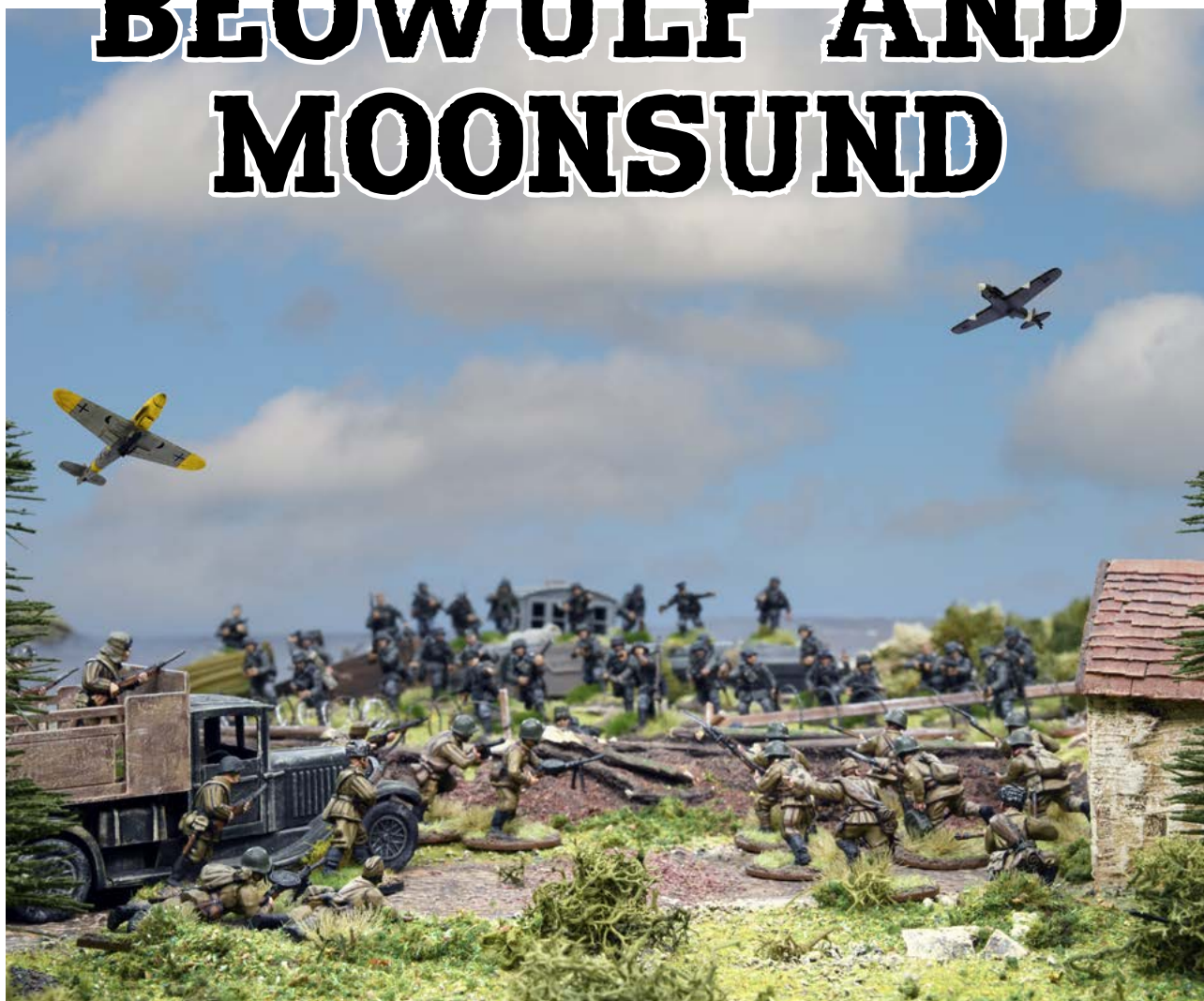
Another thing that's fun is a simple catch-up mechanic. Whenever you get a Victory Point, your opponent gets a new unit to place on the map. You're winning the war, so there's less need for reinforcements, but the losing commander is far more likely to add extra support to hold the Radar Tower or some other objective. By winning, you put yourself at a strength disadvantage.

AC: Unlike a more traditional campaign system for wargames, where you pretty much have a map and move things around on it, I think that more fun comes from the Orders Board in *Combined Arms*. You place your order counters on it to put more emphasis on your fleet, ground units, or air units, and it's a more abstract board game type element than traditional wargames might be used to. It means you need to prioritise what is important to your strategy; but because play alternates, you also need to predict what your opponent will do. It connects your orders to the events that then happen on the operational map where you move your units.

Wi: We're excited to give it a go. Any excuse to play more games is good with us. Thanks for chatting to us Alessio and Jack!



BEOWULF AND MOONSUND



Jim Graham explores two World War Two combined operations to seize a group of Estonian islands: Operation Beowulf and the Moonsund Landing Operation.

Operation Barbarossa was a vast undertaking involving millions of troops, and the big battles of the eastern front are well known; epic clashes like Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kharkov, and Bagration trip off the tongue. But when looking for combined operations gaming in WWII, you don't have to 'go large', there were plenty of smaller operations that offer interesting background and scenarios, one of which takes its name from a Germanic epic - Operation Beowulf.

SAAREMAA, HIUMAA, MUHU, AND VORMSI

Lying off the west coast of Estonia, the Moonsund Archipelago (now known as the West Estonian Archipelago) guarded the approaches to the capital city of Riga and threatened the northern flank of Germany's Army Group North as it moved through Poland and the Baltic States. The German High Command needed to address the threat posed from the archipelago.

Their plan was to storm the islands; essentially, a reworking of the one their fathers and uncles had used in the Kaiser's War. This was slightly adapted after Beowulf I (the land advance) stalled as German forces crossed into Estonia, making the need to attack the islands more acute. In Beowulf II, the 61st Infantry Division, reinforced with assault engineers and pioneers, was to be transported to the islands by a combined *Kriegsmarine* and Finnish Navy task force. The Finns were keen to give any help they could to remove the threat of the Soviet Union from their borders and threw their weight behind the Axis.

The eight-thousand-man assault force would be carried into battle by around 250 hundred barges and assault boats of various sizes. The *Kriegsmarine* covering force was based around the Cruiser Squadron of the *Emden*, *Koln*, and *Leipzig*, each of which had nine 15cm guns, and their supporting destroyers.

The three islands of Muhu, Saaremaa, and Hiiumaa were garrisoned by the Soviet 3rd Rifle Brigade and supporting units, a total of about twenty-four-thousand men. Neither side had much in the way of armour; this would be an old school infantry battle facilitated by the landing barges and assault boats.

Right: DUKW Landing Craft by Warlord. Similar vehicles were used in Operation Beowulf and Moonsund.



ISLAND ASSAULT AND AIR SUPERIORITY

The first assaults went in on 9 September with a preliminary attack on the small island of Vormsi to overwhelm the coastal defences covering the approaches to Muhu. Once the way was clear, that island was stormed. The Soviet defenders were pressed back until they had to retire across the causeway to Saaremaa. This didn't save them as the Soviet engineers were unable to blow up the causeway and the Germans were hot on their heels, following them over.

The pressure stayed on, and the Soviets were forced back to the Sõrve Peninsula where they had built strong defences across the approaches. Unfortunately, they were outflanked by the German cruisers whose gunfire enfiladed the defences, allowing the pioneers to first gain a foothold and then overwhelm the defenders who finally surrendered on 5 October.

The last island, Hiiumaa, was attacked on 12 September. By this time, the *Luftwaffe* had complete control of the skies over the islands, and the defenders were starting to realise that they were on their own and that help wasn't coming anytime soon, so they dug in as best as they could. The Germans stormed ashore with a barrage of naval gunfire coming in over their heads from the indefatigable *Emden*, *Köln*, and *Leipzig*. The makeshift defences did little to stop the landings and follow up attacks. The defenders were forced back to Takhuna, where they had prepared defences across the narrowest part, but they couldn't hold and the *Kriegsmarine* and pioneers prevailed. The Soviet defenders surrendered on 21 October, they had little choice, the *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe* controlled the sea and sky and evacuation was impossible.

THE RIPOSTE: THE MOONSUND LANDING OPERATION, SEPTEMBER 1944

Three years later, the Soviets were back. Their assault on the archipelago in 1944 was basically the same operation in reverse.

The Soviet 8th Army had been a mainstay of the Leningrad Front and had fought through the whole Eastern Front war. It was a battle-hardened formation, well-versed in up-to-date tactics. Like the attackers in 1941, they were braced with combat engineers, and the assault troops carried flamethrowers, satchel charges, and submachine guns.

The German 23rd Infantry Division defended and was a much newer formation than its number suggests. The original 23rd had been converted to a



panzer division in 1942, and this was a re-constituted late war formation with all that suggests; recent recruits built around a cadre of veterans. The Soviet Air Force were on the front foot this time, outnumbering the *Luftwaffe* and able to control the skies. The Red Navy controlled the seas, but the *Kriegsmarine* were always up for a fight.

The highest point of the islands is only 200 feet above sea level, so the Soviets went back to the technology of the Tsar's War and used two observation balloons for artillery spotting.

Unlike in 1941, the Soviets were well-equipped and had amassed Lend Lease landing craft and DUKW amphibious vehicles to transport troops ashore as well as sufficient naval and air units to screen the landings from the Germans. The Soviet Army committed the 8th

Estonian Rifle Corps, which was made up of local 'volunteers' who were hurriedly trained and not well-equipped. It was a propaganda move, but it had the bonus of risking the lives of Estonians who might be of a mind to oppose the Red Army in the future.

THE FINNISH FLIP-FLOP

The main striking power of the attackers was the 109th Rifle Corps, a seasoned unit that had fought through the Eastern Front battles and the Siege of Leningrad, and it would take over from the Estonians when the going got tough. The naval force was joint, in terms of the peace treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland, and now the Finns were allied to the Soviet attackers. The Finnish Detachment *Arho* comprised 50 motorboats and 50 other ships and transported part of the Soviet forces to



Above: The German attackers employ flamethrowers during their assault. Figures by Warlord Games.

the islands. 'Papa Joe' Stalin had not forgotten what happened in 1941 and wanted to make a point of who wielded the real power.

The Soviet onslaught fell on 29 September. The Germans quickly withdrew to Saaremaa, destroying the causeway behind them. They reinforced the garrison on that island with the 218th Infantry Division and 12th *Luftwaffe* Field Division.

The Germans had beefed up the old Soviet defences and fought tenaciously from bunker to bunker and trench to trench, but the Soviets prevailed due to numbers and their grim determination to avenge everything that had been done to them for three long years. As well as the frontal attacks, the Soviets tried several amphibious landings behind German lines, but all were repulsed with heavy losses by the Germans.

To support the islands, the *Kriegsmarine* committed its major assets in the Baltic: the cruisers *Admiral Scheer* (with six 28cm and eight 15cm guns) and *Prinz Eugen* (with eight 20cm guns) gave support to the defenders. They had hoped to draw the Red Navy into battle and to interdict the supplies to the islands, but the Red Navy declined to play. Before the Soviets completely cut off the islands, the Germans withdrew the 12th *Luftwaffe* Division, while the rest of the Germans were forced back and surrendered.

CONSIDER AN UNUSUAL APPROACH

There are plenty of WWII rulesets for virtually every size of battle, so you can take your pick and use the ones you like best. If you choose a skirmish level scenario, then it is worth getting creative with the rules you use; I've suggested before that in a game with trench systems and underground bunkers, you can use rules like *Space Hulk* with minimum changes. All the players control different units of the attackers, while the defences are unrolled before them, and the defenders are controlled by an umpire or a simple AI system.

Right: *Space Hulk* meets *Moonsund*.



Above: Soviet Marines on the Moonsund Islands.



Left: Soviet medics check equipment ahead of their amphibious assault on the Moonsund Islands. They are wearing float belts from the PKT swimming suit.



Right: Soviet landings during Operation Moonsund.

WHAT IFS

There are several what if options to consider in this region, and a Red Navy intervention offers one possibility in 1941. There was the possibility of the Red Banner Fleet sallying out of Leningrad to attack the *Kriegsmarine*; thus, the three German light cruisers could be facing the capital ships of the Red Navy. These battleships were, however, stronger in name than in reality; the Soviet battleships were Great War era at best and a liability at worst, but the cruiser *Kirov* was a modern ship as were several the destroyers. An attack by the *Kirov* and a destroyer flotilla on the *Kriegsmarine* cruiser squadron and their supports would be an interesting exercise and would certainly make for new considerations when it came to the Axis assault on the island without the same naval support.



Above: A 1941 photograph of the *Kirov*.

In 1944, the Red Air Force could have made a more serious attempt to sink the German ships, something the RAF managed with the *Admiral Scheer* in 1945, though it would take the US military two nuclear blasts after the War to sink the *Prinz Eugen*. If the Soviets had put a major effort into air strikes, then they might have driven off or sunk the major *Kriegsmarine* assets in the Baltic. Naval gamers may decry them but in land warfare terms a 20cm gun, accurate from over a dozen miles away, will comfortably outgun even the largest Soviet assault gun, and for combined operations this has some real impact. Sinking either of the ships would make the advance along the Baltic Coast easier. While the Red Air Force didn't have the strength of the RAF, they were at least as powerful as the Japanese Air Force, and they sank plenty of cruisers.

WARGAMING BEOWULF II AND THE MOONSUND OPERATION

The 1941 battles were between well-trained and equipped German troops and Soviet forces who were aware they were being left to their fate. The initial landings were largely unopposed, so the battles that are most interesting to refight are the later ones on the Sörve and Takhuna peninsulas. They pit the best German forces against the toughest Soviet defences with *Sturm-Pionier-Bataillon* troops in the van.

TERRAIN

The terrain should be flat with some scrub but generally open. The Soviet defences were extensive but rudimentary; although by 1944, the Germans had developed these into an interlinked network with bunkers and strongpoints. There is no reason that the Soviets wouldn't choose to attack the weakest point of course, so even in the later battles you could use similar terrain; they were long past human wave attacks regardless of circumstances.

ATTACKERS

A company of line infantry backed up with an assault platoon.

The infantry company:

- An HQ section.
- Three platoons each of three sections. Each section has an NCO with SMG, six riflemen, and an LMG team. The riflemen have grenades.

The assault platoon:

- HQ Section of an officer with pistol and three with rifles.
- Three platoons, each with an HQ of an officer with SMG and two with rifles.
- Three sections each of NCO with SMG, six with rifles, LMG, and No. 2 with rifle.

TRAINING AND MORALE

The attackers are trained or veteran with good morale; the assault platoon should be the best trained and have the better morale, though it does no harm to roll for this.

NATIONAL VARIANCE

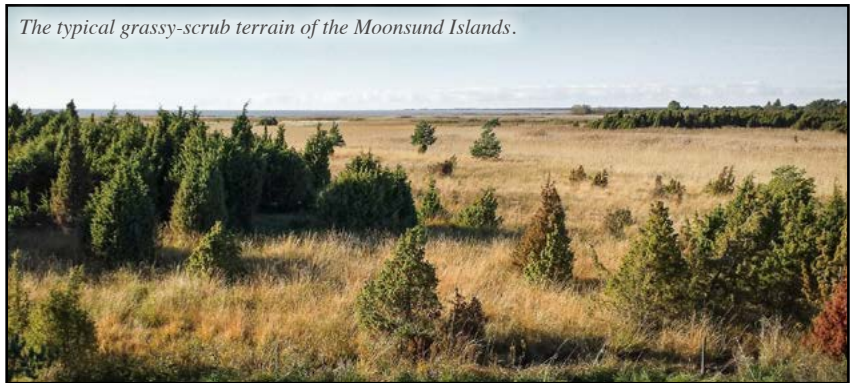
German - the Sturm-Pioneer platoon is:

- HQ section of officer with SMG, three with rifles.
- Section with two flamethrowers, six with rifles.
- Two sections of NCO with SMG, four rifles and eight grenades, two with MG34, and two No. 2s.

Soviet - the assault platoon is:

- HQ section of officer and two men, all with PPSH SMG.
- Three sections of 8 with PPSH SMGs and two with DPM LMG. Four of the men have six grenades each.

The typical grassy-scrub terrain of the Moonsund Islands.



FLAMETHROWERS

Flamethrowers brought a special dread to defenders, which could lead to them running, or it could inspire them to make special efforts to kill the pioneers. In either event, flamethrower operators should expect no mercy and they will draw more than their share of fire. If hit, roll 2D6:

- 2 to 7: Nothing special happens.
- 8 to 9: The operator fires while falling and takes one additional level of damage from his own flames.
- 10 to 11: The operator spins when shot and anyone within range in any direction is hit on a D6 roll of 5+. Determine these hits as you normally would for a flamethrower attack.
- 12: The fuel tank explodes; anyone within one move of the operator is hit as if shot by a flamethrower. The operator is killed.

This may seem harsh, but there is a reason you rarely see anyone near a flamethrower operator in actual combat pictures or footage!



Above: These photos were taken during a 2014 re-enactment of Operation Moonsund, which (as you can see) featured a working flamethrower. An Estonian newspaper report covering the event mentions that there were some safety concerns regarding using a flamethrower in grassland during a hot, sunny day (in fact, it was described as "madness to the point of stupidity"); however, the public were assured that "the grass was properly mowed and the seawater was only a few meters away." [Phew, no worries there then - Ed]



Above: Soviet Naval Infantry by Artizan Designs.

NAVAL GUNFIRE

It's nice to have, but unless you are playing at a very scaled down level or on a huge board then 15 or 20 cm shells on a tabletop are too close for comfort! Once the defender has deployed, roll a D6 for each clearly visible strongpoint; on a 6, it (and anyone in it) is destroyed; on a 5, it is damaged and counts as a foxhole or trench; the occupants roll as if under artillery fire.

DEFENDERS

The defenders in both cases are an understrength infantry company with a machine gun section attached.

The infantry company:

Three rifle platoons each of three sections of NCO and five or six riflemen and an LMG.

The machine gun section:

Two MMGs and a mortar section of two weapons in support.

TRAINING AND MORALE

The defenders are trained but morale should be low, at least one level below the attackers, though again rolling for this may surprise the attackers as they bite off more than they can chew.

Right: Soviet Infantry by Crusader Miniatures assault a German trench, manned by Bolt Action figures.



'NEUTRAL' BUT LENDING A HELPING HAND

Lend Lease was the programme that the US put in place to supply the anti-Fascists with materiel while remaining neutral. The equipment was 'leased' as a legal fiction because the US couldn't gift it and remain neutral. The transfer of equipment continued even after the US joined the war, and much of the equipment used to transport the Red Army forces to the Estonian Islands was US built landing craft and DUKWs.

The attack on the islands was the largest Soviet amphibious operation of the war, but it wouldn't have been possible without the equipment and vehicles from the US.

Right: A LST-1 Class 'landing ship' of the type that featured in the Lend Lease programme to the Soviet Union from the United States. This model is produced by ARV and is available from Warlord Games in their Cruel Seas range.



FINDING THE RIGHT FIGURES

You have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to WWII; pick a scale and you can get figures for it. In 28mm, Warlord Games make some excellent options for the Eastern Front; the Soviet infantry can be used for early or late war, the Germans have Blitzkrieg Panzer Grenadiers and infantry for the early war, while the Late War Grenadiers and Panzer Grenadiers serve well towards the end of the conflict. The D-Day Defenders pack is also useful, containing some defences and tank traps.

You don't have to worry too much about (land) vehicles as there was little armour on the islands, but the odd one for colour wouldn't go amiss. Again, Warlord Games can supply anything you need in 28mm. Empress Miniatures have some very nice sculpts for early war Germans and offer a limited number of vehicles.

For German and Soviet landing craft (and lots more besides) check out Barrage Miniatures based in Madrid. They have an extensive and eclectic range of vessels suitable for Operation Beowulf and Moonstun as well other theatres and conflicts.

If you are old school and play 20mm, then everything you want is available from the usual suspects.



Above: 1 and 3 Bolt Action Soviet Infantry. 2 and 4 Crusader Miniatures Soviet Infantry.

In 15mm, there is variety with *Flames of War*/Battlefront having a range too comprehensive to list and covering early and late war. Peter Pig have nice figures, but these are not compatible with *FoW* if that's your game of choice. They also have some nice exotica like snipers, both male and female, political officers, scouts, and assault troops.

Pendracken produce both sides in 10mm, but the ranges are better for armoured battles than they are for this campaign, which is largely a series of infantry battles.

If you choose to fight the naval battles, then *General Quarters* are a great set of rules and models for both naval factions; given the size of the actions, the ships look lovely in 1/2400, which are available from Magister Militia, Waterline, and War-games Emporium.

Left: DB Soviet landing craft 1:56 (28mm) by Barrage Miniatures.

EXTRA CONSIDERATIONS

1941 - Superior German morale and training

The Wehrmacht were at the peak of their powers; well-trained and experienced with the absolute belief that they would prevail. The Red Army was on the ropes, Barbarossa had torn through both the rank and file and the command. Morale was shaky and training patchy with little emphasis on initiative.

1944 - Veterans out for revenge

The Soviet troops used in the retaking of the islands were battle hardened, having fought on the Northern Front for the previous three years. They were well motivated and trained, the reverse of 1941. The *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe* defenders knew they were on the backfoot strategically, but that gave them determination as they had nowhere else to go. The units were not the best, but they were well-trained and equipped. The *Luftwaffe* troops were on a par with the army; not great, but not terrible either.



Painting *Carnevale* Lesser Ugdrú



Ben Porter talks reference material, mood boards, and brushwork, then applies paint to some Lovecraft looking sub-aquatic beasts from the fantasy skirmish game *Carnevale*.

I have been keen to dive into the weird and wonderful world of *Carnevale* - a unique blend of 18th Century Venice and cosmic horror redolent of the works of H.P. Lovecraft - for a while. The starter set from TT Combat is a great entry point, containing everything you need to play; it serendipitously comes with the two factions that most appeal to me too: the Guild, and the Rashaar (also known as the sinister Church of Dagon).

CREATURES OF THE BLUE LAGOON

Having committed to a 'no playing without painting' policy, I decided to paint the Rashaar gang's two Lesser Ugdrú first - the footsoldiers of the Rashaar. Fans of H.P. Lovecraft's short stories will recognise similarities to those creatures described in *Dagon* or *Shadow Over Innsmouth*. A more obvious comparison would be with the eponymous *Creature of the Black Lagoon* or the creature from *The Shape of Water* (both of which were heavily influenced by Lovecraft's work). Whilst the box art models look great with cool greens and coral tones, I decided that I wanted to do something a bit different with them.

PAINTING THE LESSER UGDRU

BASECOATING

When painting a model which involves a predominant colour, it is always a good idea to apply an even, opaque coat of it as a basecoat. With the blue parrotfish chosen as my main reference (see page xx), I applied several thin layers of Scalecolor Fantasy & Games Jorildyn Turquoise over the entire model.



MOTTLING

The beauty of small-scale skirmish games is that because you are generally using a small warband of about a dozen models, you can afford to pay a bit more attention to detail than you would with figures for pitched battle style games.

I opted for a mottled, frog-like look to the skin instead of painting individual scales. This saved me the time and hassle of having to freehand each scale and gave me the opportunity to add more texture to the model without it being too distracting. I felt that a nod to amphibians was in order since there are a lot of elements from them in the sculpts themselves.

COSMIC HORROR

H.P. Lovecraft is considered by many to be the father of the cosmic horror genre. Eking a living off publishing his short stories in pulp magazines like *Weird Tales*, he did not have much financial success whilst he was alive and died in poverty. He was not possessive of his work and the worlds he created, allowing - often encouraging - other writers to create fiction in the universe that would later be known as the Cthulhu Mythos. This unorthodox approach is perhaps one of the reasons cosmic horror would eventually become so pervasive in popular culture.

1) I built up the mottled texture with an older brush so as not to destroy the point on my good, clean detail brush.

The key to good mottling is to make it look random without being completely random in the placement. I began by stippling thinned layers of Scalecolor Cantabric Blue into the areas of the model where shadow would naturally be denser. I interspersed this with a bit of Vallejo Game Color Royal Purple for variation. This would also create visual harmony between the skin and the fins I would paint later in purples and pinks.



2) I followed this by stippling on Scalecolor Fantasy & Games Jorildyn Turquoise, interspersed with Scalecolor Fantasy & Games Hiril Blue. At this point I also began to build up the lighter tones more intensely along the bottom of the face, the chest, and the underbelly. A lot of animals have much lighter skin along the underbelly, so this is a touch that will serve to make our creature even more convincing.

You can see I've also painted the fins with their basecolour of Vallejo Game Color Royal Purple. The full process for painting the fins is described in the next section.



3) A stipple of Scalecolor Caribbean Blue is added to raised areas. An element of randomness is still needed to make the mottling appear natural, but it's important to be a bit neater with these lighter highlights to create a nice gradient on the model and convey a sense of light and shadow.



4) A 1:1 mix of Scalecolor Caribbean Blue and Vallejo Game Color Livery Green is stippled in selected areas to push contrast. This mix was used mostly on the raised areas of the underbelly, but I applied very small amounts to some of the uppermost areas on the darker skin too.

5) The mottling is completed by mixing some Scalecolor White Sands into the previous mix to lighten it without desaturating the colour too much. This gets applied to the underbelly and other areas of the lighter skin that would catch the most light.

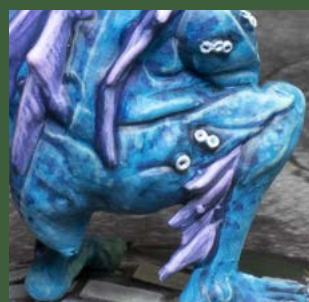
I also used this mix as an edge highlight, using regular brushstrokes to further accentuate the outlines and details on the darker skin.



MOTTLED SKIN

The mottled texture of the Lesser Ugdrü is built up by stippling on paints of different shades and hues in varying sizes and densities. Stippling is the technique of using the tip of your brush to create dots of paint on the model. Whilst the idea is to create a pattern on the model that imitates the random pigmentation that occurs on animals like frogs and fish, the placement is very deliberate. The pattern is formed so that darker tones are concentrated where shadow would naturally occur, and lighter tones help to emphasise highlights.

The model is further defined after the mottling has been painted on with good old-fashioned highlighting and shading. Without the use of these traditional approaches alongside the texture, the model would look a bit amorphous.



SPINES, FINS, AND GILLS

For the spines, fins, and gills I used the pink and violet tones that can be found across the parrotfish in the images I collected.

As shown previously, these parts of the model were basecoated with Vallejo Game Color Royal Purple.

1) I mixed some Vallejo Game Color Squid Pink with the Royal Purple at roughly a 1:1 ratio and applied this mix along the length of each gill, fin, and spine to begin building up the sinewy texture that fins tend to have.



2) Pure Vallejo Game Color Squid Pink enhances the stripe pattern, leaving some of the previous colours to create a gradient between them.



THE EYES

The great thing about monsters is that there are a lot of different ways to approach painting eyes. Common ones include a vertical slit for the pupil to create a predatory look akin to a feline or a reptile; another is to paint the eye all red or black for a suitably sinister look. I decided that I wanted to lean into the descriptions from Lovecraft's writing of the Deep Ones and the populace of Innsmouth by giving my Lesser Ugdrú wide, unblinking fish eyes. The start for this is a Vallejo Model Color Black.

1) Citadel Rhinox Hide is used to emulate the golden colour a lot of fish eyes tend to be. Although very little of this colour would ultimately be visible, and it's hard to tell too much difference between it and the initial black, it forms a good basis upon which to build subsequent golden-brown hues.

2) Leaving only a small amount of the previous colour visible, the next layer for the eye is Scalecolor English Uniform, then this is blended with some Vallejo Game Color Extra Opaque Heavy Goldbrown to add further depth.

3) The pupils are painted using Vallejo Model Color Black to form a nice, solid circle, and a wee dot of light refraction gets very carefully applied using a dash of Vallejo Game Color Dead White. This really helps to sell the stark, unblinking nature of the Ugdrú's eyes, and I think it is quite a bit creepier than the usual cat's eyes that painters often opt for in monsters.



MOOD BOARDS FOR INSPIRATION AND REFERENCE

I am not sure who originally said it, but I adhere - to an extent - to the philosophy that good science fiction (or fantasy) has one foot grounded in reality. To that end, I often use photographs from the real world as reference materials for my painting, creating a mood board.

This is a collation of similar images built around a theme. Make a folder of images that inspire you on your phone or computer (the website Pinterest is particularly useful for this), cut images from newspapers and magazines, or take pictures yourself when you are out and about.

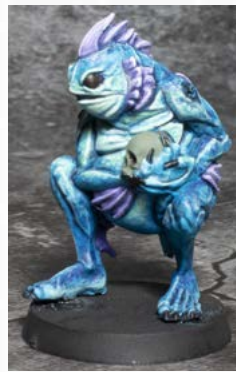
Before painting the Lesser Ugdrú, I looked to tropical fish. Their bright, zany colours would mesh well with the otherworldly nature and origins of the Rashaar, whilst the use of a colour scheme found on a creature that exists in our own world would trick the viewer's brain into thinking:

"That makes sense - that could exist."

I found some very striking images of an ocean denizen called the 'Blue Parrotfish.' Whilst this fish is predominantly a very striking vibrant turquoise colour, scales also encompass teals, pinks, and violets.



3) Finally, Scalecolor White Sands is mixed with the Squid Pink to act as an edge highlight.



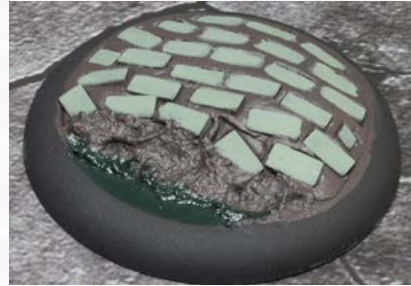
ALL ABOUT THAT BASE

With the base I really wanted to ground the Lesser Ugdrú in the world of *Carnevale*. The Church of Dagon operates out of a flooded district of Venice called San Canciano, so I decided to create an impression of a paved street or town square partially crumbling into the lagoon.

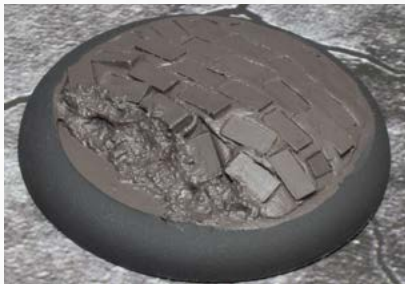
1) I mixed some putty and spread it out over the base for the groundworks, removing a section near the front so that I could eventually make it look like it had subsided. I have a few bags of Juweela bricks that I use in my basing, and these made perfect paving stones when pushed into the putty. I avoided making the brick positioning too neat, so it looked like the ground was sinking.



3) I basecoated areas with murky browns, greens, and greys to reinforce the sinister atmosphere of the world and strengthen the impression of a city being reclaimed by nature. The slightly cooler green brings a visual harmony between the base and the model; whilst the model is very vibrant and the base is overall quite drab, they still look like one piece.



2) When the putty had cured, I applied some texture paint in a rough pattern to graduate the effect of the pavement falling into the water.



4) I finished the base off by refining the painted areas before adding a splash of water effects in the pool at the front. Some grass fronds emerging from between the stones are the final touch.



GET A BIT IMPRESSIONISTIC

Something to keep in mind as you view reference images is that directly copying onto the model very rarely works; a bit of abstraction is required. Deciding what elements to use on the different parts of the miniature is something that comes with experimentation and experience. Painting individual scales onto the Lesser Ugdrú - whilst possible - would take an exceedingly long time and could also create

unwanted and unnecessary 'visual noise' on the model. Instead, I used the colours on the Blue Parrotfish's individual scales to inspire a mottled, amphibian-like pattern.

Painting tester models is a useful habit to get into; it allows you to assess how your ideas appear in practice before committing to a large batch of models and finding out it does not work part way through your warband!

THE FINISHED FIGURE

With this and the other Lesser Ugdrú from the set painted, I'm on the way to playing *Carnevale*. I think this is a colour scheme that will work very well for the rest of the gang, and some additions I have planned. The two figures have slightly different bases, as a result of me experimenting with the possibilities. I prefer the one that looks like the collapsing streets of a flooded Venice, and will apply it to the rest of the gang as well as perhaps redoing the flatter base that my second Lesser Ugdrú currently stands on.

Keep your eyes unblinking for the rest of my blue parrotfish-inspired Rashaar gang as they join the *Carnevale* - I hope to have an update in a later issue of *Wargames Illustrated* and maybe I can tell of some adventures from the gaming table too.



NEVER MIND THE BILLHOOKS



THE BATTLE OF BLACKPOOL SANDS, 1404

A story of (and scenario for) medieval-era combined operations going badly wrong, by Andy Callan.

In *Wi402* Simon MacDowall described how to use my *Never Mind the Billhooks* rules to re-create the notorious ‘Chevauchées’ of the period - long distance raids into French territory aimed at destroying the enemy economically rather than militarily. But at the same time as these operations were cutting a swathe across rural France, the French and their allies were launching counter-raids across the Channel, this time using seaborne landings to terrorize English coastal communities.

To readers accustomed to taking England’s later command of the seas for granted, it will come as a surprise to learn of her relative maritime weakness during the Hundred Years’ War. In those days, there was no English navy as such, only merchant vessels commandeered for royal service in times of war. This system had its uses and could occasionally bring high-profile victories at sea, such as Sluys (1340) and ten years later at Winchelsea (or ‘*les Espagnols sur Mer*’).

But such triumphs were short-lived; in the meantime, there was no regular system for protecting England’s maritime trade or guarding her coasts - the routine but essential tasks for which a permanent naval establishment would have been required. Just as France proved too big to conquer, so the seas around England proved too big to control.

Enemy raiders could come and go with impunity and did so with depressing frequency throughout this period. Ships from France and her allies - including Brittany, Castille, Portugal, Genoa, and Monaco - raided more or less at will all along the Channel coast. Plymouth, Dartmouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, Rottingdean, and Rye were all sacked at various times, often more than once. Little Winchelsea, at one time a thriving port, was attacked no less than seven times and never really recovered. The English did mount raids of their own, of course, but generally seemed to be on the back foot.

Both the chevauchée and the coastal raid were cruel and ruthless in their effect on the civilian populations. The coastal communities must have spent their lives in fear both for menfolk in peril on the sea and in dread of what might come at any time from the sea. Arson, pillage, and rapine are words that trip easily off the tongue, but the realities must have been unspeakably grim. While Henry V might have joked (at the siege of Meaux) that “war without fire is like sausages without mustard”, it wasn’t his property that was being burned down, only that of the despised lower orders.

Just occasionally, however, the raiders didn’t have it all their own way, and the locals were able to strike back and turn the tables on their tormentors. Which brings us back to the little-known ‘battle’ of Blackpool Sands, Devon, fought on 14 April 1404 during the reign of King Henry IV.

FISHWIVES AND FRENCHIES

Well, OK, the raiders might have been mostly Bretons rather than Frenchmen, but let's not quibble if it gets in the way of a catchy title! The women of Dartmouth, however (amongst whom there were indeed many fishwives), certainly played an active part in this remarkable affair, which is set at just the sort of small-battle level for which the *Billhooks* rules were originally designed.

BACKGROUND

In the early 1400s, the Hundred Years' War was going through one of its 'colder' phases, with not much in the way of major Anglo-French military operations except for the ongoing and debilitating series of cross-channel raids and counter-raids described above. Henry IV was pre-occupied with threats to his authority on the English mainland both from fellow Englishmen (such as Hotspur) and an altogether more persistent rebellion in Wales led by the redoubtable Owain Glyndwr. The French were only too happy to stoke these fires of rebellion, and their ships and those of their Breton allies gave active support, assisting the Welsh in their operations against English strongholds along the Irish Sea coast and the Bristol Channel and even landing a substantial army at Milford Haven.

In the West Country, Plymouth had suffered a major raid in August 1403 with much of the town burnt down. By royal command, John Hawley of Dartmouth and William Wilford of Exeter raised a fleet to launch a retaliatory raid in October and November of the same year. They captured 40 ships and 1,000 tons of wine before landing on the Penmarch Peninsula in the far west of Brittany and raiding up to 18 miles inland, causing much devastation.

A swift tit-for-tat response was inevitable and this came in the Spring of 1404.



THE RAID ON DARTMOUTH, 1404

Arrogance and stupidity were not uncommon amongst French commanders of the Hundred Years' War period; but for sheer bone-headedness, the generation that led armies between the battles of Nicopolis (1396) and Agincourt (1415) really took the biscuit. The French could produce some fine, level-headed soldiers, but these professionals regularly found themselves overruled by doltish aristocrats who pulled rank on them to disastrous effect.

Blackpool Sands falls right in the middle of this nadir of the French art of war, and it seems that their Breton allies were infected with the same propensity to wreck their own best-laid plans.

This expedition was strong and well-founded - a large fleet of ships with upwards of 2,000 soldiers on board - but it suffered at the outset from a divided command. The army that sailed included the retinues of Guillaume du Chastel (an experienced commander and supposedly the Admiral) and the lords of de Jaille and Chateaubriand, but relations between them were already strained.

The voyage to England was not without incident. On the first day out from St. Malo, they encountered a convoy of merchantmen from Castile (supposedly an allied nation), which they nonetheless proceeded to capture and relieve of its cargo of wine. This caused a falling out between du Chastel and de Jaille, leading an exasperated Chateaubriand to abandon the expedition and take his ships home with him.



Above: Those dastardly Breton raiders come ashore. Figures by Perry Miniatures. Boat (Cog) by Sarrissa Precession - thanks to Steve Wood for the loan.



Above: The locals stand firm in the face of the foreign threat, as the raiders make for the slope - their only way off the beach. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

The rest of the fleet sailed on, no doubt somewhat the worse for wear, and arrived off Dartmouth in a scattered condition. The new harbour defences seem to have ruled out a direct attack, so du Chastel dithered around in the offing for six days before enough of his ships had assembled for him to feel confident enough to make a landing.

Since Dartmouth lies on the west bank of the river, it made sense to look further west and attack from the landward side. Slapton Sands was, then as now, an ideal place for amphibious operations (it was to be used to practice the D-day landings 500 years later) and this is the most likely landing ground. Chateaubriand's departure and poor sailing discipline had left the invading forces badly depleted - although surely not reduced to the mere 200 men-at-arms claimed by the French Chroniclers - but once ashore they formed up and marched eastwards along the coast road (now the A379).

They were brought up short at Blackpool Sands where the road crosses a stream that runs into the sea through a wooded and steep-sided valley. On the opposite slopes they could see an impressive-looking English force drawn up in battle order. The defenders had been given plenty of time to raise the local county militia, but there were certainly nowhere near the 6,000 men claimed to excuse what happened next.

Du Chastel, given his earlier caution, no doubt would have preferred to withdraw or at least find a way round this formidable position, but he was taunted with accusations of cowardice by de Jaille who claimed it would be an insufferable insult to their honour to be deterred by mere peasantry. An experienced commander like du Chastel should really have known better, but faced with such an accusation he was stung into action.

He hastily launched a direct assault with his heavy infantry, neglecting to make any use of the accompanying crossbowmen and light troops who might have served him better in such difficult terrain.

The English had dammed the stream (there may have been mill sluices already available since the eastern slopes just inland are still known as Millhill), so anyone attempting to cross the valley, except along the road's causeway, floundered in the mud. Ranked in companies on the hillside, the English archers poured a heavy arrowstorm on the head of the enemy assault column while the massed billmen waited to chop down

any survivors. Any of the invaders attempting to work their way across the beach and scramble up the cliffs to the East were met by volleys of stones, ordure, and anything else that might have been available thrown down on them by the local countrywomen and Dartmouth fishwives (Never mind the Pollocks?).

It was an unmitigated disaster for the invaders. They attempted to withdraw to the ships, but the English, in hot pursuit, captured 100 prisoners, including three lords and 22 knights, amongst whom were two of du Chastel's brothers. The numbers of Breton dead are unrecorded but must have been substantial. Admiral du Chastel refused to flee and went down fighting.

News of this remarkable victory by local levies over professional soldiers soon reached King Henry who ordered a *Te Deum* in Westminster Abbey to give thanks for this deliverance.

Unfortunately, like most battles, this one had no lasting consequences and the coastal raids continued unabated. But the following year, when the famous Castilian knight errant/pirate (depending on your point of view) Pedro Niño led a fleet of galleys along the Channel coast, he took note of du Chastel's defeat and "seeing fair troops of soldiers and archers coming up on all sides to defend the shore" he wisely decided to give Dartmouth a wide berth.

Note: there will be more about Pedro Niño and his amphibious operations in the Hundred Years' War in the forthcoming Billhooks Deluxe book. Watch this space!



Above: John Hawley marshals his archers. Figures by Perry Miniatures.

JOHN HAWLEY OF DARMOUTH

John Hawley (1340-1408) might best be described as an early example of a West Country 'Sea-Dog'. Part respectable merchant and citizen (he served 14 times as Mayor of Dartmouth and four times as its Member of Parliament) and part unscrupulous pirate, he was probably the inspiration for 'Schipman of ... Dertemouthe' in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer visited Dartmouth in 1373, in his capacity as Customs officer for Henry III, to inquire into the reported seizure of cargo from a merchant of Genoa, which is just the sort of dubious activity Hawley was noted for.



Above: We used a Perry Miniatures Agincourt Knight to act as our John Hawley.

“Nice conscience was a thing he never kept...
He well knew all the havens as they were,
From Gottland to the cape of Finisterre,
And every creek in Brittany and Spain,
His vessel had been christened Madeleine”

Six years later, the *Magdaleyne of Dertemuth* was one of seven local vessels named in a licence granted to Hawley and two fellow Devonians to make war upon the king's enemies by sea.

Seaborne trade was risky at the best of times, and in this period of more or less constant warfare (open or undeclared) between England and her enemies, no merchant vessels were safe from the attentions of unscrupulous rival sea captains, especially out of sight of land. Captured crew were routinely thrown overboard in order to leave no witnesses, and the authorities would often turn a blind eye to such piracy so long as the royal coffers got their share of any plunder. These activities might be semi-legalised by the contemporary equivalent of Privateering licences or letters of marque, but it was very much a grey area and captains like Hawley and his equally famous contemporary, Harry Paye of Poole ('Arripaye' to the Spanish and French), were experts at sailing close to the wind, both literally and metaphorically.

Hawley was recognised as a useful rogue but one who could be relied upon to get things done. So he was chosen to enact a royal commission to fortify the entrance to Dartmouth harbour. He did that by constructing a small fort ('Hawley's Fortalice') on the West bank of the Dart connected by chain to the opposite bank at Godmerock. Little now remains of the original works, but Hawley clearly knew his stuff as the surviving Tudor fortifications were built on the very same sites.

Arguably, the 1404 raid was deterred from a direct attack on Dartmouth by the presence of these new defences, which made possible the victory at Blackpool Sands.

This may have been Hawley's finest hour, but he was soon back to his old ways; just two years later, he was briefly a prisoner in the Tower accused of despoiling some Barcelona merchants, only to be released when local supporters pledged the enormous sum of £3,000 to secure his bail.

The old pirate died in his bed in 1408, having made provision for his immortal soul by building a chancel in the Church of St. Saviour's where he lies buried under a fine brass memorial plaque.



Above: John Hawley brass - Church of St. Saviour Devon.



Above: The Hawley coat of arms.



Above: We will fight them on the beaches! Hawley's men (1st Corps, Fireforge, and Perry Miniatures) clash with the (Perry) raiders.

BLACKPOOL SANDS – THE WARGAME

Today, Blackpool Sands is as pretty a spot as you could wish to find on the South Devon Coast. But look beyond the cafe and the picture-perfect beach and it's easy to see why it was chosen by the locals for a defensive position 600 years ago.

The valley sides are steep and wooded, and the stream still forms deep pools (hence the name) even without any artificial damming. The cliffs to the west of the bay are totally unscalable (unwary trippers still get cut off at high tide at Jenny Cole's Cove) and are equally steep to the East except where some landslip allows for a scrambled ascent.

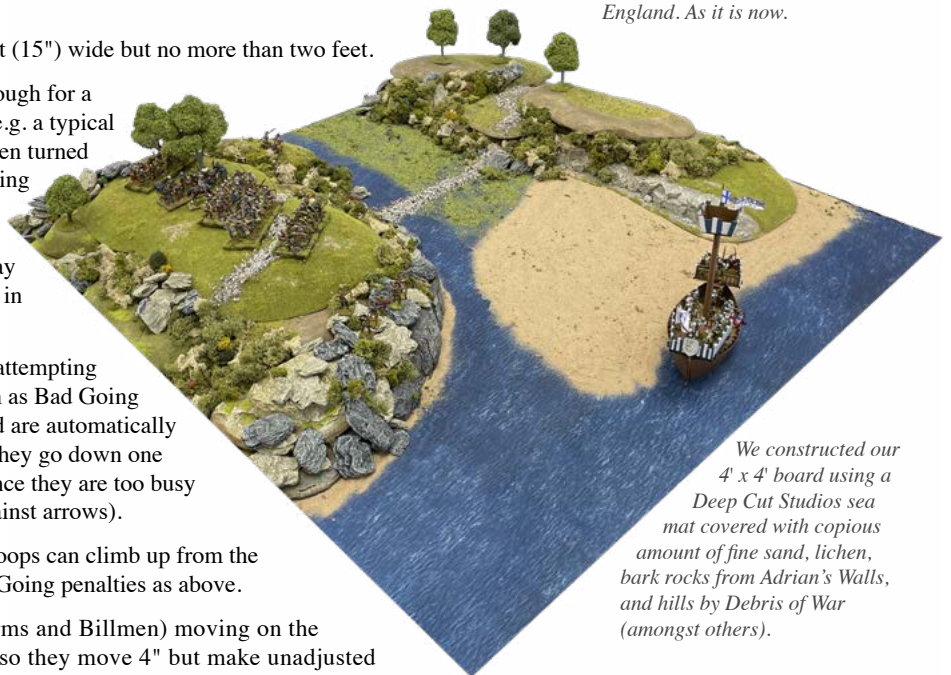
For game purposes, here is a simplified version of the terrain that takes in all of the tactically significant features. This is a small battle, so it only needs a small table - perhaps 4 feet square - or you could play lengthwise along a standard 6 x 4 table. There is no room for any fancy outflanking manoeuvres here!

Notes:

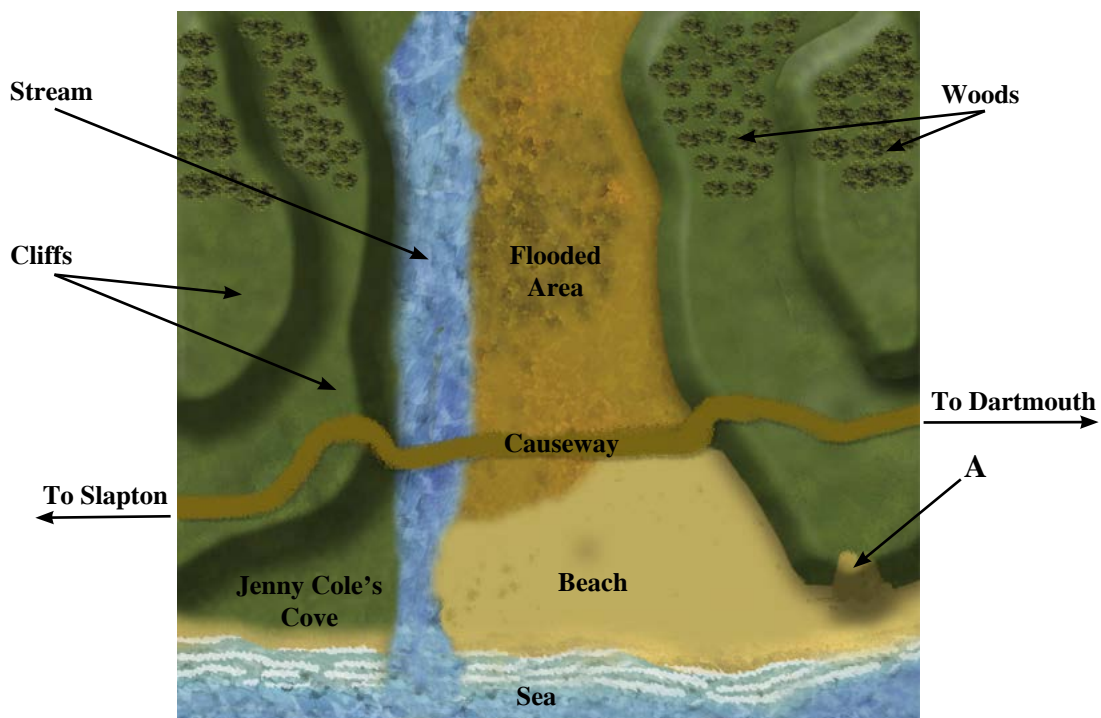
1. The valley should be at least a bowshot (15") wide but no more than two feet.
2. The causeway should be only wide enough for a company column of troops two abreast (e.g. a typical two-rank company sabot base with the men turned through 90°). Any troops entering or leaving the causeway must change formation to do so (this counts as two actions). A company column fighting on the causeway counts its first two ranks (so, four figures in total) in the first round of Melee.
3. For any units (including Skirmishers) attempting to wade through flooded areas, treat them as Bad Going - they move only 4" per Move Action and are automatically disarrayed. If shot at while in the water, they go down one armour class for their Saving Throws (since they are too busy keeping their footing to take any care against arrows).
4. The only part of the coastline where troops can climb up from the beach is at point A. Apply the same Bad Going penalties as above.
5. For any armoured troops (Men-at-Arms and Billmen) moving on the beach, treat it as "normal" Bad Going (so they move 4" but make unadjusted saving Throws).



Above: Blackpool Sands, Devon, England. As it is now.



We constructed our 4' x 4' board using a Deep Cut Studios sea mat covered with copious amount of fine sand, lichen, bark rocks from Adrian's Walls, and hills by Debris of War (amongst others).



THE ARMIES

This is a relatively small affair, so roughly 100 points a side should do it. In reality, the invaders were heavily outnumbered, but I have evened things up here to make more of a game of it. Feel free to adjust the numbers to suit the size of your collections - *Billhooks* has no fixed figure-man ratio!

The defenders always deploy first. Any troops in the woods start off hidden from the enemy.

The Invaders

- Deploy anywhere to the West of the stream between the woods and the clifftop.
- Leaders:
 - Admiral du Chastel (Level 2, Commander). Commander-in Chief, 0 points.
 - Seigneur de Jaille (Level 1, Dolt). Second in command, 5 points.
- 96 army points made up from a combination of the following troops, but including at least one unit of each type:
 - Company of 12 Men-at-Arms (Heavy armour, 24 points) - no more than one of these.
 - Company of 12 Billmen (generic polearms, Medium armour, 12 points).
 - Band of 6 Crossbowmen (Skirmishers, Light armour, 6 points).
 - Band of 6 Skirmishers (sailors with various weapons, no armour, 6 points) - treat them the same as Irish Kern.
- Take one Army Morale token for each company (ignore Skirmishers).
- Special 'Death before Dishonour' Rule:

If de Jaille's card is drawn before du Chastel's on the first turn, then he must lead ALL the Men-at-Arms and Billmen in the army on an immediate direct assault on the English position. Henceforth, for orders purposes only, he counts as a Hero and can give attack orders to up to three units per turn. These orders cannot be rescinded or overruled by the Army Commander unless de Jaille is killed in action.
- Morale:

All troops are rated as 'Retinue'. The army loses the battle if it has no Morale Tokens left when it has to give one up.





The Defenders

- Leader:
 ‘Captain’ John Hawley (Level 2, Commander). Commander-in-Chief, 0 points.
- 100 army points made up of a combination of the following troops but at least 50 points worth of Archers (in companies or bands) and at least one unit of every type listed.
 - Company of 12 Archers (Levy, no armour, 9 points).
 - Company of 12 Billmen (Levy, light armour, 9 points).
 - Band of 6 Archers (Skirmishers, no armour, 6 points).
 - Rabble Mob of 20-24 enraged peasantry, including up to 6 archers (Levy, no armour, 12 points).
 - Band of 6 Fishwives (Skirmishers with assorted throwing weapons, range 6", 6 points).
- Take one Morale token for each company or mob (ignore Skirmishers).
- Special Rules: These follow the suggestions for ‘Rebels and Rabbles’ set out in my Never Mind the Pitchforks article in *Wi402* (see table below).

Type (figures)	Points per unit	Move	Shoot (ins)	Melee x D6 per man	Save
Militia Bill Co. (12)	9	6"	-	1	5, 6
Militia Bow Co. (12)	9	6"	9 (S) - 15 (L)	½	6
Rabble Mob (24)	12	8"	9	1 (1st round) or ½	6
Skirmishers (6)	6	8"	12	½	-

Command and Control

Hawley is a Level 2 commander, so he can give two orders per turn to units within his command radius (6 inches) whenever his card is drawn.

(Note: there is no firm evidence that Hawley was in command on the day of battle, but clearly somebody was, and it was someone who knew his business!).

Skirmishers are activated when their card is drawn, as usual.

Other English units may only be activated when a Bonus card is drawn. Do a dice-off for each card in the normal way. Then:

- If the English Player wins the dice-off, he gets the card and can activate two units (up to two actions each)
- If the dice-off is drawn, nobody gets the card but the English Player can activate one unit.
- If the English Player loses the dice-off, he cannot activate any units and the opposition gets the card.

Any missile-armed unit that is not activated during a turn can shoot once at the end of the turn in the normal way. But it can only rally off a Disarray marker if it was not shot at during the turn.

Shooting

Troops on a hillside can shoot over the heads of friends lower down. The target must be at least 6 inches beyond the intervening friendly troops.

Morale

All English troops are rated 'Levy' here for Morale purposes (so they must re-roll one dice roll of 6 whenever they take a Morale Crisis Test). The army loses the battle as soon as it gives up its last morale token.

Special Event Cards

If the 'Treachery' card is played, the affected unit will always march off the battlefield rather than change sides. 'Fauconberg's Gambit' can be played on any missile-armed troops, not just Archers.

FIGURES

Anything Agincourt era will do, so the Perry 28mm plastic range makes an obvious starting point. Any English troops you use should be very short on armour. The peasants and fishwives are harder to source, but the Fireforge 'Northmen Folk Rabble' (seen below) give you men and women together with plenty of spare bits for kitbashing. I have successfully combined these with Gripping Beast Dark Age Warriors to make some suitably rough-looking medieval mobs.



Flags and Heraldry

Nothing is known for certain but the English probably used the 'national' cross of St George as a battle flag here, so giving the Bretons their contemporary equivalent of a black cross on a white background would make a nice contrast.

The Hawley family coat of arms is preserved in a local church.

The Wikipedia article on the battle of Blackpool Sands gives speculative arms for the du Chastel and de Jaille families.



TRAVEL SIZED 28s WIGLAF MINIATURES

Daniel Mersey's shifted from game design to miniature design with his new Wiglaf range. We ask him all about it.

Wargames Illustrated: How did this come about?

Daniel Mersey: The wargaming gods move in mysterious ways! A fortuitous redundancy in 2021 allowed me to return to creative freelancing, and I decided that as part of this move, I'd 'live the dream' and use the redundancy money to launch my own miniatures range on my own terms, to my own standards, following my own nose. I'm sure most of us would jump at that opportunity if they could. So, I did!

Wi: With all of history to choose from what led you to the early medieval period for Wiglaf Miniatures?

DM: The choice was obvious for me. I've been researching and writing about the British early medieval period for far too many years. My first published article about it was in *Wi103*, when I wrote about Cadwallon and Penda, and I've been flying the flag ever since with rules, including *Glutter of Ravens*, *Song of Arthur & Merlin*, *Dux Bellorum*, and *Age of Penda*. It's my favourite period to game and research, so the 'Dark Ages' was always going to be my first choice for a miniatures range.

Wi: Smaller scale seems to be having a bit of a renaissance right now. Was 15mm always a passion for you?

DM: In a previous job in the gaming industry, I realised that 15mm Ancient and Medieval wargaming is still very much alive and thriving, but high-quality ranges that get produced to modern standards are few and far between. It is harder to track the 15mm trend online and in magazines as the 'visual' nature of 28mm means that these big brothers steal the limelight. I realised that a well-researched and well-designed range of miniatures would stand a fair chance of attracting an eager audience as many 15mm armies consist of the same ranges that I was purchasing in the 1990s.

All miniatures are painted by James Morris, except for the *DBM* army, which is painted by Daniel Mersey. Scenic backgrounds by Jon Hodgson Maps. Opposing army from Forged in Battle, also painted by James Morris.





Above: An army ready for play in DBA.

Wi: Scale is always an interesting one, and we see a little variance between ranges; having had a play with some of your Wiglaf releases, it seems that they're quite big lads.

DM: Yeah, I describe Wiglaf Miniatures as 18mm because they're at the larger end of the 15mm spectrum; I wanted them to scale well alongside sculptor Mark Copplestone's previous (fantasy) work in this size and being that tiny bit larger allows for so much additional detail. It would feel disingenuous to sell these as 15mm when I don't personally feel that they mix well with some of the older (and therefore smaller sized) ranges available.

I've started a campaign to describe them as 'travel-sized 28s' rather than using any standardised points of reference! The level of detail and quality of sculpting Mark has given the models makes many people assume they're looking at photos of 28s. And they're travel-sized because you can fit so many more in a storage tray!

Wi: You've teamed up with quite the veteran with Mark. That must have been a lot of fun.

DM: It always had to be Mark Copplestone. If I couldn't bring Mark on board, I wouldn't have launched the range. I've been pursuing him (in a non-stalker way) for several years, hoping to persuade him that a historical range to match the quality and excellence of his fantasy Barbarica range would be amazing and that they should be Dark Ages minis. I must have ground him down in the end because here we are.

I've loved Mark's work since I first saw his early 40K sculpts as a kid then into the Copplestone Castings era. His Barbarica range entirely rewired my brain regarding the possibilities of 15mm - they have everything you'd expect of a 28mm range in terms of posing, detail, and character. As do his Wiglaf sculpts.

As a footnote, it turned out that he also made the Dixon Miniatures 15mm Marlburian range, which are superb, but



Above: Wiglaf Miniatures take on some 15mm Forged in Battle opposition.

I had never realised they were Mark's work before he told me. In my opinion, he's wasted on 28s! I joke, of course; anything sculpted by Mark is excellent, but I'm a little biased.

Wi: What's the process of designing figures for this scale and period?

DM: I gathered my research together from 25 plus (eek!) years and worked closely with Mark, who is equally passionate and knowledgeable about the period, on the style and equipment of the range. We've aimed to produce sculpts that are evocative of the period and shout '7th Century Anglo-Saxon' at us. There's a balanced mix of armoured and unarmoured warriors, and we have

researched costume and appearance across a wide range of sources. We've had some interesting debates about facial hair, headgear, trousers, and how a seax (fighting knife) would really be worn!

My Anglo-Saxons really are based on what is known of their costume in the 7th Century, as opposed to generic 'sort of Saxon' warriors. Shields are scaled accurately (to around 70cm), and helmets are based on the known British Isles examples from the surrounding centuries. We've modelled shield bling onto the wealthiest warriors, and Mark's Sutton Hoo and Staffordshire Hoard kings are stunning sculpts at any size but even more so in 18mm.





Above: Bowmen line up beside spearmen on a wind-swept grassland.

7th Century Anglo-Saxon armies include some variety of warriors, but not so many troop types that the range is doomed to be incomplete even after several years of manufacturing. In gaming terms, I wanted to launch Anglo-Saxons as there are some instantly identifiable pieces of armour to recreate; in this period, the Anglo-Saxons were often found fighting amongst themselves, so you can build opposing armies using the same models.

I hope that the combination of my wargaming writings on the period and Mark's top-notch sculpting skills has some appeal. We're not just producing another range of miniatures, we're producing them because we both love the period and have spent a considerable amount of time trying to make them as realistic as we can. I call this the 'Gripping Beast Effect' as it's exactly how I remember feeling when the first GB ranges came out in the mid-1990s: no longer did we have generic Anglo-Saxons equipped with kit from the entire AD400 to AD1066 time span but well-researched and authentic looking warriors that I recognised as reconstructions based on archaeological reports I'd read. I wanted to follow that concept and give wargamers the same feeling once again but in my own chosen 18mm size.

Wi: Are there any places that your research has informed the designs specifically or you've encountered unexpected miniature design problems?

DM: The poses are variations on a theme, which allows for the level of uniformity I'm after in my own tabletop armies; a warband that has the look of a cohesive force at the ready rather than everyone doing their own thing. They're also designed so that four models fit on a 40mm frontage, which is still the basing standard for many rulesets. Little things like this may not seem too important, but you must consider the models as gaming pieces rather than purely miniature pieces of art.

Spearmen are cast open-handed. Spears are one of the most likely parts to miscast and often bend during play; once bent, cast spears are hard to fully straighten. Open-handed poses allow for far more variety, and a priority in Wiglaf's design is good posing. The miniatures have a good point of contact between spear and hand, so a glued spear should be relatively hardy. However, we've also designed the hands so that they can be bent around the spear, adding strength to the join.

Finally, I bet you didn't expect me to talk about the metal I've used! I've chosen a tin-lead mix that has a bit of flexibility. This means that arms can be gently bent



With their spears added, these packed groups of men look suitably spikey.

AGE OF PENDA

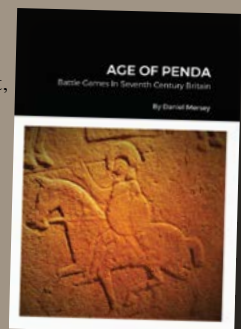
DM: These rules are the first in my 'You Command' series of light wargames. They're intended as an introductory game, or an easy-to-understand set of rules for experienced wargamers looking for something a bit different to the norm. I wanted to release something special to celebrate and publicise the launch of the Wiglaf range, and as I'm better known for my rules than my miniatures, I thought this made sense. It's also a great way to lure potential new hobbyists without much wargaming experience due to the system's playability.

The game is played on a gridded battlefield, which is the same layout as I used in *Blam! Blam! Aargh!* [released as a freebie with *Wi404* and available from the *Wargames Illustrated* website - Ed]. Your role is to choose where and how to focus your units' actions and control the battle's impetus. The battle is partly fought on the tabletop like other miniature wargames but is also fought just as hard on a Tactics Chart, which determines your army's orders each turn. Because you compete with your opponent to issue the orders you most need, your focus is kept where it should be - out-thinking your opponent by using superior tactics and exploiting their weaknesses on the battlefield. I encourage players not to think of 'turns' in the usual wargaming way;

in each turn your units may fight or move several times, countered by your opponent, creating a very fluid game where it can be hard to achieve your full plans due to the opposition's interference.

Overall, *Age of Penda* is quite a different experience to most Ancient or Medieval wargames, but that's what I wanted to create. There are already many other suitable sets of traditional rules, and I don't expect *AoP* to replace those, just to offer some variation.

With my business head on, releasing a small set of rules has helped me to support the miniatures range; the profits from this rulebook are banked for Wiglaf manufacturing and development, and sales from the rulebook's first half year are funding the next packs in the pipeline.



a little to make shield or weapon angles different to one another. Don't go crazy, as you will most likely break your models, but this slight flexibility really adds to the dynamism of the figures. This is just a little touch that really appeals to me; I've tried hard to work lots of little perks into the designs based on my own frustrations and happy little accidents over the years. You'll probably spot that every warrior (but not all skirmishers) carries a seax positioned in the way we've noticed re-enactors carry them for ease of use.

Wi: It's quite a compact range right now with just four codes. You're clearly incredibly passionate about the Anglo-Saxons; was it tough to restrain yourself?

DM: A Middle Anglo-Saxon army really builds itself, and that's worked wonders for putting out a complete and rounded army using only a few different packs of miniatures. Focussing on the Anglo-Saxons, as opposed to a more generic Dark Ages range, means that we've been able to nail down the look we're after and produce some nice variants of similarly equipped models.

You've got the leaders and their heavily armoured followers; a mix of less well-armoured warriors; and a smattering of skirmishers (Wiglaf Miniatures includes both archers and javelinmen), but there is more to come.

Wi: Should we ask what's on the way when you've only just gotten these first codes on sale?

DM: Of course! Next up is another pack of warlord and command models plus Scandinavian Vendel Culture warriors complete with the slightly larger shields they carried, and those evocative Vendel helmets. I feel that the Vendel warriors



Above: Raedwald, the 'Sutton Hoo man'.

will work equally well for east-coast Anglo-Saxons - there's a strong cultural link - as well as being used in their native Scandinavia. I'm not sure that anyone has tackled the Vendel Culture in 15mm before.

I'm planning Anglo-Saxon mounted warriors and Welsh and Irish warriors. The range will expand at a rate that matches sales, so please buy lots of them and then buy some more! I think you'll love your Wiglafs, and I'm not at all biased. Everyone needs more 18mm Anglo-Saxons in their life!

Seriously, this is a passion project for me and getting it done is a dream come true. Deploying an army of models on the tabletop that I've had a direct role in creating, and look exactly how I envisage 7th Century Anglo-Saxons, has been a really fulfilling experience.



Below: Penda of Mercia.

PAINTING WIGLAF MINIATURES WITH CITADEL CONTRAST

Despite being a dyed-in-the-wool 28mm gamer, James Morris couldn't resist the new Saxons from Wiglaf Miniatures. He shows us how he painted them.



Rather than go with the traditional four miniatures per base, I decided that I would create a massed unit effect with ten plus models on an 80mm x 40mm base for my new Wiglaf army. I wanted to get things done at a decent rate too, so I reached for my current favourites, GW's Contrast paints. How would they work on these little chaps? I was going to find out.



After a clean-up and the addition of wire spears, I superglued them onto strips of scrap mounting board and sprayed the figures white. While these lovely Coppelstone sculpts will reward an individual paint job, I was working on a warband, so 50 figures were in progress at once, and batch painting techniques were very much called for.

1) To pick out the details, I wash them all over with a thinned down layer of Wyldwood (in a mix of approximately one part Wyldwood to four parts Contrast Medium). This also provides the basecoat for undyed wool tunics on many of the warriors and saves time later.



2) Hands and faces are painted with Guilliman Flesh; shield backs and shoes with Gore-Grunta Fur or Wyldwood; the spearman's and swordsman's tunics are Nazdreg Yellow and Ultramarine Blue respectively (I'm assuming that the armoured thegn can afford some fancy clothing with more expensive dyes); the archer's tunics get left in the thinned-down Wyldwood from the last step as do some of the leg bindings, though the swordsman has Skeleton Horde instead. Contrast paints take a little while to dry, so it's important to make sure that colours next to each other aren't still wet; they can bleed into each other. The batch painting approach generally avoids this issue.



3) The last areas of non-metallic colour are blocked in with more Contrast paints: Snakebite Leather for bows and spears and much of the leatherwork, hair, odd hats, and trousers, though I also use Wyldwood for some of these parts. I don't worry too much about using the same colour on different parts of the miniature as I will be able to give these areas different highlights later.



4) At this stage, I very lightly drybrush each miniature with Vallejo Iraqi Sand. This gives a cheap and cheerful highlight on medium and dark colours, picking out the seaxes, the leatherwork, and the folds in the tunics; it's the ideal approach for painting a mass of troops.



The archer's tunic is highlighted with a drop of off-white acrylic, and I highlight the spear and bow with a yellow-brown (Foundry Buff Leather 7b) to suggest woodgrain.

I go back and add a border to the thegn's tunic as I feel it looks a little plain. Woven braids were a common decoration for wealthier people in the Saxon era, so I paint a simple black line around his tunic cuffs and hem followed by dotting in tiny spots of yellow to suggest a geometric pattern.

Simple shield designs are painted using a basecoat and highlight in acrylics with black dots on the front to represent rivets and decoration. Finally, the sword, spearhead, helmet, and mail are blocked in with black acrylic as a base for the metallics.

5) The figures are given a coat of matt varnish to bind in the Contrast paints. I usually do the metallics after this to avoid killing the shine. In this case, I add a drybrush of Army Painter Gunmetal to the mail and a basecoat of the same to the sword blade, helmet, spearhead, and shield bosses. All are given a final highlight of Army Painter Shining Silver on the top edges. Vallejo Brass finishes off the belt buckles and sword hilt.



6) I use Warbases round-cornered 80 x 40mm bases cut from 2mm MDF. Tiny 2 x 1.5mm magnets (from eBay) are drilled into the corners to hold the units in place while in transit in a steel-paper lined box.



7) Leader models are mounted on 1p and 2p coins, which I leave a space for inside the area of the unit. A tiny wooden dice tray is mounted on one back corner to allow tracking of damage using micro-dice.



8) After a bit of arranging and re-arranging to get the look of a shieldwall, I glue the figures with superglue and add my usual basing mix plus some scatter, static grass, and tufts. I'm happy with these and look forward to trying out the *Age of Penda* rules as soon as I have enough bases done!



Above: Armoured and unarmoured warriors ready for action.

If you want to see more of this project, check out my blog:
mogsymakes.net

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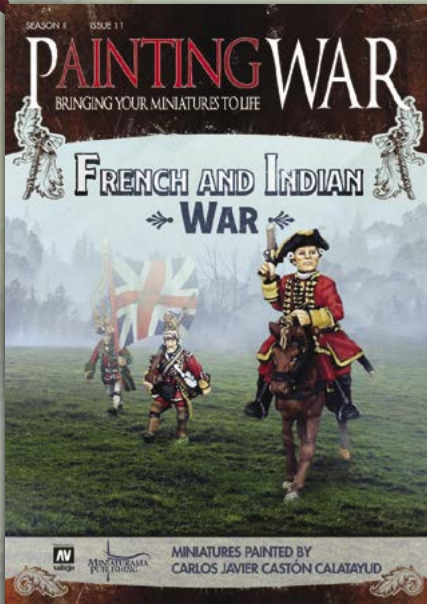


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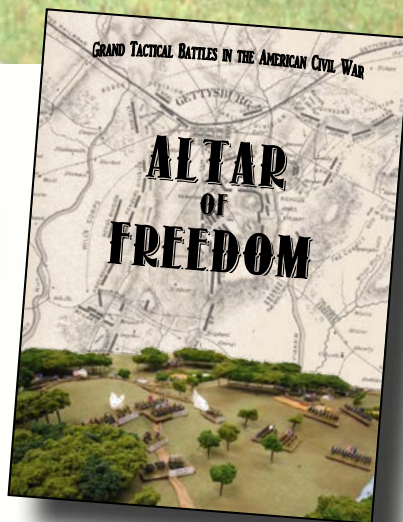
WHY I LOVE... Altar of Freedom



Grayson Brill finds beauty in simplicity while playing this 2013 ACW ruleset from Greg Wagman of Little Wars TV fame.

Any wargame worth its salt gives you choices: what troops will join the battle, who will attack or defend, who acts first, and so on. The best wargames bring complexity to those choices; perhaps you can activate one unit ahead of your opponent and you need to puzzle out which that should be. *Altar of Freedom* takes the decision making a step further and asks the player not only how badly they want to activate before their opponent but how much they are willing to give for that initiative. I have played all manner of American Civil War games, from company level up to Corps and from 28mm down to cardboard counters, but *Altar of Freedom* is hands-down my favorite because of the decision making involved.

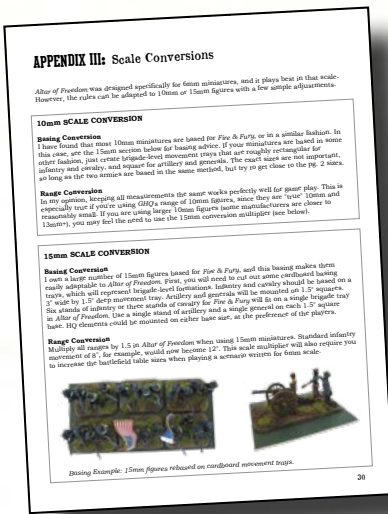
Published in 2013 by Greg Wagman, *Altar of Freedom* is a relative newcomer in a field still dominated by older rulesets, many of which were originally published before the millennium. The rules are for army level conflicts and



are supported by Baccus, with 6mm the recommended scale for the game. Conveniently, the recommended base sizes are identical to those that come with Warlord Games' ACW miniatures for *Black Powder: Epic Battles*, which brings accessibility. Notice that I said recommended scale and base size. The game is scale and basing agnostic so long as things are consistent between the two armies. I know many players want to keep their basing and scale in line with historical measurements, and the rules are not unconcerned with this, but they don't let it get in the way of a fun game.



Games of *Altar of Freedom* play like boxing matches. Players size up their opponents and vie for the initiative, trying to get them on the ropes, only to be sidestepped and find themselves facing a furious counterattack. The ruleset's intricacies force you to consider your opponent's strategy as carefully as your own and to husband your strength in preparation for an all-out push. *Altar of Freedom* gives you very few opportunities to blame the dice for a stunning reversal. There is no single dice roll that will cave in your flank and see a whole Division flee in panic. When the stunning reversals come, and they always do, they will be your opponent's fault ... or your own.



Above: "The game is scale and basing agnostic so long as things are consistent between the two armies."

BREVITY IS THE SOUL OF WIT

Altar of Freedom is made so playable by a brilliant mixture of elegance and simplicity in its rules. There is nothing inherently elegant in simplicity, of course; I have played enough overly simplified games to know that things can be pared back too far, removing any hint of elegance in the available strategy. However, I don't think you can have elegance without simplicity and vice versa. *Altar of Freedom* has both in spades.

Simplicity is achieved in this case by a merciless reduction in mechanics that old school or hardcore gamers might think of as staples. The basic units in the game are infantry brigades, cavalry brigades, and artillery batteries, each represented by a single stand of miniatures. Corps and army generals are also depicted on the battlefield. All stands (except generals) have a single stat: Strength (+/- 1, 2 or 3). That's it! There is no separate depictions of unit size (all brigades are a single base of the same size), no morale, no armament, just this lonely plus or minus

to encapsulate everything. How do you depict the Stonewall Brigade at First Bull Run? A single stand of infantry and strength +3. How about the Iron Brigade at Gettysburg, severely reduced by previous battles but still with one good fight left in it? A single stand of infantry at strength +1. This may already have some of the more hardcore gamers ready to turn the page, but bear with me, there are rich rewards gained from this heavy pruning!

When units fight at close quarters, which is where most of the fighting is done, each player rolls a D6 and adds (or subtracts) their strength. There are bonuses for supporting units, attached generals, defending artillery, etc, but the list is short. When a unit loses one of these opposed rolls, it takes a single point of fatigue. If five fatigue is applied to a stand it will be removed, so no one (except defending artillery) can be wiped out in their first fight. Again,

COLD STEEL

The vast majority of combat in *Altar of Freedom* happens in base-to-base contact, but this is not strictly meant to represent hand to hand fighting. In a game played at the recommended scale, one inch on the tabletop represents about 150 yards. Infantry has a 2" firing range, which is somewhat stretching what we know of the actual combat efficacy for rifled muskets in this era. Instances of actual hand to hand fighting were rare in the Civil War, though they did occur. Much more frequently, units would get as close as they possibly could and fire directly into one another. This is what base to base contact represents, along with the odd bayonet charge.

multiple metrics have been distilled into a single point. Fatigue not only represents battlefield losses, but also covers morale depletion and, you guessed it, fatigue! And that's basically it for combat.





But wait, it gets simpler! An activated unit can move its full movement allowance in any direction, regardless of facing, and can end its movement facing any direction they want. For terrain, there is open ground, difficult ground, roads, and entrenchments. There is no wheeling and no difference between charging and falling back. Units that are in base contact, even corner to corner contact, support one another if they are friendly, and are in combat if they are opposed. I can hear the Grognards grumbling, and I would not blame a seasoned gamer for being skeptical at this point, but remember that this all has a purpose; the simplicity is the foundation for the finely crafted blocks of gaming elegance!



WHY I LOVE

PRIORITY AND RISK

The simplicity frees the player's attention and gives time to consider a bigger picture. Rather than worry about sending green troops armed with smoothbores after veterans armed with rifles, *Altar of Freedom* makes you consider which of your generals is most capable of succeeding in that assault and how they will accomplish it. This is where the game becomes a thing of beauty.

CONFEDERATE ORDER OF BATTLE The Army of the Mississippi		
 Gen. Albert S. JOHNSTON 6		
FIRST CORPS		
 Maj. Gen. Lemuel P. POLK 4		
Clark's Division	Chatham's Division	
Bassett +2	Johnson +0	
Swain +1	Stephens -1	
Bushrod (art) +0	Ryck (art) +0	
SECOND CORPS		
 Maj. Gen. Braxton BRAGG 5		
Boggs' Division	Winters' Division	
Green +1	Clayton +0	
Anderson -1	Chalmers +1	
Pond -2	Jackson +0	
Hollings (art) +0	Robertson (art) +0	
THIRD CORPS		
 Maj. Gen. William HARDEE 5		
Hardee's Division		
Huffman +0		
Callahan -1		
Wood +0		
Shapp (art) +0		

Above: "The representation of generals and the command and control of their units is hands-down my favorite aspect of this game."

The representation of generals and the command and control of their units is hands-down my favorite aspect of this game. It uses hidden bidding to choose which units activate and in what order. Army and Corps commanders (the only generals depicted in the game) have priority points that are used to bid on the Divisions under their command. These bids become a Division's priority for that turn. The higher a Division's priority, the earlier they act. But players are not just reacting to one another. They also must consider a 'turn clock' mechanic (not an actual time keeping device) that ticks down as each priority level acts. If the clock reaches zero before the lowest priority level has been reached, then the turn ends and any units still waiting to activate miss their chance.

Generals have traits that affect their ability to control their Armies and Corps. Albert Sydney Johnston at Shiloh leads from the front, giving his troops combat bonuses. Oliver Ottis Howard, commander of the hapless Union XI Corps, is inept and can never give any two of his Divisions the same number of priority points. Getting your units to do what you want can get messy fast, but it is all in your hands.

Below: *Altar of Freedom*, as seen on Tabletop Simulator. See 'Digital Divisions' over-page.



TRUE HISTORICAL FLAVOUR

Despite the game being cut down and established in a mere 20 pages of rules, battles in *Altar of Freedom* end up feeling more like actual ACW battles than any other game I have played. Traits for generals go a long way in this regard. You get to know and love (or hate!) your generals. Playing through the battles of the western theater, I knew I could depend on General George H. Thomas in a way I never could with Crittenden or McCook. I would shell out every last one of commanding General Rosecrans' priority points to those two bunglers to keep them moving, safe in the knowledge that Thomas could be relied on to keep his Corps in order.

It's more than just battlefield personalities making their mark, however. The game's combined mechanics coalesce into something with incredible historical flavor. Remember when we talked about fatigue? The most damage you can do in a single round of combat is one point

GENERALS IN COMBAT		FATE TABLE	
<p>Late in a Civil War general was a dangerous profession. The hapless army generals died in combat—Albert Sydney Johnston at Shiloh and Oliver Ottis Howard at Atlanta.</p> <p>The attrition rate for army commanders was much higher. Prominent Civil War generals killed in battle include Reynolds at Gettysburg, Sigel's Parke at Atlanta, and all of the Union's senior commanders, the list grows longer still—Sheridan at Gettysburg, and Longstreet at the Wilderness, to name a few.</p> <p>Generals can be engaged in close combat by the enemy. Any time your general is contacted for the Fate Table, the general must immediately roll on the Fate Table. The odds are not in his favor!</p> <p>There are times when a corps commander's life does not count.</p> <p>—Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, at Gettysburg</p>			
<p>The Fate Table determines the outcome of a general in the line of fire. Generals roll on this table under two circumstances:</p> <p>(1) The General is contacted by his enemy.</p> <p>(2) The General is attacked (in his contact) by a friendly brigade that "attacks."</p>			
Roll		Fate	
1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6

REPLACING A FALLEN GENERAL

The loss of a general is a grave, although not mortal, labor in itself. Any of the units of the corps may be used for the task. At the end of the game, the general's replacement will not be as effective as his predecessor. This replacement procedure is described in the next chapter.



of fatigue, which means units can take a punch. You need to 'keep up the scare', as General Forrest would say, and hit them again and again. That one point of fatigue may diminish a unit's strength by one and wear them down, but supports can often mitigate this, meaning that unit will be ready to punch back.

I said games feel like boxing matches, and I meant it. I like to play *Altar of Freedom* aggressively, even on defense. A well-timed counterattack can pay dividends, just as it frequently did in the Civil War. Counterattacks can also be disastrous if they are made haphazardly, once again as in the Civil War. I never fully appreciated the sheer power (and difficulty!) in massing an entire Corps for a coordinated assault until I played this game. Sometimes it will take several turns to organize your troops, but it is a thrill to win the initiative and bring your carefully calculated maneuvers and activation gambles together in a final, unexpected, devastating knockout punch.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

To better illustrate the game's activation nuances, let's imagine the fictitious Union XXIX Corps, commanded by Major General Saundertrot Dillingsford. They are composed of three infantry Divisions, and General Dillingsford has a priority of six. This means that in one turn he could give two priority points to each of his Divisions and make sure they activate simultaneously; a safe way to make a steady advance.

Move forward in the battle and Dillingsford's men are in position, but the General sees that the rebel flank is in the air and wants

to exploit this vulnerability with a quick attack. He gives four priority points to his 1st Division and one each to the other two. This will allow him to capitalise on the enemy positioning and make a decisive attack. The turn begins, but to General D's surprise, the Rebel player announces that they have a unit with five priority points. It is the Division on the flank. Seeing the danger, and anticipating General D's aggressive move, the Rebel general committed even more priority points to ensure the withdrawal of the vulnerable troops before the Union troops' activation. They make their retreat and the turn clock ticks down.



SACRIFICE YOUR GROGNARD TENDENCIES!

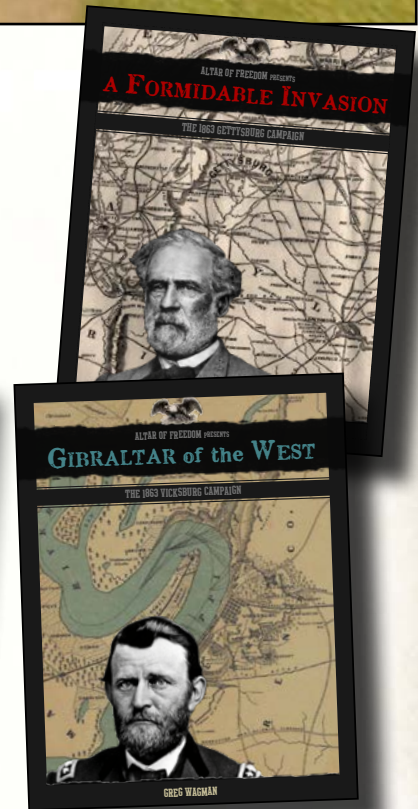
Are you ready to sacrifice rule complexity on the *Altar of Freedom* and experience the tactical pugilism on offer? If so, you'll be happy to hear that the rules come with four historical scenarios as well as guidelines for creating your own historical battles; even fictitious ones, which the author hilariously scorns.

There are two standalone scenario books for the eastern and western theaters, and two campaign books; one for the Gettysburg campaign and another for Vicksburg. All are enormously fun and well worth the investment, but the core rulebook is really all you need to get playing, and thanks to the scale and base agnosticism any existing ACW army will be ready to go!

I love *Altar of Freedom* for how well it juggles simple, interesting mechanics with authentic outcomes. Purists will undoubtedly find something to sneer at

Right: "The rules come with four historical scenarios as well as guidelines for creating your own historical battles."

in the bare bones depiction of fighting and maneuvering, but games of *Altar of Freedom* feel like actual Civil War battles in ways that other complex systems struggle to model. There are constant attacks, counterattacks, and generals with personality traits that directly affect their command and control. Most importantly, the gaming is always fun!



Above: The game's Gettysburg and Vicksburg scenario books.

DIGITAL DIVISIONS

During the pandemic, one of my long-time wargaming cohorts channeled his modeling energies into a free piece of software called Voxel. This program allowed him to build digital miniatures and terrain by stacking tiny 3D boxes together, much like making 3D pixel art. He immediately started working on ACW miniatures and importing them into *Tabletop Simulator*. This is a video game that creates a 3D, interactive tabletop. Originally intended for use with more traditional board games and miniature-light games, such as *Settlers of Catan*, *D&D*, et al., *Tabletop Simulator* has been embraced by many wargamers to continue playing the games we love despite lockdowns and/or distance.

The Historical Miniatures Gaming Society - hosts of *Cold Wars*, *Historicon*, and *Fall In!* - held two online conventions in 2020 named *Cyber Wars*. My cohort ran large, 6+ player battles in each of these events using the custom digital minis and boards.

If you own *Tabletop Simulator* through Steam, search *Altar of Freedom* in the Workshop to find his excellent work and play online!



CREATING A SNOWY DIORAMA THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Inspired by last issue's 'facing the elements' theme, some new North Star figures, and Napoleon's costly defeat, Painter Marc builds a snowy diorama of the Retreat from Moscow.



A benefit of working at *Wargames Illustrated* is that I get my hands on some incredible miniatures; I was able to have a play with North Star's characterful new French Retreat from Moscow figures recently and couldn't bring myself to put them back into the foam protection of their figure case. Instead, I decided to create a snowy diorama that they could be positioned in whilst still being removable for use in games.

PLANNING THE SCENE

I looked for reference images online and the art I found evoked a cold, desperate, disordered, ramshackle retreat, with equipment left abandoned and troops huddling together in groups for warmth.

Suitably inspired, I sketched out a rough idea of the diorama. As soon as I started positioning the miniatures and trees properly, I'd discover the optimum positioning and viewing angle.

Though things changed, a lot of my initial sketch remains in the finished scene: two slopes with a shallow valley running between them plus the two flanking trees.

THE BASICS OF THE BASE

The base was made from plasticard with its edges sanded to a taper. To represent the slopes, I cut successively smaller sections of cork tile. Alternatives could have been used - condensed styrene or stacked segments of card - but cork is a great option as it is easily carved and shaped.



I positioned some French troops on the cork to visualise how the project was progressing. This showed me that I needed a larger gap between the two peaks, or perhaps the peaks themselves needed to be larger. I contemplated different cannon positions too and played around with placement until I was satisfied with the composition.

SLOTS FOR RECESSED AND REMOVABLE FIGURES

1. The figures couldn't be fixed to the diorama as they'd be used in games as well as put on display. This meant I needed to create spaces for the miniatures to be slotted into. I used a spare base as a stencil, drawing around it with a pen. This gave me a marker on the cork for each place the miniatures' bases would be housed.



2. I then used Milliput to build up a shallow sloped edge in which the miniatures would be nestled.



3. I used another spare base as a template and pushed it in, or cut along its edges into the Milliput, to create smooth and even edges. Moisten the edges of the base to stop it sticking to the Milliput.



4. I turned to home DIY products to progress the build and finish off the basic shape. Wall filler smoothed the sides of the slopes, and I was very careful to not get any in the spaces created for the bases of the miniatures.



BUILDING BARE TREES TO SCALE

1. The carpark at *Wargames Illustrated Towers* has several bushes that provide excellent sources for farming interesting branches.



2. Sometimes nature does not quite produce the perfect miniature tree (how dare it!) and it can be necessary to add additional sticks to the branches. I made a small incision in the primary 'trunk' with a craft knife or pin vice and pushed an additional stick into place.



3. A drop of superglue fixed the two together.



4. I have found that it is sometimes possible to fix additional branches onto the primary branch, but this can look less natural as there might be gaps around the join.



DEVELOPING THE TERRAIN

1. The trees I made were stuck in place after a dry fit to check their positioning (where they were attached with sticky tack).



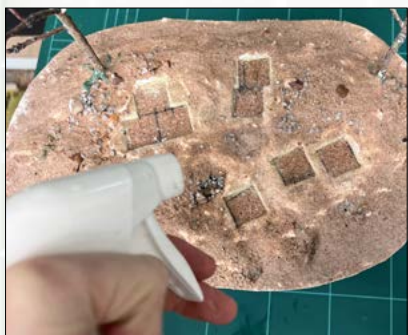
2. Tree roots were created using Greenstuff rolled into sausage shapes. The edges of the sausages were pressed into position to ensure a firm bond.



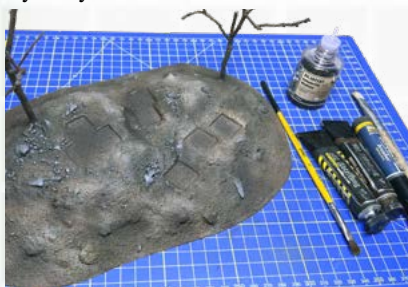
3. The surface was textured with large stones held in place with undiluted PVA glue.



4. Gravel and sand were next, and this coat of texture was held in place by a spray of diluted PVA glue. It is possible to thin PVA glue so that it only contains a very small amount of glue, and it will still create a firm bond. I apply it with an old spray bottle.



5. Once dry, I airbrushed the base before adding shadows and depth with oil paints. To do this, apply drops of undiluted oil paint to the base and spread them around using a brush and oil paint thinner. The drying time of the oil paint will allow you to manipulate it for a good bit of time, work it into recesses, and wipe off the top layer if you need to.



6. Clumps of static grass - Brown and Autumn 4/5mm tufts from Gamers Grass - were added around the base. I was careful to not go too heavy with this as I wanted the terrain to appear barren and relatively lifeless.



7. Green Stuff World's Natural Leaf Litter was then scattered around the base of the trees and sprayed with PVA glue to hold them in place. With the leaves and other detritus in place, the scene starts to look quite realistic.



THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Napoleon's push into Russia was his greatest folly. He gathered a huge army of around 600,000 and was riding the crest of a wave of victories, but his advance was undone. It was not a glorious defeat in battle that ultimately decimated his army but the simple problem of keeping such a huge body of men alive when campaigning through the barren terrain left by the retreating Russians' scorched earth tactics.

By laying waste to the land, the Russians ensured that Napoleon's usually decisive approach of speed, living off the land, and conquering the enemy through incisive attacks that divided the opposition, were stymied completely. His army could only move at the speed of the supply train, leaving them ponderously pursuing their enemy deeper into Russia. Diminishing supplies caused starvation, and a blistering hot summer gradually whittled the men down through disease and exhaustion; many that didn't fall victim to this combination deserted.

The Russians did finally turn to fight when Napoleon's pursuit brought him close to Moscow, and they faced a greatly diminished French army of about a quarter of its initial size. The Battle of Borodino, 7 September 1812, was the deadliest day in the Napoleonic Wars but eventually Napoleon emerged 'victorious' with the Russians retreating, leaving Moscow for the taking.

The great city had also been ravaged as the Russians retreated. This left Napoleon's remaining army 500 miles into enemy territory, in a city that could not sustain them, with winter closing in; they would be doomed if they didn't flee back to France.

Thus, we have the grim march of the retreat from Moscow. Bitter cold froze men and horses to death, emptied supplies meant more starvation, and all the while the Russians pursued and Cossacks conducted swift attacks. The remaining French were almost caught at the River Berezina but the damage had already been done; the Emperor found himself back in France and in a truly precarious position with his army now estimated to be at less than 100,000 remaining men.

You can find out more about gaming the 'Retreat from Russia' in *Wi327*; we have a whole issue dedicated to 'The Eagle and the Bear' in *Wi285*; there are details on the crossing of the River Berezina in *Wi396*; and the Battle of Borodino is covered in *Wi369*, 306, and, of course, 285. All can be found (along with every other article we've ever published) via the *Wi Vault*.

ABOUT THE FIGURES

We reviewed the North Star Retreat from Moscow French in last issue's Observation Post and the Russians are on the way too. Designed for *Muskets and Tomahawks'* spin off *Shakos and Bayonets*, these one-piece metal figures give players some characterful models to use in the smaller scale gaming of *S&B*, but they will also make for great unit fillers and detail pieces in any armies going to battle in this part of the Napoleonic Wars.

The figures seen here are the Russians from that same *Shakos and Bayonets* range.



LET IT SNOW

1. The final step is to add the snow effect. I used Insta-Sno from Precision Ice and Snow, which can be applied using a spatula. This is included in their Large Military Kit that comes with other snow effects, which are a lot of fun to play with.

It is possible to build this product up to create very effective snow drifts, but it is important to keep realism in mind: think about wind direction and where snow would build. I used reference images to help ensure the deposits looked realistic.



2. I brushed the spatula against the grass tufts to create the impression of snow having collected on it.



3. The same technique was used on the trees. I applied the snow effect to just one side of the trunk and branches to create the impression of snow collecting on that side; being blown there by the wind.

In this image you can see this same approach was also applied to the artillery piece.



4. I positioned spare bases in the slots that I had created to protect them from being filled.



5. More snow effect was built up on areas like the collapsed artillery piece.





1. An abandoned and destroyed 6-pdr gun lies half-buried in the snow.



2. Shako sits discarded next to the broken wheel of the artillery carriage.



3. Snow effect applied to just the one side of the tree gives the impression of a windswept environment.



4. The blood from other fleeing French troops is frozen in the snow. Perhaps this is from wounds caused by a Cossack attack.



5. Snow tops the branches as the troops continue their weary march.



6. Grenadiers and Infantry pass by another abandoned piece of Victrix artillery.



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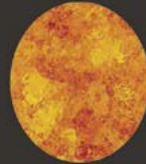
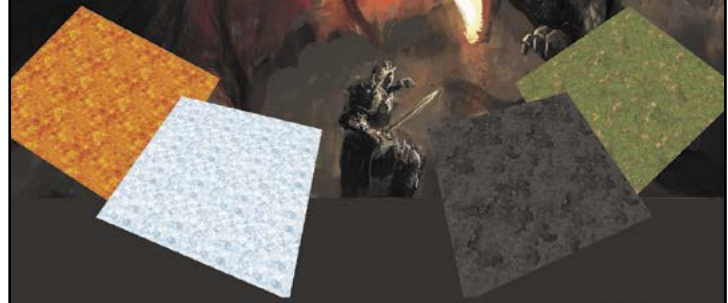


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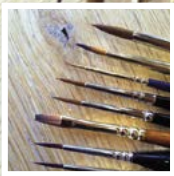
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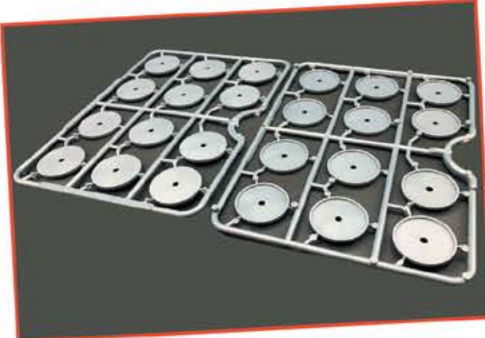
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