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ALL AT SEA: Maritime Gaming and Hobby Heaven

CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

The 'best-laid schemes o' mice an' men, gang aft agley', as Rabbie Burns would have said if he had planned to include a free rules supplement in a wargames magazine and then several things conspired against him at the last minute. We planned to include the *Thalassa* ancient naval battle rules with this issue (as advertised in last month's magazine), but we were not as ready as we would have liked by the time we had to go to press with this magazine; so please bear with us while we finish fiddling with them, they will appear with a future issue.

Fear not, there is plenty more to enjoy in this month's All at Sea theme: Barry Hilton's excellent pitch for wargaming the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 17th Century, our construction of the MDF Sarissa Ship of the Line, gaming with 18th Century smugglers and excisemen, Civil War Ironclads, and the history of the Spanish Marine Corps. I would also like to point you in the direction of our free form gaming article on page 78; this is a recent favourite of mine in which Pete Brown makes some suggestions for throwing off the shackles of the rulebook and taking your gaming into left field.

Dan Faulconbridge

Owner and Editor

This month's cover artwork is Raid on the Medway, 1667, by Peter Bull. From NVG183 Warships of the Anglo-Dutch Wars 1652 - 74 © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com

Below: Commonwealth Battle line by Barry Hilton. See page 28 for more.

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QUICK FIRE!

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

CRIMSON SHORT STARGRAVE CONVERSIONS

By Mat Lindsay

Like many UK people my age who are into wargaming and geek culture in general, I grew up watching the classic sci-fi situation comedy *Red Dwarf*. It has been an obsession for me since; but when I saw the current official minis, I didn't pop for the poses and themes, so I decided to make my own.

Above: Kryten (left) with his distinctive filed down head shape and Arnold Rimmer (right).

Above: Cat with trademark ruffled shirt added in green stuff.

Arnie (Rimmer) and Commander U-Bend (Kryten) were made mostly from *Stargrave* Crew and Trooper plastic bits with some filing done on the latter model's head and arms. A head from Wargames Atlantic's Cannon Fodder frame was just right for Rimmer's smug face.

The unwashed space-bum (Lister) was mainly made with bits from Anvil Industry with a weapon taken from the Cannon Fodder frame this time.

The Prince of Prance (Cat) was originally a Wargames Foundry Street Violence mini with a *Stargrave* Trooper head-swap and a frilly shirt made of green stuff.

They're more a tribute than an accurate portrayal, but they could be the start of a themed *Stargrave* crew.

Anyone smell a kipper being smoked in time for breakfast? Mat did, and just before we were due to go to press, he sent us a photo of two new additions to the crew, including everyone's favourite herring preserver, Ace Rimmer (right), along with Kristine Kochanski.

A BRIDGE (RAMP) TOO FAR

By Euan Clunes

My two sons (eleven and eight) are keen *Warhammer* players, and while I've enjoyed helping them make their models and play games, I'm more interested in historical wargaming and was keen to nurture their interest beyond the realms of fantasy. I thought a *Bolt Action* game based on a significant battle in WWII might help get them interested, and having watched *A Bridge Too Far* on many occasions, something drew me to that battle. The catalyst to do something about it was the arrival of a new desk, which came packed in the most amazing reinforced cardboard sheets and polystyrene. It immediately occurred to me that these could be used to build the hill and bridge ramp on which the fighting around Arnhem Bridge in September 1944 centred.

I recalled the excellent guide to building this area in Mike Haught's *Wargames Illustrated* article (*Wi*268), and having dug that out from the WiPrime Vault, I felt sure the cardboard could be made to work. My eldest son enjoyed the film and was bitten by the bug to try to recreate the area around the Bridge. We started by making the base in two sections, which together produced a 3 x 6 foot playing area. Layers were built in polystyrene at one end to simulate the hill on which the bridge was built. We then covered this in Jarvis grass sheets, grass tufts, and some trees before painting the roads down to the riverbank with Tamiya German Grey. Using the longest length of cardboard in a single six-foot length, we were able to replicate the ramp roadway and start of the bridge. The pillars were made from pieces of the polystyrene cut to size. Two larger pieces of polystyrene roughly replicated the two flak towers at the northern end.

Using two of the excellent JB Wargaming replicas of the large town houses beside Arnhem bridge on one side, and two of their Medium Town Houses on the other, the results were quite convincing. We ran out of time and space on the board so couldn't fully replicate Colonel Frost's HQ on the western side of the ramp, but we were able to build a Sarissa Dutch house and place it there. These buildings are great as the floors can be detached to place figures inside at the windows.

Three generations of the family have now gamed the scenario a couple of times, with my Dad joining my eldest, fighting as the Paras. It's amazing how close the results have been to the actual battle, with the Paras being extremely difficult to dislodge from their positions and the Germans losing infantry squads, lorries, and half-tracks like they were going out of fashion! The deciding factor are German tanks; if the British 6-pounders and PIAT teams can be knocked out, they can just blast the Paras out the buildings!

OPERATION BITING

After Arnhem, I worked on Operation Biting, the Bruneval Raid, and it worked out that my Dad, son, and I managed to play the game on the actual 80th anniversary of the action (27 February 2022). I made use of more polystyrene here, large blocks to represent the snow covered hills and cliffs, and I hope both games show that you can make a great battlefield with simple materials.

It was a very close game and the Paras managed to make it away onto the landing craft with the radar equipment just before the Germans arrived with reinforcements, much as happened on the real raid.

CREATING A CELTIC CROSS

By Nick Folley

28mm 'civilian' figures can add interest to wargaming scenes or even take part in the action if, for example, there is a peasants' revolt. I had purchased some monk figures from CP Models and was looking around for a 'Celtic' high cross to go with their monastery to decorate my wargames table, but with none to hand, I had a go at making my own.

Inspiration is easy to find online, but I referred to my stock of photos taken on trips around Ireland, where there are plenty of examples. The archetype can be found at Kells and Monasterboice made of a tall shaft around 12 feet high topped by a capstone, and with the typical 'circle' supporting the stone arms of the cross. The surfaces of a high cross are normally carved with Biblical scenes.

The first step was to determine the cross' size based on the 28mm scale of my figures, then I made the rough shape from oven bake Fimo and cooked it on low to set. A thin layer of fine Milliput was placed over the cooled Fimo and left to dry before I pencilled in the basic designs then worked the surface of the cross with a fine lino carver and cocktail stick to produce the carvings. Happily, these don't have to be super-detailed. The final jobs were to smooth down any rough edges with a fine emery board and coat with varnish to seal.

I like to make low-temp silicone moulds of any 'masters' I create so that I can make extras or replace the original if the 'master' gets damaged during gameplay. I made a two-part silicone mould, cast a few crosses in resin, sprayed them with primer (you could use textured paint here for a stone effect, but it can block some detail), then finished with a coat or two of greys and a drybrush to highlight details.

A suitably sized base finishes things off, made from a piece of dense polyboard sanded into shape with a square plug of milliput for the cross shaft to be placed on, otherwise much of it would 'disappear' into the ground!

My monk (below), stood in some static grass, is now ready to preach his sermon.

1) The cross roughly fashioned from Fimo.

2) Constructed and baked, ready for the addition of Milliput.

3) Adding the Milliput detail.

FUN WITH FIMO

Intrigued by working with Fimo? Check out ace illustrator Peter Dennis' Fimo modelling articles in the *Wi*Vault - just search for 'Fimo'.

---

4) Making a mould of the finished cross for replication.

OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames stuff you need to know about

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

CROOKED DICE - VLAD'S ARMY FEATURE PACK

Vlad's Army is the latest expansion - or Feature Pack, as they are called in the world of *7TV* - for Crooked Dice's range of film and TV inspired games. This one - packed into a VHS box and styled to look like the kind of pulpy video cassette you'd rent in the 80s - is made to work with their *Inch High Spy-Fi* game. It pits the plucky British Home Guard against an invasion from the Führer's vampire fiends. Think Operation Sea Lion but replace the blubbery mammals with winged, garlic hating Chiroptera!

A CAST OF CURIOUS CHARACTERS AND CRANKY CURMUDGEONS

The game's presentation, theme, and artwork embrace *Dad's Army* as the primary inspiration behind the good guys. The show's main and supporting characters are all represented in the heroic cast: Captain Bannerman with his Pompous Command attack; James 'Jimmy' James and his First to Volunteer star quality and Wartime Anecdote attack; PVT Geoffrey Charters' unfortunate Dicky Bladder special effect; PVT Donald Macgregor's Doom-Laden Predictions attack; and so on. We suspect most of our readers will have seen the Sunday afternoon classic and taken in those gaming details with a wry, knowing smile.

There are no new Home Guard figures from Crooked Dice to go with this release, but most WWII gamers will probably have gathered some from other manufacturers over the course of their collecting. The stout 'lads' of *Dad's Army* have been represented in various packs and box sets over the years.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE KIDDING, MR VAMPIRE?

Opposing the boys who will fight in this little game are the vampire Nazis. These have puntastic names and special rules and are led by villainous star Major Schreck (character card seen on the left). His Reich of the Dead star quality lets him reanimate his supporting cast after they are taken out of play. Hauptmann Kurtz (figure: below, far left) is the game's villainous co-star, and this bestial, bat-like vampire gets a new sculpt from Crooked Dice. It's suitably grim looking and has the kind of texture that makes it well suited to a quick paint job involving effective drybrushing on raised areas and glazing of shadows in the recesses.

Another new 'evil' figure that accompanies this release is the Bat Swarm (right); this villainous extra looks great and is cunningly sculpted so a group of eleven bats swoop over a tombstone.

Other extras that get 'new' miniatures include the zombie Totgangers (raised from the dead by Major Schreck's aforementioned Reich of the Dead star quality and shown to the left) and a Nachtjägerkommando (a hard to take down Nazi vampire, further left). If you recognise these figures it's because they were originally released by East Riding Miniatures, but Crooked Dice now own that range and are re-releasing suitable figures to match their *7TV* game worlds.
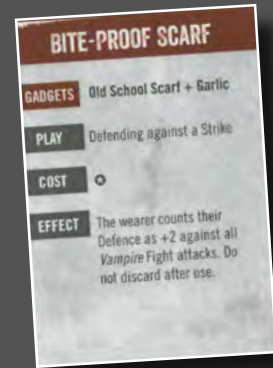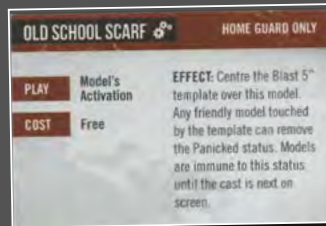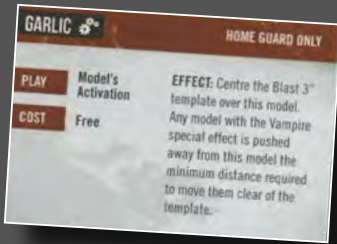
UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

SPECIAL GADGETS

There are 25 new gadget cards included, and these replace the standard deck in *7TV: Inch High Spy-Fi*; the Home Guard get 15 to draw from, the vampires get the rest. All are WWII/vampire themed, and some gadgets can be combined to make new Maguffins. This brings a crafting element to gaming; found the Garlic gadget card along with the Old School Scarf one? You can now make a Bite-Proof Scarf Maguffin, and the wearer will be able to face even the sternest of vampire attacks without breaking a sweat!

GADGET CARD

MAGUFFIN CARD

GARLIC — HOME GUARD ONLY
PLAY: Model's Activation
COST: Free
EFFECT: Centre the Blast 3" template over this model. Any model with the Vampire special effect is pushed away from this model the minimum distance required to move them clear of the template.

+

OLD SCHOOL SCARF — HOME GUARD ONLY
PLAY: Model's Activation
COST: Free
EFFECT: Centre the Blast 5" template over this model. Any friendly model touched by the template can remove the Panicked status. Models are immune to this status until the cast is next on screen.

=

BITE-PROOF SCARF
GADGETS: Old School Scarf + Garlic
PLAY: Defending against a Strike
COST: 0
EFFECT: The wearer counts their Defence as +2 against all Vampire Fight attacks. Do not discard after use.
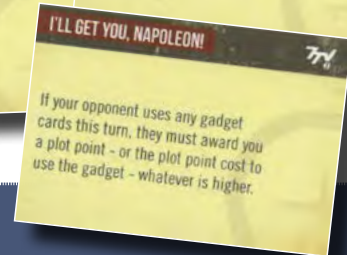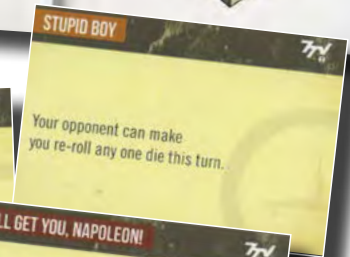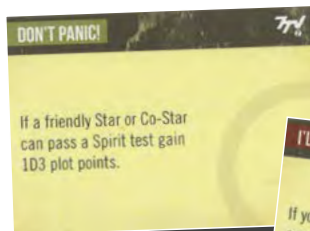
GETTING GAMING

A compact Episode Guide gives plenty of background with details of the characters and the story of *Vlad's Army* accompanied by some lovely portrait art and miniature photos. This is all told in *7TV*'s now well-established 'play the game as a movie' way. The book also contains interesting new gameplay elements; two new statuses caught our eye - Bitten and Panicked - and these are represented on the MDF token sheet included in the box. Bitten models will become undead if they die, so getting chomped on by a vampire is bad news; a cast member who is Panicked is less likely to be successful in their actions and have movement restricted.

When it comes to setting up the tabletop, there are three episodes (scenarios) included here, and each is accompanied by a charming isometric map showing the terrain setup. While the broad strokes of the games are defined by these episodes, play will be different each time due to the 15 Countdown Cards included. There are five for each of the different stages of a game, and they add modifiers to gameplay. Cards like 'Don't panic!' and 'Do you really think that's wise, Sir?' change how movement and command actions happen in Act One - the early game - meaning even the initial advance of your figures has some added drama. The Act Two cards shift the focus to combat elements with special rules like 'They don't like it up 'em!!' adding a bonus to Fight strikes. The Finale cards bring climactic moments that draw on the special gadget and status rules that should, by this point, have developed over the course of the game. It's a successful and characterful way to add replay value to the missions and offer tactical options.

Vlad's Army is a great opportunity to give Home Guard models collected for other WWII gaming (or fantasy vampires and zombies) some extra time on the tabletop. Even if you don't already have the models, then the new *7TV* releases, along with Warlord Games' *Dad's Army* set, are all you really need to see how the Home Guard fare if vamps attack Walmington-on-Sea.

DON'T PANIC!
If a friendly Star or Co-Star can pass a Spirit test gain 1D3 plot points.

STUPID BOY
Your opponent can make you re-roll any one die this turn.

I'LL GET YOU, NAPOLEON!
If your opponent uses any gadget cards this turn, they must award you a plot point - or the plot point cost to use the gadget - whatever is higher.

DETAILS

- **Scale:** 28mm
- **Period:** Pulp WWII
- **Price:** £20
- **Format:** VHS case containing 60 cards, 32 MDF counters, and a 48-page colour paperback book
- **Available from:** crooked-dice.co.uk

As part of this month's All at Sea theme, Peter Harris introduces us to a set of American Civil War naval rules by Flames of War designer Mike Haught.

Peter Harris: At Boards and Swords Hobbies, our local games store in Derby, we are lucky to be able to play a wide range of games, including card games, board games, fantasy, science fiction, and historical wargames. Over the last few years Richard Robinson and I have mainly been playing Battlefront's *Flames of War* variants, including *WW2, The Great War,* and *Team Yankee*. Recently, we ventured into other periods such as *Never Mind the Billhooks, Cruel Seas, Black Seas,* and *Legends of the Old West*. Simon Clark recently joined our group and asked if we would be interested in trying American Civil War Naval wargaming. After a bit of research, we came across *Dawn of Iron*, a 'print on demand' set of rules by Mike Haught available through Wargame Vault.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR NAVAL BATTLES

The American Civil War saw massive developments in naval warfare with the introduction of ironclad armoured ships and the transition from wood and sail to iron and steam power. The weapons used over this period also evolved to include large rifled cannons and the introduction of mines (known as torpedoes). The different technical and industrial strengths of the Union and Confederate states led to some radical solutions to the strategic and tactical problems they faced. The Confederates developed low cut hull boats with an armoured ironclad casemate structure, such as the *CSS Virginia*, the human powered submarine *CSS Hunley,* and the first 'torpedo' boat used to ram into a ship and explode a charge against their hull. The Union reacted by developing the turret armed style of ironclad generically known as monitors after their first ironclad *USS Monitor*. Both sides converted paddle wheel ships to be 'tinclad' or 'cottonclad' gunboats as well as constructing many new ones. This was a time of experimentation, some of it successful, some not. Naval warfare took place along the coast, as the Union tried to enforce a blockade, and along the Mississippi, as the Union tried to surround and strangle the Confederacy.

THE BASICS

The *Dawn of Iron* rules are designed for 1:600 or 1:1200 scale models and are supported with 3D printed models by East Coast Ironclads via Wargaming3D and by Long Face Games at Wargame Vault. Compatible models are also available from Peter Pig [see the article on page 46 - Ed] and other manufacturers.

Each ship has a matching card; on one side is a description and history of the vessel, and on the other are the game statistics. These include size, armour, propulsion type, their gun locations (fore, side, and aft), types and effective range, the ship's maximum speed, acceleration, draft, a points value, and number of hull points.

DETAILS

- **Scale:** 1:200 or 1:600
- **Period:** American Civil War
- **Price:** $9.00
- **Format:** Downloadable PDF (a *'print on demand' hard copy version is on the way - check out scarybiscuitsstudios.com for more information*)
- **Available from:** wargamevault.com

As soon as I saw the ship cards, the style immediately struck me as similar to *Flames of War Version 4*, not surprising as author Mike Haught was one of the Battlefront team who wrote the *V4* books and *Great War* rules. However, *Dawn of Iron* is his own project under his Scary Biscuits Studios banner.

The only dice you will need are D6s. The Command value (which varies from 1 for a small manoeuvrable ship, 2 for most ships, and 3 for large or sail powered ships) denotes the number of order counters that the ship has in its order queue. Each turn, the ship may use its first order counter at the start of the turn, then discard it, and in the next turn, add another order card to the queue. The order counters include Hard to Port, Hard to Starboard, Damage Control, Flank Speed, Evasive Action, Brace for Impact, and Boarding Party. This means that for most ships you are going to have to think ahead for what you may need to do.

A game consists of three phases:

1. Command Phase: Players simultaneously assign orders to their ships.

2. Control Phase: Players take turns choosing a ship to complete any orders and take actions (such as move, fire, and change speed).

3. End Phase: Players complete a number of effects (such as damage control) then end the turn.

MOVEMENT ACTION

A ship may make up to a 45° turn at the start of its move if it has the Hard to Port or Starboard order and then moves in a straight line for 2" per Speed level (this varies from 1 to 7 overall). At the end of its movement, it may choose to make up to another 45° turn.

CSS VIRGINIA 63
• RAM • STEAM SCREW •

| ARMOR | IRONCLAD |

DAWN OF IRON

CHARACTERISTICS	
COMMAND	2
SPEED/ACCEL.	4	2
SIZE/DRAFT	M	4
HULL	7

BATTERIES					
WEAPON	RANGE	FORE	SIDE	AFT	SIZE
9" DAHLGREN SMOOTHBORE	16"/40cm	-	3	-	MEDIUM
7" BROOKE RIFLE	32"/80cm	1	-	1	MEDIUM
6.4" BROOKE RIFLE	32"/80cm	-	1	-	MEDIUM

HAMPTON ROADS

EXPANSION PACKS

The basic rule pack is supported by a growing range of expansion packs, each dealing with a historic element of the naval war, and these are also available from Wargame Vault. Each includes a historical account of the battle with very clear maps, ship cards, special order cards, a historical scenario, and a few tactical variants of the actual battle. The expansion packs currently available are:

Damn the Torpedoes!, The Battle of Mobile Bay, Robert Smalls & the USS Planter, The battles of Plum Point Bend & Memphis, That Devil The Arkansas!, Battle of Cherbourg, and *The Battle of Albemarle Sound.*

SHOOTING ACTION

The dice roll to hit a target depends on its size, the range, and a few other modifiers. The target then gets a saving throw for each hit, depending on its own armour and the size of the gun firing.

The damage effect is decided by drawing a card from either the Cumulative Damage pack or the Critical Damage pack - this is where the rules create the feel of the period. Critical Damage is permanent and has serious effects. Cumulative Damage erodes the ship's hull points, speed, manoeuvrability, firepower, etc. but can be repaired by damage control.

Left to right: An example of a Critical Damage Card and a Cumulative Damage Card.

OTHER ACTIONS AND RULES

The rules also cover ramming, boarding actions, and moving under sail. There are specific rules for battles at sea and for coastal games which include cliffs, riverbanks, coastlines, and tides.

There are four basic missions in the rules, each with a deployment map, objectives, and victory conditions. These represent some of the generic naval actions of the war.

The card pack is enhanced by a set of ship upgrades; some of these add extra weapons and special modifications, and others represent the particular skills of the actual ship commanders.

PLAYING THE GAME

We have played seven games of *Dawn of Iron* at our club. Simon has an extensive fleet of Peter Pig ships, and I have a variety of East Coast Ironclads and Long Face Games 3D printed ships. We started with the simple *USS Monitor* versus *CSS Virginia* scenario and have progressed to Mobile Bay and Plum Point Bend with four to six ships per side and the addition of shore batteries and forts. All have been very enjoyable games and clearly capture the essence of the period. As a landlubber, I have had a few problems confusing port and starboard and managed to collide several times with one of my own ships!

SUPPORT

The rules are supported by an active Facebook page that gives updates on the rules and has a 'Shipyard' with a large list of other ship cards for the period. There is also Mike Haught's own website scarybiscuitsstudios.com that includes sections on making scenery and ship models, history articles, links to videos of gameplay, videos on 3D printing ships, and much more. Mike responds to comments and is developing the rules further with new expansion packs and plans for improved ship cards and game counters.

CONCLUSION

We have thoroughly enjoyed playing these rules, building and painting the fleets, and reading up on the history of the war. Mike Haught provides a bibliography with the rules, and I have bought several of the excellent Osprey books by Angus Konstam.

If you are interested in the American Civil War and Naval wargaming, we can recommend *Dawn of Iron* as a good, playable set of rules with a real historical feel for the period.

OSPREY GAMES - FROSTGRAVE FIREHEART

It's been a while since we last looked at a new release for *Frostgrave*, even though it has rapidly become a game with more supplements available than most games have figures in their ranges! We jest, of course, but only a bit! This supplement bears the code FGV 17; it's clear that a lot of different *Frostgrave* books have been released, so how can there possibly be room for another one?

CONSTRUCTING CONSTRUCTS

Author Joseph A. McCullough has always (wisely) approached *Frostgrave*'s expansions with the goal of providing optional extras rather than essential new rules. It's up to players to pick the narrative hooks (and associated supplements) that they want to bring to the tabletop; there's no need to overcomplicate the standard gaming by including rules from every expansion.

The main extra this time around is expanded rules for constructs; these inventions - made by artisans in the glory days of Ancient Felstad - were established in the main rules, but *Fireheart* adds loads of detail. That detail comes from a modification table - 40 choices with associated costs and penalties - and each modification has special rules. There are simple ones like extra armour, but it's the more creative and story inspiring options - a demonic portal, a mystic reservoir, organic construction, etc. - that we suspect will ultimately bring the most fun to the Frozen City.

Wizards can even use some of the construct modifications to enhance prosthetic replacements for lost limbs. This is a great extra and shows that Joe's an author who considers all of the possibilities when he brings a new element to gameplay.

As usual there are also some pages dedicated to new soldiers; these ones fit the theme with constructs - familiars and hounds - and soldiers - scroungers and tinkerers - who aid your own construct designs.

TERRAIN WITH ATTITUDE

It's rare that a *Frostgrave* supplement only does one thing; *Fireheart* adds interactive terrain to the gaming options with a table of possibilities. The descriptions for the interactive elements, and the ways they impact your gaming, take up the next 20 or so pages; with multiple variances possible on one terrain feature, there are some truly odd and intriguing end results. Who fancies the challenge of building a terrain piece to represent a levitation disc that includes magical fire and attracts adventurers to it like a magnet?

The book is packed with beautiful art.

These odd terrain pieces will be a fine starting point for anyone who wants to develop their own scenarios, but five authored scenarios are also included. These are set within the Construct Palace, a now ruined area that was once a hive of manufacture and creation, and take in different elements of the new construct and interactive terrain rules.

MORE OF THE SAME?

The book ends with sections devoted to new treasure and resources, fresh beasties, and some new traits. These all function as they always have in *Frostgrave* games with the addition of this book's thematic flavour sprinkled in.

Fireheart certainly doesn't take *Frostgrave* in any startling new directions or add anything particularly unexpected to the core gameplay. Joe's design approach has remained much the same with his expansions - add tweaked rules, profiles, and tables that bring the new theme into the game - and if that's your thing, then this is a solid offering. We also must give credit to the absolultely outstanding art throughout; this is the stuff to fire your imagination, enrich the game's world, and inspire your future hobby projects!

DETAILS

- **SCALE:** 28mm
- **PERIOD:** Fantasy
- **PRICE:** £20
- **FORMAT:** 96-page colour paperback book
- **AVAILABLE FROM:** ospreypublishing.com

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Dom Sore checks out the new and upcoming releases that are showing on his Release Radar.

ALL BUILDINGS GREAT AND SMALL

At 6mm, this set of 16 village houses (seen right) is the smallest of the new buildings I'm looking at, and they are generic enough to fit almost anywhere, especially with some of those clever paint jobs I keep seeing *Wi* readers produce and submit to Quick Fire. These MDF options are made by the increasingly prolific Iliada Games Studio (**iliadagamestudio.com**) – a small company based in Çanakkale, Turkey. I wonder if I can get the Editor to authorise a work trip as that's close to Troy and the Gallipoli beaches!

Slightly larger at 10mm are ten new resin tents from Magister Militum (**magistermilitum.com**). They cover everywhere from ancients to the modern day, and the full list is: rectangular tent, oligarch of the sands tent (think large Bedouin style), Viking tent, two styles of medieval jousting tents, an army tent suitable for the 17th to the 20th Century, Arabic and Egyptian tents, and two Roman tents including a command one. These will make an excellent addition to any tabletop, especially for vignettes.

There seem to be an awful lot of buildings and scenic products this month, so many that I've had to split them out across multiple sections. I'll need to build a big 'real-word' terrain extension at this rate to store all my miniature scenery!

Above: Oligarch of the sands tent.

Above (left to right): Medieval jousting tent, Roman legion command tent, Egyptian tent, and Viking tent.

Scaling up to 28mm, we have the expanding Border Reiver range from Warbases (**warbases. co.uk**), which has four new stone buildings: Milburn Cottage, Tait's Bastle House, Routledge Barn, and Forrester's Doocot. All are made from MDF and have stonework etched into the walls along with tiles etched into the roofs. Rather than denoting the style of building, the names are Border Reiver surnames common in the local area; an area I am from, and I even know a few people with the same names. A doocot is a dovecote in the local dialect, by the way, so would be full of…. Pigeons.

Above: Forrester's Doocot.

Left: Tait's Bastle House.

Below: Milburn Cottage.

The biggest recent release award this month goes to Micro Art Studio, of Poland. They have created a new range of of high-density fiberboard (HDF) buildings for WWII era Normandy (**shop. microartstudio.com**) that can be purchased individually or as a large set of 13 pieces. These have fully detailed exteriors and interiors made from UV-printed HDF. The kits come flat-packed but you won't need to paint them as they come "pre-painted", and include great detail like the tyre marks on the floor in the garage, along with opening and closing doors. Maybe the restaurant in the set is more in line with your culinary needs. This one has a tiled ground floor, wooden floors on the other two levels, and some rather attractive wallpaper. The acrylic window panes enhance the realism, but what's particularly impressive is that the shell can come off entirely and it becomes its own ruin. The same is true for the café and townhouses.

Above: (left) Church. (Right) Garage with petrol station.

Above: The restaurant in its ruined state (left), complete state (right), and its detailed interior (middle).

LOGS, DOORS, AND TUFTS

Whether it is forests, rivers, gateways, or a simple shrubbery, scenic details add immeasurably to the visual immersion a tabletop can create. One of those aspects I hadn't considered was missing from my collection – until I saw the one Anyscale Models (**anyscalemodels.com**) makes – is a corduroy road (seen right). It is made from resin and is 25cm long, so it should be enough to get across most boggy ground we see on the tabletop; should you need to, you can use multiples.

Want to add some fantasy details to your terrain? Look no further than the 'new' doors from Scotia Grendel (**shop. scotiagrendel.com**). These 28mm resin products were originally produced by Fantasy Forge but have been out of production for a while. There are four sets of double doors, a demonic guardian doorway (seen right), and a bone doorway; just the kind of thing to hide inside a building to add fantasy interest or confuse the heck out of a group of dyed in the wool historical grognards!

To finish up this trio of scenic spots, I'm examining a multitude of coloured tufts from WWScenics (**wwscenics.com**). They range from simple grass to very colourful flowering tufts, and I find you can split them apart for more varied and detailed applications. They have also released a rectangular baseboard, which, although designed for the railway hobbyist, could be used to make a 29.5cm x 21cm display board for fancy army presentation.

Left: Forest ground tufts.

Right: Heather tufts.

Left: Poppy tufts.

FANTASTIC AND ANIMALISTIC

These 10mm fantasy figures from Magister Militum (**magistermilitum.com**) could perhaps fit in with some of their tents, which I looked at in the first section of this Release Radar. Made in white metal, these minis include a giant undead Egyptian scorpion and a Lammassu ridden by an Evil Dwarf. The fact these odd offerings are small enough to not take up too much space in my collection is rather dangerous to my wallet!

Above (left to right): Egyptian scorpion and a Lammassu.

Alternative Armies (**alternative-armies.com**) offer… well, exactly what their name suggests: their Samurai cats (Kitoka) in 28mm scale white metal have caught my eye! There are 13 packs in the range so far, and they cover Samurai, Ashigaru, Ronin, Civilians, and Monsters. I'm not much of a cat fan but these are pretty great; they would make an unexpected addition to my current *Test of Honour* warbands, hopefully enough to confuse my opponent. The Giant Oni (seen right) is truly giant, over four times the height of the Kitoka, and I can see uses for it in a number of games.


MASSIVE MAMMALS

You wait for ages for a pachyderm to turn up and then two come along at once! Aventine Miniatures' Sassanid King's Elephant (**aventineminiatures.org**) is a two-part resin printed elephant, with extra details – the crew, tail, and tusks – produced in pewter. The printed head actually comes with tusks, but the metal ones are provided for those who prefer them as an alternative. The driver, standard bearer, and an archer in the process of shooting, will add to this already splendid looking kit, which will make an impressive addition to any Sassanid army… although how the standard bearer hasn't slipped off the back of the beast is beyond me!

Above: Sassanid elephant with driver, standard bearer, and archer.

The other elephant is also a 3D print, also Indian, but for an Indian army specifically. Blitzkrieg Miniatures (**blitzkriegminiatures.com**) have produced two variants, and you can also get the elephant on its own. There is one with an Indian king and two crew plus a swanky sunshade; the second variant has four crew including two archers. The Ancient Indian range from Blitzkrieg is really coming on and it might be time for me to get some ahead of the *Saga: Age of Alexander* supplement.

Right: One of the Indian elephant variants; an Indian king and two crew plus the sunshade.
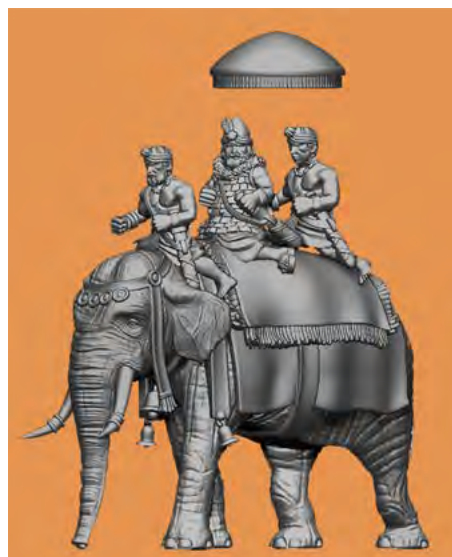
BLIGHTED SEAS

It would be remiss of me to not include something nautical in this issue to fit the theme; but rather than pick new ships for old games, I thought I would pick a new and rather different game with new ships. *Blight Seas Fleet* is a new post-apocalyptic naval ruleset currently in a publicly available beta version. You can find the rules by searching Reddit for 'blight seas fleet'. Hopefully they'll get a website soon!

It's a World War One (ish) era inspired game with simple mechanics designed for fun rather than simulation. It leans heavily on the Games Workshop game *Battlefleet Gothic*, which is cited as a major influence, and it is what the Americans would call a 'beer and pretzels' game, doing away with a lot of the fiddly mechanics that can put many players off naval games.

The beta rules contain all you need to play, with printable tokens and ship markers; but if you'd rather use figures, then the author, Liz Little, has produced those for the game too, available to make on a 3D printer (**myminifactory.com/users/Lizwarhammer**). The files so far cover the five main categories of ship: Battleship, Battle Cruiser, Armoured Cruiser, Light Cruiser, and Destroyer. They have a pleasing aesthetic and look very snazzy when painted up. You'll need to source your own bases; but if you are already 3D printing, I am sure that won't be a problem!

Above: Armoured Cruiser.
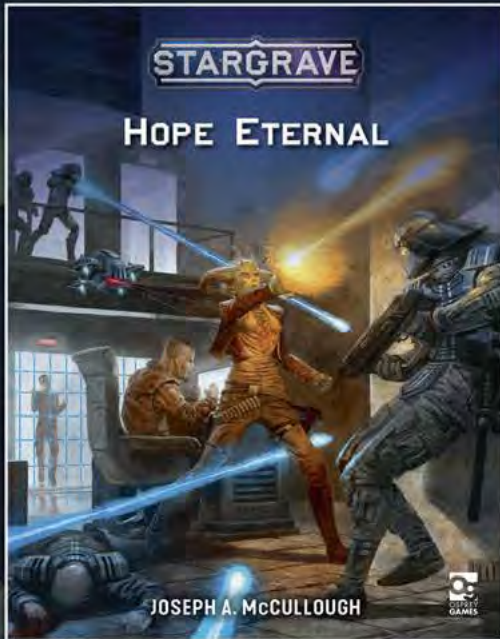

Above: Destroyer.

Above: Battleship.

Above: Battle Cruiser.

Above: Light Cruiser.

That was a whole Release Radar without a standalone WWII section; I bet you didn't think I could manage that! Until next time, fare thee well, and happy gaming!

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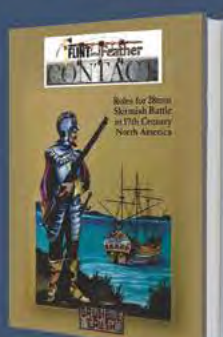Rules Coming in 2022

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NEW BOOKS FOR THE DISCERNING WARGAMER

BY NEIL SMITH

Recent events have shown that the battlefield is more than ever dominated by machines; indeed, I wonder if we're entering an age where machines do all the fighting then the soldiers come into clean up? But scanning this month's books, it strikes me that machines have always been important in warfare. Of course, 'machines' means models, means glue, means stuck fingers: it's tough being a wargamer!

ANCIENT

We start as usual in the Ancient world, but this time at sea. Michael Pitassi's *Hellenistic Naval Warfare and Warships 336-30 BC: War at Sea from Alexander to Actium* (Pen & Sword) takes us out on the ocean waves with the arms race that developed between the Successor kingdoms as they sought to control the Mediterranean Sea. That led to the development of a wide range of ships performing different functions; mainly to win battles and to support those doing the fighting, which is roughly the difference between tactics and strategy. Pitassi considers those aspects of naval warfare while analysing the ships that did the fighting. I'm excited by this book because I've read the new *Thalassa* rules and see great possibilities in them for undertaking a longstanding ambition to embark on an ancient naval project.

Back on land in the Classical world, we inevitably come to the invincible Romans. But check your adjective on that when reading Nic Fields' *Carrhae 53 BC: Rome's Disaster in the Desert* (Osprey). Carrhae may have been the Roman Republic's most significant defeat given the political consequences. It was also a tactical catastrophe that highlighted the shortcomings of the Roman legions when operating in the wide open spaces of Rome's eastern frontier. In short, the Parthian archers shot the Roman army to bits despite being outnumbered. Fields discusses all the aspects of the battle, including the famous Parthian Shot. It is that tactical contrast that makes this battle worth playing on our tables, perhaps in the very wee scales. I'm not sure how the Romans can win though, so good luck with that!

MEDIEVAL

Ever since Mel Gibson kitbashed Scottish history in *Braveheart* (1995), Robert The Bruce has had to play second fiddle to William Wallace. Nothing against Wallace, but Bruce deserves some attention. Perhaps Phil Carradice's *Robert The Bruce: Scotland's True Braveheart* (Pen & Sword) will help achieve that despite the cringey title. This is a narrative history of how The Bruce led an insurrection against King Edward's power in Scotland then a full blown war for independence, culminating in the great victory at Bannockburn in 1314. For our purposes, following The Bruce's struggles opens up a wide array of wargaming opportunities at all levels from skirmish actions to set-piece battles. Given the number of new rules recently for medieval warfare, this could be an ideal project for scaling up and down using a core force.


ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Speaking of iconic leaders, there are few who fit the category as well as Oliver Cromwell. Laurence Spring's *Campaigns of the Eastern Association: The Rise of Oliver Cromwell, 1642-1645* (Helion) takes us inside the army that brought Cromwell to military fame and glory. But while Cromwell makes for a useful hook in the title here, there was much more to this army than him. The Eastern Association rose to prominence through fighting for control of East Anglia then assisting Parliamentary armies in the wider struggle before becoming the base for the New Model Army. Along the way, it participated in many battles and sieges, including my favourite, Marston Moor in 1644. The ECW is a perfect playground for wargamers, with so much action at all levels that it is difficult to choose a single wargaming project to pursue. This book on the Eastern Association could be an excellent gateway into this fascinating conflict, or as with The Bruce, you can build a force around Mr Cromwell and all that entails.

NAPOLEONICS

Our Napoleonics contribution this month should be genuinely exciting for wargamers because it is specifically for them. Rohan Saravanamuttu's *A Wargamer's Guide to the Battle of Leipzig 1813* (Helion) kicks off a new series for Helion. If you don't know Leipzig, it was huge; half-a-million men from various states and nations launched themselves at each other for five days, with the French and their allies coming off worse. The whole thing is huge for a wargame, but Saravanamuttu has a plan for that. He breaks it all down into manageable chunks and translates those into potential wargames complete with maps, army lists, orders of battle, and some juicy 'what ifs?'. The cherry on top is that this book will work for any rules. It seems to me that this approach might also inspire wargamers to try it with other battles in addition to more books coming out in this series. I can't wait!
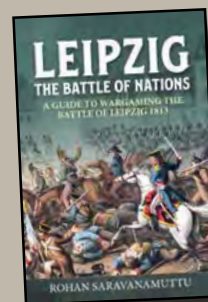
19th CENTURY

Sieges, a dozen battles, and numerous skirmishes formed one of the biggest wars in 19th Century Europe. Curious? The conflict I'm hinting at here was the Hungarian War of Independence fought from 1848 to 1849. Christopher Pringle's *Hungary 1849: The Summer Campaign* (Helion) is the second volume in this series, covering the decisive second half of this fascinating war. The text is a translation of Austria's official history, so you can imagine how packed it is with details on the campaigns and theatres, including twenty maps, orders of battle, weapons, uniforms, accounts of fighting at all levels from skirmish to the big battles. I have a friend who enjoys wargaming this conflict, particularly the irregular forces. If that sounds like something down your wargaming street, this and the first volume are obvious starting points.
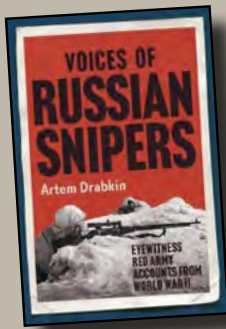
THE GREAT WAR

We stay off the beaten track with our selection this month for World War One. Alan Steele's *British Cavalryman vs German Cavalryman: Belgium and France 1914* (Osprey) surveys cavalry operations on the Western Front at the outbreak of the war when the action was still fluid. Most of us know the story of how the British Expeditionary Force took the full brunt of the German onslaught in August 1914. Less well-known is how the British cavalry had to cover the subsequent retreat while the German cavalry tried to maintain contact. That led to some explosive encounters, which Steele covers, at Casteau/Soignies, Cérizy/Moÿ, and Montcel/Frétoy. Along the way, Steele provides all you need to know about organization, equipment, and doctrine. Add the usual excellent Osprey maps and illustrations, and you are good to go for some fast-paced wargaming.

WORLD WAR TWO

I'm always on the lookout for new books that prompt potential games while broadening my knowledge. To that end, we have a couple of suitable candidates this month for WWII. We begin in the North Atlantic where the German U-Boats wreaked havoc among the convoys bringing desperately needed supplies to isolated Britain. The Allies needed more effective means of waging this war, and they found their solution, not at sea, but in the air. Timothy Good's *The Allied Air Campaign Against Hitler's U-boats: Victory in the Battle of the Atlantic* (Frontline) describes the strategic and tactical planning and developments that thwarted the U-Boats, driving them out of the Atlantic and ultimately back into their pens. In short, the U-Boats found it difficult to escape the searching aircraft and lacked the means to fight back effectively. That presents an interesting conundrum to base a wargame around: a cat-and-mouse hunt across a blue seascape with hidden movement sounds like fun.

I've long admired the 28mm female Soviet snipers produced by Bad Squiddo, and I also like to know the backstories behind my skirmish figures to bring those games more to life. With that in mind, I might have to break out the credit card for Artem Drabkin's *Voices of Russian Snipers: Eyewitness Red Army Accounts From World War II* (Greenhill). The Eastern Front was a target rich environment for snipers, particularly in urban warfare (think *Enemy at the Gates*) but not always. Drabkin's book takes us into their war to give us a sense of how they experienced this kind of killing among other aspects. It might come as no surprise that there was little glamour involved despite the fame that it brought to some. Setting up a sniper based skirmish game could be interesting. They are often on the periphery of our rules, but what happens if they are the main object of things?


VIETNAM

The Vietnam War continues to attract the attention of wargamers with new products hitting the market regularly. A major reason for that is the War's accessibility; this was the first televised war and Hollywood has pitched in with some exceptional movies. But that has also led to a cultural bias, meaning our wargaming focus has been almost exclusively on the American, or sometimes Australian, experience; the ARVN seldom gets a look-in. I bring this up because William Reeder's *Extraordinary Valor: The Fight for Charlie Hill in Vietnam* (Lyons Press) is the extraordinary story of an American Special Forces officer, John Duffy, embedded with a South Vietnamese battalion defending a hill during the 1972 North Vietnamese offensive. They were ordered to fight to the death, and they almost did. In the end, Duffy and his Vietnamese second-in-command held out to allow the remnants to escape. That sounds like a great wargame to me, particularly for solo and co-op play. There is also the potential for some RPG action if you're so inclined, and maybe test the Free Form ideas from upcoming *Wargames Illustrated* articles I've had the chance to sneak a peek at. Taking command of ARVN forces should add that extra wrinkle.

Vivid memoirs are also an important part of understanding the Vietnam War and generating enthusiasm for gaming it. Not many of them, however, promise to be as intense as Phil Gioia's *Danger Close!: A Vietnam Memoir* (Stackpole). Gioia served two tours of duty in Vietnam; the first as a still 'wet behind the ears' young paratrooper officer arriving just as the Tet Offensive began; the second with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1969 after convalescing from a serious wound. He fought in Hue with the 82nd Airborne and along the Cambodian border with a 'rucksack' company of light infantry. His combat experiences, therefore, ran the gamut of just about everything the Vietnam War had to offer. There has been a run of decidedly average Vietnam War memoirs lately, but Gioia's is sure to be a gripping read for those who want to know about the sharp end of things. That applies to wargamers too. As I wrote earlier, I like to know the backstories of my 28mm heroes, so this is ideal fare for that. Then there are all the varied potential wargames scenarios to consider and how you can shade them to enhance the simulation side of things.

MODERN

There have been only a few major wars since 1939 where urban warfare hasn't been an important factor, or at least an important event. World War Two, of course, then Hue, Mogadishu, Fallujah, Aleppo, and now cities in Ukraine show how urban warfare is increasingly prominent. It follows that to plan for modern warfare, you must train for urban combat. That segues nicely into Louise Tumchewics' *Small Armies, Big Cities: Rethinking Urban Warfare* (Lynne Rienner Publishers). This is a book of essays covering multiple aspects of combat in cities, including the evolution of urban warfare, operational advantages and disadvantages, and drone and surrogate warfare. Why cities are important and how to win are obviously the big questions underlying all this. These are also questions wargamers can ask, particularly with so many new modern skirmish rules coming out. This book might inspire answers and certainly will keep the modern wargamer reading happily.
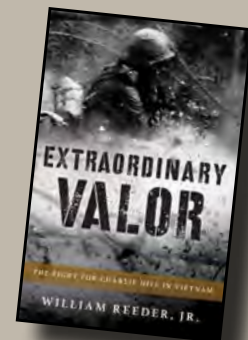
And that's all for this month but check out my reviews of new military history books on Facebook at Full Paper Jacket or my website hamsterwrangler.com/beating-tsundoku. Happy reading (and gaming)!

COME IN, THE WATER IS LOVELY!

AN AGE OF SAIL TWIST

Barry Hilton presents a compelling case for Naval gaming in the 17th Century.

If you are unlucky enough to have experienced that feeling of being beaten before you start, read on. In wargaming terms, try commanding Huns using *WRG* 6th edition, Soviets in 1941, or the Spanish in a Napoleonic naval game, and you will know exactly what I am talking about. Your opponent may exude an innate sense of smug superiority at the imminent foregone conclusion - not a motivating influence when you have a pile of unpainted models to complete for the doomed force.

It is with reference to the final example, a constantly reinforced perception of British naval infallibility during the Napoleonic Wars, that I offer a refreshing Age of Sail (AoS) twist; a universe in which the English chance of winning is no better than that of the enemy, and you may choose a force without fear or favour in an era of achingly beautiful warships commanded by intrepid, independently minded captains. With the starting pistol just fired on the contest for overseas empire building, the playing field is far more even than a century hence.

Three wars involving England and Holland between 1652 and 1674 set the course for the following two hundred and fifty years of global events, and many less obvious legacies remain to this day, including the contemporary massive wealth of the Netherlands, a modest-sized European nation with hugely overdeveloped economic muscles.

In the twenty-two years span of the wars, England transitioned from a republic back to a monarchy; the French evolved from a naval nonentity into the third force of European sea power, and the Dutch continued to tighten their stranglehold over global commerce by means of well-organized trading mega-corps, an enormous merchant marine, and some of the greatest naval commanders of any age.

Nelson is known to have felt himself unworthy of comparison with Blake. Who, you may ask, was Blake? Therein lies the answer to why this period has been overshadowed by later success. Britain reaped the enormous rewards of global domination as a leading partner

in the coalition to beat Bonaparte, and simultaneously, an age of historical revisionism flourished. Defeat was never discussed. National pride and self-belief washed away painful memories of the long struggle to success. Monarchy, of whatever flavour, was to be the symbol of national unity. As more of the population became literate, the global map turned pink, and all signs of weakness were suppressed. Sons and daughters of Empire were force-fed a high-calorie diet of British invincibility, which I can attest, we were still wading through as children in the 1960s, long after its use-by date. Some may note a passing resemblance to the oppressive information management we find so distasteful in today's totalitarian regimes. Really? From us?

These days, Robert Blake, one of England's greatest, some say the greatest, admiral is hardly known to anyone beyond nerdy nautica buffs. He was a republican who commanded Cromwell's fleet, and that was one of the first reasons to forget him. Although he led the navy to victory in the First Anglo-Dutch War,

Above: Bear Bay, 1693 - lovely water if you're a polar bear!

a Restoration monarchy was unlikely to lionize such an implacable opponent. During the turbulence of the latter Stuart age, the country was subject to foreign occupation, and King Willem's defeats outnumbered his victories. This too is barely known amongst the population despite its enormous importance to the creation of identity and esprit de corps in both the army and navy. Only with the coalition victories, in which John Churchill played a significant role, did the information management machine get to work. Much of this was not being amplified during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, which also chose to downplay the contribution of Johnny-Foreigner and appropriate all victories as quintessentially British no matter how few troops we contributed. And so, to the alternative…

GAMING THE PERIOD

Naval actions between 1620 and 1720 offer some of the most marvellous gaming opportunities I have come across. The scope of ship types, theatres, opponents, commanders, and scenarios is peerless. Whether you want the grandest of grand fleet actions involving up to one hundred ships per side, one-on-one ship duels, or even capital ships against indigenous tribal craft, it's all here. Although I am largely associated with 17th Century land-based wargaming in 28mm scale, I dove into the naval side of the period a few years back. I was inspired by a 1/1200 epic refight of the Four Days Battle run by Grimsby Wargames Club and a 350th anniversary refight of Solebay by a group in East Anglia - it all looked so tempting. Four years on, I have over one hundred

Above: Commonwealth Battle line.

ships painted and rigged in 1/1200, two hundred in 1/2400, and a further hundred in 1/4800 - yes, I am an addict, so much so that I commissioned a full range of 1/1200 scale ships for Warfare Miniatures, which now sells under the Ark Royal Miniatures brand.

I cannot get enough of the gaming because one of its most appealing elements is unpredictability. I noticed a comment on a thread somewhere from a gamer who said he didn't like *AoS* games because they were too luck-based. If you are prone to reach for the calculator or roll out your 1s before making a decision to fire, charge, or change formation, then AoS is probably not for you. The elements, and in particular the wind, make war with sailing ships extremely unpredictable and therein, for me at least, is much of the fun and fascination. How could it be that two French frigates were able to overcome forty Dutch whalers in a windless Arctic battle? Robert Holmes (heard of him?) sailed into the Vlie Estuary in 1666 and with a few brigs and

shallops, burned or destroyed over one hundred and fifty large Dutch merchant ships for the loss of twelve of his own men. Admiral Sir John Harman (what about him then?) fought his way through the entire Dutch fleet in a lone, damaged ship, fending off numerous attacks in a nautical flavoured Rorke's Drift. You couldn't make it up even if addicted to class A drugs. I also know many gamers who if confronted with such victories on the tabletop would say, 'that is totally unrealistic! How could that happen in real life?' That loops back to the echo-chamber realities created in the minds of many wargamers who find it difficult to get over their own narrow-bandwidth preconceptions. Suspend your disbelief. This is an age in which Europe's greatest sea power can run out of money, lay up its battlefleet, and be forced to sink it all in situ to prevent capture by a surprise raid on its home port. The greatest defeat in English naval history barely merits mention in most history books and is called playfully by the victors, *Tocht naar Chatham* or the Trip to Chatham!


Above: Dutch squadron, 1653.

KNOW YOUR SCALES

Do you know your 1/600s from your 1/2400s? It can be confusing for the novice landlubber. 1/600 scale (for example) means 600 feet on the real ship would be equal to 1 foot on a model. But what do those scales actually look like on the tabletop? This handy photo, showing (left to right) ships at 1/600 scale, 1/1200 scale, and 1/2400 holds the answer to that question. Clearly, the larger the scale, the more detail you will see represented in the model; the smaller the scale, the smaller the footprint on the tabletop and the larger the fleets you can portray.

RULES

There are lots of rulesets out there. I started using Neil Fox's excellent and free *Solebay* two-pager and then decided to write my own, which I have used ever since. Regardless of which scale(s) you choose to game in, you will find a set that suits. Age of Sail rules are inevitably a compromise between playability and realism. Achieving the balance is tricky; but endless playtesting of the rule system I created specifically for the period 1630 - 1720, has given me some confidence we cracked it with *Mad for War*. The release of a starter Essentials set in advance of the main book warmed up the water for gamers interested in using the system. This article is, however, rule system agnostic, and I have included several scenario ideas at the end that can be used with any ruleset even though they were originally created for *Mad for War*. As more gamers have shown interest, many making the obvious transition from 17th Century land warfare to the water, I have made available various free pieces of collateral in the form of scenario packs to help newbies and experienced players alike. For those who want copies of these documents, I am happy to send the files on. Make contact via the website, blog, or Facebook.

As a final word on rule systems, my strong recommendation is not to get sidelined by a small but vociferous hardcore of nautical experts who argue endlessly over the minutiae of sailing detail, which creates a law of diminishing returns. The more detailed the attempts to mirror every aspect of sailing reality, the less enjoyable the gaming experience. It is important to keep in mind that all tabletop wargaming is an abstract and simply an extension of board gaming principles.
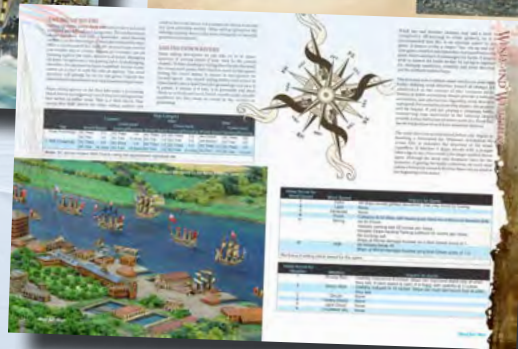
MODELS

When I started collecting, only a few years back, there was very little in the way of available models for gaming this period. The excellent Langton range had the monopoly on 1/1200 scale, although more than a little modelling skill was required to do them justice. I initially plumped for 1/2400 and used Tumbling Dice models. Since then, the market has opened up with 1/4800 scale models from TD; 1/2000 from Spithead Miniatures; and now, various 3D print design houses offer ships in this popular scale. Ark Royal have released a comprehensive 1/1200 metal range, which is compatible with Langton. There are ships available in 1/700 scale, including 3D print and card-stock paper 3D models. There has never been more choice to game the 17th Century at sea from Drake to Shovell. Getting a little force launched can be done in no time; pick a small scale and a small squadron and all ships needed could be done in a week of painting and modelling.

Above and below: Ark Royal 40 gun painted with variation on each, seen from the bow and stern.


CHOOSING SIDES

Consider the period 1620 - 1720 and the following choices are a slice of what might launch your interest as a force to model: Spanish Eighty Years' War, Portuguese, Dutch Sea Beggars Eighty Years' War, English Parliamentarian/Commonwealth, English Royalist 1644 - 1653, Danish 1630-1680, Swedish 1630 - 1680 , Dutch 1640 - 1680, English Restoration, Scottish pre 1707, French, English, Dutch, Spanish colonial fleets, VOC (Dutch East India Company), EIC (English East India Company), Ottoman, Venetian, Genoese, Neapolitan, Berber Corsair, Mahratta, Chinese Imperial or Chinese pirate, Anglo-Dutch Nine Years' War, French Nine Years' War, Russian Baltic or Black Sea fleet 1690 - 1721, Swedish GNW, and Caribbean privateer fleets. If you can't find something in there, I recommend an immediate switch to sci-fi.

ECONOMY OF SCALE

In these straitened times, when everyone is tightening their belts, this is a space and resource efficient gaming option. The scales are small, and the space required for a game can be as little as 2'x2' (60cm x 60cm). Most of my games (over 150 in the last two years) have been on a 2'x2' or 4'x4' table. If you have a cloth mat, then all to the good, and this becomes almost a shoebox hobby period. Regardless of the scale chosen, a squadron or two of small forces are likely to cost no more than £100. The games are as absorbing as any I have played in nearly fifty years, and I cannot recommend this period highly enough.
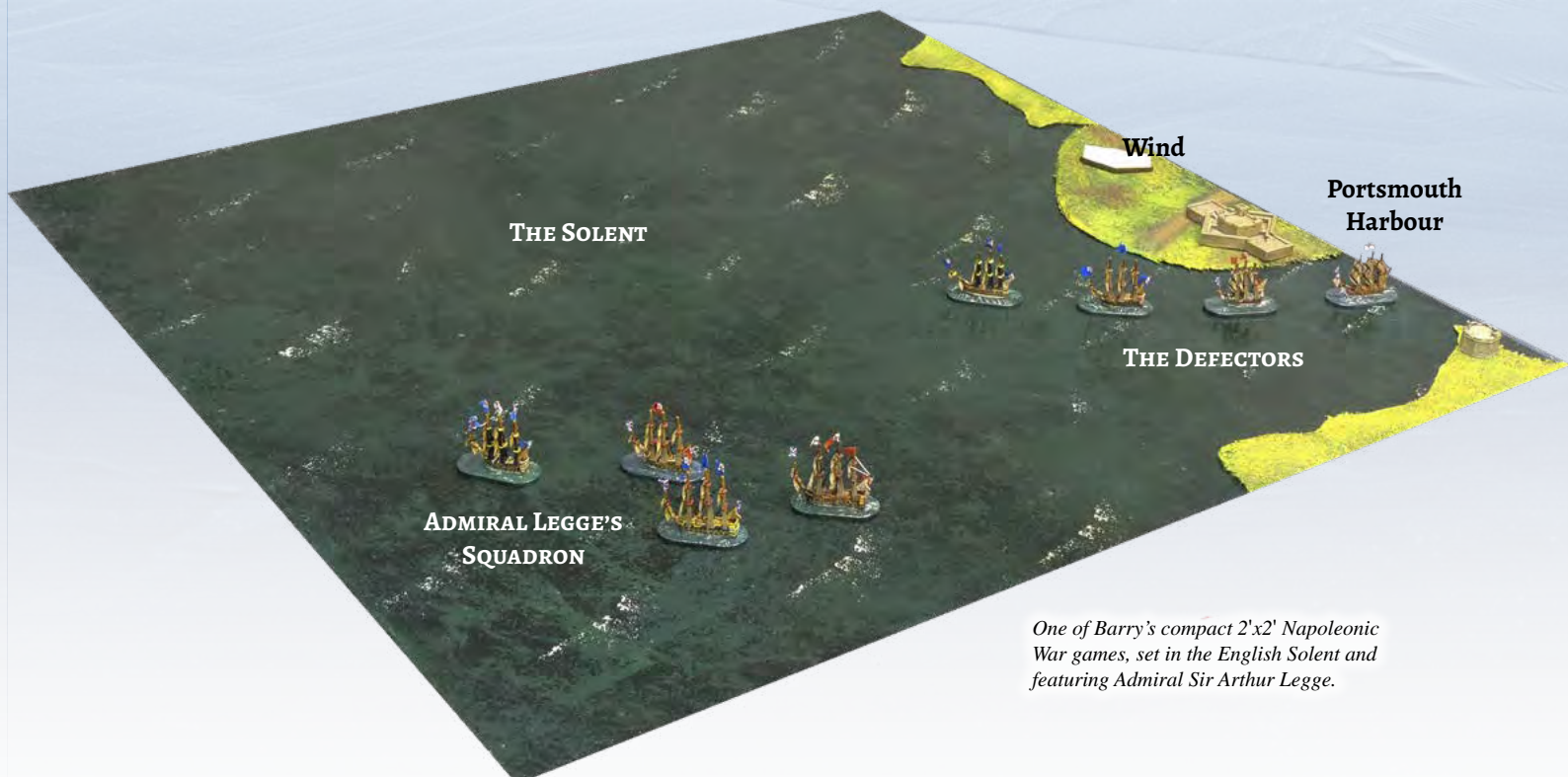
One of Barry's compact 2'x2' Napoleonic War games, set in the English Solent and featuring Admiral Sir Arthur Legge.

SCENARIOS

I began to document the scenarios I discovered in a format that could be shared with other interested gamers. These became the 4Play range, which already has over thirty published scenarios, all on themed campaigns, with a further boatload being released in batches. There are endless possibilities for games involving ships of every size in every location. Do your own research and be astonished. If the story of five New England pirate sloops pulling off the capture of an 80-gun behemoth in a Red Sea ambush and netting the equivalent of millions of dollars is not exciting enough, try a 1,000-gun duel between two static lines of ships at a distance of 250 yards in a Norwegian harbour. The prize was half a billion dollars worth of treasure aboard the sheltering Dutch fleet. Actually, the more I write, the more it does sound like historo-fantasy.

Above: Battle of Livorno, 1653.

RESOURCES

Above: Artwork by Arnold de Lange, Passage of Musselbank, 1667.

Finding resources was a little like the scrounge around I had when I first became interested in late 17th Century land warfare; but once you get your eye in, it becomes far easier. At no cost, make your first stop threedecks.org. This site is not restricted to the 17th Century and is a goldmine to which you will return repeatedly. Books by Helion in the *Century of the Soldier* series are good. Titles from Seaforth Publishing by authors such as Rif Winfield, Stephen Roberts, and James Bender are reference staples. Excellent authors such as Frank L. Fox, JD Davies, and Simon Harris all provide factual fodder about ships, campaigns, and commanders. Wikipedia has an enormous amount of data on naval warfare of the period; so without spending a penny, you can accrue a substantial amount of useful data and (critically), pictures, prints, and maps.
I thoroughly recommend the naval art of two outstanding modern Dutch painters - Jan de Quelery and Arnold de Lange - who both produce copious amounts of amazing and evocative work focused on ships and battles of the period, which you can ogle at online for free. The emphasis not surprisingly is on the Golden Age of Dutch naval achievement, 1630 - 1678.

MODELLING THE WATER AND TERRAIN

Below: Artwork by Jan de Quelery, Four Days Battle, 1666.

Most battles of the period took place very close to land, and having some on the wargames table breaks the monotony of a sterile blue cloth, although many of the naval gaming mats now available are very attractive. I build my own seaboards from MDF. You can find out how to do that here: leagueofaugsburg.blogspot. com/2020/02/sea-what-i-mean. I recommend placing some land features - such as coastline, islands, sandbanks, or a river estuary - where you can. A comment from a player during my participation game on the Medway at Partizan recently indicated that, far from being restrictive, a naval action in a river setting made the game even more interesting because of the navigation challenges, risk of collision, closeness to shore batteries, and other hazards. There are plenty of terrain companies providing good products for naval gaming: Brigade Models offer excellent 2mm buildings, Irregular Miniatures have buildings and accessories, and Amera Plastic mouldings sell some super islands.

HOW DO YOU EAT AN ELEPHANT?

Buy a couple of ships, use some of the 2D overhead plan views supplied in *Mad for War Essentials,* or download some for free from the web. Eat this naval elephant in small pieces; don't attempt to refight Lepanto or Lowestoft as your first nautical adventure. Move a couple of frigates around on the dining room table and throw a few dice. Don't attempt to rig *Sovereign of the Seas* in 1/1200 before playing a game; buy a couple of small-scale ships, paint them with Contrast paints, then glue them to Warbases MDF bases. That is a good investment of three hours. As a top tip, I have found that some of the resin sea scape bases offered by manufacturers are very soft and tend to curl in an unsightly way. This explains my choice of a more rigid MDF alternative. A game with a single ship on each side will keep you and a mate happy for an hour or so. Two or three ships a side might last for two hours, and you may never have to buy anything else. It is a very economical gaming genre unless you tilt at it like an idiot as I have done. Use scenarios with attached conditions and don't simply try and fight each other to destruction (which is actually fun too!). The addition of coastlines, rivers, islands, sandbanks, and reefs make the gaming even more interesting and create more to catch the eye. Another top tip is to get the games going early even if you only have one or two ships per side - the enjoyment will stimulate more painting, and the squadrons and eventually fleets will build as you go. Part of the romance of the period is the use of characters, and there are plenty to choose from. Whether you recreate the adventures of the vagabond Prince Rupert, bedevil the Spanish Main as Henry Morgan, terrorize the North Sea

Above: Dutch squadron, 1652.

HEADING INTO DEEPER WATERS

When done with the 17th Century, why not consider heading further back in time to game the most famous naval battle of the 16th Century; Lepanto, 1571, fought between the Holy League (a coalition of Catholic states) and the Ottoman Empire. Or how about pushing Triremes and galleys around the table playing Ancients.

Check out Ark Royal's range of 1/1200 models for both of those periods at leagueofaugsburg.com.

Right: Venetian Lanterna.

as Jean Bart, or run rings around the English as Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter, you will ask yourself why you did not discover this wonderful wargaming opportunity before.

Three compact scenarios illustrate the breadth of opportunity. All are based on historical actions.

SCENARIO ONE: STARTING A WAR! (19 May 1652, First Anglo-Dutch War)

As a Dutch fleet lay off Dover, its admiral, Maarten Tromp, ordered his musketeers to conduct firing practice in full view of the English coast. Having already refused English orders to lower his flag in deference to their ships, warning shots were fired across his bows by Robert Blake's flagship *James*. One of these warning balls hit Tromp's *Brederode,* and he responded with a full broadside that started the First Anglo-Dutch War. Yes, a war started through a game of chicken! A running fight that sucked in various ships from both fleets, and became known as the Battle of Dover or the Goodwin Sands, ensued.

On the tabletop

This scenario is a great way to enter the world of 17th Century naval gaming as it is a duel between two equally matched flagships. Tromp's 54-gun *Brederode* is very slightly larger than its opponent. Its crew should be classed as veteran - the term used in *Mad for War* is Salts. It should have marines or soldiers aboard, and Tromp should be rated as a more experienced commander than his opponent. Robert Blake is the English fleet commander or General at Sea. His 48-gun flagship is *James*. It should also have soldiers aboard. Class the English crew as veterans too. If your chosen set of rules allows, give the English ship heavier guns and make it slightly slower. This scenario is a duel, and it's won when one ship breaks off or strikes its colours, or an admiral is wounded or killed. To add a little spice as a pre-game sharpener, have a roll-off to see who fires the first broadside with the other having no opportunity to return fire. I have played this game many times and umpired it many more. Honours are about even. The recommended table size for 1/1200 or 1/2400 is 2'x2'.
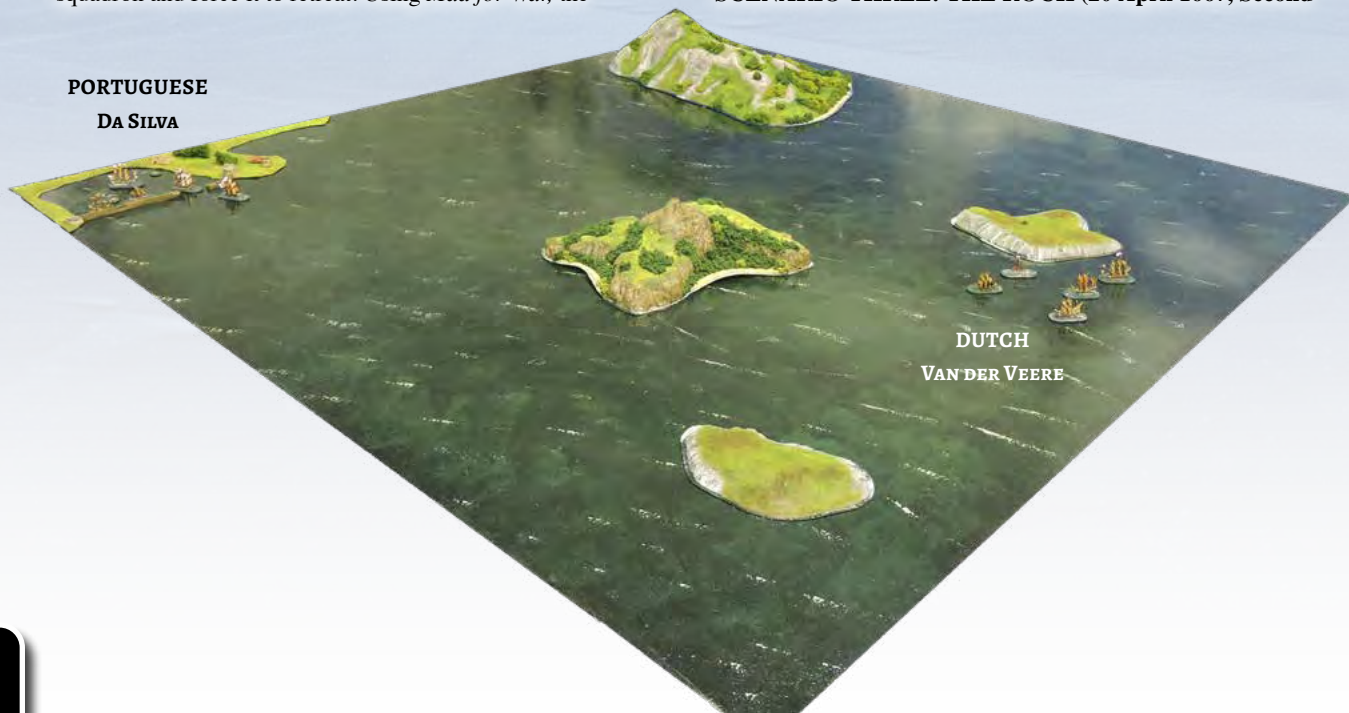
SCENARIO TWO: SPICE (2 July 1636)

Dutch *Watergeuzen* (Sea Beggars) continue to seek revenue sources to prosecute their war of independence from Spain and take ships, cargo, and crews wherever they can. A particularly lucrative opportunity is presented by the Portuguese colonies on the west coast of India. A small squadron of itinerant Dutch ships threatens Portuguese trading posts in Goa, provoking the local governor to send out his convoyers to chase off the impudent heretics.

On the tabletop

Five Dutch ships of various sizes face three larger Portuguese vessels. The objective is to break the morale of the enemy squadron and force it to retreat. Using *Mad for War,* the

Portuguese check morale after the loss of one ship and the Dutch after the loss of two. This scenario is an encounter action complicated by islands and the risk of grounding. Dutch ships should be less likely to ground in the shallows compared to their opponents. Soldier contingents are allowed, but if used, should be given to both sides and perhaps not on every vessel. All Portuguese crews are veteran. The Dutch flagship has a veteran crew, and the others have the equivalent of drilled or trained - *Mad for War* calls these Able. All the Dutch ships apart from the flagship have lighter calibre guns. *Mad for War* calls for hit rethrows at longer ranges with this type of ordnance. The Portuguese ships and Dutch flagship have what are called middling guns in *Mad for War,* which is the default calibre.

Dutch ships: *Haarlem* 40 guns (flagship), *Zierikzee* 30 guns, *Franicker* 24 guns, *Bredamme* 20 guns, and *Valckenburch* 8 guns.

Portuguese ships: *Santissimo Sacramento* 46 guns (flagship), *Nossa Senhora de Conceiçao do Porto* 38 guns, and *Santa Catarina* 28 guns.

The recommended table size for 1/1200 or 1/2400 is 4'x4'.

SCENARIO THREE: THE ROCK (20 April 1667, Second

PORTUGUESE
Da Silva

DUTCH
Van der Veere

Anglo-Dutch War)

During the Second Anglo-Dutch War, this time between the Dutch Republic and Restoration England, the North Sea was infested with hundreds of Scottish privateers operating out of the Firth of Forth and Fife. So many letters of marque were issued in Scotland that the plague on commercial shipping was of biblical proportions, with Danish, Dutch, German, and Swedish vessels being taken weekly and processed through ports such as Leith. The Dutch were so infuriated by these activities that they began counter-raiding the east coast of Britain and attacking towns and villages. A punitive foray into the Firth in 1667 even resulted in an aborted fireship attack on the harbour of Burntisland in Fife.

On the tabletop

This scenario sees a powerful Dutch cruiser squadron attempt to break into the estuary in search of prey. As it passes the iconic Bass Rock off the coast of East Lothian, the only resistance is offered by a couple of the infamous privateers who attempt to hold up the enemy until the arrival of more powerful Royal Navy ships based out of Leith (Edinburgh's port). The Dutch must have two operational ships at point Z (entrance to the Firth) to win. The Scots/English must hold them beyond this point to win. This scenario is an interception and potential chase, with the initially inferior wicket-keepers having to work hard until their back up arrives. The Dutch have a long way to travel and need to stay mobile. These cruisers, often known at the time as frigates, were the workhorses of the navy, carrying between 30 and 60 guns. *Mad of War* allows for characters aboard ships that influence manoeuvre, reloading, morale checks, and other important aspects of gameplay. The Dutch ships should have a sprinkling of such characters if your chosen rule system provisions for that.

The ships are: *Vrijheid* 56 guns (flagship), *Wakende Boei* 48 guns, *Hollandia* 40 guns, and *Harderwijk* 28 guns. All Dutch crews are Salts except *Wakende Boei,* whose crew is Able. All have middling guns except *Harderwijk,* which has light. All ships have marines aboard. Two ships are on table at the beginning of the scenario. For the arrival of the other two throw a dAV for each and bring them on at point X on the appropriate turn.

The Scottish privateer ships are all between the size of a brig and a small merchant, so choose suitable models. All have light guns. All have the equivalent of privateer/pirate crews aboard, which should provide superior combat performance, or as good as the Dutch marines. All crews are Able except that of *Rothes,* which is of Salts quality. One privateer may lie hidden and anchored behind the Bass Rock. It can activate when desired or if spotted. The Two English ships arrive at point Y using the same principles as the arrival of the Dutch ships.

The privateers are: *Anthony* 22 guns, *Rothes* 16 guns, *Lamb* 14 guns, and *Bruce* 12 guns. The Royal Navy flagship is *York* of 56 guns, Salts crew, and carrying marines and a couple of characters. The lighter RN Ship is *Providence* of 30 guns with an Able crew. Both have middling guns.

The recommended table size for 1/1200 or 1/2400 is 4'x4'.

Mad for War uses a points system, and the forces in each scenario are of equal points, although that number varies across all three scenarios.
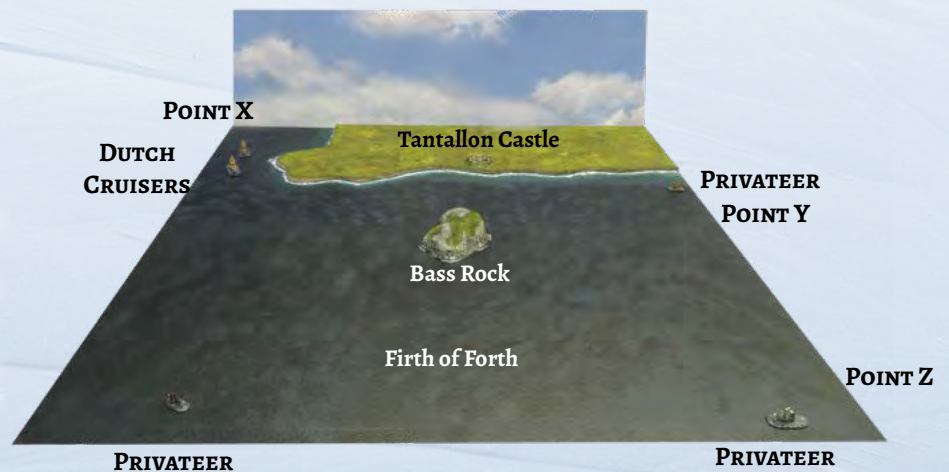
If that hasn't 'wet' your appetite for 17th Century naval wargaming then it's an eternity of fixing rigging to 1/2400 ships for you until you rethink your terrible wargaming life choices!

I will no doubt be back in a future issue of *Wi* with more naval adventures and hopefully you'll be ready to join me for a dip!

VIET CONG SHOWCASE

Painter Aimee Joesbury showcases a Gringo 40's Viet Cong force - her first historical skirmish minis.

Until the beginning of 2021, I had scant experience with historical wargaming. I had been painting and playing with science fiction and fantasy miniatures since the early '90s, but back when I was a teenager, historical always seemed too much like homework to catch my attention. Over the years, my aversion to learning history faded, but somehow, I never connected my growing interest with miniatures.

A commission changed that when a friend hired me to paint a Soviet *Bolt Action* army. I got my first real experience building and painting historical miniatures and was wowed by the meticulously detailed weapon options and the variety of troop kits available. The process of researching real-life forces through photographs and texts to create a blend of historical realism and artistic flair on miniatures really struck a chord with me.

I took on more historical commissions, including some of the display models for Bad Squiddo's fantastic selection of Soviet women; I dabbled with feudal Korean warriors and Napoleonic infantry for clients, but I still didn't own a historical force of my own. It was high time to change that!

Bad Squiddo miniatures painted by Aimee: The Serenade (top), Soviet Dancer (right), and Soviet Sappers: Dzulbhars and Dina (left).

STEPPING INTO HISTORICAL WARGAMING

The obvious port of call for my first ever personal historical force was World War Two. I had a level of familiarity with the models available and a fair amount of knowledge of the period, but I ruled it out because I wanted to explore something relatively new to me. This would allow me to learn more of the setting and conflict as I went. I still wanted to explore a modern conflict as there would be plenty of reference material on hand to work from and less chance to make any glaring anachronisms.

While playing the team-based first-person shooter video game *Rising Storm 2: Vietnam,* I really enjoyed the play style of the Vietnamese defenders; true to their real-life counterparts, they lacked the military might of the American invaders, relying on stealth and knowledge of the land to achieve victory. This is represented in-game by a mechanic of squad leaders placing 'tunnels' for players to spawn at, allowing the home team to constantly outmanoeuvre their opponents. This mechanic, together with the ability to construct traps around the battlefield, combined to give a compelling play experience that felt thematic and fun; I couldn't help but think about how well this could translate to the tabletop, and that was all the kindling needed to get this project fired up. I would build a force suitable for skirmish scale gaming set in the Vietnam war.

I didn't immediately have rules in mind to represent the kind of cinematic, stealth-based game that I pictured, but I did very quickly find some minis that I fell in love with. Gringo 40's has a fantastic range of 28mm miniatures for various factions in the conflict, and I was eager to order a handful and paint them. To narrow my choice, I decided to go with a ragtag Viet Cong squad of guerrillas rather than the better-organised North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

I wanted a diverse mix of different roles, and this range delivered. From the half-naked sappers crawling on the ground to check for explosives (while planting some of their own), to the distinctive radio operator, and the medic helping a wounded comrade away from the combat, I really felt like this range captured some of those small moments of action that I'd experienced playing *Rising Storm 2*, and I couldn't wait to begin painting them!

Above: VC from the video game Rising Storm 2: Vietnam.

PAINTING THE VC

To me skirmish forces are the 'just right' porridge of miniature painting. You can spend a little extra time drawing out some personality from your models, but you can be a little less meticulous about fixing your mistakes than you would be on a one-off display model. I want to share some of the things I found useful when painting this group of figures:

FIND YOUR FOCUS

To create a cohesive but characterful skirmish force like my Viet Cong, I think it's a good idea to pick a prominent feature that is shared by the minis and put the most effort into it. An obvious choice with the VC was the skin, and I added a lot of detail and volume to it across the figures.

If a model is heavily armoured, you could push your non-metallic metal techniques; if it is wearing heavy clothing, it is a chance to practice texturing fabric. By zoning in on an area like this, you'll quickly take a group of miniatures to the next level; the feature you pick will unify the look on the tabletop, and you'll develop your painting abilities.

If you can't work out what area to focus on, then you can't go too far wrong with spending your extra time on the faces of your model as they are always a focal point.

BEAUTY IN SIMPLICITY

I kept the clothing, packs, and straps simple. Although the real-life Viet Cong tended to wear whatever clothes they had available, I opted to narrow this down to three colours: a deep blue-black for the trademark black pyjamas, a standard olive green for the fatigues, and the rest picked out in tan. Most of the highlights on these were made by mixing my lighter skin colours into the basecolours of the fabric elements; this use of repeated tones helps tie the colour scheme together and keeps your palette small.

Above: By keeping clothing simple, the skin (and the extra effort given to it) really stands out.

Above: The bare skin on this sapper with bangalore has a broad range of skin tones.

Although they all have similarly painted clothing and kit, there's a lot of individuality to these figures.

MAKE THE METALS POP

The weapons were the items that I had the most extensive reference material for on hand, and with iconic weapons such as AK-47s and an RPG-7, I had no problem painting them. These sculpts don't have the best-defined detail on the guns, so I didn't do anything fancy, but they were satisfying to paint in metallics of varying brightness. The orange-brown on the wooden stocks re-used some of the flesh tones in the mix, once again tying the models' different areas together.

The AK47, RPD LMG, and Mosin-Nagant rifle all show the metallic contrast and wood grain detailing.

DETAILS AS A FINAL TREAT

Something you don't always get the chance to do when painting a larger army is to pick out areas of detail and give them some love. On a skirmish force, you can take extra time on each miniature and bring individual character to the combatants. I defined the black-and-white plaid neckerchiefs with some simple freehand 'squares'; although with sculpts like these, you only need to suggest the presence of the check pattern. A touch of texture was given to the straw hats by highlighting up with a series of intersecting lines, again implying a texture rather than fully creating it. These details don't need to be much, but they will be spotted by anyone who takes a closer look at your models.

Above: This female VC firing an RPG7 has enhanced straw texture on her nón lá.

Above: This wounded VC has some fine detail on her neckerchief to add some visual interest.

Right: This AK47 armed VC in simple civilian dress is enhanced with necktie detail and interesting skin tones as well as foliage on the base.

Left: Female radio operator with ChiCom Type 63 Radio and wearing a bush hat.

Right: A sapper planting a claymore mine. This mostly bare-skinned figure is a great opportunity to show off some skin detail.

Above: A sniper armed with a Moisin-Nagant rifle lines up a shot.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SKIN TONES

Although I try to apply a mix of skin colours on models where I can, I didn't have a lot of experience painting southeast Asian skin, and I think Asian skin tones in general are somewhat overlooked when it comes to painting minis. To try and get something that looked convincing, I sat down and prepared myself a palette of paint colours and mixes before putting my brush to the figures.

1
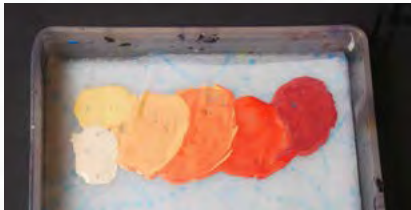
When you're not sure how to paint something, a helpful technique can be sorting out your colours beforehand; in this case, I downloaded images of the faces of people from the region and used a digital design package's colour selector tool to highlight the colours found in the high, mid, and low areas of the faces. This gave me a selection of tones to choose from and reproduce on my palette.

I mixed up the palette (pictured) based on my perception of the colours highlighted on screen. The mid to dark tones I picked are like the tones we might use for Caucasian flesh but lean more towards orange-brown than pink or mauve. The higher tones use a rich golden flesh tone, with the final highlight going up to off-white.

2

Base tones are warm browns. Remember to keep your darker tones only in the deepest recesses as you start to layer up, especially on models with lighter skin tones. If you don't, the lines can end up looking too harsh, and this skin wants a relatively smooth and realistic gradient.

3

As I highlighted up through the mid tones, I used brick-orange softened with a Caucasian mid-tone to lay the foundation for a deep amber tan. At this point, you still want to be layering over a majority of the basecoat on lighter skinned models, whereas for those with darker skin you can be a bit more sparing with your highlights. Try to keep in mind the individual volumes of the miniature when highlighting like this and pay attention to where light falls. Photo references can always help here.

4

The top highlights are golden skin tones going up to a pale off-white. Again, go much heavier on your highlights if you want to make a model lighter skinned; if they're darker skinned, you can save these tones for only the most prominent spot highlights.

5

To add some depth and life to skin, you should always apply some extra colour to reflect the translucency of real skin. I glazed some Caspian Blue into the shadows, particularly on areas that wouldn't receive direct light such as under the chin and beneath the cheekbones. I also used a bit of fuschia to add colour to lips and cheeks and any other areas of skin that would have a more flushed tone. Be careful not to overdo these as you're trying to simulate real variations in skin colour and not nightclub makeup!

**PAINTS USED
(ALL BY SCALE75)**

• Fantasy & Games Shrapnel Red

• Scalecolor Kalahari Orange

• Scalecolor Pink Flesh

• Scalecolor Golden Flesh

• Scalecolor Light Skin

• Scalecolor Pale Skin

• Scalecolor Fuschia

• Scalecolor Caspian Blue

CREATING A JUNGLE ENVIRONMENT

I wanted to place the figures in a suitable looking environment - something that can be done via basing, and this was a great chance to use some Gamers Grass laser-cut plants *Wargames Illustrated* donated to me from their stash of basing kit. [The lack of apostrophe in the Gamers Grass company name will forever frustrate us when we proofread the magazine! - Ed]

I got some elephant ear, bracken, and dry bracken, but there are many other types available. Sets such as monstera and banana tree would be particularly suited to Vietnam jungle bases. I used some clump foliage and scatter from Army Painter as well. Here's a step-by-step of the basing process.

1

Apply glue to your chosen base. Superglue is preferable as it will 'fill' the step up from the round plastic base to the cast metal base edge.

2

Dip the figure into sand to add texture. You can also add larger rubble pieces.

3

Paint the base in a muddy brown. I went on to then stain it with a wash of darker brown.

4

Choose your laser-cut foliage…

5

… and carefully pop it from the sheets.

6

Rather than use the flat plants, add folds to the centre lines and individual branches of the leaves to create a more natural look.

7

Add in extra clump and scatter foliage to your selection of basing options. Army Painter Jungle Tuft and Lowland Scrubs are included here.

8

Glue the elements to the base and take care to place them as naturally as you can. Superglue will fix the plants firmly in place, but it's worth using other scatter to hide some of the joins.

Above: A bundle of foamy scatter has been placed under this large piece of bracken to help it stand up from the ground. This adds some extra verticality to the basing and is a handy way to prop up any 'limp' plants.

NEXT STEPS

Having painted up my motley band of guerrillas, I feel happy with the result! I'm particularly pleased with the skin tones, although I feel I could have sold the directional shading a bit better on some of the clothes. Overall though, these minis are well suited for purpose.

I have some plans to create some terrain for my Viet Cong, and having painted them all up and handled them a fair bit, I think I will eventually get around to attaching the remaining prone figures to bases. For all the things I love about metal models, one thing they often suffer is paint chipping and rubbing off, no matter how many coats of acrylic varnish you use. Using a base to pick up your minis can save a lot of wear and tear, so I'll have to work out the best way for the prone figures to be based and make a small tree stump or a crate for the seated one to be placed on.

Since I don't know anyone with a Vietnam force, I'd like to paint up a US force for my next step, so when I eventually game with these, my opponent has some minis to play with! I think for the US side I should really go all in on drawing inspiration from Vietnam war movies, so I'm planning a viewing marathon soon. Gringo 40's has some fantastic models representing that side too, so I'll be ordering more!

After I've done that, I'd love to make a small board that's suitable for skirmish games. Since I was inspired by the beautiful maps in *Rising Storm 2* as much as I was by the combat, it's only fitting I make a thematic board to play on that also doubles as a backdrop for photographing my miniatures.

Finally, I need to keep on the lookout for some suitable rules that will allow me to play games; a lot of the other Vietnam-based tabletop games I could find were designed for smaller scale; so unless I can find something that plays how I want, I may have to either adapt or create some rules that are fit for purpose.

Overall, this has been a fantastic project and a great way to get into historical wargaming; I'm already busy painting more figures!

Above: A work-in-progress preview of one of the Gringo 40's US Marines Aimee is currently painting.

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Unit W41, Lenton Business Centre, Lenton Boulevard, Nottingham,
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DAWN OF IRON(CLADS)

Wi Painter Callum heads into unknown waters, paints his first ever American
Civil War figures -1/600 Peter Pig ships - and shares what he learned along the way.

The themes for each issue of *Wargames Illustrated* result in a variety of projects making their way onto my painting bench; some of them are in my comfort zone, but others - such as these 1/600 Peter Pig Union and Confederate ships - are completely new to me.

With *Dawn of Iron* reviewed in Observation Post this issue (see page 14) Editor Dan sent four ships my way and told me to get them ready for gaming. These are just a few of the myriad vessels that took part in the naval battles between the Union and the Confederacy, and I wanted to provide a guide that could be useful on any ACW (and beyond) ships, not just these ones.

In this article, I'll show you how I used the same simple but effective techniques to get the Union's *USS Choctaw* and *USS Benton*, and the Confederacy's *CSS Albemarle* and *CSS Arkansas* painted. I'll also confess to a slight error [let's call it a learning experience - Ed] I made along the way, so you don't do the same!

PREPARING THE PARTS

The main parts of these models are hefty chunks of resin, so crack out your dish soap and old toothbrush, give these beauties a dip, and clean them in some warm, soapy water. Avoid water that is too hot as it may make the resin soft and result in misshapen ships.

I leave mine to dry on some clean kitchen roll for around an hour and finish any difficult to reach areas with my hairdryer on a gentle setting after that.

I primed the ships with Colour Forge's Ghoul Grey rattlecan spray. Resin is notorious for paint rubbing off, so leave your primer for at least 20 minutes, ideally an hour or longer, before touching and painting the model. This ensures the best adhesion of paint. If you use an airbrush primer, such as Vallejo surface primer, then at least 24 hours to dry is essential; this allows the sprayed primer to go from rubbery and vulnerable to incredibly tough.


Above: The finished Peter Pig ironclads on Sarissa TSS terrain.

BASECOATS

I started the paintjob by applying Citadel Steel Legion Drab - a dark, warmish beige - as a basecoat on the decks. I applied this with my airbrush for speed, but a standard brush would do the job. Next, I used Tamiya masking tape to block off painted sections of the deck that may get hit by overspray (right) and applied Scale75 Thrash Metal onto the relevant sections.

Any overspray onto the decking was neatened back up with Steel Legion Drab, and for the boats with white trim, I applied Citadel Corax White. I did this now so that later (when I would have to neaten that section) it would be quicker to touch up any splotches, rather than having to keep handling the finished model while establishing a solid white.
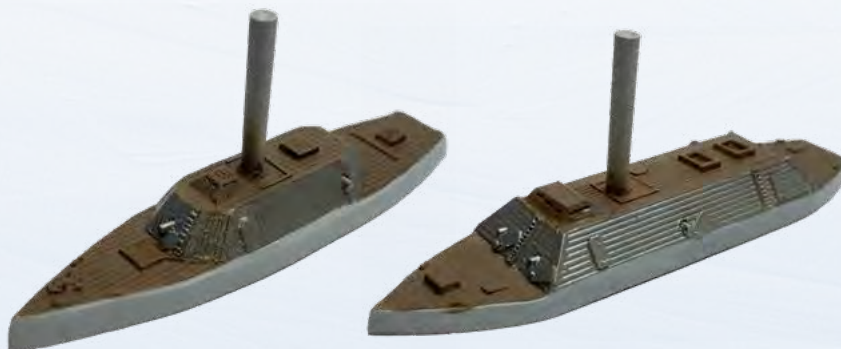
TEXTURING THE DECKS

The next step was adding detail to the woodgrain with a technique that easily achieves texture and colour variation, elevating the quality of the model without much effort.

1) Ball up some foam - any will do, though I typically use the stuff that comes in blister packaging, or the extras you get with army carry cases - and dab it into some of your chosen paint, then dab away the excess onto a piece of paper. Keep dabbing until only a few random speckles are applied with each press, as seen at the end here. This is when you can start lightly 'stabbing' the sponge at your model.

2) My first colour was Citadel Mournfang Brown - a reddy-brown that would add some warmth to the wood. Don't worry about applying too much at this stage; a lot of this colour will be covered by later layers.

3) Next, I used Citadel XV-88 - a yellow-ochre colour that contrasts with the subtle red of Mournfang Brown. Apply this paint more gently, ensuring the speckles are sparser.
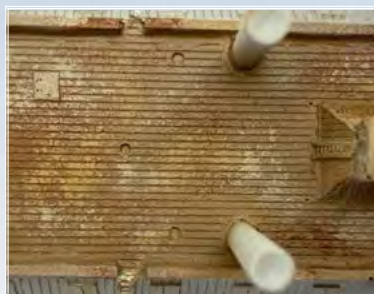
4) The next colour was Citadel Baneblade Brown, but you could also mix a lighter cream colour into your base deck paint. Try to focus these lighter speckles on open areas that would be sun-bleached, and use this stage to soft highlight edges too.

5) The penultimate step was Citadel Rakarth Flesh - a very pale-beige. I used this colour to push the contrast on the previous step's speckles, focusing on the centre of the highlighted sections, and catching the sharpest edges

6) Finally, I used Citadel's Screaming Skull - a very pale bone colour. This was a spot colour, very minimally speckled in random spots to give the impression of wood grain (or bird poop, depending on your perspective!) Don't worry about all these colours looking too stark, the next step will knock them back and tone them all together.

7) I mixed Citadel Agrax Earthshade and Seraphim Sepia in a 1:1 ratio, then added some medium into that mixture in another 1:1 ratio. This thinned wash was applied liberally all over the decking, making sure that any pooling was dabbed away with a damp brush. Give the wash around 30 minutes to dry and your wood is complete.

THINNING WITH MEDIUM

You'll often see me suggest thinning washes with medium instead of water in my guides. I do this because when I thin with medium, the wash doesn't lose any of its properties, it just gets more diluted. If we thinned with water, we would make the wash much runnier, and the actual pigment in the wash might separate from the water, leaving tide marks.

GRIMING UP YOUR METALS

With the wood looking suitably textured, it was time to add interest to the metals. Rather than sponge on texture, I wanted to keep the metal relatively smooth but add depth and tonal shifts.

Scale75 Thrash Metal was mixed with a little black and added over the metals (as seen in step 7 of the deck painting above) to tidy everything up. Having the previous metallic layer down made this step nice and quick, and because Scale75's paints have really fine metallic pigments, you can easily mix them with standard miniature paints to tint them.

The next step to add depth was to wash the metallics with Citadel Nuln Oil thinned with some medium in a 1:1 ratio, and the final result is shown below.

QUICK CLEAN LINES

Once the white was dry on the *CSS Albermarle*, I returned to my trusty Tamiya masking tape and carefully applied a strip along the bottom of the hull, leaving a space above. Gently running the back of my fingernail along the seam ensured it adhered fully.

I stippled Citadel Khorne Red - a slightly desaturated red - onto the space above the mask and once dry peeled away the mask and tidied up any areas the red had bled into under the mask.

FINISHING THE SHIPS

After all the weathering, some spill over of paint onto other areas is inevitable; you'll need to clean up parts such as the white hulls that were painted initially. I also painted some of the edge elements of the larger two vessels black. These models have some 'softness' of detail at these points, and rather than trouble myself with working out the breaks between metallic and non-metallic parts, I applied this simple finish to what is essentially the 'rim' of the model. I decided that this was a little too plain and stark once I'd completed the figures and did some final tweaks - see 'Is a figure ever fully finished?' at the end of this article.

Highlighting the metallics

Scale75 Heavy Metal, applied as a sharp, selective highlight, accentuates the shape of the ships' key areas. We're not trying to highlight every single metal panel here, just the more obvious ones to catch the eye.

You could elect to selectively drybrush if you want to go even faster, but this is a good time to spend a little more effort and time to really add visual punch to the models.

Rolling around like a Peter Pig in pigment

The final step is a fun one and might just be the star of the show - applying Vallejo pigments. I used Smoke Black, Old Rust, and a worn-out brush (pigments will wreck any good quality brush) to add a refined hint of texture, transition, and weathering to areas of the ships.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Pigments will react to the oils in your skin, and through that oil they will bind rather stubbornly to the model you are working on. That means that pressing your finger against some freshly applied pigment before it has been sealed will result in your fingerprint forever etched in place. If this appeals as a 'signature' of sorts then by all means go for it, but otherwise, be very delicate and careful about where you touch the figure, or wear a pair of clean gloves when applying pigments.
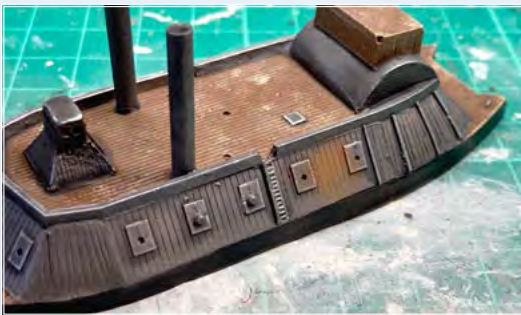
1) By lightly loading your old brush with pigment (I started with Old Rust) and gently applying it in a small circle on various open spaces, you can create smooth transitions of tone. The joy of using pigments is the control; if you put too much on, simply blow it off and reapply, or use another brush to dust it off (a makeup powder applicator is great for this). The first approach will make for smooth transitions, while the later will leave the rust in recesses while the top surface is clearer. A mix of both can create great looking weathered metal.

3) For the soot on the end of the smokestacks, I mixed Smoke Black pigment with water to help it stick to the curved surface, slapping it rather haphazardly onto the end of each of the stacks.

2) Once I was happy with the flat areas, I dragged my brush along edges so that the rust would catch in the recess. Although I didn't use the approach here, you can also mix pigments with water to fill the recesses of a model. Once the water evaporates, it will leave subtle pigment residue in those recesses.

Some people like to use Isopropanol or specific products to seal the pigment; this is recommended if you will do a lot more work on your figures, but I wouldn't be handling the ships for much longer before varnishing, so I skipped this step.

4) Don't worry about the abrupt transitions; give it some time for the water to evaporate, then with a dry brush, gently flick vertically at the bottom of the pigment to dust some of it away. If you go too far and remove too much, simply repeat the process until you are happy.

The very final step is to thoroughly varnish the models with a particular focus on the areas containing pigments. Try not to spray too closely to the model as you might end up blowing some of the pigment away! Several thin layers from around 25cm away should do the trick. I used Citadel Munitorum Varnish, which has a satin finish, but you could use any of your favourites, and application through an airbrush will aid control.

IS A FIGURE EVER FULLY FINISHED?

Responding to an expert

A final change I hadn't expected to make was snapping the smokestacks off each ship! My lack of ACW naval knowledge meant I glued the metal smokestacks to the resin ships as they came in each pack. As soon as Editor Dan saw my finished work, he spotted the error I'd made and pointed my attention to Peter Pig's website. Each ship has a short note next to it describing the length that the stacks needed to be cut down to. Curses!

This meant that I had to remove each smokestack, trim it down (at the base so as not to damage the top with its pigment soot effect), fix it back in place, then tidy up the surrounding area.

That's an error I won't make again and, hopefully, none of you will make because I've shamelessly shared my mistake (and the way I fixed it) here!

1 - The ships with their stacks removed.
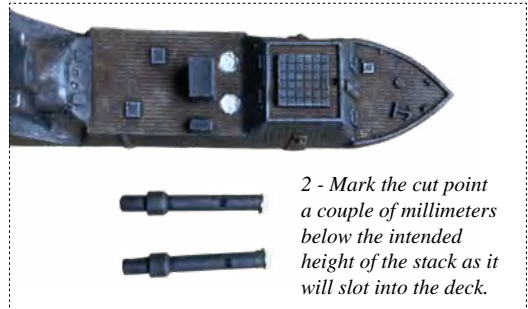
2 - Mark the cut point a couple of millimeters below the intended height of the stack as it will slot into the deck.

3 - Use clippers to cut off the excess.

4 - Superglue the stacks in place taking care to match the final level.

5 - Use a paint such as Army Painter Speed Paint Dark Wood to touch up any places paint has been damaged.

Spotting an opportunity for more

With my four ships 'completed', I couldn't help but feel that there was something missing. The more I looked at them, their hulls, which I'd left very blank, felt like they needed something extra. I could have gone in with the airbrush to add smooth highlights, but I decided to stay true to the textural and weathered approach and add a gritty look.

Using my trusty sponge, I applied Citadel Mournfang Brown to each ship's hull, focusing it on the edges and waterline areas where chipping could happen. This red-brown made for a somewhat rusted look and broke up the flat areas nicely but looked a little stark, so I toned it back by sponging on the hull basecoats (black and off-white) followed by sponged 'highlights' over that in grey and pure white. Final quick brushwork finished things off.

AND DONE!

There you have it - four ACW ships of different sizes and styles completed in no time at all, ready for a game of *Dawn of Iron*! I think the application of these simple techniques makes for some good-looking figures, and now that I've popped my Civil War cherry, I'll need to work out where to go next in the vast sprawl of options. Perhaps I'll add to these figures with more of Peter Pig's oddly charming and eclectic vessels!

1) CSS Arkansas
2) CSS Albemarle
3) USS Benton
4) USS Choctaw

ARABIAN NIGHTMARES

HISTORICAL-FANTASY GHOULS FOR RAMPANT GAMES

Rampant rules author Gianluca Raccagni delves into classic Arabian folklore to bring some 'historical-fantasy' figures to the tabletop.

ARABIAN NIGHTS VS MODERN FICTION

The ghoul is an icon of horror fiction that was introduced to Europe with the *Arabian Nights* (also known as *One Thousand and One Nights*) in the 18th Century. However, the ghouls of the *Arabian Nights* are very different from those of modern mainstream fiction and tabletop games.

This article explores those *Arabian Nights* ghouls and makes suggestions on how to gamify them. It is not a critique of mainstream ghouls, which are just one of the many evolutions that the ghoul underwent through the centuries and the countries that adopted it. Rather, this is an occasion to consider a less familiar ghoul and to wargame the *Arabian Nights* and Middle Eastern folklore. There is limited consistency about ghouls in the *Arabian Nights* itself, which is a very loose collection of tales from the medieval Islamic world with plenty of influences from pre-Islamic and non-Islamic cultures too.

I have called them historical-fantasy ghouls for several reasons. One is simply that the *Arabian Nights* is fiction produced in the distant past. Another one is that I suggest using these ghouls for scenarios that mix history, and the real world, with fantastical elements. That, after all, is the broad genre of the *Arabian Nights* itself, even if its 'fantasy level' can be quite high. I also suggest lowering that fantasy level in order to give an Arabian nightmarish (excuse the pun) touch to historical wargaming. What if the tales of the *Arabian Nights* contained a kernel of truth and unexpectedly came to life in the real world?
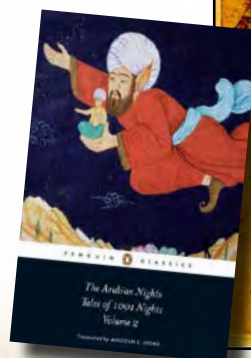
Above: Ghouls in literature.

Gaming-wise this article offers a crossover between *Lion Rampant* and *Dragon Rampant*. Its idea came when I co-wrote two expansions for *Lion Rampant* with Dan Mersey, both of which touch upon the Middle East. I was also inspired by the excellent Monster Man podcast (monsterman.libsyn.com) by James Holloway, who co-wrote *Lion Rampant: A Viking in the Sun*. While doing research to flesh out the bandits who fought Harald Hardrada in the Holy Land, I came across the pre-Islamic bandit poet Ta'abbata Sharran, whose name means 'he who has put evil in his armpit'. He was one of the founders of su'luk poetry, a kind of medieval Middle Eastern gangsta rap that represented the culture and values of brigands. The story goes that Ta'abbata Sharran captured a ram in the desert and took it to his camp, but during the journey it urinated on him and became heavier. When the bandit dropped it, it turned out to be a ghoul!

That was not the kind of ghoul I was familiar with. In modern fiction, ghouls are semi-bestial carrion-eating grave dwellers, or variations on that theme. Because of that, they are catalogued among the undead, despite being crude living humanoids or humans who became semi-bestial beings by eating the dead. They use rudimentary weapons or just their filthy claws.

Of the many ghouls featured in the *Arabian Nights,* only one has those characteristics, and it seems to have popped up when Antoine Galland popularised the *Arabian Nights* in Western Europe. Today Galland's work is not considered a translation as much as an adaptation, which embellished the *Arabian Nights* in ways that he considered appealing to Western audiences. That was probably the case with the grave-dwelling ghoul. It is at odds with the many other ghouls of the *Arabian Nights* and the cultures that produced them. It also appears in a tale of which no Arabic version survives.

That tale might have been influenced by vampire stories, and the latest editions of the *Arabian Nights* tend to exclude it.

Galland's *Arabian Nights* was incredibly popular, and its grave-dwelling ghoul became canon with the rise of Gothic fiction. The image of the ghoul as a degenerate human instead, was largely popularised by H. P. Lovecraft, who was interested in that kind of thing. Yet, as we shall see, some traces of that can perhaps be found in Sa'dan the ghoul of the *Arabian Nights*. Lovecraft knew his *Arabian Nights* very well!

However, it is easier to establish what pre-Galland ghouls do not look like than to provide a positive description. The ghoul originated in the pre-Islamic Middle East, possibly in ancient Mesopotamia. It then spread together with Arabic culture with the expansion of Islam. During that long journey across time and space, the ghoul acquired an inconsistent variety of characteristics, many of which are reflected in the *Arabian Nights*.

GHOULISH CHARACTERISTICS

The most common denominator of *Arabian Nights'* ghouls is that they eat human flesh, but they like it very fresh and sometimes even cooked! They also usually live in remote locations and are considered ferocious, scary, and ravenous: various humans are compared to ghouls in the *Arabian Nights* when they display those characteristics.

Ghouls can be solitary and malicious shapeshifting predators who lead travellers astray to devour them. In tale five of the *Arabian Nights*, a prince gets lost in the desert while pursuing a huge beast. When the beast vanishes,

Above: A modern artistic interpretation of a ghoul.

the prince encounters a weeping girl claiming to be an Indian princess who has lost her travelling companions. The prince takes her with him, but he then discovers that she is a ghoul who wished to feed him to her children hiding in nearby ruins. The prince then banishes the ghoul with a prayer. Shapeshifting ghouls are popular in folklore across the Muslim world, and in some accounts they cannot shapeshift their feet, which are cloven like those of asses and goats. Prayers are often used to banish ghouls; a bit like crosses ward off vampires.

Above: Ghoul riders from the author's collection, made with Games Workshop Ungor parts.

We find another solitary ghoul in *Sinbad the Sailor*'s third voyage, in which he undergoes an adventure that is reminiscent of the episode of Polyphemus from the *Odyssey*, but with a ghoul rather than a cyclops. The ghoul's (two) eyes are compared to coals on fire. It also has large canine teeth, huge ears, and claws like those of a lion. When Sinbad hits it with his swords, the ghoul challenges him to strike again, but an ally warns Sinbad that a second blow would regenerate the ghoul. Once again, that kind of regeneration appears in stories outside the *Arabian Nights* too.

Ghouls, however, can also fight in warbands, as in the tale of Prince Janshah. He is lost at sea with three mamelukes and lands on an island where feuding communities of apes and ghouls live. Those ghouls are described as large creatures with heads like those of cows and camels, but they can also ride horses, which means that they are not giants. The apes make Janshah their king, and he turns the tide of a battle with the ghouls, using his Mameluke archers. Despite there being only three of them, their arrows rout the ghouls. Archery is not in the ghouls' repertoire, and they seem to find it unsettling. They can hurl stones though. Ghouls with animal heads are mentioned in other sources too, from dogs to cats, goats, and hyenas.

Yet ghouls can mix with humans too, and even rule over them. In Sinbad's fourth voyage, we find a ghoul king on a remote island inhabited by primitive humans. The humans rescue Sinbad and his companions from a shipwreck but then drug them to turn them into mindless human-cattle, whom they then pasture on the island and feed to their king. It goes without saying that the only survivor is Sinbad. He mistrusts his hosts and refuses to eat. Having lost weight and looking emaciated, his captors lose interest in him, which allows him to escape. Alas, the tale does not describe the ghoul king, but would justify having a ghoul as the commander of a human warband.

Above: An illustration of a huge one-eyed ghoul with large ears.

The tale of Gharib also suggests that you can include a ghoul in a human warband commanded by a human. Gharib embarks on a quest to defeat a ghoul called Sa'dan, who preys upon travellers from a remote mountain castle. Instead of killing the ghoul, however, Gharib convinces him to convert to Islam. After that, Sa'dan becomes Gharib's closest ally, and they fight together in numerous wars against infidels from Arabia to India. In those wars, Sa'dan acts as Gharib's right hand and champion. His speciality is to challenge enemy champions in single combat, whom he flattens with his enormous mace. He then roasts and eats them in sight of their comrades, who exclaim 'who can fight against jinn and ghouls?'

Sa'dan is here described as an individual who is too big to ride horses, even if the tale then contradicts itself. No animal features are attributed to him, suggesting that he looks mostly human, but that is not specified. He does have human ancestry: the tale states that Sa'dan comes from India and descends from Ham, who was one of Noah's sons. Ham and his progeny are associated with a curse in Biblical and Islamic sources. That does not generally apply to ghouls, who are often, but not always, considered jinn, and in Arabic sources ghouls and jinn can interbreed with humans.

Above: A Ghoul king with an Ungor head.

Apart from his gigantic mace, on one occasion Sa'dan uses an uprooted tree and in another a normal sword. He has human slaves and retinues, and sometimes Gharib entrusts him to lead human armies. Sa'dan also has five bulky and violent sons, but they are smaller than him, ride horses, and wear armour.

SUGGESTED MINIATURES

There are no miniature ranges devoted to the kind of ghoul that you find in the *Arabian Nights* specifically. On the other hand, they are relatively similar to a variety of other creatures whose miniatures are commonly used for fantasy settings.

For example, the gigantic ghoul of Sinbad's Third Voyage looks very close to that the Savage Vampire from *Frostgrave*, but could be represented by a troll (after all, it has some form of regeneration!).

Frostgrave Fireheart Savage Vampire figures converted into fearsome ghouls by Marc Shucksmith-Wesley.

The ghouls of Janshah's story are essentially beastmen, but any bestial humanoid would do, including gnolls. The oldest Citadel beastmen include a couple of camel men too!

Sa'dan could be represented as an ogre, or a human giant, but not a particularly big one.

Any four-legged beast, including some fantasy ones, could be used to represent ghouls when they shapeshift into bestial form.

If you wish to give your miniatures a more *Arabian Nights* appearance, I suggest some conversions by using bestial humanoids and historical miniatures. The only references to

clothes, arms, and armour of ghouls are in Gharib's story, and they seem to be the same as those of humans. You don't need many conversions, especially if you only add one unit of ghouls to a human warband, and if you use reduced model units. You can see some examples of conversions on our Facebook page: facebook.com/hglabprod

Conversions will be necessary for mounted ghouls, which in the *Arabian Nights* use horses.

Left: An Oathmark Troll doubles up as a large ghoul here.

Below: Resin Eye of the Tiger Ghouls.

GHOULS ON FILM

In the 1977 movie *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*, a trio of Ghouls make an appearance after being summoned from a campfire by the evil magic user Zenobia. Special effects guru Ray Harryhausen is the man behind the models in the film, and although these alien-undead looking creatures are not his finest work (and are despatched within the first ten minutes of the movie by some rolling wooden logs), they are still an interesting addition to the Arabian Ghoul Bestiary.

Above: Fantasy Tribes Orcs by Citadel Miniatures take on the role of Beastmen.

GHOUL TROOP TYPES

I suggest these *Dragon Rampant* troop types for ghouls, which can be easily mixed with *Lion Rampant* ones. *Dragon Rampant*'s fantastical rules are probably too high fantasy for the historical fantasy setting that I have in mind (apart from Hatred for apes in a setting like that of Prince Janshah), but that is a matter of taste:

• Bellicose Foot for units of ghouls on foot. If you wish, you can replace Wild Charge with Short Range Missiles (Hurling Stones), which gives them Shoot 6+/Range 6" hitting on a 5+.

• Lesser Warbeasts for ghouls in the shape of four-legged beasts minus the Flame and Spore Attack options.

• Greater Warbeasts for particularly strong ghouls (like Sa'dan or the nameless ghoul from Sinbad's third voyage) minus the Flame and Spore Attack options.

• Heavy or Light Riders for ghoul mounted units. The Light riders have no shoot activation.

Special Abilities:

All ghoul units have the following:

• Second strike regenerates: If during an attack against a unit of ghouls there are leftover hits (after hits are compared to Armour), the ghoul unit regenerates one strength point. The Strength point is regenerated at the beginning of the next turn.

• Shapeshifting: Bellicose Foot can shapeshift into Lesser Warbeasts and vice versa. In order to do that, the unit needs to pass a Move Activation and cannot perform any other action in that turn. Strength points are adjusted to the new unit type. For example, if Bellicose Foot have only 6 strength points left, they can transform into a 3-strength points-strong Lesser Warbeast unit.

• Fearsome: Ghoul units have a free Fear upgrade against humans.

Limitations:

All ghoul units have the following:

• Fear of archers: Ghoul units have a -1 penalty for Courage tests caused by shooting attacks.

• Banished by true prayers (of any religious denomination): Enemy human commanders, Holy characters, including those from *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States*, can try to cast the Befuddle Thee! spell on one ghoul unit per turn, but the range is reduced to 12".

• Limited types of units available (see above).

Above: A Ghoul king leads his warriors into battle.

USING GHOULS IN WARBANDS

Arabian Nights suggests two options on how to use ghouls in a warband:

• You can have warbands entirely made of ghouls, as in the History of Janshah.

• Alternatively, you can have one or two units of ghouls in a predominantly human warband. In this case, you can have a ghoul leader (as in the History of Gharib or in Sinbad's Fourth voyage) if you wish.

For warbands mixing humans and ghouls, you can also use one of the Middle Eastern army lists from *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States* or *Lion Rampant: A Viking in the Sun*, by simply inserting one or two ghoul units in them.

Above: The colour contrasts on these ghouls make them a vibrant addition to any warband.

SUGGESTED WARBANDS

These are only suggestions. Feel free to modify them as you see fit!

Full Ghoul warband

2 Ghoul Bellicose Foot with Short Range Missiles (Hurling Stones) option @ 10

1 Ghoul Heavy Rider @ 4

1 Ghoul Light Rider @ 4

1 Ghoul Greater Warbeasts @ 6

Human warband with ghouls like Sa'dan from Sinbad's Third Voyage

This warband can use the Muslim principalities of Syria and Anatolia army list from *Lion Rampant: Crusader States*, but it replaces one or two infantry units with Sa'dan and his sons, or Sinbad's ghoul. You can include Sa'dan's sons in his unit or have Sa'dan alone in one unit as a reduced model unit and his sons in a separate unit. You can use Sa'dan as leader, if you wish, too.

1 Ghoul Greater Warbeasts @ 6 (Sa'dan alone as a reduced model unit or Sa'dan and his five sons)

2 Human Heavy Riders, or 1 Human Heavy Rider and 1 Ghoul Heavy Rider, if you wish to use Sa'dan's sons as a separate unit @ 8

1 Light Riders + expert @ 6

1 Light Riders @ 4

Warband inspired by *The Lost Island of the Ghoul King*

The tale describes the ghoul's subjects as naked men and does not mention horses, which suggests choosing units on foot with the lowest armour value. However, you can move this kind of warband to a different location and choose different units while keeping one ghoul unit for the leader.

1 Ghoul Bellicose Foot @ 4 (the ghoul king as a reduced model unit or with bodyguards)

1 Human Bellicose Foot @ 4

2 Light Foot with Mixed Missiles @ 10

1 Light Foot with Short range missiles @ 4

1 Scout @ 2

SUGGESTED READING

• *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1,001 Nights*, 3 volumes (Penguin Classics, 2006).

• 'The Arabic Ghoul and its Western transformation', A. Al-Rawi, Folklore, 120 (2009), available with open access from Research Gate.

• *Icons of horror and the supernatural: an encyclopaedia of our worst nightmares,* S. T. Joshi, (Greenwood Press, 2006).

• For the Monsterman podcast episode on ghouls: monsterman.libsyn.com/episode-21-ghast-to-ghoul

SCENARIO: THE COCKY GHOUL WHO WENT TOO FAR

Introduction

If there is a passage from the *Arabian Nights* that calls to be wargamed, it is an episode from the *Tale of Gharib* regarding Sa'dan the Ghoul. His roasting and eating enemy champions within sight of their comrades usually has a chilling effect on them, but on one occasion it backfires horribly.

Gharib's most hated enemy is 'Ajib, his evil, tyrannical, and infidel half-brother, who killed their father and Gharib's mother. At one point, 'Ajib captures Gharib, and Sa'dan rushes to his rescue with Gharib's army. At the beginning of the ensuing battle, 'Ajib's champion follows the fate of those who accept Sa'dan's challenges. Sa'dan then gets too cocky by eating him all by himself in the middle of the battlefield. He is probably arrogantly showing his disdain for his opponents. 'Ajib, however, manages to overcome the terror of his men. They charge Sa'dan, whose troops intervene but cannot avoid his capture. Later in the tale, Sa'dan escapes captivity together with Gharib.

Set Up

The scenario starts when 'Ajib's men spring into action while Sa'dan is eating 'Ajib's defeated champion.

- For Sa'dan's warband, use the suggested one above. You can use any opponent.

- Place up to 10 points of Sa'dan's warband in the Central Zone, possibly next to a campfire. That includes Sa'dan alone as a Greater Warbeasts reduced model unit, or you can add his sons to him as a Lesser Warbeasts unit.

- The rest of Sa'dan's warband starts in the south Zone.

- Sa'dan's opponents start in the North Zone, and they deploy and move first.

Ending the scenario

- If the attacker manages to wipe out Sa'dan, or Sa'dan is routed, the game ends. In the first case, Sa'dan had been captured, and in the second, he flees the battlefield. In either case, the defenders will abandon the fight.

- The game also ends if the Attacker has lost at least half of his warband, which will bring an end to the attack.

Victory Conditions

- If Sa'dan is wiped out or routed, the Attacker will earn 5 points +- boasts.

- If the game ends because the Attacker gives up, the Defender will earn 5 points +- boasts.

- If Sa'dan does not retreat towards his troops before he attacks or defends against the first unit of the Attacker that reaches him, the Defender gains 2 points; conversely, if Sa'dan retreats towards his troops before his first attack or defence against the Attacker's units, the Attacker gains 2 points.

Above: A classic Games Workshop Ogre doubles up as a ghoul champion.

THE HISTORY OF THE SPANISH MARINE CORPS 1537 - 2017

Miguel Lopez Gonzalez de Leon created 15 'moments in history' dioramas to show the evolution of the Spanish Marine Infantry. He shares this impressive project with *Wi* and delves into the details of the oldest Marine Infantry in the world.

Four hundred and eighty-five years ago, on 27 February 1537, Charles I created what has gone on to become the Spanish Marine Infantry - an elite amphibious operational unit that is regarded as the oldest Marine Infantry in the world.

Tracing the Marine Infantry's evolution from the 16th Century gives a fascinating view of the history of Spain; this was something I wanted to capture and display in a miniature project for the recent 4th National Exhibition of Static Models, Cadiz, Spain.

It took me around 200 hours of building and painting to bring this project together, and figures from a wide range of manufacturers make up the 15 moments that are displayed in the collection.

Since the inception of the Marine Infantry, they have been present in every theatre of war where national interests had to be defended, and over the centuries they have demonstrated their courage, discipline, and bravery. This makes the Corps worthy of their motto 'brave by land and sea' and makes completing a project dedicated to them feel truly worthwhile. This collection of miniature scenes is my attempt to reflect their importance, bravery, and ongoing dedication to the defence of Spain and other territories and peoples.

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE MARINE INFANTRY

The Marine Corps has its origins in the Tercios Viejos, infantry units who would embark from ships on a temporary basis when specific campaigns or combat required it. It was eventually decided that these troops should be dedicated exclusively to naval warfare, and Charles I permanently assigned the old companies of the Sea of Naples to the galley squadrons of the Mediterranean. Philip II then took this a stage further and created the current concept of the landing force.

After the disappearance of the Mediterranean galley squadron in 1748, its sea troops were reorganised and modernised. The names of the existing companies changed and were no longer known by the name of the captain who commanded them; from December 1749, they were named by an ordinal system as was already in place in many European countries. In this way, a total of eight battalions were formed in Cartagena, each consisting of six companies.

In 1808, the Spanish War of Independence broke out; the Marines came off the immobilised ships and their Marine Battalions were incorporated into army infantry regiments.

During the Spanish Civil War (1936 - 1939), a Marine officer, Ambrosio Ristori de la Cuadra, was posthumously awarded the Placa Laureada de Madrid for his exploits in the siege of the Alcazar and the Battle of Seseña, where he was killed in action. The Laureate Badge of Madrid was the highest military award for gallantry during the Second Spanish Republic and was only awarded eight times in total.

At present, Marine Infantry companies participate in humanitarian actions in all corners of the globe.

AN UNEXPECTED FIRST

In 1793, Ana María de Soto, passing herself off as a man under the name of Antonio María de Soto, enlisted in the 6th company of the 11th Marine Battalion and was eventually discharged with pension and honours in 1798, when it was discovered that she was a woman. She was the first female Marine in the world.

Above and right: Birth of the Marine Corps 1537 Charles I.

Miguel with his splendid looking collection.

Above: Tercio of the Armada 1627.

Above and left: Old Tercio of the Navy of the Ocean Sea 1677.

STAGES IN HISTORY - 16TH TO 21ST CENTURY

• Army Infantry - landing force - 1537 to 1717
• Battalion Corps - garrison ships - 1717 to 1827
• Royal Marine Corps - expeditionary force - 1827 to 1931
• Marine Corps - garrison bases and ships - 1931 to 1957
• Marine Corps - landing force - 1957 to 2017

Below: Battalions of the Galleys 1727.

Above: Battalions of the Navy 1717.

MAJOR BATTLES

Algiers 1545 and 1575

The Marines were deployed in galleys to fight the Ottoman Empire for control of the *Mare Nostrum*. They played an important role in the military expeditions in Algiers, which aimed to punish the port from which the Barbary ships set sail to impose their law. The number of garrisoned men per ship was set at a total of 125, including the captain, the ensign, the sergeant, a fife, and a drummer.

Lepanto 1571

On 7 October 1571, the Holy Alliance defeated the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Lepanto. It was "the most memorable and loftiest occasion that past centuries have seen, nor do those to come expect to see", as Don Miguel de Cervantes, one of the distinguished Marines who took part in the battle, put it. The Marines were the first to board the Ottoman Admiral Ali Pasha's galley *Sultana* and the galley's banner is still preserved in Toledo Cathedral.

Conquest of the Azores 1582

This was the first major landing of a naval force. It took place on the Third Island of the Azores archipelago, where the Spanish navy stopped France in that part of the Atlantic. This battle pitted 25 Spanish ships, commanded by Don Álvaro de Bazán, against 60 French ships, commanded by Admiral Felipe Strozzi, who died in the battle.

Havana, defence of the Morro Castle 1763

One of the characteristics of the Marines' uniform is the double red striped trousers, a distinctive feature of the Royal Household Corps (currently only the Royal Guard and the Marines are entitled to wear them in Spain). This distinction was given after the fierce defence of the Morro Castle in Havana in 1763.

Left: Navy Battalions 1787.

Above: Marine Infantry 1807 Charles IV.

Left: Rio de la Plata Marine Infantry Volunteers 1807.

Above and detail below: Marine Infantry Battalion 1817.

Below: Royal Marine Brigade 1827.

Right: Carlist Marine Infantry 1837.

Expedition to Pensacola 1770

The Battle of Pensacola was fought between the Spanish, who supported the American revolutionaries, against the British for control of Florida, which Spain had ceded to England seven years earlier in exchange for the return of Havana and Manila.

Toulouse 1814

During the first months of 1814, the Marine Battalions of Ferrol were the first Spanish forces to enter France in pursuit of the Napoleonic army. It was in their own country on April 10 that they finished a six year campaign against the invading army, taking the city of Toulouse with a demonstration of bravery and courage; the reason why the crown awarded the Marine Battalions of Ferrol the Toulouse Tie on whose cross appears the legend "Courage and Discipline".

Cochinchina 1858

A century before American 'Marines' set foot in Vietnam, Spanish Marines arrived in Cochinchina, together with French troops, to carry out a punitive expedition against the locals after the murder of several Spanish and French missionaries. The Spanish military officer leading the troops was Colonel Carlos Palanca, and in February 1859, the Allied troops attacked Saigon, seizing 100 cannons, a large quantity of ammunition, and food supplies - enough to supply 8,000 men for a year.

San Pedro Abanto 1874

After the Carlist Wars, the reign of Amadeo of Savoy, and the short-lived First Republic, the Bourbon dynasty was re-established with Alfonso XII. However, hostilities intensified in 1874, starting the Third Carlist War. The 2nd Battalion of the 1st Marine Infantry Regiment based in San Fernando was ordered to enlist. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Joaquín Albacete Fuster, it began the campaign fighting in Cuenca and Guadalajara. It continued in Bilbao, the centre of Carlist power, with the actions of Somorrostro, San Pedro de Abanto, and Caserío de Murrieta taking place during this campaign.

This period of tough expeditionary campaigns was marked by heroes of the Corps. Outstanding among them was Lieutenant Colonel Albacete Fuster, who after hard fighting with the Carlists, broke through the front at San Pedro Abanto and reached Murrieta in a brilliant bayonet charge, an action for which the 2nd Battalion was awarded the Laureate of San Fernando. Today, the Marine Infantry School of Cartagena is named after General Albacete y Fuster.

Larache 1911 and Al Hoceima 1925

In the first decades of the 20th Century, the Corps' units distinguished themselves in Africa on numerous occasions, most notably the Larache landing in 1911 and the Al Hoceima landing in 1925 in the vanguard of General Fernández Pérez's column. This was also the first time in history that air support, naval forces, and land forces acted under a unified command (that of Miguel Primo de Rivera), thus creating the modern concept of amphibious landing, which would be implemented in World War Two.

Bosnia, Haiti, Lebanon, and Afghanistan

In the era of international missions at the end of the 20th Century and beginning of the 21st Century, the Marine Corps have deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Haiti, and Afghanistan. Since 2008, eight Marines have formed an ACAF (Acquisition and Control of Fire Support) team, responsible for liaising with air support in the event of enemy harassment or attack.

Left and detail below: Philippine Marine Infantry 1897.

Right and detail above: Marine Infantry Equatorial Guinea 1907.

COMPLETING THE SCENES

The project explores the history of the Spanish Marine Corps from 1537 (its birth) to the present day in 15 moments. This project won the first prize at the convention in Cadiz earlier this year.

The scenes encompass 92 infantry miniatures, 13 cavalry, and 15 flags, along with a dog, a cannon, a Humvee, and an armoured car. I used 28mm miniatures from the following manufacturers:

- Perry Miniatures
- Wargames Foundry
- Front Rank
- Empress Miniatures
- 1898 Miniaturas
- Ebor Miniatures
- Warlord Games
- North Star

The project started with me reading Jose Maria Bueno's book *La infanteria y la artilleria de Marina 1537 - 1931,* and I continued my research online and through all of the other books I have about the Spanish army. From there, I started looking for figures, which was not an easy task; in fact, I found very few, which is the reason I had to use many manufacturers, seven from the UK and one from Spain.

When I had all the miniatures together, I started to paint them with Vallejo, AK, and Scale 75 acrylics and to look for the flags which are from Adolfo Ramos, Warflags, and GMB Designs with extra detail painted on. The scenes were based with detail to represent appropriate terrain.

I finished each scene with the drawings from Jose Maria Bueno's book, printed onto acrylic, and mounted in the background. This shows the detail and accuracy present in each of the 15 scenes. If I had to choose a favourite scene, it is Tercio of the Armada 1627. I am pleased I was able to include the model of a dog, and it is my favourite period. In a close second place is the Marine Infantry 1807 Charles IV because the Napoleonic era is my vice.

Left and detail above: Marine Infantry Spanish Civil War 1937.

Right and detail above: Marine Infantry Current 2017.

THE GLOSTERS' LAST STAND - PART ONE
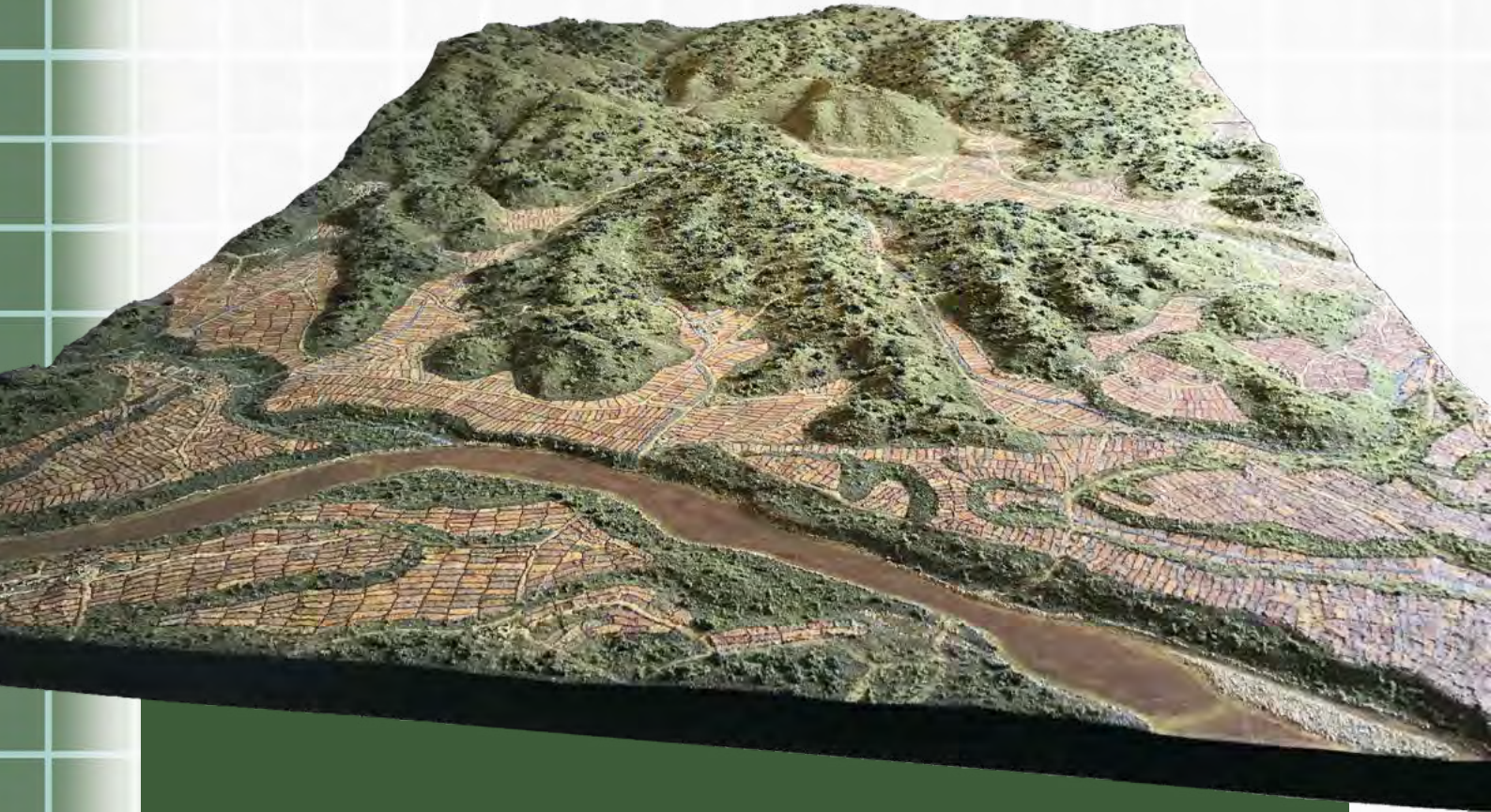
Charles Rowntree tells us how he built his realistically contoured Imjin River board that won the Pete Gill Shield for the Best Participation Game at Partizan, May 2022.

One of the greatest battles fought in the Korean War, the Chinese Spring Offensive, began on 22 April 1951. 300,000 Chinese and North Korean troops attacked along a 40-mile front, catching out UN forces with strategic surprise. The rapid retreats and pursuits up and down the peninsula that had characterised the Korean War ended; this time the UN troops stood and fought.

Near Choksong, just north of Seoul, the British 29th Brigade defended a sector sat astride two key routes that the Chinese wanted to use to outflank the UN lines. The British brigade, including a Belgian battalion, dug in on hilltops dominating the valleys that overlooked Route 5Y and Route 11. For four days, outnumbered seven to one, they fought stubbornly holding the hills and coordinating artillery and air strikes as wave after wave of Chinese infantry assaulted them. This heroic defence allowed the UN to stabilise, coordinate planned retreats, and blunt the Chinese offensive capability. The Chinese failed to achieve their key aims, and five weeks later, the ground was recaptured, before the stalemate that became the Korean Peninsula we know today.

RECREATING THE GLOSTERS' LAST STAND

The Korean War is often called the Forgotten War; it is easily overlooked by wargamers, perhaps because of a perceived lack of variety in what was principally an infantry war. This was caused by the almost complete lack of Chinese and People's Republic of Korea (PRK) armour or vehicles and the way the challenging landscape limited the effectiveness of UN armour. The War would not, however, be forgotten by every gamer; the rolling landscape was a particularly appealing factor to me and something that I wanted to properly replicate in my latest project.

My board allows players the chance to refight a key part of the Choksong defence, specifically the defence of route 5Y by the Gloucestershire regiment, known thereafter as the Glorious Glosters. For three nights, four fighting companies, along with support elements, held hilltop positions and then, isolated and cut off, fell back to hill 235. With failed relief attacks, missed air drops, expended ammunition, and drained radios, the battalion finally issued the order for individual break outs, but just the remnants of one company succeeded in evading capture. Days later, only 170 out of the 850 nominal troops were able to muster to receive the US Presidential Unit Citation award.

Choosing the ground

I've attended several UK wargames shows over the last few years, putting on participation games. Both games I put on were small and allowed participants to

finish a game in an hour or less. Running the same game multiple times with different players was great fun, but with this project I wanted something bigger, something epic! It still needed to meet several self-imposed criteria, however; it had to:

- be a participation game

- look spectacular and be a modelling challenge

- be a single battle telling a story across the show day

- enable people to come along and join in for an hour or less.

I looked at five or six different options before I settled on the Imjin battle, and the Glosters' stand really stood out because of the modelling challenge. The battle at Imjin was a fight for control of key terrain; the river, the roads, and the hills beyond it determined how and where elements of the battle were fought. It therefore followed that the terrain needed to be modelled as closely and realistically as possible. Having accurate terrain would pose real challenges to players on both sides whilst supporting historical approaches to the battle.

CREATING THE CONTOURS

The starting point was an online copy of a 1:50,000 map drawn up by the US in 1950, based on wartime Japanese surveys and maps, and updated with aerial information. This was detailed, accurate, and as a real bonus, it was contemporaneous.

The starting point - an online copy of a 1950 map of the area.

I realised I could fit the Glosters' section of the battle on a 6' by 4' board but just couldn't include the other elements of the battle (the other three battalions of 29th Brigade) without extending the dimensions too far. The ground scale worked out neatly at 25mm, or 1 inch, to 100m, and using 5mm foam board for each 20m contour gave me a consistent ground and height scale.

The challenge was the huge number of hills and contours. I needed to create a systematic approach and work logically; this began with some image manipulation, enlarging the map and overlaying a grid onto it so that each square in the grid represented 100m by 100m of actual terrain but 25mm by 25mm on my board. I built a physical grid stencil using some thin 2mm wide styrene strips that I made into a grid that matched up - 25cm high by 25cm wide and ten squares by ten squares. Using dressmaker pins to hold it in place, I could now transpose the contour lines onto my foam board.
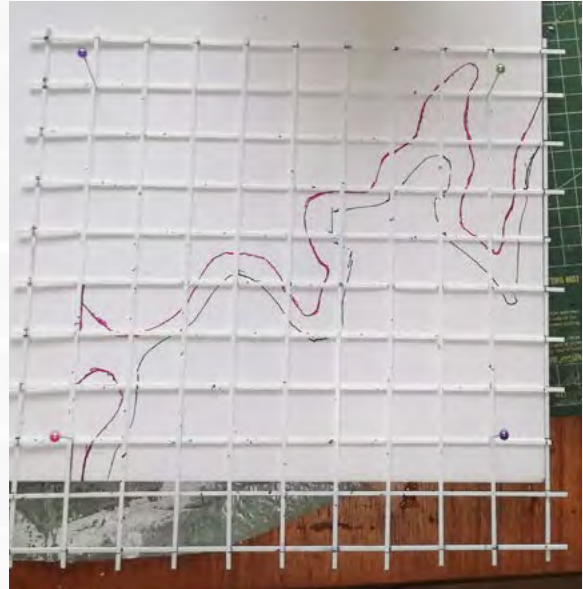
Above: The contours transposed onto foam board.

The lowest point on the board is the riverbed for the Imjin River. The next layer used 3mm foam board and was my 0m contour. It created the depth of the Imjin River but otherwise covered the entire board. Everything else was cut out of 5mm foamboard.

I started by marking 1km squares (25 cm/10 inches) onto my base layer to build the boards by sections. I soon discovered that if I started with the high point and cut out the contours from the top down, it was much easier to create the hills. Once a layer was cut, I traced around it onto the lower layer. This fixed its position and helped the marking of the next layer. It also enabled me to spot errors when I made mistakes. By using different colour pens, I could see the previous layer position, the edge of the current layer, and corrections to mistakes. I marked the contour height in multiple places to keep track of layers and check I was working correctly.

Above: The contours of the model take shape on one of the board sections. Working from the top down turned out to be the easiest approach.

Above: The whole board with layered foam board in place. The highest peak was constructed using 24 layers.

Once the basic process was tested and refined on some of the easier squares, all I needed to do was repeat, change knife blades regularly, order huge quantities of foam board, and spend hours and hours marking and cutting. As I got better at the process, I moved from working with 25cm square blocks to working with A1 sheets covering multiple grids. The highest point on the board is 24 layers of foam board high.

Each section was held together by dressmaker pins and then pinned to the base board. Once each board was complete, I glued the sections and weighted them down. A day later and I could see the battlefield take shape. I was really pleased with the look and the accuracy; it felt like I was doing the battlefield justice, and the contours showed the shape of the hills.

Above: Copious amounts of food tins came in handy as weights for the board.

CUTTING INTRICATE CONTOURS - DOS AND DON'TS

DO start at the top of a hill and work down. It's quick and easy to cut out the higher layers, so initially you make quick progress, and you can trace around the previous layer to aid drawing the next contour.

DO use three different coloured pens instead of just one colour: one pen to mark the current contour layer, another to mark the previous contour line, and a third for when a mistake needs to be corrected.

DO use pins. They hold everything in place, marking key points and places.

DON'T sweat the small stuff. Accuracy is important but not at a loss to your own sanity; you can forgive a few tiny concessions.

DON'T glue things down straight away as you'll restrict the flexibility of your build. I went back and added an extra thin layer so my river could be recessed.

DO work in small sections until you get used to the process. I started by cutting contours in 25cm-by-25cm pieces, even when they joined together, before ending with A1 sheets.

DO use different colour foam board if you are mixing different thicknesses. Confusingly, the map uses dotted lines for 5m and 10m contours in places. So always check the map and key before starting out!

DO order foam board, then order some more. The last thing you want is to be scraping for offcuts you can squeeze another level of contours onto.

DO change blades regularly. Foam board dulls knife blades (I went through four or five blades), and it is self-defeating to keep using a blade that is dragging and tearing.

DO write the contour height on every piece, often, and in several places. This helps keep track of which layer you are on - important when you have more than 20 layers!

Above: The Glosters make their own contour changes as they dig in. Some men are on guard in case of attack, while others dig trenches. (Popperfoto/Getty Images)

FILLING THE HILLS

To create the hard surface for my boards, I decided to use sculptamold - a mix of plaster of paris and paper fibres. It is light and dries to form a solid, tough layer. I used the best part of two 3lb bags for the model in two layers and quite enjoyed the process.

Layer one

I had spent a lot of time and effort ensuring I had accurate contours, so it was crucial that the plaster moulded to the contours rather than disguising or hiding them. I concentrated on just filling the gaps between the layers of foam board first; the slopes were not fully defined, and I could see red contour step lines everywhere.

Funnily enough, it was easier to apply the plaster on the hillier areas where the contours guided my scraper, and it was easy to see when too much had been applied. The flatter areas didn't offer much in the way of guidance and required more freestyling.

I used a small decorating scraper to initially apply the mix then wetted my fingers and got stuck in smoothing the mixture by hand.

Layer two

Applying the top layer to finesse the detail followed a similar approach but with more use of my fingers. Often the key was letting the plaster harden slightly before using fingertips to mould it to the contours. This layer was quite thin as I needed to ensure I didn't obscure the contours.

It took about three days of work - about four or five hours a day - to cover all three boards accurately; it then took another week for the plaster to properly dry out.

Finishing the basic build

The last element to finish the structure of the base boards was fitting 3mm plywood strips, cut to match the contours, to give each board a defined edge.

I painted the whole board with muted browns and greys and then marked up the roads, villages, minor rivers, and the edge of the hills with marker pens. Then I flocked the hills using a base layer of Woodland Scenics fine turf. Korea is very brown, so I mixed soil and earth mixes together to create a dull green look for the hills. Different highlight and shadow turfs were added to help define the slopes and valleys. Coarser turf was then dotted around to mimic the scrub, dwarf trees, and copses that covered almost all the hillsides.
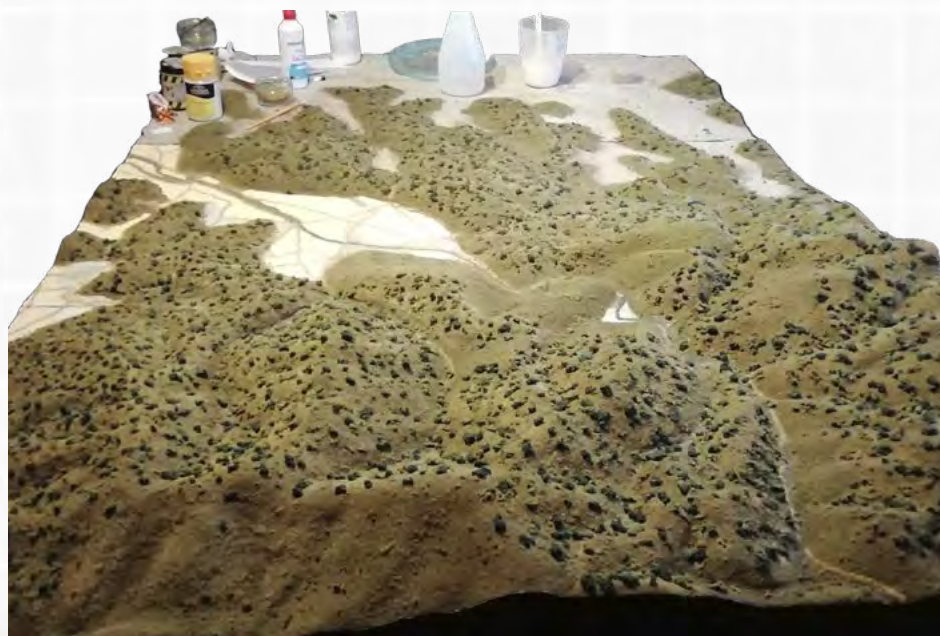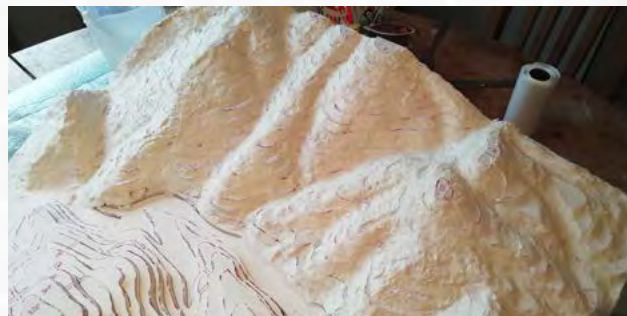
BOARD DETAILS

The board is 6ft by 4ft, with 1 inch to 100m ground and height scale.

I use the *All Hell Let Loose* rules, by David Wasilewski, originally designed for WWII with some minor scenario adaptations. The ever-popular *Bolt Action* offers a Korean supplement, and other WWII systems could be adapted easily to the conflict.

Infantry are from Adler Miniatures: WWII British Royal Marines for the Glosters, US infantry for the Filipinos, and Winter Russians for the Chinese. GHQ vehicles and Tumbling Dice aircraft complete the roster.

ADDING DETAILS

Villages

The Korean houses on the battlefield were mostly traditional, single-storey, wooden-framed structures with dirt and straw walls and straw thatch on the roof. A small number were stone with tile roofs, belonging to richer or noble Koreans. They tended to be small and were clustered into several villages generally found in the valleys. The area had seen fighting during the war before this battle, so some buildings had already been destroyed. The villages and buildings had little military value or role to play but would add some variety to the board's look.

I created my buildings in proportion to the ground scale using 1mm by 1mm wooden strips that I cut up and painted. I used a textured paint to create a base for the village, glued down the buildings, used a marker to delineate compounds, and painted on the greenery of small holdings.

Above: Some buildings in this village have tiled roofs and would have belonged to richer or noble Koreans.

Below: Scattered structures in the valley amongst the rice paddies.

Roads and minor rivers

The roads, just dirt tracks at best, were created by gluing a trail of fine sand to the board. A similar process was used for the minor rivers using a dark ash and lighter stones overpainted with light grey highlights.

Rice paddies

The battle took place in late April, so the rice paddies at that time of year were not planted or flooded; they would have been bare and in various shades of brown. To create mine, I used a desert sand texture paint as a base. I then used brown paint and a range of inks to create individual paddies. I kept adding short strips, randomly placing each colour. The final mosaic looked untidy and indistinct. However, once the trusty 0.3mm permanent marker was used to delineate the paddy boundaries, the fields looked separated and sharpened.
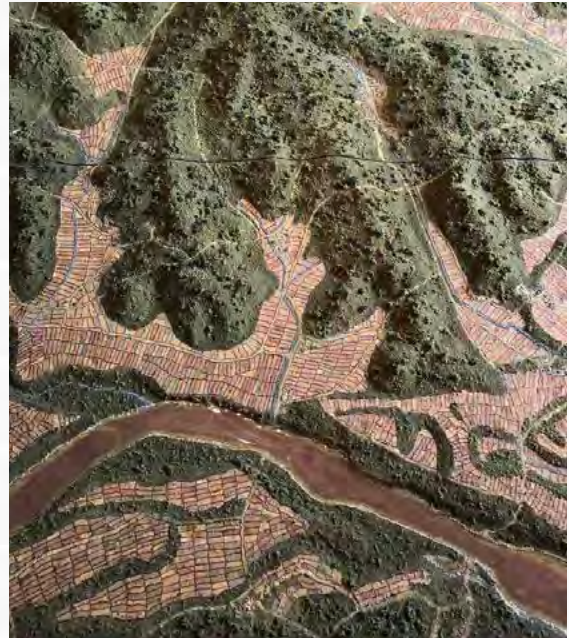

Above: A vast number of rice paddies delineated with the application of boundaries in permanent marker.

The River Imjin

This was my first resin pour and was quite nerve wracking. I painted the riverbed in a range of browns and sands to create the impression of channels and depth, and I used a fine sand grit on the banks and sandy islands. Then it was time for the water effect.

I sealed the ends of the river, mixed the resin, carefully poured it, then spent a nervous 24 hours waiting for it to cure. It was the last step in the building of the board and could ruin everything, but it worked, and I was really pleased with the result!
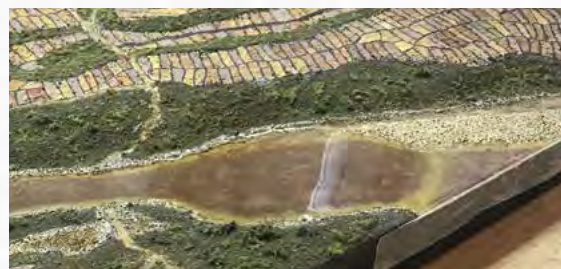
Above: Don't forget to seal in the ends of your river!

Below: The glistening but murky waters of the River Imjin finish off the build.

VARIED COMBAT OPPORTUNITIES

The Chinese preferred to attack at night by stealthily infiltrating UN lines and isolating positions and units before launching waves of close assaults supported by mortars and machine guns. The UN forces preferred to fight during the day, maximising their advantage with armour, artillery, and airpower.

Right: Crossing the Imjin - The Chinese 187th division assaults Gloster crossing, 11.30pm, 22 April 1951. From Imjin River 1951, Campaign 328, illustrated by Steve Noon. © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com

A STORY IN CONTOURS

I have gained a greater understanding and appreciation of the battle now that I have modelled and gamed on it. The strategic importance of route 5Y is easily visible when taking a bird's eye view of the terrain, and the initial placement of the various Gloster companies makes great sense. I can compare one hill next to its neighbour, see the height differences, ridge length, and fields of fire; this better explains why a company was moved there and ordered to hold their ground better than thousands of words could in a book.

My respect for the soldiers of both sides is enhanced. Fighting on this unforgiving terrain - pancake flat paddy fields with no cover; sharply rising slopes of hill upon hill to defend or take; and a wide, deep river that had to be crossed during ambush fire, artillery stonks, or aircraft attacks - must have been hell.

I will take the board to UK wargames shows over the next year or so; you might get a chance to see it and game on it to appreciate the terrain difficulties yourself. After that, all being well, it will be on long term loan to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, where it will be displayed and used for talks about the battle.

But a board is nothing without a game to play on it. In Part Two, I'll discuss the scenario for the battle, the adaptations I made to the *All Hell Let Loose* rules, and how things played out at Partizan, May 2022.

MDF TIPS AND TRICKS
28mm SHIP OF THE LINE

James quickly constructs Sarissa's impressive new kit and shares advice that can be used on any of your MDF builds.

MDF kits have come a long way. The basic, utilitarian chunks available in MDF terrain's early days have evolved into realistic barricades, complex vehicles, and detailed buildings an architect would be proud of. There's never been a better (or easier) time to cover your tabletop with impressive terrain and Sarissa's new Ship of the Line kit shows just how far things have come. The home hobbyist can now construct a 28mm scale vessel that is a match for the glorious ships seen on the most impressive display boards at wargaming shows…

Well, that's the promise, but just how easy is it to go from its compact pack of MDF and greyboard sheets (plus some metal cannons), follow the instructions, and end up with a great looking 28mm 5th/6th Rate Frigate or Ship of the Line?

I built the kit to answer that question and along the way I jotted down my MDF kit-building advice and some top tips. These are as relevant to MDF kits in general as they are to Sarissa's Ship of the Line, and the advice should make your future builds a little easier.

I hope you feel emboldened to take on more advanced projects after reading this article; if you do tackle this wonderful Ship of the Line kit, I hope that you get to spend more time on it than the single working day I had to build it in!

TOP TIP - TAKE SLOW METHODICAL STEPS

With so many different sheets of confusing looking parts and a good bit of money spent on the kit, you'd be forgiven for feeling a sense of dread about the build. Don't panic; focus on the first step and go from there.

The only difference between constructing this huge ship and a small building made of five parts is the time required; you're following instructions and applying the same basic build techniques on both kits, there are just a lot more steps for the Ship of the Line.

I had to rush my build to get it done in about seven hours; I don't advise this. An expensive model like this is something to enjoy and savour so take things slow, be methodical, and feel your grin grow as a truly impressive model moves closer to completion.
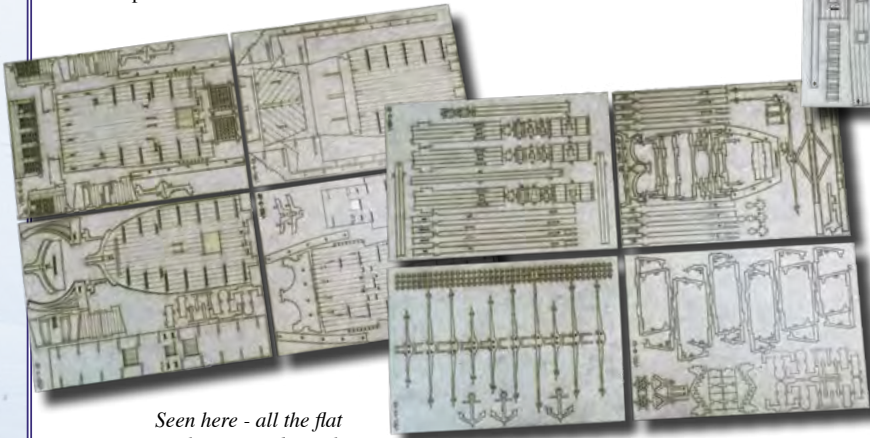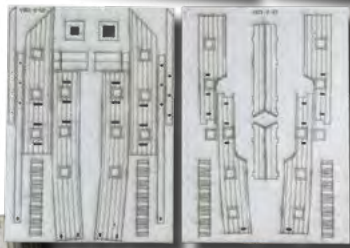
Seen here - all the flat pack MDF and metal parts in the set.

GETTING STARTED

Check the instructions and make your mark

Not reading instructions is somehow wrapped up in 'blokey pride'; if it's the height of machismo to remain wilfully ignorant then count me out! Read through the instructions closely before you start the build, mark notes on areas that seem important (see right), and if it helps you out consider writing numbers or other details on the kit's various parts. Use a soft pen such as a Sharpie rather than one that could etch into the MDF or greyboard if you do this!

Wipe the boards

Cutting MDF leaves a lot of residue on the surface of the sheets so it's wise to wipe them down with a cloth before you get started. If you don't it could impact glue adherence during the build or paint adherence later on.

Consider pre-painting

I opted against painting the parts before gluing them together but it's always worth considering. Applying paint to flat pieces is a lot easier than manhandling a big kit to get your brush onto it at awkward angles.

If the kit has interiors, then it's especially worth painting those sections (which are usually harder to get at) before you build them but the interiors here are easily exposed by removing the details around them, so I just built the full vessel.
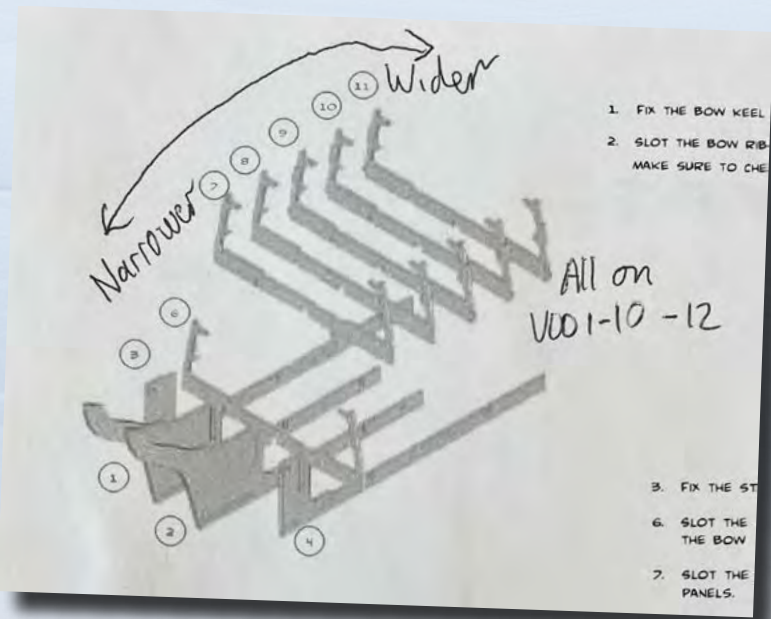
TOP TIP - RISERS

MDF parts are prone to snapping if you flex them too much and the thinner parts of kits (the Ship of the Line has many of these!) are especially vulnerable. Avoid unfortunate breaks by placing spare MDF sheets under the sides of the sheet you are working on, so that it is slightly raised up and flat above your desk. All you need to do to get the pieces you need is push down with another spare offcut of MDF and they'll pop down below.

DRY FITTING

Don't rush to glue the pieces together; for each step of the build do a dry run and check everything is where it should be. In just this first step of the ship build (right) there are many potential problems - the central bow keel panels could easily have been placed on the wrong bow ribs, the order of the bow ribs might have been incorrect, and so on - but by putting them together without glue I could ensure everything was just right.

The other option you have with dry fits is to glue them without ever taking your dry fitted pieces apart - check the advice in the next section!

GOING BEYOND PLAIN PVA

Conventional wisdom suggests using PVA or wood glue to build MDF kits but there are further options worth consideration.

The PVA family

Polyvinyl acetate is the component that gives PVA its name, but it is present in all kinds of differently named adhesives: wood glue, carpenter's glue, white glue, Elmer's glue if you're in North America, and more. Whatever name it goes by it's recommended for MDF kits for a reason; once dry it bonds the parts very well. Basic PVA will fix most things together just fine while something branded as wood glue might be a little stronger and create firmer bonds.

After application PVA glue will often squirt out when you press parts together (1). Use this as an opportunity; apply a damp brush to the blob of glue to thin it down and smear it over the surrounding area. Focus on cracks between parts (2); your final bond will be even stronger (3)!

Thick and thin super glue

When it comes to sticky stuff, I am a fan of cyanoacrylate, the fast-acting adhesive that takes glue from its humble everyman status and upgrades it to super glue! I don't often see the use of super glue advised in MDF kit building, perhaps because MDF tends to soak it up, but it's a great way to rapidly fix your kits together. If you do use super glue do so in a well-ventilated area (the bonding process can create unpleasant fumes) and be ready to get through quite a bit of it.

Super glue comes in various viscosities and for MDF kit building I generally make use of the super thin and thick varieties. For speedy kit building I will take the sub assembled parts of my kit, place them flat on a surface I don't mind messing up, and run super thin super glue (4) over each connection point. This will flow into the cracks and rapidly create bonds without the waiting time and risk of slipping parts that PVA brings.

Once dry I switch to thick and 'cap' each join by adding a blob of the super glue over the top area (5) then quickly smearing it in with a spare piece of MDF to fill any top level gaps and strengthen the bond.

4

5

Don't go faster

I advise against the use of an accelerant to speed up your super glue's drying time. It's not really required, and it will make your bonds more brittle meaning parts of the kit will be more prone to snapping over extended time, and when subjected to movement and pressure.

1

2

3

TOP TIP - APPLY THE PRESSURE

A common problem beginners encounter when building MDF kits is that they fear applying a good bit of pressure to pop parts together. This means they struggle to get things properly lined up and slotted in place. It is sometimes essential to use force, but the essential thing is you don't just go at it like a brute from the outset!

Soft then strong

I was over-zealous with the rib shown to the right and caused a snap (thankfully easily fixed by carefully realigning the piece then dousing it with thin super glue) so I was very careful when I fed the large bow deck piece over the various ribs in what I'll call the 'lining up' phase.

You should be soft and gentle here to avoid doing damage to parts but also take a mental note of where there is robustness and firmness to ready yourself for…
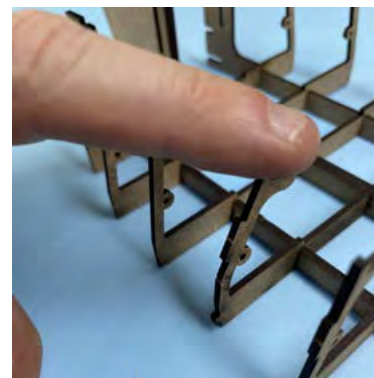
Combo it up

If fixing parts together in a more traditional way you can use superglue and PVA in combination. Apply a few spots of super glue on the corners but fill the remaining gaps with PVA. The super glue will make a strong initial bond and hold things in place, the PVA will then add bonded strength across a wider area. Just be careful that you don't mix the two glues too closely together as the PVA will rather nullify the effect of the super glue.

Alternatively, you can do your initial building with super glue as described earlier and then wash the finished build with PVA thinned with water. This was done on the entire frame of the lower deck on my Ship of the Line (right).

6 ● WHOOPS!

7
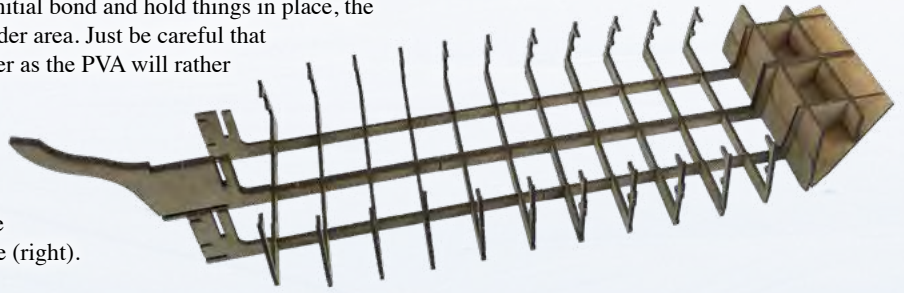
CHECK AFTER EVERY STEP

We all make mistakes from time to time so checking our work is important. After each build stage compare what you've made with the images in the guide as well as photos of the kit if they are available. The Ship of the Line can be seen in full at sarissa-precision.com and at the end of this article.

The longer you leave things to dry and the further you get into the build before discovering an error, the harder it will be to fix.

Own your mistakes

As an experienced kit builder with something like 30 to 40 MDF kit builds under my belt I am not exempt from needing to check my work... but, unfortunately, I don't always follow my own advice!

The confidence and competence I have (along with the need to get this build completed at a pace) brought the risk of rushing on; this hubris was almost my downfall on the Ship of the Line.

I glued the deck under panel the wrong way around at stage 14 of the instructions without even realising it and only when I got to stage 32, with the ship now far too developed to rewind, did I notice the holes in the deck didn't line up. The main mast mounting socket - to secure a rather important part of the ship - wouldn't fit through. I had even taken a progress shot at stage 16 and failed to pay any attention to the obvious error I'd made (6)!

With much nervousness I gradually trimmed away the MDF to make space for the socket to fit through. Luckily the problem was hidden away underneath the deck (7) and if I didn't confess here, you probably wouldn't have noticed, but it could have been so much worse. Check and check again, especially with complex kits!

… The 'bold' phase. This is where you will need to apply pressure, perhaps more than seems wise, to get things to clunk together. On the deck it was across each of the wide connection points where the base of the rib fed through. The pressure was done join by join, from one side to the other, rather than all at once, with each rib clicking into place before I moved to the next one.

● CARE
● BOLD
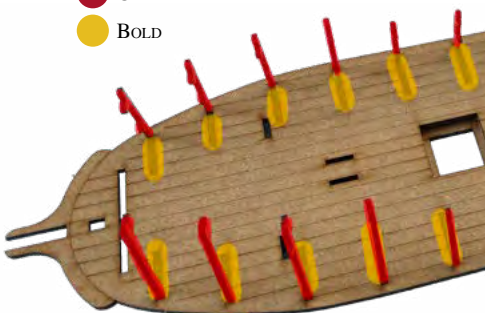
If you're dry fitting each stage, you'll already know when the 'bold' phase is required. I advise you never 'go bold' in your dry fit; save that for once glue's been added!

Whittle down the joins

If it really does feel like the kit's about to turn to kindling under the pressure you are applying, you can ease back and trim some of the connection points.

I had to do this when pushing the mast mounting socket up through the fore deck and underdeck (upper right).

The end parts wouldn't quite line up and fit through the holes in the deck, so I sliced a little off their sides and tried to fit them again, repeating until they slotted into place (right). Be very gradual when you do this to ensure you don't split the MDF or make a loose join. You can always take away but it's not so easy to add MDF back in place!

GREYBOARD - MDF'S REDHEADED STEPCHILD!

The greyboard parts that come in many modern MDF kits are a point of annoyance for some and I know that *Wi* Editor Dan's certainly not a fan of them [that's putting it mildly - Ed]. I can somewhat understand it; they do feel rather insubstantial compared to the rigid MDF. That inherent flimsiness is vital though, enabling cladding and curves to be applied to models. If you treat the greyboard a little differently to the MDF it's fine.

Shape before application

Greyboard will often enable a curved area on the model, but it comes flat on a sheet so it's wise to curve it before application. I wrap mine around an empty Pringles crisp tube, but you can use whatever you have to hand. I often curve it far more than will be required on the kit as the curve helps it to 'grip' against the MDF that supports it.

Guide from anchor points

The hull strips, bull panels, and hull panels that clad the sides of the Ship of the Line all have areas that can be used as (pardon the naval pun) anchor points. By fixing the end anchor point firmly in place you can then guide the rest of the application by pulling at the greyboard from this solid anchor (right).

NUMBERED PARTS?

The instructions for the Ship of the Line are excellent and guide you through each step of the build, with numbers for every single part used. Unfortunately, the parts themselves only have numbers written on two of the MDF sheets and this makes things a little… let's be nice and say tricky!

We hope that Sarissa will fix this for future runs and have let them know about the problem but if you do build the ship yourself we hope our guide here will help:

Instructions page	Parts found on sheets
1	9 and 10
2	9, 10, and greyboard
3	6, 7, and 8
4	6, 7, 8, and greyboard
5	3, 4, 8, and greyboard
6	4 and 5
7	5
8	4, 5, and 12
9	4

Take care, don't tear

You can be quite firm with greyboard without doing damage to it but there's always a risk of tearing it, particularly around connection points where wet glue can saturate and weaken the material. Be mindful of this when you pull pieces into place and consider using super glue for the initial bond then adding watered down PVA in the gaps to strengthen the bonds.

Save the grey to last

As the application of greyboard requires a slightly different mindset and approach you might consider skipping its stages and applying it all at once to finish things off. I did this with the Ship of the Line and it worked well (below). Just be careful that you don't glue on any parts that might obstruct that application of the greyboard - I left the fore deck and poop deck handrails unglued so they could be removed when adding the greyboard panels.
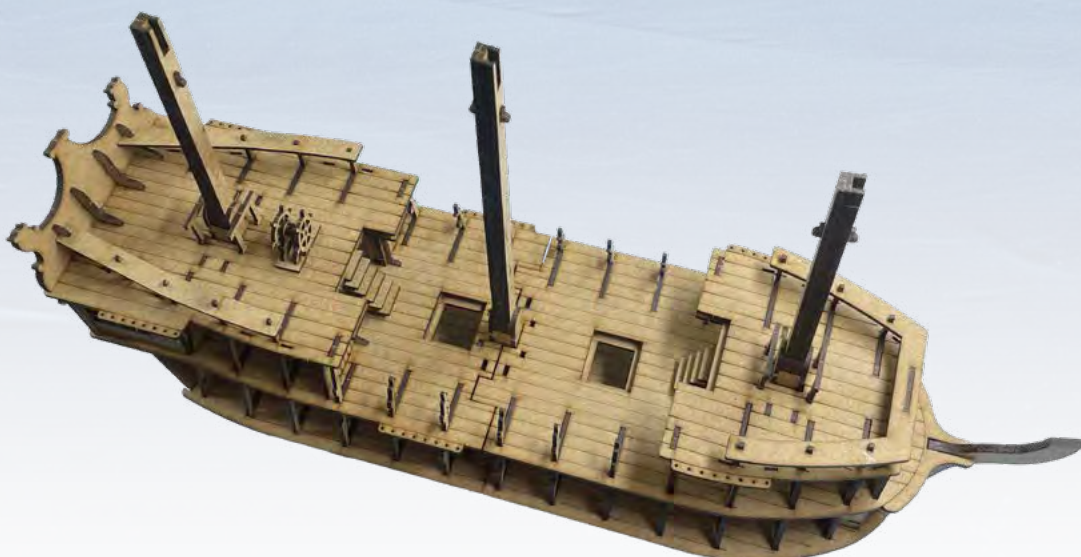
MY FINAL THOUGHTS

Taking this Ship of the Line from an intimidating pile of MDF sheets to a finished model in a working day was a frantic but very enjoyable experience; one that my error with the main mast's mounting point couldn't dampen.

This is a complex kit but it's not a complicated one if you pay attention to the instructions. The lack of numbering on the parts is a bit of an annoyance (something I hope Sarissa will fix) but those printed instructions are detailed enough to get around the problem.

I hope that I've imparted some useful advice and that this article will inspire others to take on the Ship of the Line challenge. At around £100 it is not a cheap model but at almost 60cm long it is certainly a very good value one. There are many other wonderful MDF options out there for every historical, sci-fi, and fantasy setting you can think of if you're not quite ready to dip your toes in the ocean.

This build started off as an opportunity to share my MDF tips and tricks, but I might have to do a follow up article about painting this beauty. My rattlecan's at the ready to lay down a primer coat but no promises, the requirements of hobby projects for future issues are already taking up my time!

Before I get ahead of myself we'll finish with a look at one of Sarissa's own Ships of the Line, painted by Gary Faulkner.
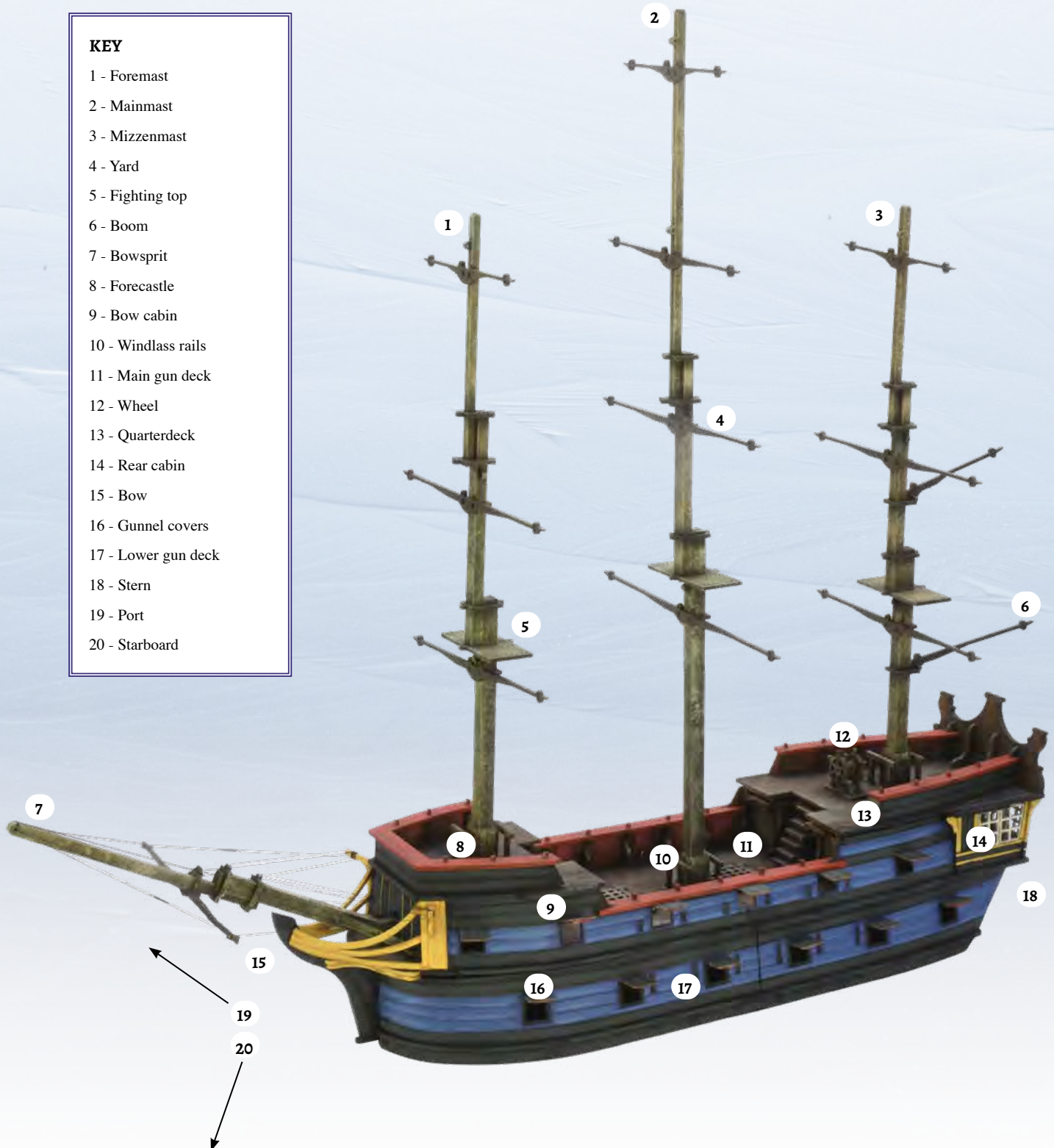
KEY

1 - Foremast

2 - Mainmast

3 - Mizzenmast

4 - Yard

5 - Fighting top

6 - Boom

7 - Bowsprit

8 - Forecastle

9 - Bow cabin

10 - Windlass rails

11 - Main gun deck

12 - Wheel

13 - Quarterdeck

14 - Rear cabin

15 - Bow

16 - Gunnel covers

17 - Lower gun deck

18 - Stern

19 - Port

20 - Starboard

"HE'S MAKING IT UP AS HE GOES ALONG!"

FREE FORM WARGAMES AND IMAGINATIVE UMPIRING

Pete Brown tears up the rulebook and brings a free form approach to his players' wargaming adventures.

Wargamers love a set of rules.

I would go so far as to say that, other than the miniatures themselves, the quest for the perfect set of rules for the period you play is the most important aspect of the game. However, no ruleset is ever 'exactly' right or covers every aspect of the war, which in turn forces you to keep buying and playing each new set as they are published on your endless quest for perfection. At least, that is your excuse and you're sticking to it.

Don't worry. You are not alone. All wargamers take their dedication to finding a perfect set of rules just as seriously. Indeed, if you ever hear raised voices at the wargames table, nine times out of ten it will be over a rules dispute. Do we play by the literal interpretation of what is written or the spirit of what is intended? Should we use the rules as they are written or should they be overruled by what actually happened historically? For example, in a recent Napoleonic game, my formed light cavalry caught a unit of French skirmishers in the open and were thrown back in disorder in the subsequent melee. Suffice to say, the views I expressed about the rules after the game would not be suitable for publication!

Yet despite rules writers making it abundantly clear that if you don't like a rule, change it, many people don't like to make even the simplest changes to what is written. Move rates, modifiers, and army lists are carved in stone, and if it's not in the rules, you can't do it. For example, when reviewing my *Black Powder* Supplement, *The Last Argument of Kings*, I remember one critic lambasting me for making the Prussian

Hussars regular cavalry rather than irregular! This, apparently, ruined the whole thing. The idea that he could change it if he didn't agree did not occur.

At the other end of the scale are Kreigsspiel games, which most wargamers will be aware of even if they have never played in one. In these games, there are very few rules, and the results of firing, melee, and morale are all decided by the Umpire on the balance of probabilities and by using historical precedent. Whilst these games can be great fun, some gamers find them very frustrating, especially those players who like clearly defined rules with predictable outcomes. Unless the Umpire is a very strong character, they can quickly descend into argument and bad feeling.

This article attempts to establish if there is a middle way. Could we use a set of rules as a basis for a game but incorporate some aspects of the Kreigspiel game, allowing the Umpire to make decisions on the fly to keep the game moving along? It was whilst pondering this question that I came across a documentary called *Secrets of Blackmoor,* which is about the wargames organised by Dave Arneson, one of the founding fathers of Fantasy Roleplaying Games.

THE HISTORY BIT

It may come as a surprise for many of you to learn that Dave Arneson, Gary Gygax, and many of the other Godfathers of modern roleplaying, began their gaming careers as wargamers. Arneson had a large Napoleonic collection, and he often hosted multi-player games in his parent's basement back in the late 1960s. Arneson was also an avid history buff, and a great deal of research was undertaken to ensure his players used the correct units with each player assigned the role of a particular historical Brigade or Divisional commander. In the early days, this was as far as 'roleplaying' went, although fluke

Above left: Dave Arneson, seated with glasses, at Gen Con 1969.

Above right: Gary Gygax, in striped shirt, at Gen Con 1969.

events that occurred during the game (such as a unit rolling a double six and fighting to the last, or another rolling a double one for the reverse outcome) were often put down to imagined characters on the battlefield, with Lieutenant Fromage leading the brave Guard against all the odds, or the cowardly Captain Flashman starting the retreat. Although not represented by a miniature, when the game was over, these tiny lead heroes had become part of the story of the battle, with players bemoaning the tenacity of Lieutenant Fromage, for example, in holding the bridge and thus preventing the flank attack. This storytelling element of the game is something that began to develop alongside another emerging aspect: Umpiring.

Given that Arneson's games took place in the late 1960s, there were few published wargames rules available, and so he and his fellow gamers had to adapt what rules they could get hold of, albeit modified with their own 'in house' amendments. Inevitably, this led to a great deal of arguments about the rules, and many of their games got bogged down as disputes dragged on and on. For this reason, Umpires had to be introduced, initially just to resolve disputes and move the games along. However, as they had little direct involvement in the game, this role became very dull for the poor saps lumbered with the task, and as a result, these Umpires began to take more of an active role. This began with simple scenario design, allocation of forces, and the assigning of objectives for the games; a role familiar to any of us who have organised games for our club. What was different was that the Umpire continued to drive the scenario after play had begun rather than becoming a passive rules

referee. To do this, they adopted a 'free form' approach to Umpiring that operated outside of the rules.

For example, a player could decide that he wanted to send out scouts to examine the terrain that his artillery was about to move across. Scouting was not covered in the 'rules', and so the Umpire would essentially have to make something up on the fly. Arneson would tell the player what happens, perhaps detaching a light cavalry squadron to undertake the mission before imparting what the scouts discover. Far from finding this a nuisance, or replying to such enquiries by the players with the stock line: 'That's not in the rules', Arneson positively encouraged his players to be imaginative in how they approached the battle.

GENERALS ARE PEOPLE TOO!

Not only would the players' command stand represent General Picton, with all the benefits that the rules impart to commanders with regard to command radius and morale bonuses, but the player was now expected to use his little lead representative as though they were the living character. What they could do exactly was only limited by their imagination and the ability of the Umpire to cope! For example, at one game, Arneson placed a column of civilians fleeing a town as the enemy army approached. One of his players moved his general miniature to intercept the column and questioned the civilians about the local terrain, fords or crossing points of a nearby river, and anything they knew about the enemy. Arneson could think of no reason why the civilians would not impart this information, and so he provided the player with the appropriate intelligence. 'Fog of war' factors were also introduced, such as not allowing

Above: Gygax and Arneson in miniature form.

players on the same side to converse unless their command stands were next to each other, something that became very common in later wargames rules.

What was slightly different here was that, as well as naming the individual commanders of the brigades, Arneson gave them individual personalities and objectives within the game. The players were encouraged to converse 'in character' and to adapt the strategy for the game ahead to suit their objectives, sometimes at the expense of the army as a whole! For example, one ACW General

Above: Picton from Perry Miniatures.

DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP

Although better known as the designers and creators of *Dungeons and Dragons*, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson began their gaming careers as wargamers but were frustrated by the lack of published wargames rules. They especially enjoyed Napoleonic Naval games, and they began to exchange ideas by post in the early 1970s about potential rules for ship-to-ship combat. In 1971, their draft rules *Don't Give Up the Ship* were published by Guidon Games and appeared in *International Wargamer* magazine before being republished as a second edition by TSR in 1975. The name comes from the dying words of James Lawrence to the crew of his *USS Chesapeake*. They were later stitched into an ensign created by Purser Samuel Hambleton and raised by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry at the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

Although the rules have been out of print for some time, games are still run at Gen Con, and there remains interest in the rules mostly because of their famous authors. However, with a play time of six hours; movement rates and turning circles that required the game to be played on the floor; the need for protractors to identify wind direction; and the 'tacking' of ships combined with complex firing tables, I doubt anyone will be rushing to produce a third edition. This is definitely a case where modern players can build on the foundations of those rules, rather than adopt them all!

Right: Mike Carr running the naval miniature wargame Don't Give Up the Ship at Gen Con in 2013.

had shares in the local railway in his previous civilian life, and his objective was to ensure that it was not torn up or damaged by his own army to prevent the advance of the enemy. He therefore had to argue against this tactic should it be suggested, even though it was the tactically obvious thing to do. On one famous occasion, two of the players on the same side had characters who did not get on with each other, and following a disagreement about tactics, they decided to have a duel whilst the battle was in full swing.

Scenarios could also be changed on the fly. If new players turned up after the game had started, columns of reinforcements would be introduced into the scenario at short notice to give them troops to command. Equally, if the

scenario was proving too easy for one side, or luck was just on their side, then the losing side could find their forces bolstered with reinforcements, or the winning side could encounter a hidden marsh or unexpected mutiny that slowed their advance. The aim of the game moved away from 'winning and losing' and more toward entertainment and fun.

ROUND THE WORLD

Eventually, Arneson started a 'worldwide' campaign, where the players took on the roles of the heads of state of various European and Colonial powers. This required a huge amount of work on Arneson's part, in which he detailed where all the ships and armies of the various powers were around the world in 1775, along with budgets, available armed forces, and even the extended

royal families of the nations involved. All this in a time before Google!

Players were encouraged to take the same free form approach to the campaign as they did in their wargames, with nothing being off the table. On the one hand, this did away with the need for detailed campaign rules, as you simply did whatever you pleased, but at the same time it required a huge amount of time to manage. As with any wargames campaign, alliances were forged, invasions undertaken, and battles fought. However, as with the battles, players were encouraged to improvise and use their imagination. When an enemy battleship blockaded an American port, for example, the player in charge requested that it be attacked under cover of darkness by troops in rowboats who hoped to take it by 'coup de main'. This led Arneson to improvise this scenario as a skirmish wargame, one that he would never have thought to play out otherwise.

BRAUNSTEIN AND THE BIRTH OF ROLEPLAYING

Eventually, Arneson ran the first of his games set in the fictional Prussian state of Braunstein. In these games, players were given roles to play out, such as the head of the Militia, the local Mayor, an enemy spy, and so on. Also, although a board was laid out and miniatures placed on it, the game revolved around the interaction between the players, who tried to achieve their objectives by bribing, cajoling, or forming alliances with the others. The Umpire had to circulate amongst the players, making rulings and throwing dice before updating them on the action.

Above: David Arneson (at the table end, leaning forward) and friends playing the Braunstein Game, April 1966.

Left: Original Blackmoor campaign book.

Below: The orginal Blackmoor campaign map.

Today we might call these sorts of games 'Committee Games' or even 'Live Action Role Play', but back then this sort of game was groundbreaking.

There is an apocryphal story that Arneson's approach to gaming was subsequently influenced by early episodes of Star Trek. In these episodes, a group of characters acted cooperatively to solve a mystery or undertake an adventure. Using his experience of running the Braunstein games, Arneson started his now famous Blackmoor campaign. Blackmoor was a pure fantasy setting, with armies of Orcs, Skeletons, and Elves replacing Prussians, French, and British. In this campaign, however, the players were all on the same side and acted cooperatively to defeat dragons and evil overlords, using an early version of what would eventually become *Dungeons and Dragons*. And the rest, as they say, is history.

WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH ME?

What has all this got to do with wargaming, I hear you ask? After all, much of what was discussed above is common in modern games. Cooperative games such as *Science vs Pluck* and *Company B* led the way in designing games where all the players are on the same side fighting against Umpire controlled enemy forces. In both of

Above: Popular games such as Frostgrave (above) and Rangers of Shadowdeep have shown that there is a market for character and story-driven games, albeit at a skirmish level.

these games, Umpires were encouraged to be imaginative in creating scenarios and when describing what the players could 'see'. The players, in turn, were encouraged to act 'in character', playing the role of Victorian Officers or tough western scouts. More recently, popular games such as *Frostgrave* and *Rangers of Shadowdeep* have shown that there is a market for character and story-driven games, albeit at a skirmish level. Unexpected events and surprise reinforcements are generally dealt with in

Right: Science vs Pluck helped lead the way in cooperative games where all the players are on the same side against the Umpire.

DOS AND DON'TS OF FREE FORM GAMING

1. **Make sure that everyone is on board**: Everyone playing in the game has to agree that the Umpire is the final arbiter and that what he or she says is law. Disagreements and arguments are to be discussed in the pub after the game!

2. **Umpires don't play**: Unless all the players are co-operating against the Umpire controlled enemy, Umpires should not control or command any forces in the game. There will be cries of bias aplenty without adding more grist to the mill.

3. **Be consistent**: If one player's cavalry took three turns to travel through the marsh, so should the next player's. If rain caused one units muskets to misfire, then all units caught in the rain should be affected. If in doubt, scribble down your decisions to refer to later.

4. **Be positive**: If you are going to encourage players to be imaginative and creative, then don't meet every idea with a 'No.' Some suggestions will be clearly impossible or historically inaccurate, but otherwise, try to allow as much as possible.

5. **Keep the game moving**: Some players, when presented with the unexpected, tend to stop, dig in, and take stock. This is not always a problem; but when everyone does it, the game can grind to a halt. Have messages arrive from the Corps commander or the King, asking for action, or messages from subordinates asking why we have stopped.

6. **Prepare well**: Everyone knows that the best way to make something up on the fly is to have prepared it in advance. Have answers to the more obvious player queries prepared, and maybe take the time to prepare player updates as typed handouts rather than verbal briefings so that you can brief lots of people at the same time.

7. **Be fair**: Unless the game is designed to put one player under pressure (such as a disguised version of Little Big Horn or Isandlwana) then ensure that both sides have equal good and bad events. It is not always about the winning, but it is about everyone enjoying the battle rather than enduring it.

8. **Engage everyone**: Try not to focus the events or storyline on one player or one side. Ensure all players are engaged and have events happen to them. Its tricky, but try not to give all your attention to the loudest player.

9. **Learn from your mistakes**: If free form does not work out the way you planned it, don't give up! Find out what went wrong. Speak to your players and be prepared for constructive feedback. Free form is not for everyone, and some of your players may prefer using the rules as written.

10. **Have fun**: That is the aim after all. Free form games should involve lots of laughter, groans, cheers, funny voices, and tall tales told in the pub afterwards.

larger games through the drawing of cards or rolling on a random events table, whilst anyone who has played in any of the Lardies' demonstration games will know that Rich Clarke is no stranger to making stuff up on the fly. So do we have anything to learn from Arneson and his 'free form' approach to wargaming? I contend that we do for a couple of reasons.

First of all, for the sake of the Umpire. If your game is between two players, both of whom are using an agreed set of rules, then there is obviously no room for free form gaming. Don't even try it. You won't be popular. However, if you are organising a game for your club that will involve three or four players a side, then the opportunity for some free form gaming exists. Traditionally, in normal games, the Umpire will design the scenario, allocate forces, and provide each of the players with his objectives for the game. However,

Above: Rich Clarke of Too Fat Lardies receiving an award for his excellent participation games at Partizan 2019.

Above: HMGS umpire extraordinaire Pete Panzeri presents a game of Custer's Last Stand. Pete is no stranger to free forming during his massive participation games at US conventions.

once the game begins, the Umpire will have little to do beyond ensuring fair play and occasionally making rules decisions. By taking a more free form approach, the Umpire can instead become an active participant. Rather than relying on cards or tables to produce random or unexpected events, the Umpire will now introduce these events at his or her discretion. Taking this approach makes the role of the Umpire much more fun and appealing and introduces 'friction' into the battlefield in a much more coherent way than any random system could.

The second reason concerns fun. Once you have played a set of rules many times, the mechanics become familiar and a little dry. You will know the 'beardy' rules to exploit and how your opponent is likely to react. Whilst the rules are still functional, they lack surprise or originality. It is often at this point that players move on to try new rules, simply to keep their games fresh. In fact, there is probably nothing wrong with the rules you are using, but they have become stale

because you are confined to play within their parameters. By using the rules as a framework for the game (firing, moving, melee etc.) but allowing the events of the battle to be story or character driven, then the game can be different every time, with players being more concerned about the story than the rules.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Of course, this approach is not all plain sailing. On many occasions, even Arneson found that some players, especially those who believed they know more about the period than the Umpire, would argue about his decisions. Interventions were classed as unfair or biased, and when the outcome was clearly going to go against them, players bailed out of the game in a good old-fashioned huff.
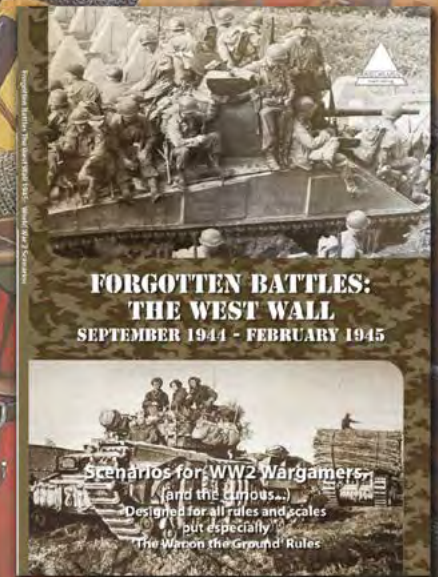
Much of this was caused by the player's need to win. Wargames, unlike Roleplaying or Cooperative games, have a winner and a loser. We are playing out these battles to defeat our opponent, and so when your powder gets wet in a rainstorm or your artillery gets lost and does not arrive 'on table', you feel the chances of winning slipping away. When these decisions are made on the turn of a card or by a random table, you may not like the results, but you have no recourse to complain as everyone is using the same rules. But, just as in sport, as soon as a human referee is introduced, everyone feels like the game is unbalanced against them and that the referee has made an error.

Try not to forget that the point of the game may be to put you, as a player, under stress. My reinforcements have not arrived, my powder is wet, and the enemy outnumbers me! This forces you to think on your feet and come up with solutions just as the historical commander had to. Equally, your objectives may have to change so that your chance of winning remains constant. For example, Custer's objectives at the beginning of the Battle of the Little Big Horn were very different from his objectives three hours later. A good Umpire will keep reviewing what you need to do to win or lose in light of the evolving situation rather than have these fixed in stone.

WHAT NEXT?

If you have not played in or Umpired a free form game then the actual practicalities of how you set it up and run it may seem unclear and a little daunting. Trust me, they are not.

In the next installment, I will provide an example of a free form game alongside advice on how to run your own and how to troubleshoot problems that may occur. Until then, start to think outside the rules!

Above: Up next - Pete umpires an Irish Rebellion game, in the August issue of the magazin

THE TYBURN JIG

As part of this month's All at Sea theme, Pete Brown goes wargaming with 18th Century smugglers and revenue men.

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson,
Baccy for the Clerk;
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
And watch the wall, my darling,
While the Gentlemen go by!

From Rudyard Kipling's *A Smugglers Song.*

Who doesn't like a good tale about smugglers? From Falkner's *Moonfleet*, through du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*, to the BBC's latest series of *Poldark*, the exploits of these 18th Century 'ne'er do wells' have been keeping us entertained for years.

With the large number of 18th Century small-scale skirmish games available on the market, pitting some wily smugglers against the dastardly revenue men seems like a fun scenario. However, on closer examination, there does not seem to be so much wargaming potential in this

genre; the aim of the smugglers was to not get caught, and if they did, to 'leg it sharpish', as I believe the saying goes, making for a good story but not such a good game. If you dig a little deeper into the history of smuggling, though, you quickly find that there were more than enough good quality punch-ups to keep your club supplied with gaming scenarios for quite some time to come.

IN THE BEGINNING…

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) had cost the British government a fortune, so it was forced to raise taxes on imported and 'luxury' goods, such as chocolate, coffee, spirits, lace, and even tea, to pay for it. These taxes could be in excess of 30%, making these products very expensive. Not surprisingly, a black market quickly grew up with 'entrepreneurs' purchasing the untaxed goods in France before dropping anchor off the coast of Britain, where smaller boats, manned by smugglers, would meet them. The goods would then

be offloaded, brought ashore, and quickly carried inland on horses and wagons.

As early as 1727, large smuggling gangs were reported to be operating along the coast of Wales, from where the goods were run into Shropshire, Cheshire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire. One revenue man described "great gangs of smugglers to the number of forty or fifty in a body (who) unloaded the ship and immediately carried the goods up into the country, fifty or sixty horses attending on the shore for that purpose". If anyone opposed them, "they were beat and abused in a most barbarous and cruel manner".

Not surprisingly, this quickly became big business with huge sums of money to be made for those prepared to dodge the customs men. In June 1734, for example, the customs officers of Yarmouth reported that an estimated 20,000lb of tea had been landed illegally in just one month, whilst the customs officer on the Isle of Man, a Mr. Sydebottom, reported that in March 1748, an estimated 40 to 50 tons

Above: A Smugglers raid on a coastal town somewhere in Southern England. The vessel is Sarissa Precision's most excellent MDF Ship of the Line. We somehow got too carried away with photos to notice we had the masts oriented incorrectly. Sorry to any naval experts we've triggered! 'Laketown' buildings by Games Workshop.

of brandy had been shipped to Scotland in one week with a further 100 tons about to depart. There was a ready market for these smuggled goods as the poorest in society could not afford to purchase taxed goods and instead relied on the smugglers to bring in these luxuries. As a result, the smugglers were often seen more as heroes than villains, with the local people often impeding the customs men in their work. Women would light bonfires on the headland to guide ships in, a practice known as 'flashing off the lugger', whilst local labourers would be employed to help unload the vessels. This could be very rewarding work. In 1733, a labourer could receive up to 10 to 15 shillings for a night's work with the smugglers as well as receiving free tea and gin; an average wage on a farm was 8 to 10 shillings for a full week of labour.

GHOSTS AND GANGS

Ghost stories were often used by the smugglers to hide their operations. At Hadleigh Castle, a pair of 'phantoms' - the White Lady and Black Man - made dramatic appearances just before a shipment of illicit liquor arrived and duly disappeared when all the liquor had been moved away. The famous 18th Century legend of the Ghostly Drummer of Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex no doubt started with some enterprising smugglers and a little phosphorus!

The smugglers also posed a threat to national security as they did not mind who or what they smuggled into the country if the price was right. As a

Above: Smugglers face off against excisemen. Figures from North Star's Muskets and Tomahawks and On the Seven Seas ranges. Buildings by Hovels.

result, smugglers were often employed by the Jacobites in the run up to, and during, the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion to bring messengers and spies across the Channel. Indeed, one customs officer complained that a well known band of smugglers, the Hawkhurst Gang, "have been so impudent as to publickly drink the pretender and his son's health, with success to their arms and confusion to his majesty King George."

The Crown soon stepped in to stop this illegal trade, sending customs officers, often referred to as excisemen or revenue men, to arrest the smugglers and seize their goods. This turned out to be dangerous work; the excisemen were nearly always outnumbered and outgunned by the smugglers, who were not shy about tangling with the law. In addition, the excisemen and soldiers were not welcomed by the local people, who saw them as the enforcement arm of an uncaring government. When employed searching wagons leaving Portsmouth for contraband and deserters in 1745, Captain Bagshawe found himself "called scoundral, villain, thief, told I should be broke like a scoundral, challenged to fight, threatened to have my head broke, to be shook out of my laced cloaths, sticks lifted at me and attempts made to strike me". The local population

did not, it would appear, appreciate his efforts. One smuggling ship was chased into Deal harbour by a Royal Navy Cutter in August 1771, but when the revenue men went ashore to examine it, "they were respectively stonned, beat, brusied, and much hurt by the people on the shore." The rest of the crew came ashore to help but were greeted "by the mob with cricket bats, stones, and staves."

Being an exciseman was not a desirable profession, and it was one that often had a limited life span. John Hurley, a customs officer from Branscombe, fell upon several women who had lit a bonfire on the cliffs, allegedly for the purpose of guiding in a smuggling ship. He mysteriously fell to his death, although the women all swore on oath that he had missed his footing in the dark and fallen whilst conversing with them. Thomas Wylde, from Wiltshire, was murdered by smugglers in 1731. Samuel Alexander, a watchman at Giles Cripplegate in Middlesex, was beaten to death whilst trying to apprehend a man and a woman carrying illicit tea. John Smith, an exciseman, died in 1768 of a gunshot wound whilst apprehending smugglers, as did Mr Dighton in Halifax a year later. The list of dead and wounded excise officers is lengthy.

SMUGGLERS ON THE OFFENSIVE: THE CROWN FIGHTS BACK

The smugglers became so sure of their ability to beat the understaffed revenue men that they often attacked Customs Houses to retrieve goods that had been previously seized! In February 1748, a customs officer wrote: "Our Officers were removing 61 bags of tea, which they had seized, to a place of security, they were pursued by twelve men with blackened faces, who beat two of the officers very cruelly and dangerously wounded the other, after which they

Above: Smugglers by John Atkinson, 1808.

rescued and carried off the tea." A Customs House was attacked in Salisbury, "leaving two of the officers weltering in their blood", after which the smugglers stopped for breakfast at a local hostelry before departing with their recovered goods! In 1767, John Buckley, the excise officer of Hastings, had apprehended a known smuggler named Stephen Bourner, "who had been arrested and carried to the excise office", but he "was rescued out of the hands of the said Buckley by the said smugglers", who were "enabled to carry off the prisoner, which they did in triumph, firing several pistols as they went along and went in triumph on board a cutter and set sail for France."

Such blatant disregard for the law could not be borne, and soon regiments of infantry and cavalry were called upon to take their turn patrolling coastal areas to apprehend smugglers and to support the revenue men. They were usually deployed as a company or a troop to a particular location, although infantry could be scattered across an area in groups of twelve men, which were referred to as a Corporal's Guard. This was the minimum number of soldiers expected to escort the revenue men about their business. Records for the Queen's Dragoons find them on smuggling duty in November 1749, whilst in 1751 the 6th Dragoons had three troops based in Colchester, working against the smugglers, and the other three were in Kent on similar duty.

Above: Excisemen (requisitioned from the French and Indian War!) corner a group of smugglers. Figures from North Star's Muskets and Tomahawks and On the Seven Seas ranges. Buildings by Hovels and scratch built. Battle mat by Kraken Wargames.

Cavalry regiments were more likely to be assigned anti-smuggling duty as the horsemen could cover more ground in the pursuit of fugitives. The infantry was used as a garrison in a peacekeeping or law enforcement capacity. In 1760, troops were deployed to support the revenue collector of the Loughrea district in Ireland as he had been attacked by a mob whilst going about his duty. Later that year, Corporal's Guards were deployed in towns and villages in Ireland suspected of being involved in smuggling, such as Ballybay, which was considered "a nest of lawless people."

As with any criminal enterprise where large sums of money were to be earned, gangs soon became more organised and better equipped, running their own ships and even taking to offshore piracy. On more than one occasion, smugglers used shore-based artillery to cover ships making the smuggling runs into Deal harbour, and a carriage gun was once deployed by the smugglers in the streets of the town itself. A Parliamentary report in 1783 found Deal to be "an emporium of smuggled goods" with the entire population, including the Mayor, helping the smugglers with their work.

Above: Above: Smugglers push into a town and take on some excisemen who are defending an inn.

The smugglers would also attack goods vessels coming into harbour and seize their cargo, and as a result, the navy had to lay on guard vessels to escort ships coming in. Naval actions were not uncommon, such as one off Deal in 1784, when the Royal Navy cutter, the *Nimble,* took on a large lugger running illicit goods into the harbour. There was an exchange of fire, and the lugger was eventually boarded and taken after a vicious fight. Four hundred and nineteen casks of gin and brandy were recovered, which earned the captain of the *Nimble* £200 reward.

Large bands of smugglers also fought battles on land to discourage the government forces. One excise officer wrote: "They come very often in gangs of 60 to 100 men to the shoar in disguise armed with swords, pistols, blunderbuses, carbines, and quarter staffs and not only carry off with the goods they land in defiance of the officers, but beat, knockdown, and abuse whoever they meet in their way." Large scale skirmishes were fought, such as at Langley Bridge, near Eastbourne, in 1720, where a gang of 200 armed smugglers fought a running battle with customs officers and local militia.

GAMING WITH SMUGGLERS

Gaming with smugglers offers a range of possibilities: skirmish games between individual figures, representing the ambush of a customs official or the rescue of a fellow smuggler from the clutches of the army, through to the misadventures of over a hundred heavily armed men in organised gangs. These bigger games can use large scale skirmish rules such as *Sharpe Practice* or *Chosen Men* to become much more practical.

The smuggler gangs were not afraid to engage government forces if the rewards were worth it and employed melee weapons, firearms, and even cannons! Scenarios could include an attack on an isolated Customs House, where a stash of seized booty is awaiting transport to London; a ship-to-ship action involving smugglers attempting to seize a well-defended cargo ship; or perhaps a classic raid on the beach by excise men when the Smugglers are busy unloading their loot. Attempts to fight the Smugglers in port might end with the local population becoming involved and attacking the excise men, and local help might come from the town to assist those being attacked on the beach. Small naval landing parties, regular infantry, or dragoons deployed for the purpose, could support the excise men.

THE BATTLE OF UPPER DENCHER

In this scenario, our dastardly band of rowdy smugglers intend to raid the customs house in the sleepy seaside town of Upper Dencher to retrieve goods seized by the revenue men a few days ago. The revenue men have gotten wind of their scheme and have sent a rider dashing to fetch the army, who will hopefully ride to their assistance!

ORDERS OF BATTLE AND OBJECTIVES

The revenue men are led by Sir Roger Daley, a no-nonsense civil servant who intends to hold the customs house for as long as he can. He is assisted in this by his loyal companion, Sergeant 'Jock' Strapp, a tough Scot from the slums of Glasgow, who is leading some rather unwilling militia.

Captain 'Dandy' Desmond Fancy is leading the smugglers, who have split into three bands headed up by his first, second, and third mates. They have brought some men armed with axes to break into the custom house and relieve it of its goods!

The government cavalry is led by Captain Harry 'The Hawk' Hawkins, who resents being sent on this policing action and is just itching to get stuck in to break the skulls of some lawbreakers!

The smugglers must drive off the revenue men, break into the custom house, and make off with the loot. Should the unit of smugglers armed with axes contact the custom house, they will begin breaking down the doors. At the start of the turn after they contact the building, place a pile of swag next to the axeman unit.

If the smugglers drive off the government forces and leave by the same board edge they entered from with the swag, they gain a complete victory. Rum for everyone! Capturing any amount of swag and leaving the board with it is a partial victory, even if the government forces hold onto the town. If the government forces defend the custom house and the smugglers leave with no swag, it is a government victory! Gin for the officers and grog for the lads!

BUILDING YOUR COLLECTION

When collecting suitable smugglers, the bulk of the rank and file can consist of the large numbers of pirates available in 28mm from a myriad of manufacturers. For the photos accompanying this article, we used pirate types from North Star's *On the Seven Seas* range.

For the excisemen, the same ranges can be plundered for smartly dressed miniatures that could pass for government officials. They can be supported by navy personnel, marines, local militia, as well as regular cavalry or infantry.

The government forces can also be supported by local militia, plundered from AWI ranges. Have a look at Trent Miniatures for Irish militia and fencible regiments that were deployed all over the country during the later 18th Century. This is an ideal opportunity to use these excellent figures if the Irish rebellion itself does not appeal. For our photos, as well as Trent, we press ganged excisemen and soldiers into service with figures from North Star's *Muskets and Tomahawks* range.

1 - North Star *Muskets and Tomahawks* range.
2 - Trent Miniatures Irish Rebellion range.
3 - North Star *Muskets and Tomahawks* range.
4 - North Star *On the Seven Seas* range.
5 - Rackham Miniatures.

TERRAIN AND SETUP

Ideally, this scenario should take place around a dock or port, but I appreciate that not everyone will be able to put their hands on such terrain. If the board features a road lined with a couple of structures (houses, perhaps a church with a graveyard, a pub - The Old Cock Inn) and, of course, the all-important custom house, which should be somewhere near the centre of the board, the scenario can be played.

Be sure to place the odd abandoned wagon, piles of barrels, hedges, low walls, and other cover to reduce fields of fire. Although this is a large-scale skirmish, we do not want to reduce it to two sides firing volleys across open ground!

Sir Roger Daley sets up his forces anywhere on the board, at least 18" from a board edge, awaiting the arrival of the smugglers. They can place a barricade across one road if they wish, although they do not know from which direction the attack will come. The barricade counts as cover for any troops deployed behind it. He may not deploy troops inside the buildings - the locals have locked their doors.

For the smugglers' eyes only! Dandy Desmond will bring his forces along the coast road, entering from the eastern edge of the board. Harry Hawkins will eventually bring his cavalry down the road from the northern board edge. Every turn after the second, roll a dice, with Hawkins' forces arriving on an odd number.

ORDERS OF BATTLE (using *Chosen Men* rules by Osprey)

THE DEFENDERS

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Sir Roger Daley	3	2	3	2	4	2	Officer
Armed with pistol and sabre. **Special Rules**: Duellist							

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Sgt 'Jock' Strapp	3	3	3	1	3	1	Officer
7 Infantrymen, drummer, and standard bearer	3	3	3	1	3	-	Infantry
Armed with musket and bayonet. **Special Rules**: Militia							

THE ATTACKERS

Harry Hawkins' Dragoons

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Captain Harry Hawkins	3	2	3	2	4	2	Officer
Armed with pistol and sabre. **Special Rules**: Lucky							

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Sgt Fritz Tightly	3	4	3	2	3	1	Officer
4 Light Dragoons	3	4	3	2	3	-	Cavalry
Armed with carbine, pistol, and sabre. **Special Rules**: Devastating Charge							

Captain 'Dandy' Desmond Fancy's smugglers

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Captain 'Dandy' Desmond	3	2	3	2	4	2	Officer
Armed with pistol and sabre. **Special Rules**: Discretion is the Better Part of Valour and Dirty Fighter							

THE TYBURN JIG

Tyburn was primarily known for its gallows, which functioned as the main execution site for condemned prisoners from the London-area from the 16th through to the 18th Century. On the day of execution, the condemned were transported to the Tyburn gallows from Newgate Prison in a horse-drawn open cart. The distance between Newgate and Tyburn was approximately three miles, but due to streets often being crowded with onlookers, the journey could last up to three hours. A usual stop of the cart was at the Bowl Inn in St Giles where the condemned were allowed to drink strong liquors or wine to steady their nerves. The large crowds that turned out for a public execution cheered any prisoners that went to their deaths heroically, but jeered those who wept or showed fear. Tyburn thus became synonymous with hanging and a euphemism for death. To 'take a ride to Tyburn' was to go to one's hanging; 'Lord of the Manor of Tyburn' was the public hangman; and 'dancing the Tyburn jig' was the act of being hanged as death was not often instantaneous and the condemned sometimes fought against strangulation for up to three quarters of an hour. Being a smuggler in 18th Century Britain was a risky business.

A TYPICAL SKIRMISH

In November 1753, Corporal Todd of the 35th Foot was involved in a raid on a small settlement in County Kerry "to take Murphy O'Sullivan, a great smuggler, who was outlaw'd by killing an Officer of the Custom, where by £500 was offered for the apprehending and takeing him dead or alive."

Todd and his men surrounded the house O'Sullivan was in and called for him to surrender. Instead, O'Sullivan and his men fired on the soldiers and "wounded two of our men out of the windows with blunderbusses." Todd's men set fire to the house, forcing the smugglers to make a run for it.

The soldiers killed two as they tried to escape, and then O'Sullivan "came out last with a loaded blunderbuss and it missing fire we shott him dead at his door." Todd and his men recovered some silver spoons from the house, which they divided amongst themselves, and were further rewarded with £4 12s each in reward money when they brought O'Sullivan's body back to Cork.

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
First Mate Mizzen	3	3	2	1	3	1	Officer
9 Smugglers	3	4	3	2	3	-	Infantry

Armed with muskets, pistols, and sabres (+2pts).
Special Rules: Guerrillas and Light Infantry

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Second Mate Poopdeck	3	3	2	1	3	1	Officer
9 Smugglers	3	4	3	2	3	-	Infantry

Armed with muskets, pistols, and sabres (+2pts).
Special Rules: Guerrillas and Light Infantry

Model	M	R	C	W	TAC	STG	Type
Third Mate Drivel	3	3	2	1	3	1	Officer
9 Smugglers	3	4	3	2	3	-	Infantry
5 Axe men (Sappers)	5	3	3	2	3		Sappers

Armed with muskets, pistols, sabres (+2pts), and axes.
Special Rules: Guerrillas and Light Infantry - melee Specialist (D3)

Smugglers on a cliff top try to lure in unsuspecting ships. Figures by Black Scorpion and Rackham.

HOW TO...
BUILD AN ARTHURIAN GATEWAY AND RAMPARTS

Paul Davies makes a welcome return to *Wargames Illustrated* with a 'How to …' guide for constructing some Arthurian/Dark Age defences.

Years ago I had an idea for an Arthurian campaign game, but I was diverted to another project and it was forgotten; forgotten that is, until I discovered my assembled but unpainted Gripping Beast Late Roman infantry and cavalry lurking unloved and neglected in my 'started but never finished' pile. Since I didn't have any other projects on the go, I decided it was time to revisit my love of the Arthurian period, not least because Wargames Atlantic had recently released their Late Roman Legionaries, so I felt that a bit of mix-and-match would be the order of the day.

One of the game elements was a gatehouse complete with ramparts to form the basis of a 'fort' or a small

defended settlement. For many people there is very little distinction between Arthurian and fantasy; to give it a semblance of historical context, I collected some information on the gatehouse at South Cadbury Hill Fort - at one point suggested as the site of King Arthur's Camelot so what better starting point?

PLANNING AND GENERAL CONSTRUCTION NOTES

My first consideration when building anything is storage because that controls the maximum size of any component. I also always ensure that doors are large enough that a based figure could pass through, and windows positioned and sized so that a based figure could shoot through them. For this project another important dimension was the height of the gateway through which a mounted figure had to be able to pass, albeit with

any lance or standard suitably dipped. The gateway also set the height for the gatehouse floor and the ramparts.

The main materials used were balsa and styrofoam, which was 'challenging' because glues that work for one don't work for the other. PVA (white glue) works for styrofoam, though the components need to be pinned together because of the long drying time… in fact I often leave the pins in place for added strength. Balsa can be glued to itself using balsa cement or superglue, but both of these will attack styrofoam. In the end, I used a combination of the above as appropriate and a hot melt glue gun. As ever, always test glues on waste material before starting on the actual components!

Usually I leave the painting of my models to the last but one stage (adding groundwork being the last), but for this project I found it easier to paint some components prior to assembly.

THE GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse frames were constructed from 6mm x 6mm balsa; the front and rear pieces are identical.

1. The front and rear frames were joined with cross pieces; the lower ones set the height for the gateway, the lower gatehouse floor, and the rampart walkway.

2. With the frame assembled, supports for the upper floor made from 4mm x 4mm balsa strip were glued in place.
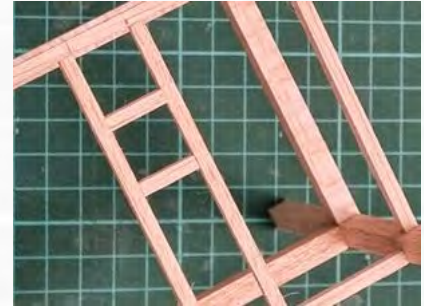
3. Additional supports were added for the hatch, which provided access to and from the upper floor.
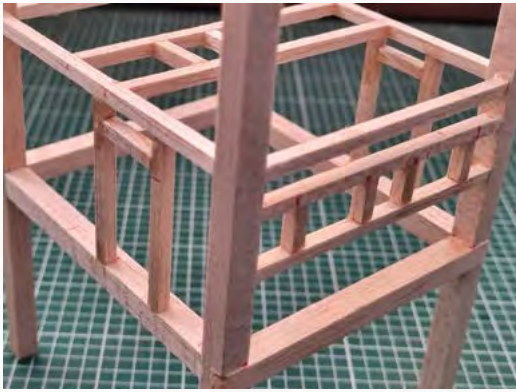
4. The gatehouse doorways provide access to the ramparts, and frames for these and the 'windows' were glued in place.

5. The first floor was constructed from balsa planks. Supports were added to the lower edges of the uprights to create a lower fixing point for the side panels.

PAINTING THE FRAMEWORK AND ADDING CLADDING

6. I painted the framework and reverse of the panel before assembly using a black undercoat drybrushed pale grey to pick out the grain in the balsa. After adding the cladding, I painted the outer surface of the gatehouse.
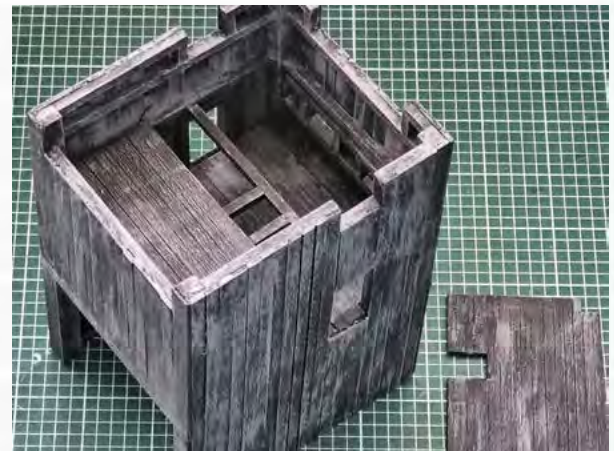
7. I made the gatehouse upper floor in two pieces so part of it could be easily removed to place figures on the lower floor; one piece was glued in position, leaving the other as a lift-out panel. Painting was as described in step 6.

ADDING GATES
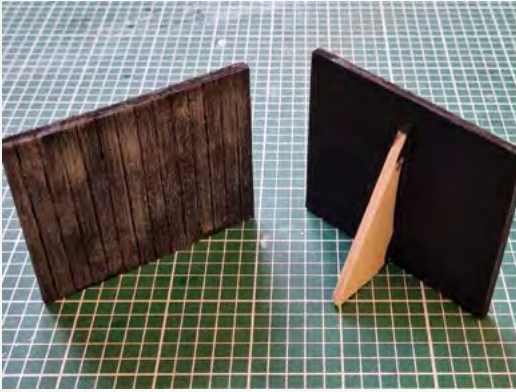
8. The single piece front and rear closed gates were each given a triangular rear support.

9. Operational gates can be tricky to make, and for a wargaming model, it is arguable whether they are necessary. I made a set of single gates for the front and rear of the gatehouse, and glued them in the open position, leaving enough space to fit closed gates made from single pieces of balsa scored to represent wood panels.

The closed gates are simply pushed into position. When I want them open, I remove the closed gates to reveal the open ones. I also decided to add some hinges to the doors from strips of black plasticard drybrushed with Citadel Boltgun Metal.

THE ROOF AND DRAGON'S HEAD DETAILING

10. The roof comprised two triangular gable ends joined by pieces of sheet balsa incorporating a gap along the ridgeline.

11. The roof was clad with short lengths of balsa sheet to simulate planks then painted.

12. It maybe a little fantastical (who knows!) but I constructed a ridge piece incorporating a dragon's head at one end. Carving the balsa was simple enough using a suitable grinding bit in my Minidrill. For the dragon's teeth, I used a piece of thin black plastic sheet; the ears were cut from separate pieces of balsa then glued in place.

13. To finish the roof, I added a suitable skull.

I made the roof detachable for a slightly less more conventional look.

THE RAMPARTS

For the front face of the ramparts, I cut two lengths of 10mm thick styrofoam, lightly marking horizontal lines with a soft 6B pencil to indicate the layers of stone and perpendiculars for where the timber uprights would fit. To etch the stonework, I used an old fine point metal-nibbed marker, leaving spaces where the uprights would be fitted.
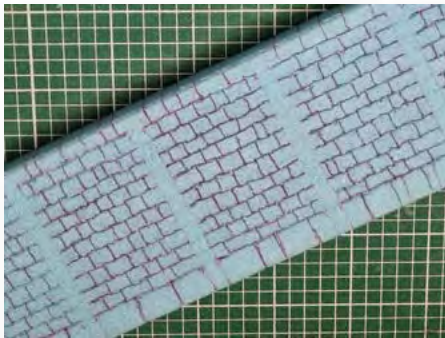
1. I roughened the styrofoam by rolling a ball of aluminium foil over the surface.
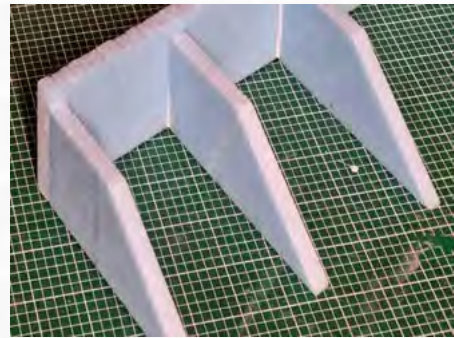
2. The upper ramparts fitted onto styrofoam profile pieces that were pinned and glued to the rear of the front wall. By matching where the timber uprights would fit on the front I ensured the pins used to aid fixing the profile pieces in place would be hidden once the timbers were added.

3. The upper ramparts were cut then pinned and glued in position, as was the sloping rear of the ramparts. The join between the rampart and slope was blended using filler.

To make painting the dry stone wall face of the ramparts and timber uprights easier, I painted both elements prior to assembly.

I painted the front of the ramparts mid grey. For my models, when painting large areas, I use Dulux Colour samplers; they have an enormous range of colours and are very cost-effective.
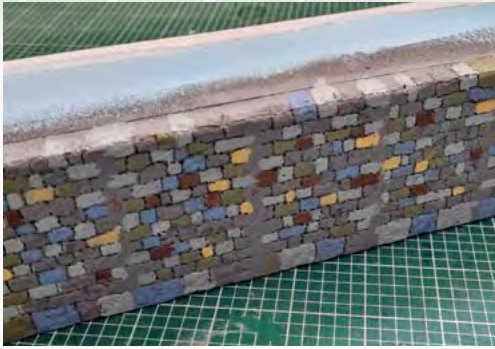
4. I randomly picked out individual stones using different greys, browns, and creams. I won't lie to you, at this point, as the photograph above shows, the wall looked really dreadful.

5. After the paint had thoroughly dried, I brushed the stone surface with Army Painter Strong Tone wash to soften the colours and blend them together so that the colour variation was more subtle.

6. Uprights were cut from 6mm x 6mm balsa. Each upright was 'notched' so that it would sit on the rampart looking as if it was integrated into the dry stone wall.

7. The uprights were all painted in the same way as the gatehouse.

8. I glued and pinned the uprights to the front wall. Apart from the main uprights, the only other visible sign of the supporting framework would have been the ends of the horizontal beams, which were notched into the uprights for strength. The pins were inserted off-centre so that they would be covered by the exposed ends of the horizontal beams.

9. The horizontal beam ends were made from 3mm x 3mm balsa about 7mm long then trimmed to fit against the wall and notched like the main uprights. Once I was satisfied with the fit, I painted them and glued them in place.

10. I added a wooden wall along the top of the ramparts fixed to the uprights. I could have cut a single sheet of balsa and ruled lines to represent individual planks but decided that individual planks made from balsa strips 2-3mm wide looked more realistic.

I painted these strips following a similar technique to the one I used on the uprights. I then glued them to the inside of the uprights using pins to hold the strips temporarily in place.
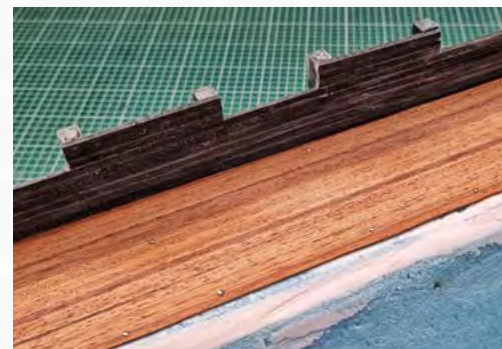
11. The walkway posed a few challenges, notably fixing balsa to styrofoam. My solution was to pin thin wood veneer to the styrofoam.

12. I brushed thinned PVA over the sloped ramparts up to and over the veneer then sprinkled fine sand and gravel over just the slope. Once the glue was thoroughly dry, the slopes were given a dark brown undercoat followed by a cream drybrush.

13. For the walkway, I cut strips of balsa, painted them, and fixed them to the veneer with superglue. I cut short lengths of balsa, PVA gluing them into the ramparts to suggest rear supports and keep the walkway strips in place.

14. To finish off the uprights, I added rear pieces and caps then painted them to match.

15. I painted the ramparts with random patterns of PVA then pressed static grass and a few pieces of sponge into it.

Needless to say, there are numerous possibilities to further enhance and individualise your gatehouse and ramparts: spare weaponry, barrels, ladders etc., just let your imagination run free.

REFERENCES

Roman Legionary Fortresses 27 BC-AD 378, Duncan B Campbell (Oxford, 2006).

British Forts in the Age of Arthur, Angus Konstam (Oxford, 2008).