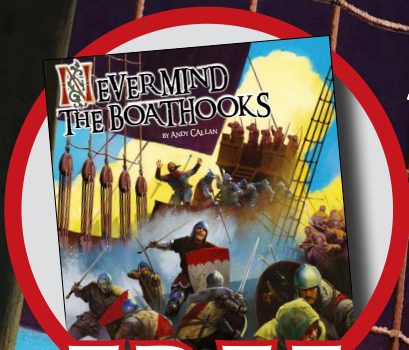


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ISSUE 426
JUNE 2023
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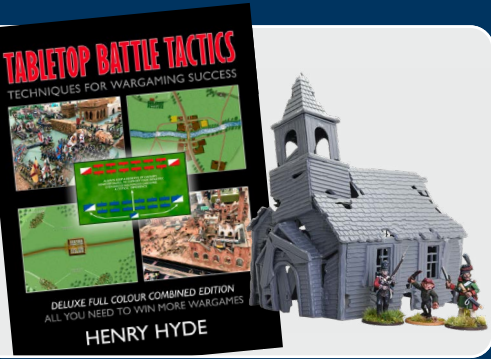


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FROM THE EDITOR

When we gave *Never Mind the Billhooks* 1.0 away with the August 2020 issue of *Wargames Illustrated*, we never expected it to evolve into a 200 page all-singing all-dancing rulebook, with 3,500 followers on Facebook and a reputation as the most fun medieval miniatures game around. We also didn't expect that it would sire a child in the form of the booklet we are giving away with this issue of the magazine: *Never Mind the Boathooks*.

Boathooks is a stand-alone set of rules - you don't need to play *Billhooks*, or even like it, to play *Boathooks*. You will need to download some free cards, and you will need some medieval ship models, that's about it. Your one-stop-shop for models is Sarissa Precision - they have you covered for the Warships and Support Vessels - but if you want to give the game a try before you buy; just use ship shaped card or paper until you decide you love the game as much as we do. Steve Wood has more suggestions for acquiring a medieval navy in his article on page 24.

On a completely different subject - Salute 50 was very good. Team *Wi* had a great time meeting readers, selling mags and subs, drinking overpriced coffee, and whizzing about the hall taking photos of the games (see page 32) and recording video interviews (see our YouTube channel). It really felt like this venerable old show was back to its best, and the UK wargames scene is all the better for it!

Happy reading and rolling.

Dan Faulconbridge
Editor and owner.

Our cover artwork this month is by Neil Roberts and is taken from your new Never Mind the Boathooks rulebook.



CREDITS

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Printed in the UK by: Warners.

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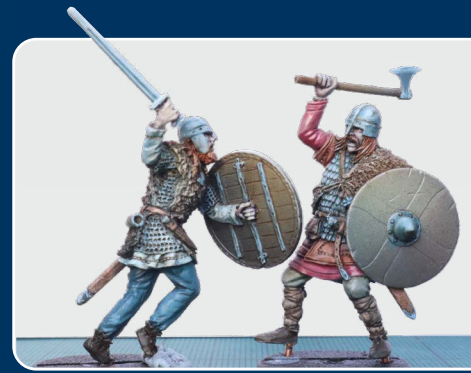
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GRAND EVENT 17th/18th JUNE

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Traditional tabletop gaming, but in real time....

Imagine a 264 sq ft tabletop laid out at a scale of 1/1000 featuring every significant part of the Waterloo battlefield. Take charge of the French, Allied, or Prussian armies representing every regiment, battalion and cannon present on the day. Now re-fight the battle in real time!

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Table shown lit for placement of infrastructure and units

You are invited to participate in the Grand Event....

We are running the event over the weekend of 17th/18th June 2023 at our gaming centre in Edgbaston, Birmingham, with all proceeds going to “Help for Heroes”. We are now extending invitations to individuals and teams to command the respective armies throughout the day.

We are looking for around 14 players for each day (7 per team) and have in mind a charge of around £95.00 per person for a full 8 hours play. Why not get friends and family to sponsor you for the day?

If you can raise more than £95.00 for “Help for Heroes” all the better! Application and sponsorship forms are available for download from our website. It should be a great weekend with lots of other fun things to do including a painting competition for children, trivia quiz and prize draw.

Your support for “Help for Heroes” is appreciated.

Bernard Cornwell has promised a number of signed copies of his fabulous non-fiction book “Waterloo” in support of the event, which we will offer as prizes.

ARE YOU UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

Our specially constructed 8m x 4m tabletop has enabled us to re-create the 32 sq km Waterloo battlefield at a scale of 1/1000. Our detailed study of historic maps has enabled us to accurately position all the main infrastructure features that were key influences on the battle's outcome. Here you will find the respective ridges occupied by Wellington and Napoleon and the high ground occupied by the French Grande Battery. The layout is a revelation in itself. We've all read about the fight for Hougoumont, but how many of us really had a sense of how far that farm was situated in front of Wellington's line to act as a breakwater against the French attack. We all know about the pivotal role of La Haie Saint in the centre of the British line, but do we appreciate the importance of the close knit defensive barrier formed by Papelotte, La Haie Farm, La Marche, and Frichermont that channelled D'Erlon's abortive attack on a relatively narrow front?



La Haie Saint

Our battlefield is designed to ask the same questions of our players as was asked of Wellington and Napoleon. There were many good reasons why the 18th June followed the course it did, but many mistakes contributed to the ultimate outcome. We are not expecting our players to re-enact the battle as it unfolded on the day, but rather to find their own path to victory. We believe we have produced as a "true-to-life" simulation as is possible on the tabletop, to be played in real time. Your strategy may differ, but you will find you are best served by employing the tactics of the day. However, the best laid plans do not always come to fruition. Will you avoid a catastrophic mistake? Will your fellow generals be the best of the best, or like Napoleon do you prefer a lucky general to a good one?



Hougoumont Chateau and Farm

SIGN UP FOR OUR GRAND EVENT NOW!

Places for the weekend of 17th/18th June are limited. Sign up now using our online Application Form. You can also download a Sponsorship Form. All proceeds go to Help for Heroes. Thank you for your support. This is an experience not to be missed.

BONUS FREE INTRODUCTORY SESSION!

A downloadable pdf of the rules will be available shortly so you can familiarise yourself with the game. Participants who sign up for the Grand Event will be offered a full day introductory session as a rehearsal for the big day - FREE OF CHARGE!

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OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames
stuff you need to know about

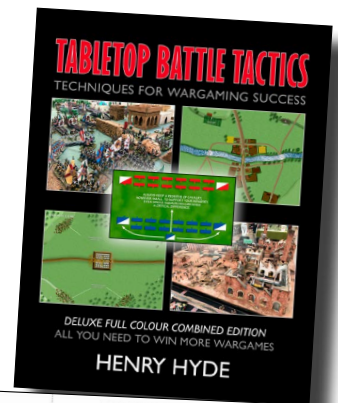
RULES, SUPPLEMENTS, FIGURES, TERRAIN, HOBBY GEAR, AND MORE

GLADIUS PUBLICATIONS -

TABLETOP BATTLE TACTICS DELUXE: TECHNIQUES FOR WARGAMING SUCCESS

Henry Hyde has been a wargames stalwart for as long most will remember; he's been a magazine editor, is a prolific blogger, and has a long list of previous publications about wargames under his belt. This book, combining books one and two of his *Tabletop Battle Tactics* series, joins his bibliography and collects articles previously published in wargames magazines, combining them for the first time in one luxury full-colour volume.

The book has been skilfully edited so the articles have a flow rather than feeling scattershot. The book's 94 pages rather pleasingly and progressively take the reader through the subject of wargames strategy in two parts. The first looks at the evolution of infantry, cavalry, and artillery tactics and how best to simulate them in wargames; the second provides a series of scenarios. On this wargaming journey you'll also see plenty of full-colour maps, and eye candy photos of games in action.



DETAILS

- SCALE: Assorted
- PERIOD: Multiple
- PRICE: £25
- FORMAT: 94-page full-colour hardback book
- AVAILABLE FROM: [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

The first chapters cover the use and deployment of light infantry and line infantry through the ages. Experienced wargamers may find the advice given here to be obvious (keep your light infantry in broken ground and so on), but there is a lot of sound advice for anyone new to wargaming. There then follows a chapter on how to play with underdog armies, such as Zulus, against better armed colonial forces. Chapter four discusses tactics for WWII infantry-based games which, at only three pages, could ideally have done with being a bit longer! The next three chapters deal with the development of cavalry tactics, with the chapter on horse and musket cavalry focussing on getting the best out of your horsemen using *Black Powder* rules. The remaining four chapters of this first section deal with the development of artillery tactics from ancient through to modern times.

Part two of the book provides seven tactical conundrums to challenge wargamers at the next club meeting. Essentially, Henry provides a scenario - such as an encounter on a forest road - with background, an outline of the forces involved, and detail on how to set up the board. Full-colour maps accompany the description, and these are very well rendered, a standout feature of the book. The author then provides the reader with an overview of how the scenario might play out using ancient armies, horse and musket forces, or some other period, such as ACW. Scenarios include 'River Crossing', attacking prepared positions, fighting in built up areas, and controlling a retreat. The last scenario is a skirmish between smugglers and Customs Officers; they are not all big battle games.

If you are an experienced wargamer then the first half of the book may not teach you anything you did not already know, but even old hands will take some positives away from the rest of the book. The scenarios are all excellent, and enough information is provided to set these games up easily at your next club meeting. Wargamers are spoiled for choice when it comes to books about the uniforms, history, and personalities of their chosen period, so it is refreshing to read a book devoted solely to the hobby and to winning more wargames. For that, Henry Hyde is to be commended.

GREAT ESCAPE GAMES - THE CHICAGO WAY BOOTLEGGERS AND PEAKY BLINDERS



We showed off some new *Dead Man's Hand* gangs last issue (and you can see The Boys in action in this issue's battle report - page 60), but Great Escape Games have more new figures on the way - two groups for *DMH's* spin-off gangster game *The Chicago Way*.

These are equally splendid figures and sculptor Mark Evans has created two sets of seven figures that look beautifully cohesive, yet have enough individual flair that they will also work well as individual models. They'll have gaming uses beyond battling for turf in Chicago, too.

THE PEAKY BLINDERS

Both sets take design cues from some notable TV show gangsters, and the first lot - the Peaky Blinders - aren't exactly going to challenge you in working out what series inspired them! Making the journey from Birmingham to Chicago doesn't seem to have changed their dress style or love for a scrap one bit, and Chicago will probably seem like a breath of fresh air compared to the grime of Small Heath!

Individual characters can be quite easily distinguished on the faces beneath their distinctive peaked flat caps, and, thanks to the muted palette, they will be a simple lot to paint and get onto the tabletop.

DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Gangsters and Wild West
- PRICE: £20
- MATERIAL: Metal
- AVAILABLE FROM: greatescapegames.co.uk



THE BOOTLEGGERS

Not quite so simple to paint, should you want to convey the flair and style conveyed in Warpfend Studios' paint jobs shown here, are the Bootleggers. They take inspiration from the criminally overlooked HBO show *Boardwalk Empire* and are led by a 28mm version of racketeer Albert "Chalky" White. This unofficial leader of the African-American community has gathered other fine-looking gangsters to the cause, some of them hiding in plain sight, thanks to the anonymity their status offers them in the city.

This gang opts for precision (with handguns) and scatter (with shotguns) over the submachine guns of the Peaky Blinders, which will make for a very different play style. The casting quality and detail on the figures is excellent, and the packs for both include a rules leaflet and special royalty Action Cards.



RENEDRA - RAMSHACKLE CHURCH AND SHIPPING CONTAINERS

It seems Salute inspires the folks at Renedra to create new plastic terrain pieces. With the show not running last year, we've been eagerly awaiting something fresh, and they've rewarded our patience with a dual drop of two very different new box sets this time around.

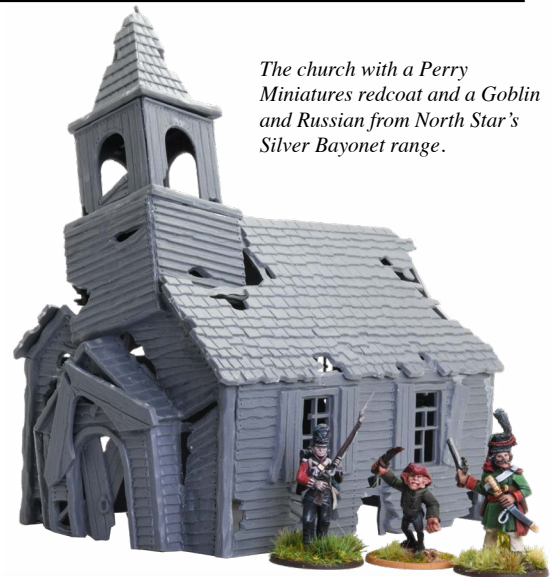
RAMSHACKLE CHURCH

This is the third in the Ramshackle series - a weather board church that will fit from the late 1700s to modern day - and it has certainly seen better days. Each new Renedra Ramshackle release has become more dilapidated and tumbledown. The barn was a bit of a mess, the house started to show more damage in its bowed roof and had plenty of holes in its walls, but the church is falling in on itself completely, and looks at the point of total collapse.

It comes on four frames, and parts are quite cleverly designed to be large yet multi-layered, looking like they are made from various depths of wood that are in a state of extreme disrepair. These hefty chunks of plastic mean constructing most of the church is quick and easy, with help from the easy-to-follow instruction leaflet. The spire (below) is far more multipart, but this abundance of pieces allows it to be a point of attention when finished, with a swinging bell as a neat extra. It looks splendid once fixed in place, precariously lop-sided and falling through the roof of the church.



Previous Ramshackle kits have included extra accessories like ladders and farming equipment, but the church is all you get here. We're not complaining, though: this is a fine feature terrain piece for £20. The scale is at a gaming 28mm, which means it'll look great on the tabletop and with figures around it, but the details such as the doorway are a bit undersized for those figures to move through practically. There's no interior detail either. This isn't a problem in games where one figure represents multiple soldiers, but is slightly small for the more granular focus of skirmish gaming. It will still feature on our tabletop for games of *The Silver Bayonet*, though, and while it sits in the Renedra America range (clearly ideal for battles in the Revolutionary and Civil War) we won't mind bringing it to Europe too, especially for some spooky games.



The church with a Perry Miniatures redcoat and a Goblin and Russian from North Star's Silver Bayonet range.



DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Late 17th Century to Modern
- PRICE: £20 for the Ramshackle Church, £10 for the Shipping Containers
- MATERIAL: Hard plastic
- AVAILABLE FROM: renedra.co.uk

SHIPPING CONTAINERS

After the showiness of the church, this release is far more utilitarian, but a collection of shipping containers (along with bonus pallets) will be useful in many modern and sci-fi games.

The containers are visually uninspiring machined blocks with openings - exactly as they should be! The pallets follow the same function-over-form design approach, though they are made of four parts and take a while to construct, as the slats, which must be glued on, are small and tricky to handle. Doors on the containers open and close if you don't glue them in place, and there is full interior and exterior detail. If you intend to paint that interior, we suggest you do so before gluing the top on.

There's an instruction guide, but the build process is fairly obvious, with one frame for the side walls, one for tops and bottoms, and one for doors in the 20-foot set. This is great stuff at just £10 for two containers and four pallets. Buy a few packs and you'll be able to set up loads of easily-painted and line-of-sight-blocking terrain. The 40-foot container (below) has extra side frames to double up the length, and costs £10 too, while extra pallets can be purchased separately at eight for £4.



Containers and pallets shown with figures for scale reference: *Forgotten Front Arctic Commando*, *North Star Stargrave Engineer*, *Empress Ultra Moderns*, and *TAG Chinese*.



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

CONTAINING POTENTIAL

We said that these containers were visually uninspiring blocks, but perhaps that's not fair, as they generate gaming and kitbashing inspiration. Battles at a shipping yard, infiltration into sci-fi storage facilities, daring raids onto captured cargo ships, and many more will be easy to set up and play without much financial and time investment. Also, thanks to the container frames essentially being different-shaped metal panels, you'll be able to use them to build a great many sci-fi creations (e.g. barricades from cut-down pieces, cladding to make other structures, vast container cities) by gluing together multiple kits.



FLAGS OF WAR - BORDER WARS FIGHTING IRISH

Steve: The latest box set from Flags of War, for their Border Wars range, covers the Irish of the period. Irish raiders were not a common feature in border reiver raids, but they would occasionally cross over into the Marches as mercenaries, hired to help the English or Scottish nobles in their border disputes. Thankfully, that's all the justification that Flags of War needed to get this great set produced!

The company's output has diversified a lot in recent years. They still make some excellent flags, but they've also started to produce various splendid figure ranges. These Irish join their nicely-developing selection to support *Border Wars* - a skirmish game that they originally funded on Kickstarter, but is now available to purchase as standard.

The Irish set comprises a mounted commander and eight figures on foot: three heavily armoured gallowglass and five kerns. Every figure is an individual with its own character and style; the set comes with profile cards to use them in *Border Wars*, and laser-cut MDF round bases are included. Just in case you didn't notice from the images here, they're a brilliant looking set of figures that exhibit the very best that modern sculpting and casting can offer.

There is some assembly required as various figures are multi-part, but this allows for some dynamic poses. The commander's horse, for example, requires you to assemble two of the legs, but in being split off the figure, the crisp casting requires minimal clean up and there's no flash between the horse legs. The connection points are all excellent, and if you are using a good quality of Cyanocrylate glue, no filling will be required. The same high standard of moulding applies to the other arms and weapons that require assembly. The fit is possibly the best that I have experienced!

Of the three Gallowglass, two are armed with the fearsome dane axes, the other with a two-handed sword/claymore. All are heavily armoured with mail and Morion-style helmets. The lighter Kern are beautifully sculpted in their *léine* linen shirts and are armed with javelins, bows, or a sword and *targe* (shield).



The only slightly odd element in the kit is that one of the two shields has visible stepping on it when you look really closely. We're being incredibly mean to even point it out though, a coat of primer will hide it.

Arcane Scenery head honcho Steve Wood has been a bit obsessed with 16th Century Irish lately; he built an army and fielded them in Wars of the Roses clashes at the latest *Billhooks BASH* (see page 50). So, who better to cast their expert eye over this new set?



Even shown larger than actual size and in his raw metal, the commander looks extremely clean and sharp.

Apart from the Kern in the Morion-style helmet, these figures could easily be repurposed for earlier conflicts. As a keen Billhooker, my instant consideration is the Wars of the Roses; these are such superb models that they will find their way into my collection, and will fight *Billhooks* battles as a part of my ever-expanding Irish army.



DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Pike and Shot
- PRICE: £28
- MATERIAL: Metal
- AVAILABLE FROM: flagsofwar.com

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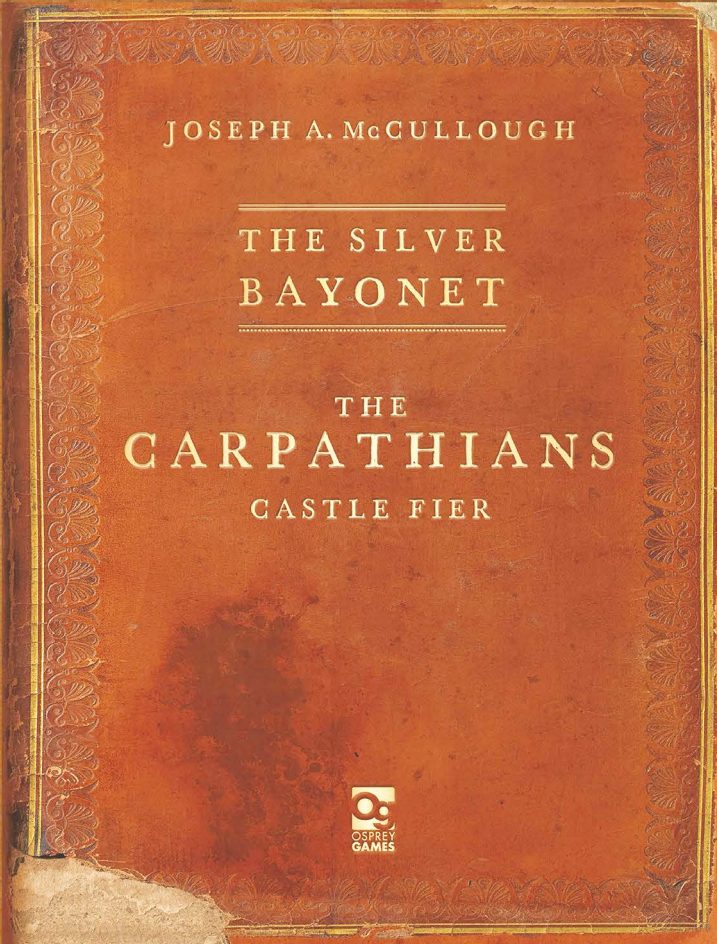
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**THE SILVER
 BAYONET**
 THE
CARPATHIANS
 CASTLE FIER

The Carpathians: Castle Fier is a supplement for *The Silver Bayonet: A Wargame of Napoleonic Gothic Horror*, in which the special units must fight their way through the ruins of a menacing haunted castle. It features two campaigns – one competitive and one for solo or cooperative play – as well as new monsters to fight, soldiers to recruit, and treasure to unearth. In addition to the rule book there is the official figure range.



Russian Occultist



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RELEASE RADAR

Dom Sore's got the latest new goodies on his radar.

ALL BUILDINGS GREAT AND SMALL

'Small' might be understating it; these 2-3mm scale pieces from Irregular Miniatures (irregularminiatures.co.uk) are tiny! Their latest micro releases are new options for Renaissance era games - a large church, clock tower, smithy, and a 'huge' set of 16 assorted residential buildings. The large church (seen below left) is well-detailed and is more like a cathedral in size, while the smithy comes as a forge attached to a large cottage. The set of 16 buildings (below) are all different and will form a nice small town or large village, depending on how you represent your urban areas. Be aware that the website is in desperate need of an update, but persevere (and scroll down) and you will find what you need.

Time flies when you're having fun, and fun is what I have been having! By the time this issue lands I should be sunning myself in Rome and taking in its wonderful buildings. This month's column starts with a section of terrain too - it's a cornucopia of architectural delights for all!



On a much larger scale are the new 28mm MDF buildings from Iliada Studios (iliadagamestudio.com). Placed in the fantasy realm by the creator, they are also useful as generic medieval or rural buildings. There is a barn, two types of frontier house, and two cottages in their new set of releases. The frontier houses have multiple sections, allowing the buildings' layouts to be redefined with every new use. They are quite similar in design, other than the position of the doors; one is on the building's short edge, and the other's door is on the long. This is the same for the cottages. All buildings have removable roof pieces, which makes them ideal for skirmish gaming. If you are big fans of MDF, check out their laser cut troops while you are there, too.



Above: Barn.

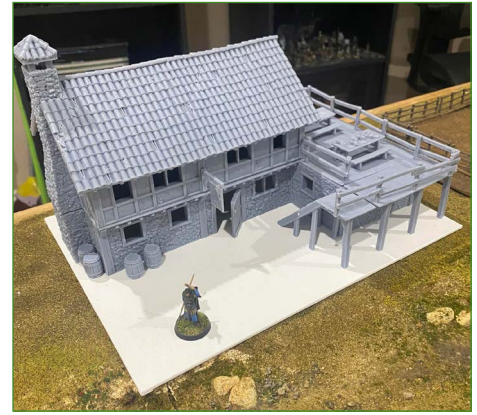


Above: Frontier House.



Above: Cottage.

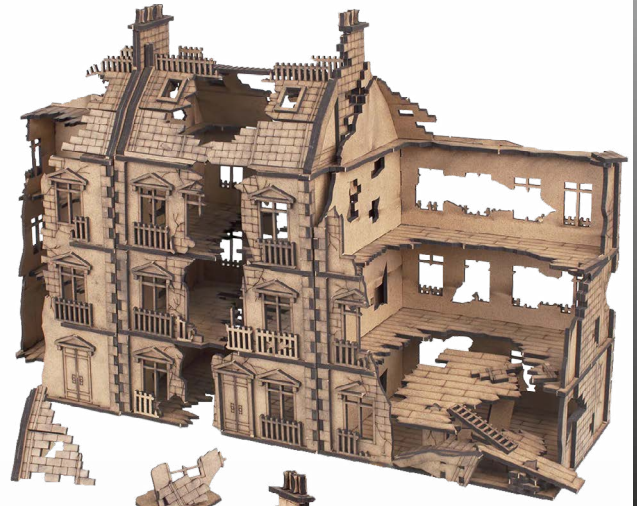
We've covered cast and MDF buildings; now we shift focus to files for 3D printing! Available from Reconquer Designs (myminifactory.com), these new 28mm stables (below right) are a magnificent advert for what 3D printing can accomplish. The set comes as three stable stalls within a stone structure with a tiled roof, and you get fences to make a paddock, along with water trough, small cart, and a large pile of manure. It's the extra details that count! There is some excellent detail to the kit, including tack on the walls and tools sticking out of the manure pile. Given that the stalls aren't attached to the structure, you can play around with layouts so they are outdoor stalls, or print two and have indoor and outdoor versions. It is easy enough to have the outdoor stalls surrounded by fences to make a nice pigpen, although nice and pigpen are not two words I would normally put together!



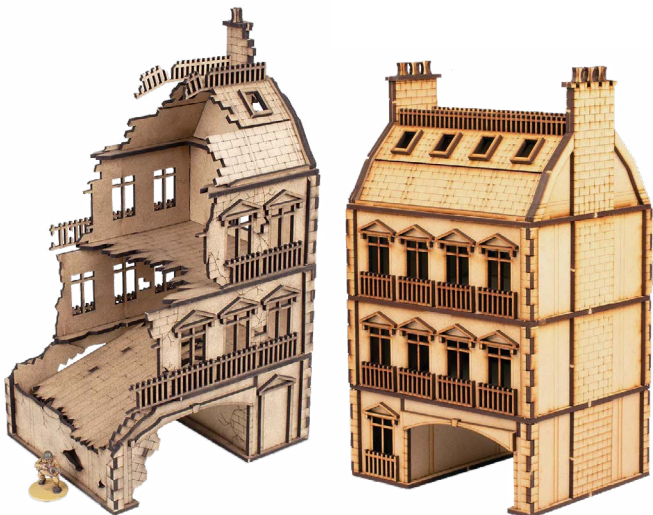
If Reconquer's stable is good, then their 28mm scale inn is even better. It is spread over two floors with a removable roof, and floors that can sit in place without glue, allowing access to all areas of the interior. It also has a small outdoor terrace and a load of accessories included: a bar, shelves full of goods, beds, tables, benches, stools, windows, and signs. This is everything you could need to make the inn your own and to add character to many more buildings in your collection, too. Credit to the sculptor for this terrain work of art; I'm looking forward to what buildings they produce next.



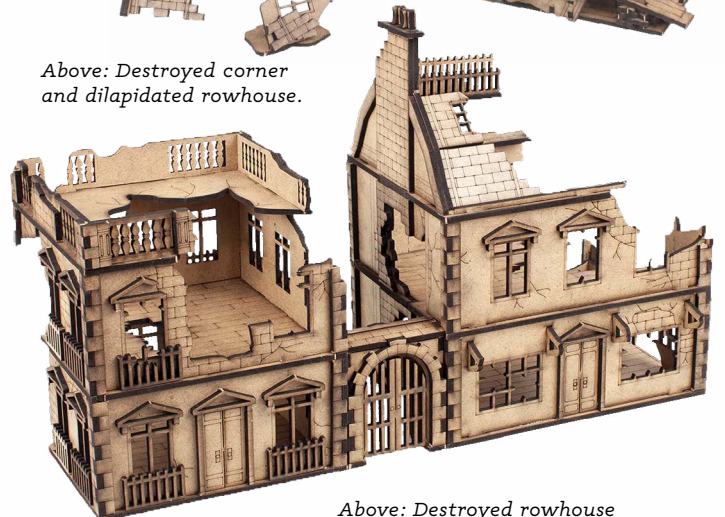
Had enough of me talking about perfect buildings? Respite is here... these ones have been ruined! TT Combat (ttcombat.com) produce a large range of reasonably priced MDF kits already, and they've recently added some ruined variants which they describe as 'Destroyed': a rowhouse arch, corner and dilapidated rowhouse, café and terrace, and two-storey house and corner shop. All but the arch rowhouse consist of multiple buildings that you can mix and match and have varying amounts of damage. These will add a little realism to your war zone, and are great value for money. Even better, you can get intact versions of the buildings, too, and with a little extra effort you can make for a memorable pre- and post-bombardment look in your campaign games (see the two rowhouse arch kits below).



Above: Destroyed corner and dilapidated rowhouse.



Above: Rowhouse arch in its two variants, 'destroyed' on the left.



Above: Destroyed rowhouse cafe and terrace.

Finally, something fascinating from Brutal Cities (brutalcities.com), who make great MDF terrain and are now embracing new technology. They've turned their terrain pieces into digital assets you can use in augmented reality via your phone camera, to see what the terrain will look like within your own board's set up. You can check if it will match your current items or stand out in just the right way, and all without having to spend a penny first (below). This is a superb way for customers to 'try before they buy', and it is genuine innovation within the industry. Even if it isn't something you might want on your tabletop, it's great fun to have a play with, so I recommend taking a look! Hopefully the scale boosted life size versions will still be available for you to mess around with, too (right).



GETTING THE HUMP WITH CHARACTERFUL VICTORIANS

If you haven't looked at V&V Miniatures (vminiatures.com) before, you really should. They combine top-notch casting with excellent sculpts to produce premium figures that deserve to be the centrepieces of your army. Their new Arab Camel Riders (below) are no exception, coming as a set of four outstanding 28mm scale figures. The sculpts are nearer truescale so expect them to be slightly taller and slimmer than many of the comparable figures from other manufacturers. The camel mounts are wonderfully posed to look like they are in motion, and all four riders and camels are unique sculpts. The men are armed with spears/javelins and sporting shields, and there are many small details present that will reward careful painting. Remember, kids: two thin coats! [I think that catchphrase is already taken, Dom - Ed]



Completely unrelated to camels: another lot of smashing-looking figures are the new Victorian Characters from Brigade Games (brigadegamesminis.com). There are three packs of three figures in this release, all produced in 28mm scale metal, and every last one is bursting with character. Kudos to Mark Evans for the sculpts, which have a Mark Copplestone kind of charm and very satisfying chunkiness to them. All come armed in some way, and they will remind you of characters from TV shows or movies without being direct copies. One of them definitely reminds me



of Tom Hardy in *Taboo*, but you will need to let me know what the rest put you in mind of. These will be great for any Victorian skirmish game like *In Her Majesty's Name* or *Dracula's America*. You could even push them into a later period as there is always someone wearing old clothes, even these days.



WWII HEAVY HITTERS

Two big releases from MarDav Miniatures (mdminis.co.uk) have my attention, starting with big guns for the Finnish Army. There are seven new items in this release, which should be enough heavy firepower to satisfy even the most demanding of gamers with the biggest of tabletops. By 'most demanding gamer' I mean me... and yes, on this rare occasion I am satisfied! The 20 ItK/35 AA gun, 76 ItK/28 B AA Gun, M1897 75mm Light Howitzer, M1913 105mm Medium Howitzer, C17S 155mm Heavy Howitzer, 75 PstK/97-38 Medium AT gun, and 75 K/40 Heavy AT Gun make the full set, and this lot will create more boom than any standard 6'x4' table could possibly contain. Although these sound Finnish-made, the names are simply Finnish designations of the various Italian, Swedish, French, and German artillery pieces they purchased for their army. Each set comes with relevant crew, and a nice touch is that the three Howitzers also get spotters, which will save you having to find a figure in your existing force to deputise.



Above: Finnish Heavy AT.



Above: Finnish Light AA.



Left: Finnish Heavy Howitzer.



Left: Finnish Heavy AA.



Above: Soviet BT-7a.

To face the Finns, MarDav have also released an expansion to their Soviets. Seven new releases here too, plus an update to one previous release. The new items are the BT-7a, 45mm AT Gun, Commissar, Medic Team, Flamethrower Team, AT Rifle, and SMG Squad, while the T-20 Artillery Tractor has been updated. The BT-7a is a mainstay of early war light armour units, and somehow lasted throughout the war, even if it was already obsolete when the war started. The other items are ones no self-respecting commander would leave home without, especially the AT Rifle. If you play Warlord Games' *Bolt Action* these are very effective weapons; you can even take a Panther out with them if you are lucky.



Above: Soviet 45mm AT Gun.



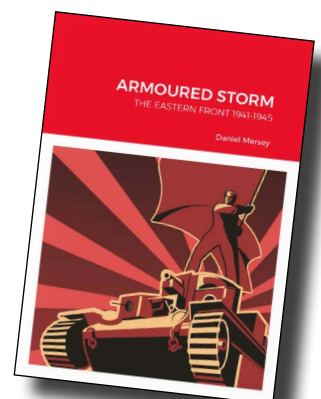
Above: Soviet Medic Team.



Above: Soviet AT Rifle Team.

The last of the World War Two items is the new ruleset from Daniel Mersey - *Armoured Storm: The Eastern Front* (wargamevault.com). This downloadable PDF book builds on the prolific author's previous ruleset *Armoured Storm: The Desert War*, so if you have played those, you'll have a good idea what to expect. In fact, if you have played any of the rules from Daniel you will know what to expect - these are not simulation style rules, they are fast play and, as is written in the intro, they are "not intended as a serious study of tank warfare". They do not go into deep detail, but they are clear and concise; there are no points, no restrictions, and no onerous tables to detract from your fun. Think childhood games with speed and enjoyment at the forefront, as opposed to working out penetration abilities of shots at specific ranges against depth of armour. Although there are rules for infantry and artillery, as well as air support, the goal of the ruleset is to get lots of little tanks trundling about. At that they succeed and, as you can probably guess from the title change, this time the theatre is different, bringing along some new rules and different tank stats.

Until next time, fare thee well, and happy gaming!





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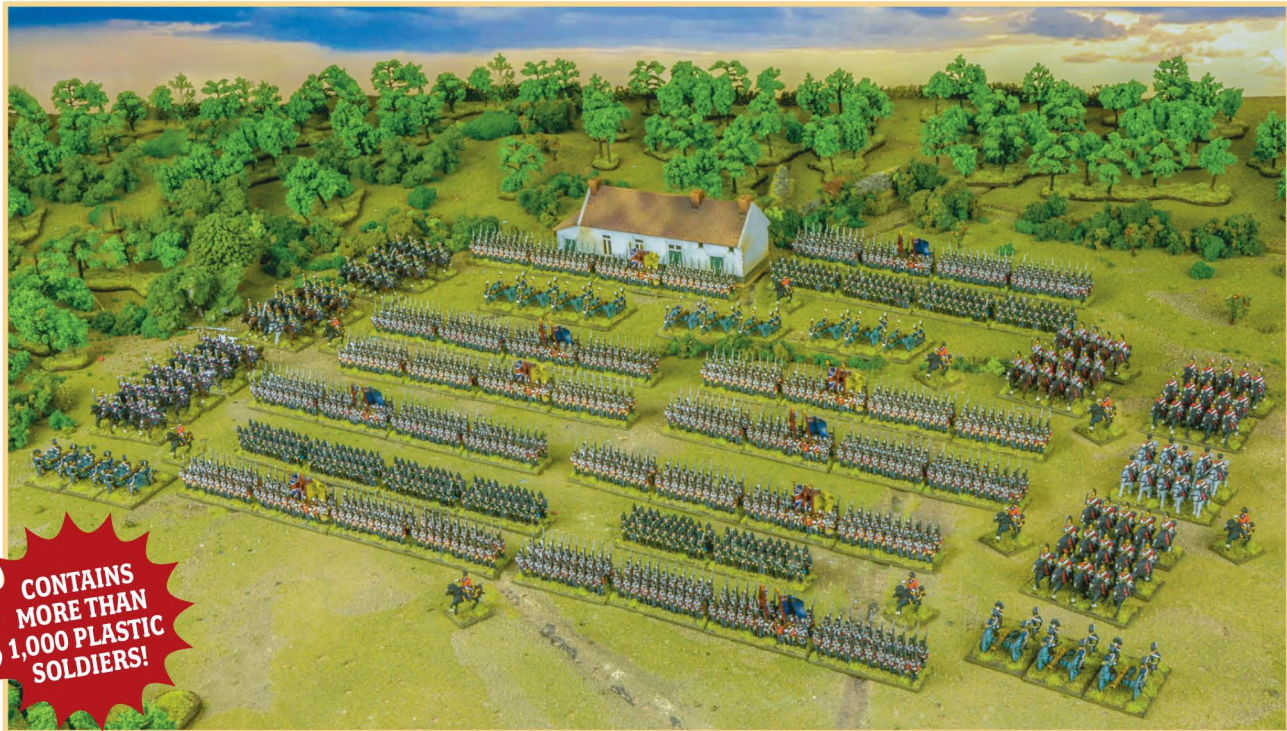
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QUICK FIRE!

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

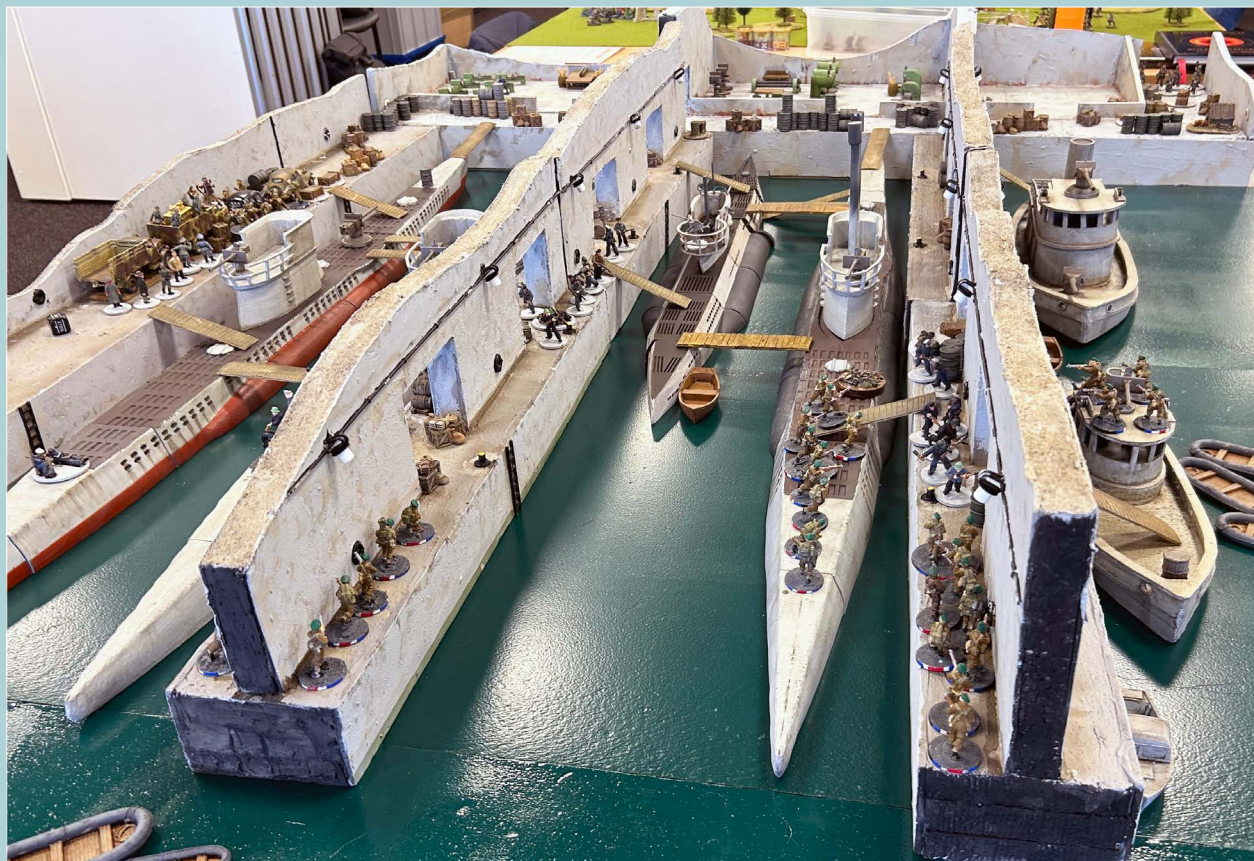
RESCUE THE ARK

By Ronald de Bruijn

After a few years of absence, the BoD (our club) put on our Big Battle Day in Utrecht. At this annual event various club members play or organize a battle that is larger and more standout than you'd get to play during a normal club evening.

The idea for my table first hit me after I came across a 28mm U-boat online. I've always been interested in the St. Nazaire commando raid, so I ordered one. A few years, many hours spent measuring and planning, countless Styrofoam bits, and plenty of painting time later - this is the result.

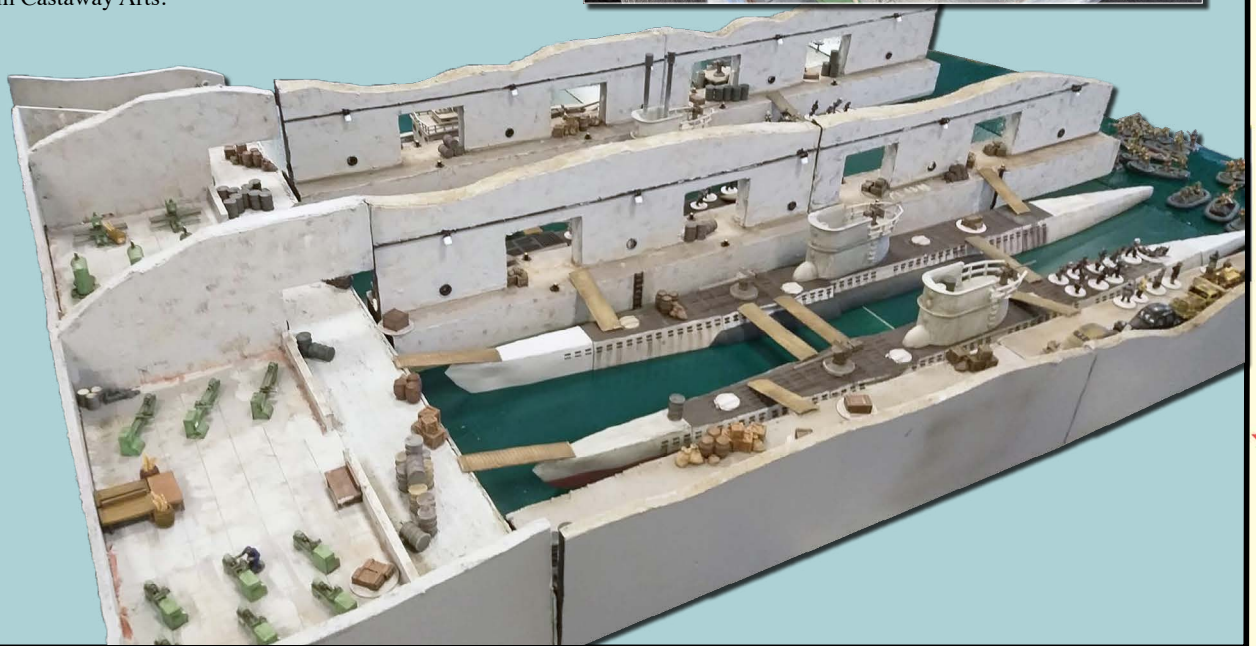
The objective of the battle for the British Commandos was the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, which had just been freshly unloaded from the U-boat and put on a Nazi truck. If the British could capture the Ark and escape in their rubber dinghies, then they would emerge victorious. The German objective was to drive the Ark out of the bunker in their convoy, from left to right, so it could be delivered who knows where for some nefarious purpose.





The British Commandos had a hero, Indiana Jones, who could appear anywhere on the table (because he can!) with ten bonus Commandos. The Germans also had a hero, Captain Meinard Stubbing, father of the famous *Love Boat* captain Merrill Stubing. Unfortunately, he became the forgotten house rule in the excitement of the battle - his arrival was supposed to stall the fighting - and the Commandos had no problem capturing the Ark of the Covenant and transporting it to England where it remains to this day.

The table will probably never be finished as I'll continue adding details. It currently contains a variety of products from Anyscale Models, OTP Terrain, Charlie Foxtrot, Empress Miniatures, and Warlord Games. The Ark itself is from Castaway Arts.



MORE **QUICK FIRE!** PLEASE!

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

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

Send your emails to: wi@wargamesillustrated.net

Use the subject title 'Quick Fire!'.

BERM BABY BERM!

By Jim Morgan

Berms are flat, raised barriers with thick mounds of dirt to absorb the impact of bullets and armor-piercing shells; they provide hull-down firing positions for tanks, guns, and infantry. After invading Kuwait in 1991, the Iraqis built vast lines of them along the Saudi border to protect their ill-gotten gains and Russian bulldozers heap them up in Ukraine to protect theirs.

Berms aren't sexy, just practical. To an attacker, head-on assaults may be costly, even suicidal, and the onus is on the attacker to outflank them (like the Desert Storm coalition did) or rain down fire on defenders from above (using drones and precision ammunition strikes).

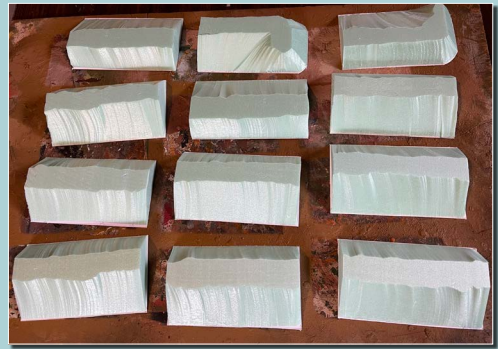
Arab/Israeli and Oil War battles are popular at GAJO Games; unfortunately, the store's berm count was zero, so my friend Craig, knowing my lust for models always outstrips my budget, offered me the chance to swap some of my scratch-built terrain for cool minis. I got to work!

The specs: 6" wide, a steep forward slope, a gradual rear slope so that defending tanks can ascend from hidden to a hull-down position, sand texture, and desert colors. The project called for 1" thick, 24" x 24" insulation foam board, matte-board (for a durable base), special foam glue, white glue, sand, and acrylic paint.

I cut out 6" x 3.5" rectangles from the insulation and matte boards and matched them together with foam adhesive, placing heavy books on top to 'berment press' them until they cured. Next, I used a hot wire cutter to carve along the front edges at about 45°, leaving an inch of flat space on the top. I tapered the remaining 1 1/2" slopes down to the rear edges. That formed the basic shape for twenty pieces, and I also tapered corner pieces for flanks.

The application of sand was the messiest step as I brushed each berm with a thick coat of white glue and poured sand on the upper surfaces. A few spots needed filling in - the foam isn't always friendly to the glue - and I had to touch-up where my fingers gripped the piece. I let them dry overnight, then shook off excess sand prior to painting. Finally, I sprayed brown acrylic paint over the whole surface (the glue/sand coating kept the foam from melting when the aerosol hit it), then drybrushed on Territorial Beige and Trail Tan to make the sand texture pop and accentuate ridge lines and imperfections.

The project materials aren't costly, and the pieces are straightforward to build, but it's a labor-intensive effort. I ended up with twenty-four new berms to make twelve linear feet of faux earthworks for the tabletop.



Above: Half of the finished berms.

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BUILDING A MEDIEVAL NAVY



Steve Wood is our man at the helm, guiding new players as they set sail into their *Boathooks* army building adventures.

Welcome to the world of ballingers, barges, carracks, cogs, galleys, hulks, and great ships! *Boathooks* is here and it brings plenty of exciting new possibilities to your late Medieval gaming. Due to the lack of clear information on boats of the time, however, it probably brings up a lot of questions too. There is very little documented detail of the ships used in this period beyond a few examples of well-preserved wrecks, along with illustrations and accounts in contemporary chronicles.

There were no formal navies as such; the kings of England would 'requisition' ships for invasion and defence as the need arose. Very often, these were simply merchant ships that were modified with the addition of a stern castle, fore castle, and (if possible) a fighting top.

Naval warfare was largely an extension of land warfare but (I'm not going to shock anyone here!) fought on the sea. In effect, the naval battles consisted of two or more enemy vessels exchanging missile fire - arrows, crossbow bolts, rocks, sharp objects, harsh words, etc. - before grappling and coming together. A boarding action would follow, becoming a kind of 'land battle', but across the decks of the ships. To some degree, your ships are large movement trays but the units inside operate under some extra special

A DISCLAIMER!

This article is not a guide to building accurate scale models of medieval sailing ships. The vessels highlighted here were perfect for playtesting the naval version of Andy Callan's *Never Mind the Billhooks* and are now perfect for use in the official *Billhooks* expansion those playtest sessions led to - *Never Mind the Boathooks*.

As such, the ships are mere representations of the types of vessels that were around at the time. They are 'crewed' by 28mm figures for gameplay purposes, but the ships are certainly not scaled to 28mm or 1/56th. They have been quite drastically reduced in size to make the gameplay practical.

Henry V's great ship *Grace à Dieu*, for example, was massive in real life - 66 metres long and 15 metres across the beam - so she would scale down to a model 1.2 meters long and almost 30cm across the beam at accurate 28mm scale. There wouldn't be much space on the average wargames table if an accurate scale replica was built!

A further consideration is that the gameplay in *Boathooks* requires the ships to fit into relatively small squares, so my version of the great ship is just 10" long.

In effect, the ships are used as 'fancy' movement trays for the troops but hopefully convey a sense of what a naval battle at the time might have looked like.

rules... oh, and there is nowhere to retreat to if you are on the losing side of a scrap!

Accuracy fans may bemoan the lack of historical detail, but to my less exacting mind, medieval naval combat is ideal for wargamers. We have enough information to construct opposing forces but not enough to get bogged down in the detail; that leaves our games free to be boatloads of fun and we need never drown in the minutiae of 'how did they do that?' and 'who did what?'

A PROBLEM OF SUPPLY

There are only a few commercially available 28mm scale ships with which to build your fleet, so the new *Boathooks* player faces a similar problem to the one medieval monarchs did - a shortage of available vessels to carry troops to victory. Have no fear, with a little imagination, some modelling skill, and not too much expense it is possible to build a fine fleet. You'll be ready to smash a metaphorical bottle of 28mm bubbly over the bow and sail off on your maiden *Boathooks* voyage in no time!

Right: This plate shows English soldiers somewhere in the English Channel in the 1410s. They are to act as marines to drive French ships out of the Channel and protect the shipping lanes. By Graham Turner from Henry V and the Conquest of France 1416 - 53. © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com



FIT FOR GAMING AND PERIOD APPROPRIATE

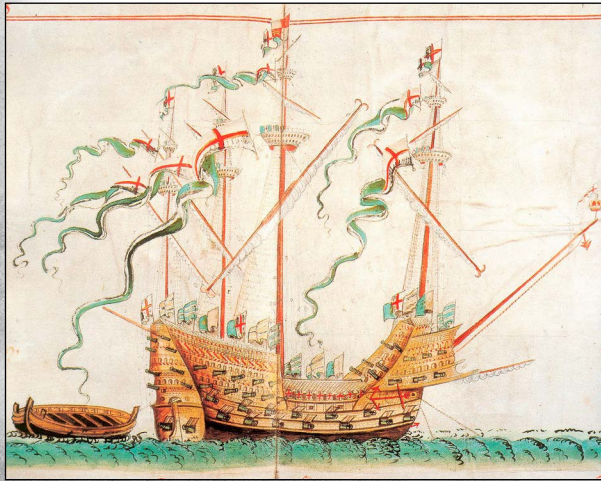
Durability is of prime importance and, as we are building models that will be pushed around a wargames table, they need to be practical to use too. As such, I have dispensed with anything too breakable - rigging will simply get in the way when moving figures, so it has largely been left off the ships suggested here. Likewise, the sailing crew and oarsmen are not represented. They are assumed to be part of the fighting complement or too busy running the ship to be involved.

It's important to keep the timeframe of these naval battles in mind when choosing ships too. *Boathooks* is about the

Left: A miniature of the battle of Sluys from Jean Froissart's Chronicles, 15th Century.

THE GRACE À DIEU

The *Grace à Dieu* was the largest ship on the sea when she set sail in 1415 and remained so until the 17th Century! Her dimensions were truly remarkable. At 66 metres long, she was only three metres shorter than *HMS Victory*, her beam was 15 metres wide, just 70 cm less than *HMS Victory*, and she weighed in at about 1,400 to 2,750 tonnes.

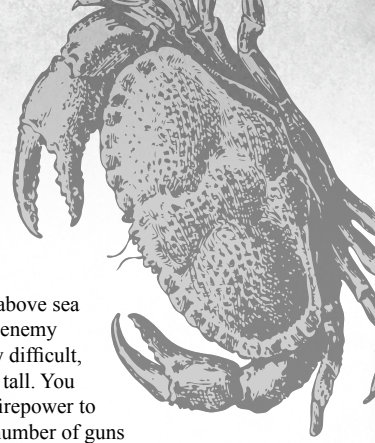


The forecastle of the ship stood 15 metres above sea level, allowing her archers to fire down on enemy ships while making boarding her extremely difficult, and the main mast was probably 50 metres tall. You might expect a vessel of this size to boast firepower to match that of *HMS Victory*, at least in the number of guns (over 100 on the more modern vessel) if not overall power. Nope! Despite her massive size, the *Grace à Dieu* carried only three small guns.

The wreck of the *Grace à Dieu* still exists and can be seen at low tide in the River Hamble at Bursledon. To find out more I recommend watching the *Time Team* documentary filmed in 2004. It is still available on YouTube:

[youtube.com/watch?v=vSpow0idVKM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSpow0idVKM)

Left: The *Grace à Dieu* as reproduced in *The Anthony Roll of Henry VIII's Navy*.



naval battles that took place (and can take place in 'what if?' encounters) during the Hundred Years' War up to and including the Wars of the Roses. In other words, these conflicts occurred in the period before gunpowder weapons began to dominate on the seas. Gunpowder was a dangerously new technology, not yet adapted to naval warfare. Where they were present, guns were fixed to the deck or hooked over the handrails and tended to be small anti-personnel weapons rather than ship killers.

The battles that Andy and I began playing were loosely based on the battles of Sluys, 1340 and Winchelsea, 1350 (or the Battle of Les Espagnols sur Mer as it was known). These were the main battles of the time, although there were many more minor clashes, particularly where small convoys of merchant ships were attacked and captured. Piracy was very much a booming business!



Above: Boathooks in the early days with scratch-built ships.

Below: See more on the making of Steve's Galley on page 66.



BUILDING YOUR FLEET

SCRATCH BUILD

Bearing in mind the caveats and disclaimers above, the easiest and cheapest way to create a suitable fleet is to scratch build your ships. This might sound daunting, but it can be as complicated or as straightforward as you wish to make it. We are playing a game, not making museum pieces, and you can make a passable cog hull from a suitably sized piece of balsa or soft wood. Round it off at the stern and make it pointier at the bow, add some fighting platforms made from cardboard, and paint it in suitably bright colours and you have your first boat.

This is exactly what Andy Callan did to make the first fleet that we used for playtesting. Barbeque skewers and cocktail sticks made suitable oars and spars, coffee stirrers were perfect planking, and even used McDonald's sauce containers became fighting tops!



Above: Paper boats take on more complex builds but don't look at all out of place. The boat in the foreground is a pinnaceskiff, made from a scaled down (75%) version of the Viking Longship in the Paper Soldiers 1066 book.

Once painted, with flags and shields added, along with your army figures as crew, the simplest ships will look great on the tabletop. For those of you who are a bit more ambitious, turn to page 66 to follow my instructions for building a simple galley.

Once you've got the hang of the build in my galley article, you'll be equipped to take on any other medieval vessels you desire. I built my great ship from scratch with foamboard, greyboard, plasticard, and balsa. There were no plans; I based it on the illustrations that I had and made it up as I went along!

PAPER MODELS

Peter Dennis has a great selection of paper ship models in his Paperboys range. You can download the medieval range at:

peterspaperboys.com/collections/28mm-ships

At just £3 per-ship (and you can print as many of each as you need) this represents a very cost-effective way of assembling a fleet. Even better, you don't need to paint them, as master painter Peter has done this for you! There is even a free PDF guide showing how to build them adding a little extra value.



Right: Paperboys Small Medieval Merchant/Warship, complete with the addition of a Fighting Top, made from a McDonald's ketchup tub.

MDF KITS

My favourite MDF model manufacturer, Sarissa Precision, have had a Medieval Cog Sailing Ship in their range for a while, but hot off the press is the news that they have just released two more medieval vessels ideal for *Boathooks* action! All Sarissa kits are designed for wargaming use and, as such, are straightforward to build, and practical and robust after construction.

I replaced the mast that comes in the kit with dowel so that I could fit a fighting top to my ship. You can then comfortably fit a fighting contingent of twelve Bowmen and twelve Men-at-Arms or Billmen on board.



My enhanced Sarissa Cog.



The Sarissa Precision Cog.



Above: Some of the extra detail I added to the kit - a dowel mast and fighting top. Find out more by visiting my blog at arcanesceneryandmodels.co.uk.

OPPOSING FORCES

The *Boathooks* rules call the opposing fleets 'English' and 'French', but you are free to expand the naval actions to take in other nations and conflicts across the world. The focus of the simple ruleset is to make a generic and easily playable late medieval (14th - 15th Century) game at sea but there's nothing stopping you from expanding and tweaking the rules to fit within a different period or ruleset. Perhaps that Viking ship (and more like it) could take to the waves centuries before the time of *Boathooks*.

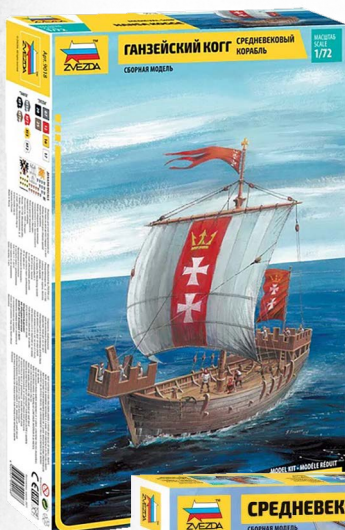
PLASTIC KITS AND OTHER OPTIONS

There are three plastic kits that come to mind as somewhat suitable for our needs. The first is the Zvezda Kit of the Medieval Hansa Cogge. It is designed to be a display piece rather than something for use on a wargames table and even at 1/72 scale it is a massive 40cm long so it's not quite the size we're after, but you could always up the size of your board!

It can thankfully be built as a waterline model as well as with a full hull and the detail is quite superb. What is pretty to look at will soon be broken if being used robustly in a game though - those lovely plastic spars and rigging will soon be in bits - so take care if you opt for this model, and be aware you might need to scale up your board grid.

Zvezda also make a nice little medieval lifeboat. Again this is in 1/72 scale but it will be useful as a 'jolly boat' or skiff.

At 1/50 scale the Revell Viking ship is perhaps more robust and better suited to wargaming. It will need a bit of conversion work to use as a medieval ship, but the potential is there. It is, of course, ideal for your Viking force if you have one and will make a superb centrepiece! Again, at 30cm long, it is a bit on the large size for our purposes, so as well as adding a forecastle and stern castle, you might need to cut it down!



Left: A small support vessel can be used as a sort of marine skirmisher, or to ferry reinforcements to warships. These basic vessels have a small fighting band of six figures and no castles or fighting tops. The Zvezda lifeboat could represent such pinnaces or ballingers nicely.



BUILD LIKE ANDY!

We're onto 'other options' now and the first is a difficult suggestion to act on; be Andy Callan! Andy is a genius when it comes to adapting toys and other miscellany for use in wargaming. He took a toy pirate ship and with a few simple modifications, he produced a passable cog for our playtests, and he even made seagull play markers from tile spacers!

If you can't 'be' Andy, then you can certainly take inspiration from him... or join the *Billhooks* group on Facebook where you could ask him about his boat and gull creations directly!

STL SHIPS

Another option is 3D printing; I hear that *Wargames Illustrated* are working on *Boathooks* STL files to be offered to *WiPrime* Subscribers through *WiDigital*. Those should be just right for gaming robustness at the perfect playable scale when they arrive.

WOODEN BOATBUILDING

For those of you that want to produce a more accurate scale replica of a medieval period ship, I have come across a very interesting range of wooden kits - Shipyard. They are again in 1/72 scale, but these seem to be of museum quality. I don't think that they will make particularly practical gaming pieces but if you fancy a challenge, then it might be worth seeking this range out and having a play. See more at: model-shipyard.com

I hope this article leaves you excited, inspired, and ready to take your *Billhooks* army to sea in whatever vessels you end up requisitioning. Expanding your battles to water-based clashes will bring new campaign options, add a whole host of extra tactical considerations to combat, and (if my games are anything to go by) lead to some truly memorable moments. Just remember to be sympathetic to any landlubbers suddenly suffering from seasickness and keep your Men-at-Arms away from tumbling overboard; those suits of armour don't float!



Left: The 1:72 scale *Wütender Hund* - *Kogge von 1390*, by Shipyard.

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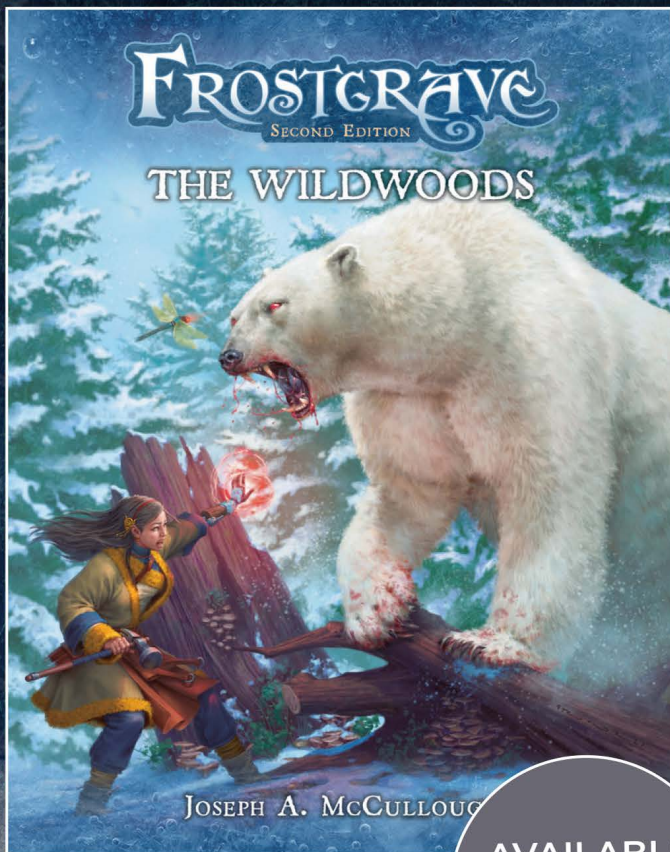
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This supplement for *Frostgrave: Fantasy Wargames in the Frozen City* takes players beyond the ruins with rules for running expeditions in search of secret places and forgotten treasures in the dark Wildwoods. New soldiers and magic items may improve wizards' chances of survival, but dwindling supplies, the hostile environment, and terrifying new creatures will push them to their limits in a range of scenarios set in these deep, foreboding forests.



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SHOW REPORT **SALUTE** 50

Salute came back this year with a bang, or at least a buzz. After 2021's damp squib event and 2022's non-appearance there were concerns that this venerable old wargames show was heading for the history books. But no! After a raft of new organisers came onboard and a proactive approach to the show's promotion and organisation was adopted, Salute 50 (as the 2023 event was officially dubbed) was buzzin'.

Our Salute 50 show report is a photo heavy look at the games and activities that made the show a success, hopefully reminding attendees of the highlights, and sharing, with those who didn't attend, what they missed. Without further ado - here's the stuff that Salute 50 was made of.



BILLHOOKS ITALIA - WARGAMES ILLUSTRATED

We begin our look at the games from the show with... us, or at least the *Wargames Illustrated*/Never Mind the *Billhooks* table. *Billhooks* author Andy Callan was on hand to guide medieval small battle enthusiasts (and those willing to be converted) through a few turns of the game, or introduce them to *Never Mind the Boathooks*, which made a special guest appearance in the harbour at the end of the table.

The most striking feature of the table was the 2' x 2' castle perched on a hill opposite the harbour. As well as showcasing *Billhooks* the demo table gave us the excuse to dig out some classic *Wargames Illustrated* terrain and the castle was a showstopper. Commissioned by *Wi*'s founder; our mentor Duncan Macfarlane, it was scratch built by Herb Gunt of HG Walls in the USA and brought back to the UK as Duncan's hand luggage on the plane!

The flavour of our table was Northern Italy, and the figures comprised two *Billhooks* Italia armies, with figures from Perry Miniatures, The Assault Group, Wargames Factory, and a few others besides.

The boards were made by the talented hands of David Marshall of TM Terrain, the house came from Grand Manner, and the Dock was from Printable Scenery (via Etsy) and Games Workshop's Laketown range.

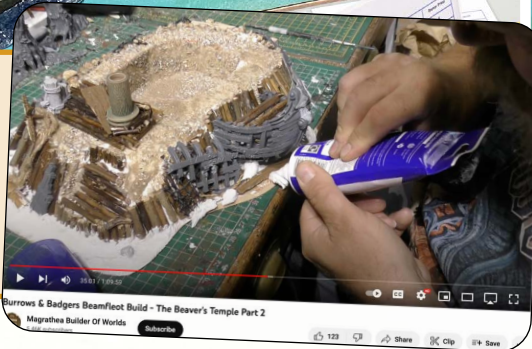
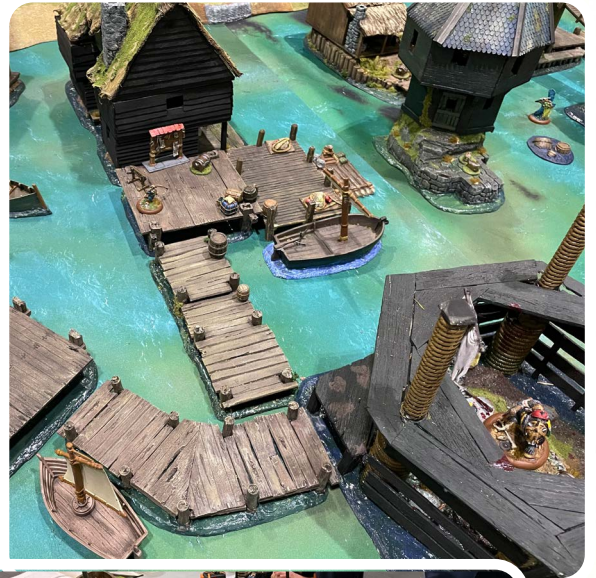
 YouTube @WargamesIllustrated

See loads more coverage from Salute 50 in our two videos on the *Wargames Illustrated* YouTube channel, including interviews with some of the creators of the best tables.



BURROWS AND BADGERS - MAGRATHEA BUILDER OF WORLDS

We used to call him Tim, but now he goes by the moniker 'Magrathea - Builder of Worlds' which is slightly more dramatic and fitting for a fella who produces such nice looking terrain. Tim, sorry, I mean Magrathea, fell in love with anthropomorphic animal skirmish game *Burrows and Badgers* a few years ago and the *B&B* world has taken his terrain building talents to new heights, appealing to the "hairy middle aged YouTuber's" love of knocking up scenery from a wild range of detritus.



Check out Magrathea - Builder of Worlds in video action on his YouTube channel.

BUNNY BADGER GAMES - ТРАКТОРНА БРИГАДА

The collective know as Bunny Badger Games added to their satirical game portfolio with тракторна бригада - a participation game that focused on the Ukrainian Tractor Brigade's efforts to relieve Russian forces of their military surplus and put it to use defending their homeland during the current war in Ukraine.



HOBBY HEROES

Very few UK wargames shows try anything new... ever, so the Salute organisers should be commended for giving Hobby Heroes a go. Throughout the day the makeshift Hobby Heroes auditorium played host to various panels of experts who discussed different aspects of the hobby and were posed questions from the floor.

After a slow start for 'Building the Battlefield', the Hobby Heroes auditorium began to overflow with attendees by the time the 'Women in Wargaming' seminar came around at 1.30pm.

All the attendees had something to offer. Despite the cavernous nature of the venue, which made hearing them a challenge at times, Hobby Heroes definitely added an appealing new element to the show, and could be tweaked to be even better next year.



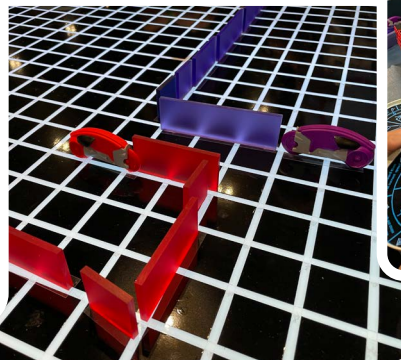
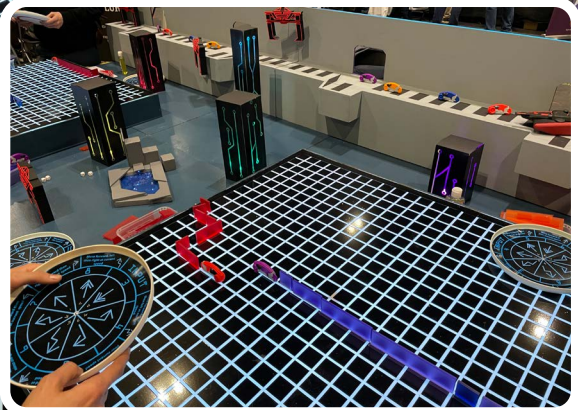
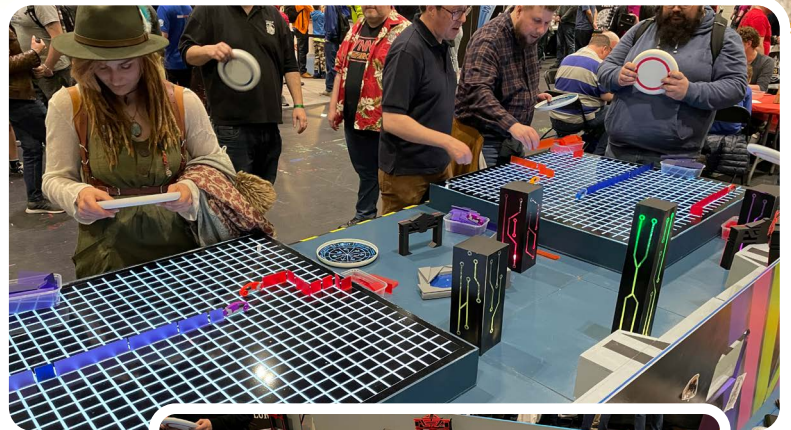
Above: The Hobby Heroes Game Design and (right) Women in Wargaming panels.

BEXLEY REAPERS - LIGHT CYCLES

This game wasn't *Tron*, although you could be forgiven for thinking it was, but it definitely wasn't, so anyone from the Disney Corporation can look away now.

Winners of the 'Most Innovative Game' award, the Bexley boys have garnered a reputation for presenting quirky quick play games at Salute over the years. They like to develop and run participation games that take around five minutes to play based on interesting subjects and their own rules.

Players of *Light Cycles* were given an Identity disc (Frisbee) which they used to plot their moves in secret, before then manoeuvring their 3D printed cycle model on the table. The 1980s 'space age' look of the game - complete with flashing lights and neon walls - was a real eye-catcher.



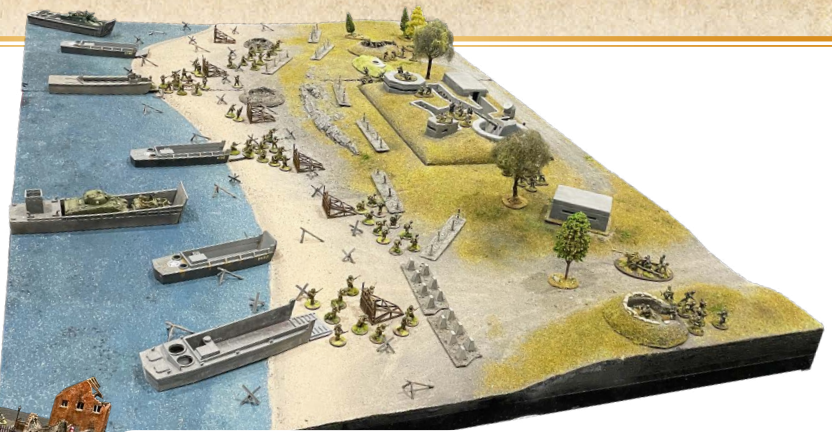
GAMERS GRASS

We always like to applaud those traders who go that extra mile by not only selling stuff, but also demoing their products. Like the *homem* and *mulher* at Portuguese basing materials manufacturer Gamers Grass, who were offering lessons in tarting up your figure's bases.



HUGO'S HEROES - GETTING MY AIRFIX

Who doesn't like a slice of 20th Century nostalgia? Millennials probably. But putting them aside, everyone else loved seeing what Hugo's Heroes had created by turning Airfix kits into 28mm scale wargames models. Classic kits: The Pontoon Bridge, Gun Emplacement, Coastal Defence Fort, and Forward Command Post were all there, supersized and ready for *Bolt Action*.



Check out *Wi387* and *Wi390* in the Vault to see how Jan Karman made The Pontoon Bridge and Gun Emplacement.



CORNWALL WARGAMES ASSOCIATION - THE ZAGORY REBELLION



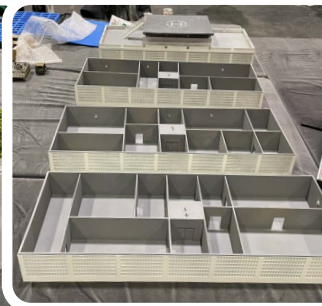
Featuring a plethora of Mark's Little Soldiers from Coplestone Castings, and set in a 'what if?' interwar world, this game had a pleasing retro *Little Wars* look to it. It used rules based on the boardgame *Memoire 44*, with the subtle changes in 'field' colours acting as squares. The ominous looking zeppelin hovering above the table was scratch built by a club member who correctly thought it would make for a fun addition. Most of the other scenery is commercially available from Sarissa and Warbases, with nodding donkeys from TT Combat, and vehicles from Matchbox and various 3D printers.



GRINGO 40s - ASSAULT ON THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, SAIGON, 1968



Sponsored by Gringo 40s, who supplied the American and Vietnamese figures, this game had the sort of height that really helps a table stand out at Salute. At least it had height for some of the time! The centrepiece of the table was a representation of the US Embassy in Saigon, and the game being played was the Viet Cong attack on the building during the Tet Offensive of 1968. To enable players to battle both outside and inside the building, the three levels of the embassy were removable, and gaming could take place in the internal rooms.



RETIRED WARGAMERS RELOADED - EAGLES AND LIONS AT CARENTAN

Who's not seen *Band of Brothers*? That's right, no one. So you will all be familiar with the Battle of Carentan, June 1944, which featured in episode three of the series (seen right). This strikingly neat 15mm game used *Rapid Fire Reloaded* to play out the second day of this World War Two battle, by which point the US Screaming Eagles had pushed the defending German forces out of town, with 3rd Armoured coming in to support the American infantry and 17th SS coming to help shore up the German line.

Pretty much everything on the table was 3D printed: buildings, railway line, bridges, with the figures coming from *Battlefront* and *The Plastic Soldier Company*. The aircraft were from the short lived *Airfix* 1/100 range, which came ready painted.



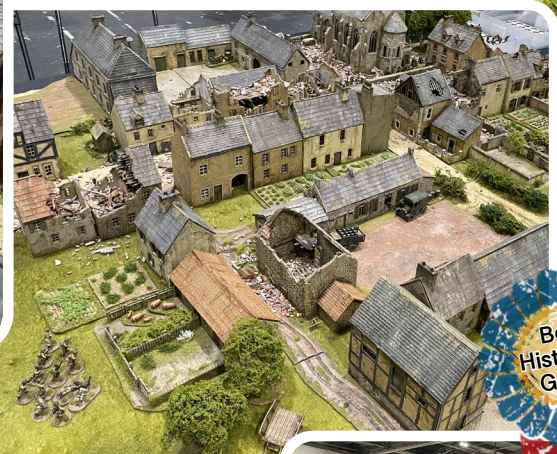


THE LARD ZONE

A sizable chunk of the back corner of the Salute hall was given over to The Lard Zone in which Rich Clarke and the Too Fat Lardies team were running not one, not two, but six games from the TFL stable. *Wi's 2022 Readers' Awards* 'Best Game' winner, *Chain of Command*, was the ruleset

of choice for two of the Second World War games, whilst Mark Backhouse was running a 2mm scale game (on a 8' x 4' table!) using his own *Strength and Honour* rules. Similarly, *General d'Armee* author Dave Brown umpired a game of his upcoming second edition of those Napoleonic rules, with John Savage joining the party and running his *What a Cowboy* game.

All the games in the Lard Zone looked great, were open to participants, and were umpired with an impressively high level of energy and zeal. Two of the six justifiably won awards: 'Best Historical Game' went to Joe Bilton's *Saint Come du Mont Chain of Command* table, and 'Best 6mm Game' (what's 4mm between friends) was won by Mark Backhouse's *Strength and Honour* Battle of Cannae.



Right: Joe Bilton receives his Best Historical Game award, presented by Karl of the South London Warlords, ably assisted by his son Charles.



TO THE STRONGEST! - ANTIGONUS AT BAY: IPSUS 301BC

Simon Miller likes his battles big, and at Salute this year he had 3,000 plus figures on display in this reflight of the last battle of the Alexandrian Wars of Succession. Eight Scythed chariots, 33 War Elephants, and an absolutely massive Greek phalanx all helped to make this game the 'Best 25 - 28mm Game' award winner.



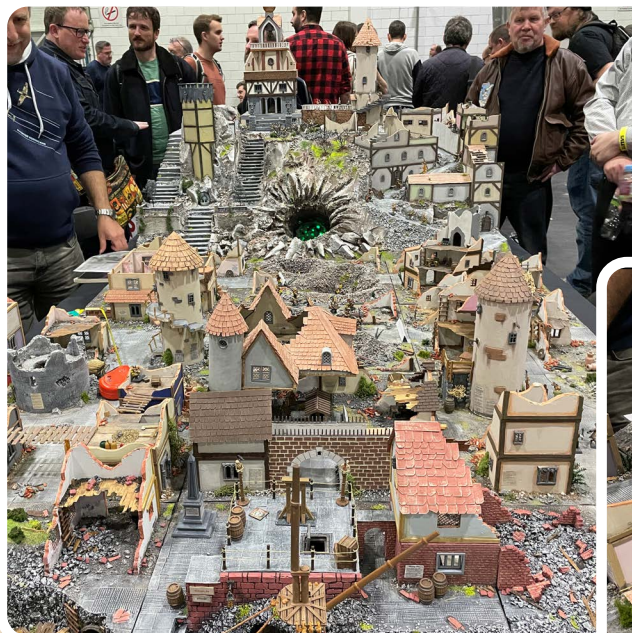
Below: Photo courtesy of Ian Notter from Simon Miller's Big Red Bat Cave Blog.



LOUGHTON STRIKE FORCE - CHAOS ON THE STREETS

LSF have a pedigree for presenting great games at Salute, and this year's was no exception. Picking up the award for 'Best Scenery' for their participation game which used Games Workshop's 24 year old rules, *Mordheim* (now available for free from broheim.net).

Originally displayed at the Colours wargames show, the depths of the sewers and height of the hillside, along with the flashing green light in the crater (created by a crashed Wyrdstone meteor!) all helped to make this table a worthy winner.



THE FRIENDS OF GENERAL HAIG - THE BATTLE OF DIRSCHAU/TCZEW 1627



Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden (1611 - 1632) has invaded Poland, captured the town of Dirschau, and is keen to march his forces north, but the Polish army is trying to pin down the pesky Swedes and crush them before they get any further. The actual Battle of Dirschau, 1627, proved to be a strategic Polish victory, but it did allow Gustavus Adolphus to test a new tactic of making his cavalry more aggressive by charging into melee. This proved to be a major success, and would serve the Swedish commanders well in future battles.

Away from the history and onto the tabletop, the Swedish cavalry were severely mauled in this game of *Pike and Shotte*. At least eight different figure manufacturers were on display on the table and the man behind the game, Andy Bartlett, told us he loves to plunder roleplaying mini collections for all the camp followers. Andy also borrowed a railway modelling idea for the Dirschau backdrop, saving on buildings but giving the impression of a tabletop town.



HORNCHURCH WARGAMES CLUB - INTOMBI RIVER

No one wants to get caught with their pants down by a Zulu Impi, but that's what happened to a group of British soldiers escorting a convoy of ammunition wagons across the Intombi River when they were attacked as they slept on the morning of 12 March 1879. This table, by the Hornchurch Wargames Club, last appeared at Salute in 2007, and the members decided it was time to give it another airing. The historical action was a small affair in the scheme of the Anglo-Zulu War, but in 1-to-1 scale that still meant hundreds of models on the table. Figure manufacturers included Redoubt, Britannia, and Minifigs, all amassed over several years.

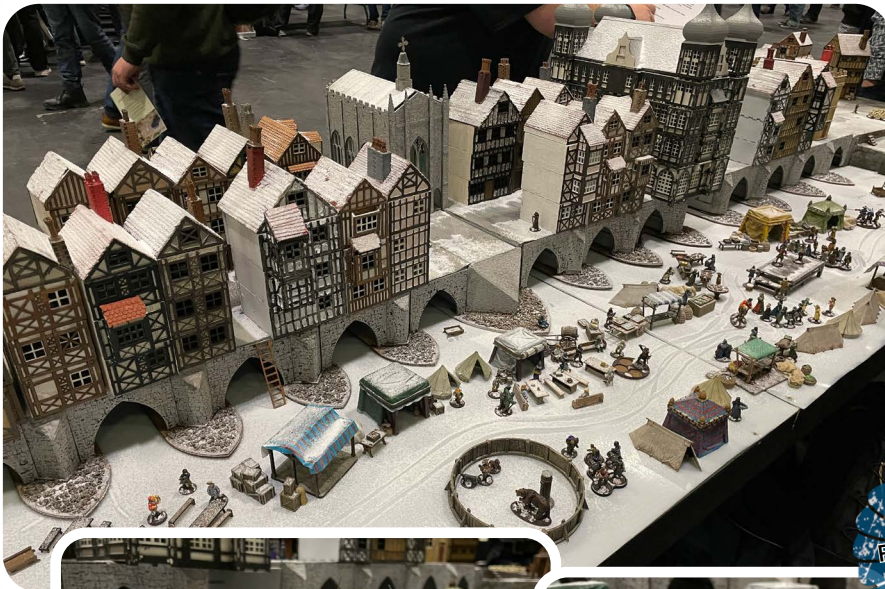


DICE OFF

The biggest participation game at Salute was back! Fifty plus gamers took part in the *Wargames Illustrated* Dice Off, with Golden Ticket holders competing to win one of three boxes loaded with goodies. Well done to Danny Beattie, Neil Randall and Cookie who picked up the prize boxes. (Particularly Danny who won by throwing three consecutive 6s!)



LONDON WARGAMING GUILD - COLD DOINGS IN LONDON



London Bridge 1650 was the setting for the game that was awarded both 'Best Participation Game' and that most coveted of gongs 'Best in Show'. A worthy winner of both, the members of the London Wargaming Guild created a buzz around the table with their hooting, howling, and general energy in presenting this participation game. Based on the antics of various gangs of ne'er-do-wells skirmishing around London Bridge, this was a fabulous looking table. The board's centrepiece was an 8' long model of the bridge itself, complete with iconic buildings like Nonsuch House (all of which were, in reality, torn down in 1757). Most of the buildings were made from laser cut MDF, with a couple constructed using foamboard.



ROLL ON SALUTE 51!

+++ 13 APRIL 2024 +++

It was hard to find anyone who had a bad word to say about Salute 50, whether that be traders, demo gamers, or regular attendees. We at *Wargames Illustrated* certainly didn't, and we're already looking forward to next year - roll on Salute 51!



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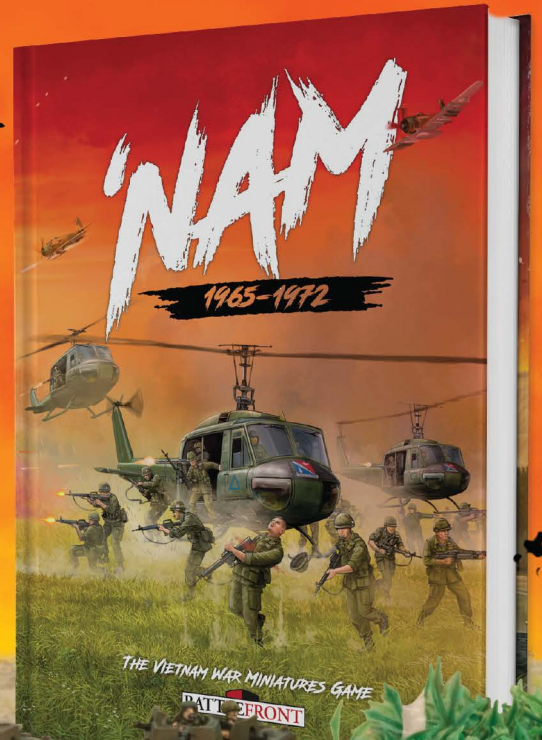
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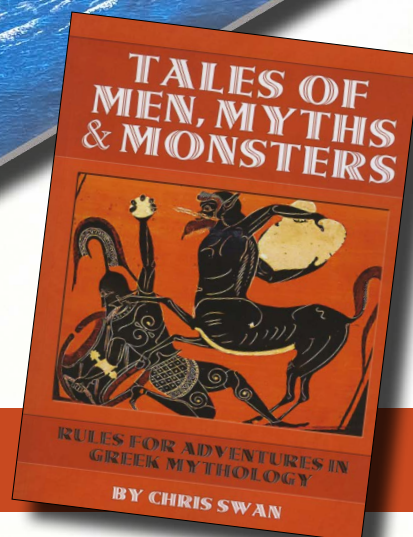
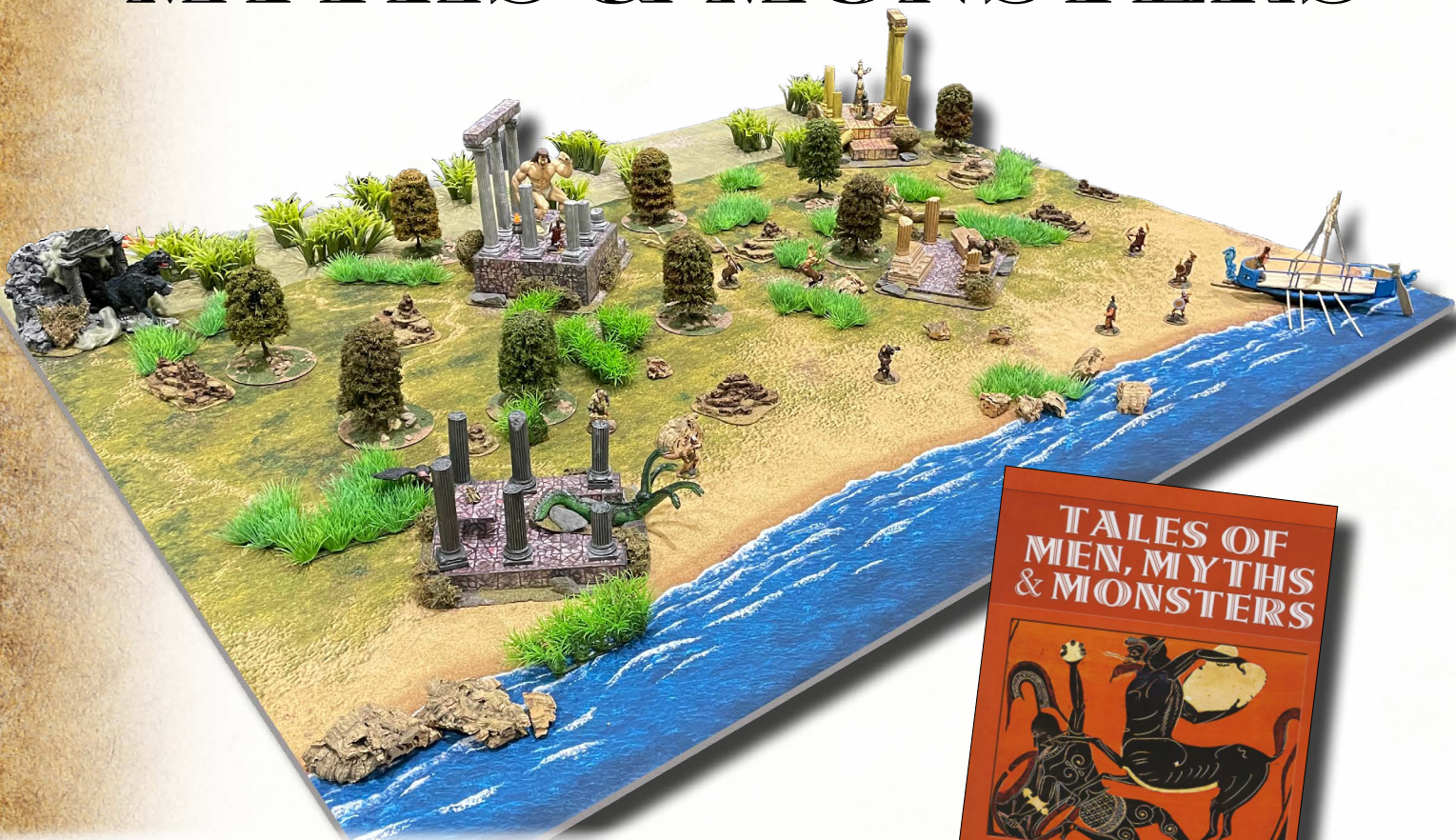
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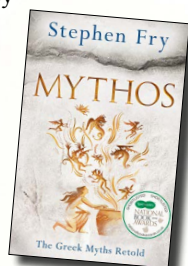
RETURN TO THE JUNGLE THIS JUNE

DESIGNER'S NOTES: TALES OF MEN, MYTHS & MONSTERS



Chris Swan turns a lifelong passion for Greek mythology and its Hollywood representation into a new tabletop wargame.

My father took me to the cinema to watch a new movie called *Jason and the Argonauts* when I was eight. From its opening moments I was absorbed by the tale of men, gods, and monsters, and when the special effects kicked in it was so “WOW!” that the exclamation demands the engagement of caps lock decades later! I have been fascinated by the Greek myths, or perhaps by Hollywood’s version of them, ever since. Of course, there are also numerous written versions of the tales; notably, Stephen Fry has recently retold them, implanting his own style of wit and humour in the books *Mythos*, *Heroes*, and *Troy*.



The Greek myths are over 3,000 years old and these tales of gods and heroes, and men and monsters, have now been told and retold through word of mouth, in writing, plays, poetry, music, and on the big and small screen.

Today’s movie and TV versions of stories feature flashy CGI, but in the mid 20th Century they relied on stop motion animation. This technique, wherein jointed models are moved in small increments and photographed frame-by-frame, creates eventual sequences that breathe life into these mythical monsters. Stop motion legend Ray Harryhausen used this technique in *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and *Clash of the Titans* (1981) and his cast of mythical monsters were small metal armatures covered in latex, moving across a model film set. How could this process not appeal to me and to other gamers? There’s even a scene in *Jason and the Argonauts* where Zeus and Hera are moving terracotta models of ships and men around a map of the Mediterranean with the line: “Hera my dear, you really must learn to win without

cheating... or to at least lose gracefully!” Even more connected to wargamers!

I’ve always wanted to recreate the Greek myths on the gaming table but needed a spark to really start me off. About five years ago I saw some plastic toy figures, approximately 50mm tall, from a company called Plastoy Tubo. A tube of ten ‘Mythology’ figures included three Greek heroes and assorted mythological beasts and other characters. I had found my ‘Muse’; I needed some rules to use them with.



The Talos on the attack in a classic scene with stop motion animation by Ray Harryhausen.

MINIS, CARDS, AND DICE

I needed a set of one-on-one skirmish rules that recreated the drama, heroics, and actions of the myths from what the Greeks called the Age of Heroes... or at least the Hollywood version of it where players could represent one of the Greek heroes, with all their individual traits and abilities. The other option was that they could create their own heroes and lead a group of lesser characters on quests across the Greek world.

Although I was inspired by 50mm figures, the rules are both scale and figure agnostic, allowing players to use whatever suitable figures they choose.

I decided to keep the mechanisms from my other rulesets (based on ideas for individual skirmishes) that Mike Blake, Ian Colwill, and I have developed over several years. These use a pack of standard playing cards to activate characters and, for the first time, monsters (there's not so much call for them in even the furthest back of the back of beyond!) along with D10s to determine the outcome of their actions.

These are used in four ways:

- Throw two or more D10s and take the highest.
- Throw one D10.
- Throw two D10s and take the lowest.
- Throw multiple D10s and each can score.

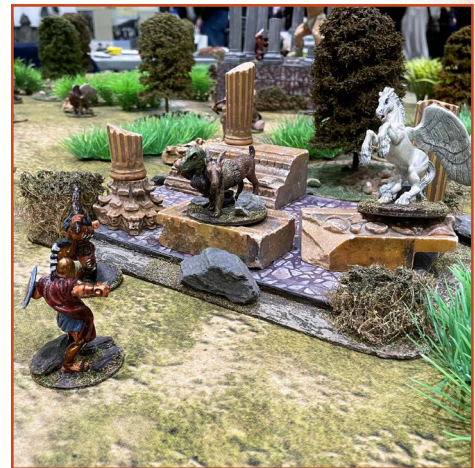
The variation between the possible outcomes here is the way each different character or monster's efficiency and skill can be represented. The rules use the same outcome for most dice throws (except for the effect of hits) to keep things easy to remember:

1	2 to 4	5 to 9	10
Spectacular Failure	Failure but can try again	Success	Spectacular Success

Characters have Action Dice, which are used to carry out tasks, attacks, reactions, and Courage tests, but in some circumstances, they use Reduced Dice which lower the chances of success.



Above: Chris Swan at Salute 50.



Above: Figures by Plastoy Tubo, from Chris Swan's collection.

RECORD KEEPING WITHOUT THE LEGWORK

The rules are character-driven with the characters rated as Heroes, Main Characters, Supporting Characters, Minor Characters, or groups of Extras, just as in the movies.

I wanted a system with no record keeping, so each character, group, or monster is allocated between one and four playing cards which, when turned over, allow them to move, make an action, attack, etc.

Heroes get four cards, Main Characters three, Supporting Characters two, and Minor Characters and groups of Extras get one. The cards are all placed into the Action Pack and as they are turned over players can give orders and test to see if they carry them out. Jokers are also used and represent either the favour or curse of the Gods.

POPULATE YOUR OWN TALE OF LEGEND

PERSONALITIES

There are various personalities to define the core of a character. Brave allows the character to reroll failed Courage Tests, Rash means they reroll a failed Move roll which would take them towards the enemy and always stand, fight, and make an all-out attack when in combat. Bloodthirsty means they must pass a test to stop fighting or take trophies from a fallen foe, whilst a character who is Resolute is more disciplined and gets a chance to reroll certain orders.

GENERAL SKILLS

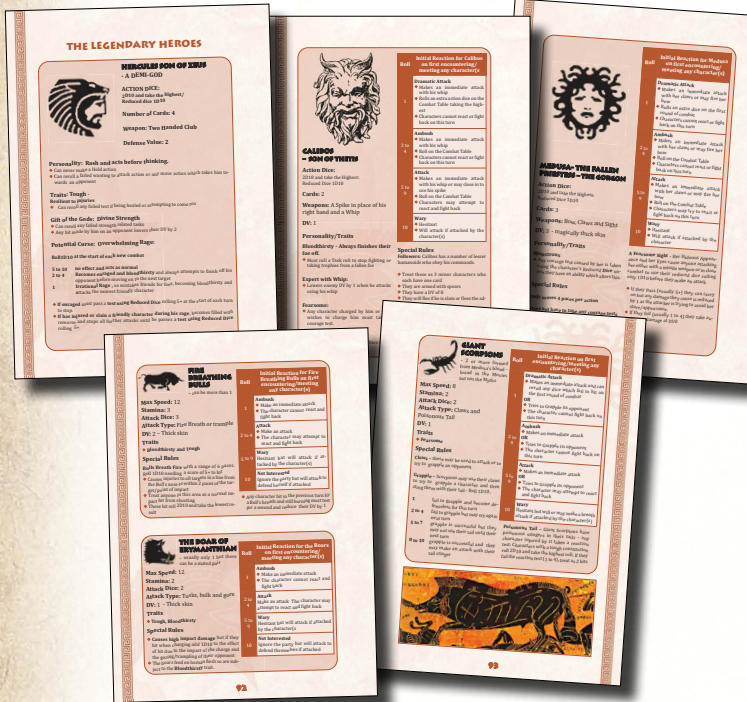
These are a set of mixed abilities that include Athletic, where the character can reroll climbing, jumping, getting through small spaces, etc. Quick Witted allows a character to reroll a failed Reaction Test. Oathsworn means they will protect another character 'even unto death' and if the character they are sworn to protect takes a hit from a missile or a blow in close combat, the Oathsworn may try to take the blow on their behalf instead.

SPECIAL SKILLS

These include extra combat abilities such as Fighter, Expert with a type of Weapon, or even Two Weapon Trained; this enables a character to use dual wield! Most of these allow them to reroll a hit in combat and lower their enemy's Defence Value (DV), but this list of skills also includes Healer, which might enable a wounded character to regain lost action cards.

As characters take hits they lose one or more cards and when all of their cards have been removed they are out of the game. This system means that Heroes, Main Characters, and Supporting Characters can take more than one hit before rendered unable to act but the number of actions they can make is reduced as they are 'wounded'.

There are slight differences for the multitude of Demi-Humans, Beasts, Creatures, and Monsters found in the Myths; although they are still activated by cards, they have a number of dice for their attacks. Each successful hit on them removes one or more dice, which means that it is these dice that ultimately diminish as they take wounds, their attacks getting weaker, until they are finally slain.



MIGHTY HEROES AND LEGENDARY WARRIORS

The rules offer players a wide range of characters to choose from for their quests, from Heroes such as Hercules, Jason, and Perseus to warriors such as Hector and Achilles from the Trojan War. There is also a more generic selection of warriors, priests, and bystanders, and players can create their own Heroes.

Each of these characters has their own personality and a set of Traits and Skills, which define how they carry out their tasks and respond to danger. Along with their Personality they also have between one and four Skills, depending on whether they are a minor Character or a Hero. There are ten Personality types in the rules together with ten General Skills and ten Special Skills.

The rules give players three options to use when creating their characters: customising the generic characters; choosing a Personality, Skills, and Traits freely; or rolling dice and letting the fates decide - very appropriate for the Greek myths!

DIVINE GIFTS

In the myths some mortals are particularly favoured by the Gods and granted a gift that gives them extraordinary abilities. This may be because they were particularly devout or were the offspring of a union between a God and a mortal. However, the Gift often carried a Curse placed on the character by another God who was jealous of their patron God. I wanted to include such gifts in the game but, as they might be akin to 'Superpowers', I needed to limit their use. Gifts can only be given to a Hero or a Main Character; only one such Gift will be granted, and it replaces one or more Skills or Traits. All Gifts have to be 'activated' by rolling one D10. An example of a Gift is:

The Gift

Birdlike

Will pass any tests for leaping, jumping, climbing, limiting damage from falls, and other similar actions, unless a 1 is rolled.

The Curse

Earthbound

If a 1 is rolled, all future tests for leaping, jumping, climbing, limiting damage from falls, and other similar actions are taken by rolling Reduced Action Dice needing a 5+ to succeed until the character passes a reaction test.

THE CLASH OF BRONZE

Combat forms a key part of the rules, and the system is interactive. When a player wants their character to attack another character or creature, they roll to see if they can make the attack, but if their foe still has cards in the Action Pack, they may opt to use one of these and try to respond. If successful they may try to evade away from the attack or make one of their own; if they succeed the two attacks are simultaneous. If a hit is scored the player controlling the foe rolls to see what damage, if any, is caused to them.

Each character has a Defense Value (DV) but there is a range of possible adjustments to this through the actions of the attacker, the nature of the target, or the type of weapon. Once the final DV is established, the player controlling the target rolls for each hit and applies the outcome.

These range from the epic power of a Fatal Wound, with the character immediately losing three cards in one hit, down to a Graze, where the character loses no cards but must take a Courage Test unless they are a Hero, a Main Character, or have the Brave Trait. The last result is a Near Miss which has no effect at all!



A MISCELLANY OF CREATURES

The Greek myths are filled with demi-humans such as Centaurs, Fauns, Satyrs, the Minotaur, and great creatures such as the Chimera, the Hydra, Cyclops, and, of course, Medusa. All of these and more - such as flesh-eating boars and the riddling Sphinx - can be found in the rules, with their own set of abilities, such as Fauns using the Pan Pipes to charm the Heroes, the Hydra's ability to regenerate, the Chimera's ability to breathe fire, and Medusa's ability to inflict harm simply by looking at a target!

In addition, in games where the players all want to be Heroes, these creatures' reactions can be determined by dice rolls which range from them ambushing the Heroes to joining forces with them!



EXPANDED MYTHOLOGY

There is an add-on pack for the rules, which expands them to cover the beasts and creatures of European and Arabian legends (Harryhausen added his stop motion magic to three Sinbad movies) and introduces more characters suited to these settings. Furthermore, there is a full set of solo rules that allow the playing of solo or cooperative quest games.

It is worth noting that classic films such as *Jason and the Argonauts* readily mixed elements of mythology. According to the Greek myths, the Golden Fleece was guarded by a gigantic serpent that never slept, not the Hydra. Perseus did slay Medusa then use her severed head to slay a sea monster (although the Kraken comes from Norse myth), but he flew using the winged sandals of Hermes; it was Bellerophon who flew on Pegasus the winged horse. Bellerophon used his mount's special flying ability to help him slay the Chimera!

I encourage players to use my rules as the vehicle to carry them through their own quests - mix the characters created with different myths and pit them against a multitude of foes, be they men or monsters!

MYTHICAL MAGIC

What set of fantasy rules would be complete without a bit of magic? Whilst divine intervention by the Gods of Olympus was common in the Greek myths, the direct use of magic by mortals was not. However, there was one Goddess whose followers did practice it:

Hecate or Hekate (pronounced Heck - a - tee) was the goddess of magic, witchcraft, the knowledge of herbs and poisonous plants, graves, ghosts, necromancy, and sorcery - a fearsome combination, and in *Jason and the Argonauts*, Medea is described as the High Priestess of Hecate. In the myths, her actions and use of magic and potions is frequently referred to along with her bloodthirsty nature.

Thus, the rules include the use of magic by characters that have the Sage, Priest, or Magi trait allowing them to try and cast spells ranging from the ability to charm or control others; summon beasts or the undead; heal or harm characters; and protect themselves or others. However, they must pass a test to use it and failure has its own consequences. In

addition, they may try to make potions or salves to help other characters, but beware, for these might well cause harm instead of doing good.

The rules also include a number of Treasures from the Gods, such as the Shield of Athena with its reflective surface which protects its user from the eyes of Medusa, the Girdle of Hera which endows the wearer with luck allowing four occasions when they may reroll dice, and the legendary Nectar of the Gods with its magical power to heal.

QUESTING

At the centre of most of the myths are the quests the heroes are set. These range from the recovery of an object such as the Golden Fleece; the rescue of a person, such as the first abduction of Helen long before the Trojan War; or the need to slay a particular beast such as Bellerophon's quest to slay the Chimera.

The rules cover how to undertake such quests, the dangers involved in such journeys, taking trophies to prove a character's prowess, and the

risks involved in exploring ruins and labyrinths.

In addition, there are six quests containing dangerous foes, ready-made for players to complete using a set of pre-generated characters or ones of their own creation.

Characters can recover from their wounds between quests and possibly improve their abilities. I've included two sets of cards that players can copy and use to create a random encounter pack for the countryside or in underground locations.

These rules will provide players with a chance to embark on new quests or perhaps rewrite the existing ones, but remember that it was the Greek myths that introduced the world to the Fates or, as the Greeks named them; The Moirai. These three sisters, Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos, were the Goddesses of Destiny and of the Past and Future and Birth and Death; hopefully they will be on your side. Go forth brave heroes; seek and fulfil your destiny!

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BASHED!

WELL, I'LL BE BILLHOOKSED!



Veteran player Mike Peters reports on the latest *Billhooks* BASH.

Old foes exchanged challenges and new adversaries joined in the light-hearted *Billhooks* banter as armies were unboxed and players warmed up their dice-rolling hands. It was time for the fourth *Billhooks* BASH!

BASH is THE tournament for all enthusiastic Billhookers, bringing players together for a day of gaming, friendly competition, and *Billhooks* camaraderie. The event has been running since the game was a humble free ruleset with *Wargames Illustrated*, but BASH 4 may well have been the best yet; the brilliantly organised day, managed by Pete Harris, was the first since the release of the complete *Billhooks Deluxe* book and the most attended BASH so far.

TIME TO BASH!

The format for this event is now well-established - each gamer brings a force of 120 points (representing either Lancaster/Tudor or York) and takes on three games throughout the day - but this time there was a more exotic feel to several armies, picked from the *Billhooks Deluxe* Theatres that go beyond the Wars of the Roses. This kept BASH veterans on their toes with new troops and challenges on the tabletop while the spirit of fun from previous events



Above: From left to right: Standing - Richard Marriot, Steve Wood, Steve Cooper, Paul Baldwin, Lloyd Lewis, Mark Taylor, Ralph Dutton, Andy Callan, Peter Harris, and Ian Callan. Kneeling - Colin Bright and Mike Peters. Unfortunately, some players had already left when we took this picture.

Above: This year BASH had grown in size and games extended downstairs.

remained. Billhookers are a sociable group, as the revelries of the previous night in the Brewery Tap (now a well-established pre-BASH tradition) had demonstrated, and we were abuzz as things got underway.

With so many players this time around we expanded beyond our usual perch to take up both floors of Boards and Swords in Derby. Thankfully *Billhooks*' head honcho Andy Callan was there as Games Guru and Umpire; he was more than ready to wrangle our rabble into an organised bunch!

After Andy's short introductory talk, we received a unique souvenir in the form of a special edition BASH Special Event card, provided by *Wargames Illustrated*! We added this card, 'Better Late than Never', to our tournament decks and the games got underway. I ended up drawing the new card twice during my games, getting to use my general when he was the last card drawn in the turn. A handy bonus for some extra activation!



Above: Steve Coopers' formidable looking Lancastrians.

"The games are played with a wry sense of humour rather than a competitive edge, with good fortune and bad met with the same amused resignation and acceptance!"

Veteran player Steve Wood



Above: Steve Wood's Irish.



Above: My Yorkists with their King!

IT'S NOT JUST GAMING

York took the lead at five games to four after the first round, but the titanic battles came to a halt as a special unit, fresh from the Italia Theatre, landed on each table - pizza! Lunch isn't just about round bread and melted cheese, though; there's the painting competition and a chance to check out the standard of the other players' armies.

Notable efforts were Steve Wood's Irish (a mostly kitbashed force, with cavalry mounted on cushions), Ralphie Dutton's French Hundred Years' War army (very thematic, based on the force at Formigny), Colin Bright's Lancastrians (complete with bowstrings!), and Mark Taylor's Lancastrians (with a nice tableau of Henry VI overseeing archery practice). Against such fine competition I was very pleased to take the crown for best painted army this time around.

BACK TO BATTLE

The happy murmur of wargamers enjoying themselves returned as we started round two, interrupted by the occasional shout of triumph or despair. The very noisy, hard-fought contest between Roddie Roddis and Mark Taylor was probably the highlight of the session. This was a true grudge match (though light-hearted, as is right between two established adversaries and firm friends) and, but for Mark's very lucky dice, it could have gone the other way. Double sixes at two crucial moments brought victory for Mark and Robbie's despairing cries echoed around the venue.



Above: Mark Taylor's Henry VI vignette.

I had an excellent second-round battle with Ian Callan which went to the wire. The last draw of a card saved my badly injured King and gave me the chance to snatch victory from defeat with no coins left in my tent!

After the second-round the Yorkists had established a strong lead of eleven games to seven. Surely there was no way the Lancastrians could recover from this.

Despite having my own game to play I donned my 'roving reporter' cap and tried to see every game in the third round. The one that really caught my attention was the epic struggle between seasoned *Billhooks* veteran Pete Harris and BASH first timer Lloyd Lewis. The BASH is a friendly, non-competitive gathering where all are welcome, and established players and rookies often clash.

"All those horses were a scary sight and the speed of movement left me bamboozled! My plan focused on taking a large central hill and then facing outwards in a 'Custer's Last Stand' approach!"

BASH newcomer Lloyd Lewis



Above: The empty tent after my game with Ian Callan.

BOARDS AND SWORDS

Derby's Boards and Swords is an excellent venue, and the friendly and helpful staff ensured a happy buzz of content Billhookers filled the air during the BASH. The store, which opened its doors in January 2018, has a range of wargaming products to purchase but for many the draw will be their 17 6x4 wargaming tables and eleven card gaming tables. These can be used all day for a small fee, but check their event listing if you fancy playing at the weekend as you might clash with an event like the BASH!

boardsandswords.co.uk



BOARDS & SWORDS
HOBBIES

Pete's Border Warden and Reiver army had five cavalry squadrons and showcased the challenges that these variant armies can bring to the tabletop. The game went right to the wire with Pete failing a morale test at a crucial moment and Lloyd stealing the win.

Lancaster made a strong comeback in the afternoon sessions and the final result was a narrow 14 to 13 victory to the Red Rose!

Congratulations to Mark Taylor for winning all three games and commiserations to David Grumitt who lost all three of his.

Everybody had a marvellous time, and we are all looking forward to the next *Billhooks* event, Bristol's Mister BIG Billhooks, which will have happened by the time you read this.



Above: Lloyd's Lancastrians make their last stand.



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VIKINGS VS ANGLO-SAXONS



Sébastien Clément discusses the making of his victorious Salute 50 Painting Competition entry.

After painting miniatures in a comic book style for my 2021 Salute Painting Competition entry, I decided to get inspiration from other types of art for my latest effort. This time I looked at classic canvas paintings, depicting lifelike scenes, along with more contemporary artwork from historical books such as those produced by Osprey.

Inspired by the stories these images told, and the colours they used, I started to search for figures to tell my own narrative with. I didn't have a particular period or area in mind, so I started to randomly browse for dynamic miniatures that inspired and excited me in old issues of *Wargames Illustrated* as well as online. Eventually I found the 40mm range from V&V miniatures; their Viking and Anglo-Saxon offerings caught my interest and I started to work on a concept. I eventually chose three Vikings and three Anglo-Saxons and set them together in a fight for their lives.

BUILDING THE DIORAMA

I wanted to implement classic techniques for composition, choice of colours, and use of light in the building and painting of the diorama. The main compositional element is the use of pyramids to lead the layout; this is a technique which has been used in art since the Renaissance if not before. The difference between my scene and ones from canvas paintings is that my diorama would be looked at from all angles. I therefore made the scene so that there are different triangulated compositional angles when you turn the base. From the top, the miniatures are set as a triangle as well and this is helped by the round plinth I chose to use - an old wooden vase stand I found at an antique market.





Here and previous page: The finished diorama with the different triangulated viewing angles highlighted.



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

I built a rough version of the ground using cork tiles to start the project off. These are easy to use and allow quick construction of ground forms, especially tiles that come with an adhesive side. I piled them on and carved them up to shape the ground. Another benefit of cork is that it allows the use of wire from the feet of figures (drilled in with a pin vice) to move the miniatures in and out of the diorama.

Right: After repositioning the combatants a few times and adding cork layers, I was able to obtain a good spot for every warrior.



Above: The textured base pre-painting. Note that I masked off the edges of the plinth to keep them clean while I was spreading the plaster and paint around.

Once I was happy with the shape and miniatures' positions, I used plaster filler to cover the cork. I used a generous amount to fill the gaps and then removed some of the excesses. On this first step of texturing, I was careful not to cover the spots where the minis would be set.

I didn't smooth the filler, instead letting it dry as a random textured ground. As the filler is not real plaster, it retracted a bit, and this added to the realism effect somehow. Once it had dried, I applied a second layer of texture with Citadel Texture Agrellan Earth (which cracks when drying) on some areas and Stirland Mud on some others.

Finally, I used real dried plants to add scatter: tree leaves, dead wood, and roots on the ground.

STORYTELLING

I wanted to tell a fictional story inspired by history but, as I was not familiar with the period, I had to do some reading and browsed pictures of real artefacts, more creative illustrations, and looked at reenactors. From this, I tried to imagine what was happening in the diorama I was building.

My scene could be a skirmish between a small group of Vikings against an equal force of Anglo-Saxons, or maybe it's part of a bigger fight during which the Vikings would have moved around the main battle to strike at or capture the enemy command. It could also be the end of a bigger battle with the last trio of Anglo-Saxons being surrounded... but I probably should have added some blood on the weapons and warriors to show the fighting had started a while ago to really sell that idea. Nevertheless, just as the scene can be viewed from multiple angles it can be interpreted in different ways.

To enhance the storytelling, I decided to use one main colour for each faction to make it clearer that this fight is three against three. From my reading, there's a big probability members of the same faction would wear completely different clothing and have completely different equipment - whatever they were able to craft, buy or loot - but I felt this would make my scene visually confusing. I imagine each small group of warriors shown in my fight scene comes from the same clan or village, and got their gear from the same place, which makes it more plausible their clothes would have been made the same way.

Ultimately, I decided to use red as the main colour for the Anglo-Saxons and blue for the Vikings to help the viewer read the scene more easily overall. Other parts of the equipment were still painted differently, and some details were added to the main cloth so none of the figures look too similar.

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

The painting process started with a zenithal highlight (aka a preshade) of white over black applied with my airbrush. As the goal of this project was to set the foreground in the spotlight across three different angles, I directed my airbrush spray from each viewing angle to light the forward facing four front miniatures, leaving the last pair in the shadow. I was not painting in realistic light here, but the intent was to accentuate the final look from each viewing angle; each miniature received two main sources of light, and a third subdued source. The base received a quick but similar preshade and I took several photos of this first phase to use as reference when I advanced the painting on the miniatures.

The next step was a quick spray of different shades of brown, red, khaki, green, and grey through the airbrush to harmonise things a little. I covered every area to tone down the black and white, but colours were diluted as I was not looking to fully cover the preshading.



I then removed the miniatures from the base for a first pass of individual painting. This consisted of applying most of the main colours quite roughly to be refined later. Again, I used the zenithal highlights to guide me in the application of darker and lighter colours. I did slightly more advanced painting on areas which reflected the most light, such as the chainmail and helmets.





REFINING THE BRUSHWORK

With volumes and colours established I set the miniatures back over the base and checked if my first pass of light on the individual pieces of equipment made sense. I painted the miniatures separately, using the preshading and the photos taken as a reference, but I had to adjust some of the highlighting to ensure the figures looked realistic from each angle in turn.

I moved the figures away from the base to paint the details such as the faces and the shield designs, along with other improvements to the painting.

As my inspiration was canvas painting, I did not use any metallic paints. Metal parts are all done with non-metallic metal techniques, and this allowed me to 'direct' light across the scene. As metal is very reflective, I could make these areas pop with brighter highlights. Other surfaces such as flesh, leather, and clothes were also highlighted at the same angles, but I used less contrast on them.



Finally, I added some freehand work: runes or symbols on a couple of shields, patterns on some cloth parts, and the draco war flag. This will not be very visible from a distance but it adds something to catch the eye and bring the viewer in to take a closer look.

At the very end, once the miniatures were glued on the base, I used pure white for the first time. This added high-intensity light on some parts of the metal, especially on blades and the top of the helmets, but by waiting until the very end I could place these spot highlights very purposefully and harmoniously.

Right: I regularly placed figures in their combat duos to check they looked good together as I applied more paint.



COMPLETING THE BASE

As with the figures, the painting of the base started with a rough application of colours: browns for the mud, shades from red to yellow for the scattered dead leaves, and areas of green to represent moss. I highlighted some parts of the dirt to add a bit more contrast but kept this quite subdued overall so the figures remained the focus.



The next step was to add some foliage, a mix of different products to make it look like a wild area next to a woodland. I purchased ferns from Model Scene in the 1/45-1/48 scale to use along with the mix of grass tufts I already had. Before gluing the ferns to the diorama, I added a gradient with my airbrush to make them look more realistic. I started by applying the main green ferns to spots where they would make sense in establishing the outer edge of a wooded area, then added dry ferns underneath. By stacking them with more ferns to the centre of the piles they were made bushier.



PINNING FOR EASIER PAINTING

I pinned the miniatures through their feet with short lengths of copper wire. This was strong enough to hold them to the cork of the scene without glue, and once I drilled into a few gaming bases, I was able to temporarily set the miniatures on those to paint them individually. I was able to repeatedly swap the minis from the 'painting bases' to the diorama to check the process was coming together.



With the edge of the woodland created, I added moss and grass in different heights and colours, mostly on the opposite side of the ferns. I did not cover all of the surface as I imagined the place was well travelled by men and animals whose feet and paws have turned up the ground. Finally, I added more dead wood, mostly on the visible dirt. The natural colour of this wood was not working well so I painted it to better match the current colour of the base.

I airbrushed the base with matt varnish to suppress the shine the PVA glue had left on some areas then carefully fixed the figures in place.

THE COLOUR PALETTE

Unlike most of my painting projects, I decided to go with a relatively limited range of colours and create my own mixes. Still, there are quite a lot of greens and browns, mainly because the base needed many variations of colours.

Greens and blue


-  • Vallejo Black Green
-  • Vallejo Yellow Olive
-  • Vallejo Cayman Green
-  • Vallejo German Cam Bright Green
-  • Vallejo Livery Green (base only)
-  • Vallejo Electric Blue (shield only)
-  • Citadel Stegadon Scale Green

Reds and purple

-  • Citadel Khorne Red
-  • Vallejo Scarlet Red
-  • Citadel Screamer Pink
-  • Citadel Naggaroth Night
-  • Citadel Druchii Violet (flesh only)
-  • Citadel Carroburg Crimson (flesh only)
-  • Citadel Reikland Fleshshade (flesh only)

NMM






The non-metallic metal areas were painted mainly with:

-  • Citadel Stegadon Scale Green
-  • Vallejo Wolf Grey
-  • Vallejo Smokey Ink
-  • Vallejo Dead White

Browns

-  • Vallejo English Uniform (base only)
-  • Vallejo Orange Brown (base only)
-  • Vallejo Light Brown (base only)
-  • Vallejo Smokey Ink
-  • Vallejo Hull Red
-  • Vallejo Khaki
-  • Vallejo German Yellow
-  • Citadel Skrag Brown

Others

-  • Citadel Abaddon Black
-  • Citadel Corvus Black
-  • Citadel Flayed One Flesh (flesh only)
-  • Vallejo Wolf Grey
-  • Vallejo Dead White (NMM only)

CONCLUSION

This diorama is my first in a long time and I really enjoyed building something bigger than a usual gaming base. The multiple sources of light are a great alternative to the classic single direction light which tends to be used on gaming miniatures and I'm happy with the mix of different textures and types of plants for the base. That's something I'll now apply more often on other dioramas and on wargaming bases too.

I'm not done with Vikings or with V&V Miniatures; my next historical project will involve a band of female Vikings at 28mm scale. I'll get my inspiration from canvas painting once again, but this time I'll build the scene in a frame!



The consideration and time that Seb put into his scene was rewarded with a first place in the Historical Unit (Other) category at Salute 50. He also came third in Sci-Fi Unit (Other) with his War Griffon shown below.

See a round up of the best entries in the Salute 50 Painting Competition in next month's magazine.



HOW DID I MISS... DEAD MAN'S HAND?



James takes on his first-ever game of *Dead Man's Hand* against the game's designer, Mark Wheatley.

The rules that got me into historical gaming were Warhammer Historical's *Legends of the Old West*. I'd been a steadfast fan of sci-fi and fantasy gaming until the beautifully designed *Legends* book drew me in. Before I knew it, I was rounding up a posse of Foundry cowboys and playing with them in a big campaign. From there an interest in broader historical gaming grew but *Legends of the Old West* remained the only cowboy game in my life...

Until now! Mark Wheatley, one of the key designers behind *Dead Man's Hand's* (*DMH*) rules and miniatures, was visiting *Wi* Tower. I expressed an interest in learning his game and off he popped, faster than a quick-draw gunslinger can blast the Stetson off a Sheriff, returning with a gaming board, figures, and terrain. With a nod of approval from the Editor we got things set up and I spent a few hours trying to level up from a *DMH* greenhorn.

GETTING STARTED

The rulebook contains various scenes (scenarios) that are connected and best played as a set. Time was short for our gaming session, so Mark skipped the usual run of escalating scenes, instead telling me the basics of the rules, and putting me in control of a full gang of Outlaws who had robbed a mining depot. I'd learn to play 'on the job' as I made my escape. It was my mission to get half of my gang to the side of the board furthest away.

Rather than meet the lawmen they expected, my Outlaws faced off against a collective of angry children intent on stopping them escaping with their ill-gotten loot! The Boys, a new gang based on John Wayne's movie *The Cowboys* (see more of them in *Wi*425), are primarily made up of young 'uns. This brought extra pressure; the fear of being shown up by a group of kids under Mark's knowledgeable control!

I deployed just off centre while Mark split his models to start at each flank of the table, ready to catch me in a pincer attack.

How did I miss...? is a new, semi-regular series from *Wi* Project Manager James. He'll face an expert gamer of a popular ruleset that he's not gotten around to playing; they can guide him through... or brutally trounce him! When the dust has settled, James will write a battle report, highlight the key rules he enjoyed, and discuss how likely he is to play the game again.

James insists this will be a great chance to introduce *Wi* readers to rulesets they might also have missed out on, but we suspect he's created a crafty excuse to tick off some of the titles on his gaming bucket list!



These figures, and those seen throughout the article, are from *Great Escape Games* - their *Dead Man's* range.



Two of my gang deploy on the top edge of the board to try and escape around the rear of the buildings on the main street.



The majority of my Outlaws take cover on the street as they exit the mining post.



Mr Nightlinger and three of his boys started the game inside buildings.



The Rancher and a few of his boys protect the side of the table my Outlaws need to escape from.



Mark's final kid took up a sharpshooting position on a roof. I was outnumbered eight to seven by the Boys but I was, in theory, using far more capable fighters.

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH DEAD MAN'S HAND?



THE HAND

Playing cards are integral to *DMH* and each player uses their own themed deck during the game. The cards serve the dual purpose of modifying actions (with the hand) and dictating initiative order. My opening hand, shown below, had three useful cards to get me out of trouble during the game. The others - two of "You can't kill what you can't catch" - could help me sprint off the table and complete my game winning objective: not a bad selection.

You can use as many cards from your hand as you wish in one turn. This made it tempting to get my gang moving at speed straight away but as you can only replenish a single card at the end of each turn I opted to be cautious, bide my time, and maintain plenty of options.

HOW IT WORKS...

A varying number of cards are drawn and become your 'hand' depending on the scenario; we took five here. These each have an associated ability that can be used to enhance your models or hinder your foes. These cards act as an interrupt option to some extent. In the minimal downtime between activating your own models you'll always be engaged and observing the game to check if you can scupper your opponent's plans with a card from your hand.



INITIATIVE

We each drew an initiative card and chose which of our figures to give it to. With that done we dealt out the remaining initiative cards face down and placed them next to the rest of our models, then went through the drama of flipping them over to see who would activate first. This is just one of many 'micro-moments' in a game of *DMH* that add drama and excitement to play. While it wouldn't make a huge difference in the first turn, the random activation would later scupper plans and bring unexpected opportunities for Mark and me.

My Dude with a repeater activated first with his ace but he missed the aimed shot at the kid on the rooftop ahead of him. We then activated in order and generally did very little in the first half of turn one, mostly moving to take up better positions without leaving ourselves too vulnerable to enemy gunfire.



HOW IT WORKS...

At the start of the turn each player draws a card from the top of their deck and chooses which model to place it on. If it's a high card they'll most likely activate early on (Aces are high) and low will activate at the end of the turn (Jokers are the lowest) so, you'll need to choose the model carefully. With that done the other figures are dealt random cards. Before the turn begins the player with the lowest card next to a model may choose to switch it with one from another model in their gang. This ensures your plans aren't totally decimated by an awful draw. Activation order runs from highest to lowest and several of your models can therefore go one-after-another.

I reckon these card mechanics are the core component of *DMH*'s fun and the fact that they serve multiple functions shows some great game design. Their tactical importance and dramatic potential became instantly apparent as we started to play. Each turn began with an adrenaline spike as I checked if the models vital to my plans would activate early. I invariably had to start making new plans when the draw didn't go how I hoped as well as reacting on the fly to the attacks Mark made, deciding if I'd use cards from my hand to counter particularly dangerous actions.

OUT OF HIDING TO THE outhouse

As turn one continued, Mark began activating the members of his gang that were deployed in the buildings to my right. One little scamp with a shotgun declared he was going to leap through a window and move next to an outhouse, ready to blast at my Dudes on the far side of the table next turn. Muttering some toilet-based threats far too crude for print I vowed to deal with him as soon as my Dudes activated.

Meanwhile, more of Mark's gang left the safety of the buildings and rushed across the open space of the street. The 10cm move actions can stack giving models the potential to cover large distances in a single activation. This came as a bit of a shock to me, but big moves thankfully use up a model's three actions or leave them with a minus on their to hit rolls if they do retain an action to shoot.



The Dude got a good hit, giving the kid an under fire marker and forcing him to take a nerve test, which he failed, getting another marker. My second Dude followed up but couldn't finish him off. Now I was in a vulnerable position and had to hope I'd get to activate first next turn.



Eventually, it was time to rush the kid with the shotgun. I declared I'd move to get a line of sight then try and shoot him down, but I'd fallen into Mark's trap. He'd drawn my focus with this young whippersnapper then pulled a Stumble card to stop my attack in its tracks. I had a matching card and chose to use it, trumping Mark's ability and getting to continue my activation unaffected.



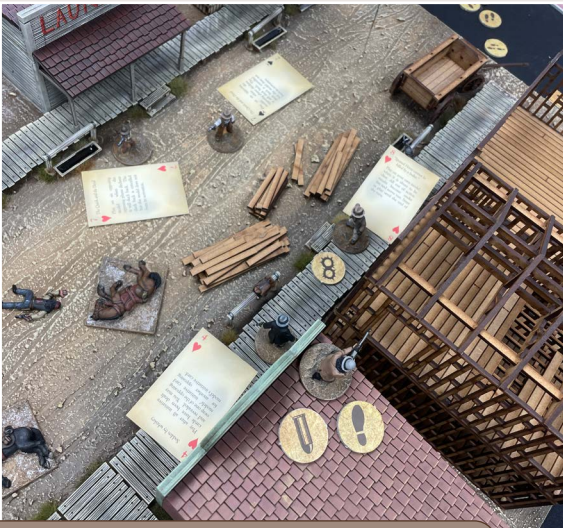
Three under fire markers isn't quite enough to take Mark's gang member out.

A FISTFUL OF MISSES

The game progressed and I quickly got the hang of the rules. Play is intuitive and my biggest hurdle during the game was that I kept on using a D20 when I should have used a D10 and vice versa. Mark was always quick to point out my error, though, when he could have let me keep taking shooting tests on a D10 with a zero percent chance of success! You need at least an 11 on a D20 to give your target an under fire marker.

Even with the D20 getting rolled I struggled to get meaningful hits, as did Mark, and many models were left to shake off near misses or duck into hiding to recover.

It was early in turn two, as Mark closed in on my gang members in front of the mining depot, that I realised I'd started the game in a sub-optimal way. A third of my gang was heading towards the table edge they needed to escape from, leaving the other men holding down the middle ground. I should have focused all my attention on the buildings to the right, where four of Mark's gang hid, then turned around as a full gang and made for the escape point with a numerical advantage. It was too late for that now; two separate shoot outs were developing.



Mr Nightlinger uses his full move allowance to make a bold advance.



HOW IT WORKS...

Shooting is simple in *DMH* with a 50% unmodified chance 'to hit' on a D20. Get that hit and you'll give the target an under fire marker, hit with a 15+ and they will also have to take a nerve test; if they fail that they get another marker. Most models can fight on with three under fire markers but will be taken out when they reach four. If you hit on 19+ you will kill your target outright regardless of the number of markers.

The catch here is that various modifiers will impact your to hit roll. Some, such as a point blank or aimed shot will help you hit, but many others will hinder your ability. Moving more than once applies a minus, as does taking multiple shots, and so does each under fire marker you have. This means that those killer shots get more likely if you are up close and personal but you're also more likely to suffer damage yourself and become less effective at shooting.

A final consideration in shooting is your target can choose to sacrifice their future activation to duck back into cover or make a quick shot back.

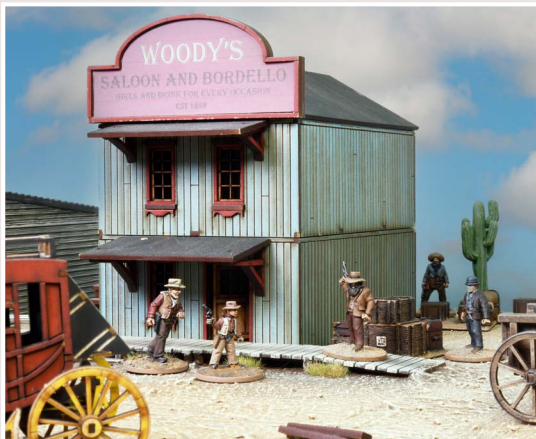
Despite his vantage point my Dude only manages one hit on Mr Nightlinger who now threatens my Gunslinger.

BEHIND THE SCENES

My dudes by the outhouse finally dealt with their shotgun armed nemesis but doing so had slowed their escape. The Duke was closing in and the order of activation in the next turn

allowed him to make a deadly close up shot with his six-shooter, killing one of my Outlaws (right).

My other Dude, now feeling mighty vulnerable, weighed his options and opted to leg it! I used as many move actions as I could, plonking down a "You can't kill what you can't catch" card to make the extra distance and escape off the board (right). I was part way to completing my objective but was now fighting down two men while I'd only taken out one of Mark's young 'uns.





COUNT(ER) ON A GOOD GAME

DMH uses quite a few tokens to record statuses and along with the activation cards on the table things can get quite busy. These all serve very important gameplay purposes and provide a useful visual guide to the status and likely future impact of each figure but if you like your games to look streamlined and 'pretty' then this may not be the game for you.



THE MAIN EVENT

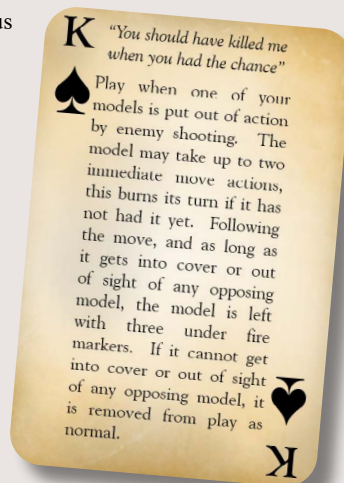
As the action escalated the order of activation became far more important. In these decisive moments we each started to throw down more abilities from our hands, including special royalty cards that provide each gang with unique special abilities.

My gunslinger was ready to open up at close range in what looked like a moment of certain doom for one of Mark's Rascals... but Mark played a Jack from his hand - "You wouldn't shoot a kid?" - which stripped me of my ability to shoot at all (below). Dagnammit!



It started to look embarrassing when Mark caused my Boss to duck back into the mining office to avoid a Rascal and Young 'Un attack... but I retaliated by using one of my gang special abilities - Above Snakes - which allowed me to retain my activation with the penalty of an action used (left). I leapt through a window, turned back around, and took out the already weakened Young 'Un with a pinpoint shot (below). Phew!

I was holding back a King card in my hand as it would grant me the ability to cheat death when a model was taken out of action. This ability, called "you should have killed me when you had the chance", seemed essential as I had various models on the brink of death and could ill-afford more casualties. Mark ensured I used it when he took more shots at my weakened Boss.



K "You should have killed me when you had the chance"

♠ Play when one of your models is put out of action by enemy shooting. The model may take up to two immediate move actions, this burns its turn if it has not had it yet. Following the move, and as long as it gets into cover or out of sight of any opposing model, the model is left with three under fire markers. If it cannot get into cover or out of sight of any opposing model, it is removed from play as normal.



K

BRAWL!

As much as I loved *Legends of the Old West* its rules for brawling (based around the melee rules in Games Workshop's *Lord of the Rings* game) were brutal. We had a house rule banning fisticuffs as it was too deadly, with the attacking model invariably tearing their foe apart!

In *DMH* brawling can still be deadly but it opens the attacker up to risk too. Each player rolls a D10, getting a +1 for each under fire marker their opponent has, a +1 if fighting from higher ground, and a +1 if they initiated the hand-to-hand. The difference between the rolls is how many under fire markers the winner places on the loser. In our game there was only one moment of close combat - a dramatic brawl on the roof of the mining building! Mark won and pushed my figure down to the ground but I managed to survive the fall and fight on.

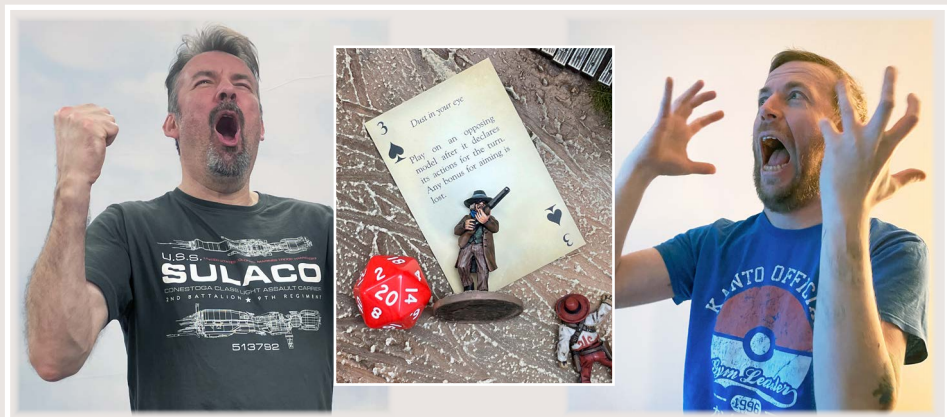


HE COULD SHOOT THE WINGS OFF A GNAT

It was getting tense as I managed to sneak another Dude off the board. I had just enough gang members left to snatch a victory if everything went perfectly and, even though that was unlikely, I wasn't giving up hope, especially with Mark starting to take some long-range potshots at me.

Unfortunately, with the dice gods smiling down on him, he rolled the perfect 20 he needed, let out a roar of triumph, head shotted another of my Outlaws, and won the game.

I must admit that Mark had the advantage from early on and was a well-deserved winner despite the unlikely final shot hitting home. Although he played competitively, he also ensured I got a full understanding and appreciation of his game as we played.



OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The eternal push and pull of risk and reward is what makes a great game for me, and *Dead Man's Hand* has that in spades... and clubs, diamonds, and hearts. I had a brilliant time playing against Mark and after just one game I can see why so many players get rather addicted to *DMH*. Each of its interconnected systems balances the option to use bold but potentially game changing actions against safer more reliable tactics; that's always a recipe for gaming fun. The feel is just right - emulating the drama and over the top actions of a Hollywood or Spaghetti Western - and the tactical options are plentiful.

The low figure count, small board, easy to grasp rules, and fast gameplay make it perfect for club nights, games at home, or even in the pub. It's an excellent pick up and play game, but I can see it providing deep tactical challenges for veteran players too.

With a heap of different gangs to collect (including spooky weird west options), terrain support from 4Ground, and various extras such as play tokens to improve your gaming experience, Great Escape Games have made an offering that has instantly rushed to the top of my 'games I want to play again' list.



BUILDING A BOATHOOKS GALLEY



Shipmaster Steve Wood shows how he constructed a simple galley from basic materials.

My aim with this project, as with all the ships I've made for *Never Mind the Boathooks*, was to build a game-ready representation of a galley that might have been used in the period. This isn't an accurate scale model of a particular vessel, it's a robust build that is 'scaled' to suit its in-game purpose. It is specifically built to hold the 20mm bases of 18 to 20 28mm figures and to fit within the 10" squares used in the rules. In effect, it is a fancy movement tray for naval engagements in the Medieval period!

I wanted my galley to look 'foreign' - not English at least - as I intended it to be manned by crossbowmen and gunners. These are mercenaries who will either be helping the English or opposing them, so my design here is loosely based on Mediterranean galleys of the period.

I spent some time searching the Internet for galley plans without success. Finding anything particularly accurate for this period can be quite tricky, so rather than continue to conduct hours of research, I decided to use the JFDI method [You can probably work out the full 'get it done' meaning of those initials without needing to search Urban Dictionary - Ed]. I based my model on a couple of pictures that I had seen, taking the Mediterranean origin into account, and got things underway.

GO YOUR OWN WAY!

I suggest using my instructions as a point of inspiration rather than an exact guide. One of the joys of a game of *Boathooks* is the sight of assorted vessels and their varying designs on the tabletop. You can move and resize elements and add your own design flair quite easily.

I apologise for the use of both metric and imperial measurements if you do follow my guide more precisely. The balsa that I was using was supplied in imperial measurements, but I used metric lengths on the plans; if you have a steel ruler with both on it, you shouldn't have a problem!

MAKING THE HULL



1) The lower hull consists of three blocks of 1/2" square balsa. Balsa is very easy to work with and can be easily sanded and carved to shape. The centre piece is 22cm long and the two side blocks 20cm long.



2) Glue them together using a good PVA glue and clamp them whilst they dry. Now shape the hull either by sanding it down or using a plane or Surform tool. You will need to use your judgement as to how much to shape the hull, but it is quite a straightforward task if you go slow and do it with care. You can easily take away but it's a lot harder to add things back!



5) Once this was dry, I made the sides from more of the 1/8" balsa sheet, gluing them in place with PVA. The sides are 12mm tall.



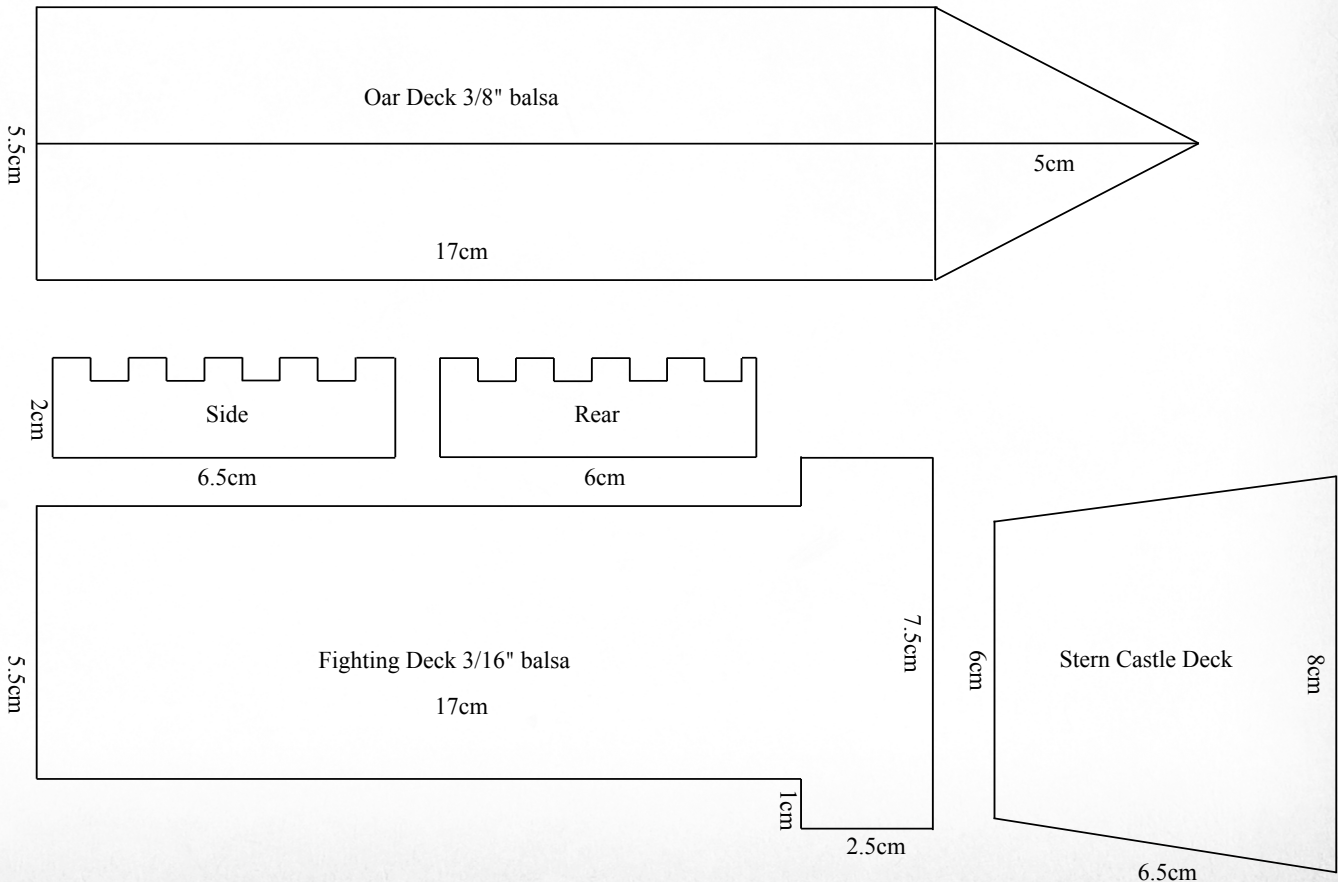
3) Cut the 'oar deck' from a soft 1/4" balsa sheet and make it into a rough ship shape with a pointy bit at the front! Glue it to the hull.



4) The next step is to cut the 'fighting deck' from a 1/8" balsa sheet and glue this to the hull. You don't have to follow my design - a straight deck will be fine - but I wanted the 'wings' to make the deck design a bit more interesting and to offer a better frontage to my crossbows.

6) The final job for the hull was building up the rear of the ship to take the stern castle. I cut strips of 1/8" balsa to about 3cm long and glued them in place, leaving a small gap for the rudder. The rudder was made from a piece of scrap balsa with a cut-down cocktail stick as the tiller.

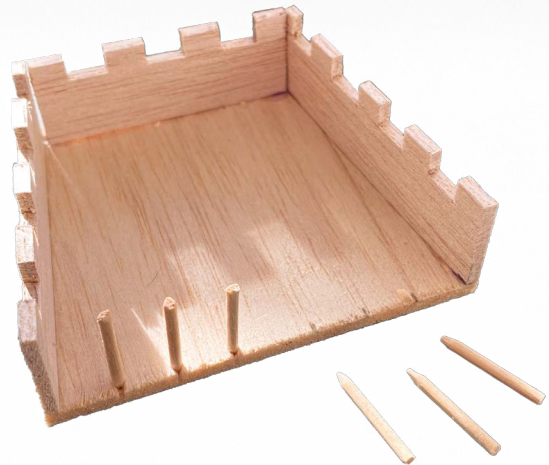
Note: The plans below are not shown to scale.



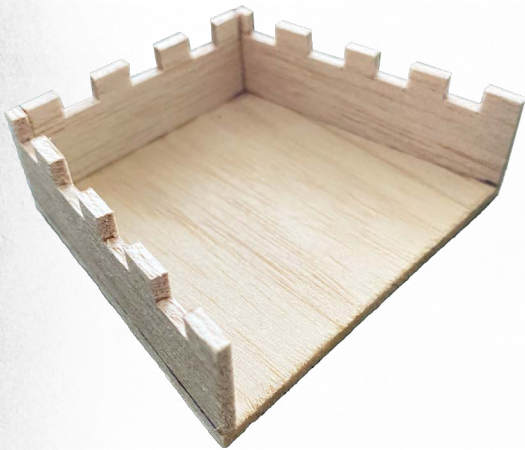
MAKING THE STERN CASTLE



1) Cut the deck shape from 3/16" balsa sheet then cut the sides as shown in the picture. You will have to use your best judgement to cut out the crenelations but there is a guide on the plans.



4) Either sharpen or leave one end of the sticks with a point so they can be easily pressed into the balsa deck.



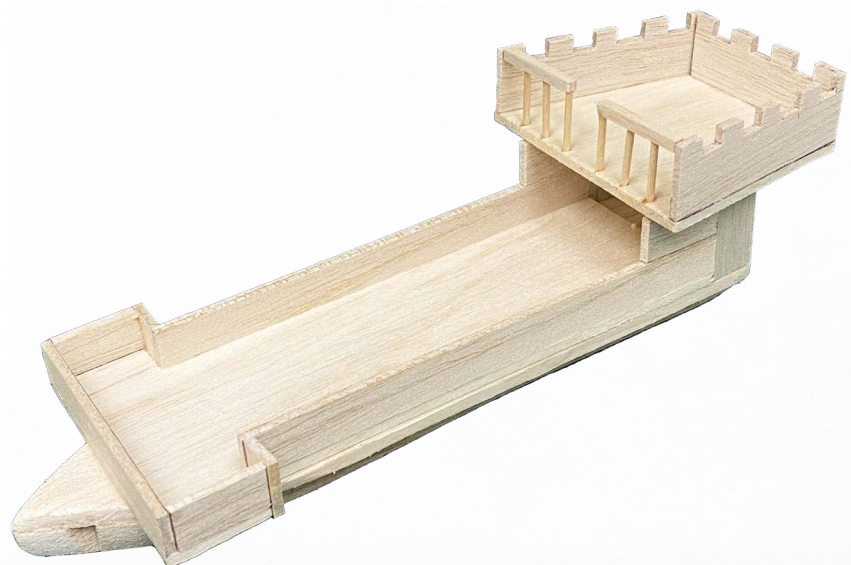
2) Make sure you leave one side shorter to take the 3/16" thickness of the balsa either side of it, then fix the sides together.



5) Once the supports are in place apply super glue (medium thickness is probably best) to secure them, then press and fix the rail top on.



3) The handrails are built with 1/4" balsa strip and six cocktail sticks that are cut to 2cms lengths.



6) It's now a straightforward job to attach the stern castle to the galley hull.

FINISHING AND PAINTING

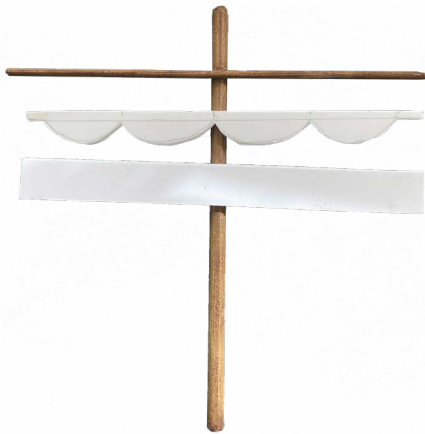
"It doesn't look like a particularly fancy ship, Steve!" I hear you cry!

"You're right," I reply, "but it is an extremely fancy movement tray!"

Before we're done it's time to apply some finishing touches and take it from fancy to truly swanky!

1) Give everything a light sanding down with fine grade sandpaper and use wood filler to hide any obvious gaps or imperfections.

When everything had dried I sealed the balsa with three coats of clear indoor water based wood varnish. Once the varnish is hardened off, lightly sand everything down again with fine grade wet and dry paper then prime the ship (or ships in my case) with your usual primer of choice. Obviously, a brown colour is preferred!



2) You could use the ship without a mast but adding one is worthwhile. I made mine from a piece of 6mm hardwood dowelling cut to 16cm in length. The spar is made from a piece of barbecue skewer.

You could just stick the mast into the deck of the galley, but I used rare earth magnets to hold it in place. They are strong enough to hold the mast but will give when you inevitably catch the mast with your sleeve during a heated moment of gesticulation during a game!

The furled sails are made by wrapping cloth over a foam card former and tying it with rigging thread. The former is shown here and you can see the sail effect fully in the finished picture.

3) I won't detail the process for painting as it is going to be somewhat dictated by your army's chosen colour scheme. You can go to town on the colours, as I've done, because from what I've read, these galleys were very brightly painted.

Oarsmen and crew play no part in the game, so I didn't feel the need to represent them, but I did add oars. These are made from barbecue bamboo skewers cut down to 7cm lengths with the sharp ends pushed into the soft balsa hull at 'oar deck' height. Super glue secured them in place when I was happy with their positioning.

The easiest way to cut cocktail sticks and bamboo skewers is to use a good quality set of sprue cutters. My Xuron cutters were great for this but watch your eyes when you're snipping; the waste flies all over the place!



FINISHING TOUCHES

Small extra details make all the difference to your ships. I added a ladder from my spares box and decorated the front of the galley with Pavises from Perry Miniatures' Mercenaries plastic boxed set, but you can no doubt find various other extras in your collection.

With the addition of some flags your galley will be ready for action on the high seas!

GAMECHANGERS: READERS' REFLECTIONS

Plenty of you enjoyed *W424's* Four Wise Men interview and sent in some of your own gamechangers. Here are just a few folks' thoughts.



SCALING DOWN AND DBA By Jon Lavis

The birth of 2mm figure blocks, with Conflict Miniatures and then Irregular, was a gamechanger for me. Cheap armies with little blocks that looked like a mass of troops, and all fit into such a small space that it was possible to have every army one desired and not need to build an extension to hold them. Small battlefields as well: I am currently playing *Black Powder* on a 1' x 1' board that would be 6' x 6' if I was using the 'proper' scales.

I know the rules for *DBA* aren't to everybody's taste, but they changed things radically for me. Units were categorised by what they did, their battlefield function, rather than by equipment, weaponry, morale, training, and other factors. In this case, the ahistorical nonsense mentioned in the article - putting skirmishers in front of knights - is sorted out by the combat results. The skirmishers will be flattened by the knights most times. Most important for me: no need to record casualties, hits, status, or whatever. I could use my 2mm blocks on a 20mm base without needing to worry about representing variations on the models.

The basic rules also proved easy to adapt to other time periods and styles of warfare. I now own rulesets that draw on the original *DBA* for Pike and Shot, Napoleonic, ACW, general warfare from 1700 to 1914ish, pre-dreadnought naval, WWI naval, and even alternatives to *DBA* itself.

The original *DBA* did have some problems, particularly if one wanted total realism, but it proved a good starting point for better systems that do away with orders and status recording. And, let's face it, realism is overrated; nobody wants to get their leg shattered by a cannon ball, have the leg amputated, and then die of tetanus or gangrene. I am sure Tilly would have been happy with less realism.



Above: 2mm gaming with a modern spin in Mark Backhouse's *Strength & Honour* from Reisswitz Press.

BACK FOR BOLT ACTION

By Keith F Massey

I really enjoyed reading this article and the very valid points made by the contributors. I am now 69 and can still remember borrowing Don Featherstone's book from my local library at the age of twelve. That was a gamechanger for me because until then wargaming involved rolling marbles or firing matchsticks at my Airfix soldiers.

With *War Games* I discovered that there was a way to fight battles with rules, and a sense of purpose was brought to the tabletop and my hobby. This led me into the world of historical wargames, and I avidly read the offerings of other authors such as Charles Grant, Bruce Quarrie, Terry Wise, and the umpteen further books from Don Featherstone.

I agree entirely with the comments about *WRG*. When I joined my first club, they were the only rules in use, so by default I got into Ancients and regularly turned up with my Severan Romans to face Samurai, Mongol, Normans, and goodness knows how many other different armies, receiving a thorough thrashing every time. I studied the rules and army lists very carefully, looking for anything that might improve my prospects of success. As I was training to be a lawyer at the time, it was very good practice. That comma or full stop could make a difference to interpreting a rule to my advantage or my opponent's detriment.

The result of this was a double-edged sword. I certainly became immersed in the subject of ancient warfare and the other periods covered by *WRG*, such as George Gush's Renaissance rules, but I found the games steadily becoming



Above: GIs tensely await the German attack in a game of Bolt Action.

less enjoyable, finishing each day with a splitting headache or the feeling that I had been a victim of gamesmanship by a better rules-lawyer than me. In short, the fun was gone.

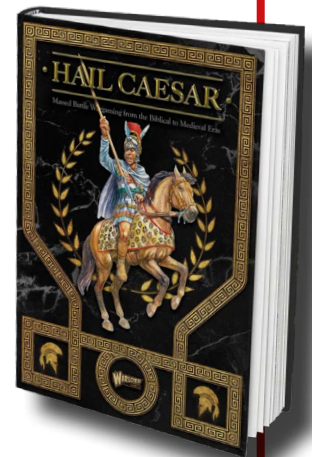
When *WRG* 6th Edition was published I duly bought a copy, but after a few games I decided enough was enough and left the club. I have never played a competitive wargame since and have no intention of ever doing so in the future.

I eventually I became so disillusioned with wargaming that I sold my figures and stepped back from gaming for a good few years, although I did continue collecting and painting miniatures. I wanted something that was very hard to find - a set of rules which brought the fun back into gaming, with the banter and socialising that I found so important. When Warlord Games burst onto the scene with *Black Powder* and *Bolt Action*, my interest in gaming was instantly rekindled. The gaming ethos of *Black Powder* was exactly up my street, and *Bolt Action* took me straight back to the

Featherstone games of my youth. Maybe there is a large element of nostalgia in my case, but in my opinion they have just the right balance between historical accuracy (if such a thing exists when playing with toy soldiers) and the most important aspect: good old-fashioned fun!

I have recently bought the new edition of *Hail Caesar* and, after a gap of about forty years, am looking at starting an ancient army again. Now that's what I call a gamechanger!

Well done to Mr Stallard and his team, and my eternal gratitude to the late, great Don Featherstone, in my case the true father of wargaming.



BRINGING IN NEW TECHNOLOGY

By Neale Smiles

Long time listener, first time caller...

Just reading the excellent article about the evolution of rules. I work in the military simulation industry, and we use a lot of wrap-around tech now. It's called 'synthetic wrap' - enriching live, instrumented training through virtual and constructive simulation.



I was struck by Rick Priestley's comment that *Warhammer* was designed around every home having D6s in it. Now everyone has a PC not just in their home, but also in their hand! My modern Team Yankee models all have NFC tags in them, and a colleague and I are working on a small project with them. With some tweaks I'm sure this technology can contribute to the next great leap forward, and will attract new blood to the hobby.



Above: An NFC tag fitted into a figure to transmit data as it is pushed around the tabletop.

Left: Terrain representing Copehill Down, a Ministry of Defence training facility near Chitterne on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire.



KITBASHING A WAR BAND FOR

THE DOOMED



Ana Polanščak has been creating and painting incredible kitbashes for years; who better than her to talk us through the process of kitbashing a warband for Osprey's new 'grimdark' skirmish game *The Doomed*?

I'm a fan of skirmish games which focus on the narrative rather than on intricate tactics. I don't see the game as a competition with my opponent, rather it is as a way to tell a story together, with the element of uncertainty that comes from rolling dice added in as an intriguing extra. This type of gaming clicks with the way I customise my figures by sourcing parts from wherever I can to make kitbashes that create unusual characters and show off their background in their aesthetic. This customisation of figures was one of the things that attracted me to the hobby in general: the creative possibilities are virtually endless. [Some of Ana's non-Doomed kitbashes are shown on these two pages - Ed]

Chris McDowall's new ruleset, *The Doomed*, has this kitbash attitude baked-in, and it's very direct about it. The game is miniature-agnostic and designed to encourage creativity in the way you model your figures of Hunters and monsters. The setting combines the aesthetics of sci-fi and low fantasy: abandoned tech, medieval armour, futuristic guns, and ragged livery. That's a rather perfect combination for the keen kitbasher!





I was very happy to be commissioned by Osprey to make the minis and scenic photos for the game's rulebook [See a wonderful selection of Ana's work for *The Doomed* in *Wi425's Designer's Notes* article - Ed] and now that the game is approaching release I simply must build and paint some for my own collection. It's a marvellous opportunity to try a different take on the same thing.

DECIDING ON A WARBAND

I started by selecting one of the four Factions and filling out a Warband roster. This defined exactly how many Hunters I needed and what equipment they'd carry. My primary goal was to make something that looked cool, especially since I don't yet have experience playing the game. I can easily tweak my list once I've gotten a few encounters under my belt if the Warband proves cripplingly dysfunctional! I don't think that will be much of an issue, given the game's philosophy and focus on narrative, but it's good to have a get-out clause.

My Faction of choice was the Inheritor Courts, described as the last remnants of old nobility and law. I made a Warband of four members: a Legionnaire, a Paragon, a Champion, and a Marshall who would lead them into battle.

The game has no specific miniature line of its own and instead encourages players to kitbash their own creations. Kitbashing is the process of mixing parts from various miniatures together (and sometimes non-miniature elements as well) to create something new and unique. There is, therefore, a lot of freedom in how one's figures and Warband can look.

The potential for creativity is encouraged by the broad strokes of the rulebook's background. It provides only brief and vague descriptions of the Factions, accompanied by a few suggested visual themes. The Inheritor Courts' themes are autumn, helmets, heraldry, nobility, law, and hierarchy. That list's certainly open to broad interpretation!

There are evocative pieces of artwork in *The Doomed*, along with the photographs I took of my minis, but the styles are visually distinct. Illustrator Helge C. Balzer and I worked from the same prompts and mood board, but we didn't get to see each other's work until the rules were laid out. This has resulted in extremely varied and distinct designs, and I really like the variety; it implies there is no single 'right' way that the Factions should look.

The setting of *The Doomed* is worth considering before you build your Hunters. It's a pre-modern world that was colonised by hi-tech spacelarking people, who subsequently abandoned



INHERITOR COURTS WARBAND

Honorat - Marshall (Blaster, Blade)

Mohor - Legionnaire (Repeater, Shield)

Naum - Paragon (Ancestral Blade)

Nikanor - Champion (Shield, Maul)

it and left the indigenous inhabitants to their doom. The warbands, therefore, sport an eclectic mix of medieval and technologically advanced gear.

FIND YOUR INSPIRATION AND FOCUS

I pull inspiration from a variety of sources: books, film and television, games, history, folklore, music, visual arts, other people's creative work on miniatures. Literally everything can be useful, some things very directly, others only subtly. In this project I went for an early Medieval Europe look, but I could equally have taken ideas from the Sengoku period, Ancient Rome, or myriad other sources. In adding the sci-fi side, I see that I was perhaps influenced by *Star Wars*, but this was not so much a conscious decision.

Since there are no official miniatures for the game, we are free to make the choices about what figures and bits to use, but we also need to set the limits. Even though I use parts from various manufacturers, I like my custom Warbands to be a visually coherent whole. The main way to achieve this is through the careful selection of bits; the resulting custom figures need to look like they belong in the same Faction, so they will ideally share a set of visual cues. This is why I deliberately used a limited selection of kits when building the Warband.

BUILDING THE FIGURES

The bodies and heads of my Warband members were sourced from a Norman infantry kit. The tower shields are Roman scutum, and they have backpacks swiped from Napoleonic infantrymen. Sci-fi bits were sparsely peppered on top of the historical base to bring the figures away from pure medieval fantasy: belt pouches, holstered handguns, a bayoneted rifle, goggles, ribbed tubes, and more.

You will notice that the Marshall is a towering, static, stoic presence compared to the other human-sized and more animated 28mm Hunters. Built from a 40mm resin figure of an early medieval knight, the Marshall's size is an intentional application of hierarchical proportion. This is a technique taken from art history, used to depict the relative importance of the figures in the works through their unnatural proportion or scale. A king will often be depicted as larger than a peasant, for example.

Once I had all my bits laid out, I started to glue them together. Since they were not a perfect fit, they needed some cutting or sanding in various areas and a bit of gap filling with putty. I tend to use Milliput as it can be sanded more easily than Green Stuff or mixed with a little water to better fill gaps and cracks.



Above: As you can see from this Killa Kan conversion Ana's Inheritor Court Warband isn't the first time she's taken inspiration from Star Wars!



Above: A pile of bits ready to be brought together into a Warband. With the 40mm figure's larger scale there will be no mistake who the boss is in this Warband!

A few of the smallest details were saved for the end of the building process. It is a good idea to establish the broad overall form of the figure first, then get closer to add the finer refinements and points of interest. On my Inheritor Courts Warband, I used tiny acrylic rhinestones to make round details that cover the ears of the figures. This is just a small addition that gives their helmets a modern element on top of what's clearly medieval.

Not all materials need to come from miniature kits; jewellery making supplies, children's toys, small mechanical parts (such as watch mechanisms), and even natural materials like well cleaned snail shells can inspire forms or add detail to your kitbashes.

The bases were decorated with a simple mud and rock texture that I sculpted in air dry clay.



RESTRICTIONS CAN BREED CREATIVITY

My conversions often start with a core idea, which is then fleshed out through finding reference material and drawing sketches. Once it's on paper, I can select and acquire the figures and bits to build with.

This time I had a different approach; I worked only with what I already had in my bits box, trying out parts to find a combination that clicked. Both approaches have their own merits, but to can help to keep your selection of parts quite minimal until you've built up your kitbash confidence!

BRUSHWORK

A huge part of a warband's visual coherence comes from the build stage, but the paint job plays its own important role in harmonising your creations and making them look like intentionally crafted miniatures rather than kitbashed conversions.



Above and Left: As soon as you apply primer it will make your kitbashed figures look more complete. The primed Warband is now screaming out for some colour! If you struggle with mini painting motivation then kitbashing your own creations could provide you with much needed inspiration.

The warband was painted with water-based acrylics, over a white spray undercoat. I wanted a bold, graphic colour scheme for my Inheritors, rendered in my usual loose, painterly style. I selected a limited palette that was dominated by blood red, with black for details. Yellow browns and yellows were used for edge highlights, bringing out the sculpted details.



KEEPING A RECORD

The colour scheme was documented in my painting journal. If I ever decide to add more members to this Warband, or if I wish to use the scheme for another project, this will be an invaluable reference. Swatching paints in addition to writing down the colour names helps me find a particular scheme faster when flipping through the journal.





The warband's leader has this scheme inverted: most of the figure is black, while red is used as a spot colour. This way they are visually tied with their underlings, but at the same time they stand out as important.

I went for mucky, desaturated greens on the bases. This has a rather neutral look and won't clash with the gaming tables on which I usually play - green marshland and grey stone tile. Subtle and harmonious is the general principle I adhere to for basing my gaming figures these days.

Putting this warband together was a fun and creative process. The small model count means making a group for each of the four Factions is easily achievable too, but before I get distracted by that I need to build a Horror for the Warband to hunt. That's my next project for *The Doomed* and it will be the topic of my next article in *Wargames Illustrated*.



Above: By working browns and yellows into edge highlights the figures fit with the 'Autumn' visual theme suggested for the *Inheritors*.

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The 33rd Regiment and the British Infantry Experience During the American Revolution, 1770-1783

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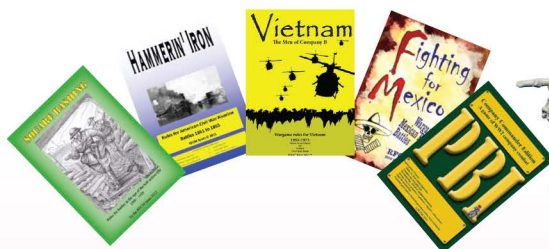
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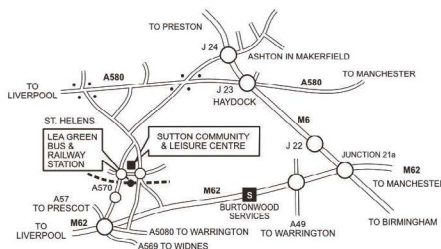
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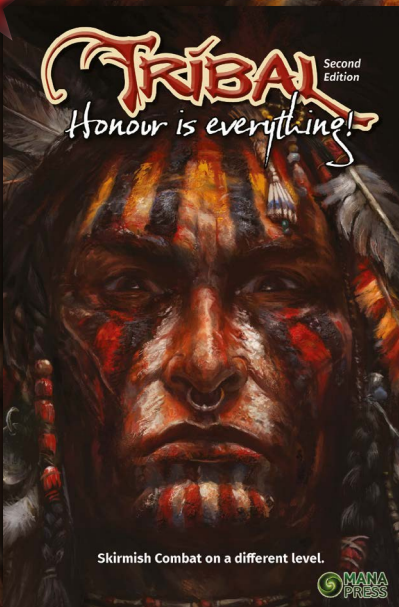
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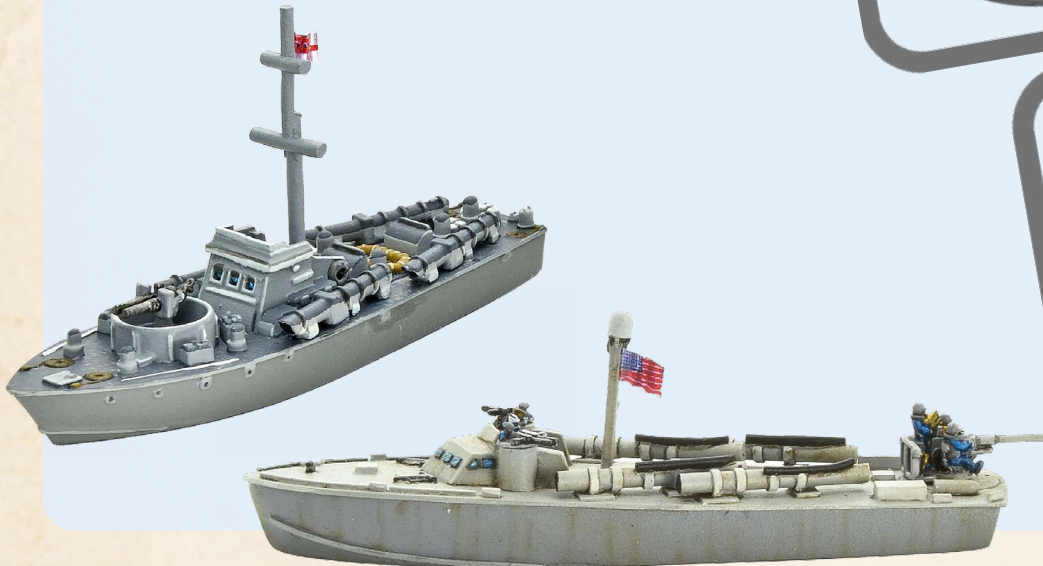
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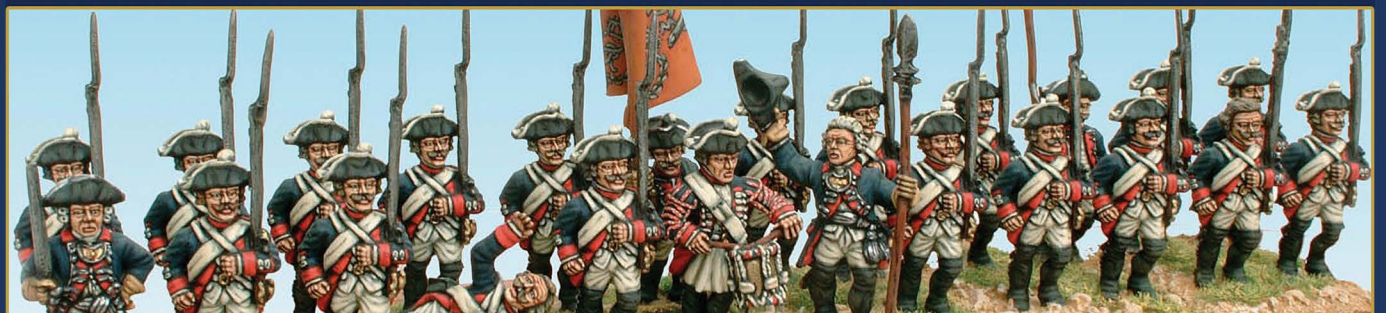
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