

THE WORLD'S PREMIER TABLETOP GAMING MAGAZINE

# WARGAMES illustrated®



## ARMY PAINTER FANATIC

WHAT'S ALL THE  
FUSS ABOUT?



ISSUE 433  
JANUARY 2024  
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**THE PARTHIAN SHOT**  
Killer tactic of the ancient world



**NEVER MIND THE BILLHOOKS**  
Here's the Ruckus!



**OPERATION IKARUS**  
The Nazi invasion of Iceland

HIT AND RUN: GETTING IN, AND GETTING OUT AGAIN

FEATURED  
THIS MONTH

WARGAMES ILLUSTRATED ISSUE WI433 JANUARY 2024

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### FROM THE EDITOR

Oi, oi, what's this? No freebie with *Wi* this month?

Having spoilt you for three consecutive issues with frames of Napoleonic infantry, Epic Covenanters, and *Valour & Fortitude* rules, we're taking a brief breather from all that generosity. As it's the beginning of a new year, it is perhaps a good time to point out that more freebies will be coming your way in 2024. We have at least four figure frames lined up for you, and a minimum of two rule booklets. That's plenty to look forward to as the new wargaming year opens.

Back to this issue of the magazine, and we have some Hit and Run antics to entertain you. From the battlefields of ancient Iran to No Man's Land infiltration, via medieval siegeworks, and the swamps of North America.

Outside of our theme, we try Army Painter's new Warpaints Fanatic range, get involved in a Ruckus, meet Peter Cushing's wargaming ephemera, plus lots more.

Happy reading and rolling.

Dan Faulconbridge  
Editor

*This month's cover illustration is The Parthian Shot by Neil Roberts.*



### CREDITS

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# OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames  
stuff you need to know about

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

### FIREFORGE - SAMURAI SETS (By Steve Wood)

Fireforge have recently released five new sets of Japanese Warriors, comprising one box of Samurai Warriors, Samurai Shooters, Ashigaru Warriors, Ashigaru Shooters, and Mounted Samurai. A mouth-watering proposition for anyone about to build a Samurai army... that would be me then!

Rather than do a broad overview of everything, I've picked the Ashigaru (basic infantry) box and two Samurai sets (foot and mounted) to do a focused dive into.

There are sufficient parts in each box to make 24 warriors on foot or 12 mounted Samurai which is good value at just over £1 per foot figure and £2 for cavalry. The Warlord equivalent is £24 for a box of 20 so they're at just the right price point. The foot figures consist of a set of legs, torso, head, two arms, and weapon options. The mounted figures include the horses (in two halves) and the rider legs are separate, meaning slightly more pieces to assemble. Overall, Fireforge have been extremely generous with the number of parts in each kit.

### ASHIGURU

There are nine sets of legs, in various poses, six torsos, eight different heads, and 15 sets of arms with either yari (spear) or naganita (polearm)! Add in the sashimono (back banners) and spare katana (sword) and you have plenty of options and variety.

### SAMURAI WARRIORS

The Samurai have even more options, with multiple head choices and every torso slightly varied with a different armour pattern. Add to that a wide variety of weapons and no two Samurai in your army should look the same! The poses on the Samurai are particularly good, with the models either ready to strike or delivering the decisive sword blow (see below). The detail moulded onto the armour should help with the painting process. The stitching on the armour plates will really pop through the application of Contrast/Speed Paints or a drybrush.

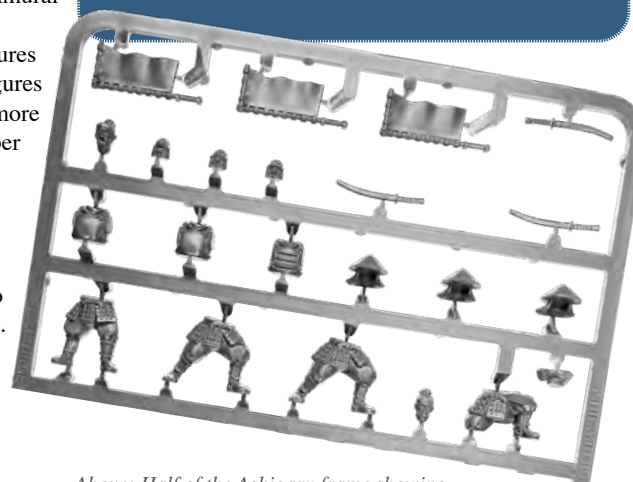
### MOUNTED SAMURAI

Whether armed with a yumi (bow), katana, or yari, the models build into dynamic poses with plenty of variety possible and are my favourites from the range. The horo (inflated cloaks that caught arrows coming from the flank or rear) will give skilled painters plenty of scope to show off their talent!

The horses are moulded in two halves with separate heads and tails. The good news is that the left and right sides of the horses are interchangeable, to give a greater variety of poses. The (maybe) bad news, depending on how you are struck by the look, is that the horses are a little stylised and maybe a bit on the large size. The Japanese tended to ride smaller ponies compared to the warhorses of Europe but this certainly doesn't put me off adding them to my collection.

### DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Feudal Japan
- PRICE: 32.50€ per box
- MATERIAL: Hard plastic
- AVAILABLE FROM: [fireforge-games.com](http://fireforge-games.com)



Above: Half of the Ashigaru frame showing the great variety in parts and poses.



Left: As can be seen in this render, the miniatures are digitally sculpted, which seems to have made for clean and crisply detailed plastics. The poses are very powerful on the Samurai, with *kasumi no kamae* (left), *chūdan no kamae* (middle), and *migi chūdan-no-kamae* (right) well represented.

Below: Step-by-step the mounted figures fit together quite logically but I suggest leaving riders unglued to make painting easier.





## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### COMPARING THE CLANS

How do the Fireforge figures stand alongside those from other manufacturers? Well, they're certainly a little on the large size. I measured the second figure in this image at 29mm to eye level in this somewhat hunched stance. Were he to stand upright, I think that measurement would be closer to somewhere between 30mm to 32mm. The figures are on the 'chunky' size for sure, so they may not intermix perfectly with other ranges, but it won't look too bad from gaming distance.

Shown here are miniatures from various manufacturers (left to right): Grey For Now Games, Fireforge, Perry Miniatures, Warlord Games, and Footsore Miniatures' Warring Clan range. Grey For Now's *Test of Honour* figure is the largest (fitting for a skirmish game) followed by Fireforge's, which is clearly larger than the others with a bigger head, broader arms, and chunkier legs. I think the Perry offerings go the best with the Fireforge plastics. That said, so long as they are in separate units, I doubt that you will notice the variance when the figures are on the table, and it certainly won't discourage me from building several units of these lovely models!



I rather like the aesthetic of the horses and certainly appreciate that the whole range builds into robust, but lightweight figures that will stand up to the rigours of tabletop gaming while still looking appropriately intricate and refined in areas. The more that I built (see Hobby Corner for my specific thoughts on that process) the more I appreciated the detail present. Pose possibilities are plentiful, lots of period details and options are included, and as the ranks of men grow the sight is ever more impressive. Fireforge have brought a great set of models to the market, and I can't wait to get some paint onto them!



Above: Samurai Mounted Warriors. Note: bases are supplied in the box sets - just not the ones seen here!

## HOBBY CORNER



### CONSTRUCTING THE TROOPS

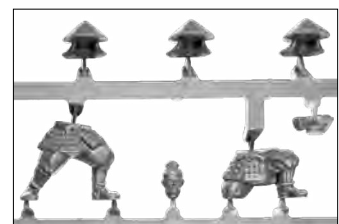
I had no major problems building the models as they are extremely well produced, with the 'half pieces' matching together via moulded lugs. There was little, or no flash and minimal mould lines to scrape off. It's a good job that the pieces fit quite obviously as there are no specific assembly instructions supplied in the box. Even less forgivable, there's no build guides on the Fireforge website to help with assembly either. It would be of great help to newcomers and even more experienced modellers to have some guidance in terms of assembly, painting, and conversion options. This is probably my major gripe with the sets but as you can see, I still managed to build the figures just fine.

Some of the two-handed weapons needed a bit of a fiddle to get the hands to match the weapons successfully, but by using polystyrene cement you'll benefit from the extra drying time, so you can align things without rushing.

The Ashigaru heads that need hats fitting to them are a bit difficult to handle because of their small size but, offsetting that, is the fact that the heads all have rounded neck joints, meaning that they are easily poseable. An excellent little detail that too many plastic manufacturers ignore by making flat connection points.

Using polystyrene cement meant that I had no need to use filler on any joints, as everything bonded nicely, which was a slight help where I had a bit of an issue fitting the sashimo to the backs of the figures. There didn't seem to be a specific locating point for the pole, and the hat brims on the Ashigaru made getting a good contact difficult. Patience is required!

I was somewhat conservative when building my samples and generally followed the poses shown on the boxes. I think that after I have built a few more of the models, I will be happy to 'go rogue' and try some simple conversions and weapons swaps between the different sets.



Above: A section of the Ashigaru frame, showing the separate heads and hats.



Above: The steps of building an Ashigaru with a yari.

## GREY FOR NOW GAMES - ESCAPE FROM STALAG LUFT III

Every new *02 Hundred Hours* expansion brings a different flavour of dramatic, cinematic, WWII action to the tabletop and the latest is no different. *Escape from Stalag Luft III* takes its inspiration from the historical escape that took place at the Luftwaffe-run POW camp in east Germany. Seventy-six prisoners made a rush for freedom through a lengthy tunnel they had dug in secret, then they scattered into the night. All but three were eventually captured and most were punished with execution, but their bravado caused a distraction for the Germans, inspired 1963's *The Great Escape*, and laid down a very appealing gaming scenario for this expansion.

### BREAKING OUT THE CONTENTS

If you've unboxed any of the previous *02 Hundred* expansions you'll know what to expect here. The contents follow a very similar composition, with a well-produced, full-colour, 16-page rule and mission book; a collection of cards for new troops, equipment, and events; and various new miniatures.

This time everything has been given a prison escape twist and all but one of the figures - all sculpted by game designer Graham Davey - represent different escapees. There are various named characters and the man who organised the real escape, Roger Bushell, gets top billing. He begins games with the 'Escape Committee' Veteran card, which allows him to sacrifice an action of his own and donate it to another escapee once every turn, which can make all the difference at the most vital moment. He (and all other escapees) can also make a 'Heroic Sacrifice' when taken out. If a Guts test is passed the distraction created means you can remove an Alert marker from a friendly figure at least 10" away.

RAF Flight Lieutenant Travis, USAAF Major Dodge, and RN Lieutenant Commander Fanshawe all get their own Veteran cards and corresponding models, in various stealthy poses, and RAF Flight Officers fill the rest of the ranks.

### A GREAT ESCAPE

The gaming takes place across five missions, developed by Graham and Ben Chapman, and the first introduces the new 'escape' approach, with prisoners trying to flee while being transported to the Stalag. Mission two - Under Their Noses - is where the breakout begins properly and the 'attackers' must sneak supplies to various parts of the camp while keeping out of sight of the guards. Tensions run high as contraband



is hidden, guard patrols perform inspections, and brave prisoners use special Distract actions to draw the guards away. No weapons are used here but the mission is full of stressful moments and lots of excitement, highlighting the versatility of *02 Hundred's* core mechanics.







By mission three the prisoners have escaped and must gather supplies from a nearby village before meeting the resistance in mission four. You might want your escapees to get changed into civvies at this point (miniatures in civilian clothing are available separately) and there are alternate recruitment cards for this, changing the Heroic Sacrifice rule to 'Unthreatening'. This can drastically reduce how much the alarm level goes up when discovered.

By mission five, freedom is so close that your brave men can taste it, but the dangers are greater too. A Border Checkpoint must be passed to finally escape and, as you'll see in Under the Microscope, the Feldgendarme have a way to quickly zip around and run your men down!



Left: The Escapees in Civvies' cards are included in the expansion set and their figures, though not included in the box set, can be purchased as a separate pack.

Preparing for, and breaking out of, a POW camp is so perfectly matched to *02 Hundred Hours'* stealth gameplay systems that it's somewhat surprising it's taken this long to arrive. Now it has, the game's potential can shine in a different way and it will be particularly exciting to see if there are future missions or expansions that, like *Under Their Noses*, focus on pure stealth rather than combat.

## DETAILS

- **SCALE:** 28mm
- **PERIOD:** WWII
- **PRICE:** This is currently TBA, Graham's not sure yet and his sets vary.
- **MATERIAL:** Metal miniatures, 16-page softback book, and cards.
- **AVAILABLE FROM:** [greyfornow.com](http://greyfornow.com)



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### A MOTORBIKE MOUNTED NCO

This is the first time any motorised transport has featured in the game and the new bike riding Feldgendarme is the highlight of the figure selection here. His bike looks great, the pose is dramatic and powerful, and we think that this fine sculpt will find its way into many larger WWII armies.

In *02 Hundred Hours*, one bike can be used by defenders and it has some interesting properties. It starts in reserve, is never covert, gets a movement bonus to its Roving Patrol and Advance action successes, and is a tough nut to crack when attacked.



### SPECIAL RULES

## Motorbike

The defenders may recruit a single Feldgendarme NCO on Motorbike for any mission unless stated otherwise (or if the players agree it would not make sense).



The following rules apply.

- The motorbike is always directed. It cannot be covert. Technically, it always has an Alert marker, though players may decide they can easily remember and not bother with the marker.
- The motorbike always starts in reserve.
- In a Roving Patrol action, each success provides +2" of movement rather than 1".



- In an Advance action, each success provides +4" of movement rather than 2".
- Motorcycles cannot cross obstacles, enter rough terrain or go inside buildings (and obviously they cannot climb).
- During the game the rider will not dismount.
- The motorbike's headlight has no particular effect - it is factored into the rider's Sights score.

- If an Escapee boots the bike's body, they may take the bike in this case, use the motorcycle model to represent the Escapee (assume he also takes the helmet and coat as a disguise). From this point the Escapee can only make Roving Patrol actions (even though this is normally defenders only and even if there is normally a detected enemy within 1") or Advance actions towards an Escape marker. He cannot Sneak, Shoot or Fight. The special rules above for the motorbike still apply.

## Missions

By Ben Chapman and Graham Diney  
Playtesting by Alan Traves and his group, with extra assistance from the SOE Operatives.

These five missions can be played in isolation, but are designed to form a loose narrative campaign, following the story of the brave escapees.

Missions 1, 3, 4 and 5 follow the standard format seen in the main rulebook. Mission 2, meanwhile, is somewhat different, as it represents occurrences within the prison camp and has a battle of any kind. As such, the rules are modified to create a new way to play!

There are no ongoing effects, from mission to mission apart from the normal gaming experience (see page 45 of the rulebook).

## 1ST CORPS - COLD WAR BRITISH ARMY

This new set of figures, sculpted by Mark Fuller, brings 20th Century riflemen, specialists, and command to British armies from 1960 to 1990. It's not the first time that 1st Corps have ventured into Cold War (and Cold War gone hot) gaming, but it's a significant new addition and the herald of more to come.

### RIFLEMEN

Each pack contains four miniatures (seen below and right), and the core of the troops is made up of eight riflemen, spread across two packs. These men are in light, fighting order kit and armed with L1A1 Self-Loading Rifles, an armament that makes them more suited to gaming up to the 1980s, but still gives a good 30 years of use.

Poses are varied and cover various battlefield actions - everything from at rest to a full tilt charge whilst firing - and this sort of variety is always appreciated in games that tend to have a low figure count. One miniature, which has slung his rifle and is wielding his combat knife, is in a bit of an unnatural pose. It's clear that the sculptor wanted to represent something rather different to a standard 'rifle up' stance, but because the arms run flat across the plane of the figure (to aid one-part casting) it looks a little stilted.

The detail packed into the kit and weapons is impressive and, interestingly, this realism contrasts somewhat with quite stylised and caricatured heads. The facial expressions bring a lot of personality to each model, but may not appeal to everyone and might be at odds with other ranges you collect for the period. These new Brits do compliment 1st Corps' existing Internal Security Operations range perfectly though, and provide more poses, weapons, and kit.



### COMMAND

The NCOs (right, first row) in this pack come in two variants: one is Oscar Mike and armed with a Sterling SMG, the other has his L1A1 SLR raised while pointing directions. A sharpshooter (right, second row) carries an L42A1 sniper rifle and its barrel (as with other weapons in the collection) is the exact right balance between sturdy thickness and good-looking refinement. This is something so many ranges get wrong, with the process of bending them straight after inevitable wobbles often causing fragile thin barrels to snap. Another little detail on the sniper is that he has a hooded smock around his neck; this makes him better equipped for lengthy periods at rest in the cold as he scopes for potential targets. The fourth figure, hefting a Clansman radio, is another where the pose feels like it has been slightly compromised for the sake of casting ease, but is a nice extra to the collection.

### SPECIALISTS

Two more packs (seen below and right) add some specialists to the range and, first up, are four heavy weapon figures that wield a Carl Gustaf and GPMG between them. One of each team holds the weapon while the other offers support by bracing the recoilless rifle or rushing over with extra belts for the machine gun. A lot of character here and the machine gunner looks particularly tough, resembling an '80s action movie hero.

A light anti-tank weapons group comes with M72 LAW, at various stages of readiness, and finishes off the collection.



## DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Cold War
- PRICE: £7.20 per pack
- MATERIAL: White metal
- AVAILABLE FROM: [1stcorps.co.uk](http://1stcorps.co.uk)



## DES TRANCHÉES AUX BARRICADES - WWI FRENCH ARMY

Digital miniatures are starting to seriously democratise our hobby, by allowing passionate individuals to develop ranges that explore eclectic options in less frequently trodden theatres and periods.

FT Miniatures, distributed in Europe by Des tranchées aux barricades, are one such producer of digital minis. Their STL files allow folks to print figures at home, but they also offer 3D printed resin versions for those who don't own a printer. The rapidly expanding range, which features the French in the Middle East and North Africa, has some excellent designs. We snagged three of their printed sets to take a closer look.

### FRENCH INFANTRYMEN

Ready to form the core of your troops are ten infantrymen, which come as two-part figures. Bodies are in assorted poses, and each has a recess where a separate head's neck can be seated. The pose variety is pleasing, with men crouching and standing as they fire or reload their Berthier rifles. Some of these weapons have bayonets fitted and the figures will fit perfectly into Interwar games as well as Great War tussles.



Details are all well rendered and while the raw prints shown in our images look a little 'soft' this is because the resin is very slightly translucent. Variety in the heads is great, with two sets of twelve offering Adrien helmets or kepis with a selection of expressions.

At about £2 per-figure (the set is 22€) the value for detailed resin figures is decent and keen painters will have great fun picking out the kit, enhancing the fine details, and applying khaki as opposed to the traditional 'horizon blue'!



Above: It's worth noting that there are remnants of 3D printing supports that will need to be carefully removed from the resin.

Right: Necks on the heads don't sit totally comfortably on the torsos, projecting a little higher than we'd have liked at times. It might be worth trimming these down before you glue them in.



### CHASSEURS D'AFRIQUE HORSEMEN

The Chasseurs d'Afrique offer a lot of gaming potential, as they battled through Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia; the Gallipoli campaign; the Balkans; and the Middle East. Four light cavalry make up this set and at about £5 per-figure they are a more expensive (but certainly more impressive) option.

As with the infantry, these are two-part figures; just the heads are separate. The poses are extremely dynamic and some excellent expressive details enhance the movement of the horses and the heroic look of the riders... but crikey they are fragile! Some elements on these samples, such as reins and swords, were so fine that they hadn't printed correctly or were extremely bent. We worked around this by straightening parts under hot water then layering super glue over the top, so they'd hold their shape, but that's far from ideal. We also hate to think of the carnage that you'd cause to their brittle resin if you dropped them.



They are figures that will look great in a cabinet after you've given them some TLC and a good coat of paint, but better quality control would have ensured parts were the necessary thickness. The Chasseurs d'Afrique horsemen are fine sculpted but their production isn't robust enough for general gaming and transportation; for that reason, we can't fully recommend them.

### GENERAL GOURAUD'S STAFF

This great set, with tons of character and detail, is probably the pick of the bunch. A good representation of Henri Joseph Eugène Gouraud (shown after the Dardanelles campaign where he lost his right arm) leads the group on the Western Front. It's the many extras that make this pack so appealing though. There's a photographer, radio operator, and staff member with papers, but adding to the charm is the selection of extra kit that the group have on hand to make their life a little more comfortable. This includes a nicely detailed radio table, a gramophone, bottles of booze, and various bits of furniture. This set is a little cheaper than the others at 18€ and manages to be extremely specialised (because of Gouraud) but also very versatile (as the different kit will have many uses on the tabletop or in dioramas). It's the kind of kit you buy because it's cool and different then work out a use for later!

We're excited to see where this range goes next and hope that the minor production issues are resolved so that gamers can get the most out of these miniatures.



### DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: WWI and interwar
- PRICE: 18€ or 22€ per pack
- MATERIAL: 3D printed resin
- AVAILABLE FROM: [destrancheesauxbarricades.com](http://destrancheesauxbarricades.com)

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# RELEASE RADAR

**Dom Sore ushers in 2024 with some new releases picked up on his advanced hobby scanning equipment.**

## A HAPPY HOBBY NEW YEAR

If you're starting the new year with a new army, you'll need to finish up some new bases; KrautCover Scenics ([krautcover.de](http://krautcover.de)) are a new (to me) company that have some materials to help you out. Their basing kits currently come as Groundcover - a finer material designed to provide a good covering - and Base Cover - coarser to add texture to a base. You can combine these to create various styles and make your bases unique yet unified. The Ruins of Persistence mix looks very interesting for urban environments and Soil of Sparta does the same for the Greek collectors. You can get these products from Northstar in the UK ([northstarfigures.com](http://northstarfigures.com)) or PK Pro in Continental Europe ([pk-pro.de](http://pk-pro.de)).

The holidays have been and gone; hopefully you got all the new hobby gear you desired from the big bearded person from the North Pole. If your loved ones gave you money, as they couldn't decipher your wargaming Christmas list, here are some spending ideas.



*Common Earth Dark.*



*Kodama Woods.*



*Soil of Sparta.*



*Ruins of Persistence.*



Geek Villain ([geekvillain.co.uk](http://geekvillain.co.uk)) have more basing options for your collection, with a new addition to their scenic line - European Battlefield basing powder. This is a mix of materials made to provide an initial layer of basing for your models. It contains pigments, sands, gravels, foams, static grass, and sawdust, and aggregates them to make the finished look more natural. I have it on good authority that more are coming, including Vietnam and Mediterranean styled powders. If, like me, you're never finished basing and like a range of materials, then this could be a great addition to your collection.

Need to move your new figures around while they are undergoing their basing adventures? How about an Army Tray from Gamemat.eu ([gamemat.eu](http://gamemat.eu))? Their MDF trays are an easy carrying solution for a collection of figures, although with the size of historical armies they're perhaps better referred to as skirmish trays, because they're only 22" by 13". There is a single tray option, with or without a magnetised shelf, and a double tray version too. That one has a second, open, 'drawer' type layer that would be ideal if you are transporting work in progress projects along with your hobby gear. The double tray comes with a magnetic sheet for the top layer but not for the storage space underneath. All the Army Trays could be broken down and packed flat, which could be really useful for travelling.



## A WORLD WAR ONE DOUBLE

That isn't a typo; we are heading to the surprisingly infrequently trodden wargaming turf of the Great War, with new releases from not one, but two companies. First up are Pandyman Entertainment's ([pandyman.co.uk](http://pandyman.co.uk)) Scottish Starter Force and Winston Churchill figure. These are for their *Trench Offensive* skirmish game, which was released in the first half of 2023 and focuses in on a microcosm of the broader trench warfare. The Scottish starter force consists of five figures, which come with a choice of seven heads, allowing you to make an officer, heavy weapon, and three rifle armed troops. Churchill comes in uniform with the Adrian helmet he liked to wear. All are 28mm and produced in resin, but certainly on the bigger end of that scale. Get ready to go over the top and then back down again as you launch attacks directly on enemy trenches.



Above: Winston Churchill.



At the other side of that trench warfare could easily be the German Army, and Eagles of Empire ([eaglesofempire.com](http://eaglesofempire.com)) are taking their Franco-Prussian War skirmish rules forward 40 or so years into World War One. We only have a sneak peek or two of what is coming, starting with the German Infantry. They will ultimately cover all years of the war and the Eastern and Western Fronts, which is ambitious and exciting. One to keep an eye on!

## FRENCH FLAIR

Charlie Foxtrot Models ([charliefoxtrotmodels.com](http://charliefoxtrotmodels.com)) have a new French Station in 1/56 scale; a substantial MDF kit that provides a decidedly Gallic flavour to rail travel, suitable for Victorian times onwards. The choice you need to make is whether it is a fancy rural station on its lonesome or if it becomes part of a more populated urban board? If you do need extra buildings, then there are plenty more in the Charlie Foxtrot range.



My Release Radar has pinged to alert me of a new company. Lowland Miniatures ([lowlandminiatures.nl](http://lowlandminiatures.nl)) are based in the Netherlands and are currently the only place I know of where you can purchase the Bravo Lima Laffly 80M. This armoured car was introduced into the French Army and, by the time World War Two broke out, all of them were in North Africa, as their European off-road performance wasn't great. Armed with an HMG and MMG, it is an interesting looking addition to a French North Africa army. You can purchase the Laffly, and a few other equally obscure WWII vehicles, via Lowland's 3D Forge, on their website.

A final entry in this French trio brings new STL files from Piano Wargames ([pianowargames.de](http://pianowargames.de)). This is a retail release following up on their Kickstarter for the French army of 1809 and the Danube Campaign. There are Line Infantry, Light Infantry, Artillery, Dragoons, Chasseur a Cheval, Command Groups, Marechals, and Boney himself. If 3D printing is your thing and you want to refight the 1809 campaign, then these are well worth a look. Printing just one set of each of the files would be a great way to build a force for *Shakos and Bayonets*, Studio Tomahawk's large skirmish game.



Above: Napoleon.



Above: Line Infantry.



Above: Line Voltigeurs Skirmishing.



Above: Foot Artillery firing.



Above: Chassuers a Cheval Command.

To go with the French in 1809 you also need the Austrians, and Piano Wargames have got you covered there too. A bit like the French, there are Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, Command, and Generals. You get more variety due to the nature of the Austrian Army of the time and you also get animals and civilians. There is a wonderful looking Archduke Charles, obviously on one of his good health days, and all the command groups look great. The infantry is designed for mass ranks, so they are not the most dynamic of models but that will make it much easier to form them up for big battles and they'll make for a smashing looking army.



Above: High Command.



Above: Civilians.



Above: Hussars.



Above: Goats.



Above: Casualties.



Above: Cows.



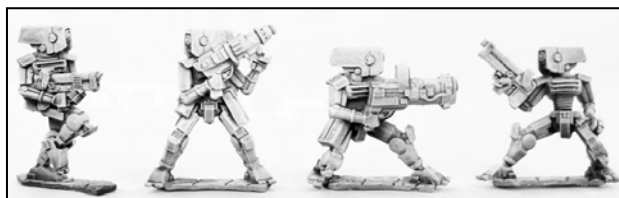
## MINI MISCELLANY

I've got a mixed bag to finish things off this month, beginning with Bad Squiddo Games ([badsquiddogames.com](http://badsquiddogames.com)) who have released six new figures of women from history (right). These are Julie d'Aubigny, Harriet Tubman, Empress Zenobia, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Ching Shih, and Black Agnes. All of them have made a name for themselves in one way or another and, given the male gaze history tends to view events through, they've done well to be remembered. A lot of the credit for that should go to modern historians, and good people like Annie at Bad Squiddo, who have gone to the effort of highlighting the role marginalised people played in our history. These are figures that deserve your support even if you don't have a game to use them in!

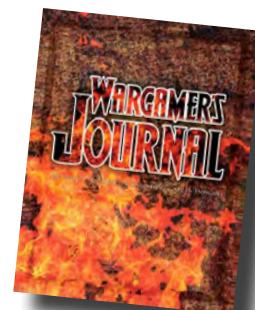


Alternative Armies have released 16 new figures for their 28mm Ion Age range ([alternative-armies.com](http://alternative-armies.com)). Twelve of these are robots while the other four are Planetary Militia.

The Planetary Militia are the controllers of the robots, which are not sentient. It makes sense to have unfeeling robots take the risks while squishier humans are safely behind the lines directing things I suppose. The robots come in assault, support, or standard configurations, which mainly determines if they have rifle type weapons, heavy weapons, or machine gun type weapons. The robots are in very human poses for supposed automata, which gives them some character.



If you're running an epic gaming campaign then how about detailing it in the *Wargamer's Journal: The Perfect Notebook for Wargaming* from Bare Beast Books, available on Amazon. This is an A4 book that you can utilise to record your games and other information. What makes this different to a simple A4 pad? The pages themselves are a combination of grids and lines including a large grid of twelve by eight squares in the top right, which happens to be the same ratio as the 6' by 4' foot tables we use in many of our games. You can easily make diagrams of your game as those squares are further divided into smaller squares. This could be useful for scenario development, logging your greatest victories, or maybe analysing those rare defeats.



The last miscellany entry is some Gnome goodies from Warp Miniatures ([patreon.com/warpminiatures](http://patreon.com/warpminiatures)) that you can get via their Patreon, but will be part of a wider Gnome range available to all once Patrons have had their fill. The new minis, to print at home and test your resin layer watching patience, include what looks like a Gnome fanatic spinning a cooking pot and a Gnome chariot that is pulled by rabbits! These look like work in progress screen grabs, taken directly from sculpting program ZBrush, but they're a tantalising tease. The chariot crew comprises two Gnomes armed with spear and bow and there's a standard pole that features large socks as pennants: very characterful. Hopefully they were washed first! Warp Minis have also shown a fully printed version of a Gnomish Badger Troll, a very odd-looking creature indeed!



I managed to get a mention of some socks into my post-Christmas Release Radar but I hope you didn't get too many of those as presents. Until next time, fare thee well, and happy gaming!

# QUICK FIRE!

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

## CRACKCON 4: A BROADSIDE OF CRACK

By Dom Cook

Crackcon, the now annual meetup for members of the Plastic Crack Podcast (PCP) community, started as a joke suggestion from the audience on our Monday night YouTube livestream. As the shutters come down on the fourth of our meetups, held on 21 October at Boards & Swords in Derby, it's incredible to me that we continue with the 'joke'.

It is not like other events. Crackcon's not a convention, or a games day in the normal sense. Instead, it's a meetup for, and by, the PCP community. We, the hosts of the show, organize the day, but the games themselves are largely put on and run by the people coming to the event. Some games are big, all-day affairs; others are drop-ins. The common theme, however, is people having a laugh and rolling dice.

So far, Crackcon has raised over £2,000 for charities, including MIND and, this year, Whizz Kids, through its entrance fee and raffle thanks to the kind donations of the community; Boards and Swords; and retailers like Warlord Games, Flags of War, and Warbases, to name a few. All profits go to charity or to the next meetup.

This year we saw some amazing games, including a massive reflight of the Battle of Trafalgar, hosted by Boards & Swords owner Ian Mann; an equally big reflight of the Battle of Tewkesbury, 1471; *Gangs of Rome*; *Blood and Plunder*, and the bizarre *Space Weirdos* were a few of many other games played. Periods went from ancient history, through to sci-fi and included WWII, WWI, Napoleonics, and much more.

Despite the floods (it was the weekend Storm Barbet struck the UK) over 50 gamers attended Crackcon 4 and it was a joy to hear the dice roll and the laughter ring out around the store.

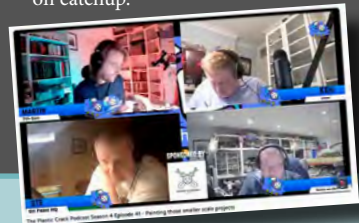
Immediately talk turned to when Crackcon 5 will happen and the good news, for those interested, is that it's already in the planning stage and will be at Boards & Swords sometime in October 2024. But you'll have to listen in to the PCP to find out exactly when!





### WHAT IS THE PCP?

Hosted every Monday evening at 8pm UK time on YouTube and Twitch, the Plastic Crack Podcast is four gamers talking about their hobby, live, for two hours. Featuring guests (the Perry twins, Andy Hobday, Rich Clarke), industry news, viewer pictures, and a lot more, the PCP regularly attracts over 150 live viewers, and around 1,500 who watch on catchup.



## RE-PLAY AT THE RE MUSEUM

By Chris Swan

If you want to play wargames, what better location than in a military museum? Saturday 28 October 2023 saw The Royal Engineers Museum stage RE-Play, its first ever wargames show. The Museum already runs several themed events throughout the year, including a military modelling show, but wanted to expand its offering. RE-Play was born!

The show was organised by the Milton Hundred club, in conjunction with the Museum, and saw ten wargames clubs in attendance, providing a mix of 15 demonstration and participation games between them. These ranged from historical games, covering land, sea, and air combat, to fantasy and sci-fi offerings, and there were also five trade stands.

The gaming tables were set up in and around the exhibits, so clubs and players found themselves playing games surrounded by various pieces of military kit; alongside a harrier, or in the medal room, surrounded by the honours awarded to the gallant sappers and military engineers of the past.

My game was played in front of a piece of the Berlin Wall and in the shadow of the Museums' V-2 rocket. It was a Senussi War scenario, set during World War One, involving an attack on a Senussi held Oasis. I ran the game twice and it drew a lot of attention, given its unusual mix of colonial warfare and early motorised vehicles.

The visitors to the Museum found themselves intrigued by all the games and asked plenty of questions. Given the show only had eight weeks of advertising ahead of its launch, it was a huge success.

The Museum wants to make this a regular event and so a replay of RE-Play is already being planned for next year!



### THE ROYAL ENGINEERS MUSEUM

Located in Gillingham, Kent, the Museum holds over 500,000 objects relating to the development of military engineering throughout the ages, and the story of the Corps of Royal Engineers in particular.

It is one of only three military/regimental museums in the UK to have a collection that holds 'designated' status, meaning it is recognised as being of national and international significance. Items in the collection include a German V-2 rocket, the map used by the Duke of Wellington during the Battle of Waterloo, weapons used by Lieutenant John Chard during the Anglo-Zulu War, a collection of bridge-laying tanks and other military vehicles, a Harrier jump jet, and a chunk of the Berlin Wall. It also has a collection of documents, paintings, and a large collection of medals, including 25 Victoria Crosses.



## SAGA GRAND MELEE POLAND

By Andrzej Aleksander Górski

I am part of the Grand Melee Poland team, and our goal is to provide players with the best wargaming experience possible in SAGA, along with any other games we can promote in the future. The concept behind the Grand Melee Poland, or GMP as it was later abbreviated, was born in late 2018, when Gripping Beast sponsored our first event, beginning an ongoing cooperation which ensures great prizes.

The recent, and fourth, GMP was extraordinary from the start thanks to its location. It was held in the Museum of Polish History in Warsaw, who agreed to be the venue after they saw and appreciated our previous works, including huge historical *Hail Caesar* battles played with 1,300+ models. Together with the Museum, we aim to popularise the history of Poland and our region.

There was unprecedented support from sponsors around the world and Reconquer Designs' sculptor honoured us by designing an exclusive model of Boleslav the Brave, the first king of Poland. It was presented to all competitors as a gift, along with a 28mm longship designed by our graphic artist Andrzej Górski, which was laser-cut in HDF.

Another of the fourth GMP's unique selling points was our own scenario booklet, where tournament referee Jan Raszynski (one of the developers behind *The Barons' War: Outremer*) designed twelve new scenarios. The event also saw the debut of the Early Piast Dynasty, a custom faction treated as 'Old Friends, New Enemies' in *SAGA: Age Of Vikings*. We used the existing Eastern Princes' battleboard for them, so as not to break the game's balance with a completely new army, and swapped some of the wargear options for historically accurate ones.

44 players took part, including guests from Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Ukraine, and it was the first time GMP featured supporting events, such as intro gaming, painting workshops for kids, historical VR simulations, and history lectures. Our event became a convention for history buffs and a treat for hundreds of the Museum's visitors during the two days it ran.



## NAPOLEON - THE VIEW FROM THE LOBBY

By Editor Dan, and friends

When you spot two famous figure sculptors, a rules writer, and a veteran wargamer coming out of the first screening of the new Ridley Scott film *Napoleon*, as a wargames magazine editor there's only one thing you can do - shove a recorder under their noses and ask them to give their initial, unfiltered, thoughts...

**Alan Perry (Perry Miniatures):** The uniforms were perfect, it's just a shame what they did with them.

**Michael Perry (Perry Miniatures):** It was great up until there was any fighting.

**Alessio Cavatore (Bolt Action author):** Why were there so few people in the battle scenes!? It looked like about 20 people involved in most of the battles, with about 50 at Waterloo. OK, maybe I'm exaggerating, but no more than 1,000. Where were the vast armies and sense of sweeping grandeur?

**Michael:** And where was La Haye Sainte, Hougoumont, and Plancenoit?

**Alan:** The battle scenes started off with some promise; great looking lines of troops, and there were cries of "form line!" but, typical Hollywood, as soon as the fighting started it was just a mad rush of bodies, with no cohesion.

**Michael:** What was going on with the flags? There was one Union flag for about every four men.

**Alan:** And those giant French flags looked like they should have been hanging from buildings, not taken into battle.

**Chris Cound (wargamer):** It isn't a film for fans of military history.

**Alan:** There were some interesting bits, the build-up to the battle at Toulon showed promise, but once the action started accuracy went out the window unfortunately.

**Michael:** Where did all those trenches and fortifications come from at Waterloo? And as they were there, why not just stay behind them? Not run out and form square.

**Chris:** I'm sure I heard a British General shout "come on fellas, over the top" - he seemed to be in the wrong war.

**Alessio:** In all the inaccurate, implausible nonsense, there was one erroneous exchange that was unforgivable. I could forgive everything else but not this. In one of the last scenes when Napoleon speaks to Wellington (which never happened of course) - a Frenchman praising British cuisine - preposterous!



Above: Editor Dan interviews some notable personalities from our hobby, in the cinema lobby.

**Wi:** Marks out of 10 then guys?

**Alan Perry:** 4.5. That's four for the uniforms and .5 for everything else.

**Chris Cound:** 5. That's mostly for the interesting noises Napoleon made before 'certain scenes'.

**Michael Perry:** 5.5, 6 at a push.

**Alessio Cavatore:** 8 for the tragic love story between Napoleon and Josephine. 2 for anything concerning the battle scenes. So, averaging out at about 5.



Above: Napoleon (played by Joaquin Phoenix) leads the cavalry charge at Waterloo. Just like he really didn't!

## MORE ON THE NORTH BERSTED MAN

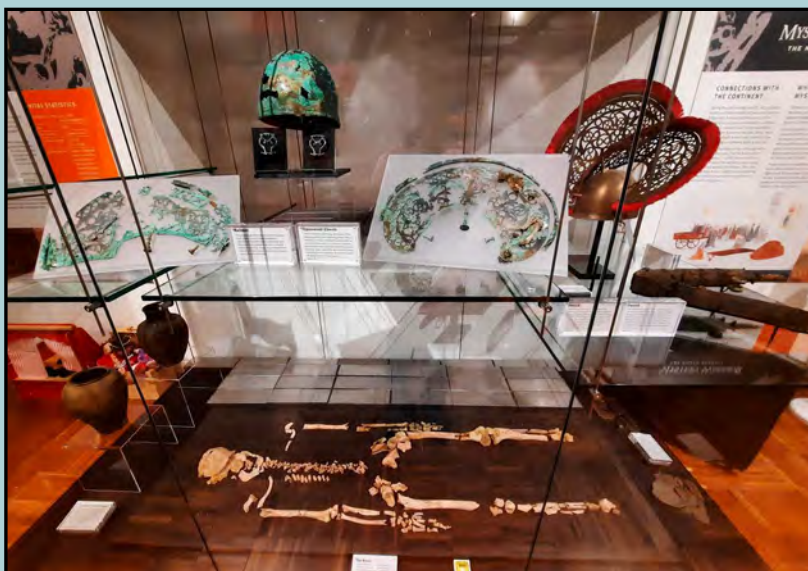
By Daniel Mersey

Following on from Editor Dan's article in *Wi432* about the Iron Age Bersted warrior burial, I thought I'd share a few more details and some photos from the Novium Museum in Chichester. I was lucky enough to visit the Mystery Warrior exhibition when it launched in 2020, and have been back to see the final display (and a collection of other superb local artefacts including the Bronze Age Racton dagger).

The bronze helmet is, of course, the star of the show, and really is unlike any other headgear I've seen from the period. The reconstruction is quite amazing. A few further points may interest readers:

- The museum describes the North Bersted Man find as "the grave of the most elaborately equipped Iron Age Warrior to have been found in England." It's an extremely rare British example of a high-status Iron Age inhumation burial.
- Analysis of the skeleton suggested a strong upper right arm (presumably from a lifetime's practice with weapons such as the burial's sword) and legs that were used to being in the saddle - so depicting the North Bersted Man on horseback is apt.
- Skeletal analysis also found significant wear to his vertebrae in the upper neck, perhaps from regularly wearing that heavy helmet.
- Looking at the reconstruction of the helmet up close, it looks really unwieldy to wear, but would have made the wearer incredibly intimidating. One suggestion I've read is that the wearer may even have been used as a rallying point on the battlefield, similar to a standard or flag. Interesting!
- The La Tène style sword was ritualistically bent almost double before being deposited. The spear was also broken before burial.
- Traces of wood around the shield boss suggest it was made from ash wood.
- The burial has been dated to 194 - 57 BC (with a 95.4% accuracy), which has further been narrowed down to the mid first century BC. The museum display ties this into a period of close relations between the tribes of southern Britain (including Sussex, where Bersted is) and northern Gaul (modern-day France and Belgium).
- Isotopic analysis, the burial rite, and the style of his weapons suggest that North Bersted Man was from the Continent, most likely France. The museum display highlights Caesar's Gallic War (58 - 51 BC) and suggests that he may have been a conflict migrant - perhaps a Gallic noble who fled to southern Britain with his warband, who eventually buried him in Continental style.
- Finally, given the location of Bersted as a suburb of seaside resort Bognor Regis, I really, really wish they research team had named him "The Bognor Bruiser". But there are countless good reasons why they didn't...

If ever you're in, or close to, Chichester, the Novium Museum is well worth a visit - not least because it is built on the site of the *Noviomagus Reginorum* Roman baths, the remains of which are viewable in situ.



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# The Parthian shot



## The Battle of Carrhae

**James examines how the skilled Parthian riders used hit and run tactics to defeat the might of Rome at the Battle of Carrhae.**

The Parthians were an ancient Iranian civilization - originally a nomadic tribe called the Parni - with a lifestyle that centred around horsemanship and hunting. From a young age, they refined their riding skills; men and women could control their mounts 'hands free' while aiming at their prey with powerful composite bows. Their lives in the saddle made them some of the ancient world's most effective horse archers, but it was the specialist tactic they pioneered and perfected - their eponymous 'shot' - that cemented their deadly reputation at the time of the Early Roman Empire.

"At once, then, the plight of the Romans was a grievous one; for if they kept their ranks, they were wounded in great numbers, and if they tried to come to close quarters with the enemy, they were just as far from effecting anything and suffered just as much. For the Parthians shot as they fled, and next to the Scythians, they do this most effectively; and it is a very clever thing to seek safety while still fighting, and to take away the shame of flight."

Plutarch, *The Life of Crassus*



## THE PARTHIAN SHOT

The Parthian shot is a relatively simple tactic but one that requires incredible skill to perform. Calling upon experience in the saddle that few could match, Parthian riders would feign retreat and gallop away from their enemy before turning at their hips and shoulders to shoot back at their unsuspecting pursuers while still at a gallop. The Parthian shot was also perfect for harrying infantry, riding by and away from the helpless troops while peppering them with arrows and remaining practically untouchable themselves.

Greek historian Plutarch first documented the use of the Parthian shot in his work *The Life of Crassus*; he describes its effectiveness against the Romans in the dramatic text that opens this article. At the Battle of Carrhae, 53 BC, which is the focus of Plutarch's finale, Marcus Licinius Crassus' army invades the Persian empire. There it encounters a numerically inferior army of Parthian defenders who, despite lacking the Romans' legendary training, soundly defeated them. The Parthian mounted archers repeatedly outflanked and outmanoeuvred their opponents, rendering the power of the Romans' well-drilled formations impotent and ensuring they were constantly on the defensive. The horse archers gradually fatigued the Romans' massive defensive square until the more powerful Parthian cataphracts could deliver a brutal coup de grâce.

The life of Crassus that Plutarch's work documents comes to an end after this clash in the desert with his capture and execution. The manner of Crassus' demise is a point of debate (the different versions are all predictably unpleasant), but historians agree that the catastrophic defeat and the death of one third of the First Triumvirate was a catalyst for the fall of the Roman Republic.

The Parthian shot claimed a notable victory, and it would not be its last. The tactic saw widespread adoption through nomadic cultures and was used with success by the Scythians, Magyars, Turks, Huns, and Mongols. As warfare evolved, the Parthian shot remained effective: Muhammad of Ghor used it to conquer heavy infantry, cavalry, and Indian elephants at the Second Battle of Tarain in the 12th Century, and in the 13th Century, Genghis Khan's military strategist Subutai defeated the Poles and Moravians at the Battle of Legnica using his light cavalry to devastating effect.

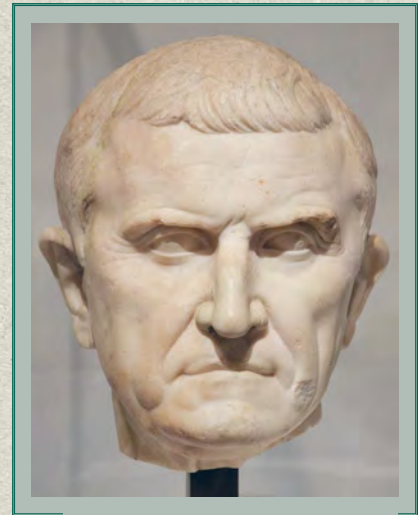
## THE BATTLE OF CARRHAE

Let's head back to Upper Mesopotamia (modern day Turkey) though and take a closer look at Crassus' folly. In doing so, we can better understand the utility of Parthian horse archers and their use of the Parthian shot tactic. After that, we will be better equipped to work out how best to implement these skilled riders into our wargaming without making battles a tedious and one-sided game of cat and untouchable bow-armed mouse!

### THE PRELUDE TO THE BATTLE

Marcus Licinius Crassus had ticked off some major bucket list tasks as he entered his early 60s: immense riches (a billionaire by today's standards), suppressor of Spartacus' slave revolt, and part of the First Triumvirate with Pompey and Caesar. But somehow this man of ambition still felt he had something to prove. Crassus wanted to add a successful military campaign to his list of achievements, perhaps to further embolden his braggadocio when clashing heads with the other two Roman greats. They had both conquered far and wide for Rome; Crassus had merely been a pivotal player in several vital battles.

Crassus decided to invade Parthia after hearing of the death of their king. He left Rome in November 55BC, intending to



A bust of Marcus Licinius Crassus.

capitalise on the vacuum that Phraates III's death left, taking his army east into Asia Minor, crossing the Euphrates River, and eventually arriving in Parthian territory, looting as he went.

After the arrival of his son (Publius Licinius Crassus) in the region, Daddy Marcus led his Roman army into Seleucia. Seven legions (around 28,000 infantry) along with 4,000 light infantry, 1,000 Gallic cavalry, 3,000 Roman cavalry, and 6,000 Arab cavalry (from Armenian King Artavasdes) made an imposing sight as they marched through Mesopotamia.

### THE PARTHIANS REACT

While Crassus sought to capitalise on any instability brought about by the Parthian empire's change of leadership, it's safe to assume that their new King of Kings, Orodes II, was at least somewhat prepared for his new duties; he had murdered his father with the assistance of his elder brother then emerged victorious in the subsequent dynastic struggle!

As Crassus' march continued, he seemed unaware that Orodes II had spies in the upper echelons of the Roman army. The Parthian King was well aware of the Roman General's plans, and in response, Orodes II led an army into Armenia himself, away from the Roman invaders. This was to prevent Armenian forces from joining Crassus, and it also drew away the 6,000 Arab cavalry who had been supporting the Roman army.

Meanwhile Parthian governor Surena - the King's right hand and a man who Plutarch is quite the fanboy of: "In courage and ability he was the foremost Parthian of his time; and in stature and personal beauty he had no equal" - had gathered an all-cavalry force of 10,000 to oppose the Romans as they pushed into the far desert.

## COMPOSITE BOWS

The layers of wood, horn, and sinew in the Parthians' composite bows increased the draw length and penetration they were capable of. Using thumb rings further enhanced the rate and accuracy of their arrows, which flew terrifyingly true and punched through armour, man, and horse alike.



Parthian sunset raiding party. The 'Ancient Horse Archers' seen throughout this article are plastics by Victrix.



### BATTLE BEGINS

Seeing Surenas's mass of Parthian horse drawing close, Crassus ordered his men to reform. The Roman soldiers kicked up dust as they quickly and efficiently reorganised from a long line into a tight hollow square. This defensive square was large and well-drilled, with around 12 cohorts to each side protecting the light infantry, cavalry, and baggage train in the centre.

General Crassus, who was no stranger to battle in his earlier years, formed this square to counter the damage that enemy cavalry could subject any exposed and vulnerable flanks to. Perhaps Crassus believed his professional soldiers' superior numbers and resolve would gradually fatigue and break the repeated head-on cavalry charges they would face; in reality Crassus had committed to a formation that perfectly played into the Parthians' hands before a single blow had been exchanged.

About a tenth of the Parthian army was made up of lance-carrying cataphracts on armoured camels (reason alone to consider this one for the tabletop, surely!), but the rest of their force consisted of agile and lightly armoured mounted archers. Thousands of light horse literally ran circles around the Roman square, making charges and feigned retreats while shooting countless arrows into the helpless defenders. The armour of the Roman legionaries was pierced, their pila were outranged, and the nimble Parthians never came close enough to face the swing of a gladius.

### INCREASING HELPLESSNESS

Describing the Parthian attack as oppressive feels like a drastic understatement. The barrages of Parthian shots had not even begun in Plutarch's

account (his full work is constantly entertaining and well worth a read) when he describes how the Parthians, "have hollow drums of distended hide, covered with bronze bells, and on these they beat all at once in many quarters, and the instruments give forth a low and dismal tone, a blend of wild beast's roar and harsh thunder peal."

This cacophony would continue to taunt the Romans as the Parthian horse archers struck again and again: "They had rightly judged that, of all the senses, hearing is the one most apt to confound the soul, soonest rouses its emotions, and most effectively unseats the judgment."

The last hope for the Romans was that the barrage of missiles would eventually be exhausted, allowing their legionaries to take up an engagement more suited to their talents. It must have crushed Roman spirits completely when, with the drone of discordant drums still ringing out, camels laden with arrows were sighted resupplying the Parthians who continued to encircle them.

### A BOLD COUNTERATTACK

Crassus ordered his son to ride out and engage the enemy in a last desperate attempt to wrestle victory from defeat. At first it seemed Publius; his comrades Censorinus and Megabacchus; some 1,300 horsemen; 500 archers; and eight cohorts of men-at-arms had routed their enemy. The Parthian horse rode off and the Roman cavalry and infantry pursued until, out in the open, they perceived the ruse, the Parthians wheeled about and were joined by more horsemen. Plutarch's description of what follows is too intriguing and grotesquely entertaining to summarise. Here it is in full:

*"Then the Romans halted, supposing that the enemy would come to close quarters with them, since they were so few in number. But the Parthians stationed their mail-clad horsemen in front of the Romans, and then with the rest of their cavalry in loose array rode round them, tearing up the surface of the ground, and raising from the depths great heaps*





*of sand which fell in limitless showers of dust, so that the Romans could neither see clearly nor speak plainly, but, being crowded into a narrow compass and falling upon one another, were shot, and died no easy nor even speedy death. For, in the agonies of convulsive pain, and writhing about the arrows, they would break them off in their wounds, and then in trying to pull out by force the barbed heads which had pierced their veins and sinews, they tore and disfigured themselves the more.*

*“Thus many died, and the survivors also were incapacitated for fighting. And when Publius urged them to charge the enemy’s mail-clad horsemen, they showed him that their hands were riveted to their shields and their feet nailed through and through to the ground, so that they were helpless either for flight or for self-defence.”*

#### CRASSUS’ CRUSHING DEFEAT

With his son and many more Roman elites slaughtered, the battle was essentially done. As night closed in, the Parthians made another assault on the Roman square and displayed Publius’ head on a pike, sewing further despair through the Roman army before retreating to a safe distance to recuperate and rest their horses.

When they returned the next morning, they found the Romans had fled. The Parthians slaughtered the 4,000 wounded and abandoned soldiers left behind then rode to the walls of Carrhae where they demanded that Crassus be surrendered in chains. Crassus attempted to flee, but Andromachus of Carrhae betrayed the Roman General and ensured his ultimate capture by the Parthians.

#### A PARTING SHOT?

Have you had the last word in a debate or argument before? Maybe you ended things with a savage barb and left your verbal victim reeling from a fine ‘parting shot’? Well, you’ve actually made a ‘Parthian shot’ of your own!

Folk etymology (where an obscure word is replaced by a more contemporary and widely understood one) has seen ‘Parthian shot’ change to ‘parting shot’ over the last few hundred years of the English language’s development. That’s not unsurprising - few beyond history buffs and wargamers would be familiar with the ancient people of the Middle East - but the great detective Sherlock Holmes was no stranger to them. He leaves his rivals “open-mouthed behind him” after making his “Parthian shot” in Arthur Conan Doyle’s fabulous 1887 novel *A Study in Scarlet*. Perhaps it’s time for a revival of the original phrase in 2023?

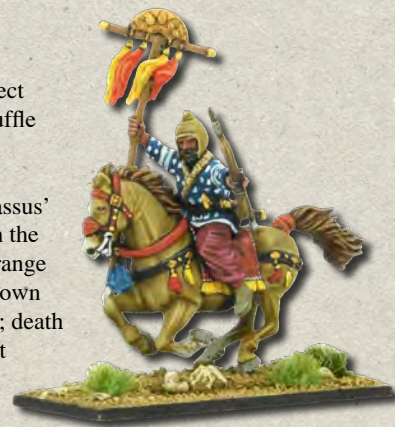
As mentioned earlier, the specifics of Crassus’ surrender and death are unknown. Plutarch affords the subject of his work a dramatic mounted scuffle where he is finished off either by a Parthian named Pomaxathres or an unnamed assailant who cuts off Crassus’ head and right hand as he lays upon the ground. Other accounts describe a range of fates: Crassus being slain by his own men to avoid capture is rather tame; death by molten gold down the gullet is at the *Game of Thrones* end of the drama scale!

With the demise of Crassus, it wasn’t long before Caesar and Pompey clashed; the First Triumvirate was over, and Pompey and Caesar would both be dead by 44 BC.

#### WARGAMING WITH THE PARTHIAN SHOT

It isn’t difficult to identify easy ways in which you can add the Parthian shot to your wargaming. Many rulesets already have some form of special rules included that will make this process much easier; if you just want a quick and easy way to use Victrix’s smashing looking horse archers which are shown in this article (along with some equally cool Cataphracts, which are available from various other manufacturers), then we can’t blame you!

*Hail Caesar*, which remains our go-to for larger battles, includes ‘Parthian Shot’ and ‘Feigned Flight’ special rules, both of which will make it a doddle to play games based around clashes such as the Battle of Carrhae. Add in special rules for your Parthian Cataphracts - ‘Elite’ and ‘Kontos’ (their long, heavy spears) - and you’re pretty much set. Camels, should you wish to include them, function in the same way as standard cavalry, but you could perhaps give them a small stamina bonus for games played in



## TWO SHOTS IN ONE?

Plutarch is not the only historian to document the Parthian shot; Cassius Dio and Ammianus Marcellinus also describe its use by the Parthians and their successors, the Sassanids, against the Romans. Informed guesswork is always required when examining tactics from the ancient world, of course, but with multiple written accounts that are supported by artifacts depicting riders firing behind them - mosaics, reliefs, and the famous Hephthalite silver bowl - the Parthian shot has been documented, preserved, and is still practiced by skilled riders today, although more as a show of skill than a tactic at war.

The broader perception of the Parthian shot has become somewhat confused, however, and many are prone to mashing the Parthian shot together with a different way of shooting a bow - the Jarmakee shot. This misconception probably stems from the engravings on the aforementioned Hephthalite silver bowl, which does depict riders firing behind them but performing the Jarmakee shot. The engravings are often mislabeled as the Parthian shot (including in the first image of the Wikipedia page) and thus the confusion has grown.

### What is the Jarmakee shot?

Although it also originated from thumb ring cultures, the Jarmakee shot serves a completely different purpose, and it is used on foot as well as from horseback. Riders knock their arrows, then move their bowstring behind their heads in a 'trick shot' looking style that, while visually showy, serves a practical purpose; it greatly increases accuracy and defence when shooting down.



The Hephthalite silver bowl (shown above) is a beautiful artifact from around 470 AD that depicts two different Huna tribes hunting on horseback, taking on antelope and lions. The riders' prey is the first clue that it is the Jarmakee shot being depicted as the technique is perfect for hunting, allowing riders to aim at the beasts running around the hooves of their horses. The shot also aided mounted archers who needed to fire as they rode along an elevated bank or cliff at an enemy below, but its utility didn't end there. Bowman on foot could use the Jarmakee shot to fire down - over battlements, wells, trenches, etc. - without needing to lean over the edge to get a shooting angle, thus keeping themselves better protected and ensuring they didn't take a tumble.

Some speculate that riders may have utilised the Jarmakee shot during the use of the Parthian shot tactic, reasoning that it would require less turning of the hips, thus not causing a slight misdirection of the horse as it was performed. You might still want to include some riders making the Jarmakee shot in units of horse archers then, but you need never refer to their technique as the Parthian shot!

the isolated, fatiguing, super-heated environment!

### ADDING VARIETY

As seen in Plutarch's eloquent descriptions of the Parthians' tactics and attacks (particularly if you read his full account), there are many additions that can bring extra flavour to your games. Consider the following possibilities to

better represent the the Battle of Carrhae or any other games fought in Parthia.

### Cavalry only

Asymmetric forces make for fascinating games, so the all-cavalry armies of Parthia are a very tempting prospect. Ignoring the visual spectacle, pitting skilled riders against an infantry-heavy

army will instantly create many tactical challenges for the players.

You'll need to be mindful of balance here. Representing the overall style of a Parthian army is fun, but it's important you don't make the game a snore-fest for your utterly helpless opponent as you repeatedly feint and rain down arrows on them! To avoid this consider adding





limited arrow supplies as a 'circuit breaker' that will force the Parthian riders to eventually commit to an engagement.

You could play a secondary encounter in parallel to the larger game that has Roman outriders attempting to delay the camels that are bringing arrow supplies to the Parthians. Perhaps your battle could transition from day to night, where the Romans will gain the upper-hand as horses grow weary and struggle to find safe footing in the dark.

#### The feigned retreat

Beyond its obvious application as a prelude to the Parthian shot, feigned retreats could be the inciting incidents behind smaller, skirmish level ambushes. Perhaps the fleeing cavalry lead their pursuers to a dead end in the rocks where a dramatic Ambush scenario from *SPQR* could be played. A feigned retreat could also offer you the chance to zoom into the battlefield and play a sub-battle that focuses on a specific area of the larger conflict: the doomed chase made by Publius at the Battle of Carrhae is an obvious possibility here. If you fight a desperate last stand such as this, then

*CLASH of Spears'* fatigue management would be an excellent addition to make the fight feel even more realistic.

#### Battle fatigue

Regarding fatigue, you should include mechanics to represent it in whatever game you choose to play. It will impact the Parthians and their opposition differently: the Parthian horses should not be able to make constant attacks with the same speed and effectiveness as the battle continues; their foe should gradually get frustrated and have their morale diminished as waves of Parthians ride within range, shoot, then retreat unscathed.

Progressive fatigue should therefore diminish the accuracy, speed, and power of the Parthian attack, whereas it should reduce the unit strength and morale of their enemy.

#### Psychological warfare

The constant noise of the Parthian drums that Plutarch describes could impact the psychological stability of their opponents. Perhaps it reduces the command radius of

enemy commanders or makes it possible that special rules will not work while the low-frequency drone distracts the men.

#### The one-two punch

Nobody wants to play a wargame that involves one side being slowly depleted at range until they break. Consider adding rules that restrict how many casualties horse archers can cause each turn, and stop these casualties from forcing break tests. This will make it essential that the Parthians commit their heavy Cataphracts at key moments to break the enemy lines and run them down.

#### Kicking up dust

Plutarch describes the hooves of the Parthian cavalry kicking up clouds that impeded Roman vision and communication. You can use trusty cotton wool to cover the lines where light and heavy cavalry move at full speed. The controlling player could choose to use these moments tactically and manoeuvre other troops into position unseen, hidden by the dust.

#### CONCLUSION

It was a real treat researching this article, examining a tactic and a battle in detail, and working out how best to pull wargaming elements from the history. I hope that my focus here on the Parthian shot shines some more light on this oft mentioned method of Ancient attack, encourages you to do similar examinations of intriguing tactics, and come up with some new gaming ideas whatever the theatre or period you play.



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# SORTIE!

As part of this month's Hit and Run theme, Simon Octohatch presents some rules for gaming medieval sorties using *Never Mind the Billhooks*.

Besieged forces sortieing from their defences and striking at the opposing army was a common medieval twist on well-established hit and run tactics. By no means confined to the Middle Ages, sorties featuring armour clad warriors surging forth from castles, keeps, and other strongholds, with lance tips gleaming, mail rattling, and blood spurting are surely the most exciting of the sortie genre (shush, you over there, with your chatter about daring sorties during the Peninsular War). But do they make for an interesting wargame? I have some suggestions for how they could be, using the *Never Mind the Billhooks* late medieval, small battle, rules.

A player wins a game of *Billhooks* by either a) killing or routing their opponent's commander in chief b) taking all their opposite number's Army Morale Tokens. The latter represents the opposition's army breaking and scattering to the four winds. For my Sortie rules, we're going to rule out option A - killing/routing the enemy leader won't win you the game, and we're going to tweak option B - rather than taking all their opponent's Morale Tokens, the besieged player just needs to take 50% to win the game.



## VICTORY CONDITIONS

The 'sortier' (yes, I have invented a new noun there), is never going to be able to destroy, or break, the whole enemy/ besieging force. Therefore, their objective is to cause maximum disruption to the siege. This is represented in the game by the requirement of gaining just 50% of their opponent's Morale Tokens for victory.w

As soon as the player under siege acquires half of their opponent's Morale Tokens, the game is over.

The besieging player simply needs to deny the sortier their target to win the game.

## SCOPE

Sortie games can be played in any of the nine Theatres and conflicts covered by *Billhooks Deluxe*.

Despite getting very little press, there were at least 36 castle sieges during the Wars of the Roses, so setting your sortie games during *Billhooks'* core WotR period is not an issue. You can, however, look further afield. How about sortieing from Compiègne and capturing Joan of Arc (see Special Targets below) in the Hundred Years' War? Or sallying forth from Novara, during the Italian Wars of the 1490s, to attack the Milanese forces of tongue-twisting Italian commander Galeazzo da Sanseverino.

You don't have to have a castle in your cupboard to play a sortie game either; fortified manor houses, Pele Towers (*Billhooks Northumbria*) and War Wagon convoys (*Billhooks Bohemia*) can also offer springboards from which to launch sorties.





Above: *WotR figures by Perry Miniatures engaged in a Devonshire civil war (see boxout opposite).*

## SORTIE SET UP

**Playing area:** A tight 4' x 4' is ideal, but don't be afraid to try the game on whatever space you have available.

**Buildings and terrain:** You will need some form of fortification\*. This can be anything fitting for your theatre of operations (see above).

Elsewhere on the board: set up some form of siege works. This could be trenches, earthworks, or any form of barricade the players have 'in stock'. These works are governed by the same rules as Field Defences, with a few tweaks (see Special Rules below).

Both players should agree that the defensive structures are 'reasonable'.  
**Besieged player Note:** If your opponent thinks it's reasonable to place tons of defensive structures all over the board - it's time to look for a new gaming buddy.

**Deployment:** The besieged player begins with all their forces within the besieged fortification. Practically, this means off-table.

The sieging player places **all but two** of their units wherever they like on the board, at least 8" clear of the enemy fortification. After these units have been placed, the besieged player places two of their opponent's remaining units anywhere on the board. This represents the fact that the besieger has chosen the optimum time to sally forth - while two of the enemy units have their (metaphorical) backs turned.

## FORCES

Sieging force: Recommended, 150 points. Besieged/sortieing force: Recommended 100 points.

If you wish to play with more 'toys on the table' just ensure the sieging force is 50% stronger than the besieged.

## ARMY TROOP RESTRICTIONS

Be damned! None apply. Ignore all the usual rules regarding troop restrictions - choose whatever troops you like for attack or defence.



Above: *Perry HYW archers stand firm against sortieing Foundry Mounted Men-at-Arms.*

\*Or will you? You can feasibly not feature the besieged building at all - it could be an inch or two off table.

## "The Ideal Location For A Billhooks Sortie"

Thomas de Courtenay, 5th Earl of Devon

4.0 ●●●●○

◆ Thomas de Courtenay loathed his cousin, Sir Philip Courtenay. He felt that this junior member of the family had no right to be living in his castle, so, in the early days of the WotR, Thomas approached Philip's pile of Powderham Castle, Devon, in "warlike array to threaten, assault, beat, wound, ill-treat, and slay the occupants". In truth, Powderham was more fortified manor than fortress, consisting of a small courtyard castle, entered via a gatehouse.

Despite its appearance, Powderham, or rather its occupants - Sir Philip Courtenay's retinue - offered stern resistance and kept Earl Thomas' men at bay for over a month during the winter of 1455. This low key siege, which featured a few hundred combatants, makes for the ideal historical setting for a *Billhooks* Albion sortie, with Sir Philip's soldiers and men-at-arms regularly sallying forth to disrupt his big cousin's siege.

### SPECIAL SORTIE RULES

- **No Manoeuvre Phase.** The game begins with the sieging player taking their move and sallying forth from the fortification.
- **Field Defences.** To facilitate the pell-mell nature of a Sortie game, we're going to make the core *Billhooks* rules for dealing with Field Defences a bit less restrictive: units do not have to end their Movement after crossing Field Defences/Obstacles. I'm sure Ridley Scott and Bernard Cornwell would approve!
- **Special Target.** Players can add a cinematic touch to Sortie games by choosing a Special Target for the sortiers to 'take'. The Special Target could be a personality - e.g. the Maid of Orleans, a visiting dignitary, or a structure - e.g. a siege tower, tunnel entrance in the siegeworks, etc.

Taking the Special Target simply requires coming into base-to-base contact with it. The sortieing player is rewarded with one Morale Token for his taking the Special Target.

- **Optional rule:** The players can mutually agree to include the 'run' element of the sortie, meaning that once the sortiers have acquired their 'winning' Morale Token, they then need to get back inside their fortification alive. They will lose the game if none of their force make it back home.



Above: 'Special Target' Joan of Arc suffering the attentions of some Burgundians, outside the walls of Compiègne. The Joan figure is by Giants in Miniatures, Sparmen by Foundry.

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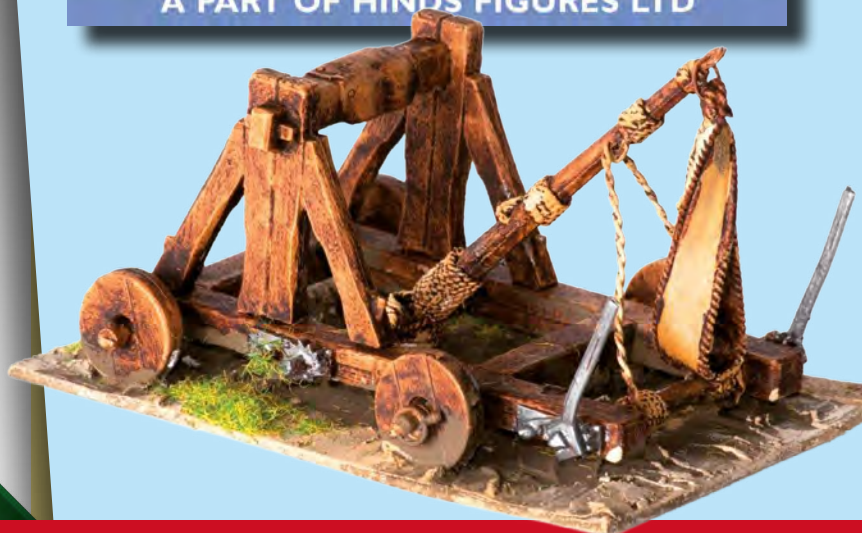
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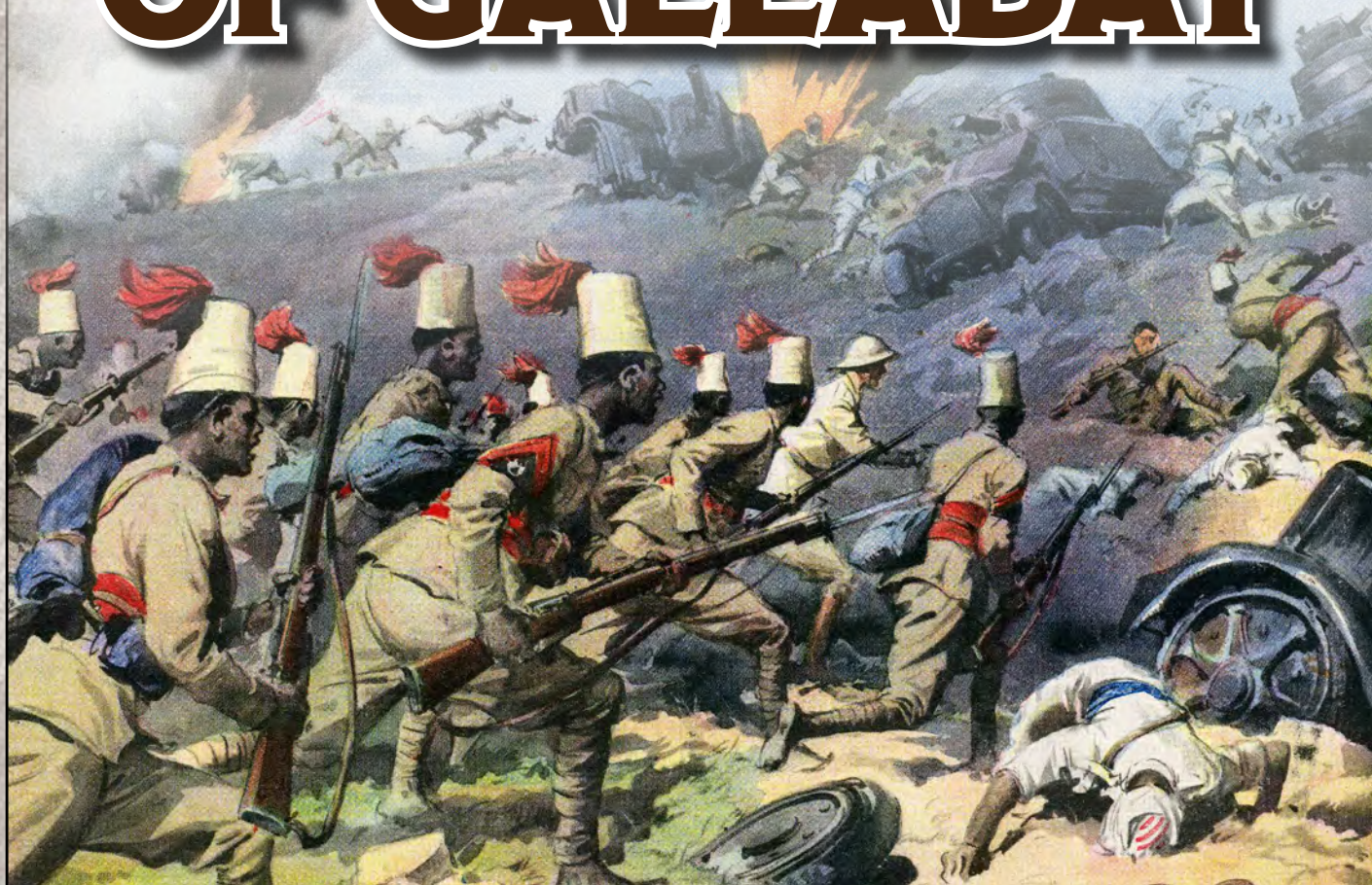
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# THE BATTLE OF GALLABAT



## ITALIAN VICTORY IN THE SUDAN

**Karim van Overmeire played a World War Two mini-campaign based on the Italian defence of Gallabat. In the first of this two-parter, he details the history of the battle, outlines the terrain, and presents some gaming options.**

The Italian declaration of war on Britain and France on 10 June 1940 was followed by an Italian offensive across the Italo-French border. However, the Italians had also built-up large forces in Italian East Africa. Thus, French Djibuti, British Somaliland, Kenya, and the Sudan were threatened. Soon the Italian army captured the border towns of Kassala, Gallabat, Karora, and Kurmuk. In August, the Italians also conquered British Somaliland.

Some feared for an Italian advance to Khartoum followed by an attack on Egypt from the south. However, the Italian forces in Eastern Africa had already run out of steam. The British naval blockade prevented the replenishment of the Italian stocks of fuel and ammunition. This forced the Italians to switch to the defensive. They hoped that a peace treaty would soon be signed so that they could cash in on their conquests. Alas, for them, this was not going to happen.

*The battle of Gallabat as seen by the Domenica del Corriere of 17 November 1940. The caption reads: "The battle around Gallabat, Sudan. The Italian garrison, that had to fall back facing superior forces, returned reinforced to counterattack and rout the enemy. Gallabat is once more in our hands."*







Here and previous page:  
Commonwealth forces in  
East Africa.



The British sent reinforcements to the Sudan and planned for a counter-offensive in the Gallabat-Metemma area. Gallabat and Metemma were forts on the opposite banks of a dry riverbed that formed the international boundary between Sudan and Ethiopia. Gallabat was a British fort that was now captured by the Italians and Metemma was in Ethiopia. Retaking Gallabat and capturing Metemma would allow the British to send weapons and supplies to the Ethiopian patriots, who were fighting a guerrilla war against the Italians.

#### OPPOSING FORCES

Brigadier W.J. Slim's 10th Indian Infantry Brigade was selected for the attack. This brigade was made up of three battalions: 1/Essex, 4/10 Baluch and 3/18 Garhwal. The Essex battalion had only recently arrived and Brigadier Slim worried about its combat value; events would prove his concerns to be well-founded.

Slim's brigade was supported by three artillery batteries, six Cruiser medium tanks, and six Mk VI light tanks. A company of the local Sudan Defence Force was also available. Furthermore, there was the promise of air support from nine Gladiator fighters, six Vickers Wellesley bombers, and various other aircraft.

The Italian forces in the area were under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Castagnola. He had three Colonial Battalions (N° 25, 27 and 77), reinforced by a Bande of irregulars, a weak battery of pack artillery, two companies of Blackshirt machine guns, a company of mortars, and an anti-tank platoon with captured British anti-tank rifles. Reinforcements were on their way with a column believed to include a Blackshirt battalion and several anti-tank guns. Gallabat could be reached by 17 Italian fighters and 32 bombers.

#### THE PLAN

The British offensive was initially planned for 8 November 1940, but this date was advanced by two days to attack before the Italian reinforcements would arrive. The British infantry attack was to be preceded by air strikes and an artillery bombardment. After that the Garhwal Rifles and the tanks would cover the one or two miles between the starting line and Fort Gallabat. After capturing the fort, the Garhwals were to advance up to the riverbed, where they were to establish a bridgehead. Starting from this bridgehead, the Essex battalion and the tanks were then to take Metemma. The Balluchi acted as a flank guard and a reserve.

The artillery bombardment on Fort Gallabat opened at 0530hrs. After 45 minutes, the target of the guns switched to Metemma. The Garhwals now advanced two companies along the east of the road, accompanied by six Cruiser and four light tanks, headed for Fort Gallabat. Along the west of the road, the two other companies and two light tanks were to capture the 'Left Golf Course' clearing and then advance as far as the Boundary Khor to establish the bridgehead.

#### A PROBLEMATIC ADVANCE

No plan survives contact with the enemy, but in this case, things went wrong even before contact had been made. Heavy rains on the evening of 5 November had made some of the British airstrips unserviceable, thus limiting or delaying the planned airstrikes.



The Essex with supporting tanks.



Poster of the Italian colonial troops.

Furthermore, several of the supporting tanks lost their tracks or were otherwise damaged by mines or by the boulders concealed in the high elephant grass. When the crews dismounted to survey the damage, they were - because of their black berets - mistaken for Italian Blackshirts by some of the Indian infantry. At least one tanker was killed by friendly fire. This was not the only uniform confusion of the day. The Italians identified the Garhwali, in their slouch hats, as Australians and reported that they were attacked by an Australian division.

### TAKING FORT GALLABAT

On the south side of the road, the leading tanks and infantry reached the Right Golf Course clearing. From this position, the fort itself was attacked. By now, only four of the Cruiser tanks were still operational. At least one of them was set on fire by an anti-tank rifle while the infantry was pinned down by Italian machinegun fire. The remaining tanks were unable to cut the wire or break down the stockade to lead the way for the infantry.

The advance seemed to stall but the tanks wheeled to the left and the right and forced an entry further down. The Garhwals could now enter the fort. Hand-to-hand combat with the *Granatieri di Savoia* and the Italian colonial infantry proved necessary to overcome the stiff defence. By now, only a single tank remained operational.

On the north side of the road, the terrain offered sufficient cover to allow the Garhwals to advance to the edge of the riverbed. As the plateau dropped steeply into the Khor itself, the tanks could not continue, and the infantry came under heavy fire from Italian machineguns in well-entrenched positions on the other bank. When the Indian infantry tried to establish a bridgehead, the Italian colonial infantry launched a counterattack, supported by fire from the mountain guns. This counterattack was repulsed with heavy Italian losses.



Fort Gallabat under attack.

### ITALIAN AIR SUPERIORITY

It was now around 0800hrs. Brigadier Slim ordered forward the 1st Essex to Gallabat for the second phase of the attack while much was done to try to repair and refit the damaged tanks.

In the skies above Gallabat, Gladiators and Fiat CR42 fighters had been dogfighting, resulting in the loss of seven British and five Italian planes. Now the Italians began a series of heavy bombing raids by Caproni Ca133 bombers. This changed the course of the battle. No British anti-aircraft guns, except the unit light machine guns, were available. The Essex battalion could find little cover, as it proved extremely difficult to dig trenches and the hard, rocky ground multiplied the effects of the bomb splinters. The sole lorry carrying spare parts for the tanks was destroyed and the disabled tanks could no longer be repaired on the spot.



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An Italian  
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plane over Fort  
Gallabat.

A detonating ammunition lorry caused confusion, as the explosion was taken for an Italian counterattack from behind. Many of the inexperienced Essex Regiment cracked and fell back, carrying some of the Garhwals with them. Some of the transports drove off, spreading the panic further.

It took some time before order was restored. The bulk of the Garhwals and part of the Essex were still holding their posts and the Baluchi and Sudanese were still in reserve, but with almost all tanks out of action and the Italians having superiority in the skies, it was clear that no further offensive action was possible that day.

## A DARING PLAN

Slim was not yet prepared to give up. He planned to send the Baluchi and the Sudanese company on a night march across the Boundary Khor and then eastwards to take the Jebel Mariam Waha behind Metemma. From that position, the Baluchis would attack the Italians from the rear at daybreak.

Slim hoped that this would force the Italians to retreat, but his senior officers objected that such a bold attack was far too risky. If the brigade was defeated, the Italians would be free to advance far into the Sudan. Slim gave in and ordered his brigade to withdraw three miles to the west, thus leaving Fort Gallabat in no man's land.

Before the withdrawal, the Italian positions were pounded by the British artillery. Italian petrol and ammunition dumps in Metemma Fort were hit, leading to spectacular explosions and fire but, ultimately, the Italians had claimed victory.

## LESSONS LEARNED

After the withdrawal, the Baluchis were engaged in aggressive patrolling and skilful ambushing, even leading to a temporary re-occupation of Fort Gallabat in the following days. On the other hand, the Italians still had control over the skies and the Regia Aeronautica continued her attacks against the British positions. This uneasy stalemate continued for more than a month.

British casualties on 6 November were 33 killed and 125 wounded (other sources give 42 killed and 154 wounded for the whole operation). Italian losses were higher with 189 killed, 231 wounded, and 214 captured. The British offensive had failed but valuable lessons were learned. It was now clear that anti-aircraft guns were indispensable or that air superiority had to be gained. Moreover, a better cooperation between the infantry and the tanks was needed. On 15 December 1940, Slim's 10th Indian Brigade was withdrawn. In January 1941 the British returned to the offensive and took Gallabat and Metemma.

## WARGAMING GALLABAT

### TERRAIN

This part of the world looks very different from the North African deserts in which British and Italian miniatures are usually pitched against each other. The area was very rocky, with boulders, occasional trees, and elephant grass that grew to a height of over two metres and that severely hindered visibility.



## ORDERS OF BATTLE

### 10th Indian Infantry Brigade

CO: Brigadier W.J. Slim

- 1st Battalion the Essex Regiment.
- 4th Battalion 10th Baluch Regiment.
- 3rd Battalion 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles.

Attached:

- B' Squadron 6th Royal Tank Regiment with six Cruiser medium tanks and six Mk VI light tanks.
- 28th Field Regiment Royal Artillery (1/5th and 3/57th Field Batteries - both equipped with 18-pounder guns).
- 7/66th Battery Royal Artillery (4 x 18-pounders and 4 x 4.5-inch howitzers).
- N° 21 Field Company, Sappers and Miners, Indian Army.
- N° 20 Indian Field Ambulance.
- N° 3 company of the Sudan Defence Force.

### Italians

CO: Lieutenant Colonel Castagnola

- The 27th Colonial Battalion in Fort Gallabat.
- The 25th and 77th Colonial Battalions bivouacking near Fort Metemma.
- A Bande of irregular troops garrisoning Metemma.
- Four or six pieces of pack artillery.
- Two companies of Blackshirt machineguns.
- A company of mortars.
- An anti-tank platoon with captured British anti-tank rifles.

A column of reinforcements was on its way.

## FURTHER READING

SOBSKI, Marek, *East Afrika 1940-1941*, Zielona Gora, 2020.

GREHAN, John and MACE, Martin, *The War in East Africa 1939-1943*, Pen & Sword, 2015.

## RULES AND MINIATURES

The battle opposes two brigade-sized infantry forces, supported by some armour, artillery, and airstrikes.

At the campaign scale, Sam Mustafa's *Rommel* comes to mind for 6mm or 10mm games and aficionados of these rules might find my squared map useful, which will be presented in part two. In our club we opted for a mini-campaign, with company-sized units in 20mm and 1/72. We prefer Peter Pig's *PBI Company Commander* (with a sprinkling of house-rules) but other sets such as *I Ain't Been Shot Mum* or *Battlegroup* would doubtless provide for a great game too. The whole affair took us the best part of a day to play but it could easily be run as a more compact single battle, focused on the fort. The actions of the Garhwals breaking through the barbed wire and the defences, followed by the hand-to-hand-combat inside Fort Gallabat, would make for a fine game of *Bolt Action* or *Chain of Command* with platoon-level actions in 28mm.

It goes without saying that there are plenty of options to represent the British/Indian and Italian troops in different scales, as the uniforms barely differ from what was worn in North Africa. Steel helmets, slouch hats, and turbans can be used to distinguish between the different battalions on the British side. The bulk of the Italian infantry was made up of Eritrean colonial troops, with their distinctive tarbush or high fez. The red tarbush was usually, but not always, covered and the bright red adds some colour to your tabletop. Suitable figures are available in 15mm (Eureka), 20mm (Early War Miniatures, Mirliton) or 28mm (Warlord, Askari Miniatures). Artillery and British armour are also easy to come by in the different scales. A diecast Gloster Gladiator and a CR42 fighter were the icing on the cake in our campaign.

Italian artillery fires at the advancing Indian brigade.



In part two Karim shares details of how he and his gaming group converted the battle into a one-day campaign. Don't miss it in *W434*.

Italian Colonial Troops Infantry Squad from Warlord Games.



# PULP FIGURES

by Bob Murch

[www.pulpfigures.com](http://www.pulpfigures.com)

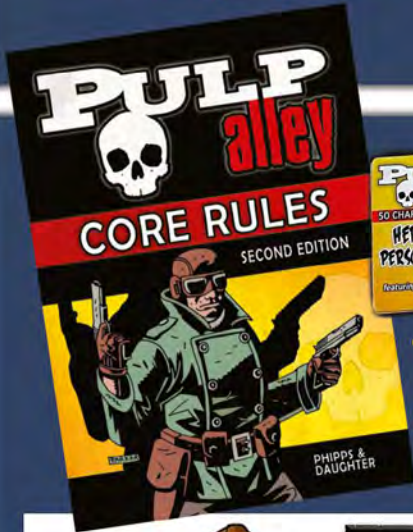
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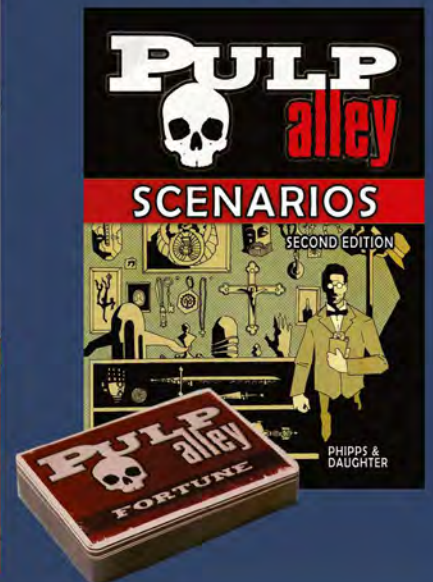
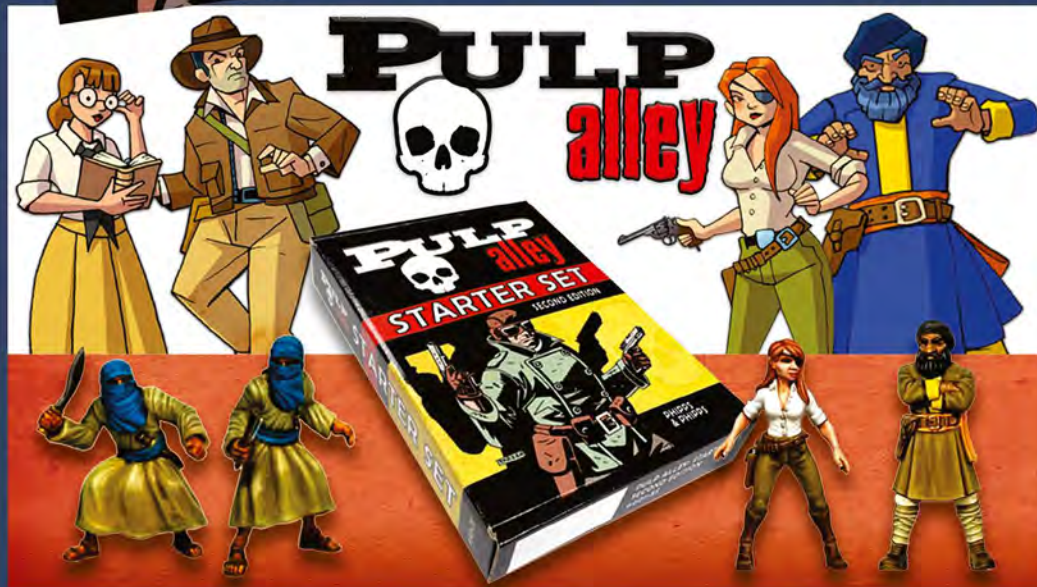
CLUE SET #1



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# AN OUTRAGE WHICH COULD NOT BE COUNTENANCED

## *Hit and run in Great War Italy*

**Jim Graham examines the misnomer of No Man's Land as the British launch a Hit and Run attack during WWI.**

"But beyond that the war had become stagnant. The continuous harassing fire of artillery, the perpetual action of patrols, and the frequent minor enterprises, which had become habitual in France and Flanders, had been unknown on this front."

*Page 237, The 23rd Division 1914 - 1919, by Lieut-Colonel H. R. Sandilands.*

"There were several small, ruined buildings in No Man's Land which the Austrians were suspected of occupying at night. Such an outrage on neutral territory could not be countenanced, and the 70th Infantry Brigade immediately set to work to investigate matters."

*Page 244, The 23rd Division 1914 - 1919, by Lieut-Colonel H. R. Sandilands.*

It was a tenet of faith in the British Army that vigorous action in No Man's Land was an essential part of trench warfare. The very name 'No Man's Land' was a misnomer and to be ignored; British territory ran all the way up to the enemy wire and would be patrolled and picqueted accordingly. The Germans took a similar view, as did the French, so No Man's Land was a hive of nocturnal activity. Things were different in Italy; neither the Italians nor Austro-Hungarians took the same view, largely because they lacked the training and small unit leadership to do so. Things would soon change.





One of the units sent to Italy to shore up the front, after the Italian collapse at the Battle of Caporetto, was the British 23rd Division. It was a straightforward line unit, a wartime formation with a history like many. It had arrived in Flanders in 1915 and had been everywhere; The Salient, The Somme, back to the Salient, and all points in between.

For the British divisions hardened on the Western Front, arriving on the Asiago Plateau in early 1918 was something of a pleasant surprise. Not the weather or the terrain, but the fact that the Austrian-Hungarian divisions facing them were very ordinary at best, and often with little stomach for a fight. In part, this was because The Empire was in obvious decline (if not disintegration) and, in part, due to lack of training and supplies. The Austrian-Hungarian Army of 1918 was well past its best, and that best hadn't been all that good. Four years of war had taken its toll; lack of supplies, lack of training, incompetent command, and a slowly dissolving empire meant that most units were very fragile. They would stand for a while, but sooner or later, they would crack. That isn't to say that there weren't many brave men still fighting on. In many cases there were, and they were often from those very minorities who were seeking to leave the empire.

The British 23rd Division was pretty much up to strength and at the top of its game. The move to Italy meant it avoided the reduction in size that divisions in Flanders suffered, so it still had four battalions in each of its three brigades. Three years on the Western Front without

any changes in the divisional makeup meant that the division operated smoothly and efficiently, and it brought the habits of Flanders to Asiago. This was not an elite unit but simply a line division which had started off as Kitchener volunteers, but conscription and later volunteers meant it was a run of the mill BEF division. Where it differed from the Honved - the designation for Hungarian reserve units - was that it was up to strength, up to date in tactics and technology, and fully equipped. The battalions forming the division came mainly from the North of England; a brigade of Northumberland Fusiliers and Durham Light Infantry, two of Yorkshire regiments, with the only exception being one battalion of the Sherwood Foresters, representing the East Midlands.

The unit opposite the 23rd Division was the 38th (Honved) Division, which was no better or worse than many in the Austro-Hungarian Army. It had suffered from shortages and losses, was well below strength, and morale was precarious. It had started as a reserve division, originally from around Kolozsvár in what is now Romania. Four years of war had blurred all the distinctions of the Austro-Hungarian Army, and the 38th was by now simply a line unit but still mainly made up of Hungarian conscripts; though Austro-Hungarian commanders tended to pressgang any passing reinforcements, regardless of nationality and whether they even spoke the same language as their new officers and NCOs. It had taken part in various offensives on the Russian Front but was teetering on the knife edge

*British from Pandyan Entertainment's Trench Offensive work their way into the Austro-Hungarian defences.*

between 'battle hardened' and 'ground down', which led to its transfer to the quieter Asiago front to rebuild.

#### THE ACTION

"On the second night in the line, March 29, 2nd Lieutenant Swire, 11th Sherwood Foresters, led a platoon against some buildings at Mörar, and attacked an Austrian post that was found in occupation. Three prisoners were taken; the remainder of the garrison were killed. The prisoners belonged to the 38th Honved (Hungarian) Division, not before identified on this front... 2nd Lieutenant Swire and Sergeant Redfern were awarded the Italian Silver Medal of Valour."

*Lieut-Colonel H. R. Sandilands*

This quote tells you pretty much all you need to know about the course of events. The 11th (Service) Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters had been raised in Derby in 1915 as part of the K3 tranche of the Kitchener New Army. The troops were originally volunteers, but as the war wore on, more and more were conscripts.



## REPRESENTING THE TROOPS

Any late war figures in Brodie helmet and box respirator will work for the British. As it is a trench raid, the box respirators were sometimes left behind as gas was very unlikely to be encountered.

The Austro Hungarians were badly supplied and equipped. Some were still in the same cloth cap they went to war with in 1914, others had the Austrian variant *Stahlhelm*. Whichever you choose, the whole unit should be in one or the other. Late war German figures with a little paint engineering can be used for their south-eastern cousins. What differences there are in 28mm are easily fudged.

Figures are available from a number of manufacturers in 28mm, which is by far the best scale for actions of this size. Neither side had much in the way of winter camouflage, so any figures for the period look right. North Star have ranges including both late war British and Germans that are an ideal starting point. If you want to run the scenario elsewhere, they have some very nice Americans too. The US forces, particularly the Marines, took the lessons they learned from training with the Australians, who were rarely averse to a spot of the old ultra-violence, to heart! The Wargames Foundry range is a bit limited, but some of the 'characters' are very well sculpted and good for variety. Scarab Miniatures produce a decent range of Austro-Hungarians, though the Stormtroopers aren't all suitable. They do a very nice range of Italians too, should you wish to branch out. While many Italian units adopted a 'live and let live' approach, some, like the Alpini and Bersaglieri, were keen, and both also have much better hats than the line troops do. Woodbine Design from Gripping Beast are a bit eclectic, but their advantage is that they have interchangeable heads; so, for example, early war figures with a Brodie helmet can be used to represent late war troops in light kit for a trench raid. Brigade Games do some early war Austrian figures in cap, which would do nicely for many of the Honved troops as *Stahlhelm* were not universal.

## KABOOM!

The British Army of the time didn't use grenades; they used bombs, because the Grenadier Guards were terribly precious about their designation. But they did call rifle grenades 'rifle grenades' even though they were Mills Bombs too!



*Scarab Miniatures Austro-Hungarian infantry.*

If you choose 15mm, then Peter Pig and Minifigs both have extensive ranges that cover the period, with the bonus that, in the smaller scale, the differences between Germans and Austro-Hungarians all but disappear.

## SCENARIO

The British are determined to impose themselves on the enemy, in the way they were used to doing, by way of 'frequent minor enterprises.' A hit and run trench raid (or tip and run in the parlance of the times) on the suspected Austro-Hungarian outpost will be just the job to start with; a quick jaunt across No Man's Land, grab a prisoner or two, bomb any likely targets to cover the getaway, and nip off home before dawn.

The Austro-Hungarian defenders are obviously a cut above most since they are venturing out at night to picquet the ruined buildings. That said, they are not expecting trouble so may not be at full alert, though all should be awake. Should! Roll a D6 for each sentry before the game starts; on a one, they have nodded off but will wake at the first loud sound.

The original trench raid took place on the night of 29 to 30 March 1918, so all night restrictions in the rules should be used. This is in the north Italian mountains, so it would be very dark but with an almost full moon, which ought to give enough light to move by. I would suggest that every turn each group moving rolls a D6; on a one they drift left, on a six they drift right.



*The Austro-Hungarian defenders are shocked into action by explosions on the edge of their line. Figures from Scarab Miniatures.*



## THE BRITISH PLATOON

A British 1918 infantry platoon had evolved from the 1914 version, when every man was a rifleman, through the mid-war, when specialist sections were the rule. By the end phase of the war every man was multi-skilled and could fill several roles, particularly bombing and using rifle grenades. The British were also in the process of changing from specialist sections to integrated sections. A British platoon could consist of:

### Platoon HQ

- Lieutenant Swire
- Sergeant Redfern
- 4 riflemen (snipers and scouts if available)

### 1st Section

- Corporal with rifle
- 6 men with rifles and bombs
- 2 men with rifles with grenade attachment

### 2nd Section

- Corporal with rifle
- 6 men with rifle and bombs
- 2 men with rifles with grenade attachment

### 3rd Section

- Corporal with rifle
- 6 men with rifle and bombs
- 2 men with rifles with grenade attachment

### Lewis Gun section

- NCO
- Lewis gunner
- No. 2 with rifle
- Ammo carrier with rifle
- Rifleman
- Lewis gunner
- No. 2 with rifle
- Ammo carrier with rifle
- Rifleman

Alternatively, the rifle grenadiers, bombers, and Lewis guns could be in separate specific sections to give a balanced force of specialists. Both organisations were in use in early 1918. The platoon could contain a sniper team of two; roll a D6, and on a 4+ they are attached to the HQ. On a further roll of 4+, the platoon has two scouts.



*The defender's HMG may not be on the table but it's worth adding to your collection! Shown here is one from Scarab Miniatures.*

## THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PLATOON

At this stage in the war, platoons varied dramatically in size and equipment, but they could consist of:

### Platoon HQ

- Lieutenant
- Sergeant with rifle
- 4 riflemen
- LMG gunner
- LMG No. 2 with rifle

### 1st Section

- NCO with rifle
- 2 men with rifle and grenades
- 4 men with rifles

### 2nd Section

- NCO with rifle
- 2 men with rifle and grenades
- 4 men with rifles

### 3rd Section

- NCO with rifle
- 2 men with rifle and grenades
- 4 men with rifles



*We couldn't resist bring some new Pandymen Entertainment Trench Offensive Scots to our tabletop, even though they're not quite history appropriate!*

The defenders have a heavy machine gun attached and firing in support along a fixed line over No Man's Land. The Hungarian player notes this down before the game, and two turns after the balloon goes up, the HMG will fire along that line. This will be visible to both sides, as tracer rounds were mixed in with normal rounds. The HMG is off-table and cannot be targeted.

Roll a D6; on a six the defending platoon has a sniper attached who can be anywhere on-table, or, if using *Through the Mud and the Blood* rules, somewhere nearby in the defenders' trenches.

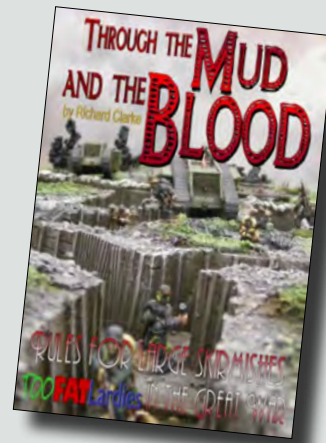
## NO MAN'S LARD

Too Fat Lardies' *Through the Mud and the Blood* rules work well with this period and scale. Designed for large skirmishes, they are ideal as the scenario pits one more or less full-strength British platoon against an understrength and poorly equipped Hungarian one.

The Hungarians should have a 'Hesitant Troops' card to reflect their morale, an 'Ammunition Shortage' card, and an 'MMG' support card. You might want to give the Hungarians an 'SOS Artillery Fire' card, but barrages in skirmish games tend to be a bit overwhelming, and the Austro-Hungarian artillery was rarely fast enough to get rounds on target before the British were back in their trenches.

The British should have a 'Rally' card. You could argue that since both 2Lt Swire and Sgt Redfern received bravery awards, a 'Heroic Leader' card might not be out of place.

Other than that, a standard pack of cards should be used.



### SETUP

A 4' x 4' table should be big enough, though a 6' x 4' would give the British more room to deploy any support sections to cover the withdrawal. The objective is a ruined house, or houses, on the Austro-Hungarian side of the table, and it should be surrounded by broken ground, providing some cover. The defenders can deploy foxholes or hastily built defences, like sangars, around the objective if they wish. These should be treated as soft cover as there were no proper trenches or dugouts. The approach from the British side should be fairly open for movement but with cover if the British go to ground.

The defenders deploy anywhere within 12" of the house with up to two sentries anywhere on-table.

The British start within 6" of their own table edge.

### VICTORY CONDITIONS

#### British attackers

Capture a prisoner and return to your own table edge well before daylight. This time limit will have to be adjusted to suit the rules you use and the size of table, but ideally the British will have to move at normal speed and only have three or four turns at the Hungarian position.

#### Honed defenders

Drive off the British without losing a prisoner or voluntarily leaving the table. If neither condition applies, then it's a draw.

Unlike many scenarios, this cannot really be fought either way as the KuK army didn't contest No Man's Land the way the British or Germans did. You can, of course, fight the scenario with the Germans or French on the offensive and any suitable opponent defending. Or use whatever you have; the basic scenario can easily be transported south to Monte Cassino or east to Kharkov in the later war.

*A Scarab Miniatures Austrian battery, further back from the trenches, spots the flashes of battle in the gloom.*



AWARD-WINNING WARGAMING IN THE FROZEN CITY

# FROSTGRAVE

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## MORTAL ENEMIES

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RUNNING OUT

# THE AEOLIAN RAIDERS



## AN ALTERNATIVE FLEET LIST FOR THALASSA

Ricard Fortun brings pirate fleets to his Ancient naval game *Thalassa*.

Since the publication of the *Thalassa* rules in *Wargames Illustrated* (Wi412), we have played numerous games, experimented with alternative ways to play, and continued designing plentiful new ships for the game. The mighty vessels of the Patron Gods brought mythological flavour to the Hellenic fleets in Wi429 but they are just one example of the game's evolution. While reading about the period I came across a place in the Tyrrhenian Sea - the Aeolian Islands - that were constantly referred to as the 'pirate islands'.

How could I resist putting pirate hideout islands and naval conflict together? A fleet of pirate ships, all unique in style and tailored for their dodgy businesses, started to form in my mind. Pirates are already considered in the game's core rules, but these are as allied ships and standard triremes or penteris. Not so exciting!

This article takes what started as a pirate ship (that could join a force) and presents what ended up as a full faction that could bring their own fleet to an engagement. Who hasn't dreamt of a Pirate Commodore (Navarch) in charge of a fleet of pirate captains. Well dream no more, now you can be that Navarch... albeit in miniature.





## THE AEOLIAN RAIDERS

The scattered Aeolian Islands are a notorious region, located off the coast of southern Italy, that have become home to an array of pirate vessels and freebooters from various nations. They find refuge in its protected bays and hidden coves, and, thanks to their activities, the area has become known as the pirate islands.

The Aeolian Islands are ruled by a council of pirate captains, who coordinate their efforts to prey on ships traveling through the nearby trade routes. They launch surprise attacks on unsuspecting merchant vessels, seizing their goods and sometimes taking captives for ransom or slavery. The council enforces its rule with a brutal code of conduct that ensures loyalty and secrecy among its members.

Despite the danger, some sailors and merchants are drawn to the Aeolian Islands for the opportunity to trade with the pirates or sell their stolen goods. Others come seeking the services of skilled shipbuilders or weaponsmiths who work in the region. This has created a thriving black market, where goods such as weapons, drugs, and slaves are bought and sold.

The pirates and their associates use the proceeds from their plunder to fund their lavish lifestyles and maintain their hold on the islands. Not all pirates are the same and they have varied goals and methods in their trade. This makes them a difficult bunch to assemble in an orderly manner under one flag but provides a bandit admiral with a colourful blend of possibilities. A leader, with a good eye and touch for business, will be able to lure and convince their fellow pirate captains to follow him for a greater purpose and a greater reward.

While many of the neighbouring city-states view the Aeolian Islands with contempt, some secretly engage in trade or even make alliances with the pirates to further their own interests. However, the pirate council is always wary of outsiders and quick to respond with force to any perceived threat.

Despite the dangers, the Aeolian Islands remain a symbol of freedom and independence to many of their inhabitants, who have little choice but to turn to piracy to survive in a world dominated by the powerful city-states.

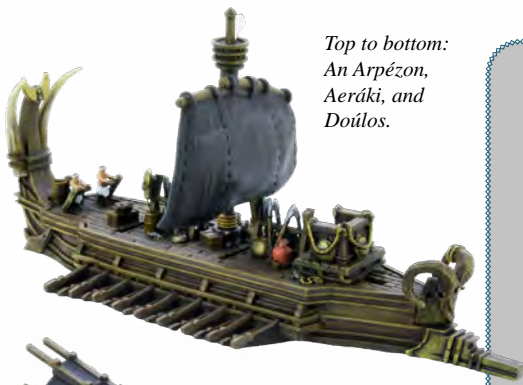
### AEOLIAN WARGALLEYS

Most pirates choose the wargalley as their pillage and raid workhorse. Wargalleys are robust, fast, and efficient at getting close and personal with their prey and, since the Aeolian wargalleys are usually smaller than triremes, they are easier and cheaper to maintain. The business of raiding requires one's full attention and that is why most pirate wargalleys are pushed by slaves or initiates, who must earn their place among the crew, leaving the fully fledged Aeolian raiders to stay fresh for the fight.

In many cases, due to their stable design and the way their crew operates (more than 50 men on deck in addition to the oarsmen), it could be said that these ships are like Illyrian lembos class ships.

Always on the run, the Raiders are a very independent and resourceful group, and they can depend only on their own abilities to manage their ship and overcome any problems aboard. All Aeolian wargalleys benefit from the Acolytes of Hephaestus Ship Nationality rule and the Teasing Predators Fleet Command dice special rule below.

Top to bottom:  
An Arpézon,  
Aeráki, and  
Doúlos.



## ACOLYTES OF HEPHAESTUS

### Ship Nationality Rule

The crews of an Aeolian ship must know how to attend to its upkeep and the most complex tasks on board. This mix of craftsmanship and resolve ensures that the ship will always be ready to respond even in the most extreme conditions.

All Aeolian ships count as being upgraded with the following crewmasters:

MASTER KYBERNETES


PYROSVÉSTIS

MASTER ENGINEER

## TEASING PREDATORS

### Fleet Command Dice Rule

There is no honour among thieves and the Aeolian pirates are a bunch of brigands and cheats who would do anything to win the hand in an open battle.

Any ship belonging to the Aeolian Raiders fleet can use the  result on the fleet command dice to pass their activation when the turn moves to the controlling player. When activating a ship that passed, that ship receives +1 to their Mastery level for the remainder of the turn. A ship that passed can perform *Coordinated Manoeuvres* as explained on page 16 of the rulebook.

# FLEET SELECTOR

When building a pirate fleet, the admiral will have a tough time organising them in the same cohesive way that other fleets are formed. Long held grudges and personal vendettas can get in the way of the ships' mission to plunder and this is represented by these fleet rules:

## FLEET COMMAND DICE

Instead of a bunch of common Fleet Command dice, a player rolls one Fleet Command dice for each pirate ship in their fleet. The player nominates ships one-by-one and rolls their corresponding Command Dice. The result is allocated automatically to that ship and the player may or may not use it when the ship activates:



When a ship receives a Fleet special rule symbol, the controlling player may decide which result it counts as at any time.



A Drift result applied to a ship can be used with that ship or with an enemy ship as normal.

Once the Fleet Command Dice are used, they are removed from the table, ready for the following round.

## ALLIES

An Aeolian Raiders Fleet has no friends or allies. No other ships from other nationalities can join an Aeolian Raiders fleet; it must be composed exclusively of Aeolian ships. This does not prevent Aeolian ships from joining other fleets as their allies, of course.

## TYPE OF SHIPS

Given their need for autonomy, the Raiders prefer smaller ships that are easier to maintain, generally more manoeuvrable, and easier to hide if needed. For this reason, an Aeolian Raiders fleet can only recruit Aeolian Wargalleys as Main Ships and Penteconters as Auxiliary ships. When assembling an Aeolian Raiders fleet, you must acquire all your ships from the following list at the cost indicated. Full ship profiles are shown at the end of this article and available to download from the Wargames Illustrated website:

Any	Aeolian Wargalley class Main Ship	70 points
0-1	Aeolian Arpázon class Main Ship	70 points
0-1	Aeolian Aeráki class Main Ship	70 points
0-1	Aeolian Doúlos class Main Ship	65 points
Any	Aeolian Penetere class Auxiliary Ship	45 points

Aeolian Raiders Fleets may use all upgrades available to Hellenic ships as normal but must use this crew upgrade list:

STANDS	COST	TYPE	RES	AS	AD/MOD	SD/MOD	RANGE	SPECIAL
<b>Aeolian Raiders</b>	0	Melee Crew Stand	3	7+	3/-	N/A	-	<i>Repel Boarders (1)</i>
<b>Despoilers</b>	5	Melee Crew Stand	3	6+	3/-	N/A	-	<i>Leaders Prized Target</i>
<b>Poachers</b>	2	Ranged Crew Stand	3	8+	2/-	2/-	12"	<i>Repel Boarders (1)</i>
<b>Plundered Oxybeles</b>	8	Engine of War Crew Stand	Structure (1)	Ship	1/-	1/-1	18"	<i>Impale Incendiary (+8 pts)</i>



## SPECIAL RULES

**Peculiar Fleet:** One can hardly call the rabble that is a group of pirate ships a fleet. The only Main Ships an Aeolian fleet can recruit are Aeolian Wargalleys, or any ship with the Aeolian or Pirate keyword in their ship class description. The Aeolian Raiders are a fast-attacking force and the only Auxiliary ships that could keep up with them are Penteconters, or any other Auxiliary Ship with the Aeolian or Pirate keyword in their ship class description.

**Repel Boarders (x):** When the target of a boarding action, roll the number of dice indicated in brackets. For every 6+ obtained, the attacking player loses 1D10 from their attack pool.

**Leaders:** The Despoilers are the most savage and wanted pirates known and for this reason they are revered and respected (and perhaps feared) by the rest of the crew. A ship that has a crew stand with the Leaders keyword adds +1 to their Governance (Gov) value while that crew stand is on board.

**Prized target:** If this stand is destroyed, the enemy receives one Victory Point.

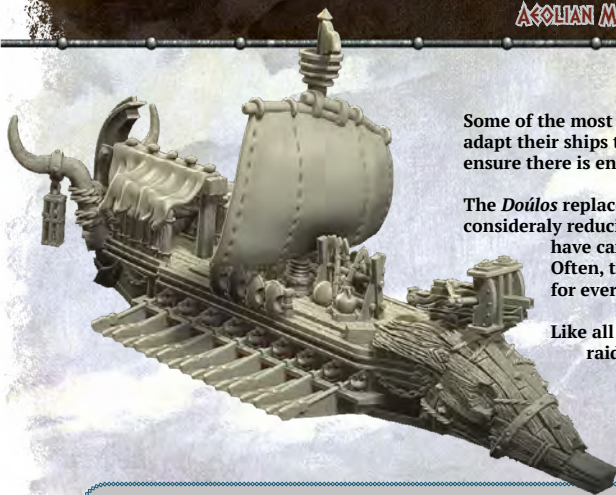
**Accurate (Range):** A stand with the accurate keyword may reroll one Shooting Dice (SD) during a shooting action.

**Impale:** If a hit is scored, roll a new dice and try to hit again. Continue doing this until the action scores three hits or the dice roll fails. Once all hits have been calculated, the target resolves all Armour save rolls and applies wounds as normal.

**Incendiary (X points):** The cost of this upgrade (indicated in brackets) is added to the crew stand or the engine of war when recruited. If, during a shooting action, at least one hit is scored, the target ship receives one Blaze token (🔥). This replaces the Chaos token (☠️) the ship would normally receive because of a shooting action.

# DOÚLOS

AEOLIAN MAIN SHIP



## IN-GAME RULES

Some of the most ruthless pirate captains that shelter in the Aeolian Islands adapt their ships to the ancient trade of human souls, and modify their hull to ensure there is enough room for their unfortunate cargo.

The *Doúlos* replaces its heavy bronze ram with a simple thick beam, considerably reducing the overall weight of the ship, which allows the *Doúlos* to have cargo holds to accommodate the same weight in human traffic. Often, these ships proudly display prized slaves in cages on the deck for everyone to see and fear.

Like all Aeolian vessels, the *Doúlos* is manned by a crew of veteran raiders that maintain and defend their ship.

To represent this fantastic reliability, the *Doúlos* benefits from the following Ship Nationality rule:

## ACOLYTES OF HEPHAESTUS

### Ship Nationality Rule

The crews of an Aeolian ship must know how to attend to its upkeep and the most complex tasks on board. This mix of craftsmanship and resolve ensures that the ship will always be ready to respond even in the most extreme conditions.

All Aeolian ships count as being upgraded with the following crewmasters:

MASTER KYBERNETES    PYROSŪVĒSTIS    MASTER ENGINEER

DENOMINATION	MOVEMENT	MASS	STRUCTURE	HULL			ARMOUR SAVE	COST
				FRONT	SIDE	BACK		
0-1 <i>Doúlos</i>	3"	5	3	6	5	5	7+	3

CREW	RESILIENCE	ARMOUR SAVE	AD/MOD	SD/MOD	RANGE	
Raiders	3	7+	3/-	-/-	-	Repel Boarders (1)
Harpoon	-	-	-/-	1/-	6" (Fixed Bow)	Shattering, Drag



## NOTES

**Repel Boarders:** When the target of a boarding action, roll 1D10 for every crew stand with this special rule. For every 6+ obtained, the attacking player loses 1D10 from their Attack Dice pool.

**Shattering:** After resolving any damage to the crew, if at least one impact was scored, roll 1D10 to check if the heavy harpoon affects the structure of the ship. On a result of 6+, the ship loses 1 structure point. This cannot be saved with a normal armour save but can otherwise be allocated to engines of war as normal.

**Drag:** If the Harpoon inflicts one Structure Point, the target ship counts as *Anchored* until the enemy player releases it with an *Anchoring* captain special order (as explained on page 20 of the rulebook). After 'anchoring' the ship, the controlling player may resolve a free *Away Boarders* action against that ship immediately, avoiding any ships or obstacles that may be in the way.

**Mastery Level:** The *Doúlos* Mastery Level starts at *Veteran* (3+) to reflect the experience and skill of its crew. This can be upgraded further using the Main Ship's cost as explained in the rulebook.

**COST** 65

# ARPÁZON

AEOLIAN MAIN SHIP



## IN-GAME RULES

The *Arpázon* is an Aeolian wargalley specialised in hit and run tactics. Its forecastle, in the shape of an ancient abyssal fish, is capable of breaking through most larger ship hulls, producing additional damage when it retreats to attack again.

With a crew of veteran raiders manning each part of the ship, the *Arpázon*, like most Aeolian ships, is a formidable, reliable old wargalley that has seen many battles and usually comes out of them to fight another day.

The *Arpázon* benefits from the Ship Nationality rule: Acolytes of Hephaestus as described below.

## ACOLYTES OF HEPHAESTUS

### Ship Nationality Rule

The crews of an Aeolian ship must know how to attend to its upkeep and the most complex tasks on board. This mix of craftsmanship and resolve ensures that the ship will always be ready to respond even in the most extreme conditions.

All Aeolian ships count as being upgraded with the following crewmasters:

MASTER KYBERNETES      PYROSVÉSTIS      MASTER ENGINEER

DENOMINATION	MOVEMENT	MASS	STRUCTURE	HULL			ARMOUR SAVE	COST
				FRONT	SIDE	BACK		
0-1 <i>Arpázon</i>	3"	5(6)	3	6	5	5	7+	3

**Serrated Ram** - The forecastle of the *Arpázon* meets its ram, forming a dented, solid structure, capable of tearing the planks of a ship when reversing after a ram. To represent this, the *Arpázon* ramming action receives the special rule **Shattering** if the ship decides to **Reverse** after a successful ram. Like with a regular ram, the ship adds +1 to the Mass when ramming (already included on the profile) and benefits from +1 Armour saves against impacts received on the Front Hull.

**Aeolian** - The *Arpázon* is an Aeolian vessel. The ships of the Aeolian Islands know no nation or allegiance, and would join the efforts of any Navarch that offers them good pay and a share of the spoils. An Aeolian ship can be recruited by any nation: *Hellenic, Persian, Carthaginian, Roman*, or any other.

**Foredeck Slots (1)** - Can select up to one foredeck upgrade from those available on the Ship Upgrades list.

**Crew Slots (2)** - The *Arpázon* is manned by two crew stands or Raiders which are already included in the ship's recruitment cost. Any number of Raiders crew stands can be upgraded with any of the options available on the Aeolian Raiders fleet selector list.



CREW	RESILIENCE	ARMOUR SAVE	AD/MOD	SD/MOD	RANGE	
Raiders	3	7+	3/-	-/-	-	Repel Boarders (1)

## NOTES

**\*Shattering:** After resolving the **Reverse** movement during a ramming action, roll 1D10 to check if the serrated ram damages the structure of the ship further. On a result of 6+ the ship loses 1 structure point. This cannot be saved with a normal armour save but can otherwise be allocated to engines of war as normal.

**Repel Boarders:** When the target of a boarding action, roll 1 D10 for every crew stand with this special rule. For every 6+ obtained, the attacking player loses 1D10 from their attack pool.

**Mastery Level:** The *Arpázon* Mastery Level starts at *Veteran* (3+) to reflect the experience and skill of its crew. This can be upgraded further using the Main Ship's cost as explained in the rulebook.

COST 70



# AERÁKI

AEOLIAN MAIN SHIP



## IN-GAME RULES

The *Aeráki* is an Aeolian ship of unknown origin. Its most significant characteristic is its lack of oars. It sails gracefully using its peculiar aft mainsail which is able to capture the softest breeze and produce an incredibly accurate push that allows the *Aeráki*'s skilful crew to execute unseen manoeuvres.

Like all Aeolian vessels, the *Aeráki* is manned by a crew of veteran raiders that not only expertly man each part of the ship and conduct any repairs and maintenance on board, but are also excellent sailors and fighters.

To represent this fantastic reliability, the *Aeráki* benefits from the following Ship Nationality rule:

## ACOLYTES OF HEPHAESTUS

### Ship Nationality Rule

The crews of an Aeolian ship must know how to attend to its upkeep and the most complex tasks on board. This mix of craftsmanship and resolve ensures that the ship will always be ready to respond even in the most extreme conditions.

All Aeolian ships count as being upgraded with the following crewmasters:

MASTER KYBERNETES    PYROSVÉSTIS    MASTER ENGINEER

DENOMINATION	MOVEMENT	MASS	STRUCTURE	HULL			ARMOUR SAVE	COST
				FRONT	SIDE	BACK		
0-1 <i>Aeráki</i>	Sail	5(6)	3	5	6	5	7+	3

**Ram** - The *Aeráki* mounts a bronze ram on its bow that adds +1 to the Mass when ramming (already included on the profile) and gives the ship a +1 Armour save against impacts received on the Front Hull.

**Sailing** - The *Aeráki* is a very unconventional ship that uses its sail to move and manoeuvre, not requiring oarsmen. Like all ships in Thalassa, the ship receives three manoeuvres during its activation, but instead of moving and turning normally, the ship uses the Drift template with each manoeuvre. The player must position the Drift template with its long edge against the front of the ship, regardless of the direction of the predominant current, and resolves a Drift movement normally. Sailing does not produce momentum when declaring a ramming captain's order. Because of its complexity and specialisation, the *Aeráki* is restricted by the **Combined Tasks** special rule on page 38 of the rulebook.

**Aeolian** - The *Aeráki* is an Aeolian vessel. The ships of the Aeolian Islands know no nation or allegiance, and would join the efforts of any Navarch that offer them a hefty pay and a share of the spoils. An Aeolian ship can be recruited by any nation: *Hellenic, Persian, Carthaginian, Roman*, or any other.

**Crew Slots (2)** - The *Aeráki* is manned by two crew stands or Raiders which are already included in the ship's recruitment cost. Any number of Raiders crew stands can be upgraded with any of the options available on the Aeolian Raiders fleet selector list.



CREW	RESILIENCE	ARMOUR SAVE	AD/MOD	SD/MOD	RANGE	NOTES
Raiders	3	7+	3/-	-/-	-	Repel Boarders (1)

### NOTES

**Repel Boarders:** When the target of a boarding action, roll 1 D10 for every crew stand with this special rule. For every 6+ obtained, the attacking player loses 1D10 from their attack pool.

**Mastery Level:** The *Aeráki* Mastery Level starts at *Veteran* (3+) to reflect the experience and skill of its crew. This can be upgraded further using the Main Ship's cost as explained in the rulebook.

COST

70

# THE SWAMP FOX



## James discusses Hit and Run attacks in South Carolina's swamplands during the American War of Independence.

The Swamp Fox was a formidable figure, who masterminded many successful guerrilla strikes during the American Revolutionary War. Launching raids through South Carolina's unforgiving terrain, this skilled leader oversaw attacks that kept the more regimented British forces on their toes, and seriously disrupted their efforts to control the colonies in the South.

Francis Marion, a militia officer who cut his teeth in the French and Indian War, cemented his legend as the "Swamp Fox" through the way he and his men used the environment to their extreme advantage in the later years of the AWI. They blended into the wetlands and forests, launched surprise attacks, then disappeared back into the cloaking safety of the cypress and gum trees. British Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton would ultimately coin Marion's sobriquet in 1780 when he despaired: "As for this damned old fox, the Devil himself could not catch him." This came after Tarleton had unsuccessfully tried to chase down Marion and his militia for seven hours through 26 miles of inhospitable swampland.

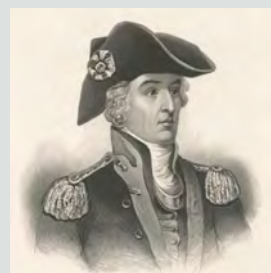
"Colonel Marion had so wrought the minds of the people, partly by the terror of his threats and cruelty of his punishments, and partly by the promise of plunder, that there was scarcely an inhabitant between the Santee and the Peedee that was not in arms against us."

*Charles Cornwallis*

### BRIGADIER-GENERAL FRANCIS MARION, 1732 TO 1795

"Fighting in the Revolutionary War, well, is terrifying. But I'm terrifyingly terrified that the terrified Regulars won't be terrified no longer."

Francis Marion



Marion was born in South Carolina and returned there, after a brief stint serving in the French and Indian War with his brother. He bought a plantation and around 200 slaves but would return to combat in 1775, at the age of 42, enlisting in the Continental Army's 2nd South Carolina Regiment as a captain. He was soon commissioned to the rank of lieutenant colonel and, eventually, after implementing hit and run warfare in the swamps, his reputation grew.

The collection of irregular militiamen he commanded, from a base camp on Snow's Island in Florence County, became known as Marion's Men. These guerrilla fighters had as fierce a reputation as the newly nicknamed Swamp Fox himself. Finding conventional warfare ineffective against the well-trained and better equipped British, Marion's Men used their knowledge of the land, launched hit and run attacks, and implemented terror tactics to sow fear through the ranks of the King's Men.

After the war, Marion rebuilt his destroyed plantation, married his 49-year-old cousin, served several terms in the South Carolina State Senate, and died on his plantation at the age of 63. This relatively gentle retirement and uninspiring early years led biographer Hugh Rankin to describe Marion's life as "something like a sandwich - a highly spiced centre between two slabs of rather dry bread." Rankin might be right but that's some seriously spicy swamp sausage for us to enjoy bringing to the tabletop!





*Snow's Island in the swampy lowlands along the Pee Dee River.*



Marion was a strategic thinker who realised the tactical benefits that South Carolina's swamps could offer to his small groups of fighting men. His tactics were unconventional but incredibly effective, striking fear into the hearts of the British and disrupting their supply lines, communication, and fortifications. This makes him a worthy subject of study for this month's theme of Hit and Run. Let's examine how he became such a thorn in the side of the British and how can we bring him to the tabletop in our wargaming.

**HOME IS WHERE THE SWAMP IS**

The wetlands played a key role in the success of Marion's attacks, providing concealment for his Patriot militiamen as they approached their foe, and making for excellent cover from which scouts could spy on their enemies.

The swamps also offered Marion's Men an area to escape into after attacks - one that the British struggled to pursue them through - and made for excellent bases of operations. Many of the Swamp Fox's fighters, who became known as Marion's Men, served without pay and supplied their own arms and food, operating from a base camp on Snow's Island in Florence County. They lived off the land, took shelter unseen, and patiently gathered information on the enemy movements and weaknesses in the surrounding area before launching bold raids.

Before you bring the Swamp Fox and his Men onto the tabletop, you'll need to ensure your board represents the natural fortresses from which they outmanoeuvred and outfought their enemy. Thankfully, it only takes minimal terrain, and a little ingenuity, to change a standard tabletop into a gloomy swampland.

The key to an easy swamp board is flipping how you'd usually define the terrain elements; instead of adding rivers and pools to your landscape add your landscape elements to an otherwise waterlogged board!

You can get good swampy options from Deep-Cut Studio (their Tropical Swamp mat looks great) but these have fixed areas of ground, so you won't get too much variety from them. I think a better option is their Waterworld mat onto which you can place sections of land. You probably don't even need to make new landforms - your existing woods, low hills, and difficult terrain pieces can make up the firmer ground of the board and elements such as camps or fortifications will further define details. At most you'll need to do some gap filling with scattered flock.

If the wetland bug takes hold, then you can always start to add more specialist terrain such as specifically designed trees, beds of reeds, glossy patches of muddy water, crossing points, and more.



*A fine looking swamp board like this comes through raiding Wi's terrain shelves but by following simple tips above you can make something close to it with a far smaller selection of pieces. The modular swamp pieces are by Debris of War.*

## MAKING MARION'S MEN

If you're after a model of the Swamp Fox, then look no further than our WiDigital STL files. There's an on-foot version of Marion, studying maps, as well as a mounted version, who looks more than ready for combat. These figures can be purchased from our webstore and our MyMiniFactory page but will also be released as Giants in Miniature metal figures soon, which is great news for those who don't have access to 3D printing!

To put together a unit of Marion's Men, Warlord Games' excellent Colonial Militia Men box set is my first pick. Although it is designed for *Black Powder*, the 30 plastic figures that come in one box are perfect for skirmish gaming, and I'd suggest *Muskets & Tomahawks* as another system for your gaming consideration. There's a lot of individual character in Warlord's set thanks to their civilian clothing options, varied poses, and weapon choices.

To add even more variety to a force, you could represent some of the enslaved men who, sometimes against their desires, went to war. How about using some of Perry Miniatures' plastic Zulu heads on Warlord's Militia Men bodies? Multipart plastic frames mean this is an easy swap and the parts scale together just fine for me, even though there's a slight discrepancy. Headgear can be snipped off the Militia Men and placed on a flattened Zulu head top too.

While we're talking about Perry plastics, I'm a fan of their American War of Independence Continental Infantry 1776-1783 set, especially the Continental 'Riflemen' frame in it (this can also be bought separately) which includes men wearing hunting shirts. There's a ton of fine-looking metal options that you could mix and match available on the Perry Miniatures website too, if you prefer pewter.



Left: Examples of Perry Miniatures' Continental Riflemen.

Above: Some of the unpainted conversions I made for my unit of Marion's Men.

cut off their lower legs at different levels, creating the illusion they are partly submerged. Paint your base in a swamp colour, add some gloss over that and you're well on the way to swampy excellence!

The addition of foliage detail makes all the difference, and I scattered some between bits of broken cork tile. There are brass etched leaves (bent to have a more natural shape) along with Citadel's flexible plastic Creeping Vines. These vines are scattered with leaf details and can be bent to wrap around your base or even move up a model. I glued them to different parts of my sharpshooter (right), so they'd hold their position, which makes him look like he is taking aim through the branches.

The easiest way to make your men look like they're in the swamp is to



Above: When there are less miniatures on the tabletop, I think they deserve some special attention on their bases. Marion's Men have murky swamp water patches between dense foliage.

## THE BATTLE OF TEARCOAT SWAMP, 25 OCTOBER 1780

With the terrain looking suitably swampy, we need some gaming inspiration. How about the Swamp Fox's raid on a British camp at the fork of Black River? This is a textbook example of Marion's hit and run style of attack and it is ideal for newcomers to the period; a confined battle that requires just a few troops to get started. If you already play the period, you probably have enough in your collection to play right away.

On 24 October Marion's scouts reported back to him that lieutenant colonel Samuel Tynes had bivouacked his loyalist militia in the fork of Black River. This placed Tearcoat Swamp at Tynes' back with the river protecting his front; a well shielded position to wait for reinforcements... or so he thought.

Marion decided to "Break up the party, before its newly made converts should become confirmed in the principles they had unwillingly adopted". In modern parlance: "These unwanted guests are in my swampy house and they're going to find out what that means!"

The Swamp Fox gathered 150 men and marched towards Salem, but not before distributing misinformation about their intended destination to further confuse the enemy. After scouting out the enemy's position he attacked at midnight, when the ill trained Loyalists were mostly sleeping.

Three prongs of mounted attack - from the left, right, and centre - caught the enemy completely by surprise and they suffered six dead and 14 wounded, along with 23 captured. No men on Marion's side even suffered injury.

Obviously, this is a very one-sided scenario, but it sets the template for the kind of battles you should be playing. Defenders in positions that seem protected versus the Swamp Fox's knowledge of the area. You could up the awareness or size of the Loyalist force to make it a fairer fight, of course!

Part of the appeal of this battle is that the Swamp Fox was present and commanded the centre, so you can reasonably put his fine figure on the tabletop, even though he wasn't a part of the charge.



### BLACK MINGO CREEK, 14 SEPTEMBER 1780

The raid by Marion's Men on the Loyalist supply depot at Black Mingo Creek came before Tearcoat Swamp, but it was not quite as textbook. They were spotted as they infiltrated and scouted the area, so they had to adapt their plans on the fly. Marion's troops were so well drilled that they comfortably launched a sudden attack in the dark, rather than their planned assault at the break of morning, and grabbed victory from circumstances that could have been disastrous.

Black Mingo Creek will make for a more balanced scenario and offers greater defences to the Loyalist force. To counter this, Marion's Men should be infiltrated and attack under a fog of war, with their positions unknown at first. Rather than a straight fight, you could make this a sabotage mission with victory points gained by destroying supplies. Historically, this attack caused some serious setbacks to the British due to the disturbances to their supply chain.

*Although Marion didn't take part in this assault, we couldn't resist dropping him in alongside his troops to charge to victory. Figures by North Star, from their Muskets & Tomahawks range.*

### THE SIEGE OF FORT WATSON, 15-23 APRIL 1781

Fancy a bigger scale and higher stakes game in a more dramatic looking encounter? Look no further than the Siege of Fort Watson. This defended position was located on the Santee River and the eventual capture of this key British stronghold was a major victory for Marion. It is one of the most memorable, and notable, attacks carried out by the Swamp Fox's brave men.

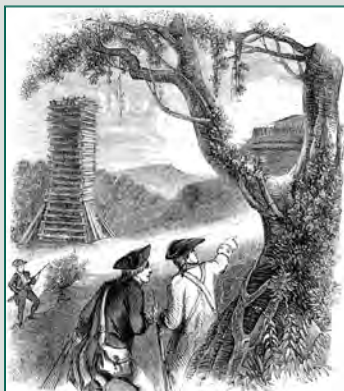
The Continental army launched a surprise attack on the fort under the joint command of Marion and Henry Lee III (another man who earned himself a cool epithet - 'Light Horse Harry'). The first assault was made only days after the two Colonels had first joined forces, with Marion's scouting and knowledge of the area helping develop a plan of attack. That first attack was unsuccessful - Marion and Lee's troops lacked artillery and

### THE MAHAM TOWER

The tower of green pine that the Patriots constructed would become known as the 'Maham Tower' and it went on to be used in further sieges, such as Augusta and Ninety Six later in 1781.

Jim Purky's scratch built Maham Tower (shown below right), along with AWI figures from his company Fife & Drum Miniatures, decorate this page. Rifle pits have been added in front, for defence against an enemy sortie.

This is a deceptively simple model made from lengths of cut down twigs that have been stacked and glued together. Extra twig sections have been added at different intervals to make platforms on the way up the tower, finished with a 1" mantle level to protect the sharpshooters.



*Right: Jim Purky's scratch built Maham Tower, along with AWI figures from Fife & Drum Miniatures. Rifle pits have been added to the front for defence against an enemy sortie.*



*Above: A 19th Century engraving depicting the Maham Tower at the Siege of Fort Watson.*

couldn't penetrate the fort's defensive fortifications - but they weren't put off.

Major Hezekiah Maham, who had served as cavalry commander in Marion's partisan corps since the fall of Charleston in May 1780, came up with a different approach - a log tower that more resembled siege equipment from centuries before. It was first part-assembled away from the fort, then finished under the cover of night, close enough to the British fortifications that the Americans would

be able to fire from it and over the fort's raised defences.

On the morning of 23 April Marion's sharpshooters climbed the tower and opened fire, sending defenders scattering from the walls and allowing two forlorn hope parties to charge uphill and across what would have otherwise been a kill zone. They scaled the walls with log ladders, surged past defenders, and forced the baffled garrison commander to surrender.

The capture of Fort Watson was a significant victory for the Patriot cause and a major blow to the British, who had relied on the defensive position to protect their supply lines and communications in the region. The victory boosted morale in the area, further cemented Marion's reputation, and demonstrated the ongoing effectiveness of his unconventional tactics.

### HERO? ANTI-HERO? VILLAIN?

"I am in love and my sweetheart is Liberty. Be that heavenly nymph my companion, and these woods shall have charms beyond London and Paris in slavery. To have no proud monarch driving over me with his gilt coaches; nor his host of excise-men and tax-gatherers insulting and robbing me; but to be my own master, my own prince and sovereign, gloriously preserving my national dignity, and pursuing my true happiness; planting my vineyards, and eating their luscious fruits; and sowing my fields, and reaping the golden grain: and seeing millions of brothers all around me, equally free and happy as myself. This, sir, is what I long for."

*Francis Marion*



*John Blake White - General Francis Marion Inviting a British Officer to Share his Meal.*

This quote paints a powerful image of the freedom that Francis Marion was fighting for but, as with many men of note from this period of history, Marion's life and his actions are rather more complicated and conflicted when viewed through a modern lens.

Marion grew up in the American South, was the son of plantation owners, and a man of means. Upon his return from the French and Indian Wars - where some accounts suggest he took part in acts that would be considered war crimes today - he went on to purchase his own plantation and some 200 slaves.

The hit and run guerrilla attacks that Marion masterminded and the brutal, fear inducing reprisals he encouraged in the swamps of South Carolina, seem shaped by his experiences in the French and Indian War. Whether those tactics were a progression of his own actions in that conflict, or inspired by the brutality dished out by the Cherokee fighting on the border, is a detail lost to history.

### FREE MEN?

How Marion treated his slaves is another matter of some debate and not all stories paint him in a positive light; at best he was probably 'not as bad as he could have been'. This is rather at odds with the Swamp Fox's reputation for kindness to his men and his willingness to share the hardships of war with them. As a

plantation owner, it is difficult to envisage his camps in the wetlands as a haven of equality between the white troops and the African Americans that made critical contributions to Marion's attacks.

Black militiamen were often fighting to earn their freedom and served with various guerrilla units, including Marion's Men. At the end of the war close to a quarter of South Carolina's slaves achieved some form of freedom through their efforts in the conflict, indicating that the area saw far larger proportions of free or freedom-seeking Black men in its units than were found elsewhere. Reports suggest that up to half of the guerrillas in some of Marion's attacks were Black, and this certainly provides the opportunity to mix up the figures you put on the tabletop.

Marion was famously accompanied by one enslaved man, his 'faithful servant' Oscar Marion (whose true name is unknown). Oscar is pictured cooking sweet potatoes in John Blake White's painting of Marion inviting a British officer to share his meal. This scene is likely rather fanciful, but Oscar was real and would have tended to, and fought alongside, Marion. Whether that assistance was given willingly or through force is something we will never know, but Oscar was finally given recognition as an 'African American Patriot' in a ceremony at the United States Capitol in 2006.

### BRINGING MARION TO THE TABLETOP

You've got your swamp, you're read about some of the attacks the Swamp Fox devised, and you've perhaps painted *Wi's* figures of Marion... but, alas, he didn't directly take part in any of those raids himself. His militia did the Swamp Fox dirty work while the strategised the next assault.

Have no fear, we can take the Swamp Fox to battle on the tabletop in a 'what if?' scenario against the hated British!

### HOUSE RULES

This scenario is designed to be system agnostic but the ruleset you use might require some tweaks to the army lists or special rules. Make whatever changes best allow you to recreate this historically adjacent 'what if?' scenario. If you need to change the number of figures on the tabletop bear in mind that Marion's Men were almost always outnumbered; ensure that the British are always greater in number while the Patriots are more skilled at fighting in the swamplands and on the attack.

You can implement these special rules into other battles involving Marion's Men, of course, whether the Swamp Fox is present on the battlefield or not.



*The Swamp Fox prepares for a fight as his patrols spot the British nearby.*

### THE FOX LEAVES HIS DEN

*It is nightfall and the Swamp Fox is laughing and joking with his troops by the fireside. He's briefed the men at this militia outpost about the next stages of their guerrilla campaign. Now it's time to relax and bond with the brave volunteers who risk their lives for him every day.*

*Their reverie is cut short, though, as cries ring out from the ever-vigilant perimeter patrols; British soldiers have been sighted nearby, splashing through the swampland shallows that surround the camp.*

*Marion has barely begun to issue orders when gunfire and screams ring out in the distance. It looks like tonight promises a different sort of entertainment to the bawdy stories and tales of adventure he was expecting to share.*

### The Patriot army list

The British arrival is unexpected, but Marion's Men are veteran combatants, well-drilled, and always at the ready. They rapidly form up and prepare for battle, turning a potential defence into an instant attack:

- Francis 'The Swamp Fox' Marion on foot or mounted.
- 10 irregulars (perimeter guard - former frontiersmen, hunters, and potentially Native Americans of the Catawba people if you want some variety).
- 20 light infantry (local militia).
- 5 mounted cavalry.

### TURNED AROUND IN THE SWAMPLANDS

*"Captain Lancaster, I'm sorry Sir but I honestly haven't the foggiest where we are!"*

*There was a nervous wobble in young Thompson's voice as he spoke and alternated his gaze between the ever-darkening swamplands and his map. Although this ineptitude was frustrating it would serve no purpose to punish the boy right now, so the experienced Captain replied with fatherly reassurance in his tone: "I think we're close to home. The water here doesn't smell foul enough for us to have strayed too far from the path, we'll be back at camp for a brew soon, don't you fret lad."*

*The young man barely had time to give his Captain a reassured smile before shots rang out. Thompson stumbled, dropped his map, and splashed down beneath the surface of the muddy waters, replaced by a spreading bloom of crimson in the murk.*

### The King's Men army list

Lancaster's patrol has strayed off-route in the swamps and is utterly lost. They've been caught on the back foot by Marion's scouts and must quickly organise to defend themselves.

- Captain Jack Lancaster (mounted).
- 40 regular soldiers.
- 10 mounted cavalry.
- A small number of artillery pieces (such as swivel guns or a small field gun).

### SPECIAL RULES

#### Perimeter defence

Marion's irregulars are the perimeter guard; it's up to the controlling player to choose how these men react to the initial threat. Before the battle begins choose how many of your irregulars will 'report back' and how many will 'strike from the dark'.

#### Report back

Number of figures who report back:

- 2+** Add +1 to the Patriots' roll for initiative in the first turn.
- 4+** As well as the 2+ result begin Patriot deployment second (or first if you wish).
- 6+** All above results and move the Patriot irregulars up to their maximum distance in any direction before the start of the first turn.
- 8+** All above results and move one friendly unit/five men up to their basic distance in any direction before the start of the first turn.

**All** All above results and launch an 'artillery attack' at one enemy unit before the first turn begins, regardless of them being in range or not. This represents a booby trap or ambush in the distance - the Swamp Fox avoided the use of ponderous actual artillery!

Only irregulars who report back deploy as usual at the start of the battle.

#### Strike from the dark

Roll a D6 for each figure who chooses to strike from the dark and combine the total:

**15+ Confusion** - Delay five British men/a British unit so they arrive a turn late (British player chooses which).



*With a heavy investment in 'strike from the dark' the Patriots manage to disorientate the British, sending them in the wrong direction at the start of the battle. Royalist figures by North Star, from their Muskets & Tomahawks range.*

**25+ Destruction** - Above result and remove two British men/25% of the strength of a British unit (British player chooses which).

**35+ Disorientation** - All above results and move five British men/a British unit up to its basic distance in any direction before the start of the first turn (Patriot player chooses which).

**45+ Decapitation** - All above results and assassinate Captain Lancaster! The British army must fight without any command bonuses he would otherwise provide.

For each 1 rolled remove an irregular as a casualty. Any irregulars who chose to strike from the dark will not join the irregular unit on the tabletop until the second turn.

#### **Night fighting/swamp fighting**

This battle occurs in the gloomy swamp as night falls; an unsettling and dangerous environment at the best of times, let alone during a battle! The Patriots are vastly more familiar with manoeuvre and combat in such conditions so should not suffer as heavily from any range modifiers caused by the darkness or movement penalties that would come from the difficult terrain areas of swamp that are present.

*Though outgunned Marion's Men are fighting from terrain they consider their home and are on the British with swift and deadly efficiency.*

In addition, the Swamp Fox is a skilled guerrilla leader and can use his knowledge of the terrain, and his stealth attack tactics, to his advantage. He and any troops within his command radius may reroll any stealth/movement checks and add +1 to their Initiative.

#### **Outnumbered**

The Patriots, used to being outmanned and outgunned, are comfortable using hit and run tactics to secure victory. They may reroll failed Charge checks and add +1 to their Damage scores. If within Marion's command radius they can reroll failed Morale checks and add +1 to their Defence.

#### **Well-drilled**

The British are well-trained and disciplined. If they are within command radius, they may reroll failed Morale checks and add +1 to their Defence.

#### **Ready the guns!**

The British artillery has been caught off-guard and will take time to set up their guns and prepare to fire. They must roll a 4+ on a D6 to use their artillery on the first turn and a 3+ on subsequent turns. After this test is passed once they can fire each turn, but make the chance of misfire greater in the damp and oppressive swamplands if your ruleset has rules that allow it.



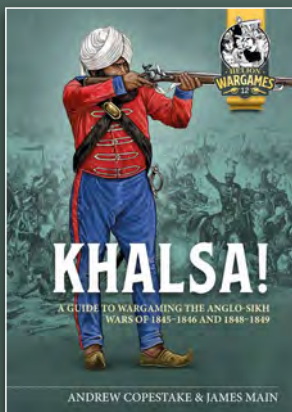


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### KHALSA!

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Andrew Copestake & James Main

This book details the two wars fought by the British-Indian Army against the Sikh Empire of Northern India in the middle of the nineteenth century. These hard-fought wars eventually resulted in the addition of the Punjab to the territories of British India and the introduction of the famous Sikh regiments to the British-Indian army.

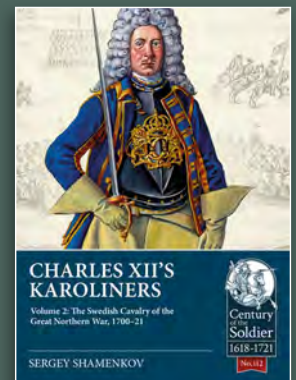
The descendants of these regiments still survive in the armies of India and Pakistan today. As a guide to wargaming these fascinating and colourful conflicts this book provides detailed information on the organisation and uniforms of both armies together with advice on how to build armies of model soldiers, and which rules are suitable to enable the enthusiast to bring these enthralling battles to the wargames table. Additionally, the book also contains detailed narratives and orders of battle of both sides for all of the major battles, as well as scenarios for the wargamer to translate to his or her tabletop.



### CHARLES XII'S KAROLINERS

Volume 2: The Swedish Cavalry of the Great Northern War, 1700-21 Sergey Shamenkov

This book is the second volume of a ground breaking work dedicated to the Swedish army of Charles XIIth that fought in the Great Northern War between 1700-1721. The Swedish army for much of the conflict was victorious, with the cavalry playing a major role in the army's achievements. The book looks at the uniforms and equipment of the Swedish cavalry. The previous volume dealt with the uniforms and equipment of the infantry and artillery. The book uses rare and previously unpublished illustrative material including photographs, black and white graphics and specially commissioned colour reconstructions of Swedish soldiers and officers drawn by the author.



# OPERATION IKARUS

## A BATTLE FOR ICELAND THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN



Lisa Smedman presents a World War Two ‘what if?’ with Britain and Germany clashing in *Bolt Action* battles over neutral Iceland.

I’m a huge fan of alternate history, and the ‘what if?’ possibilities that genre can explore. I’m currently playing through *Bolt Action*’s Campaign Sea Lion and Campaign Gigant, which explore what might have happened if the German plans to invade Britain in 1940 had gone ahead, and I created my own mini campaign - Operation Ikarus - to take gaming into clashes that could have happened in Iceland too. Real-world military history was my starting point and from there I designed five scenarios, meant to be played in order, with the outcome of each slightly altering the conditions under which the next is played.

### OPERATION FORK AND UNTERNEHMEN IKARUS

On 10 May 1940, Britain launched ‘Operation Fork’, the occupation of neutral Iceland. The rationale given was that the Germans, having recently overrun Norway and Denmark, might be tempted to seize Iceland as well, to use its capital city, Reykjavik, as a base for U-Boats. The British had similar goals: they planned to use Iceland as a port for ships of the Northern Patrol.



Allied troops arrive in Iceland.

The invading British force consisted of the 2nd Royal Marines Battalion, 746 men under the command of Colonel Robert Sturges, and their first objective was to secure the German consulate in Reykjavik. As the British approached his residence, Consul Werner Gerlach began burning files in his bathtub. The British also secured communications networks in Reykjavik, occupying the offices of Landssiminn Islands HF (telephone and telegraph) and the Ríkisútvarpid (RUV) radio station. They also rounded up German civilians living in the city.

The second objective was securing additional harbors. These included the port of Hafnarjörður and the town of Akranes, which overlooked the deep water anchorage of the fjord of Hvalfjörður, as well as the towns of Akureyri and Melgerði, along Iceland's northern coast.

The Germans reacted by drafting *Unternehmen Ikarus*. Had this plan gone forward, it might have seen German troops landed by air and submarine, but the Germans never went ahead with Project Ikarus; by June 1940, Erich Raeder, commander in chief of the Kriegsmarine, concluded that supplying a German force in Iceland would be an impossibility. Although the plan was revisited in 1942, ultimately it was scrapped, but that doesn't need to stop us from exploring a fascinating 'what if?' on the tabletop.

### THE HISTORIC FORCES

The British battalion sent to Iceland were new recruits, only partially trained. Some had never fired their weapons - primarily rifles, pistols, and bayonets, although some had Bren light machine guns. Support included anti-tank guns, 2-inch mortars, and the brigade also had two 3.7-inch mountain howitzers, four QF 2-pounder anti-aircraft 'pom-pom' guns, and two 4-inch coastal defence guns.

For aerial reconnaissance during the initial phase of the invasion, *HMS Berwick* catapult-launched a Supermarine Walrus amphibious biplane to scout for enemy submarines.



Had Operation Ikarus gone ahead, the Germans planned to send the 163rd Infantry Division (*Wehrmacht*) aboard the ocean liners *SS Europa* and *SS Bremen*. These troops had taken part in the invasion of Norway in April 1940, and included three infantry regiments (310th, 324th, 234th), a reconnaissance battalion, tank destroyer battalion, engineer battalion, signal battalion, field replacement battalion, and divisional supply group. The German forces likely would have included *Gebirgsjäger*, alpine troops with experience fighting in Norway.

German citizens living in Iceland may have formed a resistance movement, although they would have had little in the way of weapons - just hunting rifles and shotguns.

Other Germans in Iceland at the time of the invasion included 62 sailors from the freighter *Bahia Blanca*, rescued after their ship struck an iceberg and sank. The British initially thought these men were a reserve crew from a submarine, but the sailors were unarmed civilians.



Iceland's forces included 60 to 70 police officers armed with revolvers.

Left; *Gebirgsjäger Squad* from Warlord Games.

## SCENARIO 1: SEIZE REYKJAVIC

The British Royal Marines sail for Iceland aboard cruisers that dock in Reykjavik. The ships are spotted several miles out, and the German consul has time to organize a resistance of sorts.

### FORCES

Each player has 400 points to spend.

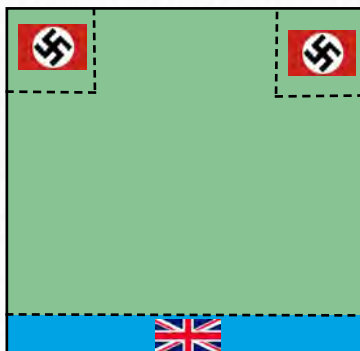
The British player is limited to Inexperienced units only, aside from its officer, and may not have any artillery - the guns haven't been offloaded from the ship yet. The British do not yet have a National Characteristic.

British: 0-6 Infantry Sections (Early War), 0-1 Officer, 0-1 Medic team, 0-2 Light Mortar teams, 0-2 Medium Machine Gun teams, 0-2 Boys Anti-Tank Rifle teams, and 0-2 Sniper teams.

The German player selects from the Reykjavik German Forces list, detailed at the end of this scenario. The Germans (all untrained civilians) may not use Army Special Rules.

### SET UP

The game is played on a 4'x4' map, filled with buildings. The British start on the docks, within the bottom 6" of the map. They are still disembarking from their ship. Half of the British units (of the British player's choice, rounded up) are on the map at the beginning of Turn 1; the other half are on the ship, and are placed on this deployment area during Turn 2. They enter automatically and do not have to make an order test. Do not place their order dice in the dice bag until Turn 2.



The Germans start on the opposite edge of the map, within a 1'x1' space on each corner. The telecommunications office is in one corner, and the home of the German Consul is in the other corner. The German/Icelandic forces may deploy either inside or outside of these two buildings. The German consul must be placed on the second floor of his home.

### OBJECTIVE

The British have two goals: to seize the telecommunications office, and to eliminate the consul before he can destroy sensitive Nazi documents.

The German goal is to prevent the British from entering these two buildings.

### GAME DURATION

At the end of Turn 6, roll a dice. On a result of 1, the game continues for one more turn.

### SPECIAL RULES

**German Consul:** The German Consul must remain on the second floor of his home for the entire game, frantically burning documents. The 6" range for his morale bonus and extra orders includes all the first and second floors of the building and extends 6" beyond any side of the building that has a window; he is deemed to be shouting orders through the windows.

**Green:** All British units begin the battle as Green. German civilian and sailor units are also Green.

### VICTORY!

The British player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed, and 2 victory points for capturing the telecommunications office. The German player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed, and 2 victory points for holding the telecommunications office until the end of the game.

Victory points for the Consul's home objective are determined by how quickly the British eliminate the Consul. The diminishing points earned represent how much time the consul has to burn sensitive Nazi documents.

If the British eliminate the Consul on Turn 4 (or earlier), they score 3 points and the Germans score 0 points. If on Turn 5, the British score 2 points and the Germans score 1 point. If on Turn 6 or 7, the British score 1 point and the Germans score 2 points. If the British never reach this objective, the Germans score 3 points.

### HISTORIC NOTES

During the actual invasion of Reykjavik, the British were unopposed; not a shot was fired. The Icelanders grumbled but did not resist and the British politely knocked before entering and seizing buildings.

German Consul Werner Gerlach (a retired doctor) ran to the second floor of his home and began burning Nazi documents, aided by his wife and daughter. He yelled at the British, "You can't come in! Iceland is a neutral nation!" To which a British officer quipped, "You mean neutral like Denmark?" - a reference to the neutral country that Germany had attacked the previous month. Gerlach surrendered peacefully.



## CAMPAIGN

The British player should keep track of which Green units upgrade to Regular during this scenario. At the start of Scenario 2, the British player may designate as Regular a number of units equal to this number.

The type of unit does not need to match - e.g., if the British had two infantry sections that had upgraded to Regular by the end of this scenario, they could designate one section and one machine gun team as Regular, the first time they play Scenario 2.

## REYKJAVIK GERMAN FORCES

This list represents the hodgepodge of 'troops' available to the German consul in Reykjavik at the time the British landed. It assumes that the German sailors and civilians were willing to take up arms, and that the Icelandic police chose to fight the British invaders.



*Above: A Bolt Action Volksturm Squad works well to represent the German civilians though you may want to cut down on their weapon options somewhat!*

<b>GERMAN CONSUL</b>	
The German Consul is the official representative of the Nazi party in Iceland and is equivalent to a Second Lieutenant.	
<b>Cost</b>	35pts (Inexperienced), 50pts (Regular)
<b>Composition</b>	1 leader and up to 2 clerks
<b>Weapons</b>	Pistols
<b>Options</b>	- The consul may be accompanied by up to 2 clerks at a cost of +7pts per clerk (Inexperienced) or +10pts per clerk (Regular) - Give a clerk a rifle for +3pts
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Can only give orders to Germans (police can't benefit from his bonuses)

<b>GERMAN CIVILIAN 'PLATOON'</b>	
A handful of German civilians were living in Reykjavik at the time the British landed. Most would have only been able to access improvised weapons, although a few might have had hunting rifles or shotguns.	
<b>Cost</b>	20pts (Inexperienced)
<b>Composition</b>	1 leader and 4 volunteers
<b>Weapons</b>	Improvised hand weapons
<b>Options</b>	- Up to 9 additional volunteers armed with improvised weapons at +4pts each - Give up to 2 volunteers a shotgun at +5pts each - Give up to 2 volunteers a rifle at +3pts each - The entire patrol may be mounted on bicycles at +1pts per volunteer
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Green - No more than half the volunteers (rounded up) may be equipped with a firearm - Bicycle rules, if taken

### GERMAN SAILOR WATCH CREW

The German sailors from the Bahia Blanca were also civilians but were a bit tougher and better disciplined.

<b>Cost</b>	30pts (Regular)
<b>Composition</b>	1 leader and 4 sailors
<b>Weapons</b>	Improvised hand weapons
<b>Options</b>	- Up to 5 additional sailors armed with improvised weapons at +7pts each. - The leader may be armed with a pistol for +2pts
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Tough Fighters



Left: Kriegsmarine from Warlord Games.



### ICELANDIC LÖGREGLAN (POLICE SQUAD)

The Icelandic Police were armed with pistols.

<b>Cost</b>	35pts (Regular)
<b>Composition</b>	1 police sergeant and 4 officers
<b>Weapons</b>	Pistols
<b>Options</b>	- Up to 3 additional police armed with pistols at +7pts each
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Will not take orders from Germans (bonuses from German consul do not apply)

### ICELANDIC POLICE SUPERINTENDENT

In charge of the police force at Reykjavik, the Superintendent is equivalent to a Second Lieutenant.

<b>Cost</b>	35pts (Regular), 50pts (Veteran)
<b>Composition</b>	1 leader and up to 2 police
<b>Weapons</b>	Pistols
<b>Options</b>	- Give up to 1 police a shotgun +5pts
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Can only give orders to police (Germans can't benefit from his bonuses)

## SCENARIO 2: SUBMARINE INSERTION

The British occupy the towns of Akureyri and Melgerði in northern Iceland, and the town of Akranes, north of Reykjavik. The Germans attack soon afterwards, landing by night in inflatable boats after a journey by submarine.

This scenario may be played twice, once for each location (Akureyri/Melgerði, and Akranes).

### FORCES

Each player has 700 points to spend.

The first time this scenario is played, the British player should consult the campaign notes from Scenario 1, to see how many Green units upgraded to Regular during that scenario. Only this many Regular units may be included in the British force; the rest must be Inexperienced. The second time Scenario 2 is played, this restriction does not apply; any British units may be Regular (but not Veteran). The British still do not have a National Characteristic.

British: 0-6 Infantry Sections (Early War), 0-1 Officer, 0-1 Medic team, 0-2 Light Mortar teams, 0-2 Medium Machine Gun teams, 0-2 Boys Anti-Tank Rifle teams, 0-2 Sniper teams, and 0-2 3.7-inch Mountain Howitzer (Light Howitzers), detailed at the end of this scenario.

The German forces are tempered by blitzkrieg; they may be Inexperienced, Regular, or Veteran, and use the Army Special Rules.

Germans: 0-1 Officer, 0-1 Medic team, 0-6 Infantry squads (Heer, Heer Veteran, or Gebirgsjäger Early War), 0-2 Light or Medium Mortar teams, 0-2 Medium Machine Gun teams, 0-1 Anti-Tank Rifle team, 0-1 Sniper team, and 0-1 Flamethrower team.

### SET UP

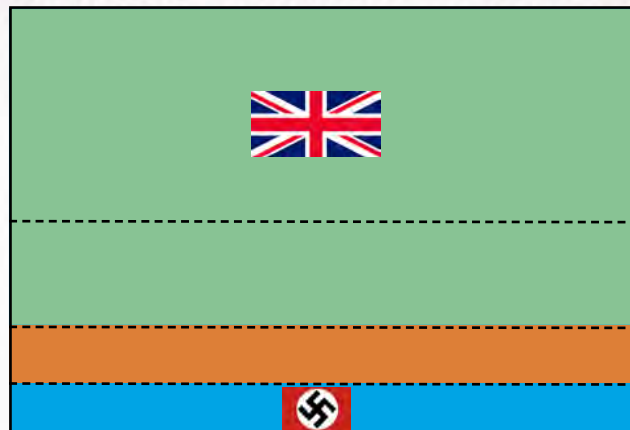
The game is played on a 6'x4' map. One of the long sides of the map is ocean (blue), which occupies a 6" wide strip. The next 6" of the map is beach (brown). The rest of the map has a few small buildings: houses and fishing shacks.

The Germans paddle ashore in inflatable rubber rafts, each of which holds up to 12 men. During set up, the German player places their units on rafts and sets these up with the front of each raft just touching the bottom edge of the map. Units must be kept together; a unit may not be divided between two rafts. Each raft should be as full as possible - the submarine can only carry so many rafts!

The British deploy on the top 24" of the map.

### RAFT LANDING

Dice Roll	Effect
1-3	Already on the beach! Move the raft forward until its front is touching the beach. The activating unit may then be assigned any order the player likes
4-5	Still padding! The activating unit must use an Advance action to paddle the raft to shore. This constitutes their entire movement; they may not exit the raft (although they may fire). Other units in the same raft can activate normally once the raft is touching the beach
6	Last off the sub! The activating unit must choose a Run action to paddle the raft to shore. This constitutes their entire movement; they may not exit the raft. Other units in the same raft can activate normally once the raft is touching the beach



### Objective

The German goal is to exit the top of the map. The British goal is to prevent the Germans from moving inland.

### FIRST TURN

The first time a unit within a raft activates, the German player makes a roll to determine whether the men in that unit are still paddling ashore, or if their raft has already reached the beach. See the Raft Landing table on the bottom left of the page.



### GAME DURATION

At the end of Turn 6, roll a dice. On a result of 1-3, the game continues for one more turn.

### SPECIAL RULES

**Night Landing:** Iceland in May and June experiences just a short window of darkness. Sunset isn't until 10pm, and sunrise is around 5am. The Germans land under cover of darkness but dawn breaks on a subsequent turn; use the Dawn Assault and Reduced Visibility rules.

**Nowhere to Hide:** Units aboard an inflatable raft may not be given the Down order.

**Still Not Ashore:** Rafts that have not yet touched the beach are off the map and may not be targeted.

**Where Are They?:** Until the Germans have been spotted, using the rules for Reduced Visibility, British units may not move from where they have been deployed (they may not Advance or Run). This restriction ends as soon as any German unit has fired, or when any British unit spots a German unit and raises the alarm.

**VICTORY!**

The German player scores 1 point for each unit moved off the board.

The British player scores 1 point for each German unit destroyed. If the German player fails to get any units off the board, the British score 1 additional point.

If one side scores 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the battle is a draw.

**CAMPAIGN**

It is up to the German player whether this scenario is played once or twice: whether the Germans perform two submarine landings, or just one.

If the Germans win this scenario at least once, they capture a port and have additional troops when playing Scenario 4 (see next issue).

If the British win this scenario at least once, the player may add the Rapid Fire National Characteristic to their force. This happens immediately; if Scenario 2 is played a second time after a British victory, the characteristic may be included.



**3.7-INCH MOUNTAIN HOWITZER)**

Introduced in 1917, the 3.7-inch mountain howitzer was designed to be broken down into eight loads, for ease of transport over difficult terrain. Its adjustable suspension allowed it to be easily set up on steep, uneven ground. A split tail allowed the gun to be fired at high angles. It was light enough to be towed by a jeep or truck

<b>Cost</b>	40pts (Inexperienced), 50pts (Regular), 60pts (Veteran)
<b>Composition</b>	3 men
<b>Weapons</b>	1 light howitzer
<b>Options</b>	May add spotter for +10pts
<b>Special Rules</b>	- May fire shells loaded with either shrapnel or smoke. If put into Ambush the player must specify which type of shell is loaded. - Gun shield - Team weapon - Fixed - Howitzer

**HISTORIC NOTES**

The Germans landed Abwehr (counterintelligence agents) on the coast of Iceland by submarine in April 1942. The spies spent a couple of days collecting information on the allied military installations on the island, then were removed by submarine. The exercise was a warmup for Operation Pastorius, which landed eight German saboteurs by submarine on the east coast of the United States two months later.

That's it for the first part of this 'what if?' invasion. Next issue I'll return with three more scenarios that conclude Operation Ikarus' action through an airfield assault, a battle around a roadblock, and an urban warfare finale on the streets of Reykjavik.



German infantry seen here (and in the opening photo) by Crusader Miniatures.





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# PETER CUSHING'S WARGAMING EPHEMERA



Peter Cushing was a famous English actor whose career on radio and screen spanned more than six decades. He was also a keen wargamer and avid terrain maker, who left behind a legacy of fascinating notes concerning his hobby in the form of his 'wargaming ephemera' - now owned by Alan Perry of Perry Miniatures fame.

We caught up with Alan to find out more about Peter Cushing's collection.

**Wargames Illustrated:** Let's begin with a spoiler - in summary, what is Peter Cushing's Wargaming Ephemera?

**Alan Perry:** It's a collection of the actor Peter Cushing's notes on making terrain, painting flags, and running a wargame campaign, involving his friend Don Houghton. Don was a TV and movie scriptwriter and producer, whose best-known works include Hammer Horror films, and *Doctor Who* in the 1960s and 1970s.

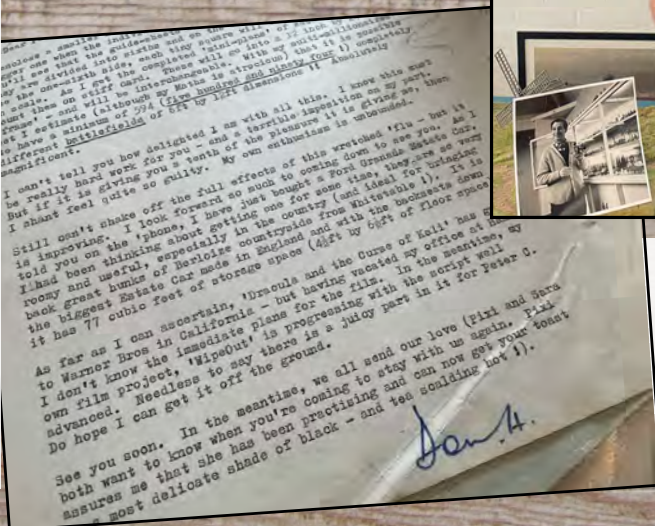


Left: Alan and Michael Perry show the ephemera to friend Jervis Johnson.



Above: Alan Perry - posing like Peter!

Left: One of the letters from Don to Peter - talking wargames and movies.



It seems like they were involved in an ongoing Napoleonic campaign, lasting three or four years, which involved numerous letters between Peter and Don. The campaign correspondence forms about one-third of the contents of the collection I have acquired; the other two thirds are Peter's sketches and notes on his terrain building and flag-making projects - he seems to have had quite an obsession with flags.

**WI:** Where did all this ephemera come from?

**AP:** I purchased it from an auction held in Canterbury in July this year. Most of the items for sale were his paintings, which are very good, and were of interest to my wife. Wargames-wise, there were some figures, which I wasn't overly interested in, and the collection of notes. The auction was billed as 'Peter Cushing's personal documents and movie ephemera', so I have taken to calling the stuff I have acquired his 'wargaming ephemera'. Although I was the highest bidder and won the wargaming ephemera, I didn't know exactly what I was getting! When a whole box full of stuff was delivered by courier, I was a bit surprised, because I was only expecting a dozen or so sheets of paper.

**Wi:** Were the papers and photos in the box file in any kind of order?

**AP:** No, not at all. I decided my first task was to turn amateur sleuth and to try and get everything into some kind of chronological order. I was aided by the fact that a lot of the letters were dated, and, fascinatingly, a lot of Peter's notes are written on the back of films scripts, which gave a clue to their dates. Broadly, that's between 1974 and 1988.

**Wi:** Do you have everything relating to Peter and Don's campaign?

**AP:** No. For one thing, I've only got the letters heading in one direction - from Don to Peter. So, I've only got half a view of the campaign. It's difficult to say for certain that Peter was taking part in the campaign himself. He certainly made a lot of the terrain, and made/painted Don's flags, and I get the feeling he was actually playing. In the correspondence, he is regularly referred to as 'General Surveyor Sir Peter Cushing'. Of course, that could mean that he was surveying/overseeing the terrain making, or the running of the campaign.

Below: A sequence of photos showing Peter, his collection, and wargames table.



8<sup>th</sup> February 1978

Terrance Wise  
20 St. Mary's Road  
Wheatley  
Doncaster, South Yorks.  
DN1 2NF  
Telephone 22352

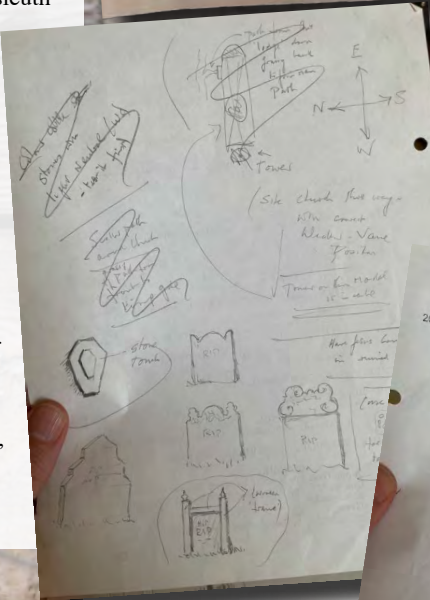
Dear Mr Cushing

Thank you for your letter on military flags: it is always pleasing to hear nice things said about one's work, particularly when reviewers so often say nasty things! I presume you are THE Peter Cushing, from the tone of your letter, and therefore you will be well aware of such critical attitudes. May I, on this assumption, say a thank you in return, for all the pleasure you have given to people through your own chosen career.

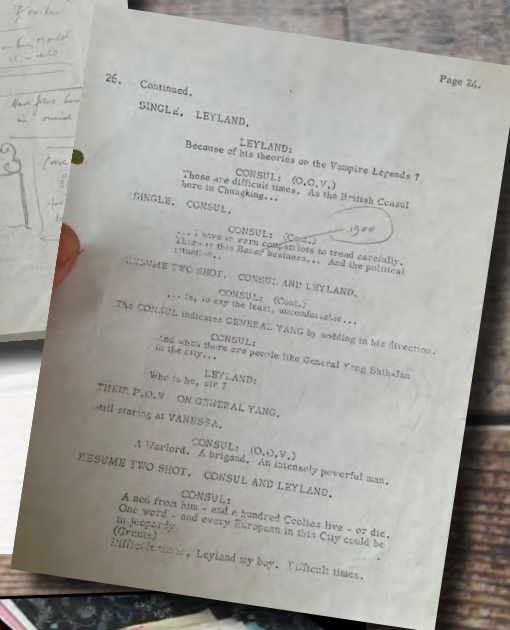
To your particular query on flags. It is true that light cavalry rarely carried standards on campaign but instances occur at least as late as 1812 of light cavalry standards being captured on the field of battle and who are we, at this distance in time, to say which regiments carried standards and which obeyed orders!

The Austrian light cavalry regiments during 1806-16 period carried (if not in the field, then ceremonial occasions) one Leibstandarte per regiment.

Above: Letter from Terry Wise regarding Peter's request for flag information.



Above and right: Gravestone drawings on one side, and the script for The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires on the other.



Above: Some of Peter's meticulous flag sketches.



## WHO WAS PETER CUSHING?

Instantly recognisable to most of our British readers, Peter Cushing gained fame in the UK with acting roles in over 20 Hammer Horror films between the mid-1950s and 1970s. Along with fellow British actor and friend Christopher Lee, and US actor Vincent Price, Cushing became the face of on-screen horror, playing Baron Frankenstein in six of Hammer Horror Frankenstein films, and Doctor Van Helsing in five Dracula movies.

International readers might know Peter as the evil genius Grand Moff Tarkin in *Star Wars Episode IV - A New Hope*, where Tarkin meets his demise in the explosion of the Death Star.



Above: Peter Cushing in *Revenge of Frankenstein* and playing Grand Moff Tarkin in *Star Wars*.

**Wi:** Is it just one campaign, or several?

**AP:** It seems to be just one campaign, which must have lasted quite a long time, mainly because so much of it was done by post. The players not only mailed the instructions for their off-table moves, but they also gave written instructions for moves to be made on the table.

**Wi:** But there was some tabletop gaming being played, right?

**AP:** Oh, yes, although it isn't clear how much. They certainly visited each other's houses to game on occasions throughout the campaign. In fact, in one of his letters, Don Houghton talks about how he has bought a larger car in order to pick up the terrain Peter has made for the campaign.

To keep the campaign moving, Peter also made miniaturised versions of his terrain boards; 3- or 4-inch duplicates of 2' x 2' tiles, so Don could take them with him when he was away filming, and he could arrange battles on his own.

**Wi:** They were playing a Napoleonic campaign, right?

**AP:** Yes, it was an alternative version of the Waterloo campaign, set in May rather than June.

**Wi:**... why?

**AP:** Seemingly because Don wanted to use more than just French and British figures from his collection. Setting the campaign in May gave

them the excuse to bring in troops from other nations, which historically would have been closer to the theatre of operations in May.

**Wi:** Can you tell us a bit about the non-campaign material in the ephemera?

**AP:** Peter Cushing really did have a thing for flags, and a lot of the paperwork is sketches, often painted, of flags. Peter clearly put a lot of time into researching the flags, which he would then reproduce in miniature for Don. At one point, Peter contacted Terry Wise, a well-known early British wargamer, author of *Battle for Wargamers*, and owner of Athena Books at the time, to ask for some advice. Terry responds with a letter

saying "I assume you are *the* Peter Cushing by the tone of your letter..."

**AP:** As well as researching and making flags, Peter clearly enjoyed making terrain. I've got several sketches/plans of his terrain-making projects, including drawings of churches and gravestones.

**Wi:** And you also have some photos of Peter with his collection?

**AP:** Yes, I've got an interesting sequence of about 30-odd photos taken in 1960, showing Peter standing with his figure and terrain collection, as well as some shots of his model railway set-up, and some with the boardgame *Buccaneer*, - to which, being Peter Cushing, he added his own terrain.



Above: *The Battle of Pierreville* - back to life after 50 years.



Above: Alan's gaming buddies Rick and Alessio marshal their troops in the Battle of Pierreville.

Right: Alan displays Peter's plan for the battle he recreated.



**Wi:** What's the plan with the ephemera from here?

**AP:** Well, I've been putting everything into sections, and chronological order, but more interesting than that, we've actually started playing, or replaying, their campaign games.

We had our first game - the Battle of Pierreville - a few weeks ago, and it was really good fun. We based it exactly on the terrain seen in Peter's plans. Miraculously, the table Don and Peter used was the same size as mine: 12' x 6', and I was able to 'field' all the same terrain. I was even able to manipulate the roads and tracks on my table to match theirs. They did, however, seem to fight their battles from table end-to-end, rather than width-wise. I'm not sure why they would do that, as it seems rather impractical, and in their correspondence, they do complain about 'traffic jams' on the table, which [playing length-ways] is not surprising.

Peter's plan for the battlefield included a Chateau Helsing - a clear nod to one of the most famous characters he played on screen: the vampire hunter Doctor Van Helsing.

**Wi:** How did the game play?

**AP:** It was really good. We played it just as Peter and co. had done, with troops coming on randomly throughout the game, and including the same random-events table they had drawn up and used.

We played using the *Black Powder* rules; I'm not sure what rules they were using, as it was never explicitly stated.

**Wi:** Will you be playing more games from their campaign?

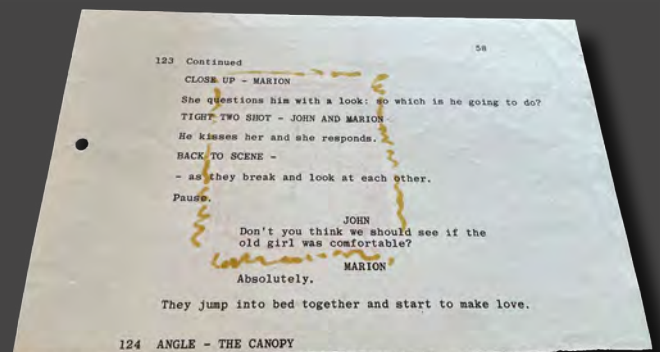
**AP:** Certainly, and I will continue to post reports on the Perry Miniatures Facebook page for anyone interested.

## SCRAPS OF SCRIPTS

One of the most interesting aspects of the ephemera is the snatches of movie scripts that are featured on the reverse of Peter's wargaming notes, including several scenes from famous Hammer Horror films, notepaper from *At the Earth's Core*, and a script from the first western vampire martial arts movie: *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires*.



Above: Notepaper from one of Peter's films.



Above: The script for an x-rated movie scene, with the outline of a flag showing through from the back.

# THE BATTLE OF ORAVAIS

Jan Karrman recreated a battle from the Finnish War for Salute 2023 with a little help from his friends.

When I happened upon an old map of a battle I had never heard of, I was fascinated. The Battle of Oravais, 1808 - one of the decisive battles in the Finnish War - had all the ingredients of a 'real' Napoleonic battle: infantry battalions lined up against each other across a big field, with colourful cavalry and artillery also present.

Not only had I not heard of the battle before, but my experience of Napoleonic wargaming was also non-existent. I had never painted a Napoleonic figure, and I knew nothing about suitable rules. The war in Finland - 1808-1809 - was fought on a much smaller scale than some of the famous conflicts on the continent though; this makes it a bit of a hidden gem for wargamers. Battles and skirmishes can be recreated without needing a huge figure collection and, with this in mind, I got down to my research.



Map of the battlefield from the Swedish War Archives.



## THE BATTLE OF ORAVAIS, 14 SEPTEMBER 1808

On 21 February 1808, General von Buxhoeveden and a force of 24,000 Russian soldiers crossed the Finnish border and marched into southern Finland. The Swedish king, Karl XIII, who was convinced that Napoleon was the antichrist, had refused a Russian ultimatum to join what was effectively the continental blockade against Great Britain. Tsar Alexander saw this as a good opportunity to attack his country's old foe. Finland was poorly defended because a large part of the Swedish army was tied up in southern Sweden, worrying about a Danish attack.

Badly prepared and with low morale, the Swedish army had no option but to retreat; towns like Borgå, Helsinki, and Åbo quickly fell. On 6 of May, Sveaborg, a large fortification, considered by the Swedes to be impossible to conquer, also fell without much resistance. This was a huge blow for Swedish morale. During the summer of 1808, Swedish reinforcements finally arrived in Finland and, for a while, things started to look more hopeful but, with Russian victories at Ruona and Salmi, it became clear that the Swedish summer offensive had failed.

The Swedish army now moved north, in constant danger of being cut off by Russian forces and with the main Russian army in hot pursuit from the south. On 13 September, the Swedes finally stopped and, hoping that a decisive blow could be dealt to the main Russian force, they lined up in a good defensive position just outside of Oravais, a small town in Österbotten. As they waited, the stage was set for the bloodiest battle of the war.

### THE BATTLEFIELD AND LILLTRÄSKET

The place where Adlercreutz decided to meet the enemy was well chosen. The Russians would have to cross a large field with a small river running through it before they could reach Swedish positions. There was also a ridge running next to the field, giving Adlercreutz good views of the battlefield and providing good positions for the artillery. Soldiers had also been able to prepare different types of defensive positions, in the field and in the woods.

On the morning of 14 September, a skirmish took place at Lillträsket, just south of Oravais, where advance Russian troops encountered a small force from the Hälsinge regiment and some Swedish artillery. They had been left to guard a bridge where the main road crosses a small marsh. Gradually, more troops from both sides got involved, but the Swedes eventually had to retreat to the main Swedish force.



*The game in action at Salute 2023 with troops fighting around the church.*

### THE MAIN BATTLE BEGINS

At around 10am, the main battle started, with the Russian 3rd Jaeger regiment arriving at the battlefield on the Russian left flank and the Petrovsk and Perm regiments advancing on the right. After an initial artillery exchange, with Kulnev in charge of the left flank and Demidov in charge of the right, they made a frontal assault on the Swedish line. The attack quickly got bogged down and the Russians, despite making another attempt, could not break through. At one point, the Västerbotten regiment, against orders, left their positions and started to advance across the field. Like the Russians, they found it very difficult to cross and suffered heavy losses. The Savolax brigade tried to support them but also came under heavy fire and, when the Russians then tried to counter-attack they were, again, thrown back.

### THE SWEDISH COUNTER

At roughly 2pm, watching the battle from hills on the north side and seeing that the Russian center was thinning out, Adlercreutz decided to order an all-out attack. Västmanlands battalion and Upplands battalion spearheaded the action but soon the whole army was moving forward. The Russians were taken by surprise and ended up retreating all the way to Lillträsket, where the initial contact had been made. The Swedes could sense victory; unfortunately, just at that moment, fresh troops led by Usjakov and Kamenskij arrived along the main road from the south.



*The last attack of the Swedes, by Magnus Adlercreutz, illustrates the Swedish attack which ultimately led to their defeat.*

## THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

At 5pm, now under attack and low on ammunition, the Swedish troops were forced to fight their way back to their original positions at the side of the field. With fresh troops arriving, the Russians advanced and tried to outflank the Swedish left by marching through the woods. Adlercreutz ordered Hälsinge regiment to try to stabilise the battleline, but it gradually became clear that the Swedish situation was hopeless.

At around 10pm, the Swedish army was in full retreat. In rain and total darkness, the men were desperately trying to get away, with only the battle-hardened Finnish regiments making some form of orderly withdrawal.

## AFTERMATH

The final losses for the Swedish army, including wounded and captives, were estimated at 1,200 men and the Russian losses at around 900 men. The battle marked a definitive turning point in the war, where any hope of defending Finland was lost and what remained was a long and hard retreat to Sweden. Oravais was the decisive battle and turning point of the entire war.

### ORDER OF BATTLE

#### SWEDISH FORCES

5,500 men commanded by General Carl Johan Adlercreutz

#### INFANTRY

Upplands regiment	2 battalions
Västmanland regiment	1 battalion
Hälsinge regiment	3 battalions
Västerbottens bataljon	1 battalion
Uppland, Hälsinge and Västmanland jaegers	6 companies
Österbottens regiment	1 battalion
Savolaks infantry regiment. (4th brigade)	2 battalions
Savolaks Jaeger regiment (4th brigade)	2 battalions
Karelian Jaeger corps (4th brigade)	1 battalion

#### CAVALRY

Livgardet till häst	2 squadrons
Karelian dragoon corps	1 squadron



*General Adlercreutz with a lieutenant from the Nylands Dragoons.*

#### ARTILLERY

6-pound guns	x 6
4-pound howitzer	x 1

### ORDER OF BATTLE

#### RUSSIAN FORCES

6-7,000 men commanded by General Nikolaj Kamenskij

#### VANGUARD UNDER J. P. KULNEV

Sevsk musketeer regiment	2 battalions
3. Jaeger regiment	2 battalions
Grodno Hussar regiment	2 squadrons
Don Cossacks.	1 sotnia (squadron)

#### TROOPS UNDER N. I. DEMIDOV

Petrovsk musketeer regiment	2 battalions
Perm musketeer regiment	2 battalions

#### RESERVES UNDER USHAKOV

Mogilev musketeer regiment	2 battalions
Lithuania musketeer regiment	2 battalions
25 Jaeger regiment	1 battalion
Grodno hussars	1 squadron
Russian Uhlans	1 squadron

#### ARTILLERY

Colonel Arguns company - 6-pound guns	x 12
Lt Colonel Ziminski's company - 12-pound guns	x 6



*Russian colonel. Figure by Brigade Games.*



## BUILDING THE BATTLE FOR SALUTE

The beauty of wargaming is that there are always people who are willing to help with new projects. When I mentioned to my friend, Roy Boardman, that it would be nice to recreate a Swedish-Russian battle that few people had heard of for Salute, he immediately offered assistance. He has lots of painting experience and completing a few hundred Swedes and Russians did not sound too daunting to him. Peter Moulton, who has helped me with buildings for Salute many times in the past, was also keen to get started as soon as I was able to give him drawings to work from. Oravais church - a feature building on the board - is his masterpiece this year. Henning Knecht, a good friend of Roy from Germany and a frequent Salute visitor, joined the project a bit later and kindly produced vignettes for the Russian side.

If you are trying to find people to help with your project, you can also look online. I came across Andreas Hellerstedt on one of the forums, painting beautiful figures for the Finnish War and lecturing in Swedish history. I also found Chad Daniels, who lives in Mississippi; he not only paints beautiful figures but is also a fountain of information about the period. Keen for their painted figures to see some action, they both agreed to come over to the UK for Salute 2023.

Through these connections, the Oravais project slowly became a multinational affair, with participants from Sweden, the USA, Germany, and the UK. I also made friends with Goran Backman, the enthusiastic and knowledgeable chairman of Oravais Historical Society; he was very helpful with information and feedback during the project, so Finland was represented as well.

## COORDINATING

The first thing we did was to put together a spreadsheet, clearly showing all the units and officers needed. We filled in what people already had painted and which units each of us wanted to get ready for the show. Doing this early, prevented doubling up and allowed people to work at their own pace during the project. There was a wealth of knowledge about the units taking part within our group and everybody shared information on our messenger page. By constantly exchanging pictures, we also knew the style of painting and basing each of us were using. It was fantastic working with experienced figure painters and it forced me to raise my own game, since I really wanted my contributions to be acceptable.

## FIGURES AND UNIFORMS

Swedish and Russian uniforms underwent many changes around the time of the war. Luckily, Perry Miniatures has a good range of correctly dressed Swedes, and they very kindly helped us by providing much of what we needed for the Swedish and Finnish troops. There is not much available for Russia in this early period. Brigade Games has some nice but quite expensive line infantry, so some of the figures are converted from Warlord's plastic infantry. The Russian infantry in Finland had not yet been given rectangular knapsacks, so we carefully cut away the canteens and attached them to cylindrical knapsacks that we made from Green Stuff. Many of the more obscure regiments also needed converting to look right for the period, like the Livgardet till Häst and the Grodno Hussars.



*Converted Warlord Russian infantry with correct knapsacks.*

1



1. Russian Grodno hussars, conversion.
2. Finish Karelian Dragoons, Perry Miniatures.
3. Swedish Livgardet till häst, conversion.
4. Finnish Savolax Infantry Regiment, Perry Miniatures.
5. Swedish Uppland Infantry Regiment, Perry Miniatures.

2



3



4



5



## BUILDINGS

We wanted the buildings to have the correct Scandinavian flavour, so they were built, based on existing drawings and photographs from the area, using a multitude of modelling materials. The most prominent building was the church and Peter Moulton did a wonderful job scratch building it, as well as building the officer's house and a soldier's croft. You can still visit all three buildings in Oravais and the officer's house now serves as a museum displaying everything about the period, including a large diorama of the battle.

1



2



3



4

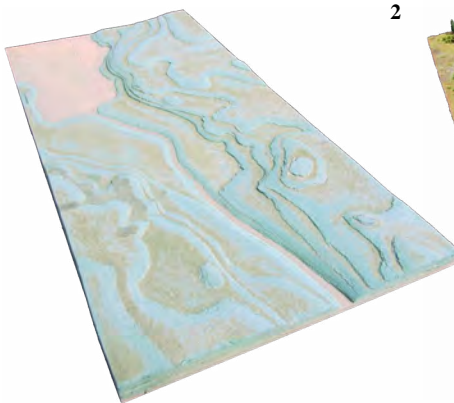


1. Oravais church, for 28mm and 6mm figures.
2. Barn being used as a temporary operating theatre.
3. Finnish Officers' house and soldier croft.
4. Swedish tent based on a contemporary drawing.

## PRACTICING IN 6MM

Before starting the large landscape, I tried things out by building a much smaller model of the battlefield. It proved useful when trying to show other people what things would look like. Having finished the smaller board, I decided to make both the Swedish and the Russian armies in 6mm. This was in addition to the 28mm armies we were already painting and Peter Barry at Baccus gave me a good deal on the figures. I really enjoyed working on them in parallel with the larger project.

1



2



1 to 4: Constructing the 6mm board and units in 12mm positions for the battle.

3



4



## TREES

The battlefield has mixed woods on either side of the field, mainly consisting of pine, spruce, and birch trees. Acceptable spruce trees are easy to get online while painted and flocked seafoam (a dried plant used by railway modelers) made good birch trees. Pine trees are more difficult to find and also expensive. Having looked at several methods online, we had a go at making our own. Like everything else in life, making the first ones took a long time, but we gradually became a lot faster. All the trees had metal pins attached to the bottom of the trunk and were inserted into the board using a small hand drill.



*Pine tree production.*

## FIELD FORTIFICATIONS

Some Swedish units arrived early to the battlefield and had time to make defensive preparations. They cleared shrubbery to improve their line of fire and made protective walls for artillery on either side of the road leading down towards the bridge. They also made the left flank more secure by making *förhuggningar*, which involved cutting down trees and placing them in a way that would make a Russian advance difficult. Timber from the barns was gathered to create simple defences but, since there are no details about how they looked, I took measurements from barns in the area and tried to imagine how I would have used the material gathered. Scandinavian barns can be taken apart very easily, so rather than keeping them intact, I think they could have used the timber to support low earth walls, giving more soldiers protection and good visibility for firing across the field.



*Field fortifications using timber from barns.*



## THE LANDSCAPE

At Salute, it's good to go big if you want to be noticed. I decided to make the landscape 1.8 x 3.6 meters (12' x 24'), made up of nine individual boards. That meant a lot of planning, trying to get things to fit together properly. When drawing up the plans, I used old Swedish military maps for the correct coastline and roads, but modern maps proved more reliable for the topography.

### A CURIOUS AFFAIR

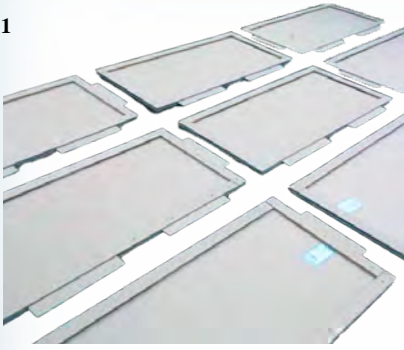
#### SIR JOHN MOORE AND THE KING OF SWEDEN

Since Sweden was allied with Britain, a 14,000 strong force under the command of Sir John Moore arrived in Gothenburg on 3 May 1808. The intent was to assist Sweden in the conflict with France and Denmark but trying to negotiate with the unstable Swedish king proved impossible.

At one stage, and with the king angry at the lack of progress, Sir John Moore was asked not to leave Stockholm. Fearing he could be held hostage, Sir John snuck back to Gothenburg under the cover of darkness. The soldiers were never allowed to disembark onto the Swedish mainland and eventually left for Spain on 3 July. Luckily, a number of British ships remained in the Baltic and became a real thorn in the side of the Russians. As their supply lines became increasingly extended, transporting things along the coast became almost impossible. It made a sustained attack on Sweden very difficult and helped Sweden to negotiate a peace agreement.

## STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION

1



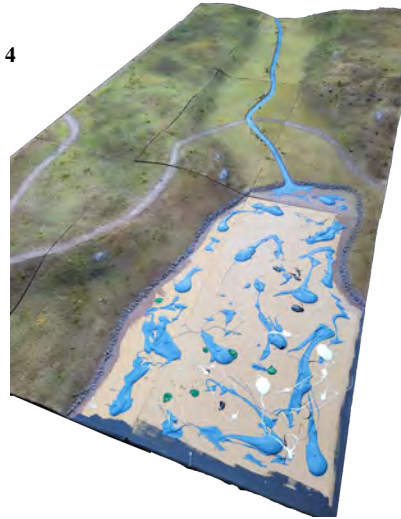
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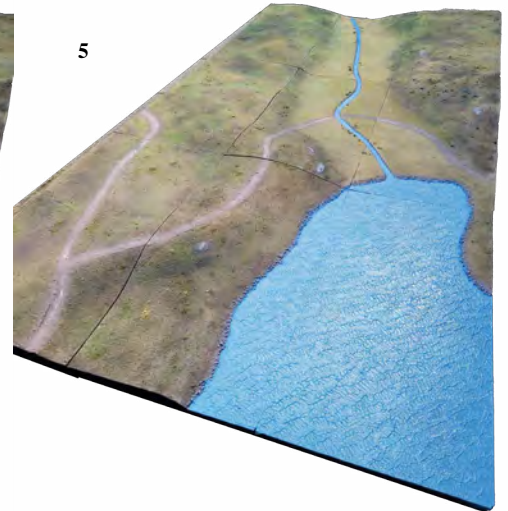
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4



5



Due to limited workspace, I could only work on one 1.8 x 1.2 meter section at a time. It ended up being a lot of heavy boards constantly needing to be lifted and moved around. Only at the end could I work outside and join the sections together to make sure everything fitted.

Painting and flocking the landscape was a rather daunting task, since I needed a couple of days of good weather without strong winds. Luckily, I got just that in the week leading up to Salute. When that was done, I could finally pack everything up and have it ready to be transported. With sixteen boards and numerous boxes to be taken to London, having a professional driver on the team made things so much easier. So a very big thank you for loading and driving the van, Brian Bunker.

I had worried about what we would do if someone did not turn up on the day. Would we end up with large gaps in the battle lines? Luckily, everybody was already waiting for us when we arrived at the ExCel Centre. It was so exciting to finally meet all the volunteers and to see the figures and accessories that they had put together. Everybody helped each other, and we had a fantastic day at Salute. I am so grateful for everyone's help in putting on a battle that I knew nothing about a few years ago but now has been recreated in front of thousands of visitors.



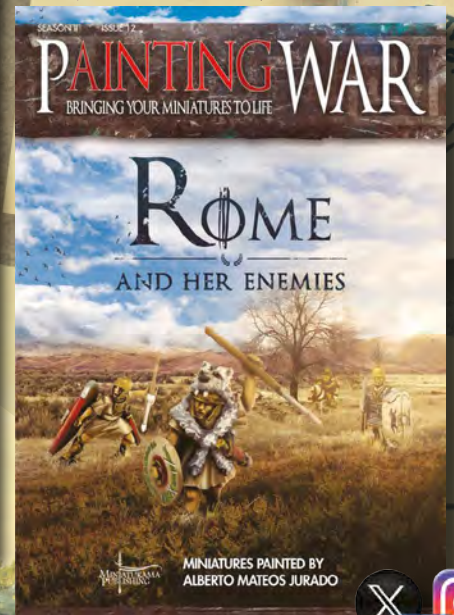
*The game in all its glory at Salute 2023.*

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## MILITARY RANGE

- 101 White
- 102 Black
- 103 Yellow
- 104 Red
- 105 Orange
- 206 Light Blue
- 207 Dark Blue
- 208 Grass Green
- 209 Dark Green
- 210 Purple
- 211 Light Grey
- 212 Dark Grey
- 213 Flesh
- 214 Suntanned Flesh
- 215 Oriental Flesh
- 216 Dark Flesh
- 217 Leather Brown
- 218 Wood Brown

- 219 Chestnut Brown
- 220 Silver
- 221 Horse tone - Dun
- 222 Horse tone - Roan
- 223 Horse tone - Chestnut
- 224 Horse tone - Bay
- 235 Horse tone - Brown
- 236 Horse Tone - Grey
- 225 Khaki
- 228 Buff
- 229 Dark Sand
- 231 Mid Grey
- 232 Bronze
- 233 Linen
- 234 Dark Earth
- 237 Russet Red
- 238 British Scarlet
- 239 Bavarian Blue
- 240 Unbleached Wool
- 241 Rust

## FANTASY RANGE

- 106 Enchanted Silver
- 107 Bright Gold
- 108 Goblin Green
- 109 Chainmail
- 110 Royal Blue
- 111 Dark Elf Green
- 112 Bone
- 113 Magic Metal
- 114 Wizard Blue
- 115 Tanned Flesh
- 116 Barbarian Leather
- 117 High Elf Blue
- 118 Poison Purple
- 119 Rat Brown
- 120 Hairy Brown
- 121 Bogey Green
- 122 Elven Grey
- 123 Elven Flesh
- 124 Dwarven Flesh
- 125 Putrid Green
- 126 Festering Brown
- 127 Enchanted Blue
- 128 Enchanted Green
- 129 Vampire Red
- 130 Bilious Brown
- 131 Brass
- 132 Aquamarine
- 133 Ink wash - Flesh
- 134 Ink wash - Green
- 135 Ink wash - Blue
- 136 Ink wash - Brown
- 137 Ink wash - Chestnut
- 138 Ink wash - Red
- 139 Matt Varnish
- 140 Gloss Varnish

- 141 Grey Primer
- 142 Gun Metal
- 143 Dwarven Bronze
- 144 Shocking Pink
- 145 Ruby Red
- 146 Dusky Yellow
- 147 Burnt Orange
- 148 Marine Blue
- 149 Angel Red
- 150 Shadow Grey
- 151 Lupin Grey
- 152 Scorpion Green
- 153 Ink wash - Armour
- 154 Ink wash - Black
- 155 Angel Green
- 156 Leprous Brown
- 157 Warlock Purple
- 158 Jade Green
- 159 Golden Yellow
- 160 Amethyst Purple
- 161 Deadly Nightshade
- 162 Nauseous Blue
- 163 Beaten Copper
- 164 Emerald Green
- 165 Hawk Turquoise
- 166 Fester Blue
- 167 Hideous Blue
- 168 Ink Wash - Yellow
- 169 Super Wash - Black
- 170 Super Wash - Green
- 171 Super Wash - Red
- 172 Super Wash - Blue
- 173 Super Wash - Yellow
- 174 Super Wash - Purple
- 175 Super Wash - Light Brown
- 176 Super Wash - Mid-Brown
- 177 Super Wash - Dark Brown

## WORLD WAR II

- 501 British khaki
- 502 Field drab
- 503 Military green
- 504 Panzer grey
- 505 Green grey
- 506 Desert Sand
- 507 Sea grey
- 508 Olive drab
- 509 Brick red
- 510 Mid stone
- 511 Tank blue grey
- 512 Tank green
- 513 Faded olive
- 514 Pale green
- 515 Black green
- 516 Iron grey
- 517 Desert Yellow
- 518 Field blue
- 519 Chocolate brown
- 520 Red Brown
- 521 Army green
- 522 Pale sand
- 523 US dark green
- 524 Tan earth
- 525 Uniform grey
- 526 Tank Light grey
- 527 Tank drab
- 528 Russian brown
- 529 Beige brown
- 530 Russian green
- 531 Japanese uniform
- 532 Italian red earth
- 533 Slate grey
- 534 Dark Leather
- 535 Jungle green



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# THE ARMY PAINTER WARPAINTS FANATIC RANGE

We gave a selection of The Army Painter's new Fanatic range to *Wi's* resident speed painter, James. Can they possibly reach the heady heights of their promotional claims? Let's find out!

Citadel was the only brand I used when my painting journey began in the '90s, but, as my style and technique evolved (and the internet revealed more possibilities), the companies I bought my hobby gear from diversified. Different ranges of paints revealed different strengths, and some suited my painting approach better than others. Over three decades of painting, my Citadel pots were joined by Vallejo, Foundry, Windsor & Newton, Scale 75, Daler-Rowney, Darkstar, and more.

Until a couple of years ago, The Army Painter's products were notably absent from my go-to selection, but the release of their Speed Paints changed that completely. It seemed the company had made a significant push to improve their paints, and many Speed Paint pots replaced Citadel Contrast stalwarts in my collection. Their Air range (I'm a regular airbrusher), with its handy paint Triad system, also found its way in.

Army Painter's Warpaints range, however, remained a notable omission. This large collection of opaque paints always seemed an unreliable, inconsistent, unpredictable, and piecemeal oddity to me. Consistent coverage, good saturation, and well-mixed paints were not regular features, and, while Warpaints were cheaper than some other brands, I found that was about the only positive thing they offered.

## TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Army Painter has a new set of Warpaints on the way. This large selection of 216 new paints has had the name 'Fanatic' added, and its arrival is heralded by the kind of fanfare and bold promotional claims usually only seen from multilevel marketing schemes!

Each paint is given a fancy name (Ultramarine Blue, Greenskin, Daemoniac Yellow, etc.) that is closer to fantasy or sci-fi than history. The colour shown on the label is always a good match for the paint in the bottle, but compared to a brand such as Vallejo (which follows more military naming conventions), it's going to make selecting paints a little less easy for historical painters.

The paints still come in 18ml dropper bottles, these are recyclable and pre-loaded with stainless steel mixing balls.

## WHAT THE MARKETING SAYS

The ongoing promo for the Fanatic range has highlighted various 'selling points', and this list shows the biggies.

- 300-700% more pigment than previous Warpaints.
- Stabilising technology for unsurpassed performance.
- Superior brush feel and smooth application.
- Advanced liquid pigments for colour consistency.
- Flexible Colour Triads.
- Practical naming conventions.

Through this article I'll award Army Painter a 'GOOD TO THEIR WORD' stamp whenever their product matches up to their claim!



Can these Warpaint Fanatic paints possibly live up to the hype? Let's find out!

## ANATOMY OF A BOTTLE

Zooming in on one of the new Fanatic bottles, you'll see various conventions that will enhance the way you use the paints.



If a paint is a match for any of The Army Painter's spray-on primers, it's noted on the bottle.

## THE FULL FANATIC SELECTION

The range of paints is sizable, and can be broken down quite logically into sub-sets for your organising and planning desires. Of the 216 new paints, 18 are metallics, 18 are 'effects', 18 are washes, 18 are skin tones, and the remaining 144 are a mix of acrylics, covering all the colours under the rainbow.

### WASHES



### SKIN TONES

I am particularly keen on the range of skin tones, which will make painting figures from any background or area of the world a dream. The way these have been organised into three 'Flexible Triads' is very smart, and each of these three sets will guide painters in applying the shading, mid, and highlight tones. You won't need all 18 paints to create brilliant skin tones, but if you get them all, you'll be fully prepared to paint everything from golden South American tones (1), through to deeper Black skin for African and Caribbean figures (2), all the way to pale Caucasian skin for your northern European needs (3). What's particularly nice is that the shift between tones matches how different levels of melanin impact how light effects skin.

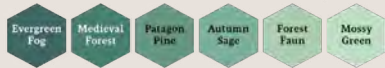


The transition on the Caucasian range is gradual, appropriate for the low melanin level, where the Black skin group goes from a darker base to more severe highlight, mimicking how high melanin causes light to reflect more and create 'popper' highlights.

### HISTORICAL MATCHING

Beyond this, the range consists of further Flexible Triads that will be useful for all kinds of painting applications. I've picked out some that are well suited to World War Two gaming; I think this shows the potential of the range, even though the paints are not explicitly named for historical purposes.

#### GERMAN BLITZKRIEG



Above: Helmets and jackets.



Above: Trousers.

#### BRITS IN THE DESERT



Above: Caps and webbing.



Above: Fatigues.

#### WINTER SOVIETS



Above: Helmets.



Above: Fatigues.

Caps are colour coded to identify the type of paint:

- White = Acrylics
- Green = Effects
- Red = Washes
- Black = Metallics

Thankfully, all the standard acrylics in the range have a more descriptive name on their side. Greenskin is described as Strong Green, Daemonic Yellow as Vivid Yellow, and so on. This is going to be particularly helpful for any painters with colour blindness, but it is a generally useful addition to the range, and one we like a lot.

• Practical naming conventions.



The price remains very competitive at £3/3.50€//\$4.25. That's around the cost of a bottle of Vallejo paint, and cheaper than Citadel (which come with less paint in an inferior pot). As well as individual paints there are bundles that offer far more value. If you're really committed, you can get the complete range, but at £600/699€//\$759 that's a hefty investment. Perhaps the Mega set, with 50 paints and a free paint stand, at £150/175€//\$199 is a better option.

A swatch of six different tones is shown on each label, and the group is given a descriptor such as Cool Reds, Browns, Strong Pale Blues, etc. An arrow marks where the paint sits in this 'Flexible Triad' of tones. I'll discuss Triads more later!



## THE TECHY BIT

The claim is that these paints have 300% to 700% more pigment than previous Warpaints and still have great brush feel because of a mysterious new 'stabiliser' ingredient. How much of a selling point you consider this to be is somewhat dependent on how you rated the first edition Warpaints - in my case, not particularly highly - so let's give some of the more 'neutral' colours a go, and decide how they fare! Where better to look than the paints in the Starter Set?

To the right are heads on a frame of Warlord Games' British Commonwealth Infantry. Fanatic paints have been applied over the raw plastic; this is about as mean a test as I could think of, as the lack of primer will make them more likely to split on the surface or patch.

I was extremely impressed with how a moderate application of unthinned paint went on. The finish was even, the paints gave good coverage, and the Fanatic paint feels good on the brush. It's smooth in the application, and brush strokes feel free and flowing, even when there's no water mixed with the paint. Considering the harsh test conditions, I was particularly impressed with the red and white, and even the yellow coverage was good.



Above: Ultramarine Blue, Greenskin, Daemonic Yellow, Pure Red, Leather Brown, and Matt White.



• Superior brush feel and smooth application.



Here I've thinned down Ultramarine Blue. The first head on the left is the pure paint, the second is a 1:1 mix with water, and the third is a 1:2 mix with water. In all three circumstances, the paint felt great, making for speedy application, and the finish is good. The thinnest mix was, of course, less controllable, and found its way into the recesses. What's interesting is that even without the addition of any specialist medium, the finish here is akin to Speed Paints, creating a rather pleasing sense of highlight and shade across the surfaces.



• Stabilising technology for unsurpassed performance.

I can't confirm the technical details behind the paints, but have to say that the result is great. The paints cover well, feel great on the brush, and, once dry, they are indeed incredibly rich and vibrant. Pure Red is likely to become my go-to for that primary colour tone, and the Matt White stands out as a great 'pure' white. It has a lot of vibrancy and none of the 'chalky' feel that plagues whites in some other ranges.



• 300-700% more pigment.  
• Advanced liquid pigments for colour consistency.

### Watch out for...

Perhaps because of the pigment/stabiliser/resin base mix, the Fanatic paints are slightly deceptive as they dry. They look extremely glossy when first applied, but quickly lose that shine for a matt finish. This initially led me to think the paint had dried very quickly indeed, but I was deceived, and adding paints over the top caused blending or muddying. Make sure you give the paints longer than you think they need to dry at first, until you are used to their drying properties!



## THE FANATIC STARTER PAINT SET

Eleven dropper bottles:

- Brush-on Primer
- Dark Tone Wash
- Two metallics
- Seven acrylics

Painting guide

Free brush and figure

£28/32.99€/39.99





## PUTTING THE STARTER SET TO THE TEST

We gave the Fanatic Starter Set to new *Wi* staff member - and miniature painting virgin - Charlie. How would he get on applying the paints to a Perry Miniatures Wars of the Roses figure? I built a duplicate of the figure so I could have a go at the same challenge, and we gave ourselves an hour to paint our models to an army standard. Charlie was to refer exclusively to the painting guide that comes with the set for any painting advice he might need.

We warmed up by applying the Brush-On Primer (which works very well and is going to be a great option to do touch up after a spray of primer), then moved to the acrylics. Charlie found the paints easy to apply, but remarked quite early on that "this seems more like a Starter Set for the Fanatic range than a Starter Set for someone new to miniature painting." I had to agree. The paint selection meant Charlie had to mix a skin tone and fight against the available colours from the start. The guide that is supplied (an updated version of Army Painter's previous one) is more like a promotional leaflet than a 'how to' painting guide. It has some useful advice, but I was soon shepherding Charlie through the different painting stages and approaches to help him progress.

I added some highlights to my figure after the basecoat dried, while Charlie tidied up some spots he'd missed. With that done we both applied Strong Tone wash. This added the quick depth that a beginner would want on their miniature, and, for an army standard figure, left Charlie satisfied with a good first attempt. It reminded me that I don't like Strong Tone!

*Right: Charlie's figure is completed with some simple basing, while I added a few pop highlights to the metals and drybrushed the base.*



Charlie  
(The novice)



James  
(The old hand)

*Above: Basecoats went down quickly, thanks to the fluid paint application. When doing the quartered detail on my figure (right), I noted that the smooth flow of the paint off the brush meant that the joining lines were very clean. In the few places I did make splashes, the coverage of the paints allowed me to hide the errors in a flash.*



Charlie



James

*Above: Close to finished, our figures get the Strong Tone treatment.*



Charlie



James

### Watch out for...

The 'Quickshade' approach to painting is what kick-started Army Painter as a brand. This 'get more time for gaming' by painting fast ethos hasn't gone away, but the company has certainly put some of their focus on pleasing hobbyists who prioritise showpiece quality finishes too. With that transition, I feel that their 'Tone' paints have become less essential in the main range, particularly with Speed Paints now doing much the same thing, but with a greater variety of colours and easier-to-control finishes.

Some painters are always going to want the quick results that Fanatic Tones provide (they are the original Quickshade Washes with a few tweaks), but I find they mute the lovely and vibrant Fanatic acrylic colours too much. Tones are the part of the new range I can do without, as I'd rather apply thinned Speed Paints.



## THE FLEXIBLE COLOUR TRIAD SYSTEM

I had to eat crow here! After initially dismissing the Flexible Colour Triad system - "How can six paints be a triad?" - I've come to really admire what Army Painter have created, and I'm excited by its potential!

The acrylics are all presented in groups of six tones that flow from shadow to highlight. Technically, this makes them sextals rather than triads, but the idea is that the painter can make their own triads from the selection of paints shown.



Using the first and last paints along with a midtone creates a layered finish similar to that you'd get with a traditional kind of Triad from the Foundry range.



By selecting only the three lightest tones a more pastel, ethereal finish is created from the exact same Flexible Triad.



At the other end of the scale, the darker paints create a moody, subdued finish that looks like it could work well for certain historical painting applications.



With all the paints used from the Flexible Triad, the finish is closer to a character or competition level.

The top and bottom paints of the Flexible Triad are progressively mixed to the middle, so more confident painters could always cut down on expense and buy those, then mix to the centre, but it's great to have exact colours across the range for army painting purposes. The Flexible Triad system should also make for incredibly easy-to-follow painting guides, and we're certainly excited about that for our future *Wargames Illustrated* hobby content!



• Flexible Colour Triads.

## METALLICS

I am always on the hunt for a great metallic paint, as I don't have the patience for non-metallic metals. Darkstar Molten Metals have been my full-range pick of late, but their position as my favourite may be under threat. The Fanatic metallics I had a go with applied beautifully over a standard primer, and looked even better over a specific basecoat (brown under Greedy Gold, for example). The shine is lovely, the metallics mix well, and coverage is superb.



*Plate Mail with Strong Tone on the buckler, sword, and helm of my one hour Wars of the Roses figure. The shine is great and top highlights (mixed with Matt White) work well.*



*A single coat of Greedy Gold over grey primer looks extremely shiny on the feet of this knight.*

## OVERALL

After the hyperbolic marketing campaign, I was ready to don my cynic's hat in this assessment... but damn it Army Painter, I'm struggling to find much wrong with the Fanatic range at all!

I'll be adding plenty of the paints to my collection, and I suspect some will find heavy rotation around the *Wi* office. I also think that, due to the thought that's been put into the range, painting guides for the Fanatic paints will be extremely easy to write (yay for me!) and easy to follow (hurrah for our readers), so I will be strongly encouraging Editor Dan to buy us the complete set... perhaps minus the Washes.

The proof is in the painting, of course, so I strongly encourage you to pick up a Flexible Triad or two at the least. Give them a go on your current army and I suspect the ease of application, great coverage, and saturated results will make you a convert.

This won't be *Wi*'s last use of these excellent paints - expect Fanatic hobby guides aplenty in the years ahead!

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# DESIGNER'S NOTES: NEVER MIND THE BILLHOOKS HERE'S THE RUCKUS

**Mike Peters shares details of his *Billhooks*-inspired medieval small skirmish game, where each player controls a Captain and their small company of warriors to contest the field and win glory.**

I have been playing *Never Mind the Billhooks* since it was first published for free in *Wargames Illustrated* (Wi393, September 2020), and must have played more than fifty games by now. Each has provided a different experience and its own dramatic story on the tabletop. *Billhooks* is a game where Special Event Cards and capricious activation mechanisms create a dramatic narrative that often echoes historical events. The game feels like a chaotic 15th Century fight to the death in mud and blood, but manages to be great fun at the same time. Each battle is changeable, dramatic, frustrating, and gratifying by turns; Andy Callan's seemingly simple ruleset has provided me with hours of fun and after-action debate.

## THE DOWNER OF DUELLING

One small aspect of the game that has never been universally popular, however, is the Duelling rule. Two enemy leaders can slug it out, man to man, amid the swirling melee of battle but, what should be a moment of high drama, feels out of kilter with the rest of the system. This face-off, as written in the rulebook, uses the simple game of rock/paper/scissors to determine a winner. If one of the leaders involved in this basic side-game is the C-in-C, then the result of the whole battle can be decided this way; not really the glorious end you would want for a clash of armies.

*Mike advances his force through a densely packed Ruckus board.*

The rule feels so at odds with the rest of the game that most *Billhooks* players ditch it, and it is noticeably absent from tournament games. Nobody wants their best laid plans to be scuppered because the enemy's stone blunted their scissors!

## DOING DUELS DIFFERENTLY

*Billhooks* has a lively Facebook group where fellow Billhookers come to swap tales, offer advice, show off their armies, and generally chew the fat. A post from veteran gamer, Stuart Smith, proposed an idea for Duelling where each combatant rolls a dice per level of leader and the winner inflicts a wound on the loser. 'What an elegant and simple solution', I thought, and then it occurred to me that the drama could be even further enhanced.

By allowing each Duellist a parry, where they could force the opponent to reroll their dice, there could be further nuance within a simple system. This led to the additional idea of a lunge, whereby the player could choose to reroll their own dice. A more complex system was developing in my mind but, with Duelling made absent from the *Billhooks* games I play, I never got the chance to put my ideas into practice.

Stuart's spark of inspiration would not go away; it sat in the back of my mind, like a rules rodent, nibbling at my gaming brain, and creating a nest of unconnected thoughts concerning *Billhooks*. One night, the brain worm coalesced into a singular thought that dragged me from my bed and had me rushing downstairs in search of pen and paper.

'*Billhooks* as a skirmish game!' was jotted down in my sleepy state and the next day I got to work expanding on the idea.



## BUILDING UP TO A RUCKUS

*Billhooks* has some simple rules at its core that have been knocking about since wargaming came into being. D6s (where 6 is good and 1 is bad) are rolled to hit and then rolled to save; the principle is sound, the result is interactive (as both players are involved), and, in the words of Andy Callan, if it ain't broke why fix it?

The game also has more modern elements that add to the challenge. A random activation system brings unpredictability and makes players await the important card that will allow their plans to slot into place. Perhaps a special card will appear that adds further friction and scuppers plans. These card systems bring much of the fun to the game and would be foolish elements to tinker with too much; they work well and can easily scale down for the activation of individuals or small groups and the use of special abilities.

How would I differentiate the skirmish game I wanted to create while maintaining this effective core of *Billhooks* that I already loved? This question teased my brain through about three months of tinkering as I developed my skirmish rules.

### THE COMBATANTS

The obvious change is that individual figures take the place of units. Companies are formed of Heroes - the Captain and his Squires - and Retainers. Heroes have Martial Skills which are drawn from a deck of cards and Retainers have generic profiles that are defined by Traits.



Above: *Ruckus* is now a game of duels with each figure presenting a threat as an individual.

### HEROES!

The captain can take many forms: a Lord, a knight, a captain of archers, a leader of a band of outlaws, a mercenary captain with his harquebusiers, a village headman with a rabble of unruly peasants, and so much more. There may be more than one Retinue on each side too, which brings further variation and gaming challenges. Here are some examples of heroes, with their *Ruckus* stats.

#### Sir Henry Holland

*The Third Duke of Exeter, a Lancastrian, and a right nasty character!*

A fierce, angry man, Sir Henry 'Rules with an Iron Fist' which means followers in his retinue add one to the dice roll if ever they are out of his Command Range; they dare not misbehave! Sir Henry is also arrogant and vain, wearing a suit of the finest 'Fluted Plate' armour from Milan. The ridges on this cutting-edge design give him greater protection, allowing him to reroll a failed saving throw once per melee. If this fails and he receives a wound, Sir Henry's 'Riposte' skill allows him to make a vengeful hit against his enemy!

Name	Role	Prowess	Attacks	Health
Sir Henry Holland	Captain	3	3	3
<b>Skills</b>			<b>Command</b>	
<b>Skill'd at Arms</b>			<b>6</b>	
<b>Rules with an Iron Fist:</b> +1 to Feckless rolls.			<b>Valour Points</b>	
<b>Fluted Plate:</b> Rerolls one saving throw once per melee.				
<b>Riposte:</b> If wounded he scores an automatic hit on his opponent.				



Sir Henry's figure is from *Front Rank*.

#### Sir Walter Deveraux

*A loyal Yorkist and true friend of the King.*

Sir Walter's 'Commanding Presence' enables him to direct his Retainers at a greater distance. His 'Lightning Fast' skill grants him an extra attack (included on the profile) and combines with his 'Duellist' ability - allowing him to Thrust and Parry in the same melee - to make him a very dangerous opponent.

Name	Role	Prowess	Attacks	Health
Sir Walter Deveraux	Captain	3	4	3
<b>Skills</b>			<b>Command</b>	
<b>Skill'd at Arms</b>			<b>9</b>	
<b>Commanding Presence:</b> Command Range is three times his Prowess.			<b>Valour Points</b>	
<b>Lightning Fast:</b> Has one extra attack.				
<b>Duellist:</b> May use Thrust and Parry in the same melee.				



Sir Deveraux's figure is from *Perry Miniatures*.

## RETAINERS

In *Ruckus*, Retainers have generic profiles that share the same Traits, rather than the Individual Skills that the Heroes have, but Retainers can gain Skills in the Campaign game. These are the ordinary soldiers - Archers, Billmen, Crossbowmen, Landsknechts, Gallowglasses, etc - the PBI of the medieval world. There are currently 25 different profiles for Retainers with quite a few more on the way. Here's a taster of just a few.

### The Archer

*The mainstay of any English medieval Retinue.*

The archer is lightly armoured, and his saving throw reflects this, but he can dish out damage from up to 24" with his longbow. Although being 'Encumbered' with bow and arrows reduces his ability to fight, he can choose to Evade from chargers thanks to the 'Shootist' trait, or equip himself for melee with sword and buckler thanks to 'Armed for Combat'.

Role	Weapon	Traits	Saves on	Melee (initial to hit roll)
Retinue Archer	Longbow Sword and Buckler	Shootist Encumbered Armed for Combat	5+	5+



*This Archer figure is from Front Rank.*

### The Bill Man

*The professional soldier that could stand his ground against the more heavily armoured Men-at-Arms.*

He has a slightly better saving throw than the Archer due to his stronger armour. He is skilled in combat with his polearm and his traits reflect this. He has the trait 'Skill'd at Arms' which allows him to use Thrust, Parry, and Fend in the same way as the Heroes and the 'Support' trait, which allows him to add a dice to an adjacent comrade's melee.

Role	Weapon	Traits	Saves on	Melee (initial to hit roll)
Bill	All Pole-arms	Skill'd at Arms Support	4+	4+



*This Billman is from Front Rank.*

## SWITCHING TO PLAYING CARDS

I honed my 'Skill'd at Arms' rules (see overpage) for melee (a Thrust-Parry-Fend system that has evolved from Stuart's initial Duelling 'fix') and introduced the idea of individual Martial Skills for the combatants. These are decided before play starts in a one-off game and are represented by a playing card deck. Each card represents a different skill and the suits an overall type of skill:

- Clubs - Strength in combat.
- Spades - Dexterity in combat.
- Hearts - Leadership/Charisma/Courage skills.
- Diamonds - Archery/Missile skills.

I had planned to use the *Billhooks* Special Event cards in the game too, but it proved unnecessarily complicated to write alternate Event explanations connected to the existing cards. Instead, I turned to the playing card deck once again.

Joseph McCullough is an influence on my game design, and I love the way he uses playing cards in games such as *Rangers of Shadow Deep*. The card deck functions much like it does in the larger *Billhooks* games, but playing cards are more adaptable and are easily accessible as most households have them. Cross-referenced with tables of Events, the same card can have different meanings for each player, or vary by Theatre, and the deck can be stacked with more of one particular result if players choose, increasing the possibility of it coming up.



*Above: Mike at Wi Tower, drawing cards and assigning associated skills to his characters, as he shows off his game.*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

A rare occurrence in *Billhooks*, but far more common in the story-packed games of *Ruckus*, special events are very much a two-edged sword! They can provide an unexpected boost, or they might bring some unwanted friction; either way, they guarantee a narrative event and increase the fun! Playing cards are used to create a generic deck of special events as well as some scenario specific events tailored to fit the circumstances of the scenario.

### GENERIC SPECIAL EVENTS EXAMPLES

#### 'You Tardy Knave'

This is played on your opponent as they draw a Hero card and forces them to place that card at the bottom of the deck, thereby missing their turn.

#### 'Blessed By Providence!'

A religious amulet, small prayer book, or lucky talisman turns aside the point of the weapon and prevents a wound. This is the type of card that helps you rather than hindering your opponent.

### SCENARIO SPECIFIC SPECIAL EVENTS EXAMPLES

#### 'The Peasants Are Revolting!'

A card specifically designed for the scenario called 'Hit him where it hurts'. The local peasants are restless and have become increasingly angry at their overlord's greedy, grasping ways; the drawing player may place six peasants on the table 9" away from an enemy character. This

player controls the band of peasants for the rest of the game and, in this scenario, all peasants are considered angry and lose the 'Reluctant Warrior' trait.

To add to the functionality of the new group of peasants, an ambush card of the appropriate colour gets shuffled into the play deck and they are activated when it is drawn.

One advantage of using playing cards is that the Event deck can be tailored so an event occurs more or less frequently. In 'Hit him where it hurts' there are four sixes (which are the 'The peasants are revolting' cards, increasing the chances of Peasant Revolt).

#### 'If I Can Just...'

This card is used specifically in 'The rescue' scenario and it is represented by the seven, eight, nine, or Queen cards, vastly increasing the frequency of its appearance. If one of these is drawn by the attacker it allows a bound prisoner an attempt to cut his bonds on a jagged fragment of a broken blade that just happens to be on the ground, as is traditional in the great swashbuckling stories!

#### 'I Think I Heard Something...'

Should the defender draw a seven, eight, nine, or Queen in the same 'The rescue' scenario, a completely different Scenario Specific Event triggers, which allows a spotting check for any sneaking attackers.

## SKILL'D AT ARMS

Each character in melee has an Attack attribute representing their skill in combat. For knights, the bosses of hand-to-hand, the Attack is three; this means they roll three dice in melee. In the first round of a melee, characters require a 4+ to score a hit but there's more to it than that, especially as more elite fighters do battle. Follow as these two captains battle it out across multiple rounds of combat.

### A ROUND OF MELEE

Blue (left) is the attacker and rolls three dice as his captain's Attack value is three. Red (right) is also a captain and rolls three dice too.

Both Captains have the 'Skill'd at Arms Trait' which consists of three Skills that can be used to manipulate the melee dice. They can each choose to use one of these Skills once in each round of melee. The skills are:

- Thrust - the ability to reroll one of your attack dice.
- Parry - the ability to force your opponent to reroll one of their attack dice.
- Fend - only used if you are the defender. Fend gives the character another dice to roll but successes are used to block the opponent's hits; choosing to Fend means that the defender cannot cause wounds.



1) Both players roll and, needing 4+ to hit, they examine the results. Blue has rolled two 1's and a 4 while, red has a 1, a 3, and a 5. Blue has the skill 'Deadly Blade' which allows him to reroll a 1 to hit in melee. Unfortunately, his reroll is another 1. In *Ruckus* you cannot reroll a rerolled dice so it will remain a 1. Next, as the attacker, Blue has the option to use 'Skill'd at Arms' first. He elects to use a Thrust and rerolls the other dice that scored a 1.



2) This reroll gets him a four and with the hit from the other four he has two hits on Red.



3) Sir Red now uses his 'Skill'd at Arms' trait and elects to Parry one of Sir Blue's hits. This forces Blue to reroll one of his 4s, but he gets a 5; the Parry has been unsuccessful, and Blue has retained two hits while Sir Red has scored one with his 5.



4) They both wear full plate armour so normally save on a 3+, however, Red has the skill 'As Strong as an Orse' which means that Blue's saving throw is reduced to 4+. Red rolls a 5 and 6 to successfully deflect both hits. Sir Blue rolls a 3 and sustains a wound! This completes the first round of melee.



5) In the second round of melee characters hit on a 5+ as they are starting to tire. Sir Blue has been wounded and is thus reduced to two attacks. He rolls 4 and a 3. Sir Red still has three attacks and rolls a 5, 4, and 3.



6) Sir Blue - still the attacker - elects to Thrust and rerolls the 4, getting a 5 - a hit! Sir Red also Thrusts his 4 into a 5 and scores two hits.



7) Saving throws - The unfortunate Blue rolls a 5 and 3, saving just once, and takes another wound. Sir Red rolls a 6 and remains uninjured.



8) There are three rounds to each combat. In the third round the combatants are becoming increasingly tired and not only do they hit on 5+ they also lose the 'Skill'd at Arms' trait entirely, so they will no longer be able to reroll their dice.

Sir Blue, who has taken two wounds, is in a desperate situation and, as he only has one attack, would love to Fend, which must be announced before any dice are rolled. Fending means he can roll an extra dice but any 'hits' will block Red's hits. Unfortunately, he cannot Fend as this requires 'Skill'd at Arms' and it is not used in the third round!

Blue rolls a 3, missing completely, while Red rolls a 5, 4, and 3. Sir Blue will be killed if he cannot save the hit Red has made with his 5... but that's a story for another time!



## CONNECTED BUT DIFFERENT

Although a separate game for very small skirmishes, I wanted *Ruckus* to be compatible with its Bigger *Billhooks* Brother so that it could form a 'game within a game'. Like *Billhooks*, the game uses a deck of cards to create Random Activation and Events, and the old D6 to resolve shooting attacks, melee, and Will-to-Fight rolls. The transition from one game to the other feels quite natural. I would like to develop a campaign system which uses both *Billhooks* and *Ruckus* to resolve battles and skirmishes!

*Ruckus* battles can be one off scraps or flow as a campaign, with character development included as different figures gain new skills and attributes.

There is no Manoeuvre Phase in *Ruckus*; instead, players deploy their Retinues as directed by the Scenario rules.

Initially, I had melee taking place over three turns - a la *Billhooks* - which provided some interesting tactical choices, but became horribly complicated when combat involved more than two characters. The simple solution was to have melee resolve in three rounds and fight them all in one turn, as seen on the previous page.

## PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Like *Billhooks* author Andy Callan, I am not a fan of complicated games. However, games that are too simple can be boring and lack nuance. I've aimed to create a game that has simple individual mechanisms which, when layered, become complex rather than complicated. Tried and tested basic systems (such as 1 is bad 6 is good) apply throughout the game, but here and there I layer in extra flavour and quirks so that a process usually has several elements to it.

The goal is always to make mechanisms that provide a fun and engaging game, rather than striving for realism or historical accuracy. By doing this, I hope I've produced a system that is easy to learn yet requires good tactical play to get the best from the game. Skirmish games with no purpose can be rather stale affairs, so scenarios with achievable yet challenging goals and a good narrative are essential.

## GOING FORWARD

I like my game! It is fun to play, interactive, engaging, and delivers narrative events on the tabletop. *Ruckus* is easy to pick up for anyone, but especially existing *Billhooks* players, as it only uses a few figures and utilises the same cards and factors as the main game. If you are a *Billhooks* player, then it would be silly to not give *Ruckus* a try, as you have everything you need to play the game already other than the rules. As for those rules, I'm very happy to say that they'll be available for free with a future issue of *Wargames Illustrated*!



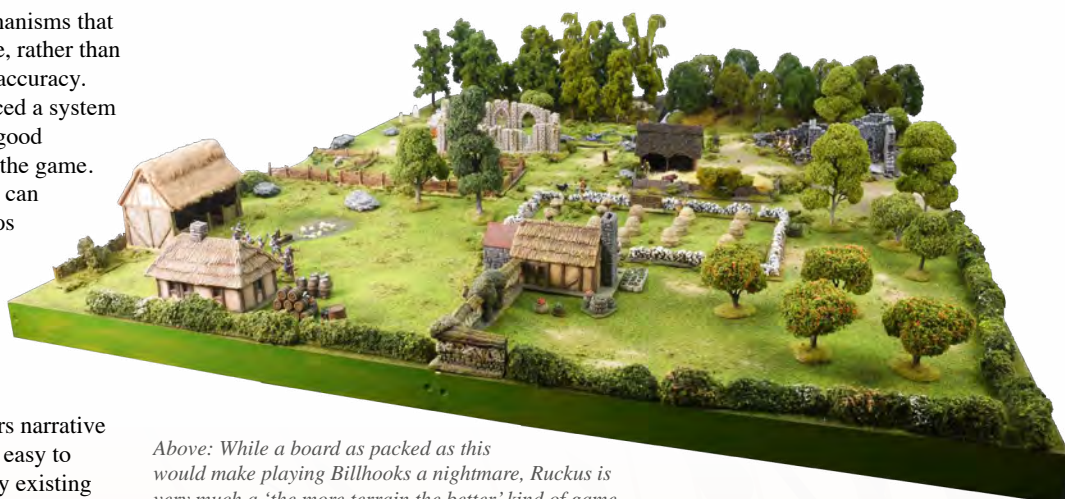
Above: A group of retainers advances towards a peasant, but could he be the spy they've been searching for?

## BROAD SCOPE

As with *Billhooks*, *Ruckus* is initially set in the Albion Theatre, for the Wars of the Roses conflict. It is a time of misrule, lawlessness, and diverse alarms! A time for rebels and outlaws, a time of border conflicts and raids, a time when old family feuds escalate, a time to settle scores. In short, the perfect setting for a skirmish game and rightly the initial focus of *Ruckus*.

I also have plans to adapt *Ruckus* to the other *Billhooks Deluxe* Theatres, using the *Deluxe* stats and profiles as a guide. I am working through them one at a time and have written new Retinues for the Hundred Years' War already; now I'm working on scenarios to go with them.

Many of the scenarios require specific Special Events cards and Special Rules, and this is another reason for the use of standard playing cards with tables, as opposed to special and specific decks. This flexibility allows the basic game to be adapted for any medieval theatre, and I can envisage a future edition of *Ruckus* which is period agnostic, extending the game to stretch from the Early Medieval to the British Civil Wars of the 17th Century. I am also thinking... pirates! But for now, I'm trying to stay focused on getting the core of the game as refined as possible before it gets into players' hands.



Above: While a board as packed as this would make playing *Billhooks* a nightmare, *Ruckus* is very much a 'the more terrain the better' kind of game.

## NINE FINGERED AMBROSE AND MORE!

In a future issue we'll show off more of *Ruckus* with reports on various battles we've played at *Wi* Tower. Mike and his good friend, and regular opponent Mark Taylor, fight over a bountiful monastery garden while searching for Nine Fingered Ambrose, a spy who has disguised himself as a monk, the Brothers Callan - Andy and Ian - fight in the fog, and team *Wi* play a game themed around Sherwood Forest residents of legend.

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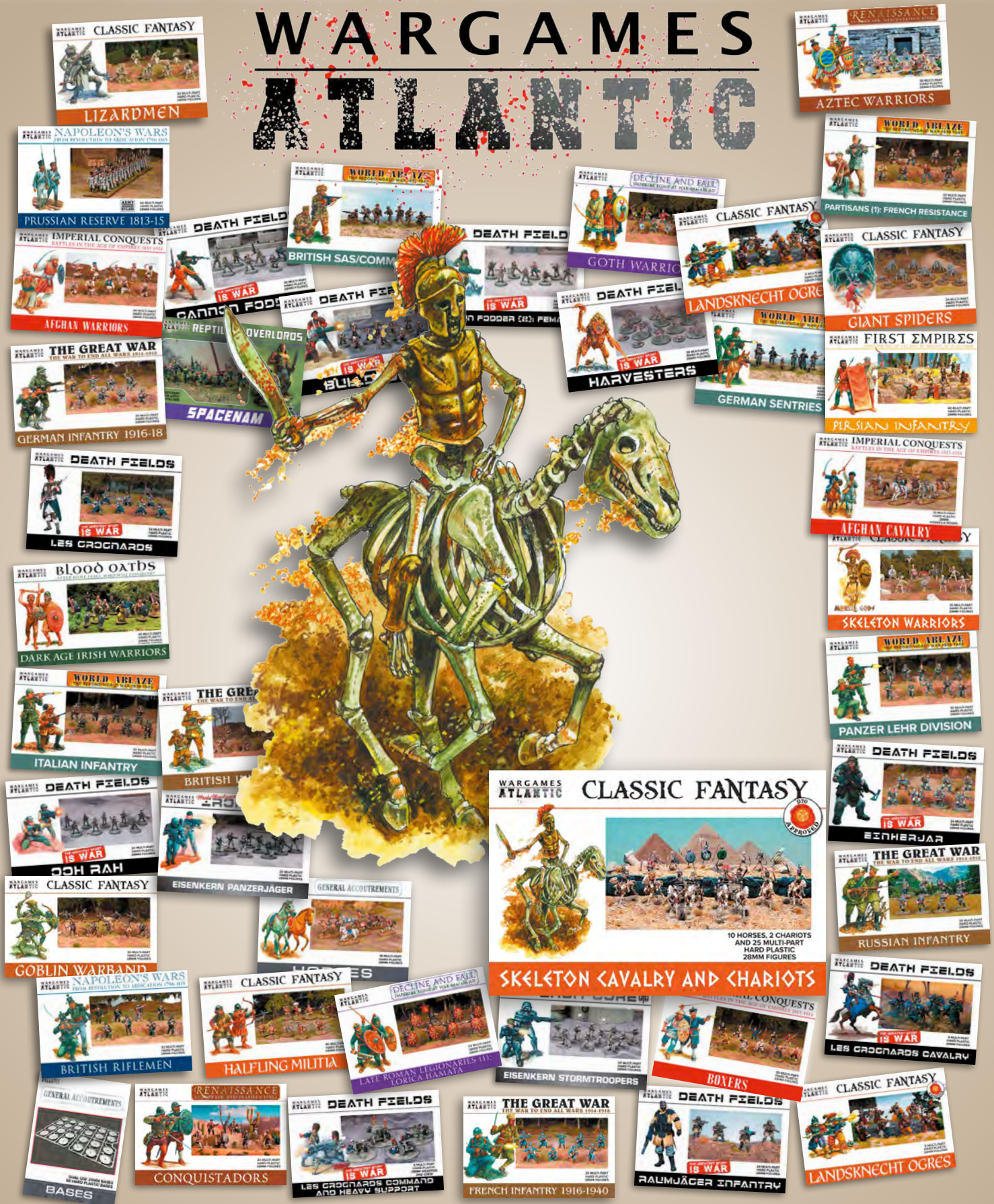
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