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# WARGAMES illustrated®



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ISSUE 434  
FEBRUARY 2024  
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# WARGAMES ILLUSTRATED ISSUE WI434 FEBRUARY 2024 CONTENTS

## FROM THE EDITOR

As we were putting the finishing touches to this issue of *Wargames Illustrated* we received the sad news of Bryan Ansell's death. Bryan was a titan of the tabletop miniatures world, initially forming Asgard, then Citadel Miniatures in the 1970s. He went on to lead Games Workshop into a brave new world of soaring popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, at a time when I worked at the company, under Bryan and his wife Diane. He then went on to make his mark on the historical wargaming hobby with Wargames Foundry.

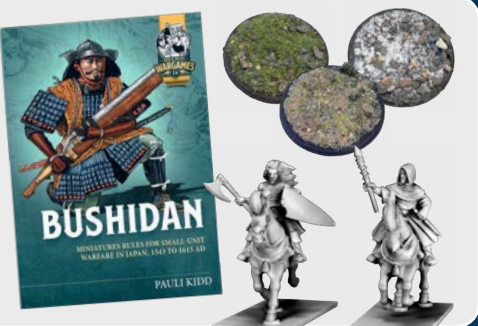
Bryan was also a friend of the magazine; Wargames Foundry distributed *Wi* in the early 2000s and contributed heavily to it's content. Bryan himself penned three sets of rules which his old friend Duncan Macfarlane (the then *Wi* Editor) published in the magazine. These can all be found online via the *Wargame Illustrated* Vault, for those of you who would like to take look.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Bryan back in December 2012 (see photo below), you can read what the great man had to say about the part he played in the development of our hobby by visiting [wargamesillustrated.net](http://wargamesillustrated.net) and searching 'Bryan Ansell'.

It is hard to overstate Bryan's influence on our hobby, and our condolences go out to his family at this sad time.

Dan Faulconbridge  
Editor

*This month's cover illustration is by Peter Dennis. From CAM 215 Leningrad 1941 - 44*  
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▲ OBSERVATION POST ..... 6



▲ ADRIATIC ADVENTURES ..... 40



▲ ABC WARRIORS ..... 46

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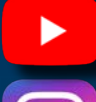
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Printed in the UK by: Warners.

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## CONTENTS

### OBSERVATION POST ..... 6

We review new basing materials, fantasy elves, an ECW painting guide, and rules for gaming the late Sengoku period in Japan.

### RELEASE RADAR ..... 14

Dom Sore's monthly column shines a light on new and upcoming wargaming kit from an assortment of manufacturers.

### QUICK FIRE ..... 18

What have your fellow hobbyists been up to? Find out in Quick Fire, our regular, reader submitted section.

### THEME: HISTORY, SCENARIO, STATS. DONE. .... 22

Pete Brown introduces this month's theme with an article examining how best to explore History - Scenario gaming.

### THEME: THE TEMPLARS' LAST CHARGE ..... 28

Steve Tibble casts his expert gaze over the last moments of the Templars at war, during the Siege of Acre.

### THE NEVER-ENDING COLLECTION ..... 34

Pete Brown again, this time reporting on the Culloden game he ran at the Warlord Games Open Day.

### ADRIATIC ADVENTURES ..... 40

Dave Watson outlines Russian activities in the Adriatic in 1806, and offers a Napoleonic tabletop scenario with a difference.

### ABC WARRIORS THE MINIATURES GAME ..... 46

James guides us through Warlord Games' new 2000 AD related *ABC Warriors* starter set.

### THEME: A FREEZING FIGHTING RETREAT ..... 54

Dom Sore follows up on last issue's Hit and Run theme with an article that examines the Italians' fighting retreat from Russia in World War Two.

### THE ATTACK ON FORT GALLABAT ..... 62

Last issue, Karim van Overmeire outlined the background and gaming basics for this WWII action in the African Campaign. This time he shows how to translate the gaming into a one-day campaign.

### THEME: THE BATTLE OF MOTTOLA ..... 68

A Liberation of Italy skirmish encounter for *Bolt Action* by Colin Ball.

### WARGAMING MANZIKERT ..... 72

Simon MacDowall provides a detailed account of a clash in the East, between the Byzantines of Romanus IV and a Seljuk army led by Alp Arslan.

### OPERATION IKARUS PART TWO ..... 80

Lisa Smedman returns to Iceland in the second part of her WWII 'what if?' *Bolt Action* campaign.

### RUCKUS IN THE WI GAMING ROOM ..... 86

In this article, James presents highlights from some of the dramatic *Ruckus* tabletop clashes that have been played in *Wi's* gaming room.

### AN ACW SIGNAL TOWER: MAKING AND GAMING ..... 94

Matt Parkes makes a tabletop vantage point for his Union Signal Party, and gaming guru Rick Priestley provides ideas for using it in his *Black Powder* rules.



▲ A FREEZING FIGHTING RETREAT ..... 54



▲ WARGAMING MANZIKERT ..... 72



▲ RUCKUS IN THE WI GAMING ROOM ..... 86



▲ ACW SIGNAL TOWER: MAKING AND GAMING ..... 94



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# OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames  
stuff you need to know about

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

### KRAUTCOVER - ASSORTED BASING MATERIAL

Some hobbyists love adding the final groundwork and detailing beneath their models' feet, treating basing as a reward at the end of a careful painting process - a post coital cigarette, celebrating a job well done, if you care for your saucy metaphors! Others are far less excited and enthused by basing, wanting to just get it done so they can get busy with gaming; these sorts are, of course, much more likely to opt for a quick, hard flock!

Whatever category you fall into, there's a new kid on the basing block, with products to help the groundwork under your figures look splendid. German manufacturer Krautcover (we did a quick poll around the office and none of us reckon a cabbage would even count as soft cover!) offer tubs of different basing kit, split into three categories: Basis, Texture, and Décor. This trio of levels allows you to apply the lower ground, mid-level, and surface detailing without having to put too much thought into what specific materials you might need. As you can see from the different bases we created, they all work rather well!

### DETAILS

- SCALE: Any
- PERIOD: Any
- PRICE: £4.50 to £8.50
- MATERIAL: 140ml plastic tubs of basing materials
- AVAILABLE FROM: [northstarfigures.com](http://northstarfigures.com)

### A SOLID FOUNDATION

Although not an essential first step, the Basis products in the range are the ideal way to begin your basing. These mixes of fine powder, larger rubble, rocks, and small twigs make for a visually appealing 'preliminary pass' on any base. We used Common Earth (light) but other options are available. It's worth noting the slight and subtle colour variation present, with the larger rubble pieces paler than the powder, which instantly creates depth in your basing.



Above: A 50mm base with just Common Earth (light) applied.



### LAYERING ON THE DETAIL

Assorted tubs of Texture are the ideal mid-stage application, consisting of further mixes of flock, moss, sand, powder, rocks, and more. As you can see from our examples, the mixes bring the bases to life despite being just one quick application.

For the best results we advise applying these on top of a Basis layer, but we wanted to see how they looked without such care, gluing the options over standard black bases.



Above: While it looks good without it, the paler Soil of Sparta would have benefited from a more complimentary colour underneath it. This could have been Common Earth or a simple layer of beige paint.



Above: Meadows of Purity is going to be the perfect option for a great many battlefields. To get an even coverage of all elements it's worth mixing up the tub contents before applying them as some of the materials within can sink to the bottom. You want to get even coverage of all elements.



Above: Snowy Highland Pass was a particularly great one-layer finish, creating a partially melted and 'dirty' looking snow environment. This would be ideal for WWII Soviet urban action.





Here we've applied Meadows of Purity over the top of the Common Earth base we made. This creates a different looking finish. We only applied glue in select areas, so that small patches of earth were left visible. This varies the colours present and ups the realism. Mixing the different Basis and Texture tubs is great fun and, if you wanted to make a more display level model, is our recommended approach.



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### KRAUT-TAC

As well as the tubs of basing material, there's an adhesive too, called Kraut-Tac. Don't be tempted to use this as if it's a simple PVA glue, though, while it's certainly sticky, it's been designed with basing as its specialist purpose.

The adhesive within the 250g bottle stays tacky and stretchy, even after it dries, which means that it does a great job of bonding the loose litter and static grass to bases and to each other. We noticed, after removing excess scatter, that far less bits continue to shed than with standard PVA glue. It makes basing a little quicker and easier, and if you're making the groundwork for hundreds of figures that time saving will add up! The downside is that, as the Kraut-Tac remains sticky, it's not as robust or resistant to handling. Thankfully a coat of varnish or diluted wood glue will remedy that issue, sealing everything.

Kraut-Tac is not an essential but we found it brushed on well, held scatter nicely, and was a generally useful addition to our basing supplies.



## FINISHING TOUCHES

The Décor stage is one that could be seen as optional rather than essential. While it isn't needed to make a great looking base, it does bring yet another level of detail and texture. Snowy Highland Pass is given a more pure and fresh snow look by adding patches of Powder Snow (below) and, while this powder isn't as realistic as some products, it also doesn't have such devastating health risks associated with it (extremely reflective, glistening snow products tend to be extremely unpleasant if inhaled).



On the other three bases (above) we used a selection of tufts made (see Hobby Corner) from various lengths and colours of static grass that come in the range's other Décor tubs. The mix of tones and different height levels will make your command stands and larger artillery bases look particularly interesting.

When adding Krautcover materials to the bases of wargaming miniatures (shown on the previous page) you will probably want to keep things a bit simpler. We did use multiple layers on some of the models' bases but it's worth noting that by doing so we somewhat 'buried' their feet. This looks quite cool, but for certain battlefields you won't want your figures wading through high grass, as it just won't be historically accurate.

We're impressed by these products, particularly the Basis and Texture tubs. If you find a couple of these that work for your army, you'll be able to base it consistently without taking much time at all.

## HOBBY CORNER



Kraut-Tac can really come into its own (and be a good value purchase despite its £8.50 price tag) by aiding you in creating your own sticky extras. If you apply small spots of the adhesive to plastic or baking parchment and wait for it to dry, you'll be able to peel it off and use it to aid making dry-fits of figures. Because the spots can hold well, even when small, it's better than standard sticky tac at doing the job.

Perhaps even better, you can use Kraut-Tac to make your own sheets of basing tufts. It's as simple as scattering static grass over spots of the adhesive that you have dotted around baking parchment. Now you're free to make tufts in whatever tone or mixture of tones you want (right!)





## HELION WARGAMES - BUSHIDAN

Pauli Kidd's *Bushidan* rules - the newest release in Helion's rapidly expanding 'Wargames' series - offer a new way to play Japan's later Sengoku period. This 16th to 17th Century interval was a tumultuous time; increasingly heavy adoption of firearms saw the traditional tactics and army structures of the warring clans change dramatically. Infantry-heavy forces became the norm and what might be considered 'less honourable' combat took over.

Any era of conspicuous change makes for intriguing wargaming, and the author has wisely picked the time of firearms as her starting point and inspiration here, presenting small unit tactics for the final years of the Sengoku period.

### CHARACTER FROM THE START

The rules begin by describing how players can define their ryu - the school/style of combat and belief system their leader and troops follow - which is an unusual but intriguing introduction to a game. Six characteristics/elements are picked from, and how you weigh your choices here (for a standard game you can spend twelve points on them) will define the character of your army and its specialisms on the field of battle. The elements each connect to a particular enhancement: fire is ferocity and will make your troops more fanatical, earth is discipline and will bring better drilled units, water is cunning and will make your warriors more deceptive, and so on. It's a tidy system that allows you to skew your army style without a load of complex special rules. We'll get to how the ryu functions in the game shortly.

Forces are chosen from a system that starts with just two options: cavalry at 5 points and infantry at 2 points. These become more complex with the addition of armour types, training levels, and weapons. As with the design of your ryu, the force selection is simple but extremely flexible. A unit of unarmoured peasants with yari comes in at the basic 2 points, while an elite (+3 points) Samurai unit in bulletproof heavy armour (+5 points) is a big expense at 10 points. Can their improved protection and skill make them worth five times as many peasants? You have the option to find out.

With the addition of heroes, you're well set to tune the game to match your existing figure collection, or to create a new army with the exact structure you desire.

### INTO THE GAME

Much of the gameplay is familiar stuff: a recognisable turn sequence (initiative, leader moves, orders, activations, morale, and tidy up), relatively standard terrain rules, alternating deployment, and so on. It's where the game mixes things up that will make or break how much *Bushidan* appeals to you and your gaming group, and some of the more unique elements are small ones. Movement, for example, is defined by Distance Units (D.U.) instead of a basic 'move' value. Each D.U. is equal to half a base width, which makes the game scale agnostic but also requires some calculation at first. It won't be a problem once you're used to the way it works, but is a slight barrier to entry.

A major feature of the game is how order chits function. These are made of the different elements that you picked to define your ryu and are placed face down next to units in the order phase, along with command chits, conferred by leaders. Each chit has different effects in different circumstances, so you'll need to plan and predict carefully before activations begin.

Assign wind to a unit and it will gain 3 extra D.U.s in a Move Activation, which is incredibly impactful for cavalry, who have a standard 6 D.U. charge anyway. Instead, if you use the wind chit during a Fire Activation, an infantry unit will gain the ability to rapid fire: +1 dice but they end the phase disrupted due to



### DETAILS

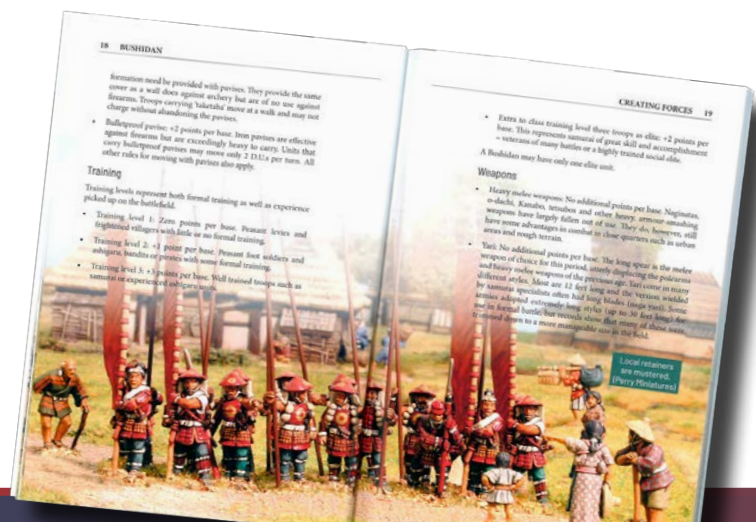
- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Japan 1543 to 1615
- PRICE: £25
- MATERIAL: 110-page softback, full-colour book
- AVAILABLE FROM: [helion.co.uk](http://helion.co.uk)

the high rate of ammo use. A cavalry unit may instead make a firing pass for its Fire Activation, losing their bows during the most advantageous point of a bonus move.

The considerations go far deeper though, as chits play a further part in combat. Each element is able to 'trump' one of the others. That will mean your wind assisted cavalry charge will be more effective against a unit that has a cunning chit (wind has an advantage against water) but will be disadvantaged against a disciplined unit using earth. Having the advantage gives an additional 2 attack dice and can heavily weigh melee in your favour.

### COMPLEX CALCULATIONS?

While Fire Activations will gradually grind down your enemy, the game is generally decided through a few key melee combat clashes. It's here where you'll need to get your brain in gear and work out all the different modifiers that apply and how many dice these add to your side's roll. There's the element chits to factor in, superior armour gives you an advantage, certain weapon types outshine others in certain terrain, facing units that have taken casualties or are disordered gains you dice, support from the rear or flank boosts you, terrain can help, and heroes also add their power to your roll. That's a huge number of factors to consider and more than you may feel





ready to easily work out during your first few games. It does get easier with experience, but prepare for plenty of list referencing during your early playthroughs!

You'll win the game by gradually wearing down your opponent's cohesion and control. This is measured by the game's second set of tokens - victory tokens - which players start the game with. You get a victory token for each unit in your force and a bonus one for each metal token picked in your ryu. These metal endurance tokens specifically factor into making an army less likely to break but do not offer the same sort of bonuses that the other elements do in game. As units lose melee or rout off the board, you'll lose 1 victory token. If your C-in-C is lost it's rather more catastrophic and results in the loss of 3 victory tokens. Once you run out of victory tokens the game is over

### IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE SENGOKU PERIOD

The book has a clean and modern layout, making this a ruleset that is easy to read and reference, while miniature photographs by the Perrys add some visual spectacle. The heavy peppering of flavourful quotes and inspiring background, that highlight the fascinating world of Japan in this period, adds a lot more appeal.

The rules are followed by a section on playing a campaign and three sample scenarios. These are specifically skewed to certain types of combat, with defined ryu presented, along with sample forces. The games see a pirate clan defending their island, the Sano and Ichi-Ikki clans in a midnight clash at a river estuary, and 'The 6 ½ Samurai'; you can probably work out that one!

The final quarter of the book has historical notes, a useful timeline, list of inspirational media, and a final appendix on foreign troops (see Under the Microscope). Things end with a quick reference section and element and victory tokens (which can be downloaded too).

*Bushidan* is steeped in Japanese philosophy and their intriguing mental and practical approaches towards life and war; this is reflected throughout the rules as well as the background. The game and book feel, rather appropriately, like a harmonious meeting of history, ethos, attitude, and dice rolling, which makes it a great excuse to expand your army if you already play the period or to dive in if you don't.



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### EXPANSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

In the book's appendix on foreign troops there are modifiers to bring a wide range of outsiders to the tabletop.

In 1592 Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Korea, initially decimating the defenders, but eventually finding himself facing the Ming Chinese too. Years of war raged, providing gamers with an opportunity to run campaigns or interesting one-off battles. *Bushidan* provides alternate 'ryu' and other modifiers to vary up the opposing countries.

#### Korea

Korean troops roll one less dice than the Japanese in melee, but have 20% more points to spend on their force and can take fire arrows (arrows with bombs attached to the shafts). The ferocity element is completely banned in their ryu, and they can only choose one metal/resolve token in the first invasion, representing the shock of the Japanese attack making them more prone to breaking.

#### Ming Chinese

Seasoned in battle, but with a command system plagued by infighting and bureaucracy, the forces of Ming China must pick at least two water/cunning elements and are severely limited in ranged combat; only one unit may be equipped with firearms. They can make a 'Mandarin Duck Formation' unit, with heavily armoured melee troops in a front rank and pikemen in their rear, gaining a bonus when charged. Their battle experience also allows them to form larger, six-base formations, which have crossbowmen or archers behind melee troops.

#### Other nations

It doesn't end there, Siam (modern day Thailand) and Burma saw an influx of Ronin and Christian Japanese, with unrest and conflict following them. These forces bring minor modifications and one major one - the addition of Elephants! These mighty creatures are melee powerhouses but can cause disorder and casualties to any troops - friend, or foe - who are caught under their clomping feet if they rout.

Filipino and Spanish forces met the Japanese in the Philippines in the 1580s with pirates attacking Spanish shipping in the area. The Filipino warriors are expert ambushers, while the Spanish have plenty of firearms and are well disciplined.

Finally, there's the Ryukyu archipelago; more than 100 islands between Japan and Taiwan, which feature peasant troops alongside upper-caste warriors of note.

This is a diverse collection of forces that will bring much variety to your gaming options.

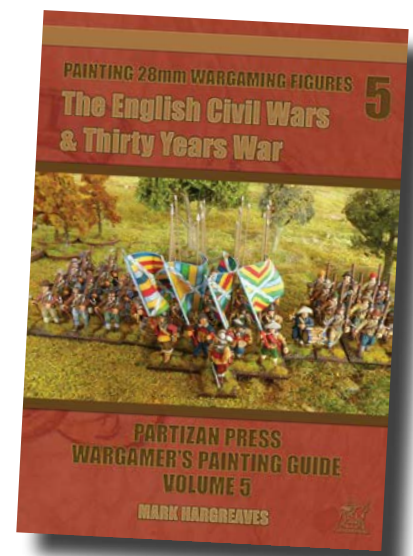
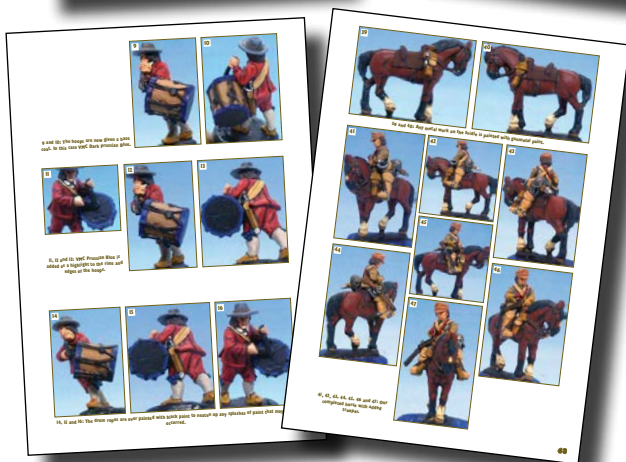


## PARTIZAN PRESS - WARGAMER'S PAINTING GUIDE VOLUME FIVE

Mark Hargreaves returns with the fifth *Wargamer's Painting Guide* he's written for Partizan Press. Previous offerings focused on the late 19th and early 20th Century, covering WWI (with two volumes on the Middle Eastern Theatres and one on the Western Front) and the Mahdist Wars, but this time he's cast his gaze, and his brushwork, a lot further back in time.

*Volume Five* heads to the 1600s and provides guidance for the Thirty Years' War and the English Civil Wars in a well-timed release. At the time of writing, Bloody Miniatures fine line for the period are fighting for the 'best new range' top spot in our Annual Readers' Awards, so there's clearly an interest in pike and shot battles. Warlord Games recently released a new version of its *Pike & Shotte* rules too, tuned to their new Epic range; while Mark's painting is focused on 28mm figures, the paint schemes he presents are transferable to any scale and will be useful on the smaller Warlord plastics.

The advice is generally presented in step-by-step sections that focus on the many different areas found on figures for the period. The first provides a hefty 69 images, showing the different stages that have been taken to paint heads, hands, and assorted headgear. It's simple advice with the paints used listed for each of the steps, the painting method described, and the photos illustrating the development of the various figures being painted. In short, if you need guidance on what paints to apply to what parts of your figures for the English Civil Wars or the Thirty Years' War, then this is certainly the guide for you!



### DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm but can be used for various sized figures
- PERIOD: ECW and 30 Years' War
- PRICE: £24.50
- MATERIAL: 108-page softback full-colour book
- AVAILABLE FROM: [caliverbooks.com](http://caliverbooks.com)

The sections are thorough and go on to cover armour, doublets, coats, breeches, buffcoats and boots, hose and shoes, scarves, baldrics, hangars, scabbards, gauntlets, drums, horses, and guns. The amount of work taken to clearly photograph each step is admirable and the different figures chosen all highlight the different areas being shown well. The numbering of the steps doesn't reset until the end of each chapter, which is a little odd, as lengthy sections run to triple digit numbers, removing clarity and making things more challenging to reference.

The thoroughness of the guide, showing the paints to use on just about every possible piece of kit and clothing found in the period, makes this a guide that is well-suited to intermediate painters, but the book may not be so appealing to anyone looking to push their techniques forward. Visually pleasing gaming figures are the focus, which means paint tends to be applied in simple, layered stages. That's great for getting units onto the tabletop, but almost every material gets the same kind of painting treatment, which makes quite a lot of the book a 'paint by numbers' offering. That'll be fine for many readers but more variety in the techniques shown could have made this guide truly indispensable to all. The section on buffcoats, for example, is the ideal place to show how to paint realistic leather via texture application, warmer tones in the recesses, surface scratches and scuffs, etc. A bit of a missed opportunity, but perhaps not as useful to the painters the author is looking to appeal to.

General advice on varnishing and basing is provided, then details on how to make the washes that are regularly applied to the different areas of figures, which is all useful stuff. With that covered, the remainder of the guide gets a little more eclectic, largely moving away from 'how to paint' and instead looking at the what and how of 'the way things were'.

Cloth dyes are discussed, then the book casts its gaze over the armies of 1618 to 1660 - a whistlestop tour of the structure and colours of Parliamentarians, Royalists, and European forces - before detailing flags and their devices. Some full-colour references (contemporary and historical) are provided for the different armies and the text goes into detail on the Royalist cornets of horse at Albourne Chase, 1644. The useful and comprehensive guide ends with contacts for assorted companies that stock products (figures, flags, and materials) for the period.



## NORTH STAR - OATHMARK MOUNTED ELF CHARACTERS

Riding in to bolster North Star's recently released plastic Elf Cavalry are four mounted command figures. These packs consist of the plastic horses from the Cavalry box set but are packaged with impressive metal miniatures to go atop them. A Musician and Champion are not totally necessary, as the plastic set includes parts for them, but there is always something satisfying about having metal command and this creates parity with the other *Oathmark* races too. The Musician blows into their horn while trotting into battle wielding a sword and wearing mail that is covered in flowing robes. The Champion is far more impressive and certainly feels like a major upgrade from the plastic options; long hair blows behind them and they wield a hefty axe and shield. They are clad in sturdy plate, adorned with an elven symbol, and look like a fierce opponent.

A Wizard rider adds magical ability to the charge and is wrapped in robes with a part staff/part torch weapon held aloft, clearly made to channel magic. As with all *Oathmark* magic users there's no flashy abilities on show here; the sense of power is conveyed through the mage's self-assured look and strong pose.



## DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Fantasy
- PRICE: £7
- MATERIAL: White metal rider and plastic horse
- AVAILABLE FROM: [northstarfigures.com](http://northstarfigures.com)



The final character is the most noble of all, an elven King, and they look suitably regal with a subtle crown nestled in their long hair. There is a confidence to the pose, with a relatively simple sword (keeping *Oathmark's* fantasy quite rooted in historical stylings) above them, ready to sweep down and lop of the heads of any nearby greenskins. Their scale mail is surprisingly simple, lacking any major embellishments or fancy extras; clearly this is a warrior King! This rider, as with the Champion, includes a metal shield but the characters are otherwise single-part casts.

If you're an *Oathmark* elf player the only reason we can see for not adding these figures to your collection is that the plastic set's so versatile you can bash together your own characters. Otherwise, these four figures are a great option and look absolutely splendid in the ranks (shown left and above).



# ABC WARRIORS™

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The Miniatures Game

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# RELEASE RADAR

Dom Sore explores the latest new and upcoming products in his monthly column.

## WARGAMES ATLANTIC'S FORCEFUL START TO 2024

There are new British Expeditionary Force plastics on the way from Wargames Atlantic (WA), and they're perfect for early WWII gaming. Developed as part of WA's 'Vox Populi' pre-order program (where box sets go into production after a fixed pre-order total has been hit), the figures have earned a lot of feedback from keen customers before their final production begins. Thanks to the input of those making pre-orders, sculptor Rob Macfarlane has modified various details on the figures, ensuring even more accurate detail on a truly excellent looking set of parts. The final frame layout is being worked out as I write this, but it looks like there will be SMLE and P-14/17 Enfield rifles, Bren and Lewis light machine guns, Thompsons, BARs, Boys anti-tank guns, and mortars. It's going to be a cramped frame if they manage to squeeze them on, but Home Guard parts are currently optioned too. Exciting stuff!

The new year is in full swing now. Did you jump on the 'new year, new army' bandwagon, or continue with what you had before? I figured, 'why not both?', but still don't feel adequately swamped in plastic and pewter; I am eagerly awaiting some Kickstarter goodies too!



Above: BEF painted by Chris Hindmarsh.



Above: Updated parts - The Boys is no longer fired left-handed, pouches now close with snaps rather than buckles, there's a reverse Bren carrying arm, and rifles with fixed bayonets. You must admire WA's constant striving for accuracy and customer satisfaction!



WA's digital spinoff, Atlantic Digital ([myminifactory.com/users/WargamesAtlantic](https://myminifactory.com/users/WargamesAtlantic)), has kept up an impressive volume of releases during its first year online, and it's showing no sign of slowing down. There are some great bits on the way, such as a large Tyrannosaurus Rex with rider. Who doesn't want a chompy dinosaur, especially when it's being ridden (making it perfect for Doug McClure's *Land That Time Forgot*-inspired games)? By combining it with parts from WA's Lizardmen kit, this figure could also be adapted into something suited to *Warhammer/Age of Sigmar*. This would result in a fearsome beastie suitable for a huge Seraphon army centrepiece.

Other recent digital files include some great-looking orc heroes and, intriguingly, three different sets of Fantasy skeletons: halflings, dwarves, and orcs. Why would a necromancer only raise human skeletons to serve in an army, especially when the reanimated bones of other races have such interesting shapes? The halflings don't look as cute as you might expect, the dwarves still have their beards (how else would you know they were dwarves?), and the orcs are my favourites, with their Japanese Samurai vibe. If history's your preference, Atlantic Digital also features multiple historical wargaming sets - from ancient all the way to modern - each month, so it's well worth having a look.



### SWEDISH STORAGE, HOBBY HOLDERS, AND TRINITY TRINKETS

If you are a boardgamer, as well as a wargamer, you will be aware of Ikea's Kallax shelving range. These freestanding shelves have openings that seem custom-designed for board game storage, as they have the perfect dimensions to nestle many of the best games around. They're not quite as ideal for wargamers... yet! Things look set to change thanks to the new inserts that Sally 4th ([wargamesbuildings.co.uk](http://wargamesbuildings.co.uk)) have created. Found in the Storage Solutions section of their website, the sets combine runners and drawers that can be slotted into your Swedish furniture for the stashing of your mini cache. The runners line the individual Kallax spaces, and up to five MDF and Perspex drawers can be slotted into them. One drawer boasts the capacity to hold 180 minis on 25mm bases so, if your historical figures are on standard 20mm squares, you should be able to fit about 1,000 warriors into a single Kallax cube. That's very handy, and a great use of space. If you have a lot of spear/pike armed troops, then you might want to get some of the double-height drawers, too.



If you don't have space for a dedicated hobby desk, or if you like to travel with your painting gear and natter with likeminded folk as you paint, then Black Site Studios' ([blacksitestudio.com](http://blacksitestudio.com)) new Case 01 could be perfect. This nifty HDF storage system has three adjustable shelves, one static shelf, elastic bands to hold your work in place, and magnets to hold the cover on. It is compatible with the Monument Hobbies GoBag Evo, too, if you really want to take your creative hobby adventures on the move.

While I'm looking at things made of wood, what about accessories to scatter about the tabletop? 1st Corps ([1stcorps.co.uk](http://1stcorps.co.uk)) have some new MDF pieces for their Wild West Trinity range that complement the buildings they've already released. There are ladders of three different lengths (you wouldn't see me climbing that tallest one), hitching rails, water troughs, and flat and raised boardwalks. As these are not attached to the buildings, they will be easy to store, and you can create infinite variety on your gaming table. They will be useful for other periods outside of the Wild West, too, making them a very useful addition to your terrain collection.





## A WORLD WAR TWO TRIPLE

New 6mm metal Polish figures from Heroics and Ros ([heroicsandros.co.uk](http://heroicsandros.co.uk)) have caught my attention, and brought my gaze back to the battlefields of WWII. There are 13 new codes covering infantry, support weapons, and artillery. These include Browning BAR in firing, prone, and walking poses, Ckm. wz.30 MMG team, 81mm Brandt M27/31 Mortar team, KP. wz.35 Anti-Tank rifle team, and gun crew (kneeling or standing). There are also some Officer and staff figures to give the illusion of command; this is everything you need to establish that small-scale early war Polish army you've been dreaming of!

MarDav Miniatures ([mdminis.co.uk](http://mdminis.co.uk)) have been busy, as always, producing new items for British and French forces. The Brits get a new Churchill tank - or, to be more accurate, they get twelve variants of it, from the MkI all the way to the MkV, and an AVRE and bridge layer are thrown into the mix for good measure.



The French, meanwhile, have had infantry and vehicles added to the ranks of their 3D-printed figures. The ability to resize these STL files before printing means that 20mm and 28mm scales can be purchased, and there's plenty of variety. Officers, infantry squads (with VB Launchers), anti-tank rifles, mortars, light artillery, snipers, medics, a medical post, command post, Char 2C, Char D1, FT-17, VUDB, and Panhard 178 comprise a saliva-inducing smorgasbord of warfare flavours. There are casualties and Gendarmes for more cinematic scenarios, and the command and medical posts are perfect for diorama builds.

## MINIATURE MELANGE

1st Corps don't just make terrain (see above); they are also known for their figures, among which their expansive American Civil War range is a highlight. It's even more appealing now that they've added some great looking Aide de Camp sets. These come in mounted and dismounted versions, in packs of four. You would be forgiven for thinking they would form a cohesive set, but the mounted versions are different characters to the dismounted versions. The figures are in the process of doing something useful, as aides should, or at least appearing to be useful so they can avoid the fighting! The poses are dynamic, and will add a touch of realism to your command stands.

Steel Fist Miniatures ([steelfistminiatures.com](http://steelfistminiatures.com)) are expanding their Late Medieval sets with two new packs of Swiss Pikemen, which will appeal to *Billhooks* players who want to take some human porcupines to war! Each pack comes with six figures on the advance, and they have a variety of clothing/armour. Note that the heads are separate (so you can mix them up), and the torsos are designed to work with Perry Miniatures plastics (so you can mix things up even more). No hanging around the cantons for these fellas!



Finally, *Warpaint!* is a new book from Partizan Press ([caliverbooks.com](http://caliverbooks.com)), written and illustrated by veteran wargamer Mike Blake. It is an invaluable guide to "Plains Indian shield and horse decoration", featuring over 400 illustrations with accompanying descriptive text. *Warpaint! (Volume 1)* will prove a useful resource for any gamer who is looking to paint authentic indigenous American designs on the shields and horses of their figures, whether they are Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Crow, or any of the other nations and tribes in the book. They all look challenging to me, but not so realistic and complex that I couldn't attempt them.



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



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# QUICK FIRE!

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

## RUNNING A WARGAMES CLUB

By Alex Mahon

I have been running my local club for a while now, and the club itself has been around for 25 years. In that time, I have seen many other clubs in my area come and go; the latter for a variety of reasons. I thought I would collect and compile my thoughts on clubs for anyone thinking of starting up their own, or keeping one running.

It can be a quick transition - a group of friends and like-minded souls probably start out meeting up at someone's house for a few hours before going their separate ways, but modern life, work, and family can get in the way. An independent venue can be a lot more appropriate; if you take the step of finding a suitable location and paying the cost of an evening hire, you're on your way to running a club!

Your first challenges will be working out which night is the most suitable, and securing a space that works. Most venues will have large tables for events; hopefully these cover the classic 6'x4' size you'll need. To start off, I would suggest people bring their own terrain, as, unless you have a storage option at your venue, terrain can easily take over and consume any available space.

In my experience, most clubs start off with good intentions, but members eventually lose interest. The motivation required to sustain a club can be bolstered by establishing specific



roles: a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and so on. Set these important roles up, and you will have the foundation for an organised affair. Allow everyone a voice, regardless of their role - no one likes a dictatorship! Social media can also prove taxing if you choose to use it; a divisive opinion can ruin a club atmosphere, so someone will have to administrate that, too.

If you decide to grow your club, you'll need to address a few points. Do you want random strangers to be able to join, or do you wish to keep it to personal invites? What's the age range you're looking for? Younger membership can prove rewarding (these players are the future of the hobby), but can also be troublesome; it's a tough call.

The diminishing number of hobby stores and shrinking recruitment for our hobby means it's up to us to champion it ourselves. I've had some of my best games at the club, and made some great friends. Shows like Hammerhead, Partizan, and Warfare are populated by clubs running demo games and showing off display boards. These volunteers are excellent ambassadors for the hobby, so go ahead and spread the joy of miniatures and rolling dice!



Above: *Code Aurora* - the Humans of the Equality hold off against the Xenomorphs of the Hunger faction.



Above: *Burrows & Badgers* - two warbands fight it out whilst they are lost in the fog.



## THE MEXICAN ITCH

By David Logan

It was a very nice surprise to open the latest *Wargames Illustrated* and read Nick Buxey's article on the war of 1846-1848. I have had an interest in this conflict for some time, and my new collection recently took to the tabletop in its first battle, played with my regular wargaming buddies: Bryan, Christopher, Simon, and Mike.

My interest in the Mexican American War was piqued many years ago when I discovered that many of the opposing commanders of the American Civil War had been West Point classmates, colleagues, and firm friends in the earlier conflict. The 'itch' was dealt with when I saw and liked Eureka's 18mm range at a show. I put in a large order from their comprehensive range for collection at Salute, and found the models well sculpted and a joy to paint.

The armies were ready for their first outing in late 2023. We use *Black Powder* for most horse and musket games, but I like to add a few surprises, hence the cards with special attributes for named historical characters (right). The cards would be revealed on dice rolls that reduced each turn (6 on turn one, 5 on turn two, and so on). I think my fellow gamers enjoyed these reveals, especially as none were particularly game changing. The hacienda on the Mexican left flank had a card hidden beneath it; I was hoping someone would occupy it and have to deal with the ensuing ill-discipline, but no one took the bait (see below)!

#1 HASOR RE LEE  
A BRAVE AND THOROUGH ENGINEER, HE HAS DISCOVERED A ROUTE THROUGH THE LAVA FIELD. FORMED, UNENGAGED UNITS MAY DRIVE THEM IN ANY DIRECTION AND WITHIN 12" OF THE MEXICAN RIGHT FLANK.  
LEE WILL COMMAND (8+)

The defending Mexicans had more troops, but poorer morale, and a reduced firing range on account of their notoriously poor supplies of gunpowder. They also had several below-average commanders. There is probably too much cavalry on both sides, but I couldn't resist collecting and painting all the different, colourful Mexican units. I made them all small units with reduced stamina, so we had no massed Napoleonic-style cavalry charges.

road to the capital was theirs! Major Lee popped up behind the Mexican flank and tied up several enemy units, but found a stony, shallow grave for his trouble. Someone else would have to deal with John Brown at Harper's Ferry!



Above: The hacienda is a 15mm 3D print from *Battle Honours*, buildings and rocky outcrops are by Peter Pig, and vegetation is by The Last Valley.

The first game was a bloody stalemate, and the American advance on Mexico City was stalled. Major R. E. Lee guided one unit through the lava field on the Mexican right flank, but after the initial impact of his attack wore off, the space looks to be a double there held on. The following week we swapped sides, and the American commanders used their longer range and better artillery to destroy the Mexican left flank. The



Above: All figures are 18mm Eureka and on battle mats from *Tiny Wargames*.

The next time these forces get an outing, I'll probably increase the morale of some - if not all - of the Mexican infantry units to be on par with the Americans. After all, a certain U. S. Grant said that the Mexican infantry were some of the bravest soldiers he'd ever encountered, and he knew a bit about soldiering and battles.





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'History - Scenario' articles are consistently voted the most popular type of article in *Wargames Illustrated*, when we run our yearly Reader's Survey, but why? What does this type of article offer readers, the majority of whom (lets be honest) won't actually play out the scenarios that are published?

In this intro to our History - Scenario theme, Pete Brown examines the genre's enduring appeal, and looks at the options for presenting such an article.

# HISTORY, SCENARIO, STATS. DONE.

## DESIGNING A WORKABLE WARGAMES SCENARIO

**Pete Brown introduces this month's History - Scenario theme with a striking confession...**

I am not a fan of History/Scenario/Stat articles in magazines.

You know the sort of article I mean: a little bit of history to provide some context and background to the battle or skirmish, followed by an outline of a scenario, giving detail on how to set up the wargames table, what scenery to use, and any 'special rules' that may be required to run the game. Then follows a series of stats for one or more sets of wargames rules. Job done.

Looking back over the years, I can count on one hand the number of times I have played a scenario from a magazine at our club. Often, the scenario in question is from a period I don't play, or, if I do play that era, I don't have the correct troops, or the scenario is set in a theatre of war that I don't collect. Even if all the stars align and the scenario is for a period I play, and I do have the correct miniatures, I may still not play it if the scenario itself does not provide enough excitement or interest to get me to dust off the collection in question.

As a regular contributor to *Wi*, I always try to steer away from this type of article and, instead, try to write the kind of article I want to read. Which led me to ask the question, why don't I read this type of article (see above for the answer)? Although you may have no intention of ever writing a scenario for publication, I imagine you do already write scenarios, either to challenge your friends, for a game at a club, or even for solo play. Since we all design scenarios using the History/ Scenario/ Stat model, what can we do to make these games more interesting to design and, consequently, more fun to play?

### SELECTING A BATTLE

When designing a wargames scenario, it is easy to pick a book off your shelf, flick to a well-known battle with an associated map, and decide that is the game you are going to play at the weekend. Bull Run for the American Civil War is a good example. Lots of maps are available online or in Osprey books, it uses lots of mainstream troop types, and can be played out using most sets of wargames rules for the period. You can turn up at the club, lay out the terrain, and get on with it. With minimum prep, a good game can be had by all involved.



Union troops arrive to take part in the Battle of Bull Run, as seen in *Wi400*.

...of the battle. We judged that it was doubtful that they would change sides, determining that if the battle favored us if we were lost he would retreat instead.

++ Joins the battle on Richard's side or lower. All of Northumberland's units make a retreat move as if they have lost combat. They are not disrupted following the move. Roll again next turn.

Modifiers	
Richard moves off the hill	+1
Richard involved in combat	+2
Stanley advances	-1
Richard killed	-3
Richard in opponent's table half	+1
Norfolk in opponent's table half	+1
A unit of Richard's army declares a charge	+1
Enemy unit has broken in melee	+1
Three enemy units retreat/broken in combat	+1
Retreated last turn	-1

Modifiers	
Henry within 40cm of enemy tidops	+1
Henry involved in combat	-1
Northumberland joins Richard	-1
Henry in opponent's table half	+2
Richard in opponent's table half	+1
Norfolk killed	+1
Oxford killed	-2
Richard killed	+2
Henry within 30cm	+1

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

**RICHARD**





*George Custer and co. in action, from a massive Little Bighorn scenario, played out in Wi300.*

But is this a ‘good’ scenario?

I always think that a ‘good’ scenario is one that, when you read about what happened historically, it immediately fires your imagination. It should contain interesting challenges for the commanders to overcome, such as an inability to communicate with one or more units under their command, or unreliable allies, or perhaps the unknown quality of some of their troops. It should have a variety of tactical options that allow you to play the scenario several times with different outcomes. What happens if I send all the cavalry to the right flank this time and commit the reserves earlier? If possible, it should be fun, with players encouraged to play the roles of the commanders as they were historically, rather than themselves as players. For example, George Custer could be headstrong and charge at everything, whilst the player taking the role of Benteen is encouraged to be cautious and non-comittal. The scenario should also have friction, alongside unexpected events that made this incident or battle unusual and different from any other in the same period. What is it about this scenario that is going to grab people’s attention and make this a memorable game?

In issue 334 of this magazine, I wrote a scenario for Operation Fustian, which was set in Italy during WWII. In this battle, German paratroopers were dropped into Sicily to seize Primosole bridge ahead of the allied advance. Coincidentally, British paratroopers were then dropped onto pretty much the same landing zone whilst the Germans were still getting established. The German paras initially thought the British were their reinforcements, mistaking the round British para helmet for that of a Fallschirmjäger in the dark. This scenario pitted German and British paras against one another, separated and confused about each other’s locations, both attempting to seize an important bridge before the other, and with their forces terribly mixed up. Depending on how your miniature paras drop onto the table, you are faced with a different tactical problem every time you play this scenario. It uses paratroops, every WWII player’s favourite, but places enemies in the unlikely situation of dropping onto the same landing zone at pretty much the same time. This wargames scenario is unusual, has lots of friction and unexpected events, and is, most of all, fun!

Not all wargames periods contain such extraordinary battles, but you get the idea. Lining equally-matched troops up on either side of a neutrally-designed board may make for a balanced game but not a memorable one.

### **BORROW WITH PRIDE**

How many times have you read about a particularly interesting or unusual battle that sounds awesome but, unfortunately, happened in a war that you do not play? My absolute favourite has to be the capture of the Dutch Fleet at Den Helder in January 1795, when French cavalry of the 8th Hussar regiment charged across the frozen harbour to capture the ‘iced-in’ ships. This was the one and only time that ships at sea were captured by cavalry. I would love to collect the encounter, as it would make such an unusual game, and a great demo game at a show. However, my dreams of collecting 28mm ships, French cavalry, and Dutch sailors, as well as an icy Dutch harbour, are a long way off - but that does not mean I couldn’t adapt the scenario. One collection I do have comprises my Mongols and Russians, all of whom I have based with snow and ice, as the Mongols invaded Russia during the winter. With some simple substitutions, I soon had Mongol cavalry charging across a frozen lake to capture Russian trade ships.



*The prize of the Dutch fleet, stopped by ice in the Texel sea in the winter of 1795, by Charles Louis Mozin.*



*Warlord Games Bolt Action British, as featured in our Operation Fustian article, Wi334.*

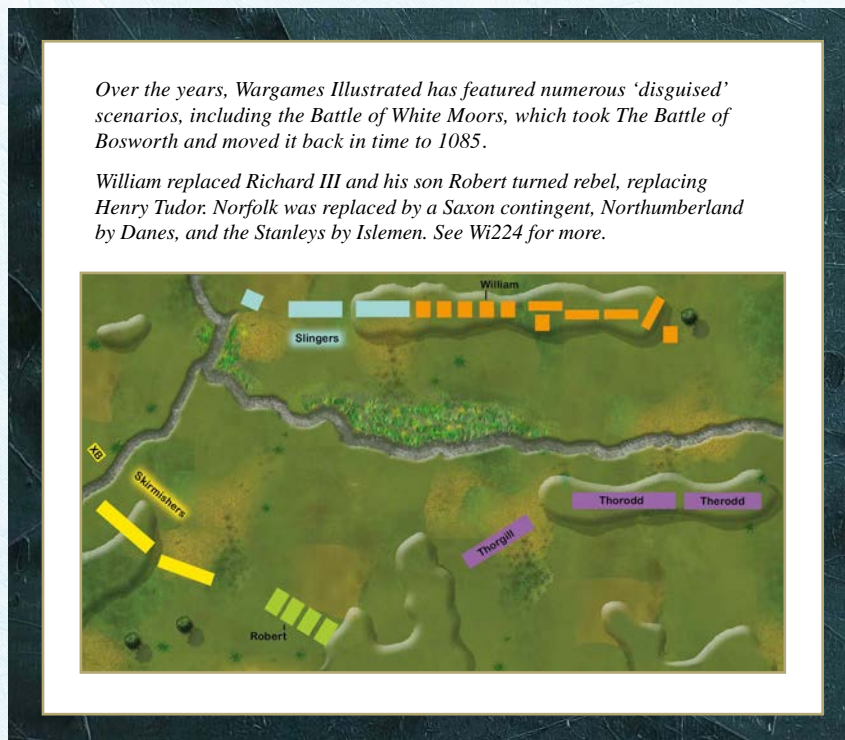


I know the Editor recently played in a game set during the Franco-Prussian War, but using the ACW battle of Chancellorsville as its basis. Although the Umpire told the players that the scenario was from the ACW, he did not say which battle. Using a 'disguised' scenario is by no means a new idea, so, if you find a battle you like, don't be afraid to convert it to your favourite period.

### WRITING A SCENARIO

You would be forgiven for thinking, once you'd selected a historical battle that is fun, interesting, and exciting, that the wargames scenario would write itself. Indeed, this is where most scenario designers - and article writers - fall down. Many think it is just a matter of throwing down terrain that approximates the historical topography and getting on with it.

In fact, the rules you choose for your game will heavily dictate whether or not you can actually play the scenario as it happened historically. For example, playing out the Dark Ages Battle of Clontarf, with Irish war chiefs shouting insults and challenges at one another, backed by their clan warriors, might be more fun played out using *Warhammer Ancient Battles* rules and 28mm miniatures than perhaps it would be using *DBM* and 15mm miniatures. Do the rules capture the flavour of the scenario, and do they allow for the various friction factors it requires? When devising scenarios for your club, be prepared to use rules that best suit the type of game you want to play, rather than running out the same set of rules for every scenario.



*Over the years, Wargames Illustrated has featured numerous 'disguised' scenarios, including the Battle of White Moors, which took The Battle of Bosworth and moved it back in time to 1085.*

*William replaced Richard III and his son Robert turned rebel, replacing Henry Tudor. Norfolk was replaced by a Saxon contingent, Northumberland by Danes, and the Stanleys by Islemen. See Wi224 for more.*

you have identified the best set of rules to capture the essence of the scenario, be prepared to write scenario-specific amendments and army list changes that cover the tactical challenges with which the players will be presented. If your scenario involves a cut-off unit that has no means of receiving orders, for example, ask yourself how best to represent this with the rules you are using.

How did the terrain effect the historical battle? Was there a hidden marsh? Did the cavalry have trouble crossing the wire fences? Was visibility reduced due to fog or time of day? Be sure that these aspects of the historical battle are allowed in your chosen set of rules; if they are not, write some modifications of your own.

*French and Indian War Battle of Snowshoes, Wi309.*



*Battle of Clontarf, Wi270.*



The same is true of the army lists for your chosen ruleset. I am a big fan of *Black Powder* by Warlord Games, but if these rules have a weakness (or is it a strength?), it is that they are not terribly focused or specific, accommodating conversion for different periods and situations. If you are playing out a French and Indian War battle in snow, fought through wooded terrain, it would not be enough simply to cut and paste the stats for French, British, and Indian troops from the *Black Powder* supplement into your scenario without alteration. The same could be said for using *Bolt Action* for the Primosole Bridge example I mentioned earlier. Once



*British troops storm Primosole Bridge in our scenario from Wi334.*



## WHAT'S THE POINT?

You should also look to include wargaming objectives. What are both sides trying to achieve? If your scenario is based on a historical encounter, then you can go with the historical aims, but, remember to make these achievable. If you are playing out part of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, there is no point telling the Confederate player that their aim is to push the Yankee army off the hill! Making it to a particular fence line with a certain percentage of troops might be more realistic. Indeed, as well as realistic objectives, there should be clear guidelines for winning and losing. The French Foreign Legion fighting their last stand at Camerone is a fun scenario, but without achievable objectives that allow either side to claim victory at the end of the game, there is only one outcome.



*The French Foreign Legion in our Camerone scenario, from Wi300.*

If you are in any doubt about tactical objectives, or winning and losing, it helps to disassociate yourself from the historical aspect of the scenario; instead designate one side of the game Red and the other Blue. For example, you might say that in this scenario, Blue's objective is to cross the river and push back the enemy around the ford to allow the rest of the army to cross. Red must hold the ford and the line of the river. If Blue crosses with more than 50% of his army and holds the ford by the end of turn 10, it is a Blue victory. By doing this, you step back from the history, stripping away the miniatures and rules so you can see the scenario in the most basic gaming terms. Ask yourself: is it fair? Is it balanced? Is it still interesting and fun, and if not, how does it need to change?

## DRAFTING THE STATS

As mentioned above, the rules you use can greatly influence how your scenario plays out. Therefore, pick a ruleset that fits the scenario, and try to avoid defaulting to using your favourite set of rules for everything. A big ancient battle like Gaugamela is best suited to an abstracted ruleset, such as *Mortem et Gloriam* and people are much more likely to play the game in 15mm or smaller, so it is wise to adapt the miniatures and board accordingly.

As mentioned above, you should also avoid simply cutting and pasting the stats you need from the army lists. Instead, think about the units that were involved in the historical battle. How did they perform? What did they do that was unusual or makes this battle different? Did the green troops turn out to have hearts like lions? Did the veterans run away? Take the time to make the necessary changes to ensure your players face the same tactical choices that their historical counterparts had to make.



*Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, Wi315.*

## WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

If you are looking to widen the appeal of your article, pick one of the more popular periods. Napoleonics is usually a winner, as practically every wargamer, even if they don't collect it themselves, has an interest in this conflict. The same can be said of World War Two, perhaps some of the more mainstream colonial periods, and, of course, Romans. The drawback here is that everyone has done these before. If you are going to design a fun and interesting Napoleonic scenario, you will have to go a step further than lining two forces up on either side of a fairly neutral board with the only objective being 'get them'. To make your scenario stand out from the crowd, it will have to include some unusual tactical aspects, big personalities, and perhaps unusual troop types.

I love reading about obscure new periods or forgotten theatres of well-known wars. In fact, Russian conflicts in Alaska during the 18th Century or Italian colonial battles in Africa are some of my favourites. These are best served as full articles in themselves, rather than History/Scenario/Stat articles,



*Russians in Alaska, from Wi399.*

but either will provide images of rarely-seen or new miniatures operating in exciting new scenarios with previously unwritten rules. Trouble is, no one will have these miniatures in their collection, few will commit to buying them, and therefore fewer still will play your scenario. You can mitigate this issue by making your scenario playable in other periods. For example, if you collect Maori warriors and are writing a Pacific-based skirmish, include options that allow players to use the scenario with their French and Indian War collection, or perhaps Aztecs, depending on the opposition. If all else fails, write your article as a 'disguised' scenario for one of the more mainstream periods. A fun scenario is a fun scenario, and the period should not matter too much.

## WRAPPING IT UP

So, there you have it: my advice, for what it's worth. Find a historical battle or skirmish that is interesting and different from the norm. Design a scenario based on it that includes tactical challenges, personalities, achievable objectives, and victory conditions, and ensure that you include fun elements to make the game memorable. If you plan to write it all up for an article, try to provide alternate period options, so more people can play the scenario. For example, if your scenario is set in the French and Indian War, why not include options for the Pony Wars or other colonial conflicts? Finally, make sure the rules you are intending to use account for the various challenges the scenario presents and, if they don't, that you have designed the necessary changes.

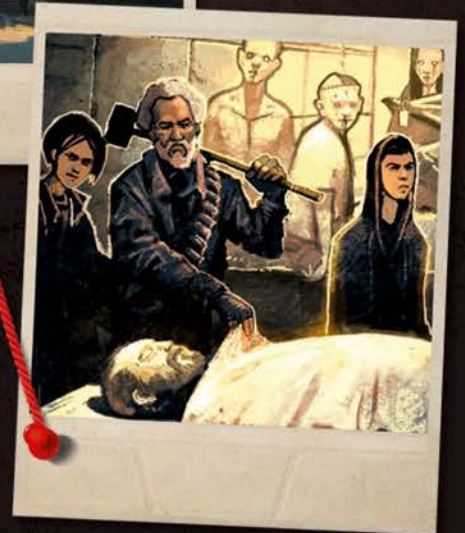
If you do all the above, you should create more interesting and challenging scenarios, which your players will find memorable and, above all, fun to play. And if it gets published, I might even have a go at playing it myself.



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# THE TEMPLARS' LAST CHARGE

*LION RAMPANT AND THE END OF THE CRUSADER STATES*

**Steve Tibble casts his expert gaze over the last moments of the Templars at war, during the Siege of Acre.**

It was 18 May 1291, and the early morning calm in the besieged city of Acre was broken by screams, fear, and death. Panic spread almost instantaneously - Muslim troops had broken through the outer walls!

The Templar Grand Master, William of Beaujeu, responded as quickly as he could. He gathered his men to seal the gap in the wall, but their numbers were pitifully few. There was no army left, just a few brave soldiers. The Templar cavalry were no more than "ten or twelve brethren and [William's] own household troops".

They frantically strapped on whatever armour they had to hand and ran towards their horses. This was a gallant but forlorn gesture - a bitter hope thrown against an unstoppable tide of jubilant soldiery. The men saddled up and rode off towards the sound of the fighting. There was no chance of success, and they all knew it, but the Templars would not go down quietly. Their duty was clear. They had to buy time for the civilians to retreat to the citadel.

The doomed band charged down the dry moat between Acre's two sets of walls and headed for the St. Anthony Gate, where enemy troops were pouring in. This was the last charge of the Templars.

Like the order itself, it began in bravery and ended in horror.

## **A DEVASTATING DEFENCE**

The Mamluks hastily formed a shield wall as they saw the tiny force of elite knights hurtling towards them. Their assault teams lined the walls, raining death down on the crusader cavalry with crossbows, and "did not cease from their work of hurling javelins." Shockingly, for those on the receiving end, they also threw clay hand-grenades full of 'Greek fire', or naphtha. This was a particularly vicious form of medieval napalm. It stuck to its victims and burnt ferociously, causing appalling casualties to the brother knights.





The chronicler known as the 'Templar of Tyre', William of Beaujeu's secretary and a member of his household, was an eyewitness. He left a moving account of the horrors he saw that day. There was one incident he found hard to forget; an English squire had his horse taken out from under him, and as he struggled to get up, pots of Greek fire exploded all around him, spraying his head and his clothing. He was so badly hit "that his surcoat burst into flames. There was no one to help him, and so his face was burned, and then his whole body, and he burned as if he had been a cauldron of pitch, and he died there."

The Templar charge had been extremely hurried. In their mad rush to respond to a dire emergency, the brothers had leapt on their horses at speed, without pausing to put on their full armour. This speed was essential, but it also had consequences. During one of the repeated charges, and the hand-to-hand melee which followed, "a javelin came at the Grand Master of the Temple, just as he raised his left hand." It struck him at a critical point under the armpit - his arming had taken place so hastily that there was a "gap where the plates of the armour were not joined". The shaft sank deep into his body. William paid the ultimate penalty for rushing to do his duty.

### THE MASTER FALLS

The last fighting Master of the order "dropped the spear on the ground, and his head slumped to one side. He started to fall from his horse, but those of his household sprang down from their horses and supported him and took him off." His Templar comrades gave no thought for their own safety. They laid him, appropriately enough, on a large shield that they found discarded on the ground. Crouching under continual enemy fire, they dragged him back to what was left of the Christian lines.

*William rushes out after hearing the commotion of battle, quickly arming up. This haste would be his downfall.*



*Panic on the streets of Acre. Figures from Footsore Miniatures and Fireforge Games.*





William clung to life for the rest of that day without saying a word. Even at the end, he tried to keep a grip on how the battle was unfolding. When “he heard the clamour of men fleeing death, he wanted to know what was happening. They told him that men were fighting, and he commanded that they should leave him in peace. He did not speak again but gave his soul up to God.”

William’s charge had bought some time, but it could not stem the assault - thousands more Mamluk troops were pouring into the city. It did, however, give the civilians a chance to dash for safety. The Templar compound formed the last fall-back position for the Frankish capital, and “the greater part of the people, men and women and children, more than ten thousand persons,” sought refuge there.

Negotiations for surrender took place in bad blood, and with bad grace. Four hundred cavalry were sent into the compound to guard the Mamluk negotiators, but, exhilarated by victory, their discipline broke down. They began assaulting young boys and women in the fortress; provoked beyond endurance, the defenders turned on the Muslim troops and massacred them. Discussions reached a definitive end.

The Templar Marshal, Peter of Sevrey, was the senior surviving officer, and the man now leading the defence of the city. He tried to revive negotiations, and ventured out for discussions under a guarantee of safety. Instead, Peter and his men were all bound and beheaded when they reached the enemy lines. There was no more talking to be had.

The last Templar defences were eventually mined, and collapsed some ten days after the rest of the city had fallen. Appropriately enough for such a mutually destructive end, the final tower “collapsed outwards towards the street, and crushed more than two thousand mounted Turks” when it did so. There were no survivors from this final, desperate garrison of Templar die-hards.

The brother knights had given their all, but it was not enough.

### WARGAMING THE LAST CHARGE

This scenario presents us with a marvellous opportunity to use the *Lion Rampant 2nd Edition* rules, and the extremely erudite expansion rules for the defence of the Christian Middle East: *Lion Rampant: The Crusader States*.

Inevitably, the scenario is deeply skewed. The Mamluk assault, once a breach had been made, was manifestly unstoppable. As the chronicle of the ‘Templar of Tyre’ put it:

“They came on afoot, so many that they were without number. In the van came men carrying great tall shields, and after them came men who cast Greek fire, and after them came men who hurled javelins and shot feathered arrows in such a thick cloud that they seemed to fall like rain from the heavens. Our men who were inside the chat [a temporary wooden fortification, erected during the siege] abandoned it. At this, the Saracens, whom I have mentioned, took two routes, since they were between the two walls of the city - that is to say, between the first walls and ditches, which were called the barbican,

and the great [inner] walls and ditches of the city proper. Some of them entered by a gate of that great tower called the Accursed Tower, and moved towards San Romano, where the Pisans had their great engines. The others kept to the road, going to St. Anthony’s Gate.”

For the Templars, hugely outnumbered, this is clearly a last stand without hope. Their objective can only be to buy time and make a final, desperate statement.

### FANATICS?

Perhaps surprisingly, but entirely correctly, the new rules about ‘Religious Fervour’, introduced in the *Crusader States* expansion, are not applied to the Military Orders, despite their key role in this most ostensibly religious of conflicts. Although the Templars and their Mamluk opponents were generally devout, like most people at that time, there was little of the religious fanaticism which is often ascribed to them. They were all seasoned players in the longstanding and convoluted politics of the region.

The Templars, for all their supposed fanaticism, had long term connections with all of the local Muslim powers, and had a more sensitive understanding of cultural nuances than most crusaders. Similarly, the Mamluks had often chosen to focus on the threat posed by their fellow Muslim enemies rather than on the crusader states. Religion always played a role, but it was by no means as definitive as one might expect.





## TERRAIN

The terrain is simple, but distinctive. The charge took place along what was, in effect, a large, open corridor: the space between the main outer walls, some of which are still visible and can be walked along today. If you have suitable castle walls, this is an excellent chance to bring them out, but note that by this period they should be sloped, rather than purely upright. If you don't have castle walls, don't worry; the game can be played along a relatively simple strip of open terrain, with a few pieces of small rubble along the way, and improvised barricades at one end.

## SETUP

The Templar's Last Charge can be played out in several different ways; the exact setup will depend on what you have available. The following should give some useful guidance.

### The Templars

The number of Templar units is, of course, smaller than normal for *Lion Rampant*. There are two mounted Templar units, and the majority of the men are Templar brother knights. They should be classified as Elite Cavalry with the Drilled upgrade. The remaining squires and mounted sergeants could possibly be upgraded to medium cavalry, but by this time in the crusader states' history, it is probably more realistic to categorise them as heavy cavalry. All mounted Templar troops may reroll one failed courage test per game, which reflects their discipline and resilience.

Behind the Templar cavalry are two units of high-quality heavy infantry (all upgrades available). These are foot sergeants and mercenaries in Templar employ, one unit armed with crossbows, and the other unit armed with spears – they are initially positioned behind makeshift barricades of upturned wagons, barrels, sacks, and tables. The main role of the infantry is to create a fall-back position for the mounted troops, in the traditional crusading fashion, but they may also be used for close support, or to recover wounded brothers, at the Templar player's discretion.

For the Templar forces, see *Crusader States* pages 52 to 56.



### The Mamluks

The Templars' Mamluk opponents are on foot, as they represent some of the forward elements of the victorious siege assault parties. They are present in far greater numbers than the crusaders. There are six Mamluk units to start with, but additional Mamluk troops enter each turn; these represent a continuing stream of besiegers pouring through the breaches in the city walls of Acre. Roll 1D6 -1 to determine the number of new entrants each turn - they can be added to existing units to replace casualties, or just boost numbers.

There will be a mixture of Heavy and Light Infantry, with all upgrades available. See *Crusader States* pages 72 to 76.



Footsore miniatures have a wonderful range of figures that you can use for attackers and defenders alike.





## GREEK FIRE

Importantly, and to give the game a distinctive flavour, some of the Mamluk infantry will be armed with Greek Fire grenades. These were primarily used in siege warfare and, usually, against fixed targets such as siege engines or other wooden structures. Their characteristics included, as our unlucky English squire found out to his cost, an ability to stick to most materials, and to be inextinguishable by water. It is perhaps best to think of it as an early, and equally horrific, form of napalm.

Rules for its use in this scenario are as follows:

**Cost:** 1 point per unit

Most units can be upgraded by adding ceramic or glass fire grenades to their weapons. In any turn the unit equipped with fire grenades can decide to use them instead of their normal weapons, counting it as a shooting attack.

**Shoot:** 7+                      **Range:** 6"                      **Hitting on:** 5+

- Not available for Levy.
- After two uses of the grenades, remove the upgrade from the unit.
- **Target type:** See the special rules below. Horse units are hit on a 6+.
- **Dangerous to handle:** A shoot activation roll of double 1 is a fumble. Roll hits to damage the unit that is using the grenades.
- **Missing the target:** Upon a successful shoot activation followed by no successful hit, refer to the special rules below.



### AGAINST LARGE OBJECTS

Four cumulative hits will be sufficient to neutralize them and render them unusable. This could be against the Templar barricades.

### AGAINST A UNIT

Roll hits like a normal missile weapon. In the case of successful hits, the unit rolls for courage, regardless of casualties, and the damage continues in the following turn, as well: automatically roll for hits, but on a 6+.

### DANGEROUS DEFLECTION

When using Greek Fire, roll 1D6 for any misses. On a 1 or 6, the grenade simply failed to break (they could be quite sturdy objects) but otherwise it will scatter. Use the 1 (which will be on one of the lateral sides) to determine the direction in which the grenade went, and 1D6 to determine how many inches it goes from the original target. If that touches a target, such as a large object or a unit, roll hits again for damage, irrespective of whether it is friend or foe.

If the scatter does not hit any target, place a 3" marker on the ground, which should be treated as dangerous terrain for the next two turns.

See *Crusader States* pages 30 to 32 for the full rule additions for Greek Fire.

## PLAYERS AND VICTORY

The scenario lends itself well to several different approaches. If you want a multiplayer game, one player could take the role of the Mamluk troops, with one or more other players commanding the Templars. Alternatively, the Mamluks could be AI controlled with a single or multiple players in charge of the Templars. Mamluk actions could be determined by picking cards or chips; this is feasible, as their victory is ultimately assured, and their scope for creative decision making is distinctly limited. If the Mamluk forces are played this way, two or more players could compete as Templar commanders who set out to achieve notable acts of heroism in this inevitably doomed conflict.

Obviously, it is difficult to play as a definitively competitive game, as there can only be one outcome; this is a situation in which outright victory for the Templars was never a realistic prospect. Instead, it should be played based on victory points allocated each turn. The Templars gain VPs as the game progresses, with each passing turn allowing increasing numbers of civilians to escape to (temporary) safety. Playing this game is your chance to give the Templars the heroic final charge their order deserved and write your wargaming version of this historic moment.

## SUGGESTED READING

- Marshall, C., *Warfare in the Latin East, 1192-1291*, Cambridge, 1992.
- Tibble, S., *Crusading Armies*, London, 2018.
- Tibble, S., *Templars - The Knights of Britain*, London, 2023.
- Crawford, P. tr., *The 'Templar of Tyre'*, Farnham, 2003.

## A DOUBLE FINALE

As an additional possibility, this scenario could be played as a short mini-campaign alongside scenario 12 from *Crusader States: The Last Assault of the Defenders of Acre*. This is set just a few weeks earlier and represents a crusader sally into the Mamluk siege lines.



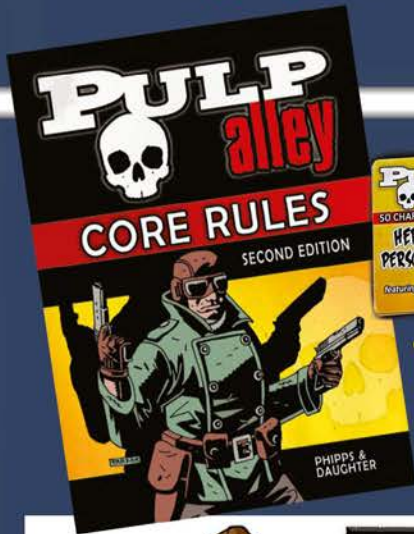


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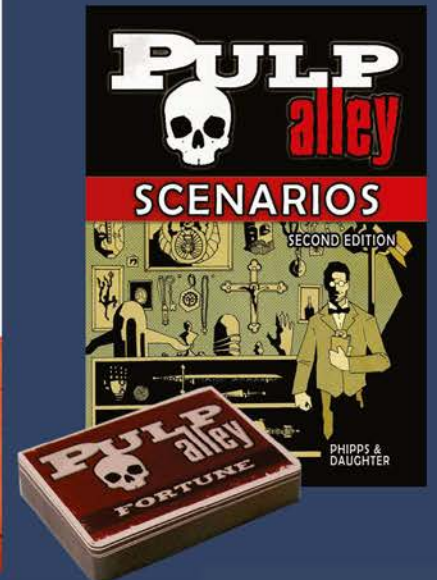
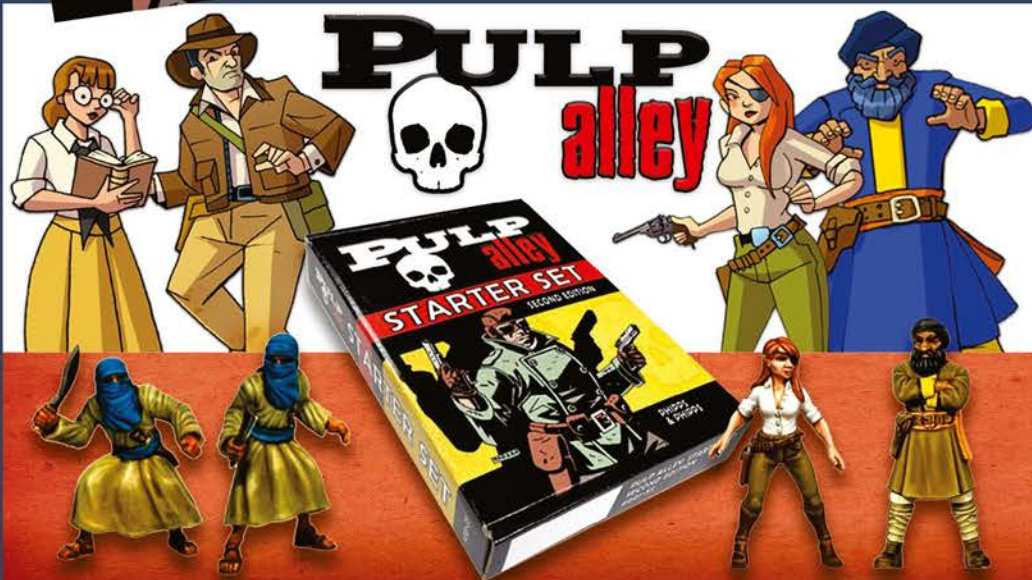
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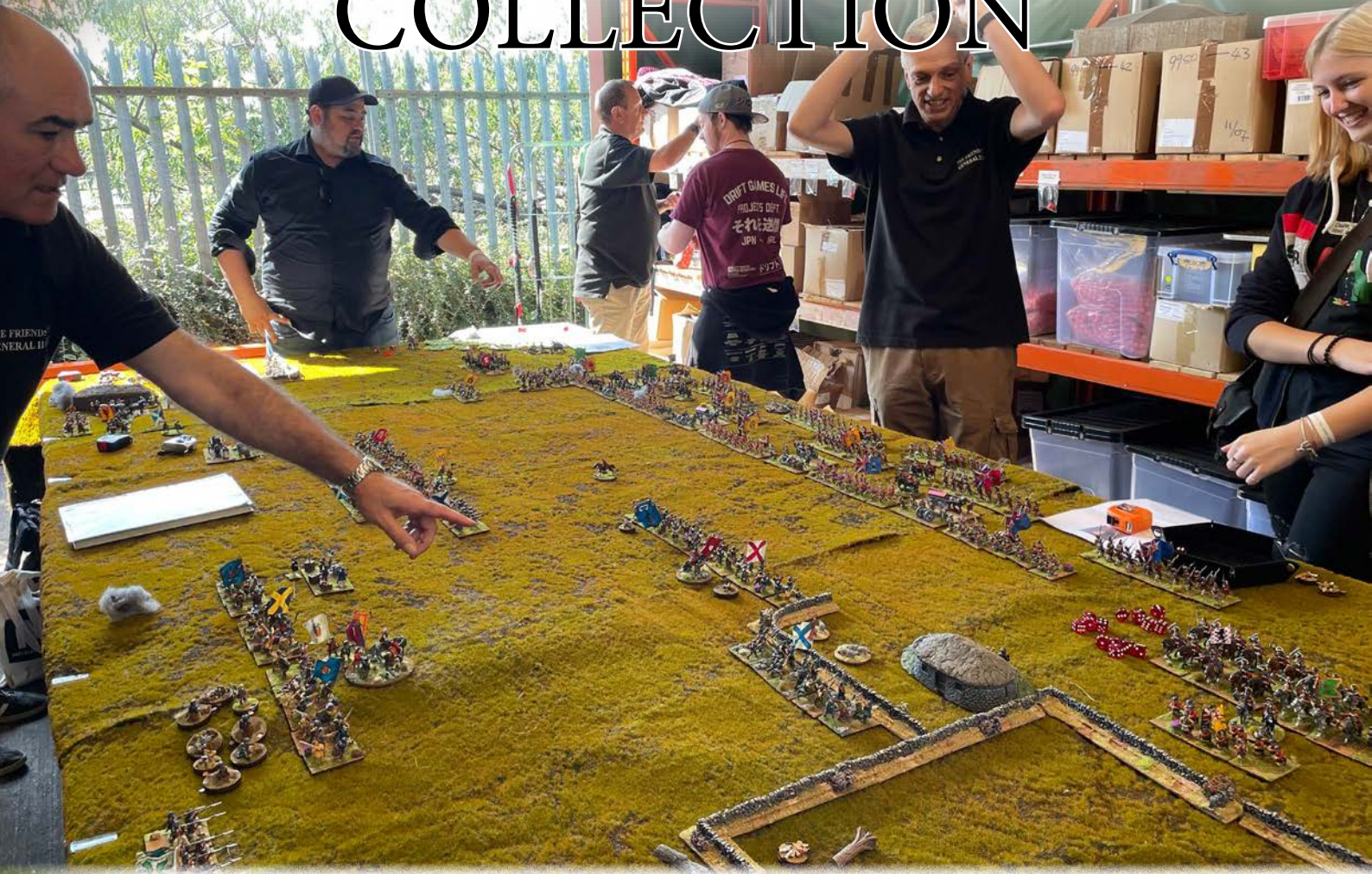
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# THE NEVER-ENDING COLLECTION



**Pete Brown tells us about the Culloden game he ran at the Warlord Games Open Day, and how he went about collecting the figures.**

I was minding my own business at the club one afternoon when John Stallard, head honcho of Warlord Games, approached me with ‘that’ smile - the one that suggests that he is going to make me an offer I can’t refuse. Warlord Games’ Open Day was coming up, and John had a vacancy for a participation game. He knew that I had recently put on my Culloden game for our club, and wondered if I wouldn’t mind bringing it along. Long story short, on the day of the event I found myself driving up to Nottingham at stupid o’clock in the morning with some willing volunteers and a car boot full of miniatures.

The game was set up and running by the time the first punters rolled through the door, and we immediately had people asking to take part. We ran two games in the morning, and another two in the afternoon, all of which proved very

popular and were enjoyed by players and umpires alike. In the pub that evening, over a well-earned pint, we chatted about the day and how the game had gone. One of the most common comments heard from folks at the show was that they didn’t think that they could ever put on a participation game, especially one of this size, either at their club or at a show.

To be honest, I sort of know what they mean. Looking at some of the glorious display and participation games put on at recent shows, there is clearly a huge amount of time, effort, and not little talent involved. However, my game was collected over many years and came about more by accident than design. In this article, I will outline how my Culloden collection came into being, and how I went about transforming it into an enjoyable wargame. Trust me, if I can put on a participation game, anyone can.

*Above: The game in full swing. The author (left-pointing) and his colleagues Jerry Richardson (centre- looking through boxes) and Andy Bartlett (right-cheering).*

## IN THE BEGINNING...

I first became interested in the Battle of Culloden when I watched Peter Watkins’ BBC docudrama as a kid (it is available on YouTube), which in turn led me to read John Prebble’s book on the subject. Historical research on the battle over the last couple of decades has shown some of the information, in both the book and the TV show, to be incorrect, but for sheer drama and emotion, they are hard to beat.



*Above: Peter Watkins’ Culloden BBC docudrama.*



*Right: John Prebble’s Culloden.*



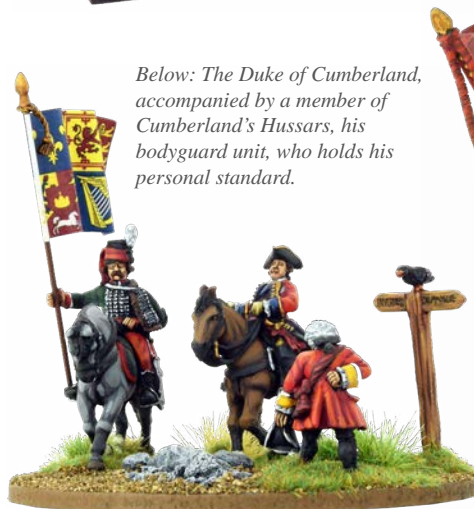
Despite my enthusiasm for the series, it would be some years before I picked up my first 28mm Jacobite Rebellion miniatures. When work took me to Worcester, smack bang in the middle of God's Own Country, I joined the Worcester Wargames Club, and it just so happened that one of the older members there was selling some units of Jacobite and Government troops. The collection consisted of about four Government battalions of twenty figures each, and roughly forty highlanders. The miniatures were older Wargames Foundry casts, and many of the highlanders were English Civil War Scots! Clearly, I was going to need more of both protagonists.

The only dedicated Jacobite rebellion miniatures at the time were made by Front Rank, and I quickly replaced many of the ECW Scots with more properly-equipped highlanders from their range. Originally, all my Scots had Lochaber axes, broadswords, and farm implements to match the historical impression of a badly-equipped army of rebels. Recent research has shown that the Jacobites were well supplied with muskets, and so, slowly, I have purchased more Scots with firearms from different manufacturers, and added them to my units. These include some really characterful minis from Warlord Games and Flags of War, and even some individual models from Border Reivers and earlier ranges that fit the overall look; one chap in a kilt with a sword looks pretty much like another.

*Below: This clan regiment is made up of miniatures from Front Rank, Warlord, and Flags of War.*



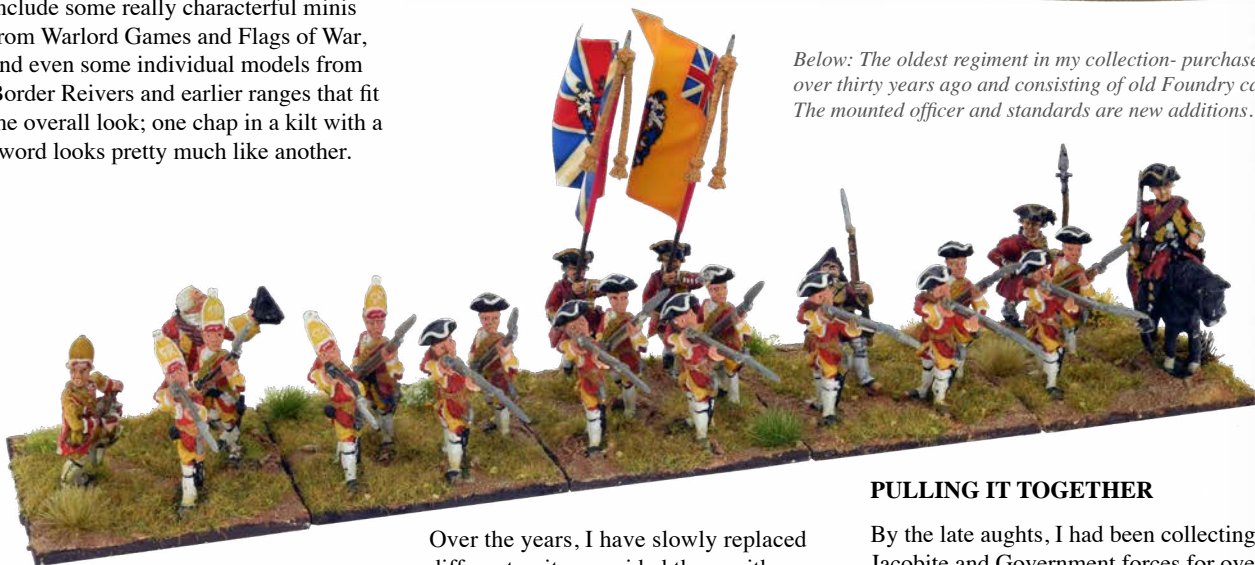
*Below: The Duke of Cumberland, accompanied by a member of Cumberland's Hussars, his bodyguard unit, who holds his personal standard.*



*Below: A Highland Commander, displaying the Stuart colours. The standard is by Flags of War.*



*Below: The oldest regiment in my collection- purchased over thirty years ago and consisting of old Foundry casts. The mounted officer and standards are new additions.*



The Government army came together over several years, and from a variety of different sources. Another member of our club was selling four battalions of Dixon Miniatures' Seven Years' War figures, which had all been professionally painted, and it seemed obvious that I should pick them up. I then bought three regiments from Crusader Miniatures before going back to buy another regiment from Foundry's latest Seven Years' War range. Many of the officers for the regiments came from Front Rank, as did the command figures, although both the Bonnie Prince and Butcher Cumberland are by Warlord.

Over the years, I have slowly replaced different units, provided them with new flags, or updated their appearances based on current historical research. For example, I initially purchased the French Royal Scots regiment and the Irish Piquets in tricorne hats, using French miniatures from Front Rank. Historical canon then came to suggest that the Royal Scots wore bonnets rather than tricorns, and that they cut their jackets short, so these miniatures were replaced with Scots from Flags of War's new miniature range. The latest research suggests that I may have been right in the first place, and that tricorns were worn with regular jackets, and so another change may be on the cards! If you keep a collection long enough, it is never quite finished.

### PULLING IT TOGETHER

By the late aughts, I had been collecting Jacobite and Government forces for over 15 years. Having a mid-18th Century British force proved quite flexible, and allowed me to flit happily between different theatres. My government regiments had seen action not only in Scotland, but also against the French in Europe, and against colonial French and their indigenous allies in Canada. I think they even had a run out against the French in India at one point, as well.

Surprisingly, there was not a huge difference in size between the various manufacturers. However, when the whole collection was on the board, there was a noticeable disparity in the overall look, as I had purchased, painted, and based them all at different times. In particular, the bases, whilst all the same size, did



*Below: The Royal Scots regiment (Royal Ecosseis) in their distinctive bonnets. The miniatures and the colours are by Flags of War. This unit was painted by Artmaster Studio.*



*Right: This highland artillery piece is manned by miniatures from Flags of War and Warlord Games.*



*Below: This government gun is crewed by miniatures from Cran Tara. The deeper base allowed me to add extra crew to create a more convincing scene.*



not match, as I had used different basing materials and styles, depending on my taste at the time.

Sometime in 2021, I decided to rebase the whole Government army. Originally, they were on 40mm x 40mm bases, with four miniatures on a base. For the revamp, I decided to base them on 50mm x 60mm bases, mostly to provide more room for the larger size '28s' that manufacturers were now making. This also allowed me to place the colours at the front of marching battalions, with the officers observing the ranks from the sides, as I thought this provided a more realistic look to the regiments. I increased the number of miniatures in each battalion to 24, which allowed me 20 soldiers, two standard bearers (front or back of the battalion), and two officers at the sides. I also took the opportunity to replace some of the Dixon miniatures, who were now looking a little small, with miniatures from Warlord Games' Seven Years' War range.

The artillery were originally based on 50mm x 50mm bases, similar to the infantry, with one gun and four crew on each base. Each gun represented three actual guns, so there would be one gun base between each of the Government battalions in the first line at Culloden. The first problem I found was that there was too little space between the Government battalions when deployed for battle. Players were able to tuck the battalions tight to each gun, making it impossible for the Jacobites to break the Government lines through the deployed artillery, as they did historically. I therefore decided to base the guns on much larger bases, with a 120mm frontage and a 60mm depth. I still retained only one gun on the base, but increased the number of crew and broadened the artillery scatter, to make it look more like a battery in action. I also placed a wagon or ammunition cart behind each of the artillery bases, each on a similar-sized base, to increase the depth of the battery. The footprint looked much

more like the space an artillery battery of three guns might take up on the battlefield, and now provided sufficient space for the highlanders to break through - if they could make it that far.

Unusually, I opted for a mix of manufacturers for the crew, mixing Warlord ECW Scots with Flags of War and Front Rank's Jacobites and Government. I also purchased some Government crew from Clan Tara. These are very slight miniatures, and much more true to 28mm scale, making them thinner and smaller than most other manufacturers. However, they are lovely casts, and, by using them on independent artillery bases, I found a way to include them in the army without making the disparity obvious.

## COLOURS AND STANDARDS

Many of the colours and standards carried by the Jacobite rebels were recovered after the battle, and were listed in a surviving Government report. In addition, many of the original records from the period describe the colours carried by some of the rebel regiments, so we can recreate them with a fair amount of accuracy. Stuart Reid's books on the Jacobite army illustrate many of the colours, and Flags of War produce them all for 28mm.

Bizarrely, it is the colours of the regular regiments at Culloden that cause difficulty. Until 1745, regiments of the British army were allowed to display whatever device the Colonel of the regiment wanted on their colours.



*Left: All the highland flags are by Flags of War- here showing (left to right) Lord Lovat, Cameron of Lochie, and MacDonal of Clanranald's regiments.*



Examples included the coat of arms of the Colonel's family, regimental battle honours, or simply images that had always appeared on the regiment's flags, such as the crown and sceptre image on Barrells' regimental colours. After 1745, the Duke of Cumberland introduced new guidelines that forced battalions to carry a Union Flag (its King's colour), and a regimental colour. This regimental flag was the same colour as the regimental facings, had a small union flag in the canton (next to the flagstaff), and displayed nothing more than the regimental number in roman numerals inside a wreath of roses and thistles. It would take quite a few years for this to be implemented, as regiments did not replace their colours until they were worn out. As a result, we know that all the regiments at Culloden would have been carrying their original pre-1745 colours. The problem is that, with a few notable exceptions, there is no record of what these colours might have looked like. Whilst far from ideal, this does allow you a certain amount of freedom to produce your own standards, or you can turn to speculative, pre-printed flags from various manufacturers. I decided, for the sake of uniformity, to get all my flags from *Flags of War*, so they would have a consistent size and appearance.

### ON TO CULLODEN

Although it was the Culloden documentary that first inspired me to collect the period, I had never intended to collect Culloden as a wargame. Of all the battles of the '45 rebellion, it had to be the most one-sided. Falkirk is a much more balanced battle in terms of wargaming options, and even some of the 'what if?' encounters the campaign throws up would be more fun to play.

However, Culloden is the iconic battle that effectively ended Jacobite hopes in Scotland, and it remains one of the few battles of the period that is still remembered in popular culture. From a wargaming perspective, if you collect all the miniatures required for Culloden, then you can pretty much game any other battle of the period, and a few 'what if?' encounters as well. This provides much needed flexibility, as no-one wants a collection that can only be used for one battle.

About a year ago I made a conscious decision to try to finish my Culloden collection. I had a few units yet to complete, and no dedicated terrain. I fixed the latter straight away by ordering two large cloths from Killing Fields in America. These were expensive, but the raised tufts and varied colour on the cloths suited the look I wanted for Drumossie moor. To make the walled enclosures, I purchased some resin dry stone walling



*Left: These are some of the speculative colours produced by *Flags of War* for the regular British regiments.*

online. When they arrived, I thought they were a little small, so I decided to add an MDF base with a strip of thick card stuck down the middle. I then stuck the dry-stone walling on the card and 'banked' it up with filler. This raised the walls up by a few centimetres and made them much more imposing. I then flocked the banks and added commercially-available flowers and bushes for colour. There are a couple of houses on the battlefield - specifically, Culloden House and the Leanach Cottage, both of which I represented using Scots buildings by Hudson and Allen, from my mate Andy Bartlett's collection.

### WARLORD PARTICIPATION GAME

Back to my encounter with Mr Stallard. Having been convinced to put on a game at Warlord's Open day, I was keen to make it a participation game. Whilst I am a fan of display games, and I marvel at the skill and commitment needed to put them together, I believe that miniatures on the tabletop are for everyone to use and enjoy wargaming with.

As it turned out, Culloden was the perfect participation game. First of all, the battle itself needs very little introduction. Most people are at least vaguely aware of Bonnie Prince Charlie

and the destruction of the clans, even if they don't know the detail of the battle, so the historical background was easy to cover. We decided that the majority of the players would take on the role of the Highlanders, with players taking Government commands only when we were oversubscribed (which was most of the time.) This was for two reasons. First, the Government army does little other than shoot. That is fine for a complete beginner, but most gamers like to 'shove lead,' as it were, so playing the Highland army made more sense. Second, the Highland army has only one tactic: Charge! Any messing about with wheeling and changing formation whilst under artillery fire only speeds up the inevitable. For this game, you must charge the Government line as quickly as you can, and get stuck in!

We used a stripped back version of the *Black Powder* rules, with very few special abilities assigned to the units, and as few of the 'advanced' rules as we could get away with. The larger Scots clan units were given the Terrifying Charge special rule: if they closed, there was a chance the Government battalion facing them might run away. Other than that, we steered clear of anything that might cause



*Above: The Jacobite cavalry were small in number but look great. Here we see Bagot's Hussars, Starthallan's Horse and, in the background, Lord Elchoe's lifeguards.*



confusion. I was ably assisted by friends Jerry Richardson and Andy Bartlett, both of whom are very familiar with the *Black Powder* system. Between us, we were able to move the game along at quite a pace. The upshot of this was that a game took, on average, an hour-and-a-half to play out, which is some achievement given that there were well in excess of 1,000 miniatures on the board.

### IS IT FINISHED?

I titled this article 'The Never-Ending Collection' because that is what the Culloden collection is to me. I bought the first miniatures for the '45 rebellion nearly 30 years ago. Since then, I have read numerous books on the subject, visited some of the battlefields, and even written a few articles. Every now and then my interest wanders, and the boxes of highlanders are relegated to the back of the cupboard as something shinier comes along. But inevitably, something happens to rekindle my interest, the boxes come back out, and I usually replace some tired looking units with the latest sculpts, repaint some others, and buy something new to keep the collection fresh.

I am sure you all have a similar collection: one you don't always play with, but which you cannot bring yourself to get rid of, are always tinkering with, adding to, and rebasing. It is the era in which you are most interested, and about which you are probably something of an expert.

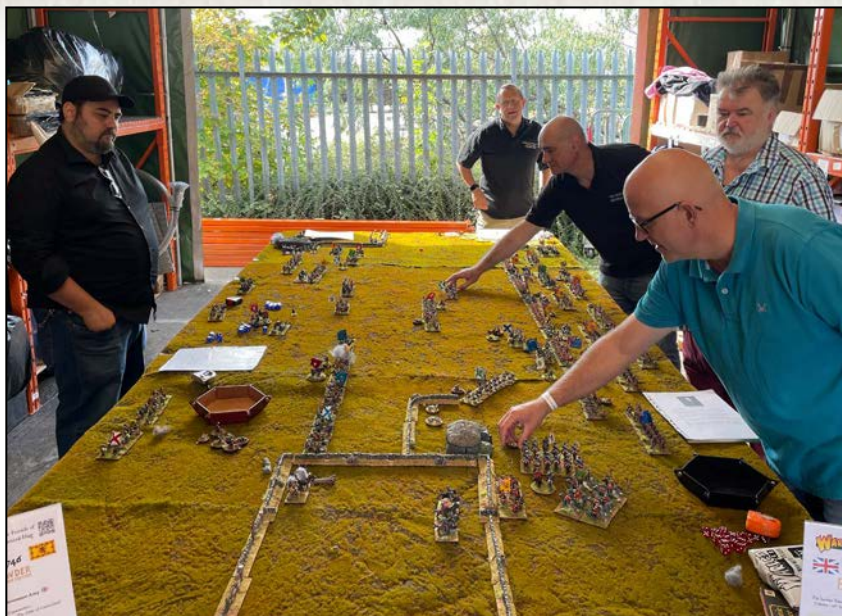
This brings me back to the question of putting on a game at a show, or even putting on a big game for your friends, or at your club. Why not? It does not have to be a battle as big as Culloden. It could be a small WWII skirmish, a Napoleonic Egyptian adventure, or even a simple Victorian skirmish between Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty. Whatever it is, people will want to see it. If you are passionate about the period, have put hours of work into painting and preparing it, and don't mind answering a few questions from interested members of the public, then why not give it a go? Trust me, it is fun, and there is very little that can go wrong. It is only by sharing that the hobby grows.

#### CULLODEN ACTION FROM THE WARLORD OPEN DAY

*Top: Warlord supremo John Stallard oversees the staunch Government defence. The Highland players only had to do better than their historical counterparts to claim a win, so routing two or more Government units was enough.*

*Middle: The Jacobite attack on the left has almost been destroyed, the right is faltering, and the centre has hardly got moving! A recurring problem for the Jacobites.*

*Bottom: The Government line consisted of three rows of infantry supported by guns. A tough nut but the Highlanders penetrated it in two out of the four games.*





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# ADRIATIC ADVENTURES



Dave Watson outlines Russian activities in the Adriatic in 1806, and offers a Napoleonic tabletop scenario with a difference.

The Adriatic Sea, from Istria (in modern Croatia) in the north to Albania and Greece in the south, commonly called the Dalmatian coast, is familiar to modern-day tourists. The coastline - mainly a narrow belt of land dominated by the Dinaric Alps - helped create a Balkan hinterland utterly different from the more urbanised and prosperous coast, which still shows its Venetian heritage. Seventy-nine islands run almost parallel to the coast. Because of their position on the coastal shipping lanes that connected the Western and Eastern world, the Adriatic islands have often played an important historical role. The coastal cities were not large during this period. They included Trieste in the north, and Rijeka, Zadar, Split - and particularly significant to our Adriatic Adventure - Ragusa (modern day Dubrovnik), and Cattaro (Kotor).

Most of the great powers contested the lands around the Adriatic Sea during the Napoleonic wars. While never a major theatre of operations, it was part of the overall strategy of most of the combatants. It had an essential role in the conflict, influencing alliances and diverting troops and ships, which all contributed to the defeat of Napoleon. It was also a period of significant change, with the Russians, French, and British intervening in a region that had long been

a battleground reserved for the Venetian, Austrian, and Ottoman empires.

Their armies and supporting ships fought up and down the coast, sometimes with or against local leaders like Peter I of Montenegro and Ali Pasha of Ioannina. Many commanders were far from home, with orders taking weeks to reach them. This meant that even junior officers could make military and diplomatic decisions usually reserved for more senior officers.





The Treaty of Pressburg (26 December 1805) ended the War of the Third Coalition for the Austrians, who handed Venetia, Dalmatia, Istria, and the Bay of Cattaro to France. This brought Napoleonic France to the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The new provinces were initially absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy, which had been created on 17 March 1805, with Napoleon crowned King in May, represented by the Viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais.

**1806: ENTER THE RUSSIANS**

The Russian squadrons in the Adriatic could come from the Black Sea Fleet only when Russia was at peace with the Ottomans, as access was through the Straits. This meant that reinforcements usually had to come the long way, from the Baltic, and usually comprised better ships. In 1805, Vice-Admiral Dmitry Nikolayevich Senyavin was appointed to command the Russian naval and land forces in the Mediterranean.

Senyavin's squadron consisted of his flagship, the *Yaroslav* (74), and the *Moskva* (74), *Svyatoy Pyotr* (74), *Selafail* (74), *Urtil* (84), the frigate *Kildyuin* (32), and two brigs. By the standards of the naval war in the Adriatic, these were large ships, unlike the frigates and brigs that the British and French generally deployed in the region. They joined the Russian squadron already in the Adriatic, commanded by Rear-Admiral Aleksey Samuilovich Greig, with five ships of the line - *Retvizan* (64), *Svyataya Yelana* (74), *Svyataya Paraskeva* (74), *Aziya* (74), *Svyatoy* (used as a troop transport) - four frigates, six corvettes, and six brigs.

It was this fleet that allowed the Russians to intervene on the mainland. The Montenegrins and the Bokez - citizens of the Bay of Cattaro (Kotor) - were sympathetic to Russia. They encouraged Senyavin to occupy Cattaro and the eight forts in the bay. The weight of gunfire from the large Russian ships was often sufficient to persuade French garrisons to capitulate to Russian commanders. !

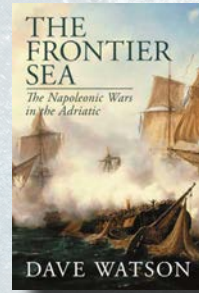
**RAGUSA (DUBROVNIK)**

The French forces, led by General Molitor, marched into Dalmatia in 1806 to occupy the territories won from the Austrians. Molitor was reinforced with a division under General Lauriston as they moved down the coast. In their way was the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), which included the city and the mainland coast from

**THE FRONTIER SEA**

The Napoleonic Wars in the Adriatic are described in my new book, *The Frontier Sea*, which examines the often overlooked campaigns, armies, navies, and personalities that fought in the region between 1797 and 1815; campaigns rarely mentioned in the history of the period:

[balkanhistory.org/the-frontier-sea.html](http://balkanhistory.org/the-frontier-sea.html)



Neum to the Prevlaka peninsula, the Pelješac peninsula, and the islands of Lastovo and Mljet. Four thousand people lived in the city, and another 31,000 in the wider state territory.

Ragusa's significant trading empire was being challenged. It possessed 190 trading vessels, with a merchant fleet larger than that of Venice and Prussia. There were 400 shipowners who could build 14 types of ships in their twelve shipyards, and who employed about 2,200 sailors. The Republic was a firmly Catholic enclave in an Orthodox and Muslim hinterland, and relations with Russia were generally poor. While Ragusa sought to exploit its impoverished hinterland, it lived in fear and loathing of the people of the Dinaric Alps around it.

On 15 March, a Russian squadron commanded by Captain Henry Baillie started a blockade of the port, capturing 26 Ragusan merchant ships. He then grabbed the island of Curzola (Korčula), which dominated the sea route to Ragusa from the north. Desperate to stay neutral, the Republic rejected an offer to pay off the French, pointing to the Russian threat to devastate their territory if they allowed the French through.

**DMITRY NIKOLAYEVICH SENYAVIN**

Vice-Admiral Dmitry Nikolayevich Senyavin came from a naval family, and graduated from the Naval Cadet Corps in 1780. He took part in an expedition to Portugal, joined the Black Sea Fleet upon its formation in 1783, and helped construct the naval base in Sevastopol.

During the Russo-Turkish War (1787-92), Senyavin was present at the battles of Fidonisi and Ochakov, and distinguished himself in command of the *Navarchia* during the Battle of Caliacria. During Ushakov's Mediterranean expedition of 1798-1800, he commanded the *Svyatoy Pyotr* (72). In 1804, he was promoted to rear admiral and commanded the port in Reval.



Above: Soldier (right) and officer of the Ragusa Republic.



They could have asked the Russian squadron for aid, but the prospect of an influx of Slavs favoured the French. Lauriston demanded that his troops be supplied and allowed to rest, but when they entered the city on 27 May, they seized control. The Republic was subsequently abolished and incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy (1808).

### THE COMBATANTS IN MINIATURE

The French forces in the area in 1806 were standard French infantry, later supplemented by locally-raised forces that included former Austrian Grenzer. These Croatian troops make a colourful alternative to the standard French line. The Ragusan militia was in local dress, looking rather like Greek figures of the period.

Russian wargame figures typically have the post-1809 or 1812 shakos, and most gamers will be happy to use these. To get things just right, Brigade Games in the USA have the former 28mm Vitrix range with the correct shakos for the period, but this can be an expensive postal option for European gamers.



Above: Perry Miniatures painted by Battle Brush Studios.



Above: There are great plastics available like Warlord's Russian Line Infantry 1809 to 1815...



Left: ... But for the proper shakos for the period, try Brigade Games.

Several Ottoman ranges include Albanians and other troop types in the region. Irregular troops for the Greek War of Independence work for the Montenegrins. Steve Barber has a good 28mm range that can be bulked out by Old Glory figures, and Old Man's Creations do some lovely personality figures in resin. Perry Miniatures have also recently entered the fry with a very nice range of Napoleonic Ottermans.



Left: Steve Barber Ottoman Infantry, Provincial Infantry, and Levy.

Right: Old Man's Creations Ottoman Irregulars Command Group.



### THE HISTORICAL BATTLE OF RAGUSA

The Russians organised a hasty attack after being warned by the Ottomans that French reinforcements were *en route*; the Montenegrins attacked the French left flank by scaling the heights. After a forward position was captured by the Montenegrins, they impulsively moved towards the next position. Four companies of the 13th Jaegers, under Captain Babichev, scaled the heights to support them. As the French prepared a counterattack, Prince Vyazemskiy attacked with his remaining forces in four columns. These troops gained the top of the heights, reorganised, and attacked the main French position.

The French withdrew to the heights above Ragusa and then into the city. Both sides lost around 400 men, and the Montenegrin fighters decapitated some French prisoners. The Russians followed up this victory with an unsuccessful assault on the island of San Marco, opposite the city harbour. They then tightened the siege, mounting naval guns on the heights above the city.

General Molitor arrived with French reinforcements on 6 July, turning the Montenegrin position. This move threatened the Russian rear, and the Montenegrins dispersed with their plunder from the villas outside the city. Senyavin, therefore, ordered his troops to embark and return to Cattaro (Kotor).



## SCENARIO: BATTLE OF BERGATTO HEIGHTS - 17 JUNE 1806

Lauriston occupied the city of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) with some 3,000 men. The Russians and their Montenegrin and Bokez allies responded by seizing the port of Old Ragusa (Cavtat) on 3 June, forcing the French outposts back to the Bergatto Heights, a strong defensive position to the southeast of Ragusa. The Russian fleet and Bokez gunboats arrived off Ragusa on 13 June to blockade the city, which forced French reinforcements to travel the longer inland route. The French built artillery strongpoints on the Bergatto Heights, supported by French infantry and some Ragusan militia. Admiral Senyavin ordered his forces to attack the heights.

### OPPOSING FORCES

Russian sources claim 3,000 French infantry and 4,000 Ragusan militia defended the heights. This must be an exaggeration, as it would have left the city without a French garrison! While the Ragusans marginally favoured the French over the Russians, it is unlikely that so many would be mobilised to fight for the French in such a short time, and Lauriston would be wary of relying on them. The Russians had 1,200 regular troops and 3,500 Montenegrin and Bokez fighters. There would be some naval gunfire support to shell the French right flank.



#### FRENCH: GENERAL LAURISTON (SR8)

Two battalions of French line infantry: Standard, Musket, Pas de Charge, Reliable.

One battalion of French light infantry: Standard, Musket, Pas de Charge, Skirmish.

Three medium gun batteries.

One battalion of Ragusan militia: Standard, Irregular, Musket, Freshly Raised.

*The French can form behind improvised rock defences. Classify as soft cover because they were probably not high or substantial enough to qualify as hard cover.*



#### RUSSIAN: PRINCE VYAZEMSKIY (SR8)

One battalion Vitebsk Musketeers: Standard, Musket, Steady.

One battalion 13th Jaegers: Standard, Musket, Steady, Skirmish.

Four units of Montenegrin/Bokez irregulars: Standard, Musket, Irregular, Bloodthirsty, Unreliable.

One heavy battery.

*The Russian heavy battery represents shipboard guns. The French position was on a cliff, making it difficult to elevate enough guns.*

### BATTLEFIELD

The French had withdrawn in fighting order from the Russian landings in Old Ragusa (Cavtat). The French light infantry skirmished with the Russian Jaegers and irregulars, drawing them towards the French defences on the Bergatto Heights. The terrain coloured brown is high and rough ground (half speed). The marked cliffs are impassable.

### OBJECTIVE

The Russians must capture two gun positions, after which the French will withdraw back to the Ragusan city walls. However, the objective must be achieved in eight moves (adjusted depending on the rules used) to reflect the possible arrival of French reinforcements.





## GAMING CONSIDERATIONS

A key feature of the battle is the rough terrain on the heights. We are not helped by the Russian memoirs applying a bit of spin to the challenges. On the one hand, they say, 'The enemy dug in on inaccessible rocky heights', then they describe the Montenegrins leaping up them and the Russian Jaegers attacking in columns. It is difficult to judge today because the site is a vast quarry with a modern road on the lower slopes.

We classified the Montenegrins as 'irregular' and 'skirmish' under *Black Powder*, which allows them to move at half speed. This might be a bit quick even for mountaineers like the Montenegrins (Montenegro means 'Black Mountain') but we found the game moved too slowly at the quarter pace suggested in *Black Powder* for 'extremely rough' terrain. We also tested the scenario using *Rebels and Patriots* and came to the same conclusion; the French had too much time to shoot down the attackers.

There was a tendency for the Montenegrins to start a shooting game, given their numerical advantage, when they needed to get into hand-to-hand combat. By giving the Montenegrins the *Black Powder* 'bloodthirsty' rule, they can reroll misses on the first round of combat, providing a decent incentive to get stuck in. There are similar provisions in other rulesets.

Whatever the Russian memoirs say, it is inconceivable that the Jaegers would have attacked in anything resembling an attack column under the rules. We assumed these were looser skirmish formations shaped in rough columns because of the filtering terrain. That is a skirmish formation under *Black Powder*. Regarding shooting, skirmish formation was too effective in the first edition, and we followed the suggestion in the second edition that you reduce the number of dice rolled in proportion to the part of the unit facing its foes. This encourages the Jaegers to get stuck in. While they were better shots than a musketeer regiment, the doctrine was still, 'bayonets before bullets.' We allowed the Jaegers to move at half pace because they were used to fighting in rough terrain during this campaign.



Above: In test games the battlefield was scattered with hills to represent the undulating terrain.



Above: Encouraged by their 'bloodthirsty' rule the Montenegrins get stuck in.

In every game we played, the French needed to keep a reserve to deploy to the most threatened gun position. The terrain was more accessible at the top of the heights but still half-speed in skirmish order. The key challenge for the French commander is deciding where to send reinforcements, and in enough time for the unit to get there. Don't wait too long!

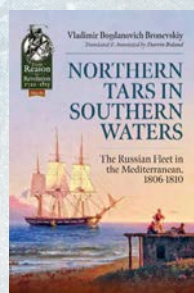
The French light infantry must also make a fighting withdrawal to the heights; otherwise, they will be quickly overwhelmed or outflanked. *Rebels and Patriots'* skirmish rule simulates this well, allowing a half move and fire.

Other than these tweaks, the standard rules work fine.



Above: A gun is overwhelmed due to insufficient French reinforcement.

## NORTHERN TARS IN SOUTHERN WATERS



For a more detailed look at the Russian actions, Darrin Boland has translated the memoirs of a Russian naval officer, Vladimir Bronevskiy, in *Northern Tars in Southern Waters* (Helion, 2019).





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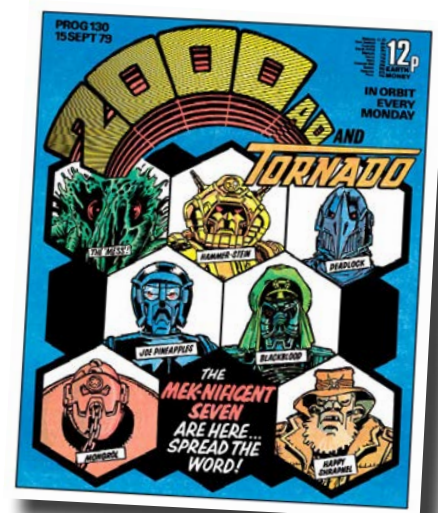
**2000 AD was a treasured part of James' formative years, which helps us understand our Project Manager's quirks a little better and makes him the ideal guide to Warlord Games' new ABC Warriors starter set.**

As a UK kid growing up in the '80s and '90s I experienced many childhood traumas: the tension of the tail end of the Cold War, awkward fashion moments, assorted 'moral panics', strange fads, even stranger archaic technology, and (shudders) shell suits! To counter those less fond memories I recall my weekly pilgrimage to my local newsagent, where I'd happily flip my way through the pages of *2000 AD* until the inevitable "this isn't a library, buy it or get out!" was shouted my way.

This classic British comic, first published in 1977, was packed with critical and allegorical tales that questioned historical and contemporary events in intelligent, quirky, and very tongue in cheek ways. It was insightful, often darkly hilarious, and (probably holding the most appeal for me initially) featured stories that were brutal, bombastic, and bloody in their presentation.

Over-the-top characters caused over-the-top carnage and ensured I got hooked on the weekly hit of pulp fiction and vivid imagery that *2000 AD* offered. I eventually got a subscription through my newsagent and, in those heady, pre-internet days when effort was required, I regularly pedalled my way around the mean streets of Grimsby, scouring second-hand book and charity shops for yellow gold (the age-discoloured older issues that I'd missed out on).

I stopped collecting *2000 AD* in the late '90s, but still sneak an occasional peek while at the newsagent. It's not the same, though; I don't get shouted at about it anymore, even though I can actually afford to buy it!



Above: The cover of *2000 AD* when the ABC Warriors made their first appearance.



### WHAT MAKES ABC WARRIORS SPECIAL?

The narrative twist at the series' core is that the 'unending war' the battlebots were designed for does, in fact, end. When that happens, machines that are essentially intelligent weapons need to find a new purpose and pass the time in a world they were not designed for. Humans play a part in upping the ante too as the 'floppies' (as they are called by the robots) are quick to claim ownership over these disenfranchised machines, often treating them terribly, creating tension, drama, and real-world parallels.

The regular characters in the *ABC Warriors* spend some of their time dealing with smaller troubles (acting almost like a mechanical *A-Team*), but they also tackle grandiose societal issues, and find their way to other cataclysmic wars.

'Soldiers of fortune' games can be created by mixing *ABC Warriors* with the world of *Strontium Dog* and *Judge Dredd* (all their narratives and settings can intersect), while the primary story and inspiration behind this box set - *The Volgan War* - is certainly well-suited to tabletop battles, as it has pretty much constant combat throughout!

### ROBOT WARS

I may not read *2000 AD* as regularly as I did, but there's no denying that 'the Galaxy's greatest comic' was one of the foremost formative pieces of fiction in my life. Shock and awe met shock and gore in various classic *2000 AD* strips, no doubt warping my impressionable mind in 'interesting' ways, but one of the lynchpins of *2000 AD*'s many spoked wheels was more about the spilling of oil than blood. Pat Mills' *ABC Warriors* featured a quirky and deadly collection of battle robots who made their first appearance in 1979, bringing their Atomic, Bacterial, and Chemical warfare with them.

Now, thanks to an agreement with *2000 AD* licence holders Rebellion, the *ABC Warriors* join *Strontium Dog* and *Judge Dredd* in Warlord Games' expanding range of sci-fi games. As a huge fan of the strip (my love of wacky robots and aggressive mecha lives on decades later) I grabbed up the starter set that landed in the office, ripped off the shrink wrap, and dived in.

### FIGHTING THE VOLGAN WAR

The first 40 pages of the vibrant 128-page softcover book, included in the game's box set, cover the core rules and are extremely easy to follow. The presentation is excellent, with plentiful illustrated examples of mechanics in action alongside their written descriptions. Various boxed out sections highlight key game concepts and summaries too, making it easy to learn the game or spot key changes between this and the previous *2000 AD* games.

Warlord have never been sloppy when laying out their rules, but this book is particularly tight and flowing. It serves as a very neat example of what they are capable of and is up there with the best of the rest - Games Workshop, Studio Tomahawk, and Crooked Dice come to mind - in visual clarity and general aesthetic appeal.



### SQUISHY SYNERGY

The game has been designed to fit with the other *2000 AD* systems, so the rules will be instantly familiar if you've dabbled with *Strontium Dog*, *Judge Dredd*, or even Celtic-fantasy romp *Slaine*. *ABC Warriors* is penned by the same authors as those other games - Gav Thorpe and Andy Chambers - but it's certainly not a straight up copy and paste job of the same mechanics. Yes, many key concepts are shared, and yes, this is another skirmish game focused on individual characters and storytelling, but the size of models in this set (more on the hulking robot figures later) and their damage tolerance brings various tweaks.

If you plan on combining the different games, you can, and the core rules of *ABC Warriors* directly mention this option. A new rules convention makes a distinction between *ABC Warriors*' 'Robots' while squishy humanoid types are called 'Floppies'. [Stop sniggering at the back! - Ed] I'm certainly excited to bring the Warriors to the tabletop as adversaries or allies to the implacable Joe Dredd, though to call Mega City One's most upright Judge floppy seems downright scandalous!



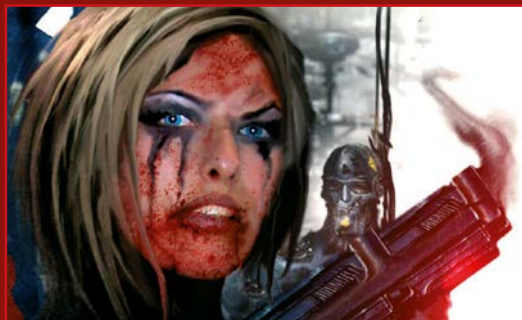


## A NEW LOOK?

The artwork in the rulebook is taken directly from a relatively recent *ABC Warriors* series that was illustrated by Clint Langley, and the look of the figures very much reflects his designs. Having grown up on a steady diet of classic *ABC Warriors* imagery, created by legendary artists like Kevin O'Neil, the newer art (all from the much later *Volgan War* series) isn't really my cup of tea if I'm totally honest.

Langley's 'grimdark' style doesn't fit my tastes when it comes to comic art (it's very busy and lacks panel-to-panel clarity) but seems to translate well to the figures (perhaps because his illustrations feature many 3D models). Yes, these *ABC Warriors* are a little different to the way the team looked in the stories I fell in love with, but they're no worse for it when engaged in epic robot wars on the tabletop! There is, however, some dissonance when these more realistic figures are lined up alongside the other *2000 AD* releases from Warlord, which have a more comic book style. Indeed, there were some 'original' *ABC Warrior* figures for the *Judge Dredd* game years ago that better suited that system's style.

Perhaps this darker mechanised look will appeal to those who love the *Warhammer 40k* aesthetic (Langley's done plenty of work for GW) and could bring about some crossover. If more GW players take to Warlord's offerings, then a trickle-down effect might bring them to historical games too; that would be great for the overall health of the hobby!



## Weapons of the future

'The Armoury' covers the many advanced weapons that were created to equip the Warriors in their ceaseless warfare. Each has a Notoriety (the game's flavourful name for point cost) so you can add them to characters of your own creation, but they are also baked-in on the profiles of figures in the 'Warriors of the Volgan War' section. Variants can change the look, function, and utility of weapons (representing stocks, long barrels, higher power, and much more) and some of the armoury options can

be 'Built-in' as part of a robot's casing, allowing them to wield even more guns in their hands!

If you've gotten this far and still don't really know who the major players are in the world of *ABC Warriors* the book provides an introduction to them in the 'Warriors of the Volgan War' chapter. Here the series' various sentient warbots, designed to survive Atomic, Bacterial, and Chemical combat in 'wars with no end', get the limelight.





**Hammerstein and the Hammersteins!**

The noble and bold Hammerstein is a humanoid robot and the team’s natural leader. This figure is the sole character from the Warriors crew in this starter set but (as can be seen in the size comparison shown in ‘Squishy Synergy’) he’s fittingly tall and bulky. Looking at him in his raw state you’ll see he’s mad of five well-fitting parts that are cast in Warlord Resin (shown below). We’ve probably reached the point where that material’s quality is good and consistent enough that we don’t need to explain its properties every time we mention it... but, for now, we will keep reassuring readers that this ‘fast-cast’ Warlord Resin shows sculpted details very well, is light, sturdy, and more likely to bounce than shatter if dropped. Its only real issue is that it can be a bit of a pain to clean up around mould lines, but thankfully these are at a minimum on all the resin figures included in the box set.



*A nice inclusion is a ‘chinnier’ head alternative for the ABC Warrior’s leader, to take on a more classic look.*

Hammerstein is an iconic combatant and characterised by various special rules. He has his ‘Auxiliary Arms’, which allow him to wield up to four one-handed weapons or a two-handed weapon and two one-handed weapons; ‘Hammertime’ enables his huge hammer-hand to cause knockbacks and turn defence into a counter-attack; and ‘Good Soldier’ makes him much more likely to reactivate after being Downed.

Supporting Hammerstein in the box set are... more Hammersteins! These three are Mk I variants (the Warriors’ leader is a Mk III) which are more basic and far smaller (seen right), created for the early days of the Volgan War. Listed as Auxiliaries in the rules, they are essentially grunts to soak up bullets and leak oil while your charismatic and skilled leader performs all the glorious and heroic acts you’d expect!



**The Volgan threat**

The leader of the opposing Russian/fascist-like Volgans is present in the starter set to take on Hammerstein. Volkhan is a gloriously daft and stylised character; another large model (four parts) that wields a sickle and hammer above a huge anvil. More than just a robot, Volkhan (named after legendary warrior-wizard Volkh) can call forth mysterious magical powers in the story background, but in-game, things are simplified. His special abilities are Monologue double actions, which represent him addressing his troops via comms with an inspirational speech. ‘Beat! Beat!’ will allow rerolls during Cool tests while ‘And Beat Again!’ will allow nearby auxiliaries to recover

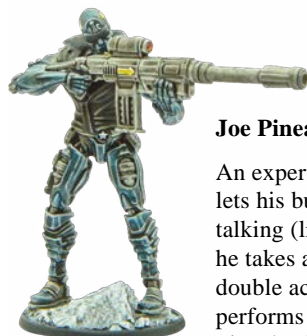
from Metal Fatigue or being Downed.

The auxiliaries included here are three Volgan AK47s armed with chunky Burp Guns. Each of these figures has an alternate head option, which is a great little extra.



**A CRAZY CAST OF ROBO-CHARACTERS**

The eight minis above ensure the box is true to its ‘starter set’ claim, setting you up with enough figures to fight some basic skirmishes, but missions will be at their best when multiple ABC Warriors and Volkan characters are involved and synergising. Loads of extras are available separately in box sets, covering most of the series’ iconic heroes, anti-heroes, and villains. Here are just a few of them:



**Joe Pineapples**

An expert sniper who lets his bullets do the talking (literally! If he takes a Monologue double action, he performs an Aimed Fire shot!).



**Deadlock**

A Khaos worshipping robot mystic whose Tarot mastery allows him to manipulate the deck heavily (see ‘Khaos and Order’) and can perform additional actions by drawing power from those he fights.



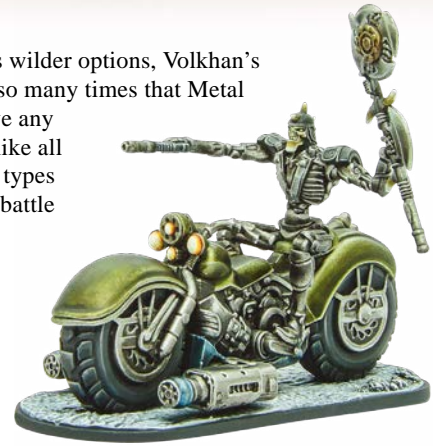


### Mongrol

A frenzied former robo-paratrooper with a tragic backstory, Mongrol still suffers from PTSD after witnessing the death of the girl who rebuilt him. He now has huge Power Paws to smash his foes, and these also help him charge in on all-fours to make up distance or smash through intervening terrain.

### Kalevala

One of the Volgan's wilder options, Volkhan's 'son' was reforged so many times that Metal Fatigue doesn't have any effect on him and (like all juvenile delinquent types of note) he rides to battle on a motorbike!



### Blackblood

A sadistic killer who embodies the worst traits found in real world war criminals. Keen on terror tactics, he causes a loss of Cool in any 'floppies' nearby (friend or foe) and he can switch places with a friendly model within 3" if attacked, leaving them to face the danger.



### Gulag

A chunky one-wheel, decked out with heavy weapons, including an Arm Cannon with a huge 48" long range.



### Raz-Putin

A Tarot manipulating mystic with plentiful power, Raz-Putin is also one of the few options in the game to have weapons purely focused on melee, with his twin Swords of Black Light.

## SIDE CHARACTERS AND AUXILIARIES

As well as the ones I've mentioned, five more Warriors (or acquaintances of) and four more Volgans get profiles. Everyone's favourite comic-relief, former sewer droid Ro-Jaws (right), is included and has rules that match the anarchic annoyance his motormouth generally causes. The incessant nattering and taunting can cause those around him to loose their Cool and, should danger really rise, Ro-Jaws is an expert at making a swift escape.



Left: KRASBO.

Ten incredibly varied auxiliaries finish off the model choices, with each bringing their own unique flavour to the game and varying quite drastically in size and power. Mekana Corps Street Sweepers (uniformed humans who count as 'floppies') are pretty much cannon fodder, aerial Volgan Yaks swoop through the sky ignoring terrain restrictions, and massive mechanised spiders named KRASBO are an arachnophobe's worst nightmare. The variety of new models, along with the addition of figures from the other 2000 AD games, will ensure no two missions are the same.



Above (left to right): Street Sweeper and Yak.





### WINNING THE WAR (AND HEARTS AND MINDS)

As with all good skirmish games, *ABC Warriors* has versatile missions at the core of its design. The slender Quickstart Booklet, that is included in the starter set, features three simple scenarios to get you going, but the rest of the gaming is yours to create and control.

This is done through the 'Combat Mission' and 'Campaigns' sections, which present you with the tools to randomly generate or engineer games that will offer various tactical challenges.

Public Objectives are placed across five locations on the board, ensuring players will have to manoeuvre successfully, while Personal Agendas are performed in secret, with clandestine missions such as taking down the enemy leader, injuring all enemy models, recovering from being Downed, or even having your leader get Downed in an act of Martyrdom. All of these will earn you likes (how very 'social media') where the audience to what is being battled out must be won over. Likes work in the same way as Credits in *Strontium Dog* and *Judge Dredd* so all systems can be mixed.

Adding to the likes earned from Public and Personal goals, Tarot cards can boost likes, rolling hits will bring you favour, and performing Monologues will also add between 10k and 60k likes. These Monologues count as a double action and leave the model unable to do anything other than advance 3", but the extra points they get can be game changing. Once I get more familiar with the game, I'm tempted to add house rules that will give bonuses to more characters when they choose to make a double action Monologue (Volkhan already gets this, as mentioned above). That will encourage more moments of chatter from players, add to the narrative, and could bring both positive and negative side effects. I'm quite shocked that Ro-Jaws doesn't have a Monologue special rule or two in his profile already; his mouth causes more trouble than Ricky Gervais' when hosting the Golden Globes!

My favourite part of the campaign rules is how Glitches can impact the team and individuals. The more that a team's robot personalities evolve, gaining independent thoughts and ideas beyond battle, the more their collective synergy will deteriorate, changing the way they play. They could be 'Loudmouths' and reveal

their normally secret Personal Agenda, perhaps your leader has 'Alpha Protocol' and must be deployed first, or maybe the team is just horribly 'Incohesive' and won't place as many Public Objectives at the start of the battle.

Individual robots who are Refined between games (to fix serious damage) must take Glitch Tests before battle starts too. This will make for permanent behavioural limits, compulsions, manias, and more, bringing a lot of extra narrative options to your campaign as well as changing how they can perform in combat.

### OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

It's tough to not let some personal bias in when reviewing something near and dear to your heart, especially when it's topped off with a heavy dose of nostalgia! As I read the book and built the figures for this new game, I did find my old school cravings occasionally bubbling up (mostly when seeing the art) and wishing it looked a little closer to 'my' *ABC Warriors*. Those feelings were regularly balanced out by the many pleasing quirks presented in the rules that feel totally true to the heart and humour of the *ABC Warriors* stories.

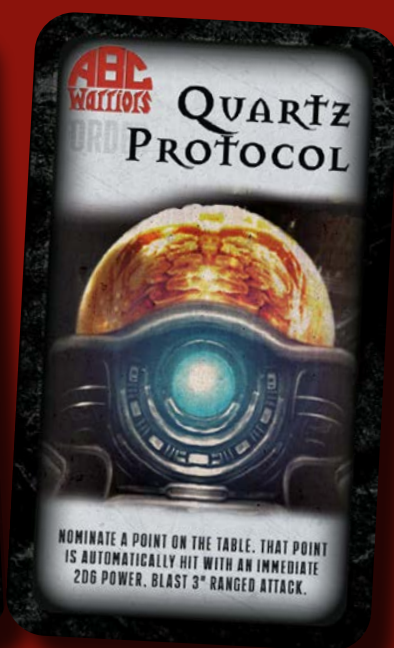
If I attempt to disengage from my series knowledge and preferences, it's clear that this is an extremely well-presented rulebook. It has well written and easy-to-follow systems, great visual aids, an index, and loads of extra rules that layer on the gaming flavour. The Tarot adds a level of tactical consideration that experienced and competitive wargamers will enjoy, and the Glitches and Glitch Tests in the campaign rules are just one of various unique extras that will reward players who link their battles together.



## KHAOS AND ORDER

Tarot cards are split into two types - Khaos and Order - and include four especially powerful Major Arcana that can appear in either deck. Once shuffled for a game and dealt out they represent the vagaries of fate and the manipulation of powers beyond the comprehension of most (although some characters have a better grasp on the mystical).

Primarily used between activations to change the on-table action, players can also choose to discard a Tarot card and add an extra Star chip to the bag at the start of a turn. Drawing a Star chip lets a model activate then potentially return it to the bag, to be used to activate again later in the turn. This can prove very powerful, but so are many card powers too, so you'll always have to weigh the potential of holding your Tarot cards or sacrificing them for more activation.



### Is it good value?

The figures are well-produced and look great when painted, which is fitting for a low figure count game. Although they're individually pricier than most of the *2000 AD* offerings, they're also a good bit larger, which makes the expense more than reasonable. Overall, the value of the starter set (which costs £75 and currently comes with a free figure of Mr Ten Per Cent) is good too, especially if you're yet to play one of the games in the *2000 AD* series. I've not even mentioned the Volkhan's Altar MDF terrain, the cards, decals, tokens, chips, and dice that are included! If you have *Strontium Dog* or *Judge Dredd*, you'll already have some of these gaming aids, so the value drops a little but if not it rockets up.

### An exciting new option

*ABC Warriors* is especially exciting to me because it expands the *2000 AD* gaming world that Warlord have spent years building. Plentiful new battlebots will bring many new gaming challenges when players combine the different systems; they'll open new narrative opportunities (I'm eager to play the first *Judge Dredd* multi-issue series, the *Robot Wars*, which is a personal favourite); and the chance to bring more robots to Mega City One gives me the opportunity to talk about all the weak 'floppies' involved. Surely a good and puerile enough reason to invest in a new game system on its own!





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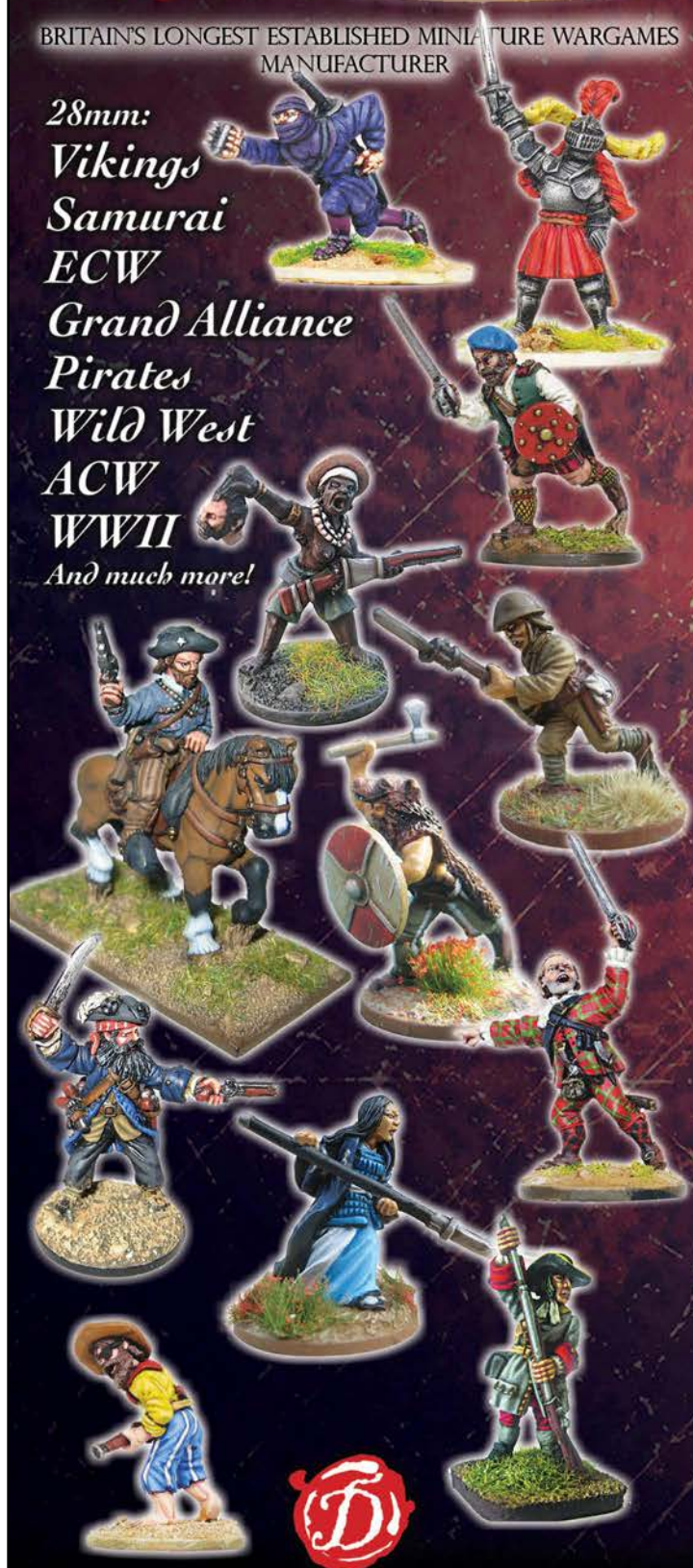
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# A FREEZING FIGHTING RETREAT



**Dom Sore follows up on last issue's Hit and Run theme with an article that examines the Italians' fighting retreat from Russia in World War Two.**

I enjoyed last issue's Hit and Run theme, but felt that it was missing one interesting example - the fighting retreat - wherein the hit is used to enable the run, either through a defensive line, or away from a chasing force. One such fighting retreat happened at the start of 1943, in the deepest, chilly depths of the Russian winter.

Operation Uranus was launched on 19 November 1942 with the goal of encircling the German 6th Army in Stalingrad. In a mere four days, the main goals of the offensive were attained, with the Romanian forces almost completely destroyed, and large numbers of German forces trapped. This was followed by Operation Winter Storm, wherein the German Army failed in their attempt to relieve Stalingrad. Once the Germans were stalled, the Soviets launched Operation Little Saturn, which smashed the Italian 8th Army, and forced the German Army to abandon any attempts to relieve the 6th Army in Stalingrad.

## **THE VORONEZH-KHARKOV OFFENSIVE**

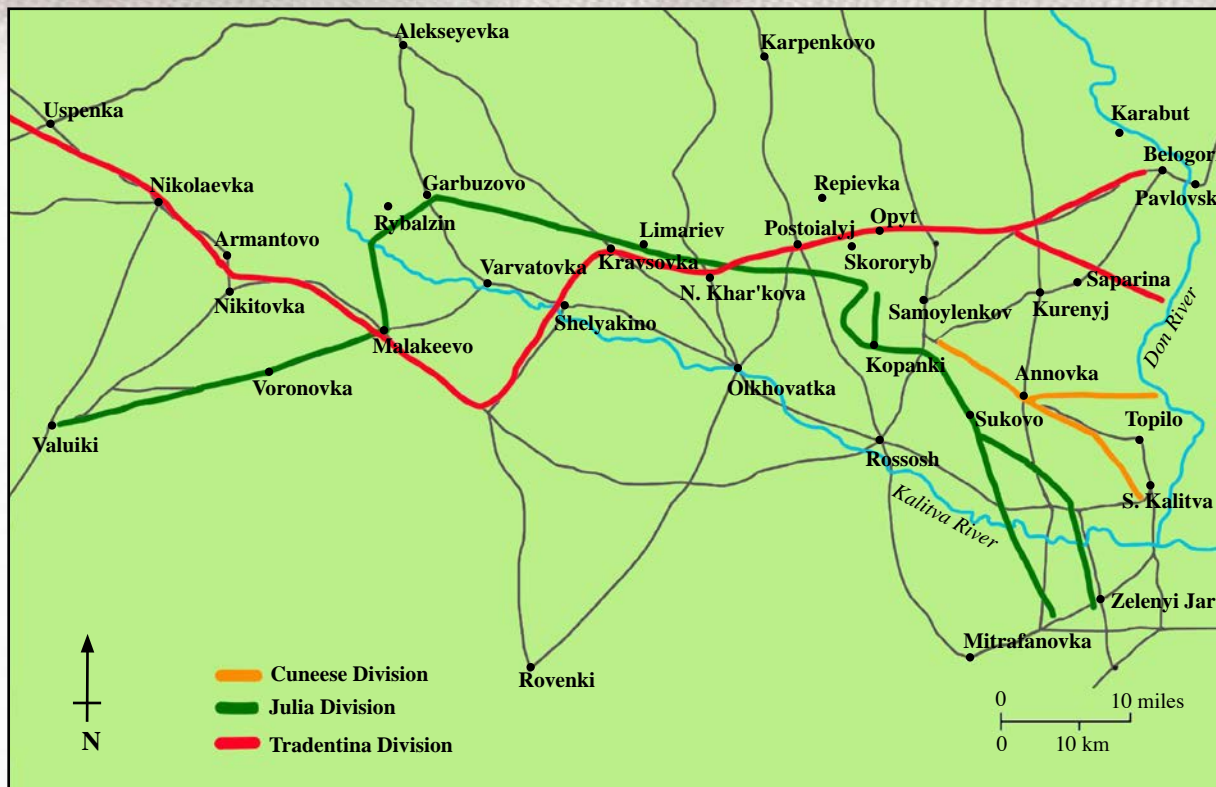
A period of regrouping, refitting, and planning meant the start of 1943 was reasonably quiet, but that peace would not last for long, as the Voronezh-Kharkov Offensive was about to be launched. This large offensive had the lofty goal of clearing swaths of Southwest Soviet territory of Axis forces. For the devastated Italian 8th Army, this

would be a very trying time, and the Alpini Division would face some of the worst fighting.

The Soviet offensive would target the joins between forces, and none more than the link between the Italian 8th Army and the Hungarian 2nd Army. The Voronezh-Kharkov Offensive would launch on 13 January 1943, and the Soviet 6th Army would target the Italian sector. In this sector, the Alpini







Divisions formed the left flank, which adjoined the Hungarian right flank. The Alpini were in a good state, and prepared to hold their ground. They did this very well; however, the collapse of the Hungarians to their left, and of the Italian Division to their right meant that by 15 January, they were surrounded.

Late into the day, and through to the early hours of the morning, discussions were held about what the Alpini would do. Eventually, it was decided they would attempt to break out of the encirclement and head towards friendly lines. The plans for this had a major issue from the outset, when tools and equipment were prioritised over food and ammunition. Some regiments thought they were simply making a small hop backwards, so focused on the requirements of transport. The journey west began in earnest as the division headed for Popovka, moving through temperatures that would drop well below freezing.

The Julia Division would need to head north first, to avoid the strong Soviet forces in the Rossos area, and ended up marching a similar route to the Cuneense Division. The Tridentina and Vicenza had more a direct route.

Cuneense were initially held up by the retreating XXIV Panzer Corps, who monopolised the road. They also encountered large numbers of German, Romanian, and civilian stragglers heading in the same direction. The stop-start nature of the movement, in areas with little shelter, led to many frostbite casualties amongst the troops.

The first troops reached Annovka on 18 January, and ditched much of their useless equipment here. Meanwhile, the Tridentina and Vicenza were moving a little freer, but it is worth noting that - of the four Divisions - only Cuneense and Tridentina Divisions were in any shape to put up a notable fight, should it be needed.

#### JULIA AND CUNEENSE ENGAGE

On 19 January, the Julia Division encountered strong Russian forces in Novaya Postoyalovka. The Soviets had occupied the village, and, with support from some Lend Lease Shermans, alongside several mortars and machine guns, they ambushed the Julia Division. After the initial shock of the well-hidden Soviet troops, the Italians rallied and attempted to take the village, seizing the outskirts. The Cuneense Division arrived in the evening and a further attack was prosecuted with vigour, but lacked enough punch to get through the determined, mobile Soviet defence, with its armoured support.

At this point, radio contact was made with the Italian High Command, who were with Tridentina and Vicenza, and requests for aid were sent. With Tridentina busy fighting its own battle for Postoialyj, no aid could be sent, which meant that Novaya Postoyalovka needed to be bypassed.

The two attacking Divisions joined together to move and fight. Under the cover of darkness, they moved north and hoped to turn west again, but Julia's 8th Regiment got separated and was forced to surrender, further weakening the southern Alpini. At this point, the Tridentina Division was given a new order to change direction, but this order was not relayed



*Alpini on the move. These are conversions made from Great Escape Games' Winter Italians and plastic parts from Warlord Games' Alpini box set.*



to the other divisions, so on 21 January, when the Julia and Cuneense Divisions reached where they thought the Tridentina Division would be, they found nothing.

Tridentina was making excellent progress, however, fighting well against Soviets in the regions of Shelyakino and Malakeevo. This Division was supported by German forces, including armour, but it was the Italians that did most of the fighting against regular partisan ambushes along their route. They left the roads to travel cross-country, which helped keep the Soviets guessing as to their exact location, but their general direction of travel was obvious!

#### AN ENERGY-SAPPING ESCAPE

While the Tridentina ploughed west, the Julia and Cuneense Divisions sheltered for a moment in the village of Aleksandrovka. This was not as restful as it could have been, due to frequent partisan activity. The Alpini were soon on the march again, following Tridentina as best they could.

They caught up to Vincenza Division, then came upon the village of Novodmitrievka, which was held by the Soviets. The Italians quickly took this village, rested, and reorganised. Frostbite, hunger, and fatigue were beginning to take their toll, and the generals were not sure if their fatigued troops could continue to make their bold attacks. Further marches would be made off-road to try to avoid the enemy.

Winter was adding to the misery of the retreat, especially now the men were off-road, but the conditions did help keep the Alpini away from the eyes of Soviet forces until the 25 January. When the Cuneense Division reached Garbuzovo, the village seemed deserted, so the Alpini started to look for food and other supplies. It was at this point



a Soviet ambush was sprung, including armoured support. The Alpini managed to fight themselves out of the village and continue to their goal of Rybalzin, harried all the way by partisans.

The Divisions made good progress until the early hours of the 27 January, when they were caught by Cossack troops roaming the area, wielding sled-mounted machine guns. This attack was driven off at some cost by the Dronero Battalion, who were then almost destroyed as they took shelter in a small village, only to be attacked again by partisans and Cossack Cavalry.

Their march west continued in increasingly miserable circumstances; Soviet aircraft harried them from the air, and ground troops moved in. Eventually, the Italians were surrounded, and 4,000 troops of two Divisions, plus other troops who had joined them, were captured.

While the Julia and Cuneense Division were finally succumbing to the Soviet pressure, the Tridentina Division fought

a massive battle at Nikolaevka. Two Alpini Battalions, plus three German armoured vehicles attacked the village in what was a quick stalemate. The Axis did not have the initial strength to take the village, and the Soviets did not have enough to push them back out. Any delay would greatly hinder the Italians. They needed to take the area, or they would suffer even greater losses on the open steppe, so every soldier who could move was ordered in. Intense hand-to-hand combat ensued, and the Italians were eventually successful.

They did not get to bask in victory - rest was taken, then the march resumed. On 31 January, the column contacted frontline Italian troops, and the evacuation could begin. The Alpini Divisions had somehow managed to escape the Soviet encirclement, but were done as a fighting force. Some 35,000 Alpini out of a force of 60,000 were lost, never to return.



*Soviet partisans launch another ambush as the Alpini push on.*



## GAMING THE ALPINI RETREAT

### TERRAIN

There are several options when gaming this retreat, but one constant factor should be present: winter conditions. Tabletops can be quite bleak and covered in snow or a white cloth, as the fighting often took part on open steppes with few more features than some rolling hills and trees or shrubs. The Alpini Retreat offers a good opportunity to start your winter terrain collection if you don't have one, as you don't need too much fancy terrain to get playing. There are a lot of forest-based and urban fights here as well, so you can vary things up somewhat. Keep in mind that the urban combat was mainly for villages rather than towns, so it's best to keep the buildings humble. You should include plenty of fences, though, and can scatter a little rail infrastructure over your gaming boards.

### PLAY STYLE

The main goal of the Italians is to get through the Soviets in front of them, rather than to capture them or make a defensive stronghold. Your games should reflect this with victory conditions that reward the Italians for pushing through, and bonuses for removing Soviets in the process. It will be essential that the Italians keep as many men as possible alive, to fight again, too. You can add in escort duties for the many soldiers who were unwilling or unable to attack, if you want to vary things up with side missions.



Soviet defenders from Artizan Designs.

The aim of the Soviet player is to stop the Italians in their tracks. Something like the Envelopment scenario from Warlord Games' *Bolt Action* is the sort of thing you should keep in mind. You could make variations on that scenario, with added bonuses/penalties in the next game, depending on how many Italians survive.

### A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TROOPS

The Alpini are mainly infantry and armed with rifles, although you may need to adjust your games to account for unarmed troops getting into hand-to-hand combat. They had some mountain guns and the odd 47mm anti-tank gun, but mainly relied on getting into the faces of the Soviets when they encountered them.

If your refight involves the Tridentina Division, you can have some German armoured support in the shape of Stugs, but there isn't a lot more on offer. Any scenario you come up with will need to take the worn down and ill-supplied condition of the troops into account.

The Soviets have a lot more options available to them; they are the winning army, and are actively hunting the escaping Axis forces. They have Cossacks - lots of Cossacks - including sleds with machine guns (think Tachanka with skis rather than wheels). There are also lots of partisan attackers waiting to ambush the Italians, wielding cool gear like massed artillery and T-34s, which the Italians could only dream of!

## FINDING THE FIGURES

The largest range of 28mm Alpini figures are all made in metal by Great Escape Games. They not only have the squads you need, but also the support weapons - mortars, machine guns, snipers, artillery, and an excellent Mule Team. The downside for our purposes is that they are all in summer uniform (fingers crossed for some winter ones soon). Another option is to make conversions from Great Escape Games' equally great Winter Italians (see *Modelling the Alpini*), resulting in troops perfect for this theatre.

If plastic is more your thing, Wargames Atlantic and Warlord Games both do box sets of Italians that can be made into Alpini. Once again, however, these are in the summer uniform. There would have been troops at this time still using the summer uniform due to supply issues, but they did not last long, or they scavenged warmer wraps. Perhaps pepper some of these through your other troops.

*The Soviets seen right all come from Artizan Designs; Army Squad IV, Soviet Command (Winter Gear), and Soviet Army Squad (Snow Suits) to be specific.*





## BATTLE OF NOVAYA POSTOYALOVKA

In this scenario, the Italian forces of the Julia and Cuneense Divisions are trying to take the village of Novaya Postoyalovka from the Soviet defenders. The Italians have the numbers, but the Soviets are prepared, have the cover, and wield heavier weapons. This is designed for Warlord Games' *Bolt Action*, but can be easily adapted for other systems.

### Set up

Working with a 6' x 4' table, one long edge will be the Italians, and from here up to the centre of the table, there is no cover; it is open steppe with nothing to help them. The Soviet half of the table should be made to look like a Russian village, but not too crowded. There should also be fences and walls to give the Soviets cover. They can be dug-in and/or occupying man-made barricades, but there should be no bunkers or heavy structures.



### ITALIAN FORCES

The Italian player has three waves of forces, and all units are veteran.

#### First Wave

- 1 Second Lieutenant plus attendant
- 4 squads of 10 Alpini with NCO with SMG, and an LMG
- 2 Medium Howitzers
- 2 Light Mortars
- 2 Medium Machine Guns

#### Second Wave

- 1 Captain plus attendant
- 1 Second Lieutenant plus attendant
- 4 squads of 10 Alpini with NCO with SMG, and an LMG
- 2 Medium Machine Guns

#### Third Wave

- 1 Major plus attendant
- 1 Second Lieutenant plus attendant
- 4 squads of 10 Alpini with NCO with SMG, and an LMG
- 2 Medium Machine Guns



### SOVIET FORCES

The Soviet forces are split in two - the initial defenders and the mobile reserve. All Soviet units are regular, except the partisans.

#### Defenders

- 1 First Lieutenant plus attendant
- 1 Second Lieutenant plus attendant
- 6 Guards squads of 11 men, NCO with SMG and 2 LMGs
- 2 Medium Mortars
- 2 Medium Howitzers
- 1 Artillery Observer (see special rules)
- 3 Medium Machine Guns

#### Mobile Reserve

- 2 BA-64
- 1 T-70
- 1 T-34
- 2 Cavalry squads of 10 men, mounted on horses, all men with SMGS
- 2 Bielski Partisan units of 10 men, all with rifles





## MODELLING THE ALPINI

At the time of writing, there are no options in 28mm for World War Two Alpini in winter gear that I could spot. You do have Alpini in plastic (from Wargames Atlantic and Warlord Games) or in metal from Great Escape Games but these are all in summer uniforms, so you'll need to get a little creative.

The simplest of conversions would be to take Great Escape Games' Winter Italians, gather spare feathers from your Warlord Games plastics, and add them to the metal figures' helmets. The Alpini wore the same helmet as the regular troops, so this simple conversion will not look out of place. You could also do full head-swaps to a similar effect, which would allow you to give some figures the distinctive Cappello Alpino.



*Well-equipped Alpini blend into the snowy landscape.*



*Alpini living up to their name, making a rapid ascent over rugged terrain.*



*We tasked Matt Parkes with making these simple conversions for our game, following Dom's guide.*

If you're up for a bit more of a challenge, then look to some of the Eastern Front photos. You often see troops wrapped in whatever they can find, and the Alpini are no different, even though they were already better equipped for the winter. This is a chance to represent the ski suits and cold weather clothing of these mountain troops with a conversion of Warlord Games' German Winter Infantry plastics. All you'd need to do is change the weapons and heads to Alpini as described above to build figures with a greater variety of poses and clothing options.

Pushing the conversions a little further, to better represent the Eastern Front photos, you can add blankets over shoulders like you see so often. These can be done with the tinfoil approach (carefully fold it over itself then shape it to fit) or with a sausage of modelling putty. Make the other parts of the uniform and gear more ragged at the same time for that desperate feel!

A few conversions go a long way toward making a unique force that will stand out on the tabletop.

## SPECIAL RULES

### Artillery Observer

The Soviet Artillery Observer can call in a barrage twice in the game; however, the first one can only be called in after the appearance of the Italian Second Wave, and the second one only after the appearance of the Italian Third Wave.

### Alpini

The Alpini were desperate and determined; when they advance or run towards a Soviet unit, they do not need to make an order check, even when they have pins. This counts as a successful order check.

### DEPLOYMENT

The Soviets set up all their units, other than the Mobile Reserve, on the table.

The Italian First Wave will advance or run onto the board on the first turn, except for the Medium Howitzers. These can be deployed within 6" of the Italian table edge before the first turn, but cannot be targeted by the Soviet player until the second turn.

The Italian Second Wave enters the fight either on the fourth turn, or when half the initial infantry squads are destroyed - whichever comes first. Their Order Dice are kept out of the bag until they can deploy. When the Italian Second Wave enters the fight, the Soviet player can also select up to half of their Mobile Reserve to appear.

The Italian Third Wave enters the fight on the seventh turn, or when half the Second Wave infantry squads are destroyed - whichever comes first. Their Order Dice are kept out of the

bag until they can deploy. Once the Italian Third Wave appears, the rest of Soviet Mobile Reserve can enter the table.

The Italian player may not outflank.

The Soviet Mobile Reserve units can enter from any table edge the Soviet player wants, other than the Italians' edge. They do not suffer the -1 penalty for outflanking.

## VICTORY

If the Italians can get more than three units, at more than half their full strength, off the Russian table edge, then they have won; if this includes the Major, then this is a major victory. If they do not manage this, then the Soviet player wins, and if all Italian officers are killed, then it is a major Soviet victory.

The game continues until the Italians win or are unable to do so.

This will not be an easy game for the Italians to win, but it can be done.





Achtung, panzer!

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Renatio et Gloriam is a set of tabletop miniature rules that allows you to fight large-scale battles from the Renaissance and Early Modern period. Covering warfare from the late Fifteenth Century up to the end of the Great Northern War in 1721, these rules allow you to field the armies of Cordoba, Turenne, or Marlborough. At the core of the rules is the CCC Games engine, developed by Simon Hall, first seen in the award-winning ancient tabletop miniatures rules Mortem et Gloriam.

There is friction in the game. Each on-table general will have a hand of cards, which can be played in multiple ways. Better-quality generals get more cards. Management of these cards is paramount to the decisions that you must make. When playing these cards will you – order a charge on the enemy? Or will you try to encourage the soldiers onward after being driven back by deadly fire? Or will the general join the ranks to bolster troops' morale? These are the decisions you will face.



### RENATIO ET GLORIAM: EUROPE'S RUIN

Army Lists for The Thirty Years War and British Civil Wars

Simon Clarke, Simon Hall, Alasdair Harley

Supporting the core rules are over 400 army lists covering conflicts around the globe. These are broadly categorised by time, geography, and important conflict. The grouping of lists does have flexibility in scale. If you want Marlborough's army at Blenheim – fine, we have that. If you want the English Garrison at Tangiers, that's fine too. We wanted to be as inclusive as possible and leave it down to the players how they play. We will not judge!

The book contains 55 army lists and enables the gamer to create wargames armies for matched play and competitions. Starting in 1618 with the Catholic League, the covers the armies of the Thirty Years to the end of the British Civil Wars in the early 1650's.





# THE ATTACK ON FORT GALLABAT



## ONE-DAY CAMPAIGN GUIDELINES

Last issue, Karim van Overmeire outlined the background and gaming basics for this WWII action in the African Campaign. This time he shows how to translate the gaming into a one-day campaign.

The attack on Fort Gallabat can be played as a quick campaign by individual British and Italian players or by multiple participants working in teams. The services of an umpire are highly desirable here and the campaign turns can be arranged ahead via email, but the goal is to have a couple of enjoyable tabletop games.

I hope that it will take only a little creativity for readers to bridge the gap between the campaign suggestions here and the tabletop rules of their preference. Doing so should create a WWII mini campaign that is manageable for the umpire and challenging for the participants. You can also take various elements from the suggestions presented here and build them into your own mini campaigns for other battles on the northern front and beyond.

### THE CAMPAIGN MAP

For my Gallabat campaign I drew a map with squares that represent 1km in real life and a 150cm x 150cm area on the tabletop. I tweaked the terrain a little bit, so that there could be no misunderstanding about the features in each square, and I placed the strategic positions in the centre of each square. A letter in each square corner shows the main vegetation, or lack thereof:

- C = Cleared
- E = Elephant Grass and single trees
- J = Jungle
- P = Palm trees.

Specific areas were given additional details. Most of the descriptions below are from Marek Sobski's book *East Afrika*:

#### • Fort Gallabat (C6)

"Walls made of stones and logs, cut thorn bushes (a so-called zariba) and barbed wire, nearly 600 metres long and almost 400 metres wide. Machine gun positions were located in the foreground. The thickets and bush around the fort were cleared (for hundreds of metres) so that the defenders had a good field of fire."



• **Metemma (C3, C4)**

“With its characteristic Ethiopian houses known as tukul and a mosque... The white-painted Italian barracks and the sheds of two field depots stood out among the huts.” It was covered by two deep lines of strong defensive wire obstacles. The buildings in the settlement itself were also strengthened.

• **The Boundary Khor (Various)**

A dry watercourse with steep slopes which make it impossible for vehicles to cross except at the bridge. (There is no need for the umpire to inform the British player about this in advance).

• **The Landing Ground (E3)**

“A primitive airstrip” - flat, hard ground without any buildings.

• **The Main Road (C2-9, D2, E2)**

Connecting Gallabat and Metemma it “was tightly shielded with wire on both sides”.

• **Hills (Row 1, Row 9):**

These are covered with trees, sometimes even described as forested.

**DEPLOYMENT**

The Italian players can deploy their troops freely in rows 1 to 7 of the map. The British players deploy their units in row 9.

The British have observed the Italian garrison for some time from the hills in row 9, and British units arrived in their starting positions under cover of night, during a heavy storm. Thus, the umpire should brief the British to a certain degree on the Italian positions, but the Italians should get no information on the British starting positions.



**STACKING LIMITS**

Each square has a stacking limit of three units from the same side. This applies after all movement has ended and all tabletop battles have been fought. Thus, during an attack, both sides may have up to three units in the square, but at the end of the contact the losing side will retreat. Battalion headquarters do not count towards the stacking limit.

**ZONE OF CONTROL**

Each square exerts a zone of control (ZoC) over the eight adjacent squares.

*Italian askari in a dry riverbed, awaiting the Indian attack. 20mm Early War Miniatures from the author's collection.*



## PLAYING THE CAMPAIGN

### SCALE AND TIMEFRAME

There are 16 campaign turns, each representing one hour of historical time with the game starting at 0500. Units are infantry companies, battalion headquarters, and support units. As this is a one-day-campaign, tabletop losses should not be replaced or recovered.

### ORDERS

At the start of a turn each unit can get a new order. Units can only have one order. Conditional orders are not allowed. The following orders are possible:

- **Move:** Movement by vehicles along the main road is unlimited. For all other units, or in all other terrain, movement is limited to four squares per-turn. Movement is halted when the unit enters an enemy ZoC. In the next turn, the unit can continue its movement, including an attack into the square with the unit that was exerting its ZoC. Attacks from different squares into the same enemy held square are coordinated into a single tabletop battle.

- **Defend:** The unit remains in the square and takes the best available cover. They get the initiative on the tabletop and will be able to immediately fire on the attacker. Without a 'Defend' order in play, the attacker will get the initiative. All troops without explicit orders are considered to be under a 'Defend' order.

- **Support Fire** (only artillery): The support fire must be allocated to a specific friendly infantry company. This unit will get support fire from this battery during the tabletop battle.

- **Interdiction Fire** (only artillery): The battery will fire on the indicated square. The fire will not result in any casualties, but no units may move in, out, or through this square during this turn (with the exception of 'Fall Back'). Enemy batteries in this square will not be able to fire. Interdiction fire cannot be given to a square containing friendly troops.

- **Fall Back:** The unit moves one square in the direction of its own deployment line. This movement is allowed even when the unit is in a square taking enemy interdiction or counter battery fire.

*Note: This rule prohibits a single battery from pinning all enemy units within a square in place for the whole game.*

- **Artillery:** All artillery batteries can fire on any square on the map. Firing from infantry, tanks, etc. is limited to the tabletop battles. Artillery cannot fire and move in the same turn. Each turn, there is a one-in-three chance that the enemy will be able to locate the square of the firing battery.

### SEQUENCE

Each turn, the umpire applies orders in the following sequence:

1. All British interdiction fire, then all Italian interdiction fire.
2. All British attacks (movements that lead to a contact/tabletop battle), then the Italian attacks. Units in a square that are attacked by the enemy cannot move this turn.
3. All rolls for recovery from exhaustion.
4. All British 'Fall Back' moves, then all Italian 'Fall Back' moves.
5. All British other movements (not leading to a contact), then all Italian other movements. Remember that units stop when they enter an enemy ZoC.
6. Fight tabletop battles
7. Follow battles with the retreat movements of the losing side.
8. Umpire briefing given to each side with updates, events, and observation details.
9. Players give orders for the next turn.



*Supported by light tanks, the Indian infantry advances towards Fort Gallabat.*

### VICTORY OR DEFEAT

The British player/players win the game if they conquer the Fort of Metanna (square C2) and if there are no Italian troops remaining south of Boundary Khor river. All other situations are an Italian victory.

### EXTRA RULES

#### Observation

As a rule of thumb, vehicles are visible at up to four squares range and infantry up to two squares, although the elephant grass, hills, and other obstacles can limit observation.

For each observation of enemies in a given square, the umpire rolls a secret dice:

- 1: Estimation is 1/3 of real enemy strength.
- 2: Estimation is 2/3 of real enemy strength.
- 3 to 4: Estimation of enemy strength is correct.
- 5: Estimation is double that of real enemy strength.
- 6: Estimation is triple that of enemy strength.

#### Retreat

Units that have lost a tabletop battle are exhausted and must immediately and automatically retreat four squares in the direction of their map deployment edge. This rule applies to all troops of the losing side that were in the square, even if they did not fight or suffer losses themselves. When retreat is not possible without getting into an enemy's ZoC, the units surrender.



### Voluntary Withdrawal

The defender can always forego a tabletop battle by voluntarily withdrawing their troops from an attacked square. These units are automatically 'Exhausted' and retreat four squares. The attacker takes the square, their units do not suffer from exhaustion, and they may continue their movement if a further advance was ordered.

A tabletop battle in which the defender withdraws all their troops from the gaming table before the start of the fourth gaming turn is also considered to be a 'Voluntary Withdrawal' with the same consequences.

### Exhaustion

All troops that were deployed in a tabletop battle are left Exhausted, including those that did not suffer any losses or did not fight. The attacker is not Exhausted when the defender withdraws voluntarily before the start of the fourth gaming turn (See 'Voluntary Withdrawal').

Exhausted troops can move but not attack. If they are attacked, they fight with decreased quality (veteran becomes trained, trained becomes green, Exhausted green troops surrender if attacked).

### Recovery From Exhaustion

At the end of each campaign turn, units suffering from Exhaustion can attempt to recover as long as:

1. They were under 'Defend' orders.
2. They were not attacked, under air attack, or artillery bombardment.
3. Their battalion commander is in the same or an adjacent square.

On the roll of a 5+ on a D6 they will recover.

### Disproportion

When the power ratios between the participating troops are too unequal, tabletop battles might be boring or finished so quickly that they are a waste of time for the umpire and the players.

When the attacker's strength is less than 50% of the defender's, or more than 300% of the defender's, the umpire should decide the result or roll a D6 to determine it randomly (applying modifiers of their choosing).

### Air Combat

Each 'Flight' represents a fighter or bomber that is active over the campaign area for a single turn. Each Flight can



*Italian motorized troops; 20mm Early War Miniatures from the author's collection.*

only be used once during the game and in each turn, both players declare how many fighters and bombers they will use. For bombers, the target square must be indicated.

- The British player has 9 'Fighter Flights' and 6 'Bomber Flights'.
- The Italian player has 17 'Fighter Flights' and 32 'Bomber Flights'.

The umpire counts the number of fighters chosen to activate by each side and rolls that number of dice for them. For each 5+ rolled an enemy plane of the enemy's choosing is downed. The side with most fighters remaining after the rolls and removals has air supremacy. The side with air supremacy may conduct bombing runs according to your tabletop rules. The bombers of the opposing side must return without dropping their loads.



*The Italian garrison of Gallabat and Metemma was mainly composed of three battalions of Eritrean askari with their distinctive turbush or high fez. The figures seen here are Bolt Action Italian Colonial Troops and British 8th Army, by Warlord Games. Empress and Askari Miniatures make similar figures in 28mm.*



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- 228 Buff
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- 231 Mid Grey
- 232 Bronze
- 233 Linen
- 234 Dark Earth
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- 238 British Scarlet
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- 240 Unbleached Wool
- 241 Rust

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# THE BATTLE OF MOTTOLA



## A Liberation of Italy skirmish encounter for *Bolt Action* by Colin Ball.

Operation Slapstick was the codename given to a rather unusual allied invasion that took place during the Italian campaign in September 1943. The Italian Government had surrendered, and offered to hand over the naval base and port of Taranto, located on the heel of Italy, to the allies. Keen to take advantage of this, the allied commanders gathered a force at short notice to take part in the landing. The only troops available were the British 1st Airborne Division, who were refitting in North Africa at the time, after fighting in Sicily. All transport aircraft had been allocated to the main invasion of Sicily and Italy, so the Airborne Division had to be transported to Taranto by ship, making a landing at the port on the night of 9 September 1943. Commanded by Major General George 'Hoppy' Hopkinson, the division quickly began to spread out from its landing site to seize the surrounding countryside. However, early encounters found that the German opposition in the area consisted of elements of the 1st Fallschirmjäger Division, who immediately began a fighting retreat, opposing the British wherever they could.

## FORCES INVOLVED

The main attacking force of the 1st Airborne Division for Operation Slapstick was the 4th Parachute Brigade. Of these, the 156th Parachute battalion would lead the way, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sir Richard 'Dickie' Des Voeux. The second main unit of the brigade, the 10th Parachute Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Smythe, started to form up in January 1943, and mainly consisted of men from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, who had fought at El Alamein.

Scouting ahead of the main body was the 1st Air Landing Reconnaissance Squadron (a Recce Squadron), a composite SAS Squadron, under the command of Major Roy Farran, and part of the 1st Demolition Squadron, otherwise known as Popski's Private Army. Captain Thomas Firbank, the 'A' Troop Commander of 1st Air Landing Reconnaissance Squadron, had managed to get 22 jeeps onto the landing ships for his squadron's use. The Reconnaissance Squadron was commanded by Major 'Freddie' Gough, who had lost an eye in a previous engagement, and who wore an eye patch (one for all you modellers out there.)

The German paratroopers had been fighting in Sicily, having been dropped there to bolster Italian resistance, and had been withdrawn to the mainland to refit. They were commanded by General Richard Heidrich, who concluded that he had insufficient forces to oppose the allied landings at Taranto. Instead, he chose to organise a fighting withdrawal in an effort to slow the Allied advance. There are no details about exactly what forces opposed the Allies at each of the skirmishes detailed here, but we can assume that the Germans fought at platoon, if not company, strength. A Fallschirmjäger Division consisted of three Fallschirmjäger Regiments, an artillery regiment, a pioneer, flak, and a medical battalion, so was well equipped to oppose the Allied lead elements.



*Soldiers of Popski's Private Army in Piazza San Marco, (Venice, Italy 30 April 1945).*





*All the figures seen in this article are by Warlord Games. We used (metal and plastic) Bolt Action British Airborne, SAS, and German Fallschirmjäger for our games.*

### THE ADVANCE FROM TARANTO

The 156th and 10th Parachute Battalions left Taranto on 10 September, with the Recon elements going on ahead by jeep. Some of the heavy-weapon platoons commandeered local transport, including trucks and private vehicles, but most of the troops were left to make the hard slog on foot.

‘A’ Troop of the 1st Air Landing Reconnaissance Squadron first encountered German opposition at Massafra, where they carried out a section attack on the town to flush out the opposition. The Germans pulled back and evacuated the area by truck, taking their dead and injured with them. However, there was no time for the Recon team to rest on their laurels, as 156 Battalion were hot on their heels, and wanted them to push on to Mottola.

The town of Mottola is situated on the top of a hill that dominates the entire area for miles. There was no way to approach it stealthily, so the men of the Recon troop approached cautiously up the main road in their jeeps. They soon came under machine gun fire from dug-in German positions, and had to leap for cover. The Recon squadron then put down fire on the German positions, beginning to

flank by sections. Very soon after this, ‘C’ Company of the 156th Airborne arrived, having commandeered some buses. Brigadier ‘Shan’ Hackett and the Brigade Major of 4 Para Brigade, Major Peter ‘Crackers’ May, arrived on the scene and began to organise an attack. Machine guns and 3" mortars provided cover for the attack, and soon ‘C’ Company had obtained a foothold in the town. The firing died down, at which point the inhabitants of the town began to emerge and told the British that the Germans had withdrawn. The British Airborne moved into the town at 1600 hrs. The British were welcomed by cheering crowds with gifts or flowers and fruit, which General Hopkinson said was: “rather like the end of a rugby match.” Casualties were light, with only 20 men wounded.

The same pattern would continue for the next few days, with the Recon elements encountering German forces and engaging them, before the main elements of the Airborne Brigade came up to dislodge them. The Germans inevitably fell back in good order, having delayed the British as long as they could. Actions were fought at Palagiano, San Basilio, Gioia, and Castellaneta, where a major engagement resulted in the death of Major General Hopkinson. In addition, the detachment of two SAS, under the



*German Fallschirmjäger ambush a British squad somewhere near Mottola.*



command of Major Symes, was employed on short-range jeep patrolling. They had skirmishes with the Germans at Castellaneta and Ginosa, destroyed a gun position at Miglionico on 18 September, and had further skirmishes at Stornarella and Ascoli on the 25 September. By the end of September, the British Airborne Division had advanced 125 miles before it was ordered to stop, being replaced by regular infantry battalions. It was subsequently withdrawn to take part in the D-Day landings.

### WARGAMING MOTTOLA

Although this part of the Italian campaign is a bit of a sideshow to the main event, it has interesting wargaming potential. It involves some of the more unusual units of the Italian campaign, including both British and German Paratroopers, Special Air Service Squadrons, and even Popski's Private Army! The low numbers of troops involved on both sides make these encounters ideal for those just embarking on a *Bolt Action* collection, or players who have time only for small encounters. That said, if you have the time, space, and the miniatures, encounters such as Castellaneta are larger affairs that can easily take up a day's gaming.

The advance from Taranto involves a series of encounters in small Italian villages and towns, which can either be played out individually, or run as linked scenarios in a campaign. The German aim was not to defeat the British, but to slow them down whilst fighting a withdrawing action. Instead of a straightforward series of 'win or lose' battles, the number of turns taken to dislodge the German defenders from each village could be totted up, with a certain number resulting in German success or failure. Trying to game a withdrawing action challenges both the German player to accomplish it, and the British player to prevent the withdrawal, making this sort of scenario eminently replayable.

### "IT'S NO WHISKY, YOU CLUCK! IT'S BRANDY!"

On the night of 10 September, 'A' Troop of the Airborne Recon Squadron had their first encounter with what seemed like 'hostile' forces. Captain Thomas Fairbank recalled, "I heard the rest of the Troop behind me quietly dismount and lie down with a clink of weapons. This is it! I thought. We are ambushed alone in the night. I crept forward to listen to the excited whispers ahead, and as I strained eyes and ears heard the words "It's no whisky, you cluck! It's brandy!" Lieutenant Douglas Galbraith, commanding 1 section, had come across an abandoned truckload of wooden crates, each one filled with bottles of brandy. It was with great sadness that the Scot had to leave the alcohol behind for the advancing supports, as Captain Fairbank had to remind him that their "primary duty was to prosecute the war." However, Lieutenant Galbraith did manage to fit a couple of crates onto the jeeps "against medical need."



SAS Jeeps off-road near Taranto.



Brits and Germans clash in an Italian farmyard. Most of the buildings seen in the article come from *Grand Manner*.

Playing a fighting withdrawal is always tricky in a wargame. If you give the German player the objective to pull their troops back, you run the risk that they will do this straight away, and the game descends into a chase. Equally, if you reward the German player for holding up the Allies for as long as possible, then they tend to dig their forces in and fight to the last bullet! For this reason, I have suggested victory conditions that reward the German player for holding up the British attack, but that avoiding the destruction of all the men under his command! You may need to refine these, depending on exactly how you lay out your board, and the nature of the troops involved; wily players always have a way of circumventing the rules to sneak a win.



## MOTTOLA IN BOLT ACTION

If you wish to play out the attack on Mottola, or any of the towns and villages on the advance from Taranto, then I suggest you use the following rules:

### ARMY SELECTION

The battle can be played out with any size of force, from platoon to company encounters. 1,000 points is the standard-sized game for *Bolt Action*, which should be about right for Mottola, as many of the troops in these elite units are more expensive in points. As the Germans are in a fairly strong defensive position, I would allow the Allies 25% more points than the Germans, especially given the tricky Allied objective.

Army selection options for the British Airborne in Italy can be found on page 103 of the 'Italian Campaign: Soft Underbelly' supplement. Also in this supplement are rules for the SAS (page 104), Popski's Private Army (page 105), and the German Fallschirmjäger in Italy (pages 91-94).

### SET-UP

The German half of the board should contain the town of Mottola, with as many winding streets, gardens, vehicles, and items of street furniture as you like. There should be a road running from the British board edge to the town, and either through it, or to a crossroads. The British should have some fields with hedges, or perhaps a vineyard, to break up their approach to the town, but the Germans selected the town to defend because of its excellent fields of fire, so the approach should not have too much cover.

The German player may place their forces anywhere up to the halfway point on the table. These units can use the hidden set-up rules (see page 117 in the *Bolt Action*



*A Fallschirmjäger MG42 LMG team ambush a passing British SAS Squad.*

rulebook). Units that are not set up to start the game can be left in reserve (see Reserves, page 119). The British player begins with their forces off-board, and must move onto the board in their first move. The British must nominate at least half of their force to form the first wave. This can be the entire army, if desired, but must include any Recon or SAS elements. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

### TURN ONE

The British player moves first and brings their first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the attacker's table edge, and must be given either a run or advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

### GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of

turn 6, roll a dice. On a 4+ play one further turn; otherwise the game ends.

### VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows:

The attacker scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. They also score 2 victory points for each of their own units that is inside the defender's set-up area, even if only partially.

The defender scores 2 victory points for every enemy unit destroyed. They also score 1 victory point for every one of their units within 12" of their base edge when the game ends (fighting withdrawal).

If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is deemed too close to call, and honours are shared - a draw!



*All hell breaks loose in Mottola. Figures by Warlord Games, Buildings by Hovels, Grand Manner and Charlie Foxtrot Models.*



# WAR GAMING MANZIKERT



**Simon MacDowall provides a detailed account of a clash in the East, between the Byzantines of Romanus IV and a Seljuk army led by Alp Arslan.**

In 1071, the East Roman Emperor, Romanus IV, resolved to put an end to incessant raids by the Seljuk Turks and re-establish Imperial control over Armenia. The opportunity came when Muhammad Ibn Dawud Çağrı, known as 'Alp Arslan' (strong as a lion), led the Seljuks through Roman territory with the intention of attacking Fatimid-held Syria and Egypt. Romanus led a huge army into eastern Anatolia, behind Alp Arslan. With their supply lines cut, the Turks had no choice but to call off their offensive and retreat. In doing so, they lost many men from desertion and a disastrous crossing of the Euphrates River.

The two armies converged on Manzikert (modern Malazgirt in eastern Turkey). All the odds were stacked in the favour of the Byzantines (as the East Romans have come to be called in modern times). They had the initiative, they heavily outnumbered the Turks, and they had the advantage of position. The Turks had no options other than to fight or sue for peace. Alp Arslan took the second option but his peace overtures were haughtily rebuffed by the overconfident Emperor; the Byzantines were confident of victory in battle...

... but all did not go according to plan. We will get to that later; in the meantime, here's a look at the composition of the armies and how they might translate onto the wargames table.



*Above: Alp Arslan considers the latest intelligence on the enemy movements.*



## ORDERS OF BATTLE

Constructing orders of battle for the armies at Manzikert is quite a challenge. We have no definitive numbers or compositions. Unusually for an Osprey Campaign, David Nichole didn't provide orders of battle in his *Manzikert 1071* book and it would seem that no one else has attempted it. I shall do my best!

### THE BYZANTINE TAGMATA (REGULAR IMPERIAL ARMY)

Led in person by the Emperor, the army would certainly have contained most of the Tagmata. The Tagmata was based at Constantinople and served as the Emperor's central reserve of regular professional troops. By the 11th Century the Imperial Tagmata was almost entirely heavy cavalry comprising the following units:

- 1,000 Hetaeria. The Emperor's bodyguard.
- 4 to 6,000 men in each of the following regiments: Scholae, Excubiti, and Icanati.
- 4,000 Optimates who were support troops and baggage guard.

In addition to these deployable heavy cavalry units, there were others (including some infantry) that were the Constantinople garrison and therefore unlikely to accompany the Emperor on campaign.

The Emperor, therefore, would have had less than 20,000 cavalymen of the Tagmata following him to Manzikert. Of that up to 4,000 would have been support troops.

He also had the Varangian Guard, an infantry regiment recruited from Rus, Scandinavians, and English. The numbers of Varangians are unknown. Harald Hardrada commanded 500 some years earlier. At Doryleaum (1097) there may have been several thousand. My guess is that perhaps 1,000 or so could be considered as regular guardsmen. Additional Varangian mercenaries were certainly hired for specific campaigns including Manzikert. Prince Vladimir of Kyiv provided 6,000 such mercenaries in 968.



Above: The three regiments of the Byzantine Tagmata (Scholae, Excubiti and Icanati), led by Nikephoros Byrennios.

### BYZANTINE THEMATIC TROOPS (REGIONAL MILITIA)

With only a very small, centrally controlled regular army, most native Byzantine troops were raised and maintained in the Themes (Themata). These were provincial districts under the command of the military governors (Strategoi). Imperial support to the Themes was run down in the reign of Constantine IX (1042-1057) to the point that the men were expected to supply themselves from land grants in lieu of direct Imperial support.

We do not have reliable numbers of potential soldiers that could have been raised from the Eastern Themes in 1071, but we do have figures from 1054. Then, the main eastern Themes had a paper strength of 43,000 infantry and 14,500 cavalry.

The Thematic troops were militia intended, primarily, to defend their homelands. Whilst

some of them would have been deployable, many, especially the infantry, would remain at home on garrison duties. The Anatolian Theme (11,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry) may have contained a deployable reserve. The important Armenian Theme (4,500 infantry, 1,250 cavalry) was abandoned in the 1050s. Armenians did serve at Manzikert, but, they were no longer on the official Imperial establishment.



Above: Byzantine infantry levied from the Anatolian Theme.



## BYZANTINE MERCENARIES

To supplement the dwindling numbers of native troops, the Empire increasingly used foreign mercenaries. Fairly large numbers were recruited for the Manzikert campaign, although we have no idea of the numbers in any of the individual contingents. The following nationalities are known to have been involved in the campaign:

- Franks: Norman, German, and French mounted knights and sergeants.
- Turks: Turcoples, Uzes, Cumans, and Patzinaks. Light horse archers.
- Armenians: Infantry and possibly some cavalry from the now abandoned Armenian Theme.
- Rus: Scandinavian-Slavic infantry with some cavalry from what is now Ukraine.
- Georgians: Heavy cavalry.
- Bulgars: Heavy cavalry, probably bow-armed.



Above: Although Armenia had been abandoned by the previous Emperor, many Armenians supported Romanus at Manzikert.

## ANALYSIS OF BYZANTINE NUMBERS

The Byzantine army at Manzikert was huge and numbers over 100,000 are quoted. The army had a large siege and supply train, and many of the men were engineers, labourers, and servants. The Norman, Roussel de Bailleul, was sent on a foraging expedition with a substantial detachment of Franks and Turks. Joseph Tarchaniotes was also dispatched with as many as 20,000 Georgians, Cumans, Rus, and Armenians. Roussel and Tarchaniotes were defeated at Ahlat and did not return. So maybe 20 to 30,000 fighting men were on the field at Manzikert. This would include most of the Tagmata, some Thematic levies, and those mercenaries not sent off with Roussel and Tarchaniotes.

Based on the analysis above, an order of battle for wargaming Manzikert could be something like this:

### Tagmata

Assumption: Not all regiments at full strength, and some left in Constantinople. Discount the Optimates who had guard and support duties.

- 1,000 Hetaeria. Elite Heavy cavalry guards. Probably lance-armed.
- 10 to 12,000 other Tagmatic cavalry. Mainly lancers but some heavy horse archers also possible. There was at least one unit of Klibanophoroi (fully armoured men on armoured horses).
- 500 to 1000 Varangian Guard. Regular fully armoured Scandinavian infantry.

### Thematic Troops

Assumption: Many would have been either disbanded after 1054 or so run down as to be useless in line of battle. Many of the available infantry would most likely be left behind as town garrisons. The numbers are pure guess work based on the Anatolian Theme which seems to have been a sort of central reserve and not just purely garrison troops. The morale and training of the Thematic soldiers would have been fairly low and their equipment variable.



Above: The Emperor Romanus leads the heavily armoured Klibanophoroi forward against the enemy.

- 10 to 12,000 Infantry. Usually 1/3 light infantry (mostly archers) and 2/3 close order spearmen.
- 2 to 4,000 Heavy Cavalry. Mostly lance armed but some may have been archers. Relatively lightly armoured compared to the Tagmatic cavalry. Light cavalry were provided by allied/mercenary Turks and similar.



## Mercenaries/Allies

Assumption: Not that many would have been present at the actual battle as most had been sent off on separate foraging expeditions. The numbers below are conjectural.

- 500 to 1,000 Frankish heavy cavalry. Possibly long-service Normans in Imperial pay as opposed to Roussel's men. Some were definitely in the reserve line at Manzikert.
- 1 to 2,000 Turkish light cavalry archers including Turcoples (Christian Turks) and Uzes. Some of the latter deserted to the enemy before the battle.
- 2 to 4,000 Armenian infantry. Numbers are based on the disbanded Armenian Theme. Any cavalry were probably off with Tarchaniotes.
- Up to 1,000 Rus heavy infantry. It is not certain that any were on the battlefield, but it is possible. Any Rus cavalry would have been with Tarchaniotes.
- Up to 500 Georgian heavy cavalry lancers and/or lance and bow. Probably most or all Georgians were with Tarchaniotes so were unlikely to have been present at Manzikert.
- Up to 500 Bulgar heavy cavalry horse archers. As above.

If the above is a reasonable guess, then I think a range of around 20 to 25,000 men is most likely for the Byzantine army up against Alp Arslan's relatively well-attested 15-20,000.

## BYZANTINE COMMAND

The Emperor Romanus commanded the centre. The Hetaeria, Varangian Guard, and Armenians were certainly part of his contingent. Nikephoros Byrennios commanded the left wing with most of the Tagmata. Theodosios Alyates led the right wing with the Thematic levies. Andronikos Dukas commanded a substantial reserve line which included some Franks as well as Archontes (Byzantine nobles with their personal followers). Andronikos was a nephew of the previous emperor with doubtful loyalty to Romanus. This had a significant impact on the outcome of the historical battle.

## SELJUK NUMBERS AND COMPOSITION

The composition of the Seljuk army is even harder to pin down. Arab chroniclers are consistent in reporting that the Seljuks had 12 to 15,000 men at Manzikert, but these may only refer to the core Seljuk Ghulams (professional heavy cavalry). Of these, 4,000 were Alp Arslan's elite askar (personal followers). Men and horses were lost crossing the Euphrates and some of the tribal levies and Arab auxiliaries deserted on the retreat to Manzikert. This left Alp Arslan with far too few men to take on the large Byzantine army.



Above: Alp Arslan held back with his askar until the key moment. When the Byzantine ranks were in disarray, he led them in a decisive charge to win the battle.

Alp Arslan sent out the call for reinforcements and the call was answered, but we do not know by whom or how many. Certainly, a substantial number of Turcoman tribal light cavalry did answer the call and an unknown number of Turkish mercenaries in the Byzantine army deserted to join him. He was also reinforced by some Kurds. The chronicler Rahid al-Din mentions 5,000 infantry in addition to 15,000 cavalry.

In the prelude to the battle, Alp Arslan sent off 5,000 men (some sources say 10,000) to engage the large Byzantine foraging parties of Roussel and Tarchaniotes. They were victorious at Ahlat and returned to take part in the main battle, minus the losses they incurred. Alp Arslan would not have sent a third of his army away when he was already concerned that he did not have the numbers to engage the Byzantines in battle; he must have had more than the 12 to 15,000 men recorded by the chroniclers.

Cross-referencing the admittedly sketchy sources, I believe the Seljuk army probably numbered close to 20,000 men, with the core of 12 to 15,000 ghulams reinforced by Turcoman and Kurdish light cavalry. Some of the losses at Ahlat may have been balanced out by Turkish deserters from the Byzantines.

A rough stab at a Seljuk army composition on the field at Manzikert might be:

- 4,000 elite ghulams. Heavy cavalry with lances and bows, including Alp Arslan's personal askar and those of his other commanders.
- 6,000 other ghulams. Heavy cavalry primarily bow-armed.
- 6,000 Turcomans and similar. Light cavalry horse archers. Including Byzantine deserters and Kurds.
- Up to 5,000 Infantry. I think it unlikely that any infantry were present on the battlefield, given Alp Arslan's tactics, but they are mentioned by Rahid al-Din. They cannot be discounted even if they may have been little more than a camp guard.

## SELJUK COMMAND

The army was split into four divisions with Sultan Alp Arslan commanding a heavy cavalry reserve.

When the opportunity presented itself, he led them in a decisive charge, apparently dressed all in white. He delegated the command of the front lines to Sav-Tekin, who was a very capable eunuch, rising to become the Sultan's most senior officer.

Sanduk al-Turki (Soundaq the Turk) led the 5,000 men that defeated the Byzantine foraging detachments at Ahlat. Unlike the Byzantine mercenaries he returned to re-join the Sultan in time for the battle.

Afsin Ibn Bakgi and Malik Danishmand were two of the more important tribal leaders (begs) commanding substantial numbers of Turcoman light horse archers.



Above: Alp Arslan humiliating Emperor Romanus IV. From a 15th Century French translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.



**PRELUDE TO BATTLE**

Feeding the huge Byzantine army required a massive effort. As the Emperor advanced on Manzikert he sent off a substantial foraging force of Turks and Normans, under Roussel de Bailleul, towards Ahlat to gather in supplies. Later, he sent Joseph Tarchaniotes to reinforce Roussel. They were engaged and defeated by Sanduk al-Turki on 23 August in what was probably a grand skirmish rather than a set piece battle. The Byzantine mercenaries withdrew and did not re-join the Emperor's army. On the same day, the Seljuk garrison at Manzikert surrendered to the Emperor. He occupied it, unaware that a substantial part of his army, and valuable supplies, had been lost.

On hearing of the fall of Manzikert, Alp Arslan force-marched towards the town, setting up his camp about ten miles to the south in the northern foothills of the Süphan Dağ volcano. The Turks launched further attacks on Byzantine foraging parties, drawing out Byzantine

reinforcements to support them. These skirmishes escalated to the point that significant numbers of Byzantines became engaged but could make no headway against the hit and run tactics of the Turkish horse archers.

**THE MAIN EVENT**

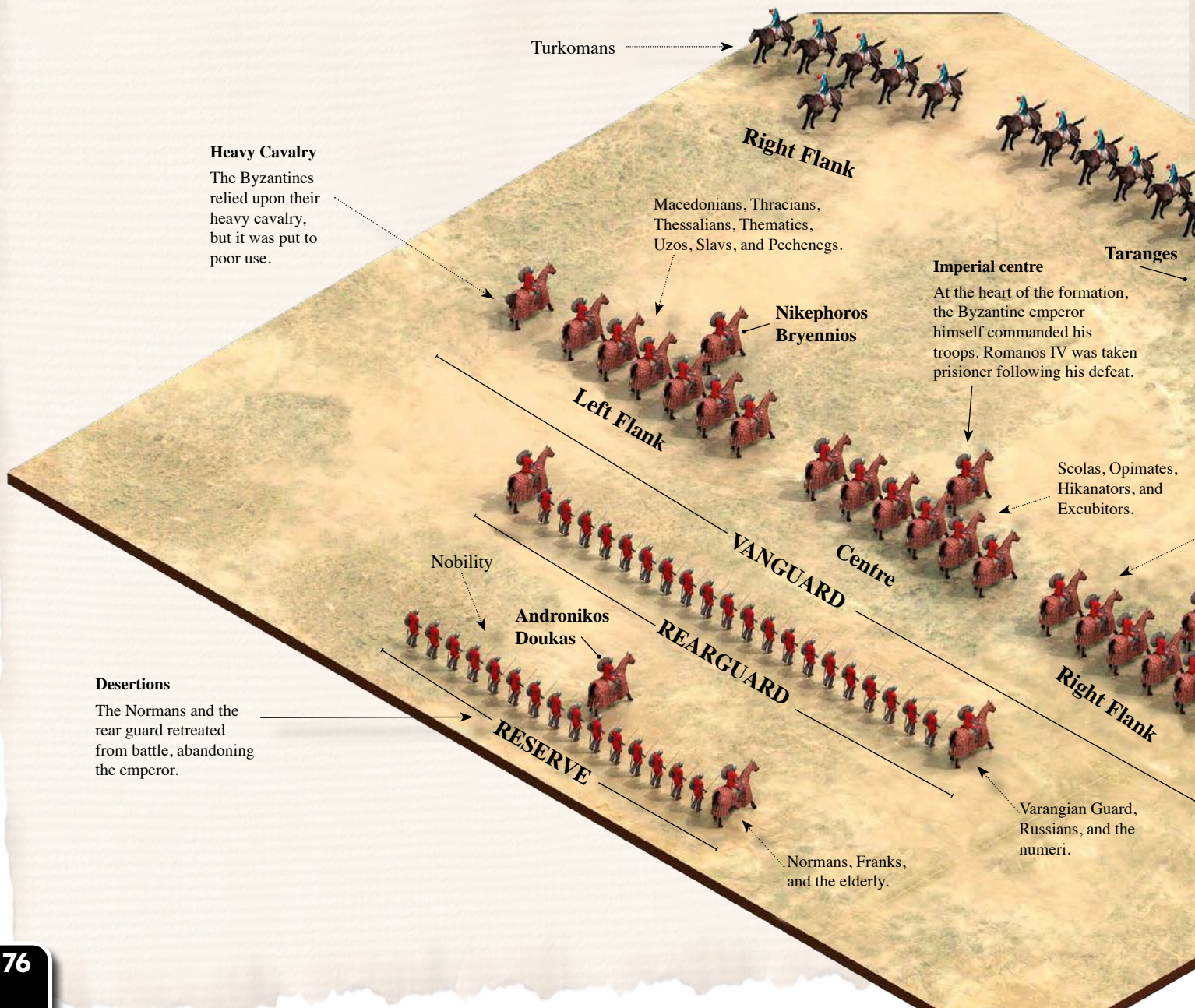
On 25 August an embassy from Alp Arslan found their peace offer haughtily rebuffed by the Emperor, who was confident in his numerical superiority. He sent out a recall to Roussel and Tarchaniotes, unaware that they had withdrawn too far away to respond. The following day the Emperor arrayed his forces and prepared to march on the Turks.

As the Byzantines advanced towards the Seljuk camp, the Turcoman horse archers harassed them. The Byzantines overran a forward camp, but, as they pressed forward, their contingents became spread out and they could not bring the Turks to battle. They simply fell back in face of the Byzantine advance.

By late afternoon the Emperor realised that he was too far from his camp and had little chance of bringing Alp Arslan's main force to combat, so he signalled a withdrawal. Romanus' central contingent began to withdraw in good order but those on the flanks hesitated and were confused when they saw the Imperial standard retiring. A rumour spread through the ranks that the Emperor had been killed and the reserve line abandoned the field rather than covering the withdrawal.

Seeing the enemy ranks in disarray, Alp Arslan sized the moment. He put aside his bow, drew his sword (some sources say a mace) and led his askar in a decisive charge. Abandoned by his flanking and reserve divisions, the Emperor made a stand (possibly dismounting) with the Varangian Guard and Armenians. Cut off and surrounded the Emperor was captured. The last great Roman army was utterly defeated, and Anatolia fell to the Turks.

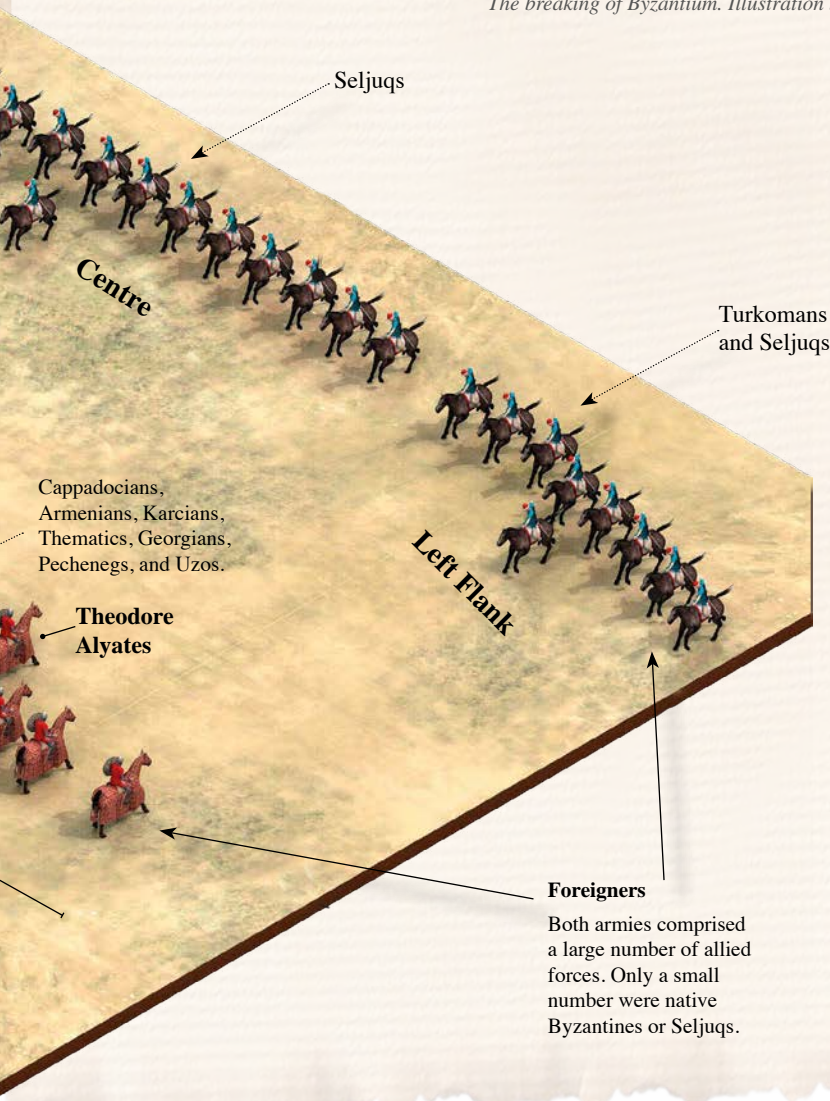
**AN INFOGRAPH GUIDE TO THE BATTLE**







Above: *The Emperor Romanos IV makes his final stand, sunset, Friday 26 August 1071. From Manzikert 1071: The breaking of Byzantium. Illustration by Christa Hook. © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com*



### WARGAMING MANZIKERT

The campaign offers several interesting tabletop opportunities. There is the fight at Ahlat, with the large Byzantine foraging parties of Roussel and Tarchaniotes against fewer but more mobile Turks; the engagement before Manzikert, when another Byzantine foraging party is attacked and then repeatedly reinforced until it develops into a small battle (this could add to any number of ‘what if?’ possibilities); and the main battle.

The big clash requires a few scenario-specific rules to make it play out realistically, whilst giving players on both sides a chance of victory. Things that need to be taken into consideration are:

- A long table to allow for the Byzantine advance without contacting the Turks, other than to be harassed by their horse archers.
- Some sort of hidden movement for the Turks, so that as the Byzantines advance they do not necessarily know where, or when, they will be engaged. This also needs to give the Turks the tabletop space and ability to disappear and then reappear.
- How to replicate Andronikos Dukas’ lack of enthusiasm or even treachery.



## INITIAL SET-UP AND SCENARIO-SPECIFIC RULES

I used a 12' x 6' table roughly divided into eight 'zones' (see map) with the game being played lengthwise. The terrain is open, with several small hills to break it up. More hills are placed in the Turkish deployment area (zones G/H) to represent the rising ground of the foothills of Süphan Dağ and there is a significant ridge along the G/H table edge.

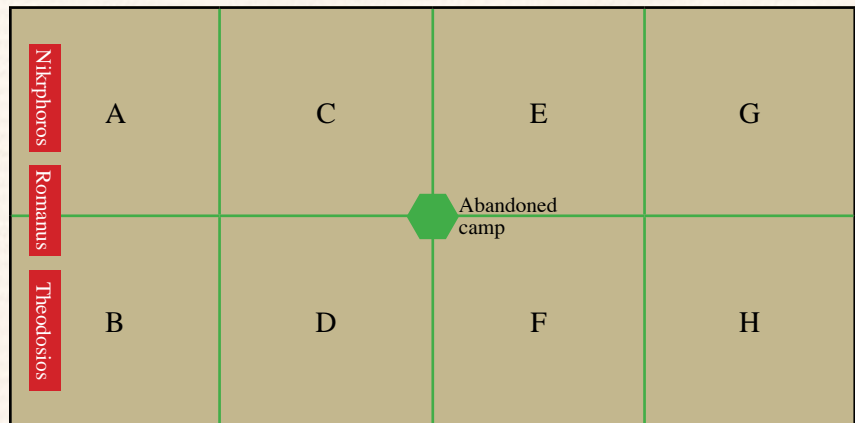
Difficult terrain should not be a factor in the game. There should ideally be a small Seljuk forward camp in either zone E or F. It is undefended, but place a few individual foot figures to give a sense that it might be defended.

The Byzantine forward divisions may be deployed anywhere in zones A and B, up to 1' in from their table edge as indicated on the map. The reserve division is initially off table and may deploy once enough space has been cleared for them. For the reserve line to come on table they must roll 5+. Add +1 for each succeeding turn. This represents Andronikos' lack of enthusiasm for the fight.

The Turks may place the Turcoman light cavalry divisions anywhere in zones C, D, E, and F. I used a 'cloud of dust' marker (cotton wool, spray painted brown) to represent each unit and one dummy per division. Once enemy come within bow range the clouds of dust are removed to reveal the actual units. This provides some 'fog of war' for the Byzantines, as they try to come to grips with the elusive Turks.

The three main Turkish divisions could be deployed anywhere in zones E, F, G, and H. They do not have to be placed on table until Byzantine heavy troops enter the adjacent zone to their front or flank.

The highly manoeuvrable Seljuk light cavalry could use the wide open plain to appear and disappear. The constriction of the game table limits this, so I allow them to voluntarily move off table. If they do, they may return the following turn anywhere within 2x bow range of the place they left, as long as it is beyond bow range of any enemy.



### Dissension in the Byzantine Ranks

Andronikos' lack of enthusiasm and potential treachery could be determined by cards, dice rolls, or by umpire control. As we had enough players, Andronikos' briefing encouraged him to hold back. It read as follows:

You are Andronikos Dukas, an experienced commander well versed in the art of war. Several of your ancestors have been Emperors prior to the current upstart Romanus. Your cousin, Micheal, aspires to the throne and you support him, although not yet openly.

You think Romanus is foolish to engage the Turks as they will most likely simply disappear as the army advances, leaving you cut off and far from the safety of your camp. You expressed your views in council, but you were overruled.

Perhaps the upcoming engagement offers an opportunity. The reserve line, which you command, is quite substantial. Should the Emperor be defeated, and you keep your casualties to a minimum, you will have the power to put your cousin on the throne.

Your objective, therefore, is to avoid decisive combat with the enemy. If attacked, you will defend yourself and not openly show any obvious disloyalty (although you may choose to disobey or misinterpret an order or two).

A decisive victory for you would be for Romanus' prestige to be diminished whilst you keep your men in good order with minimal casualties. A clear Byzantine victory would be a personal defeat for you.



Above: When the Byzantines first advanced in our game, their only indication of where the enemy might be were dust clouds. Some of these were dummy markers.



Above: The Byzantine reserve line at Manzikert did little to support the Emperor. Treachery was suspected.



## HOW OUR GAME PLAYED

As the Byzantines advanced, their only clue to the Seljuk positions were the clouds of dust, indicating possible Turcoman light cavalry units that screened the main body of the Turkish army. When the Byzantines came within bow range, the units were revealed and dummies removed.

The initial skirmishes were not that successful for the Turks and, although they managed to inflict some casualties on the enemy, the Byzantines pressed forward vigorously. Malik Danishmand was killed and Afsin Ibn Bakgi was driven off when the Emperor led a charge in person against him.

The Turcoman tribesmen, apparently driven off the field by the Byzantines, surged forward only to see their path blocked by the ghumlams of the Turkish main body. The Turks concentrated all their heavy cavalry on their right, resulting in a fierce and prolonged melee with Nikephoros Byrennios' wing. With the Turkish force left wide-open, Theodosius Alyates surged forward. A dice roll decided that he would make for the Seljuk camp rather than swing around to support Nikephoros.



*Left: Theodosios Alyates commanded the right wing of the Byzantine army. In our game, he chose to seize the enemy camp instead of supporting the fight on the left.*

Andronikos Dukas' reserve line moved forward at a snail's pace. He did nothing to intervene as a large body of Turcomans, that had previously moved off table, reappeared in the rear of the Emperor's contingent. This forced the Emperor to turn his Armenians around to face the threat and they took heavy casualties from volleys of Turkish arrows.

It was up to the Emperor himself to move in to reinforce the critical engagement on his left. Together with the Varangian guard, he charged into the enemy, taking a light wound in the process. The intervention by the Emperor and the Varangians briefly shored up the Byzantine left but Sultan Alp Arslan's elite Ghulams then joined the fray. Worn down, the Byzantine line began to crumble.



*Left: At Manzikert Sultan Alp Arslan was apparently dressed in white.*

*Right: The Emperor is killed in a heroic last stand alongside the Varangian guard, much like the historical battle.*



*Above: Primarily armed with bows, the heavy cavalry ghumlams formed the core of the Seljuk army.*

As the Turks surged forward, the Varangians stood their ground. They fought to the death to protect the Emperor before he too fell on the field of battle, leading to a clear victory for the Turks. Andronikos could also claim victory as, with his contingent completely intact, he could return to Constantinople to put his cousin on the throne. Theodosius also came out of the battle in a good position; after taking the Turkish camp, with the Sultan's treasure and harem, he would have been in a very strong negotiating position.

It was a great game which flowed back and forth and could have swung either way. We used my Comitatus rules (available from my website [legio-wargames.com](http://legio-wargames.com)) with the scenario specific adaptations described above. I was very pleased with the way the game unfolded, and the outcome remained unclear until the very end, when the Roman Emperor fell fighting alongside the Varangians and his Hetaeria. The result was not that dissimilar to the historical original.



# OPERATION IKARUS

## A BATTLE FOR ICELAND THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN



Lisa Smedman returns to Iceland in the second part of her WWII ‘what if?’ *Bolt Action* campaign.

This article is the second in a two-part series that explores how the battle for Iceland might have unfolded had Operation Ikarus gone ahead. The first instalment (published in *Wi433*) included two scenarios: the British landing at Reykjavik, and an attack carried out by German troops via submarine insertion. This second instalment includes three scenarios: an airborne attack, a crucial battle to clear a British roadblock, and the main German attack on the capital.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Within days of their 10 May 1940 arrival in Reykjavik, the British spread out to occupy harbors and airfields elsewhere on the island. Their objectives included a grass airfield (used by gliders) near the small town of Sandskeið, and flat land near

Selfoss that would make a good landing strip. Troops were also ordered to set up roadblocks to hinder German troop movements. If attacked, the defenders were to hold out until reinforcements could arrive.

By 26 May, the British forces in Iceland had increased in size to two brigades and, by June, thousands of Canadian soldiers had also arrived. A little over a year after the invasion, there were more than 25,000 Allied troops on the island, including thousands of US Marines.

This campaign focuses on those early weeks of the invasion, while the British and Canadians were still setting up their defences, well before the Americans arrived.

Above: British by Warlord Games; Germans by Crusader Miniatures.

## SCENARIO 3: BATTLE FOR THE AIRFIELD

Having seized Reykjavik, the British press on to their next objectives: a grass airfield near the small town of Sandskeið and flat land near Selfoss. This scenario imagines an attack by German airborne troops shortly after the British have deployed at these locations.

This scenario may be played twice, once for each location (Sandskeið and Selfoss).

### FORCES

Each player has 700 points to spend.

British units may be either Inexperienced or Regular (but not Veteran).

**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 QF 2-Pounder ‘Pom-Poms’, detailed at the end of this scenario.

German units may be Inexperienced, Regular, or Veteran.

**Germans:** 0-1 Officer, 0-1 Medic team, 0-6 Fallschirmjäger squads (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.



**PARACHUTE ARRIVAL**

Before the scenario begins, the German player should organize their force into individual planes; each Ju 52 can carry up to 18 men (up to a maximum of 6 units) and units must be kept together (a unit may not be divided between two planes). Each plane should be as full as possible - the Germans don't want to waste fuel on half-empty planes!

Before the first turn of the game, once the Preliminary Bombardment is complete, the German player decides which of the four rows (marked on the tabletop map) each plane will fly down. This flight may be in either direction (east to west, or west to east) and the men on board will then be able to parachute out.

The German player may deploy one of the units in each plane into each drop zone that is flown over. A marker is placed to indicate where the player would like the unit to land and a dice is then rolled to see whether they land on target.

**PARATROOPER LANDING**

DICE ROLL	EFFECT
1-3	On target! Deploy the unit in the chosen drop zone.
4+	Drifted off course! The unit lands in a drop zone one space away from its target (including diagonally adjacent zones) of the British player's choice. If this places the unit off the map, the off-course German unit enters the map on the second turn.

This process continues until all units have deployed from their transport.

Planes can fly along the same row, one after the other, effectively doubling up the units in each drop zone, but each plane can only deploy a single unit into any given drop zone.

**Scattered landing**

Whether they land in their chosen drop zone or not, the Germans wind up slightly scattered. To represent this, each man in a unit must be placed with a 2" gap between that soldier and all other soldiers in his unit. He can land within 2" of soldiers belonging to a different unit, just not his own unit.

As each unit deploys, the German player should position its soldiers one by one, first placing a soldier on the marker, then placing the second soldier 2" away from the first, the third soldier 2" away from each of the previous two, and so on. This might cause some soldiers in the unit to scatter into a different drop zone, but that's fine.

Because they land out of formation (more than 1" apart from each other) each German unit's first action of the game must be a Run or Advance order, so the unit can form up again.



*Above: Luftwaffe Ju 52s dropping paratroops.*

**Off the map**

Units that land off the board enter on the second turn, along the edge zone where they left the map, and must enter using an Advance or Run order.



*Above: The Germans land with the aid of custom parachutes made from children's Playdough and dental floss!*



## SET UP

The game is played on a 6' x 4' table. The area is flat, open grassland, with one or two small cottages and low bushes located within 1' of each long table edge (in rows A and D).

The British player sets up on the table as they see fit.

The Germans are transported to the battlefield in Junkers Ju 52 planes and use the special 'Parachute Arrival' rules (shown on the previous page) for deployment.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective is simple: destroy as many of the enemy's forces as possible and seize (or hold) the airfield.

## PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENT

At the start of the scenario, the British player rolls on the following table for each 2 pounder 'Pom-Pom' gun assigned to the airfield. Should the German player choose the same plane twice, the results are cumulative.

FLAK FIRE VS AIRPLANES	
DICE ROLL	EFFECT
1	That's miles away! No effect
2-3	That was close! Units within a plane of the German player's choice each start the game with 1 pin marker.
4-5	Plane damaged! Units within a plane of the German player's choice each start the game with 2 pin markers.
6	Direct hit! A plane of the German player's choice is hit by flak. Roll 1D6+1 to determine how many men in the plane are hit (the men are bunched together), then roll a dice for each hit to determine casualties. All units within the plane start the game with 3 pin markers.

## STRAFING RUNS

After the Preliminary Bombardment, the German player then makes two Strafing Runs on the British positions. For each, the German player chooses a British unit, and makes an attack with a Medium Machine Gun (Regular). This is indirect fire; it strikes the top of vehicles and ignores any cover that does not shield the units from above. The target can go Down if it wishes; it will then be Down for the first turn.

## GAME DURATION

At the end of the sixth turn, roll a dice. On a 1-3 the game ends and on a 4+, play another turn.

## SPECIAL RULES

**Regroup!** German units that land on the map begin the game out of formation. Their first order must be a Run or Advance. They may also go Down in reaction to enemy fire; if they do, their action on the next turn must be a Run or Advance.

**Shake it Off!** German units that land off the map may Rally during the first turn to remove any pin markers they suffered as a result of Flak. This is the only order they can perform while off the map, aside from Down. Officers who begin off the map do not convey a morale bonus to anyone but themselves (they are too far from their troops) and may not give extra orders.

		NORTH							
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6		
WEST	B1								EAST
	C1								
	D1								
			SOUTH						

**HISTORIC NOTES**

- The flat land near Selfoss became home to RAF Kalda arnes, which served as a base for an air force squadron that performed maritime patrol duties throughout the war. They used Lockheed Hudson reconnaissance planes, Hawker Hurricane fighters, and Fairey Battle bombers.

## VICTORY!

Each side scores 1 point per enemy unit destroyed. If one side scores 2 more victory points than the other, that side has won a clear victory and has control of the airfield.

## CAMPAIGN

If the Germans capture at least one airfield, they can bring in ammunition and other supplies via airplane, and do not count as Unsupplied in Scenario 4.

If the British hold at least one airfield, they can conduct an aerial bombardment in Scenario 5.

It is up to the German player whether this scenario is played once (selecting a single target) or twice (with the German paratroopers attacking both airfields).

## QF 2-POUNDER 'POM-POM'

Normally mounted on ships, the quick-firing 2-pounder anti-aircraft gun was a 40mm gun with a water-cooled barrel. When used by the army, it was mounted on the open back of a truck or flatbed train car, or mounted on a stationary gun platform.

<b>Cost</b>	48pts (Inexperienced), 60pts (Regular), 72pts (Veteran)
<b>Composition</b>	4 men
<b>Weapons</b>	1 platform-mounted heavy automatic cannon
<b>Options</b>	May be mounted on the back of a truck for +10pts; use the stats for a British truck (Damage Value 6+ soft skin), but without the ability to tow, transport men, or mount a machine gun.
<b>Special Rules</b>	- Team weapon - Fixed - HE (1") - Flak



## SCENARIO 4: THE ROADBLOCK

Having made landings by submarine and parachute drop, the Germans press on toward Reykjavik, down a narrow gravel road that hugs the coast. The British have set up a roadblock on the road and are waiting for their enemy.

### FORCES

Each player has 700 points to spend.

The British player selects their force from the list in Scenario 3. Thanks to reinforcements that arrived by ship, the British now may include Veteran infantry sections, and all units finally have access to the Rapid Fire National Characteristic.

German units may be Inexperienced, Regular, or Veteran.

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

If the German player won Scenario 2 (see *W433*) once, reinforcements have arrived by ship; they get 50 extra points to spend in this scenario. If the Germans won Scenario 2 twice, they get 100 extra points to spend.

### SET UP

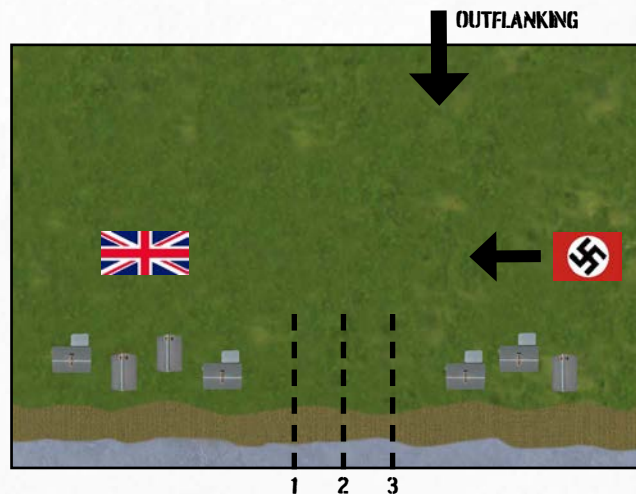
The game is played on a 5'x3' table. A gravel road runs along a beach and is only just wide enough for one vehicle; there is no place to turn around. A few buildings run along the shore - some cottages and fishing shacks - and a roughly equal number should be placed on either side of any obstacles the British might build.

The terrain raises in height from one long edge to the other and the top one- to two-thirds of the map (the top 1' to 2' of the table) should count as rough terrain.

The British player must construct at least one 12" long obstacle (either a Roadblock or Barbed Wire) at Position One, which is 2' from the left side of the map. They may additionally construct 12" long obstacles at Position Two and Position Three; each Position is 6" apart.

The British set up to the left of Position One.

The Germans enter from the right side of the map and may be positioned up to 12" in from the edge. Up to half of the German units (rounded up) may be placed in reserve. These units enter either from the right side of the map, or from the top of the map, if outflanking.







## OBJECTIVE

The German goal is to destroy the obstacles and clear the road to Reykjavik. The British goal is to prevent the Germans from doing this.

## GAME DURATION

At the end of Turn 6, roll a dice. On a result of 1-3 the game ends; on a 4+ play another turn. If there is a Turn 7, roll a dice at the end of that turn. On a result of 1-3 the game ends; on a 4+ play another turn.

## SPECIAL RULES

**Unsupplied** If the Germans failed to take either airfield in Scenario 3, they are Unsupplied. After rolling to hit with a mortar team, machine gun team, anti-tank team, or flame thrower team during the battle, roll a dice. If the result is a 1, roll again: on a 1-2 the weapon is out of ammo and may not fire again this game, on a 3-4 it has only one shot left, and on a 5+ it can continue shooting as normal.

**Roadblock** (Cost 20 pts) Constructed of sandbags and logs, these 12"x1" barriers are impassable to vehicles and artillery, but infantry may pass them without hindrance. They may be breached by an adjacent infantry squad of four or more men on a Down order (but not as a reaction to enemy fire). When this happens, remove the roadblock from the map.

## HISTORIC NOTES

- 
- 
- In August 1942, the 9th Construction Battalion of the SeaBees, with 721 men, arrived in Iceland. The US naval construction crews paved roads, built bridges, constructed airstrips, and made major improvements to piers.
- 
- 

**Barbed Wire** (Cost 10 pts) Impassable to wheeled vehicles and artillery, and a linear obstacle to infantry, this 12"x1" strip of barbed wire can be destroyed by the passage of tracked or half-tracked vehicles. It can be cleared by a Sturmpanziere squad on a Down order (but not as a reaction to enemy fire). When this happens, remove the barbed wire from the map.

## VICTORY!

The German player scores 1 point for each enemy unit destroyed, and an additional 3 points if the road is cleared (if all obstacles are removed). The British player scores 1 point for each German unit destroyed. If one side scores 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory.



*Bolt Action German LMG teams. Will their ammo last through the battle...?*



# SCENARIO 5: REYKJAVIC REPRISE

## CAMPAIGN

If the Germans destroyed all the obstacles along the road, they have access to vehicles in Scenario 5.

The Germans assault Reykjavik by air, land, and sea. The British must hold the city at all costs.

## FORCES

Each player has 1,000 points to spend.

The British player selects from the list for Scenario 3. Thanks to reinforcements that arrived recently by ship, the force may also include 0-2 Bren Carriers.

The German player selects from the list for Scenario 4. If the German player won Scenario 4 they get 100 extra points to spend in this scenario. If the German player also cleared all obstacles in Scenario 4, their force may also include 0-2 vehicles chosen from: SdKfz 251/2; SdKfz 8 with armored cab; Opel Blitz with Flak 38; SdKfz 10/4 with Flak 38.

## SET UP

The game is played on a 6'x4' table. The map should be entirely urban, filled with streets and buildings. The British set up anywhere on the board, but must be at least 6" from any edge. The Germans set up on the outermost 6" of the map.

## OBJECTIVE

The battle of Reykjavik is a simple, straightforward fight. Whichever side wins will control Iceland.

## PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENT

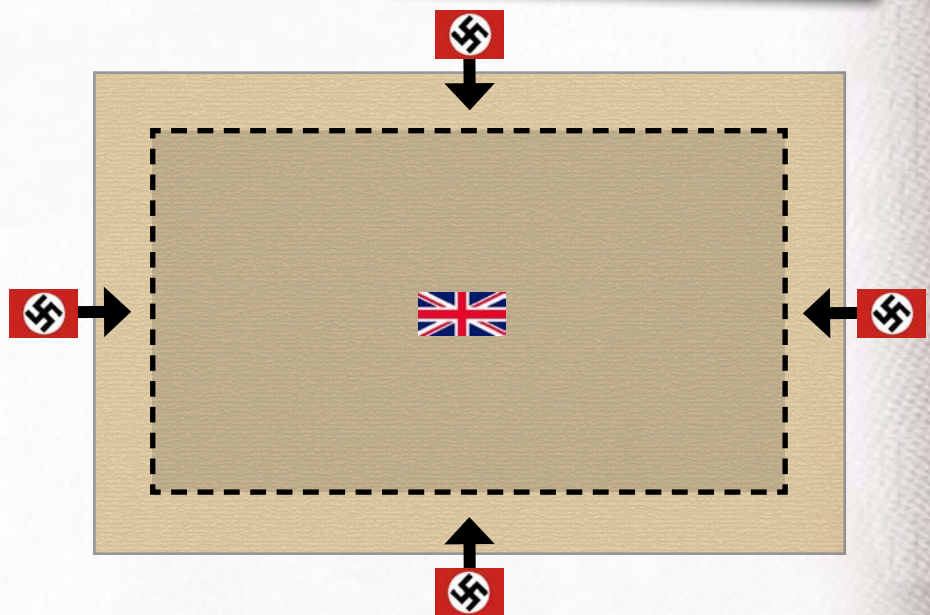
A German U-boat has infiltrated the harbor. The German player rolls a dice and on a 1, the sub gets tangled in anti-submarine nets and fails to surface. On a 2+, it surfaces, and shells the town. The German player may choose six enemy units and roll a dice for each on the Preparatory Bombardment table.

Next it's the Brits' turn. If the British managed to hold either of the airfields in

## HISTORIC NOTES

Iceland remained in Allied hands for the duration of the war. The British were reinforced first by Canadian troops, and later by US Marines. By 1943, close to 30,000 troops were stationed there (at a time when Iceland's population was just 120,000).

Despite the presence of Allied troops, Iceland remained officially neutral until the end of the war.



Scenario 3, the British player rolls a dice and on a 1, no air support is available. On a 2+, a Fairey Battle bomber arrives to harass the Germans. The British player may choose six enemy units and roll a dice for each on the Preliminary Bombardment table.

## GAME DURATION

At the end of Turn 6, check to see if a clear victory has been obtained. If not, continue to play, checking after each turn. If after 8 turns there is no clear victory, end the game.

## VICTORY!

Players score 1 victory point for each enemy unit destroyed. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, that side has won a clear victory.

*British soldiers by Warlord Games.*





# RUCKUS IN THE WI GAMING ROOM



We are hosting various games of *Ruckus* (*Never Mind the Billhooks*' small skirmish little brother) at *Wi Tower* during its development. In this article, James presents highlights from some of the dramatic tabletop clashes so far.

As I've become more familiar with *Ruckus* it's been a pleasure to welcome the game's designer - Mike Peters - to *Wi Tower* on multiple occasions and get to know him better. Mike's the kind of bloke that everyone would love to have in their gaming club: knowledgeable without being a button counter, a keen and talented painter and converter, a gentleman around the gaming table, and, of course, he has written a great game in *Ruckus*! From the first time he showed me his game, it was clear it was a gem of a skirmish ruleset (a gaming genre I am a huge fan of) and, in the year or so since then, it's been magnificently polished.

As an observer of the inaugural playthrough of *Ruckus* at *Wi Tower*, I started taking notes and snapping photos, but I got increasingly caught up in the action. The core rules are quick to learn but have a lot of depth and I was soon spotting and suggesting fun ways that participants could attack or scupper the enemy plans. It's certainly the kind of game that will draw an enthusiastic crowd of onlookers!

In that first (and perhaps most fun) game of *Ruckus* I've witnessed, Mike was joined by his good friend and regular gaming buddy/adversary Mark Taylor. They played one of *Ruckus*' recently penned (at the time) scenarios - *O' Brother, Where Art Thou?* - and the game was a joy to watch, thanks to their antics and jubilant dice rolling.

Mike took charge of John de Barre of Barr's Court, which he had painted magnificently. Mark played with his equally well-painted Gaston Villa, in their Claret and Blue livery.

## O' BROTHER WHERE ART THOU?

The players pillaged our terrain collection and laid out an extremely detailed table. At first, I was worried the multitude of pieces on our shelves had led Mike and Mark (who were like excited kids in a sweet shop) to make a packed area that would be impossible to play over. Not so! Once the game was underway, and their small number

*Mark (left) and Mike (right) prepare for a Ruckus behind the beautiful 4' x 4' board they took great pleasure in putting together.*





of figures started to vault over hedges, trudge through heavy ground, and skip over gaps, I discovered that *Ruckus* has a great variety of traversal options wrapped up in some simple rules; these only make the game more fun, so heavy terrain is certainly recommended.

Each retinue's mission was the same - to locate Ambrose of Longfield (recently returned to England with important information) who was hidden in a monastery garden. The players put together their spears - a hero leading a group of retainers - and commanded them through the verdant fields and grand orchards strung with fresh and succulent fruit. Ambrose had disguised himself as a monk, so Mike and Mark needed to make their way around the area and locate the interloper from five possibilities.

A deck of five cards represented the monks on the table. Four tens were the real monks, while Ambrose, who has no little finger on his left hand, is represented by a nine. When a character stands adjacent to one of the monks, the controlling player draws a card. If it is the nine, he has found his man and must then escort him from the garden to win. Ambrose will not go quietly though, so will need to be dragged at half speed. This is just a taste of one of *Ruckus*' various scenario modifiers, many of which use playing cards to keep things simple, while adding massive opportunity for variation.

**THE GAME BEGINS**

De Barre's men started in one corner of the board and began to spread out. Pre-game, each player drew skills, determined by the drawing of playing cards, and Mike was lucky enough to get an extra squire. He named this extra figure creatively, calling him Bill Squires, and put him in charge of four archers.

Activation in *Ruckus* is as unpredictable as it is in *Billhooks*, and it uses the same deck. Some cards offer extra function, such as the Bonus card, which was drawn first in this game. Players diced off (just as in *Billhooks*) and Mike won with a six, secretly picking a Perk card to use this turn. The card for Bill Squires was drawn next and Mike moved him, and his spear, up the right flank, heading towards the monk feeding the ducks.

1) Instantly after that move, Mike used his Perk to give Bill another activation, reaching the monk far quicker than Mark expected and demanding the man of God (or possible interloper) show his hands. All ten fingers were present!

Activations continued and players moved their spears around the board. Hard Going ground (of which there was a lot, what with all the tilled earth) can



Above: Mark's retinue - Gaston Villa, with their eponymous leader at the centre. Each retinue is made up of twelve figures, so *Ruckus* is a great way to begin exploring the Wars of the Roses with minimal time and cash investment.



Above: Mike's retinue - Barrs Court, led by Sir John De Barre.





be crossed at a cost of half movement speed. All models move a standard 6", which keeps things simple, so they were often slowed to 3". Obstacles (which peppered the board at every turn) are tackled by sacrificing half of a model's overall move to clamber over them. These two rules ensured the initial advances were slowed, but, at times, boldness took hold and Mike and Mark started to use movement Gambits.

## GETTING AROUND

Gambits - sprints, leaps, climbs, balances, and any other traversal specialities - use the same system to determine their success - a simple roll of a D6, needing anything but a 1. There's little consequence early in the game if you fail your Gambit and encounter a Mishap. You roll 2D6, needing to get above the turn number to continue with minimal consequence (it's impossible to fail in turns one and two). This encouraged Mark to make some dramatic advances, such as kicking down a door to a walled garden and charging through. This added narrative moments to the game with minimal risk to the characters. Later in the game, Gambit failures would become far riskier, with the chance of a Calamity 'winding' the character, so they'd need to be weighed more carefully.

2) I scattered some extra animals on the tabletop while the game progressed - a cat and dog emerging from buildings. I then made myself a nuisance and had them start to tag along with the retainues, for the sake of more interesting photos, but Mark soon adopted the canine companion and named him Blizzard.

Following this game, Mike wrote Blizzard into the rules in the form of a Special Event card. Because events are determined by the draw of a playing card, they are infinitely modifiable and, should you be the type of player who enjoys making your own tweaks to games, you'll have great fun with this part of the *Ruckus* rules!

## SCENARIO SPECIAL RULES

Each *Ruckus* scenario brings a selection of game modifiers that vary the play experience. For this one, the Special Event 'Ambush!' brought 3+D3 labourers into the fight if drawn. These men are angered by the garden intrusion and, though not skilled combatants, they can bring enough friction to sway the balance. They proved a meddlesome addition to the flow of the game.

The 'Wandering Monks' special rule, which gives players the option to move a monk 6" instead of picking a Bonus card option, created much merriment. Mark and Mike repeatedly



pinballed the hapless holy men around the monastery garden, even when picking a different Bonus might have been a better tactical idea, and happily cheered; "Move a monk! Move a monk!" This monk manipulation did, eventually, draw the retainues ever closer, forcing them to put a lot of their focus on manoeuvring safely or making daring engages.

## DEATH FROM A DISTANCE?

Different ranged weapons have different properties, but the longbow can be fired twice if stationary, or once if only half a move distance is taken. This meant that the bowmen kept themselves busy making occasional pot-shots as they advanced.

3) This didn't cause any grievous injuries to characters but whittled down some of the retainers. By removing these men from range, the players would have the upper hand in melee, as the lack of opposing billmen reduces the support dice that characters can use when they fight.

Tens were drawn with the first four monks encountered (did I manipulate the deck on the sly to add to the drama? I wouldn't dream of it!) which meant that the last one on the board had to be Ambrose! Now each player had to make a dash to get to him, capture him, and escape.





## WAITING ON THE SIDELINE

After their early game dash, Bill Squires and his archers never really got into the scrap. The characters are activated by cards, as in *Billhooks*, and the last one in the deck each turn is left unused. Chance led to Bill's boys missing out on activation for a couple of early turns, so they ended up choosing to use later actions to shoot from range, peppering their foes with arrows from the safety of the distant duck pond!



4) With Ambrose in the middle of a walled-in and churned up field, he wasn't the easiest target to get to. Players made more Gambit moves to leap over obstacles and sprint towards him when they could, but the risk was higher now as the turn number had progressed.

One of Gaston Villa's lieutenants, Manuel, made it to Ambrose first but, in his eagerness, he tripped while sprinting (by rolling a one) then failed his following roll (getting a one and a three - less than the turn, which was six) and suffering a calamity. This left him Winded, which removed his main fighting ability - Skill'd at Arms - and would mean he would not be able to manipulate dice in melee. With de Barre nearby that was not a good situation to be in and, sure enough, Mike's leader drew his activation card next and charged into combat.

Manuel pleaded with his supporting billman to get stuck in, but, even with the extra combat they provided, it was not enough. The skilled de Barre took Manuel down swiftly, only needing one of the possible three rounds of combat. In a campaign game, being taken down results in post-battle rolls, to see the injuries sustained, and the experience gained. In this one-off battle the body of Manuel landed in the mud and his head bounced down a few feet to his side.



It wasn't all going to go de Barre's way, though. His squires had already sustained injuries, indicated by the red tokens under their bases, from repeated arrow attacks. This brought them closer to death but also severely reduced their fighting potential; each wound taken diminishes the number of attack dice that can be rolled. The players would need to weigh each possible melee carefully now.

## AN EPIC DUEL

5) Villa, on the other hand, was at full fighting fitness. He vaulted the wall and charged de Barre. A melee showdown between the two captains looked like it could be the epic deciding moment of the game. In the first round of combat, both sustained wounds (Mike uses magnetised counters under bases to represent statuses and injuries), with their various skills making the combat intriguingly nuanced. Villa was gouged after very unlucky save rolls while de Barre had suffered one unexpected cut despite saving most of the incoming attacks with ease. Leaders start the game with three wounds, so each had two left.



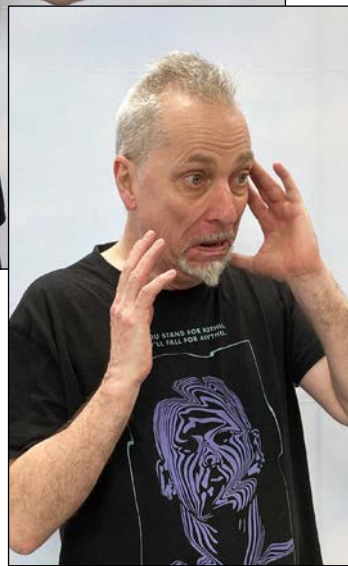
Villa's 'Fluted Plate' meant he could reroll a saving throw once per round of combat, while his 'Riposte' skill would cause any hits that wounded him to be countered, causing an instant hit back on his attacker that would need to be saved. This added "if I go you go" potential to the combat. The Skills that de Barre had were all about power and they somewhat countered those of his opponent. 'Strong as an Orse' caused -1 to opposing save throws and 'Stalwart' meant that in the second round (where to-hit rolls normally go up to 5+) his remained a 4+. Very useful!



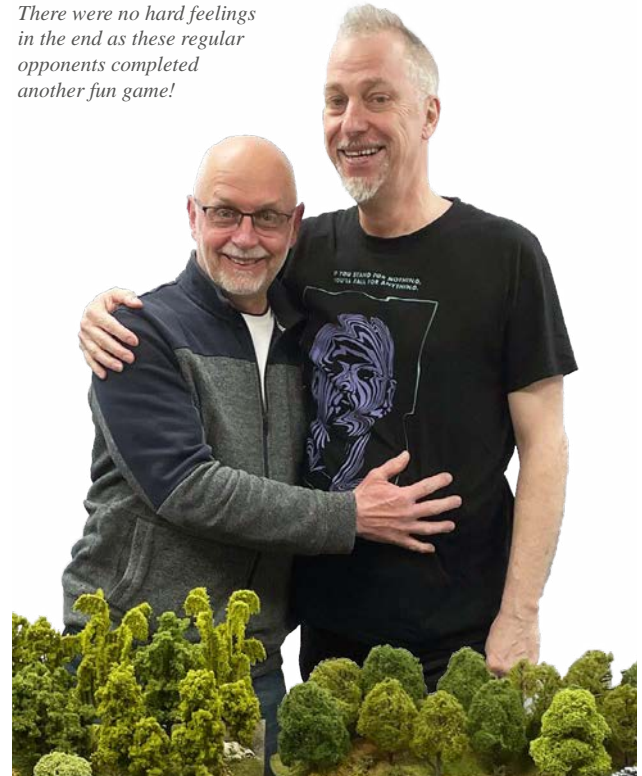
6) Ultimately, each character got two hits on their opponent and, despite his 'Fluted Plate' reroll, Villa was bested, failing to roll a 3+ all three times. Mike managed to make one save and yelled in victory as his enemy dropped to his knees. Mark wasn't quite done, though, and reminded Mike "I'm making a Riposte". Mike's revelry faded as he failed his save, meaning Villa could jam a blade into a gap in de Barre's plate and fell his opponent. The two captains collapsed, side-by-side, in the ploughed mud!

With both captains groaning in agony and taken out of action, the game ended in a dramatic and comical way, with both players chuckling at the result. Mark and Mike are regular opponents and while they certainly do keep track of their wins and losses, the biggest factor in their clashes is fun. This game had certainly provided that.

It had also shown me how well *Ruckus* can tell a story while remaining a challenging game with tactical nuance. Cups of tea were sipped, the battle was discussed, and I nipped upstairs to inform Editor Dan that *Ruckus* was a ton of fun and we should make it a *Wi* freebie, if all associated parties were open to it!



*Delight to disaster as Mike goes from victory to a draw with one quick Riposte from his opponent.*



*There were no hard feelings in the end as these regular opponents completed another fun game!*

### ADDING SOME NOTTINGHAM FLAVOUR

*Wi* HQ is right in the middle of Nottinghamshire, so I'm planning to play a game with Editor Dan that uses *Footsore* figures and represents a clash in Sherwood Forest. The beauty of *Ruckus* is its flexibility. Switching in other historical periods or mythical elements is a breeze and there should be plenty of official and unofficial variants available once more people get their hands on the game.





## THE CALIAN SEAL OF APPROVAL

Mike had already run his rules past *Billhooks'* author, Andy Callan, and kept him abreast of development, but we knew we needed to get Andy into the office to play. Therefore, on another visit to *Wi*, Mike was joined by the brothers Callan - Andy and Ian - along with Arcane Scenery's Steve Wood (another man instrumental in the development of *Billhooks*) who would observe the action.

Andy's depth of historical knowledge, along with his decades of 'unit versus unit' tabletop experience would surely make him the ultimate tester for *Ruckus'* mechanics. He would challenge brother Ian in the Fog of War scenario, set in a thick, dense, morning murk, with spears starting scattered randomly around the board.

What developed over the next hour or so was truly fascinating; an incredibly tentative game, with both players carefully moving their men through the mist and hugging cover, despite shooting range being drastically reduced by the fog. Neither brother seemed willing to take a risk and make a bold move that might give them the upper hand.

1) For a while the only combat that occurred was due to a special event that brought random opposing bow and billmen out of the fog, who were swiftly dealt with.



(Left to right) Steve Wood, Ian Callan, Mike Peters, and Andy Callan.



The activation deck included a fog card and, every time it was drawn, visibility had the chance of improving or reducing. As the turns rolled on things started to clear (which is the likeliest result) and the two players started to connect their spears together. "What other skirmish games have you played?" I asked them as they took their activations, and they surprised me by revealing that *Ruckus* was their first.

2) As I watched their figures massing and moving to the centre, it seemed that they'd both done their best to turn the unfamiliar skirmish mechanics into something they knew better. The deciding (and first) notable melee would be more like a unit versus a unit clash!



Above: Men swamp the mound in the battlefield's centre, making for a carnage packed melee.



The eventual clash happened on the raised ground in the middle of the table and a combat with various supporting attacks broke out between the character models. Andy struggled to wrap his head around the Skill'd at Arms Mechanic, not at all familiar with such dice manipulation in his big battle games, but Mike talked both players through the nuances of combat.

Soon, blows were landed and wounds taken. Ian had managed to get his captain and squires stuck in while Andy's main man remained unengaged on the nearby road. The outnumbered squires were overcome in a couple of turns and, after some consultation with Mike about his options, the *Billhooks* author opted for the "leg it!" option. This wouldn't win the game but would, at least, keep his leader alive to fight another day.

3) The retreat was extremely risky, as the fog had cleared enough that Ian could now fire at Andy from long range. The bowmen on the mound had an ideal vantage point and their archery practice would result in two arrows firmly embedded in Andy's captain's posterior as he staggered down the road. He'd make it off the board if he drew the next activation card and completed a successful sprint, otherwise Ian would almost certainly finish him off with the rest of his bowmen.

The card was flipped... Leader! Andy had survived!

Post-game saw Andy and Ian asking about various mechanics and Mike admitting that he would have given them a more standard 'capture the objective' mission if he'd known they lacked any skirmish experience. Despite the oddness of this game's finale, there was a buzz of narrative ideas being shared throughout the turns, amplified by the historically adjacent imaginings both players vocalised, deciding that these were stragglers who had wandered away from the Battle of Barnet.



## A FUN FIRST

On his most recent visit Mike ran an intro game for our web designer Joe (*The Silver Bayonet* is the only tabletop wargame he's played) and our newest staff member Charlie (who has never played a tabletop wargame). I was curious how these newbies would get on with *Ruckus*. Gameplay began a little slowly, but with Mike as rules overseer and me there to offer advice to both players, the pace soon ramped up.

1) One of Charlie's squires made a dramatic leap over the river, then used the Perk he had drawn to take an extra activation and rush to secure the objective on the left. This left him in control of the flank for now, but, with the rest of his force focused right and Joe's spears closing on the objective, it looked unlikely to stay in his hands for too long.



2) Joe got to grips with the basics of movement too, and quickly commented that he enjoyed the traversal options more than those in *The Silver Bayonet*. This plonked a big smile on designer Mike's face, while Joe bounded his men over the walls on his side of the table, as Mike's a big fan of Joe McCullough's work.



Throughout the game, both players enjoyed using their Perks (take an extra activation), Forfeits (instantly cancel an opposing retainer activation or roll a dice to cancel an opposing hero activation), and Special Events.

3) Joe swung the mid-game in his favour, when he drew a very handy Special Event and played it in the next turn (Perks, Forfeits, and Rerolls must be used the turn they are drawn but Special Events can be saved for as long as the player chooses).



Above: Mike does his best to herd Joe and Charlie - Wi's unruly kittens!

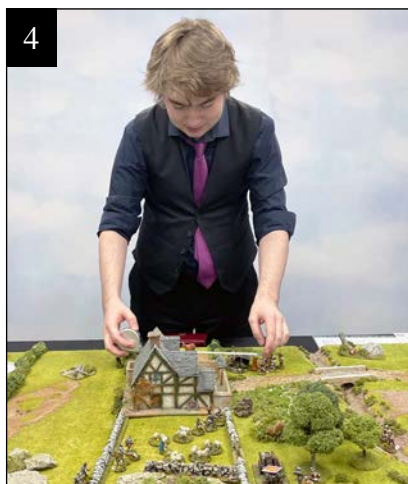
'Ouch! Oof!' is a card that trips up an opposing character and stops them in their tracks, and Joe stopped Charlie from dashing out of a ditch in the middle of the battlefield to secure another objective. It left Charlie's squire winded, needing multiple activations to recover, and rather stranded.





4) Both players launched plenty of opportunistic pot shots with their bows as they advanced, all in the direction of opposing characters. I suggested targeting the lower armoured retainers with bills, as taking them out would remove their support in melee duels, but the 'kill the character' mindset was in full effect! Practically every shot that hit and made it past intervening terrain was deflected by 3+ armour saves.

Ranged attacks are not the most reliable things as a to-hit roll of 1 on a D6 will cause a mishap or calamity, which the bowmen will need to recover from to unleash more arrows. If they are really unlucky, they will snap a bow string or run out of arrows completely.



Above: Charlie checks the range of his bowmen. You're free to measure at any time during the game.

5) Many figures started to mass around the right objective and a brutal melee soon kicked off. Charlie emerged victorious, helped by his captain taking part and steadying the troops. He took out Joe's squire and held the objective, along with control in the scenario overall.



With the last turn close (after turn 6 things continue for a randomly rolled extra number of turns - in our case 3) Joe misjudged a charge. The intent was to take out Charlie's squire (who had held the left objective since the game began) with Joe's captain, but Charlie was in a defended position. Joe could only leap over the wall if he did so more than an inch away from any enemies, and this left his retainers, who were a bit further behind, unable to leap in to support - their move distance didn't quite make it. We gave Joe the chance to reconsider his attack, but he barrelled in, assuming his superior leader would be more than a match for Charlie's defender, who had lost a wound to arrows.

## COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

Keeping your spears functioning at their maximum capacity is a vital part of *Ruckus*' gameplay. There are systems in play that can make this tricky or can add tactical nuance and opportunity. We encountered a few in our games.

### GOING FECKLESS

Each character's Command rating determines the distance (in inches) they can exert their command (usually 6 for a captain and 4 for a squire) as well as the number of men that can be commanded. One of Mike's bowmen got left behind in the monastery garden as he fell out of command range in the first game shown in this article. The de Barre archer was marked with an orange counter to show that he had become Feckless, a model is no longer under the direct control of its owning player. A D6 is rolled to see what he does and there's a chance that he will just give up and run away, which this chap did. He was removed from the table and played no further part in the battle.



There are various Skills, such as 'Rules with an Iron Fist' (any of this hero's retainers gets +1 to Feckless rolls), and Traits like 'Homebody' (which will make men more likely to run home), that influence the Feckless roll. It's a simple rule but one that has many layers to produce nuanced results. In a campaign, going Feckless can eventually be less risky for retainers as they can gain Skills (normally they only have traits) and these can make them less prone to the negative potential caused by going out of command radius.

### SPREADING OUT

In the game between Charlie and Joe, Charlie's leader had a whopping Command rating of 8. This allowed him to advance with a powerful support group of bowmen and billmen and Charlie made this the bulk of his force, rushing them over the bridge and towards the objective barricade.

With the scenario's win condition based around capturing the most objectives, I realised, as an observer more familiar with the rules, that the Command rating afforded Charlie another advantage - he could spread his spear across a massive overall range of 16", to push and grab those all-important objectives as the game ended.

For much of the fight he kept his spear tight, with strength in numbers serving him well, but as the game's final turn got close, I suggested he could spread out this group to grab an extra objective, by placing his captain in the centre and allowing the men to spread wide. Charlie, being a new player, set on doing things his own way, boldly ignored me, opting for a different tactic and winning anyway, but it's great that there are always other ways to play in *Ruckus*!

6) He really should have been... but Joe rolled an epic number of ones and twos, just enough to be cut down completely. With the loss of his leader, the game ended instantly, and, holding two of the three objectives, Charlie had won his first game.

The real winner, however, was wargaming, as Charlie was eager and enthusiastic about playing another game soon.



Our *Ruckus* adventures certainly aren't over and done with. I am already plotting a campaign (which Charlie is clamouring to join) so I can try out the experience, injuries, and skill development mechanics. You'll be able to get your hands on *Ruckus* in mid-2024, as a *Wi* freebie, to play games of your own; then the fun can really begin!



# ★ AN ACW SIGNAL TOWER: MAKING AND GAMING



Matt Parkes shows us how he created a tabletop vantage point for his Union Signal Party, and gaming guru Rick Priestley provides some ideas for using signalling and signal towers in his *Black Powder* rules.

**Matt Parkes:** If you're going to be signalling (wigwagging) with flags on an American Civil War battlefield, you are going to want to do so from some kind of vantage point. A manmade wooden tower would be ideal. That's what sprang to mind when I picked up the recently-released ACW Signals Party 1 from 1st Corps, so I set about making one. Here's how I did it...

## MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS

This is everything I used in the build. The rocky-outcrop base is a 3D print; I'll explain all the other kit as we go along.





1. I began my modelling project with a trip to the local garden centre. I knew it would save me time and effort if I could buy the 'lumber' for the tower in the right width and shape 'off the shelf', and I had a vague idea that wooden plant supports (designed to offer a crutch to growing house plants) would work, and they do. They come in lengths of about 12", and I cut them down to size based on what I required to fit on a 3D printed rocky-outcrop.

2. I then gouged out two notches in each of the miniature logs, forming depressions to aid stacking.

3. I wanted each log to have two pointed ends, so I used a pencil sharpener and then a scalpel to form pointed tips at both ends of the stick.

4. Once I had 24 finished logs, it was a simple task to stack and glue them in place.

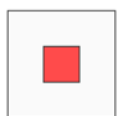
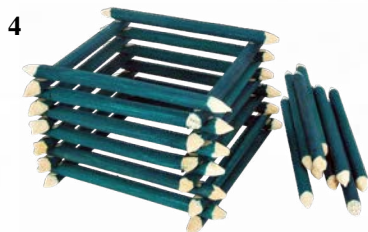
5. Nine additional logs formed the platform at the top of the tower.

6. I only attached the stack to the rock after completing painting and basing. Having undercoated the stack in black primer, I cleared the decks and got out my paints and brushes.

7. Vallejo Burnt Umber, English Uniform, and Buff were my three paints of choice for all the brushwork on the wooden tower and the tower's rocky-outcrop base.

8. By sticking to a minimal colour palette it reinforces the notion that the lumber was harvested from the surrounding area.

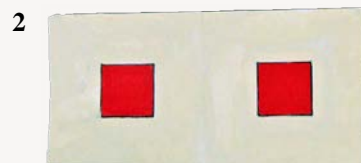
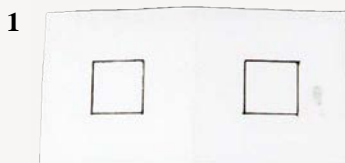
9. I'd decided on an autumnal look for the scene to add a pop of warm tones and up the interest. I first applied Gamers Grass (self-adhesive) Tufts in various autumnal hues...



**THE FLAG**

Wigwag flags are a dream for those hobbyists who are sent into a cold sweat by ostentatious eagles or rampant lions on standards. What could be simpler than a white flag with a red square in the middle?

Not much. Other options include a red flag with a white square (can I get an "oooh"), or anything you desire in a similar vein. If you don't feel comfortable freehanding the sharp edges you can mask out the shape with tape then stipple the design's colour in place before peeling off the tape for perfectly clean edges.





10. ... followed by lichen in various shades of brown, orange, and off-pink.

11. Gale Force Nine Autumn Flock Blend and Autumn Clump Foliage were then added.

12. I concluded my undergrowth attack with some rather flashy Diorama Leaf by Storm Creations, which, like all the foliage, was held in place with AK Interactive's Gravel & Sand Fixer.

13. Once the tower and base were fully dressed, it was time to glue the Signal Corps. figures in place, sit back, and unexpectedly be reminded of the opening sequence to the 1960s children's TV show *Camberwick Green*!

10



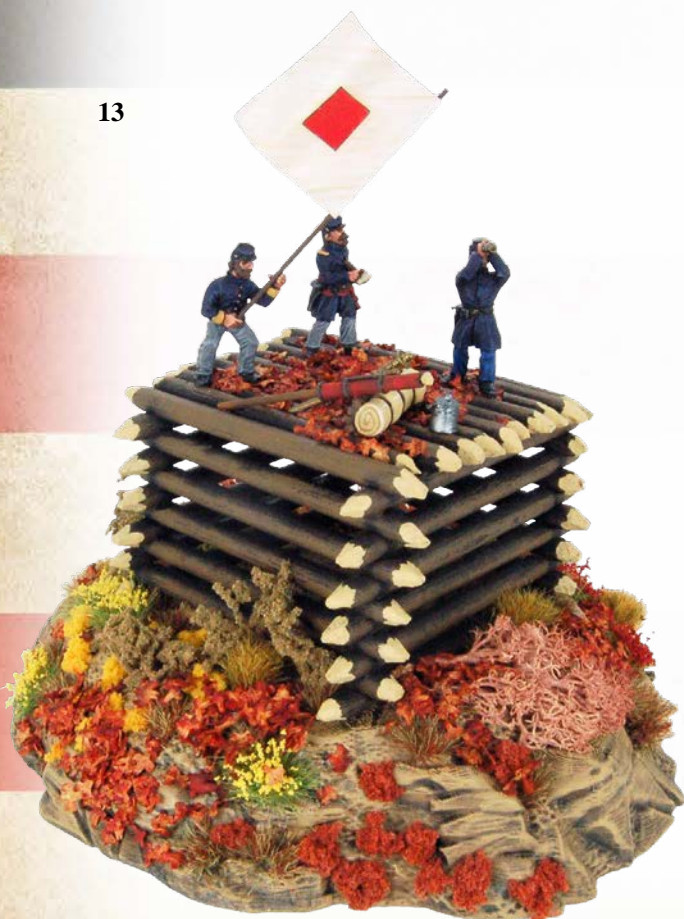
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## WIGWAGGERS RULES SUGGESTIONS

**Rick Priestley:** *Black Powder* rules are built on a dice-driven orders system that determines whether units move in response to commands and, if they do, to what extent. This basic idea makes it very easy to include command factors representing dispositions, movement, and battlefield friction - which can form the whole basis of a scenario, or a simple variation within a game.

Our signal tower, with its wigwaggers, provides a great opportunity to include something along these lines in our American Civil War wargames. I'm going to run through three basic ideas, any one of which could be useful (depending upon the game being played), and all of which have been used at some time or other for our own *Black Powder* games.

### Dispositions

A signal tower, look-out position, or picket line of any kind gives us the chance to arrange dispositions during an initial turn, as attackers attempt to sneak forward without alerting defenders to their presence. This initial turn is often set pre-dawn, as defenders are bivouacked in their tents. Whilst attackers remain out of sight of the signal tower, pickets, etc., and more than 24" distant (adjust to table size), there is no chance of being spotted in turn 1, and a 50/50 chance per turn thereafter. Where the signal tower or pickets can draw line of sight to an enemy, or an enemy is within 24", they have a 50/50 chance of spotting the foe in turn 1, and do so automatically thereafter. Once the attackers are spotted, the alarm is given, and defenders can assemble in their starting areas in their following turn, taking the entire turn to form up. Alternatively, troops require an order to form up, and the usual dice test must be made. In any case, the attackers are spotted in turn 3, if this has not already happened. This kind of rule is generally best bookended with an auto-success; otherwise, the game is essentially determined by the spotting dice roll. Having a backstop gives you three results: turn 1 is an early spot (good for the defenders), turn 2 is about average (the scenario should be balanced at this point all else being equal), and turn 3 is a late spot in which the attackers are ideally placed at the start of the game.

The signal could potentially be used to summon reinforcements from beyond the table too. This creates a situation wherein a small force of defenders must survive while awaiting rescue by reinforcements. We used this basic idea in an Afghan War game, in which the Afghans attempted to force a narrow pass held by a small garrison and heliograph team.



Above: A 'ready-made' *Black Powder* Epic Battles - ACW: Signals Corps Tower.



Above: Elk Mountain, Maryland. Signal tower overlooking Antietam battlefield.

### Artillery Spotting

This idea is suited to games involving heavy artillery (in particular, howitzers), wherein a position is being assaulted, but, we'll stretch a point and make it generally applicable to all artillery.

Where the wigwaggers can draw line of sight to both the target of an artillery battery and the battery itself, the artillery battery can reroll one missed shot per turn. This simply represents the wigwaggers communicating the fall-of-shot to the battery. Remember that a 'shot' is an abstract representing artillery fire, and not just a single discharge of the gun. This bonus might reasonably be restricted to long range shooting; fire at a shorter distance is more a case of shooting over open sights.

### General's Bonus

This third method is extendable to any game. If the army's General is within 12" of the signal tower/wigwaggers, then the General's Command reroll ability can be extended to any other Commander in line of sight of the signal tower, regardless of distance. The General is still limited to a single reroll as normal, but now, instead of having to be within 12" of the Commander to confer a Command reroll, the reroll applies to any Commander in sight of the signal tower.

This is a simple but useful rule for a signal tower, and it can be extended to cover practically any form of communication, from telegraphs to smoke signals.

### Objective and Capture

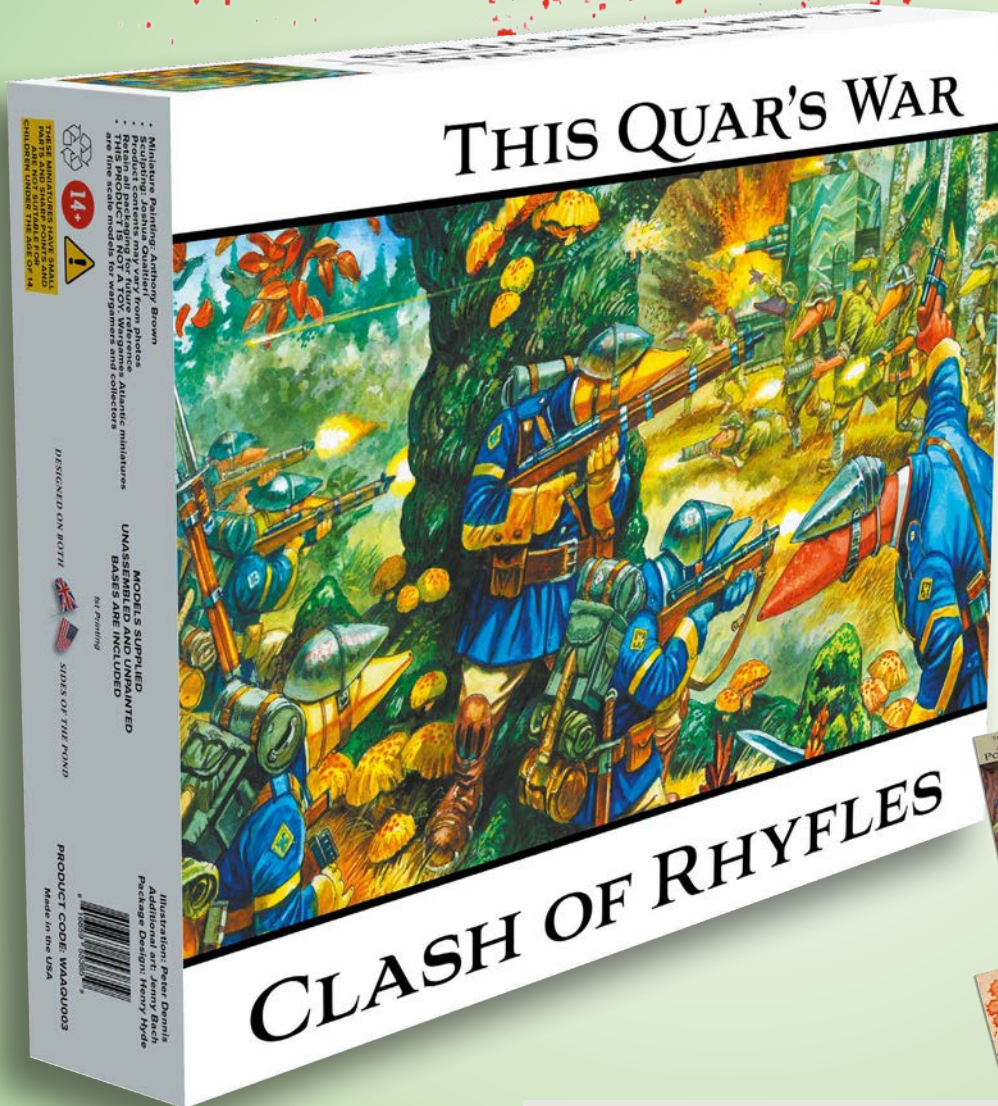
Although not a rule as such, it's obviously possible to make a signal tower one of the objectives for the game. This is a useful purpose for any distinctive piece of scenery or terrain; simply having a colourful and interesting feature to make an objective is purpose enough!

Regardless of how you use your signal tower, if it confers any kind of practical rule, you also need to have a rule that allows it to be captured, destroyed, or otherwise rendered useless. This is best achieved by as simple a method as possible; e.g. the signal tower is captured and its wigwaggers are driven off when any enemy troops come into contact with it.

I hope you'll find something useful amongst those suggestions; meanwhile, keep wigwagging.



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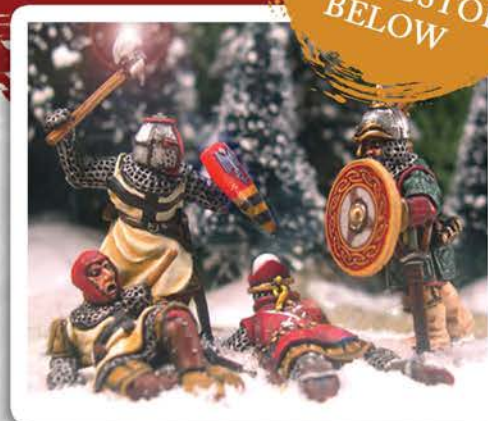




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