WARGAMES illustrated®

Marco Capparoni

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MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE
Mounted combat in *Ruckus*!

BOLT ACTION THIRD EDITION
A Q&A with designer Alessio Cavatore

SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE TO SEE WHAT'S INSIDE

THEME: POPULAR ARTICLES REVISITED

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CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

Our 2023 Revisited magazine theme proved to be so popular we have decided to revisit it again with this month's issue! The premise of Revisited is that: we ask several of our regular contributors to return to subjects or projects they have covered in *Wargames Illustrated* in the past, and supply us with a further, or related, article. We have four theme articles for you in this issue, which our contributors revisit: light troops in the Napoleonic Wars, making cotton flags, gangsters, and (broadening the remit slightly) a vintage Parker Brothers 'wargame'. I'm sure you will enjoy all our Revisited theme articles, along with our non-theme *Bolt Action: Third Edition, Ruckus,* and Vietnam content.

Bagged with this issue of the magazine*, you will also find your third (of four) Freebie Frames of the year. This Warlord Games Napoleonic Late French Line Infantry (1812 - 1815) sprue is available to buy for £9.50/$15, but it's all yours for zip, and who doesn't like to have a few (additional?) Napoleonic French in their collection?

If you are looking for ideas of what to do with your newly acquired minis, turn to page 18 to see what *Wi* painter Matt came up with, when we handed him the frame.

Happy reading and rolling.

Dan Faulconbridge

Editor

*Excludes European subscribers.

Cover artwork: The Danish Royal Life Guards, circa 1692. Inspired by a photography on page 53, by Marco Capparoni.

Below: The Napoleonic Late French Line Infantry (1812 - 1815) freebie figures.

CREDITS

Produced in the UK.

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CONTENTS

*Perry Miniatures British 'lights'.
For more see our article on page 26.*

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OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames stuff you need to know about

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

BATTLEFRONT MINIATURES - M48 PATTON

A lot of the recent big releases from Battlefront have been fun starter sets, offering quick pick-up-and-play games, and providing a ton of value due to them being packed with plenty of plastic kits. While that's great for newcomers to the 15mm range it's not so fun for existing players, as these are mostly repackaged old products.

It's a real pleasure, therefore, to get a great looking new kit from Battlefront, and one that fits rather nicely with this issue's Vietnam vehicles article.

The M48 Patton was originally developed while the Korean War was being waged but it was in Vietnam that it first saw extensive action. The new M48A3 model, using diesel instead of the more volatile gasoline of earlier models, didn't do anything too dramatic in a war that saw very little in the way of major tank battles. The Patton performed more of a support role, and it did so very effectively, often used to safely clear the ground of mines. Its service doesn't stop there. It saw action in the Indo-Pakistani wars, in Africa, and the Middle East, with Iranian forces taking M48 tanks to battle in the Iran-Iraq War.

DETAILS

- **Scale:** 15mm
- **Period:** Vietnam War/Modern
- **Price:** TBA
- **Material:** Hard plastic
- **Available from:** flamesofwar.com
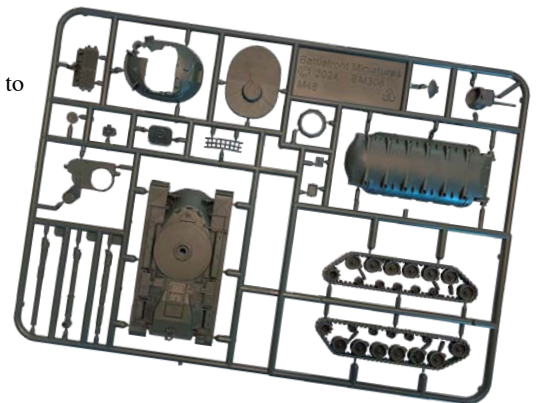
PLASTIC PLEASURE

This new kit has the balance that the best plastic sets offer; it sits neatly in the sweet spot between complexity, realism, and a minimal number of parts. Designed by veteran vehicle designer, Tim Adcock, there's nothing to be faulted in the way the tank goes together, with mostly large pieces and just a few small details to add, such as the stowage and Xenon searchlight above the gun tube.

There are three different big guns to choose from, shown right, and this gives you some options to play with and offers more variety in your gaming. Vietnam fans in the office would have loved an option with the machine gun removed from the commander's cupola and mounted above it but we're getting very demanding in wishing for that common modification and there is a spacer to raise the turret higher.

All in all this is a neat new kit that adds more variety to Battlefront's armour options and is a pleasure to build. We hear rumblings of more exciting new Battlefront goodies on the way soon too and will make sure to cover them in a future issue once we manage to get our hands on them!
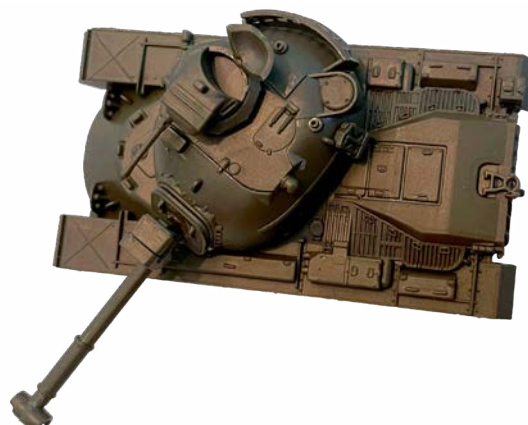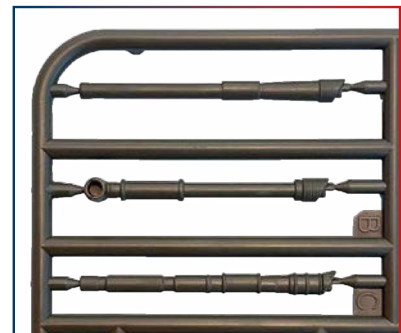
HOT OF THE CASTING MACHINE!

The folks at Battlefront also gave us a sneak peek at some new plastic infantry frames, which will be a part of a new wave of releases for *World War III: Team Yankee*.

The US Marines get a range of specialist gear and come with another frame, which is loaded with men wielding, more multi-purpose weapons, to be used as an American Mech Platoon - think M113 or Bradley APC infantry.
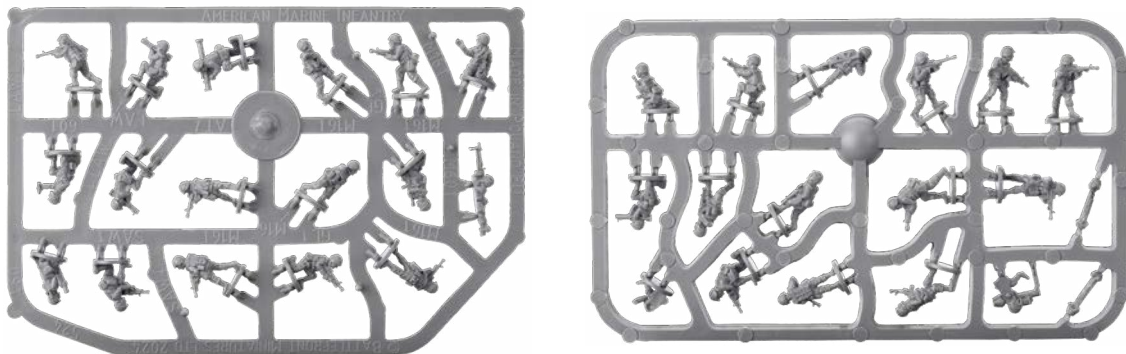
The Soviets get two frames as well, and one is pretty standard, armed with the AKs and RPGs you'd expect, to form the basis for an infantry company. The frame it combines with has heavier weapons, such as automatic grenade launchers and anti-aircraft missiles.
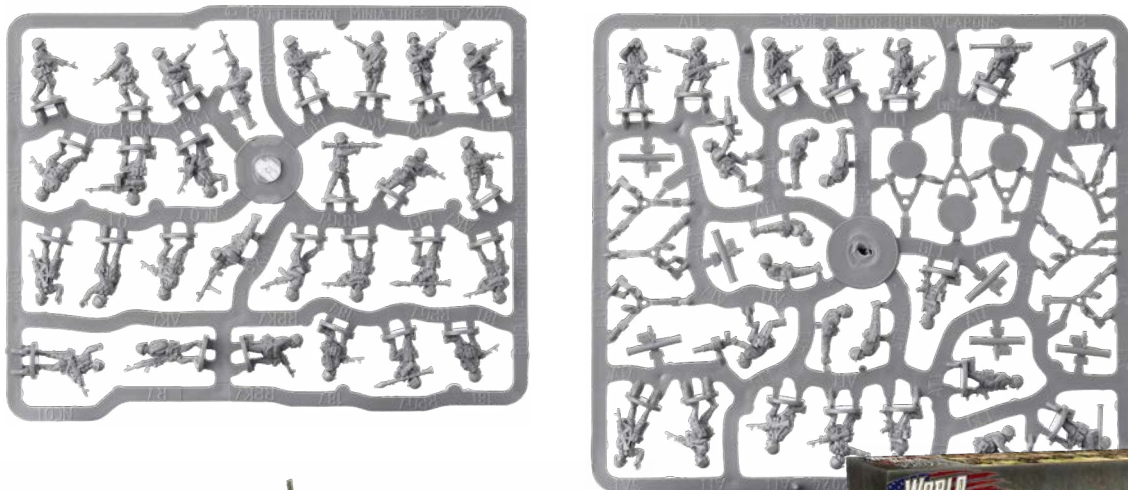
The frames are mixed into various box sets from Battlefront, with the Soviets a part of the new World War III starter set, as well as Motor Rifle Company and Motor Rifle Platoon options. The US can be purchased as a Mech Platoon and Rifle Platoon.

Above: Here's another look at the M48 Patton, painted by its designer, Tim Adcock.

WARGAMES ATLANTIC - ASSORTED PLASTICS

Wargames Atlantic (WA) delivers some new options for fantasy and sci-fi armies this month, ready to bolster your forces in various existing games, and some Bronze Age options if you like to keep your gaming grounded in history.

WEREWOLVES

The Werewolves set contains 20 multi-part plastic miniatures to assemble in various poses, from crouched and ready to pounce, to upright and howling. Six heads are available for every four bodies and there are tails and all kinds of arms to add. The fit between some arms and torsos is a little awkward; you'll need to do some dry fits to find the right look for each of your wolfmen. These are buff beasts - visible muscle tone with patches of hair, rather than covered in fur - and their heads display some vestiges of humanity alongside their animalistic features.

Individually, they'd be great for gothic horror gaming in *The Silver Bayonet,* but as a unit you could use them in all kinds of fantasy tabletop battle games.

SNEAKFEET

Let's not beat about the bush here, these are *Warhammer 40k*'s Ratling snipers by another name! That's not necessarily a bad thing as the set includes 24 figures, making the cost vastly less than you'd pay for even half as many GW figures.

WA's playful, yet menacing, SneakFeet are essentially hobbits if they'd lived into the far future and developed a penchant for sniping with long rifles. They've maintained their love of food (a frying pan with eggs is included as an optional part!) and, if you don't fancy sniping, there are SMG options as well as grenades, blades, and other kit. This set's the antithesis of the wolves when it comes to fit. Everything's really neat and pleasing to put together.

DETAILS

- **Scale:** 28mm
- **Period:** Historical, fantasy, and Sci-Fi
- **Price:** £25
- **Material:** Hard plastic
- **Available from:** wargamesatlantic.com

BRONZE AGE CHARIOTS

When we looked at WA's Skeleton Chariots a few issues ago we noted that, due to their lack of skull and other bone-like detailing, the plastic frame was ripe for switching to a more historical setting. Now, with the addition of Medium Horse frames, WA have done the work for you, putting together a box set that can be built into three chariots, each pulled by two horses. All you need to do is add whatever crew you want and they're good to go.
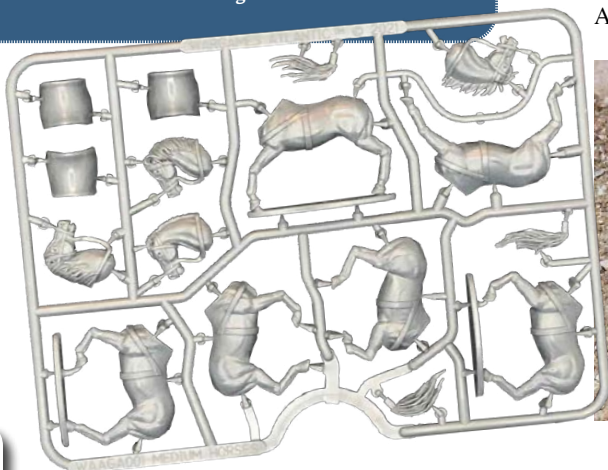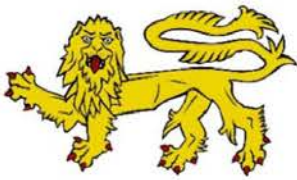
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RELEASE RADAR

Dom Sore's here with his regular column on the wargaming world's more eclectic new releases.

VARYING LEVELS OF FANTASY

Sometimes a range grabs your focus, and, while you can't quite pinpoint why, you find it quickly making its way to your online shopping cart. The new Woodwoses from Gripping Beast (**grippingbeast.co.uk**) are definitely in that category for me. Sculpted by Colin Patten for Gripping Beast's Ragnarok range, these are 28mm metal depictions of the wild men of medieval literature. These are not as hairy as some of the writing suggests, but they are primitive looking. They have flint-tipped spears, wicker shields, grass skirts, and grass head gear. Nearly all have a topknot, and they also have goatees; could these be the wild men of the fabled kingdom of Hip Ster? These fine figures will make an interesting-looking Lord of the Wilds warband for *SAGA*, as they are marketed for, but could be used as an ancient pre-historic force for games like *Tribal*.

> The year is marching on, and the nights are drawing in, which means we get more time for gaming without the pressures of "making the most of the sun". I will be deeply focused on reading rules for the foreseeable future, and not just because the third edition of *Bolt Action* is on the horizon!

If you are looking for something more suited to classic *Dungeons & Dragons* gaming, take a look at Headbunny Games (**headbunny.games**), who have released Hirelings and Skilled NPCs that are fit for purpose. There are ten figures in total, covering combat and non-combat roles, and coming at 3D-printed 32mm scale. You can choose to get them with a plain, wood, or paved base, and there's an option for no base at all, which is a nice selection of choices to have (other 3D-printing manufacturers, take note!). The blacksmith and plague doctors are great figures for which I will certainly find a use. You'll note that these promo shots are painted to a far more 'home hobbyist' level than many figure ranges; perhaps this doesn't reflect the figures' full potential, but it's quite nice to see a more achievable finish.

FULL PAPER DOM

Several rulebooks have thudded their way through my letterbox of late, and, while the new *Bolt Action* has certainly drawn my focus, that's a bit too much of a big gun for Release Radar. Instead, how about a new set of Napoleonic Era rules: *Twilight of the Empire* from Wyre Historic Books (**wyrehistoricbooks.co.uk**). Do we need another set of Napoleonic rules in the already overcrowded space? If they are from the same stable as *Twilight of the Sun King*, as these are, then maybe we do. These rules are for fighting big battles, where face-to-face actions are less important than the overall strategic flow of the battle. Everything is based on units, related to half the size of your bases, and the game is scale agnostic. If you haven't tried any of the *Twilight* games, then maybe this is the one to have a go at; you won't need to rebase any of your existing collection.
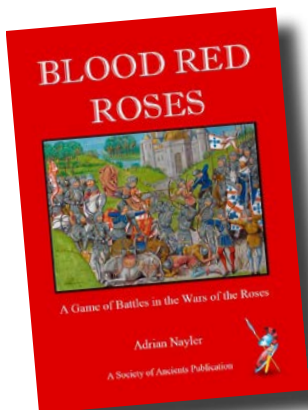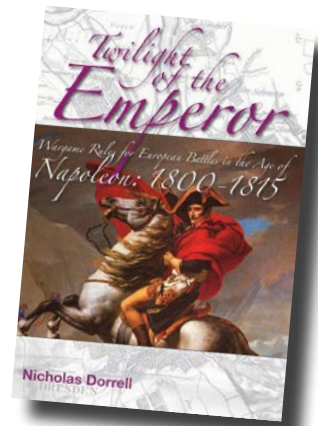
If the Wars of the Roses is more your thing, then the Society of Ancients' (**soa.org.uk**) latest release offers a rather different approach to the period than the one you'll find in *Billhooks*. *Blood Red Roses* is a grid-based game, with troops organised into wards that will then engage with the enemy, depending on their Battle Stance. Happenstance cards allow players to affect both sides, for good or ill, and even allow the possibility of troops defecting to join the opposition. You can choose to randomise your army selection with the cards provided in the physical game, which is an interesting feature, and one that will lead to asymmetric battles. I don't think we have enough of those in our hobby, and they are often my favourite games, especially when I am at a disadvantage. *Blood Red Roses* is a scale-agnostic game, so you can use what you have on a table size you like. This is a compelling set of rules that could lead to many stimulating clashes.

At the smaller scale of tabletop combat is *Tales of Derring Do: Victoriana* from Caliver Books (*caliverbooks.com*). This add-on for Chris Swan's game takes us to the Victorian Age of Steampunk, where flying machines exist, and other worlds are but a thin veil away. There are new traits, new characters, new vehicles, and much more. If you have in mind the horror stories and sci-fi novels of Arthur Conan Doyle, Jules Verne, and HG Wells, then you already have a good idea of the kind of games you'll be able to play with the ruleset. It is a toolbox for creating your own clashes, rather than a prescriptive set of rules. The Woodwoses I mentioned earlier could make an excellent opponent for a hapless detective in the wilds of Northumberland, for example. It seems that Caliver have fully embraced AI art here; almost every page has a bold computer-generated image on it, and the style and quality vary quite dramatically (see below) - a sign of things to come, perhaps.
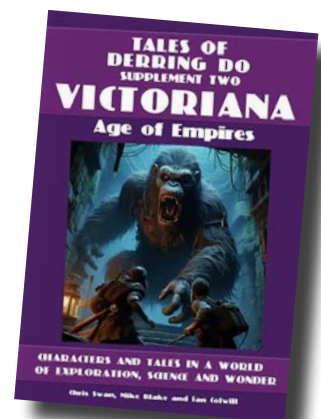
Above: A man taking his wheel for a walk on the streets of steampunk London!?

My Release Radar tends to ping and alert me to new items, but I must mention that The Plastic Soldier Company (**theplasticsoldiercompany.co.uk**) have announced the addition of various older *Battlegroup* books to their Print on Demand service. In the first round of additions, you will find: *Battlegroup Core Rulebook*, *Battlegroup Blitzkrieg*, *Battlegroup Pacific*, *Battlegroup Stalingrad*, *Battlegroup Wacht am Rhein*, *Battlegroup Overlord - Beyond the Beaches*, and *Battlegroup Bagration*. Hunting down an out-of-print copy is vastly simplified by printing what you want; go fill your boots and the holes in your library!

MARVELLOUS MEDIEVALS

If you like your troops wearing armour and wielding big choppers, how about some new figures from Medbury Miniatures (**medburyminiatures.com**), who are increasing their Hundred Years' War offering? There is Edward the Black Prince, Edward III, Archers, Knights, and Men-at-Arms, and these are all in 28mm white metal. The English range will be completed before Medbury follow up with the French. The figures can be bought in separate packs, but there is also a new Starter Army, which looks like it covers several *SAGA* options for the upcoming *Age of Chivalry* universe.

Above: Early 14th Century Archers.

Above: Unarmoured English Archers.

Above: Early HYW English Men-at-Arms.

Above: Early HYW Knights with great helms (left) and bascinets (right).

Above: Edward, the Black Prince.

Above: Edward III.

Skip forth another hundred years and you get to the Peasants' War in Germany, a conflict that Steel Fist Miniatures (**steelfistminiatures.com**) now cover with some new 28mm white-metal options. Four figures are firing from a wagon, and, although no wagon is included, they will fit the Perry Miniatures Wars of the Roses wagon, as well as some of the MDF options out there. One man has a crossbow, and three are using arquebuses, one of which is very large; you would not want to be in the way of it!

Above: Figures firing from a wagon.

MOUNT UP AND HIT THE WEST

It wouldn't be a true Release Radar without a look at new Bloody Miniatures (**bloodyminiatures.co.uk**) figures! Moving on from their excellent English Civil War infantry, they're continuing to mount the troops, with four packs in the next release. There are Horse Pistols, Bold Dragooners, Gentlemen-at-Arms, and These Our Captains. Each pack comes with three figures and three horses, and, as with the previous packs, they will bring pizazz to your army as command figures, focal points in the front rank, or just marvellous mounted regiments.

Above: Bold Dragooners.

Above: Horse Pistols.

Above: These Our Captains.

Above: Gentlemen-at-Arms.

Also producing cavalry are Clearco Miniatures (**clearcominiatures.blogspot.com**), with a range of figures representing several of the First Nations of North America. The latest to appear are the Mounted Cheyenne and Mounted Plains Indians (the name needs to change for full accuracy, but it is what it is). One Cheyenne has a revolver, two have bows, and one a tomahawk, while the Plains have three bows and a tomahawk. What I like about these are the horses; these are not the huge Shire horse size we often associate with wargames figures, these are the pony-sized steeds we expect in North America, and they are well-suited to the period. These are a welcome addition to the ranges of North-American indigenous figures out there, and might appear in my *Dead Man's Hand* games soon.

They're not on horses, but Gringo 40s (**gringo40s.com**) continue the expansion of their Comanche Wars range (seen left) with some good options. Their Comanche figures have a nice lean-but-toned look, armed with various melee and ranged weapons, while the new Colonial Spanish Artillery piece is sold as individual figures (Officer with Telescope, Gunner with Sponge and Bucket, and Gunner using Portfire, seen below), along with a 10-inch Artillery Mortar.

SPECIALIST STORAGE

TNT Laser Works (**tntlaserworks.com**) have come up with an attractive solution for miniature storage in the form of their Miniature Mimic MDF sets. They are extremely customisable, with a variety of heights and basing sizes cut into the wood, and you can go for a magnetised option. The fancier your desires, the more the price goes up, but, in their basic state, they're a very reasonably priced storage solution. What makes them stand out is the cut-out section in the front, which mimics the Mimic mouth from a certain popular RPG. When you have stacked boxes, that mouth lets you see inside, so you can identify what you need at a glance. You'll need to add a clear screen to negate dust ingress, but otherwise, they look great.

I am now on the hunt for some history or nerdery themed bookmarks, so I don't lose where I am up to in all the rulebooks I'm checking out!

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

BATTLE OF THE BULGE STARTER SET

Bolt Action starter set – Hard bitten US infantry clash with elite German paratroopers

RRP/MSRP: £93 / $149 / €112
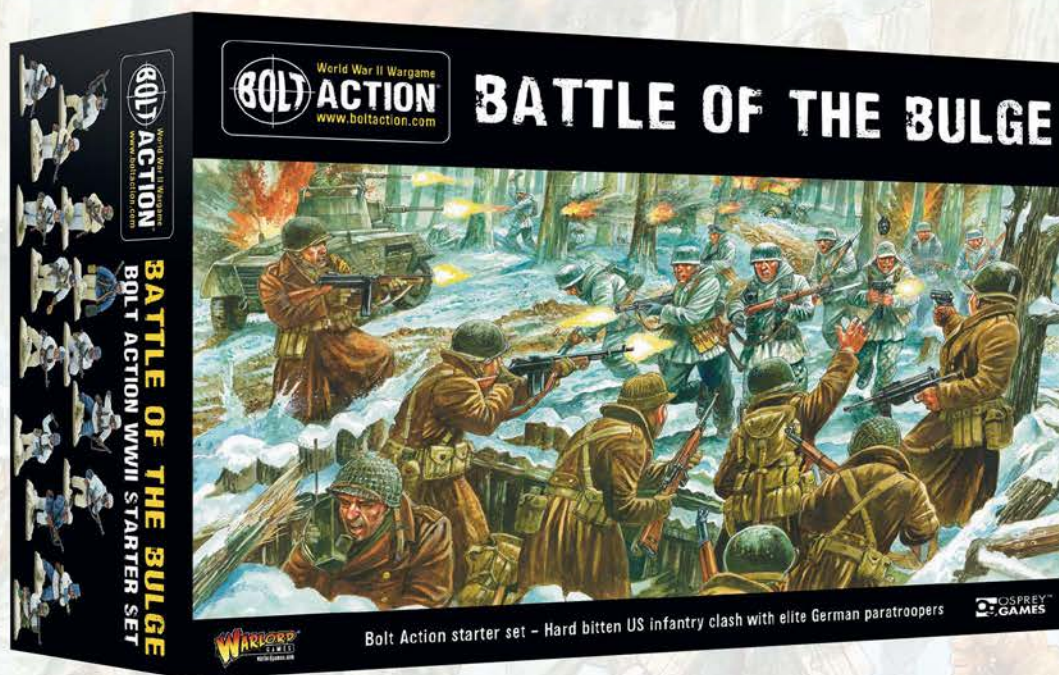
Contains:

- Bolt Action A5 rulebook
- Battle of the Bulge scenario and assembly booklet
- 24x hard plastic US Winter Army infantry (4 sprues)
- 18x hard plastic German Winter Fallschirmjäger paratroopers (3 sprues)
- 1x hard plastic M8 Greyhound armoured car (can also make an M20 scout car)
- 1x hard plastic Ruined Farmhouse terrain piece
- Full colour waterslide decal sheet
- 1x M8 Greyhound/M20 scout car stat card
- Vehicle Damage Markers
- Plastic Bolt Action templates and tokens
- Plastic Pin markers
- 10x Six-sided dice
- 8x Bolt Action Order Dice
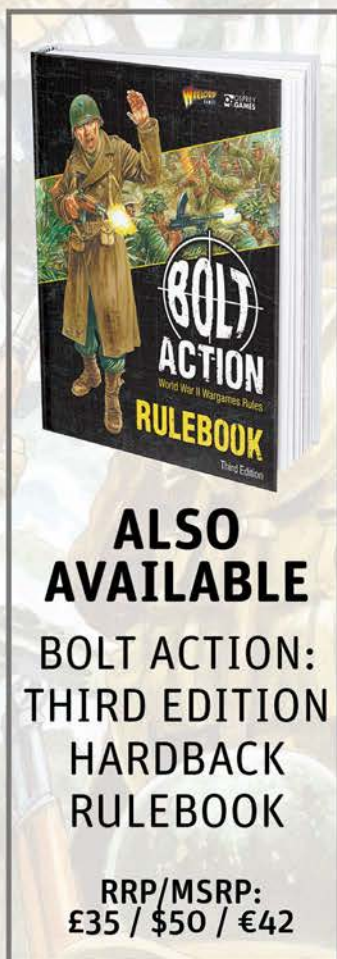
ALSO AVAILABLE

BOLT ACTION: THIRD EDITION HARDBACK RULEBOOK

RRP/MSRP: £35 / $50 / €42

QUICK FIRE!

FROM BIG GUNS TO VIGNETTES

By Warren Cann

A big attraction of wargaming campaigns, for me, are the modelling opportunities they provide. It's fun to track down and build the models and terrain I need for a linked set of scenarios.

My brother and I are preparing for Old Hickory, our third Pint Sized campaign from TooFatLardies. We play in 1/72, the scale of our youth, and I had to build units from the US Army's 30th Division, who will be defending against the Der Führer Regiment of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. The army list included M1 57mm and M5 3" anti-tank guns that I was able to source from Battlezone Miniatures, with infantry and gun crews, mainly drawn from the excellent AB Figures range with a smattering of Simon's Soldiers.

The madness set in as I started to build the guns. It started innocently enough, with the idea of doing something special with the bases. Why not, given they had to be relatively large, and I had a lot of space to play with? Once that notion took hold, ideas popped into my head and simply demand to be executed. The first M5 3" antitank gun was based in an urban setting, behind abandoned household furniture, and the second was placed in a rural setting, behind a farm gate under a large tree. The third gun ended up in a field with a member of the French Resistance riding by (an excellent 3D printed model from Wargames Atlantic), whilst the fourth is poking out behind a ruined shed.

By the time I got to the final two M1 57mm guns, the fever had broken somewhat and the basing was more sensible… although, of course, I had to go to town when given the chance to build an Airfix jeep!

Arguably, these are model vignettes rather than practical wargaming pieces, but I don't mind. I am convinced the opportunity to exercise my creativity is a big reason this hobby is so good for my mental health. Another bonus is that following the occasional creativity detour not only makes the process of building and painting armies that much more interesting, it results in an army that is just a bit different to everyone else's.

COVER MOUNT FOCUS

COAT COUTURE
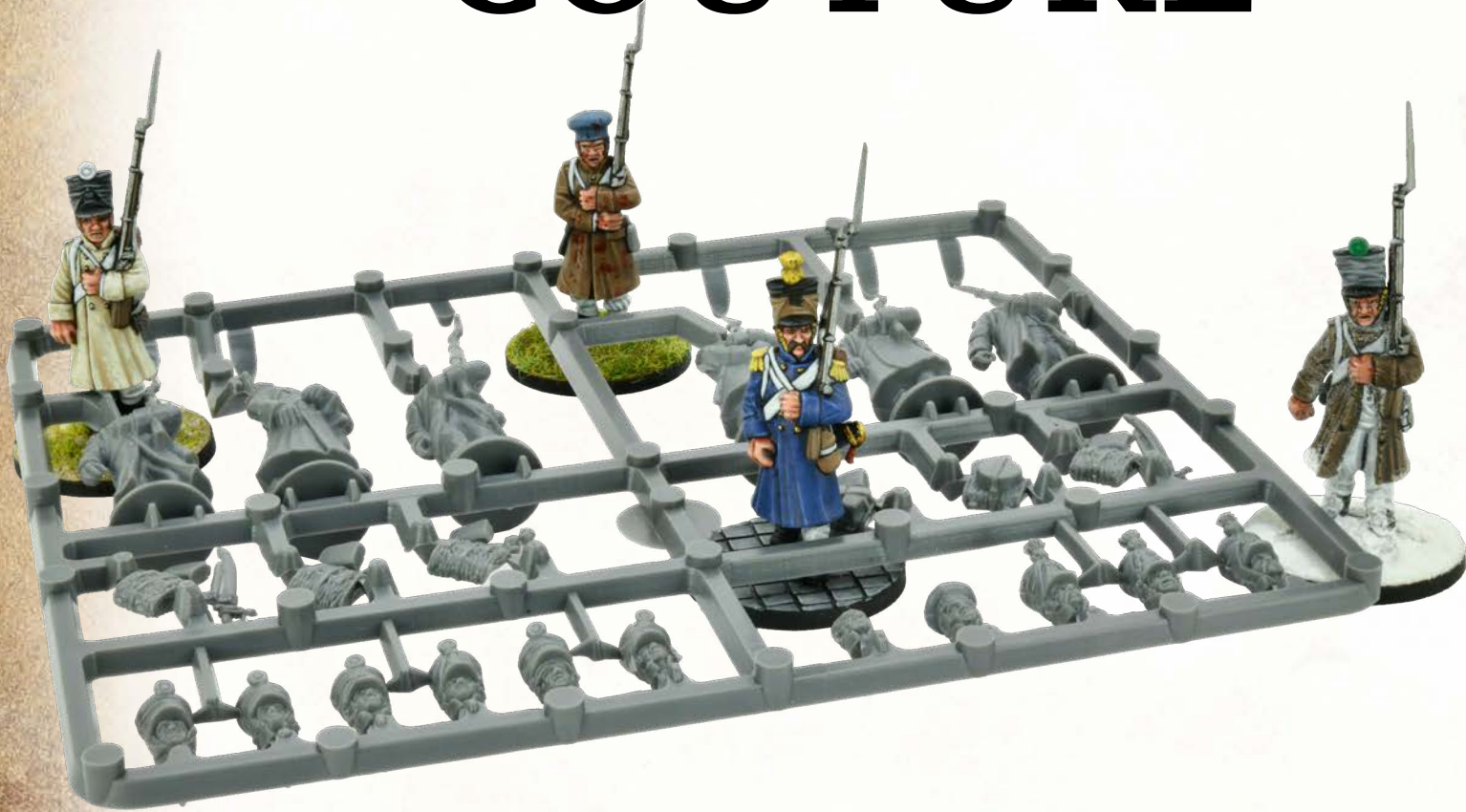
Matt Parkes paints this month's Warlord Games French Napoleonic freebie frame, focusing on greatcoats suitable for different theatres.

A large area of the French figures bagged with this issue consists of heavy greatcoats. That's good news if you want to get your infantry painted quickly, but, unless you're buying multiple copies of this issue, you're probably not about to paint a regiment! Instead of slapping on your standard paint scheme, how about treating these free French infantry as a chance to do some experimenting, try out some new painting approaches, and, perhaps, create the feeling of a totally different theatre of conflict for your developing army?

That's what Matt Parkes did with four of the figures from the frame, doing all he could to put the 'great' back into the greatcoat, giving it the care and attention that its name suggests it deserves!

All paints used here are from Army Painter's Warpaints Fanatic range, and Matt used Army Painter's Flexible Triad System. Search online for more information.

PERIL ON THE PENINSULAR - 1812

This figure's greatcoat has been bleached by the sun to a light beige, which enhances the feeling that the infantryman has faced extreme conditions while stationed in the Spanish Ulcer.

PAINTING A FADED GREATCOAT

Matt started with Paratrooper Tan (Browns Flexible Triad) before shifting to the noticeably paler, and cooler, Light Neutrals Triad. Dusty Skull followed by Tomb King Tan as the next two highlight stages ensures a look of faded fabric.

| Paratrooper Tan | Dusty Skull | Tomb King Tan |

Matt built the model with a good bit of kit, to add to the feeling that this man's making do while he's on the move, living by his wits in the rough and unforgiving Spanish terrain.

The base has been textured with Krautcover Soil of Sparta scatter. Painting scatter or leaving it plain is an ongoing debate, with some painters feeling that leaving the materials 'natural' clashes with the painted detail of the figure. Matt's not opposed to that natural look, though, and reckons it can sometimes make for a nice contrast that helps the painted figure stand out even more.

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW - 1812

This notable and truly harrowing retreat demands a suitably ragged and dramatically disheveled greatcoat. Taking inspiration from a picture that Editor Dan found online, showing a damaged (dragoon) greatcoat, with holes and all, Matt gouged tears into the Warlord figure and even melted a few holes into its greatcoat. He used a needle to do this, heated over a cooking hob flame (make sure to ventilate the room and wear a mask if you try this) then quickly pressed to the model and swiveled around a little as the plastic began to give.

With the very simple conversion done he applied Brigandine Brown through to Paratrooper Tan, via Bootstrap Brown. To add more depth, he also added a darker brown wash to the recesses.

The figure is wading through Gale Force 9 snow, which was glued to the base and dusted on parts of the figure and fixed with standard PVA.

Right: Part of Matt's inspiration was this torn up greatcoat from the period.

THE IN-CAMP INVALID

This unfortunate chap is splattered with blood - his own or that of his buddies - and he's invalided at camp, hence his lack of backpack (this left a hole in the back of the model that Matt filled with Green Stuff) and the pokalem hat to look a little more relaxed.

Coat

Bootstrap Brown · Leather Brown · Paratrooper Tan

Hat

Night Sky · Thunderous Blue · Stratos Blue

Basing has been kept extremely simple, with a scattering of static grass.

PARADE GROUND GRENADIER

Matt built and painted this figure to look fancy in its pomp and finery. The parade ground Grenadier was painted very clean, fully kitted out with a stack of well looked-after equipment.

Coat

Triumphant Navy	Gothic Blue	Ultramarine Blue	Alpha Blue

Epaulets

Leather Brown	Fiendish Yellow	Daemonic Yellow

Matt had some fun with the basing on this one by cutting out paper tiles and attaching them. Note that to sell this effect he also had to carve away the puddle base that the figure comes attached to. Thankfully this is easy with plastic - use clippers to get started and a sharp knife to finish!

GENERAL ELEMENTS

Skin

| Fur Brown | Moonstone Skin | Agate Skin | Barbarian Flesh |

All Straps/ trousers

| Ash Grey | Company Grey | Matt White |

Musket

| Brigadine Brown | Bootstrap Brown | Leather Brown |

Backpack

| Oak Brown | Tree Ancient | Dryad Brown |

| Gun Metal | Shining Silver |
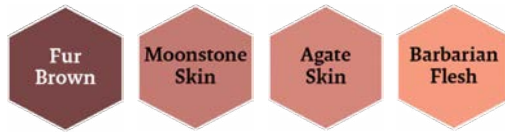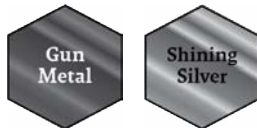
It's always a good idea to put some time aside to work on your painting approach and these figures are a great opportunity to have a go. If you get your free frame painted send us a Quick Fire [see page 17 - Ed].

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FIGHTING LIGHT AGAINST NAPOLEON

Bill Gray revisits light infantry, this time with an eye on the Allied coalition experience.

Back in July 2021, yours truly produced an article for *Wi*403 concerning Napoleonic light infantry titled Enfants Perdu. My article emphasized the French perspective that birthed the classic Napoleonic skirmisher process, using French Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout's instructions as the ultimate model (see Davout's process to the right).

How their opposition fared in the face of this change is what this Revisited article examines.

EVOLVING ALLIES

Late Prussians, the British, plus their allies finally mastered enough of the French technique to match their adversaries. Prussia's crushing defeats at Jena and Auerstedt, in 1806, were so massive and all-encompassing that any change was welcome; class structure be damned! Conversely, the British had a worldwide empire, so had plenty of experience in fighting unformed against dispersed indigenous armies.

The experience of the French and Indian Wars, along with the American War of Independence, further hammered home the point.

For the Austrians and Russians, however, there had not been such an evolution. Indeed, even by 1813, Austrian Chief of Staff Count Joseph Radetzky would forbid his infantry from skirmishing because "we do not understand that type of fighting". This strongly suggests that lower-level Austrian commanders' attempts to beat the French at their own battlefield game failed miserably.

DAVOUT'S PROCESS
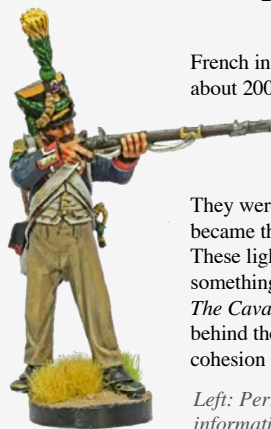
French infantry (all infantry, not just Légère) deployed in pairs, about 200 meters in front of advancing, and formed infantry columns. Other than a small reserve for replacements, the distance between each pair was around 20 yards, with one 'Universal Soldier' firing, the other reloading.

They were to annoy the enemy until their dispersed formation became the target, as opposed to the close-order troops behind them. These light troops also picked off artillery gunners and officers, something Nadezhda Durova specifically noted in her classic work, *The Cavalry Maiden*. By the time the close-order French troops behind them formed line to fire and 'à la bayonet', the enemy's cohesion and morale would be wrecked.

Left: Perry Miniatures French Voligeur. See page 29 for more information on the figures featured in this article.

WHEN LIGHT INFANTRY IS NOT

Contrary to popular belief, the use of so-called light infantry began long before the age of Frederick the Great. In the army of Gustavus Adolphus, we find that the 1611 rolls include an exotic unit called the Djurskyttar, or 'game shooter'. Records note Nils Krak's commission to recruit foresters and game wardens from the Royal Estates in southern Sweden for this unit, where they received horses, to act as a Dragoon/Jäger hybrid of sorts.

The issue was that, although most European armies converted their infantry to highly-drilled, formation-based, close-order troops, there were some situations and types of terrain for which they were ill suited. Broken terrain, such as mountains or dense forests, were particularly treacherous, as they disrupted the pretty parade-ground formations of regular infantry, making them harder for officers to supervise. What better solution than to recruit individuals who were adept at operating on such turf as part of their everyday job?

Such troops were a bit more individualistic, and could thus perform perform their military duties with less supervision by their officers. These soldiers also had an advantage in their use of rifles, as opposed to smoothbore muskets. They often brought these weapons from home, with the state happily paying for powder and shot. The rifle was exceptionally useful for sniping at enemy officers, but producing the weapon was expensive, and training to shoot it properly was a tedious and time-consuming affair. Folks from the woods solved both issues.

This is why many of these units were named Jäger or Chasseur (German and French for 'hunter'). It is also why forest-green uniforms have been associated with such troops, with the bonus of providing rudimentary camouflage.

These units were often supplemented by more volunteer-type light-infantry forces, especially in Austria. In 1741, Baron Franz von der Trenck, under a charter from Empress Maria Theresa, recruited Pandours from the Slavonian Military Frontier. Similar units followed, and the Pandours became known as brave and audacious warriors, but ill-disciplined and sometimes downright disobedient. At the 1745 Battle of Soor, the Pandours looted (or, as the Austrian troops would translate it, 'liberated') 80,000 ducats from the Prussian war chest, as well as the tent, horses, and personal weapons of Frederick the Great. They were replaced by the Grenztruppen (border troops), a local, almost hometown militia, raised by the Hapsburgs to defend the mountainous cordon sanitaire with the Ottoman Empire. They were drilled in rudimentary skirmishing, marksmanship, and linear tactics.

Finally, one must mention the various Prussian Freikorps (volunteer corps), that, alongside Frederick the Great's vaunted Feldjaeger Regiment, were created to counter Austrian lights. Alas, they were little more than brigands in uniform, and Old Fritz despised them. In fact, King Frederick once remarked that their only conceivable use was cannon fodder, deployed in front of advancing line troops, whose serried ranks of bayonets would push them forward to shield the regulars from enemy shot and shell.

Nothing really changed from these concepts, even though there were multiple warning signs during the French Revolution, as enfants perdus (French for 'lost children') and their skirmishing specialisms became an increasingly significant part of France's tactical acumen. The reason for Napoleon's adversaries' failure to match the French's changing ways was, in part, probably due to a mutiny by Austria's Grenzers in 1800. It was suppressed, but the

Grenzer corps was reduced from 57,000 effectives to 13,000, who were redrilled as regular line infantry. For autocratic Europe, the message was clear: the class differences between the aristocracy and the peasantry were simply too large. The latter had little intellectual sophistication, no experience in independent action or decision-making, and was completely untrustworthy. The officer-aristocracy was necessary to keep control, maintain order, and supervise. Lurking beneath the surface, of course, was a class-conscious aristocracy that did not want the status quo to change!

WHAT TO DO?

A clue to how other armies could use light infantry can be found in a 1786 letter of instruction, penned by Mikhail Kutuzov, to the Bugskii Jäger Korps. He listed six functions:

1. Cover the march of the army over terrain unsuitable for cavalry.

2. Keep a defile.

3. Drive the enemy out of woods or thick brush.

4. Defend woods, with or without abattis.

5. Defend or drive the enemy out of villages, cemeteries, rocky terrain, and ditches.

6. Cover friendly close-order infantry who are forming a battleline or marching over rough ground.

As an example, function 6 required the Jägers to be distributed by platoon, where each platoon commander would dispatch half of his men 100 paces forward in pairs, with an interval of not more than three paces between each pair. Such a formation was an open order deployment, yet still compact enough for officers to keep control. It was far from what French officers, like Davout, were doing with their own troops, however.

As noted earlier, Britain and her allies, along with the Prussians from about 1813 forward, broke the code and changed. Austria and Russia floundered. In 1812, Cavalry Maiden Nadezhda Durova noted that Russian skirmishers were standing in close order when the battle situation dictated they be prone. General Miloradovitch flipped out and ordered her to ride over and tell their "slow witted" officer to order his troops to lie down. These were serfs, and in Russia, as a serf, you did nothing unless your lord told you to. If given the latitude, they perhaps would not even have known what to do in the circumstances.

Above: Prussian Jägers, 1806.

Above: British King's German Legion.

Austrian generals saw this very flaw with their Grenzers. Feldmarschall-Leutnant Count Rosenburg wrote: "they are too used to being in closed lines and to acting automatically on the word of command, but they must be capable of relying on their own initiative." Radetzky put it more bluntly when, after the war, he lamented that the biggest problem with his Grenztruppen was they were overrgulated.

ON THE TABLETOP, OR NOT?

With all the Napoleonic rules in existence, and the multitudes of command levels they replicate, it's going to be hard not finding the substandard light infantry tactics noted above represented!

If you like the low-level minutiae of light infantry doctrine and the ability of skirmishers to follow it, or you like breaking down Jäger battalions into various formations, to cover deployment or assaulting cemeteries, look no further than Scott Bowden's legendary *EMPIRE* (or whatever they're calling it these days) rules. Scott gave us the concept of Semi-Skirmishers, and the game required flowcharts to play. Yes, those were the good ol' days! There are still rules out there that tackle the subject with that level of granularity too.

AT HIGHER LEVELS OF GAMEPLAY

Ultimately, you are comparing Austrians, Russians, and other Allied light troops to French doctrine. It's a question of taking Davout's instructions and seeing how well Hans and Leonid can meet or beat that standard… or not!

If you are playing later (1813 to 1815) Prussians, or the British and their loyal minions (KGL, Portuguese, Dutch-Belgian, and so on), this is an easy task; count them as equivalent to the French. In fact, when swarms of skirmishers from these antagonists collide in a brigade-level ruleset (the base infantry unit is a brigade or equivalent), you could easily say their capabilities cancel each other out, and simply ignore that part of the combat phase. Put them out of your mind as much as you can; this article is about the others!

Why? Well, I've been playing Napoleonics for close to 50 years now - from *EMPIRE*, to Ned Zuparko's *Vive l'Empereur!*, through to my own game, *Age of Eagles II* - and I have to say that skirmishers make the biggest (perhaps only) noticeable impact on a game wherein one side has them, and the other does not. On the other hand, when one side has them (i.e. the French and their minions) and the other has fewer or less effective skirmishers, things get a little bit tricky.

One of the best ways I've found to recreate the archaic light infantry tactics of Austria, Russia, and others, is to take the simple option: don't! Simply declare that they do not exist in the game you're playing. Sure, history says differently, but their effectiveness was so pathetically inferior ("we do not understand that type of fighting") that they might as well not be represented on the table. Keep it simple!

If (unlike those I game with) you're good-hearted, want your Austro-Russian adversaries to have some chance at winning, and are keen to add some historical chrome to proceedings, there are things you can do.

Don't worry about the regular line infantry, grenadiers, foot guards, and their abortive use of the third rank as lights. Instead, select all formal light infantry units - Russian Jägers and Jäger-Grenadiers, Austrian Infantry Regiment 64 Tyroler-Feldjäger-Regiment, Austrian Feldjäger Battalions (not Grenz!), and similar - and treat only these specific units as the equivalent of France's universal soldier infantry when performing Davout-approved skirmishing. This means that, while all French infantry can skirmish, very few of the enemy units they face will be able to do the same, with the rest having no skirmish capability at all. As regards overall impact on the game, the result will be just about right historically, but you'll have a little more flavor to keep players happy.

This obviously presents an imbalance if you are playing as the Russians or Austrians, but remember, their Jäger units and kin should have non-skirmish/non-light fighting functions that are not afforded to other infantry in their armies. Ensure they can:

1. Move quicker than other infantry, perhaps at the same rate of travel as heavy cavalry, if your rules allow such distinctions. After all, the cash-strapped Kingdom of Sardinia created the fast-moving Bersaglieri as a substitute for cavalry they could ill afford, and they keep on running today!

2. Pass through friendly units without penalty. Non-light formations should not receive this benefit when passing through light infantry.

Above: Austrian Jägers.
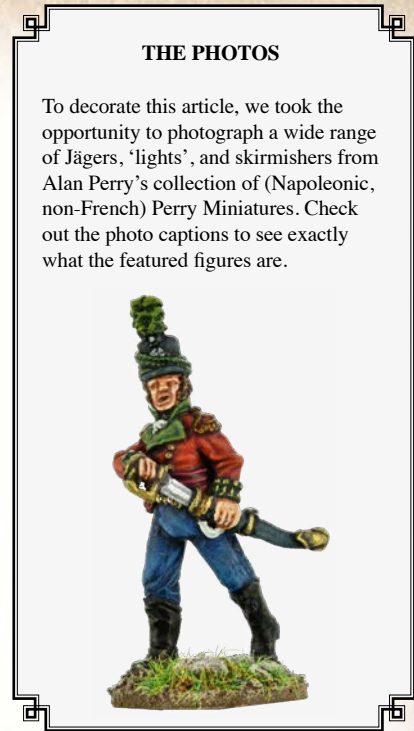
3. Deploy into or cross rough or constricted terrain - forests, hills, and the like - with no movement penalty. Obviously, this does not include impassable terrain, such as unfordable streams or lakes, unless the player can prove that the unit in question included a holy-relic-toting priest!

4. Attack enemy units in, or defend from rough terrain, ditches, urban areas, cemeteries, etc., with some kind of positive combat modifier. By doctrine, these were the formations of choice for such missions, so they were trained for it, and likely good at it. I flat-out missed this concept in my own *Age of Eagles II* rules. If I had been smart enough to include it, I would have given something like an additional +1 dice roll modifier, favoring the lights when attacking or defending in such terrain.

In a similar vein, I wouldn't necessarily worry about automatically degrading the melee capacity of such open order formations for any reason, even on open ground. Only a portion of their troops were normally in open order, and there were always a lot of formed supports to fall back into.

5. Defend against enemy musketry and artillery fire, with some sort of additional negative modifier for light infantry being targeted. Again, in *Age of Eagles,* this could be an additional -1 to the dice roll when enemy units fire at Allied Jäger units, or similar.

While I've used my own rules to illustrate the situations above (I know them best), any Napoleonic rules in use today should be easily adaptable to present such procedures and modifiers in a similar fashion.

With the above changes implemented, you might still find an Austrian player at your table showing signs of gaming distress, demanding use of their Feldjäger's 1300 Model 1770 Girandoni Windbüchse (air rifles) and their 22-rounds-in-30-seconds firing capability. Don't dismiss the request out of hand; it's sure to make one Hell of a game, and, as world-famous historian Ridley Scott noted: "if you weren't there, how do you know it's not true?"

Above: British Light Infantry, 1808 - 1814.

Above: Danish Jägers and Light Infantry.

LEROS 1943

Ian Taylor reports on his game from the Joy of Six show - a German WWII Amphibious Assault to capture the Greek island of Leros.

What makes for a good participation game in 6mm? I'm not sure I have all the answers, but it's a question I ask myself each year, before planning and building a game for the Joy of Six show, run by Baccus 6mm. I can boil my answers down to three key areas:

1. It needs to be eye catching.

2. The rules need to be representative of the period, fast to play, and easy to pick up, as players may only have a passing interest in my chosen area of history. They also need to be fast and easy for me to explain to players who have other things they want to get up to at a show!

3. I think the game should be a little bit unusual; not something you would normally see at most shows and illustrative of why 6mm is such a great scale for wargaming.

How did I try to achieve these things this year? Read on!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BATTLE

With the end of the North Africa campaign in May 1943, the British were keen to exploit the Allies' initiative in the Mediterranean with an invasion of Sicily. The successful invasion resulted in the collapse of Mussolini's government, and, in September 1943, the Italians switched sides and joined the Allies. Churchill, sensing an opportunity, ordered a British occupation of the Dodecanese islands, then part of the Italian

Empire. A British Infantry brigade with SAS, LRDG, and limited Royal Navy support landed across the islands to assist the existing Italian garrisons.

The German response was swift, thorough, and ruthless. Italian garrisons throughout the Dodecanese were captured and any resistance quickly overwhelmed. The seizure of Rhodes, with its vital airfields, enabled the Germans to dominate the skies. On the island of Leros, the British made a stand and dug-in to await the German response, relying on the support of Italian coastal artillery to repel any German attack. On 13 November 1943, Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, and Kriegsmarine forces launched their assault.

There followed a five day battle in which both sides took considerable losses. The Royal Navy fought at night, supplying reinforcements and supplies under cover of darkness, whilst the Germans exploited their air superiority to maintain a tempo that the British could not match. There were a number of occasions when the Germans could have been defeated but the British command, beset by command-and-control difficulties, was unable to exploit these fleeting opportunities. As a result, Britain lost a Brigade it could ill afford and the Dodecanese were secured within Fortress Europe. Relegated to a backwater, the occupation forces were tormented by SBS units for the remainder of the war, which has been seen as a far more efficient use of Allied forces.

CHURCHILL'S FOLLY?

Churchill had been obsessed with the possibility of a Balkan strategy throughout WWII and may have been looking for a vindication of his disastrous Gallipoli campaign in WWI. The Americans were suspicious of any extension of Allied effort into the Eastern Mediterranean as an attempt to delay the invasion of France and further British interests in the area after the war.

Churchill was concerned that the Soviets would dominate the area post-war and was keen to pressure Turkey into joining the allies. They could lend their support to a Southern front that would support and influence Soviet offensives towards Eastern Europe and threaten the strategic Ploesti oilfields in Romania.

Stalin and Hitler were keen to avoid this new front from happening, so, perhaps, Churchill may have had a greater strategic grasp than many historians have credited him.

BUILDING THE TABLE

The layout was heavily influenced by an online *Rapid Fire* scenario for the battle, as well as the Osprey publication *Kos and Leros 1943*, Googled pictures of the battlefield, and the terrain as it is today.

Creating the seascape

There were three elements to building the seascape: the water, the rocky coast, and the beaches.

The water

Using 3mm Foamex (PVC foam board) in 2'x1' and 1'x1' boards made for flexibility in use, with different placements possible. It was also a lower base from which to build up the coastal pieces, to fit against my 5mm Foamex land boards.

The sea tiles would also fit in with pre-existing river boards and expand my terrain for other games; always a great incentive before embarking on constructing a board for a wargaming show!

The water effect was achieved using sheets of kitchen roll, saturated in very watered down PVA. The sheets, if given careful manipulation with a brush, will stretch and slightly wrinkle, giving a good impression of waves once dried.

Being careful to line up the sheets, avoiding gaps - whilst patching up with roughly torn small pieces glued in place. Dark blue and black emulsion gives a sense of depth and, once dried, Liquitex medium gel gives a gloss finish and a further sense of depth.

The coastline

The rocky coastline was built up with shapes made from Woodland Scenics' plaster rock moulds. Glued onto plasticard, with the rear terrain built up to match my existing terrain boards, they provide a versatile joining element for a Mediterranean coastline.

The beaches

The beaches required the few specialist boards needed for this game, encompassing the water and coastline elements in one. By combining the rock effects with a graduated application of tile adhesive, moving into a sea-scaped board, they allowed for a greater variety in the overall shape of the coastline and a closer resemblance to the actual beaches.

I added a green to my palette, blending it into the deeper blue/black, to create a sense of shallower water leading onto the beach.

Creating the hills

The hills were produced from 25mm polystyrene sheets that I had cluttering the workshop from previous projects. They were cut and shaped to represent the maps in the *Rapid Fire* scenario and then glued in place, covered with sand, and painted to match my existing terrain boards.

They were also built to fit the fortifications and emplacements that would need to sit on most of the high points. These were specialist pieces, so I constructed roadways into the hillsides, giving a sense of a table that was more custom built in its entirety.

SPECIAL TERRAIN PIECES

Dedicated pieces were required, to give a sense of place and time, from the eye-catching fortress, to windmills, gun emplacements, and olive groves/fields that bring character to the board.

The fortress

Leros castle is Byzantine, and a representation of medieval fortifications would have been more realistic, but the old Ian Weekly 1/300 scale Venetian fort is too good a model and, for me, it looks absolutely right in a Mediterranean setting. It also inspired me to look at campaigns waged in the 16th and 17th Centuries, so it is a model that has led me into new periods.

Some Timecast and Leven models were used to invoke Leros town and harbour, and a major reference point of the game was completed without the need for scratch building.

Windmills

I always intended to model a couple of the windmills that are such a prominent tourist feature of Leros, but, as deadlines approached, I wondered if I had created unnecessary work for myself. They didn't affect gameplay and people probably wouldn't notice them either. I'm glad I gave them some extra effort in the end though, as the Leven Spanish windmill sails were easily altered with pin heads and staple lengths to give a unique representation of these iconic landmarks, really adding to the sense of place the board has.

Gun emplacements

The gun emplacements were a vital part of the game and needed to be easily identified by all players. Models provided by Legions IV Hire and the Baggage-train painted up well and were placed prominently on the high points.

I made a number of semi-arid fields and crops to break up the flat gaming area, with regularly based small trees to represent olive groves. I then used my existing Mediterranean models for the villages, farms, and villas that intersperse the table, all linked with rough roads, to give interest to the game without getting in the way of troop deployments.

Above: An Italian gun emplacement is attacked by Ju88.

GETTING THE RULES SHOW-READY

I modified my favourite WWII ruleset, *Spearhead*, to give a fast, intuitive, and easily played game. The intent was a ruleset that would:

• Take no longer than five minutes when providing an overview to the players.

• Have simple dice rolls and measurements.

• Allow for on the fly modification if the players think of something reasonable or interesting to add.

When putting on a demo game at a show, with lots of other things to do, you want players engaged and a game session that can be completed in under an hour if possible.

TO PLAY THE BATTLE OF LEROS 1943

Order of fire

1. AA
2. Aircraft
3. Indirect Artillery
4. Direct Artillery
5. Direct infantry fire.

Damage

• Target in open or attacking into terrain: 4-5 = suppression, 6 = kill.

• Target defending terrain, dug-in, emplaced: 5+ = suppression.

• Half (rounded up) of all suppressions are removed at the end of the turn.

Range

All infantry machine guns have a range of 12" LoS or adjacent BUA.

Move

• Infantry move 6" or into adjacent BUA.

• Vehicles move 12" or into adjacent BUA.

Capacity

• Beach capacity is A; 2 craft, B; 1 craft, C; 3 craft.

• MFP capacity is 4 units, PLB is 2 units, IB is 1 unit - HQs, wheeled support weapons equal 2 units.

Landing craft

Landing craft move halfway to destination and then land, disembark units, then halfway back to support ship, then a turn collecting reserve units. HQs and wheeled units must arrive in first wave.

Special rules

• Engineers and Brandenburgers have +1 in assaults.

• German HQs must follow and indicate attack arrow on map and all units under its command must stay within 12".

• German Brandenburg Kommandoes may land by glider (4-5 = suppressed on landing, 6 = destroyed) or by dingy from amphibious plane (on a roll of 1 must wait a turn to clamber over rocks, otherwise can land on beaches). Draw attack arrow on map to one objective only for each platoon.

• German paratroopers land on preplanned DZ by spinner for each platoon. They are suppressed if they land on any terrain other than flat farmland. If within 3" of any allied unit they are destroyed.

• British HQ, emplaced 25 pounder, emplaced bofors AA, and FOOs are placed secretly on map and revealed if Germans come within 12" of them.

• AA attack aircraft that attack within 12" of their emplacement: 4-5 = drive off, 6 = killed

• Italian shore artillery have an unlimited range but must have LoS to target and must fire at any unit firing at them or nearest enemy naval unit.

• German naval artillery have an unlimited range but must have LoS to target and must fire at any unit firing at them or nearest enemy unit.

• German corvette may fire indirectly with Arado spotting for it.

• E-boat and MTB have range of 12".

• JU88 attack is preplanned and will destroy unit on a 2+.

• 2 x Stukas attack turn 1 against any allied unit firing or against any Italian shore battery; 4-5 = suppress, 6 = destroyed. Each subsequent attack is marked on map and a D6 rolled for when it arrives.

Objectives

Take or hold Leros by routing the enemy.

• Italian shore artillery surrenders as soon as it is fired on or assaulted.

• British battalions surrender on 50% losses.

• All Allies surrender if Brigade HQ is captured.

• German battalions retreat on 50% losses, German paratroopers retreat on 75% losses, and Brandenburgers die to a man.

THE GAME AT JOY OF SIX

I had a great time putting the game on at Joy of Six, managing to roll it out three times. Gun duels between the fleets and the emplaced artillery were important in all the games.

The German players in the first game failed to secure a hilltop emplacement by deploying their Brandenburg commandos from the sea. In the next engagement the Brandenburgers used gliders to successfully secure the same position, showing the interesting results that can come through different sets of players taking on the same mission with varying approaches.

Above: The unsuccessful sea assault of the Brandenburg commandos from game one.

Above: The effective glider assault from game two.
Below: A Dornier Flying Boat overflies a German transport with E-Boat support.

Above: The game underway at the show.

In all the games, the Germans at least succeeded in securing a bridgehead within the time allowed. By the end of the first game, the German players contemplated a withdrawal as the supporting fleet had been devastated and dug in British infantry remained secure on the high ground. In the second, the Germans were totally triumphant, but casualties had been very high. In the third, a limited Allied counterattack nearly retook the harbour (to prevent German reinforcements) before a timely Luftwaffe strike thwarted Allied hopes and secured a German victory.

All the games were close fought, there was shock and dismay on both sides, and all players felt they had been the authors of their own their fate.

CONCLUSION

Did I achieve any of the aims I set out in my introduction? Yes! I think the game was eye-catching with dark seas and an arid landscape. The games played fast, and the players (thank you all) were intuitive and engaging straight after the first turn as they eagerly fought through their brilliant (and all slightly different) plans. I did produce something a little unusual too - a German amphibious assault featuring a raft of Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, and Kriegsmarine units versus dogged British Infantry and Italian coastal artillery. In 6mm, you can achieve ambitious games without committing all your precious free time.

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PARKER BROTHERS, LEAD THE WAY!

Lisa Smedman dusts off an old copy of *Ranger Commandos*, and considers how this vintage children's board game could be repurposed for modern wargaming.

The year was 1942, Europe was under the Nazi jackboot, and in Asia, Singapore had fallen. On the eastern front, the battle for Stalingrad would soon be raging and, in North Africa, the desert war was seesawing back and forth.

The one note of hope for the Allies came in late March, when British Commandos launched an amphibious raid on the dry docks at St. Nazaire in German-occupied France. While a British destroyer, packed with explosives, rammed the gates, 277 Commandos landed via motor launches. They attacked the pumping station and lock gates, then fought a pitched battle against German defenders, who outnumbered them.

Most of the Commandos were killed, wounded, or captured, and only five of those trapped in St. Nazaire made it back to England, but the Commandos - a special raiding force formed in 1940 - had lived up to their envisioned purpose: to conduct a "reign of terror down the enemy coast."

That same year, American publisher Parker Brothers released a game that captured the excitement of the Commando raids. *Ranger Commandos* was aimed at kids; its mechanics were quite simple, but it offered the excitement of participating in a stealthy raid on occupied Europe. It was released in the very year that the American counterpart to the Commandos was formed, the US Army Rangers.

Above: The game components, from the author's collection.

Designed for up to four players, the gameplay breaks down into three phases. Players must first navigate their barges across the open water that lies between their home base and the enemy shores. This is done by flicking a spinner, then moving the barge one space in the direction indicated on the night side of the spinner: north, northeast, east, southeast, or south.

Once a player succeeds in reaching one of the nine landings on the eastern half of the board, the second phase begins. Raiders (represented by a colored wooden peg) disembark and begin their mission. There are eleven possible objectives: two docks, a radio station, seaplane base, airfield, munitions plant, German headquarters, airplane factory, tank factory, railroad yards, and oil storage. Each of these features anywhere from one to six yellow scoring counters, with their numbers face down. As the counters are collected, the player keeps them face down; only at the end of the game is the score of each revealed. A handful are worth zero points; others score 5, 10, 25, 50, or 75 points. One is marked with a star, and represents a captured general, worth 100 points.

In this second phase, players use the spinner's numeric values to move their raiders around the board. They can only collect counters by landing on an arrow space: the entrance to an objective. If they are forced to end their movement on a space with a sentry silhouette, the alarm is sounded. The rules instruct the player literally to give "a sharp whistle warning all other Commandos that the raid is discovered". Each player then gets three spins to move their raiders back to their barge. If they fail to reach it, the raiders are captured, and that player is out of the game.

There's a nice push-your-luck mechanic. Objectives closest to the landings have fewer score counters on them, and are quickly depleted. Objectives furthest from the landings tempt the players away from their barges, with the lure of larger numbers of counters.

The third phase is a race home. Players spin to move their barges back across the ocean, using the daylight side of the spinner. The barges move north, northwest, west, southwest, or south. They can make for any home base, and the first player to reach home scores 100 points, the second scores 75 points, the third scores 50 points, and the last one home gets 25 points.

The components are abstract - a far cry from miniatures gaming. Barges are pieces of wood with cardboard windscreens, a raiding party is represented by a single-colored wooden peg, and objectives to be collected are yellow pieces of wooden dowel.

The box is plain red cardboard, with an illustration glued to the middle of it, although in later editions of the game the art was expanded to cover the whole of the box lid. The board is nicely laid out, and the 'Commandos direction finder' (spinner) looks like a compass. It's quite a pretty game on the table, for its time.

ADDING THE RANGERS

As the board game was in development, the first of seven US Army Rangers battalions was being formed in the summer of 1942. The original idea had simply been to attach US soldiers to British Commando units, then have these men return to their units to share their experiences, but the battalions evolved into their own distinctive units.

Left: An early advert for the game.

Not today, chaps!

The rules point out that sometimes the whistle can sound, with Commandos discovered before all the barges even reach the enemy shores. Those players still in the water must turn their barges around and immediately head for home, without ever having landed raiders. They are, at least, more likely to get the bonus points for being the first home!

The name of the special force, Rangers, was a callback to a company that fought in the French and Indian War. Its commander, Major Robert Rogers, came up with 'Rules of Ranging' that focused on stealth and reconnaissance. His men were expected to march in single file and take different routes to their objective, and to fall or squat down when under fire, then rise and shoot back. In battle, his men were instructed to "advance from tree to tree," and "reserve fire till they [the enemy] approach very near, which will then put them into the greatest surprise and consternation, giving you an opportunity of rushing upon them with your hatchets and cutlasses to the better advantage."

The Rules of Ranging also covered posting sentries at night, and crossing bodies of water by night in canoes and battoes (flat-bottomed boats), to have the whole night before the enemy discovered you. These were all skills that the latter-day Rangers would also need.

The term 'rangers' was very much in the public consciousness. The 1940 film *Northwest Passage* starred Spencer Tracy as Major Robert Rogers, and focused on the exploits of the company he commanded in the French and Indian War. There was also a WWII-centric comic book, *Rangers of Freedom*, whose heroes - Biff, Tex, and Peter - fought Nazis while wearing Buck Rogers-style superhero costumes. In Issue No. 5, published in June 1943, the trio were assigned to a US Rangers unit. The issues that follow show the heroes in military uniform, and the title was shortened to *Rangers Comics*.

A Pathé News film, released in September 1942, shows the actual US Army Rangers in training, climbing rope ladders, crossing rivers via rope slide and rope bridge, and paddling rubber rafts while a machine gun fires nearby. "Their training is tougher than an old-fashioned kind of war," the newsreel noted. "Landing under fire, using live ammunition, and shooting close. That's a rehearsal as near the real thing as it's possible to get." The real thing was experienced when 50 men of the 1st

Above: Shoulder sleeve insignia of the 1st Ranger Battalion. When it was time to design badges, the Rangers copied the scroll shape of the Commando insignia.

Realism in the fun

The game's objectives are the ones targeted in real-world Commando raids; Oil Storage is a classic of history and all kinds of media based around commando attacks, although young contemporary players might not realize that its real-world counterpart involved fish oil. The target of a 27 December 1941 Commando raid on the Norwegian islands of Vågsøy and Måløy, code-named Operation Archery, newsreels from Pathé News and Gaumont British News revealed footage of the raid to movie audiences.

Camera operators followed the Commandos around during the attack, so there is footage of Commandos on board the transport ships steaming towards the objective - including shots of Major 'Fighting' Jack Churchill, also known as 'Mad Jack', who accompanied the men under his command into battle with bagpipes, and carrying a Scottish claymore and longbow. There are also shots of the Commandos leaving, via assault landing craft (ALC), and storming the town.

According to the newsreels, the Commandos spent six hours ashore. They destroyed stores of fish-oil, ammunition, and fuel, as well as the telephone exchange, four canning factories, and various military installations, before departing and "leaving much of the town in flames." One wonders how the Norwegians felt about that! They took

Above: Jack Churchill (far right) leads a training exercise, sword in hand, from a Eureka boat in Inveraray

with them 98 German prisoners, including the wounded commander of Nazi garrison (who was carried away on a stretcher), along with nine Quislings (Norwegian collaborators).

Gaumont British News laid it on thick, opening with bullet holes stitching a V for victory into the all-caps title 'COMMANDO', and noting that the Commandos were "men who move with the stealth of a panther and fight with the gameness of a terrier; men with the cunning of a fox and the strength of a lion, who kill like a rogue elephant." What red-blooded kid wouldn't want to play *Ranger Commandos*, after hearing something like that?

Left: British Commandos, wearing captured souvenirs, give the thumbs up and V for victory signs after their successful raid on the Norwegian islands of Vågsøy and Måløy in December 1941. The image is a still from Gaumont British News newsreel that can be found at britishpathe.com/asset/166990.

Ranger Battalion were attached to British Commando units in an ill-fated raid on Dieppe, 19 August 1942. The raiders managed to destroy six 150mm guns, but Canadian troops who stormed the beaches suffered devastating losses. Overall, the attack was a disaster.

An 8 November 1942 raid on the Algerian port of Arzew fared much better. The 1st Ranger Battalion landed by night in LCAs, defeated a Vichy French garrison manning a fort, and knocked out four 105mm cannons. In 1943, Rangers participated in three raids in Norway, and a raid that destroyed a German radar station on Ile d'Ouessant (Ushant Island) off the coast of France. They also conducted amphibious landings in Sicily.

It was on D-Day that the Rangers undertook their most daring mission. As the main invasion force steamed toward the beaches, men of the 2nd Ranger Battalion approached the 100-foot-high cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, atop which sat a German artillery position. They fired rocket-propelled grappling hooks from their landing craft, then scaled rope ladders under enemy fire. After reaching the clifftop, they discovered that the gun emplacements were empty. But they found their target a mile inland and succeeded in destroying the 155mm cannons.

Meanwhile, on Omaha Beach, the 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions hunkered down behind a seawall. As the story has it, a general famously told a major from the 5th Ranger Battalion, "Well, God damn it, if you are Rangers, then get up there and lead the way!"

Left: The cover of Yank, a magazine for the US armed forces, shows a US Army Ranger training in Scotland. The issue is from 14 January 1944.

Right: Rangers Comics No. 13, published in October 1943, seems to foreshadow what would happen the following year, when the 2nd Ranger Battalion assaulted Pointe du Hoc during the D-Day invasion (minus the damsel in distress at the top of the cliff!).

FROM RANGER COMMANDOS TO 02 HUNDRED HOURS

The game that most captures the spirit of the Commando and Ranger raids, and feels like a modern system that could include some of the appealing systems from *Ranger Commandos*, is *02 Hundred Hours*, a skirmish game published by Grey For Now Games. In this two-player game, one side plays as the Germans, while the other chooses between SAS, paratroopers, or Rangers. The gameplay is tight and well executed, with chit draws determining which figures can activate. The focus is on night raids with limited vision, and great emphasis is placed on moving with stealth, so as not to raise the alarm. The missions include capturing an enemy officer, blowing up an objective, gathering intelligence, or knocking out an anti-aircraft gun.

The miniatures, by Wargames Atlantic, are gorgeous, and the associated terrain, by Sarissa Precision, includes a radar station, V2 rocket site, oil tank, railway station, factory, and other juicy targets. What could be better to game the exciting stealth missions on land that *Ranger Commandos* players could only imagine?

While *Ranger Commandos* is a simple, abstract board game, there are elements of it that could be incorporated into modern tabletop wargames. The most theatrical is, of course, the whistle. Imagine a game of *02 Hundred Hours* when the Alarm Level reaches eight, and the defenders can depart from their patrol routes and open fire. Pulling out an officer's signal whistle and blowing it shrilly would certainly startle your opponent!

On a more serious note, a sea journey to the objective could be played out as a precursor to a game of *02 Hundred Hours* or other wargames that focus on raiding. A landing craft

Above: Action from our 02 Hundred Hours games featured in Wi418.

What if?

The Pointe du Hoc assault is the focus of the solo wargame *Rangers: Lead the Way!* published in 2020 by Decision Games. It allows the player to conduct the assault as planned, rather than as how events unfolded.
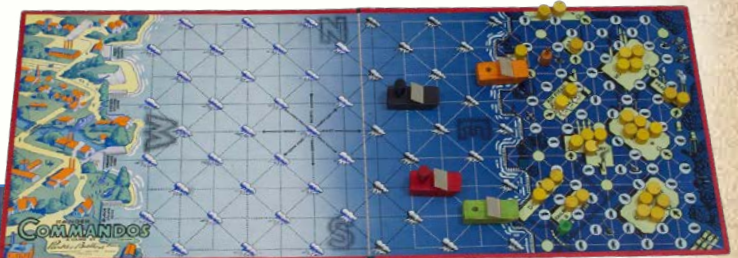
Above: Could this be the campaign board for your next WWII adventures on the tabletop? Ranger Commandos can be purchased from auction sites at pretty reasonable prices.

full of raiders didn't always reach the objective: sometimes they would be sighted and/or engaged by German coastal vessels and forced to change course, sometimes mechanical problems caused a landing craft to turn back, and sometimes a combination of weather, currents, and navigational errors caused raiders to get lost.

In Operation Abercrombie, a 1942 British-Canadian reconnaissance raid, the target was the German coastal defences near Neufchâtel-Hardelot. The British Commandos landed off course, to the north of their objective. The Canadian landing crafts became lost and were scattered, forced to abort their landings completely. The difficulties of these trips could be used as modifiers or random generators for the mission that you then play, causing variation in the number of men available, the location of engagement, and more.

During the D-Day landings some of the Rangers trying to reach Point du Hoc were forced off course by tidal currents their navigators hadn't accounted for. They landed on the wrong side of the point, 40 minutes behind schedule - an event you could work into a historical recreation on the gaming table.

Above: A scene from Rebuilding St. Nazaire, featured in Wi398.

In the board game, there are nine landings that players can reach in German-held territory, at the eastern edge of the board. Some are close to juicy targets like the airfield or tank factory, while others are at the far edge of the board, with targets offering fewer possibilities for scoring points. This could act as a campaign map where you track progress and the targets for your missions.

The game's turn-based crossing mechanic could also be used to determine the awareness of the defenders. In *Ranger Commandos*, the landing crafts travel steadily east, but can deviate north or south, sometimes getting stuck at the edge of the board and missing a turn or two. If a landing craft takes too many turns to make the crossing, the Alarm Level might begin at a higher level in *02 Hundred Hours*, due to the imminent arrival of dawn.

Alternatively, a move that takes a landing craft off the board might cause the raiders to become 'lost,' forcing them to abort and head home, returning later in the campaign.

Players could add in a counter representing a German torpedo boat or submarine that begins at the docks and moves randomly west across the board. If this counter draws adjacent to the raiders' vessel, the latter might be sunk or forced to turn back.

You could even play out the return journey back to England, with German vessels from the docks in hot pursuit!

02 Hundred Hours uses only a handful of minis, of course, which would all easily fit in a single landing craft. Wargames with a larger scope, and a force containing multiple landing crafts, could use the *Ranger Commandos* barge mechanic to see how many landing crafts make it to the objective; those that go off course might have to land their men on a distant or difficult part of the game board, and might perhaps suffer a delay in coming onto the board, too.

The *Ranger Commandos* system of randomly assigning hidden values to targets could also be implemented into a wargame. During actual raids, some targets turned out to be anti-climactic. US Rangers laboriously scaled the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc, only to discover that the 155mm artillery pieces they'd been ordered

to knock out had been moved by the Germans. During a raid on the Norwegian coast in 1943, British Commandos discovered that the German command post that was their objective had been abandoned. Don't fear bringing an "it was all for naught!" element to your games; a lack of payoff can be memorable as it's so unusual, and the journey can serve a better reward than the destination!

One can imagine playing the 'Silence the Guns' scenario from *02 Hundred Hours*, only to discover that the objective is nothing more than an empty gun emplacement, but having a lot of fun along the way nonetheless!

CONCLUSION

While tabletop miniature wargames existed in the 1940s, they were the domain of adult hobbyists. Kids who wanted to command "the toughest men in the British army" (as the Pathé newsreels called the Commandos), or an elite platoon of US Army Rangers, had to make do with board games like *Ranger Commandos*.

With its dash-across-the-ocean, push-your-luck raids, and the tension of never knowing when the whistle would quite literally be blown, *Ranger Commandos* certainly delivered the goods. It deserves a place on the shelf (if not on the table) of any collector of antique wargames; even if you can't get hold of a copy, I strongly recommend you incorporate some of its fun into your modern wargaming.
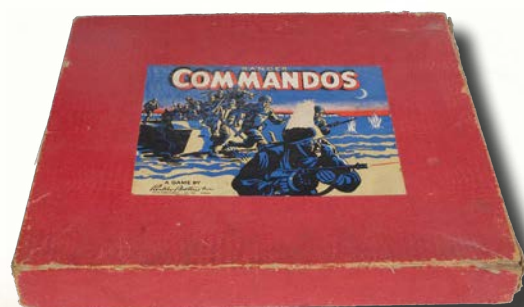
Above: Ranger Commandos from the author's collection.

MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE

Mike Peters presents rules for mounted Characters in *Ruckus*, his Medieval skirmish game.

The mounted warrior dominated the Medieval battlefield, with knights learning to ride at a very early age, and rarely out of the saddle. These skilled horsemen were able to leap, fully armoured, into the saddle, and ride at full gallop over broken countryside, vaulting over fences and ditches with ease. Mounted Characters bring a whole new dimension to *Ruckus,* and, in this article, I list everything you need to bring not just knights, but also riders of all types to your gaming.

TYPES OF STEED

The Warhorse

The Destrier and the Courser were both ridden into battle in the medieval period, and, for *Ruckus* purposes, they are combined under the title of Warhorse. The Captain, Squires, and the Light Cavalry - referred to as Scurrers or Prickers - all ride Warhorses.

Warhorses have 2 Health, and can therefore be wounded once before being killed.

In *Ruckus,* Fighters are mounted on Warhorses.

The Nag

The Palfrey and Rouncey are more general-purpose riding horses, such as those that might be used by mounted infantry, camp followers, etc. For *Ruckus* purposes, they are combined under the title of Nag.

Nags have 2 Health, and can therefore can be wounded once before being killed.

In *Ruckus,* Shootists are mounted on Nags.

Beast of Burden

An ass, packhorse, or mule; not steeds in the traditional sense, perhaps, but are used in some scenarios.

Beasts of Burden have 1 health.

MOUNTED HEROES

Captains and Squires who are mounted may be armed with Lances (see Mounted Charges with a Warhorse).

They can see and shout further atop their Steed, so their Command Range is three times their Prowess. If they Dismount or are forcibly Dismounted, their Command Range returns to normal.

Heroes have trained with Warhorses, and automatically acquire the Equestrian skill when mounted.

Equestrian - May reroll any Jump tests (see Crossing Obstacles).

MOUNTED RETAINERS

Retainers mounted on Warhorses react differently when they are Feckless. The mounted warriors of the medieval world were notoriously undisciplined, and the Feckless table reflects this.

Feckless on a Warhorse

5+	"As My Lord Commands"	Move towards your Spear's leader.
3-4	"Chaaaaaaarge!"	Charge at or move towards the nearest enemy.
1-2	"Ooh! Shiny things!"	Retainer rides off to pillage; remove the figure from the table.

Feckless on a Nag

Retainers mounted on Nags use the normal Feckless table.

MOVEMENT

STEED	MOVEMENT
WARHORSE / ARMOURED WARHORSE	10
NAG	12
BEAST OF BURDEN	8

Movement rate is halved in Hard Going; each 1" moved through Hard Going counts as 2" of movement. Mounted Characters may not enter buildings.

Dismounting

Mounted Characters start the scenario mounted. If at any time a Character dismounts or falls off, their horse is removed from the game; exchange the Mounted Character for one on foot. In campaign games the Character regains the horse post-game.

How to dismount

A Character can choose to dismount in their activation, with the following limitations:

The Mounted Character uses up to half the Move attribute of their Steed, then dismounts

or

The Mounted Character dismounts, then uses up to half their own Move attribute on foot.

MOVEMENT GAMBITS

Mounted Characters may not attempt any of the standard Movement Gambits apart from River Crossing. They may attempt a River Crossing as normal, but, if they have a Calamity, their mount is swept away.

Movement Gambit - Mounted Charge!

Characters mounted on Warhorses may use the Mounted Charge! to charge up to 5" into melee with a combat bonus. A Mounted Charge! can be used as an addition to a standard move or instead of a standard move if the Target is within 5", but must end in melee with an enemy Character.

To attempt a Mounted Charge!, roll D6. A roll of 2+ = move up to 5" into melee; 1 = Mishap. Mounted Characters can only use the Mounted Charge! to charge into melee, not simply to gain extra movement.

The Mounted Charge! may not start in, pass through, or end in Hard Going.

Mishap

The horse shies, rears, or bucks, and does not move the extra distance.

Mark the Character with a Gambit Mishap Token; it will take the next turn to regain control of the beast. If attacked during this time, the Character may defend themselves; however, they are considered Encumbered, as they are trying to control their Steed.

Calamity

The horse is blown, or has stumbled or stepped into a hole and gone lame! Remove the Steed, and replace the Mounted Character with one on foot.

CROSSING OBSTACLES

Mounted Characters may jump over any undefended linear Obstacle, such as a wall, fence, or ditch that is not taller than Character Height or wider than 3", as part of their normal movement by taking a Jump test (which is not a Movement Gambit). When doing so, roll a D6:

Jump test

6	Sails over!	Continue at full movement rate.
2-5	Awkward landing	Continue at half movement rate after landing.
1	Falls from saddle	Make a Thrown Rider Check.

Horse Casualties

If a horse loses all of its Health to Shooting or Melee, it is removed from play, and the mounted Character must make a Thrown Rider Test (see below).

SHOOTING WHILE MOUNTED

Archers

May use up to half their Nag's Move attribute, and shoot once from horseback at short-range, hitting on a 6.

or

May shoot twice if stationary, hitting on a 6.

Crossbows

May shoot once at short-range, hitting on a 6, if they do not move.

May Reload while mounted.

Note: These are mounted infantry; there will be rules for more competent horse-mounted Shootists in future additions.

SHOOTING AT MOUNTED CHARACTERS

STEED	SAVING THROW
ARMOURED WARHORSE *	3+
WARHORSE	4+
NAG	5+
BEAST OF BURDEN	5+

* Armoured Warhorses are included here as an option for you to bring more flavour to your games. Future *Ruckus* updates will include a variety of Mounted Characters, from the heavily-armoured Gendarmes to the fleet Jinites.

When shooting at a Mounted Character, a Blocked Shot roll is required. If failed, the Steed is hit and must make a save.

Above: As well as a blocked shot for the Obstacle between the archer and Mounted Character, there will also be a Blocked Shot roll for the horse itself, which can hit the mount instead of the Character.

Whenever a Steed is hit and fails its save, roll an additional D6 to determine the result:

D6	WOUNDS FROM MISSILES
4+	WOUNDED - LOSE 1 HORSE HEALTH.
1-3	THE HORSE BOLTS D6+3" IN A RANDOM DIRECTION.

Horse Bolts

The random movement of a Bolting Steed may take it to Obstacles. If these are Character Height, the Bolting Steed will attempt a Jump Test to leap over them, and it will move around Obstacles that are higher. If this movement takes the horse off the table, then the Rider is thrown at the very edge of the table, and the Steed is removed from the game.

At the end of this bolting movement, roll one D6 for each point of prowess the Rider has (Retainers roll once). If they roll at least a 4+ on any dice, the Rider keeps their seat. Otherwise, the Rider is thrown, and they fall from the saddle, making a Thrown Rider Test.

If the Rider keeps their seat, they also bring the horse back under control, and will act as normal in their next activation.

THROWN RIDER TEST

Heroes - roll a D6 for each Prowess they have, and take the best result.

Retainers- roll a D6.

D6	THROWN RIDER TEST
1	INJURED - REMOVE FROM GAME
2	ROLL TO SAVE FROM 3 HITS + WINDED
3	ROLL TO SAVE FROM 2 HITS + WINDED
4	ROLL TO SAVE FROM 1 HIT + WINDED
5	WINDED
6	LEAPS INTO ACTION - LANDS ON FEET UNHURT

Remove the horse from play and replace the Mounted Character with one on foot (assuming the Character survived).

MOUNTED MELEE

Mounted vs Foot

Characters on foot must roll for a Blocked Stroke as normal when fighting a Mounted Character:

4+	Hits the enemy Character. Roll to Save using the Character's saving throw.
1-3	Hits the Steed. Roll to Save using the Steed's saving throw.

Warhorses were dangerous weapons trained for the fight; they were often fierce stallions, and could respond with anger to an injury.

Whenever a Steed is hit and fails its Save, roll an additional D6 to determine the result:

D6	WOUNDS FROM MELEE
4+	WOUNDED - LOSE 1 HORSE HEALTH
1-3	WARHORSE - ENRAGED ADD 1 AUTOMATIC HIT TO ITS RIDER'S MELEE ANY OTHER STEED - MUST BREAK OFF THE FIGHT.

Evading on foot

Shootists on foot may try to Evade a Mounted Character and, if they are Nimble and in Hard Going, they may well succeed! Fighters on foot may not Evade a Mounted Character.

Mounted vs Foot (when Defending an Obstacle)

The Defender has the option to Evade or Defend the Obstacle.

If they Evade…

They leave the Obstacle undefended, and the Rider can attempt to jump it and pursue if they have sufficient movement remaining.

If they defend…

The Mounted Character does not receive the usual melee bonuses for making a Mounted Charge! Movement Gambit.

The Defender does not get the benefit of the Blocked Strokes that the Defended Obstacle would usually provide, as the Rider is higher up, and can reach over.

Breaking Away

The Mounted Character may choose to break off the fight at the end of any round of melee. Move the figure 3" away from their opponent, this terminates the melee.

Mounted vs Mounted

Mounted Characters fighting other Mounted Characters do not need to roll for a Blocked Stroke, as they are at equal height, and the Steed will not get in the way of the blow.

Mounted Characters that melee with other Mounted Characters and score hits may choose to allocate them to their opponent's Steed at a cost of -1 Valour Point and -1 Prestige Point, if playing a Campaign.

Mounted Charges

Any Mounted Character that makes a Mounted Charge! Movement Gambit into melee on a Warhorse rolls 1 additional attack dice, and rerolls any 1s. Heroes with the Deadly Blade Skill reroll 1s and 2s.

If a Mounted Character has the Mounted Charge! melee bonuses, and they win the first round of melee, they retain the Mounted Charge! bonuses, retaining them in each subsequent round if they continue to win.

Hard Going

Warhorse Mounted Characters in Hard Going, charging Characters who are in Hard Going, or charging a Character defending an Obstacle do not receive the Mounted Charge! bonuses listed above.

Skill'd at Arms

A Mounted Character performing a Mounted Charge! with Skill'd at Arms may not use Parry or Fend, but may Thrust as usual.

Lances

Lance-armed Mounted Characters who charge into melee reduce their opponent's Save by 1. Characters on foot who are charged by a Mounted Character armed with a lance may not choose to use Fend if they have Skill'd at Arms.

Charging on a Nag

Characters mounted on Nags may move into melee as a character on foot would, but they cannot make a Mounted Charge! Movement Gambit, so they do not gain the additional bonuses conferred upon Warhorses.

Defending an Obstacle

Mounted Characters may defend an Obstacle, but do not benefit from the Blocked Stroke rule.

COUNTER CHARGE MOVEMENT GAMBIT

Characters mounted on Warhorses that are charged by Foot or Mounted Characters may make a Counter Charge, unless they have made a Mounted Charge! this turn. In this case, they can play a Perk card to perform a Counter Charge.

If successful, move the Counter Charger to meet the original Charger at halfway. Chargers retain any melee bonuses, and the Counter-Charging Character gains melee bonuses as if they have made a Mounted Charge!.

Mishap

The horse shies, rears, or bucks, and does not move the extra distance.

Mark the Character with a Gambit Mishap Token; it will take the next turn to regain control of the beast. If attacked during this time, the Character may defend themselves; however, they are considered Encumbered, as they are trying to control their Steed.

Calamity

The horse is blown, or has stumbled or stepped into a hole and gone lame! Remove the Steed, and replace the mounted character with one on foot.

MOUNTED EVASION MOVEMENT GAMBIT

Mounted Characters that are charged may attempt to make a Mounted Evasion, but doing so on a horse is riskier than running away on foot. Immediately move the mounted Character one move directly away from the Charger, making deductions for Hard Going, and tests for Jumping any Obstacles that may be required.

Mishap

The Steed stumbles or runs out of steam. Mark the Character with a Gambit Mishap Token; it will take the next turn to regain control of the beast. If attacked during this time, the Character may defend themselves; however, they are considered Encumbered, as they are trying to control their Steed.

Calamity

The horse is blown, or has stumbled or stepped into a hole and gone lame! Remove the Steed, and replace the Mounted Character with one on foot.

Above: 1) The Character on foot prepares to charge...

2) ... and does exactly that, moving adjacent to the Mounted Character.

3) The Mounted Character's not hanging about to fight though and with his Mounted Evasion quickly trots a good distance away!

MOUNTING THE RUCKUS RETINUE

You can have as many or as few Mounted Characters in your Retinue as you want.

If mounted, the Captain and the Squires should be on Warhorses; they can be armed with Lances, and gain the Equestrian skill.

The Billmen can also be mounted on Warhorses, but do not gain the Equestrian skill. They can be armed with Lances to act as Scurrers or similar.

Shootists may only be mounted on Nags.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: BALANCE VS HISTORY

Mounted Characters add a whole new dimension to *Ruckus*. They can be very powerful in melee, they cover a lot of ground very quickly, and they will no doubt transform how you play the game. At first glance, they appear overpowered, especially as you can mount your whole Retinue with no penalty!

However, like all elements of *Ruckus*, there are risks. If you want to gain the Mounted Charge bonus, you have to take a chance on losing your Steed, and horses are quite vulnerable to missile fire. Against an opponent who has Shootists deployed behind an Obstacle, you may find it better to dismount, and seek cover yourself.

The rugged, terrain-strewn nature of the average Ruckusian table will limit the usefulness of horses, and cause problems for them. They cannot enter buildings, and there are some scenarios in which Mounted Characters will not be able to achieve the objectives.

Historically, any foot soldier of the WotR period (if they could afford it) would ride to battle on a Nag, and dismount before they deployed; therefore, it is perfectly acceptable to have all your Retinue mounted, at least at the start of the scenario. Remember, you will need a dismounted figure for every Mounted Character you use, so mounting your Retinue will significantly increase your investments in figures, time, money, and effort!

Additions to *Ruckus* will include new Retinues, which have restrictions on Mounted Characters, limiting them to certain types, to align more accurately with historical records.

Throughout the development of *Ruckus*, I have consistently avoided the use of points as a method of providing balance; I believe it is for the gamers to provide balance in their play. If you feel that Mounted Characters unbalance your play experience, you may consider limiting them - only half of the Retinue may be mounted, for example - or agree that they may only be used in certain scenarios. If you want to play competitively, these choices remain yours. *Ruckus* isn't designed as a tournament ruleset, but, should organised play be desired, work out your own house rules for the best way to include Mounted Characters.

Above all, have fun!

Still Flying the Flag

Barry Hilton, of The League of Augsburg, revisits a flag making technique he first shared with us back in 2006.

I started making flags from cotton in 1986. There were very few commercial options for the periods in which I had an interest, so home-grown, by any means, was the only way. These days, anyone can buy a software programme, do some scanning and make flags of amazing complexity. This makes my technique theoretically redundant, as it contains three aspects that repel gamers: it is time consuming, it can be fiddly, and it's inexact. That said it is extremely satisfying, and a good effort can make a regiment really 'pop' on the tabletop.

I don't do as many as I used to, mainly because of time constraints, but, on occasion, I see it as the preferred method for a particular unit. Reflecting on 38 years of using the technique, I recognise that after some initial hard learning - it hasn't changed at all.

I first used it for a battalion of English Civil War Parliamentarian Foot and, honestly, cannot remember what prompted the idea in the first place. That particular flag, and unit, was sold nearly 30 years ago. I saw it in a game at the Sheffield Wargames show about 25 years back; maybe it still leads Cromwell's New Model model men into battle. Since then, I have made over 600 flags using this method, which adorn units from the early Dark Ages through to WWII. All are still as vivid and bright as the day they were painted.

This article is a modified version of a piece which first appeared in the magazine in 2006. What the original article lacked was work in progress photos, and that omission is rectified with a step-by-step guide, but first, a brief response to occasional comments which have arisen over the years.

Sometimes folks will complain "The flags are too big". In most cases I chose to make the flags deliberately oversized. The reasons are pragmatic in the construction and aesthetic in the viewing. If they were made exactly in scale with the figures, much of the detail would be lost, and would be very difficult to paint freehand on a high relief and yielding raw material. Larger flags act as a strong focal point on the table and can very often draw attention away from an averagely painted unit, making the overall effect much more pleasing. Looking back at a lifetime of display games at shows, these 'Heroic' scale flags have become a trademark of League of Augsburg games and, I am happy to say, when I sell computer designed flags, customers often ask for them to be printed in the same size as I use for my own units. That is, anywhere between 40mm and 50mm square.

Many years of photographing grand scale wargames has revealed a perplexing anomaly. The level of detail painted onto a figure is inversely proportional to how much it shines on the table. Basic, bold paintjobs stand out far better than multi-layered, highly detailed models which, like mini black holes, seem to suck light in. What lifts a unit out of unregistered anonymity is good basing and a distinctive flag. That was largely the origin of the League of Augsburg style: the oversizing of flags and bases.

Someone once said they didn't like the relief or weave of the material showing, as it was too unrealistic. If you don't like it, do something else. Modeling is full of compromise and suspension of disbelief is necessary in many aspects of our hobby. I, too, am moderately unhappy about some of the compromises that must be made when working with this medium: the difficulty of painting over a material weave (extremely challenging

Left: Early Danish Guards.

Below: Janissary Command.

with fine brushes) and doing straight lines, particularly when painting geometric shapes are downsides associated with the approach. Cotton distorts when even a gentle heat is applied, and this can cause a significant shrinkage of surface area too. These issues notwithstanding, I still believe the pros massively outweigh the cons and handmade flags add something individual to a tabletop unit. I have seen printed flags on cotton material, but these tend to miss the mark because the layering of colour and highlight is absent from the process.

If you wish to try my canvas flag techniques, patience is essential. Do not be discouraged by a less than perfect first effort. A balanced temperament and a willingness to restart a piece of work that has gone off track pays off in the end.

Above: The Queen Consort's Regiment during the Monmouth Rebellion.

YOU WILL NEED

1. **Cotton material** which is commonly used for lining curtains (drapes for American readers). Make sure it is reasonably thin. I've never spent a penny on this stuff; all of it has come from domestic offcuts when Mrs H has been making something new for the house. This is used for the flag itself.

2. **Piano wire** (cut with pliers) - for the staff/pole. Available in most art/craft/model shops and pretty cheap.

3. **Bostik or similar viscous, slow-curing glue**. This is used to secure the flag material to the staff. Do not use any type of superglue as this reacts with the cloth, instantly makes it brittle, will prevent a closed join with the pole, and may crack the material.

4. **Paint**. I use the same paints I apply to figures. These are largely Vallejo acrylics, although I occasionally use Plaka paints.

5. **Craft Tool**. I use a Minicraft modelling tool with drill and grinder attachments. A grinding attachment can be used to achieve a very passable finial on the pole in less than 20 seconds. Use the flat of the tool to make the point and the edge to 'groove' the reduced neck of the finial. Watch out, the metal will get very hot when you grind it.

The drill can also be used to 'drill out' or enlarge holes in hands to take the flagpole.

If you wish to add cords or ribbons, use twisted fuse wire, thin paper strips, thin cords, thick thread, or etched brass pieces such as oak leaves, etc. Secure these with superglue (crazy glue) not Bostik. Some manufacturers offer cast cords and tassels.

MAKING THE FLAG

1. After marking out the template of the flag/s on the cotton material, cut them out. Do this with a very sharp clean scalpel blade. Scissors are not suitable for a totally clean cut. If you want a flag of 40 x 40mm, make the dimensions of the linen 40mm in the hoist and 43-45mm in the fly - you need the extra to wrap the flag around the pole.

2. Cut a suitable length of piano wire with pliers; make it much longer than you need to have in the figure's hands when finished. It is better to find the flagpole is too long (it can be cut) than too short.

There is the option to fashion the finial using either manual or electric modelling tools.

Coat the upper length of the pole (between the finial and the length of the flag in the hoist) with slow-curing glue. Lay the flag material flat and place the pole on the material, 3-5mm from the edge (in the fly).

Gently roll the pole so that the edge of the material is caught underneath the main body of the flag, thus, sealing it to the pole.

3. Run the flat edge of a scalpel along the new join and seal it. Place aside to dry for at least two hours.

4. The flag is now ready to take paint. Saturate the whole flag in a coat of the base colour and let it dry. This will add rigidity.

5. I prefer to paint the designs freehand. I paint the design in flat, basic colours at this stage; depending on the complexity of the design, this can take between 30 minutes and two hours. Once completed, you can begin shaping and shading.
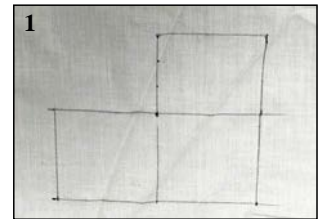
6. Apply some controlled heat to the flag. I have a metal tray placed permanently over an oil radiator which runs at full power; this gives off considerable heat and will soften the flag at critical moments during production. After the flag has absorbed some heat, fold it and pull it gently into the shape you desire. This is trial and error. As you do this, the areas which require highlighting become obvious.

In applying highlights, I often go up to six or seven shades above the base colour, but be careful of overdramatic changes in shade as going too far will look odd.

Be patient and, if you make a mistake, go back over it. The material is very forgiving.

Continue to reapply the heat when necessary to restore the shape you want. If the shape is not taking, or the flag is springing back, quickly blow on it to cool and fix.

If you need to put a fringed border on the flag, paint a thin dark brown line around the edge and then speckle with a fine brush in your chosen colour. Yellows, whites, and metallic colours are best for this.

At this stage, add the cords by twisting ropes of fuse wire to the required thickness. If you feel ambitious, you may even attempt the knots. Secure these with superglue and paint over anywhere that the glue spoils.

Cut the pole to the correct size for the figure and you're almost there! Try and resist painting the pole till you have done this. If you paint it before gluing, then the join will be a fragile paint to paint or paint to metal connection; these are easily broken. Ideally, leave painting the figure's hand until this stage also. This may be a little awkward, but it means a metal to metal join with superglue, which is usually pretty strong. It is then just a fiddly little paint job to finish.

It is not necessary to varnish the flags when finished, as the paint is so ingrained into the fabric that it cannot be scratched or chipped off. A light spray of varnish may, however, act in the same manner as hairspray and hold the shape.

Now, doesn't that look nice?

Above (left to right): Dutch Marines Officer and RSF Officer.

Above: Imperial Infantry on the march.

Above: Anatolian Sipahis before the gates of Vienna 1683.

Above: English - The Earl of Bath's Regiment 1690.

Above: The Dutch Gard te Voet, at the Battle of the Boyne.

Above: Imperial Infantry - in the Balkans 1697.

Above: Danish - Regiment Funen, Ireland 1690.

Above: Danish - Livgarde til Fods, Flanders 1692.

All photos by Barry Hilton, with figures from his collection. For more examples... visit leagueofaugsburg.com

Below: Irish Jacobites - The King's Regiment, Aughrim 1691.

PUBLIC ENEMIES
PART ONE

THE DEPRESSION-ERA CRIMEWAVE AND THE WAR ON CRIME

Nick Buxey presents a passion project in miniature, based on the lawmen and gangsters of 1933.

This article attempts to tell a story, as well as a few other things. "What's that got to do with wargaming?" the reader might be justified in asking. Well, as a wargamer of some 40-plus years, I would say that the vast majority of my wargaming inspiration has come from stories - history - and much of that through the often historically-dubious medium of motion pictures. I suspect that many other wargamers would readily admit to this too. Inspiration is a vital ingredient in our hobby. It's what pushes us to greater efforts in our gaming and show presentations.

This article, however, is about very practical matters: where to source the figures, scenery, and detailing paraphernalia that can make a setting look historically satisfactory. It's also about possible scenarios for a specific period in history, and how they might be constructed. It's very much about my obsession with a specific historical period too, and how I went about reconstructing history (or sometimes Hollywood's version of history) in miniature.

If I appear to be more of a diorama maker than a gamer in this article, I will defend myself by saying that much of my wargaming inspiration comes from the photographs of excellent models, in realistic miniature settings, that bedeck nearly all our rulebooks these days. The publications by Warlord Games and the Perry twins are a case in point, although I shrink from comparing my efforts with theirs!

Kansas City, Missouri, 17 June 1933

The figures used in the photograph are 28mm from Copplestone Castings (1), Great Escape Games (2), Dixon Miniatures (3), and Sloppy Jalopy (4 - converted to hold a Thompson SMG).

(5) The cars are 1/43 diecast by Avtoprom Nash (Russia), Rio, and Brooklyn Models. It takes time to source these models, and some can be pretty expensive, but worth it!

(6) The pavement pieces are scratch built.

(7) The background of Union Station is sourced from the internet, and printed on A3 card.

(8) This scene is based on contemporary photographs taken just after the 'Massacre', and I was fortunate enough to find a digitally-coloured version, which enabled me to produce blue and green cars for the central focus. I was even able to give them the correct number plates, printed on photo paper.

ORIGINS

Ten years ago, I wrote a series of three articles that were published in *Wargames Illustrated*. The first was about my passion for wargaming with 1920s gangsters and where to source figures, vehicles, etc. The second focussed on the 'Beer Wars' in 1920s Chicago. The third was about the 1920s gangsters of New York - 'Rotten to the Core'. [See these articles in *Wi*318, *Wi*320, and *Wi*323 in The Vault - Ed.]

At that time, I was keen to write a fourth article about the later 'gangsters' of the Depression era of the early 1930s, but, quite rightly, the magazine felt that the subject had reached saturation point. I thought that my enthusiasm for what has come to be labelled the era of the 'Public Enemies' might never be played-out for another article; there was just too much time, work, and money to be invested in telling the epic story in miniature. I have plenty of other wargaming interests and projects on the go, too, and ideas for further

The War on Crime

The Bureau of Investigation really had little idea of who perpetrated the Kansas City outrage in which two of its own agents had been shot, one mortally. A list was drawn up of possible suspects, which included Vernon Miller, Charles 'Pretty Boy' Floyd, Adam Richetti, Bonnie and Clyde, Wilbur Underhill, Alvin Karpus, and the brothers Doc and Fred Barker (sons of 'Ma' Barker). Whether these suspects were guilty, or not, the Kansas City Massacre unleashed a War on Crime, which targeted all the criminals caught-up in the crimewave of the early 1930s Depression years.

The story I want to tell begins with what has become known to history as The Kansas City Massacre. Five people were killed in broad daylight, in the car park outside of Kansas City's Union Station. Four of these were lawmen, including one Bureau of Investigation agent - Ray Caffrey. The fifth was Frank 'Jelly' Nash, a convicted bank robber and escaped convict who was being escorted back to prison, via the railway and Kansas City station.

There is still hot dispute about who perpetrated the outrage and what happened, but there is strong evidence of a Bureau cover-up. Nevertheless, J. Edgar Hoover used the incident to launch the FBI as we know it today. The Bureau of Investigation (not yet 'Federal') named Charles Arthur 'Pretty Boy' Floyd as one of the assassin gunmen, but this is very likely not the case. Perhaps the only name that can be reliably linked to the 'Massacre' is that of Vernon Miller, a freelance hitman, bootlegger, and disgraced former sheriff.

Above: Kansas City Massacre map.

articles. However, quite unexpectedly, the bug bit me again with a vengeance. The instigator was a return to watching the entire series of *Boardwalk Empire*. Having been deeply involved in creating 'Old School' armies for the Mexican-American War [see *Wi*432 - Ed], I found myself suddenly catapulted into revisiting my fascination with all things Prohibition period. My figures were unboxed, rebased, and repainted where necessary, and the slide into wanting to move to the 1930s and the era of the infancy of the FBI was rapid and irresistible.

BACKGROUND TO THE PERIOD

The uninitiated may be wondering how the early 1930s differ from the prohibition years, and the gangsters those years spawned. For a start. the major criminals of the 1930s were not bootleggers, or members of large crime organizations like those of the big cities. For the most part, the criminals hunted by the fledgling FBI were from rural America, chiefly what is called the Mid-West: Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The likes of John Dillinger, 'Baby Face' Nelson, 'Pretty Boy' Floyd, Bonnie and Clyde, Ma Barker and family, Alvin Karpis, Wilbur Underhill, and so on, were the heirs of the Old West outlaws. I find this a big attraction, as the Old West is another fascination of mine.

Like their early counterparts, their crime was mainly robbing banks or small businesses, although kidnapping and extortion can be added to the list. They were criminals in an era when prohibition had been repealed, rendering bootlegging a viable money-making option no more.

The prosperity of the Roaring Twenties had given way to the austerity of the Great Depression, ushered in by the Wall Street Crash (the collapse of the US stock market) in 1929. Like Jessie and Frank James and Billy the Kid of the Old West, many of these Depression-era criminals became folk heroes to the suffering farmers and small-town dwellers. Poverty was widespread, and
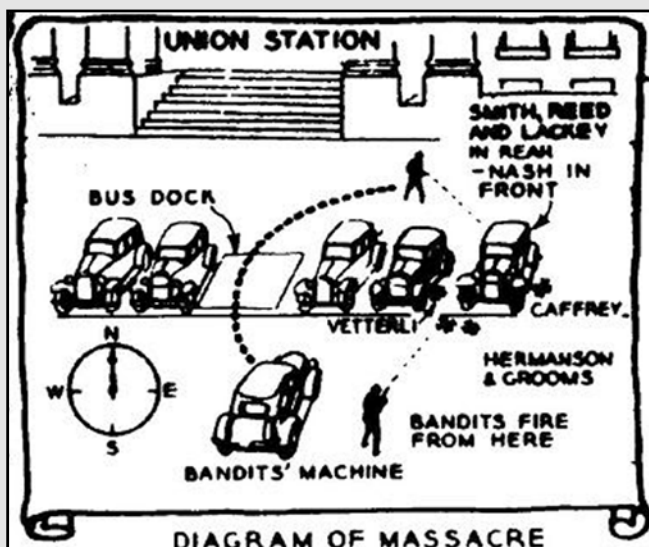
the banks and bankers, who often repossessed farms when the owners could no longer pay their way, were seen as cruel and uncaring (although many banks themselves went out of business too, taking customers' hard-earned money with them). Banks were seen as a legitimate target by criminals, and often some of the ordinary people, too.

By and large, the infamous criminals of the Depression era were 'small-timers' who, through the publicity of the newspaper headlines and the Bureau of Investigation, became larger than life, and carved out a piece of history for themselves. Even then, Bonnie and Clyde might have fallen into obscurity if interest in them had not been revived by the eponymous 1967 movie, starring Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty. So, Hollywood has had much to do with bringing these desperadoes to the attention of subsequent generations, just as the newspapers and the forces of law and order did at the time. Not only that, but there is a plethora of books available. Clearly, writers and historians are drawn to the stories of these criminals and, indeed, the entire period: Jessie James, Billy the Kid, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, but with machine guns, automatic rifles, and V8 Fords instead of horses!

A TURNING POINT

The main Depression-era criminals I am focussing on in this article were all already active and known for their criminal careers in 1933, but that year saw the real beginning of a nation-wide crackdown on them through the auspices of the young Bureau of Investigation. The Kansas City Massacre saw to that.

A 'War on Crime' was initiated, and the following years of criminal-hunting saw the Bureau eventually become the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1935, with increased powers to hunt, capture, and/or kill criminal fugitives. 'Public Enemies' became a well-known label during these years, and, as each one was eliminated, so the mantle of 'Public Enemy Number One' was assumed by the next most notorious outlaw.

Right: Four of the Dillinger Gang: (left to right) Tommy Carroll, Baby Face Nelson, John Dillinger, and Homer Van Meter.

For this article I am focussing on a few major FBI targets, but there were many more criminals I could have chosen from, with George 'Machine Gun' Kelly being a case in point. Despite his nickname, he was not as notorious as some of his contemporaries, and he just receives this passing mention through name recognition alone! Like most magazine articles, I can only hope to whet the reader's appetite, and point the way for further investigation with a decent bibliography. I will also mention movies that feature these criminals, but, of course, Hollywood, however entertaining, is not history!

PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

John Herbert Dillinger is arguably the best-known FBI target of this period, and that might be down to the fact that his became the face on the target used for shooting-practice by the FBI. He was perhaps the most notorious bearer of the 'Public Enemy Number One' brand.

Dillinger achieved fame after previously serving a nine-year sentence in Indiana prisons, where he made friends with some very experienced and tough felons whom he came to admire, with Harry Pierpont chief amongst them. On his release, Dillinger immediately joined a gang to rob banks, with a view to gathering enough money to fund a breakout for his convict friends. His first bank robbery took place in June 1933, but he was quickly arrested and incarcerated again. This was not before he had arranged for guns to be smuggled to the friends he had left in prison.

The Bureau of Investigation, 1933

The Bureau of Investigation was led by 38-year-old J. Edgar Hoover. His vision was to create an organization like Britain's Scotland Yard, using the latest forensic science to identify and prosecute criminals. His men were to be college-trained, preferably with law degrees, clean-cut, and possessing high moral values. These young men were stiffened by a smattering of tough, experienced western lawmen, such as Gus Jones. Initially, Bureau agents were not armed as a matter of course, but the upsurge in violent criminal activity forced Hoover to seek to have his men armed, gaining the support of the government for this.

(1) The figure of Hoover is O scale from Omen models, converted with a Pulp Figures head.

(2) The desk is from The Honourable Lead Boiler Suit Company, the filing cabinet is etched brass from Severn Models (it comes with miniature files), the 3D printed table lamp is from Forged Terrain, and the 1/48 scale telephone, books, decanter, and glass are from Shrunken World, via Etsy.

(3) The file open on Hoover's desk has the dossier of Baby Face Nelson printed in miniature. It is far too small to see clearly at this scale, but it pleases me to have it there!

(4) The flag receptacle is one half of a brass Chicago Screw.

(5) The background was sourced on the internet and refined in Adobe Photoshop before being printed and glued in place.

The early years of the Bureau were dogged by mistakes and ineptitude, forcing Hoover to fight his corner and prove that the Bureau could deliver on law enforcement. This often led to Bureau claims that were far from the truth, but Hoover saw this as the means to justify the result. The FBI grew in power from these humble beginnings.

Purvis at the DoJ

Melvin Purvis was J. Edgar Hoover's star Bureau agent in 1933. He exemplified everything Hoover envisaged for his 'G men' ('Government men': a term supposedly coined by George 'Machine Gun' Kelly when he was arrested by the Bureau, but that's open to debate).

This scene shows Purvis arriving at the Department of Justice building in Washington DC, exiting his expensive Pierce Arrow car, his chauffeur, President, closing the door behind him. Purvis was a Southern boy from a rich and privileged family, but he was as keen as mustard. Hoover became jealous of Purvis's fame, gained through the press, and accused him of deliberately seeking the limelight, deserved, or not. This led to an ignominious end to his career.

Purvis has been depicted in movies and TV series by Ben Johnson and Dale Robertson, neither with any historical accuracy, however entertaining. Perhaps the most faithful and accurate portrayal is Christian Bale's in 2009's *Public Enemies*.

(1) The figure of Purvis is converted from a Warlord Games Bolt Action Secret Agent, with a Copplestone head added. The chauffeur, President, is converted from a Pulp Figures miniature.

(2) The star of the show is a Kess Models 1/43 Pierce Arrow sedan convertible Le Baron 1933, a limited edition for which I had to wait five months and pay a hefty price, but it was worth it. I like to get the photo as accurate as I can for my own satisfaction.

(3) The illustration of the Department of Justice building is sourced from the internet and refined in Adobe Photoshop.

Wilbur Underhill, 26 December 1933

Wilbur Underhill was known as the 'Tri-State Terror', referring to a mining area that encompassed Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Not as well-known as some of his contemporaries, he was notorious in his day, and is still remembered in Oklahoma in particular. Underhill was wanted for burglary, bank robbery, and multiple murders. He was eventually jailed, but took part in a mass breakout, and became a much sought-after fugitive. The Bureau of Investigation threw their weight behind the Oklahoma police to track Underhill down, which they did in December 1933 in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

In this diorama, Bureau agents and local and state police surround a cottage in which Wilbur Underhill, his associate Ralph Roe, and their girlfriends are spending Christmas. Underhill makes a run for it, dressed only in his underwear, after firing at police from a window.

The law was in force, making a shootout suicidal, but, although Underhill was hit five times, he managed to escape to the nearby home of another associate, where he was later apprehended. His new bride was discovered within the cottage, scared, but unharmed. Ralph Roe was captured alive, but his girlfriend died from accidental wounding in the shootout. Underhill died of his wounds in hospital.

(1) The scene features an Underhill figure converted from a Chicago Way body (Great Escape Games), with a Foundry African Native's legs.

(2) The 'Shotgun house' is a 4Ground MDF kit from Great Escape Games.

(3) The Bureau agents are from Copplestone Castings, with fedoras added using Green Stuff. Town police and Oklahoma state police are from Brigade Games, USA. I am not sure that the state police were present, but used artistic licence, based on the scene depicting Wilbur Underhill's death in the 1973 movie Dillinger, starring Warren Oates. This film is largely inaccurate - Melvin Purvis was not present, and Roe likely did not fire from the cottage - but it adds to the drama of the scene.

Subsequently, six escaped, and repaid Dillinger's help by breaking him out in return, killing a local sheriff in the process. Thus, the first Dillinger gang was formed, which included Pierpont, Charlie Makley, Homer Van Meter, 'Red' Hamilton, and more.

From June 1933 to June 1934, Dillinger and his gang were involved in twelve bank robberies, but not uninterrupted, as they were arrested in Tucson, Arizona in January 1934. This led to perhaps the most famous incident in Dillinger's criminal career; locked-up in Indiana's Crown Point jail, he made a daring escape in March. Legend has it that he even used a fake carved pistol, but opinions vary as to the truth of this. It was not long before Dillinger hooked-up with 'Red' Hamilton and the henchmen of another notorious criminal, Lester Gillis, otherwise known as 'Baby Face Nelson'.

This combined band of bank-robbers and killers began a spree of bank robberies ranging from South Dakota to Iowa. Nelson proved to be an unhinged, trigger-happy, psychotic killer, and the gang left more than one corpse in their wake. Dillinger was seen as leader of the gang, much to Nelson's chagrin.

J. Edgar Hoover and the Bureau of Investigation named Dillinger Public Enemy Number One in June 1934, on the outlaw's birthday, and things became pretty hot for the gang. After some close shaves (and some ineptitude by the Bureau), the Dillinger gang sought refuge in a remote Wisconsin tourist lodge called Little Bohemia, but they were tracked down by the Bureau in April, which resulted in a fiasco of a shootout.

Innocent people died, as well as an agent, and the gang got away, albeit in some disarray; this did the Bureau (and Melvin Purvis') reputation no good at all. The 1973 movie *Dillinger* would have it that 'Pretty Boy' Floyd (who was not there) and 'Baby Face' Nelson (who was) both met their deaths immediately after their flight from Little Bohemia, but this is simply the director condensing the facts into a more cohesive storyline. Nelson killed another Bureau man as he escaped, and the fugitive Dillinger gang went into hiding temporarily.

Above: John Dillinger.

Above: Anna Sage, John Dillinger, and Polly Hamilton.

The second Dillinger gang in action

Here, Dillinger's crew are seen robbing a small-town Mid-West bank, in 1934. Dillinger and Tommy Carroll force the staff to open the safe, Homer Van Meter guards the front door, and Baby Face Nelson keeps the customers covered. A fifth gang-member waits outside in the getaway car, with a sixth on guard.

(1) The Dillinger gang are mostly Copplestone Castings, while Dillinger himself is a conversion from Pulp Figures. All have converted straw boaters, made from plasticard and Green Stuff.

(2) The bank employees are from Pulp Figures and Great Escape Games, but the hands raised by the manager come from Wargames Atlantic's plastic German sentry frame.

(3) The male customer is converted from a Warlord Games Bolt Action secret agent figure. Three female customers are by Pulp Figures, and one is by Brigade Games.

(4) The potted palm is brass-etched from Scale Link, and the bank interior is a carboard cut-out, downloaded from Mean Sets, which are available from Mr Patrick Wilson, proprietor of The Virtual Armchair General in the USA, and an all-round good egg.

Dillinger's downfall

22 July 1934, in Chicago Illinois, Dillinger, along with Anna Sage ('the woman in a red dress') and Polly Hamilton, was confronted by Bureau agents as the trio left the Biograph Theatre. Here, Dillinger met the violent end that seemed to be his destiny; he was 31 when he died.
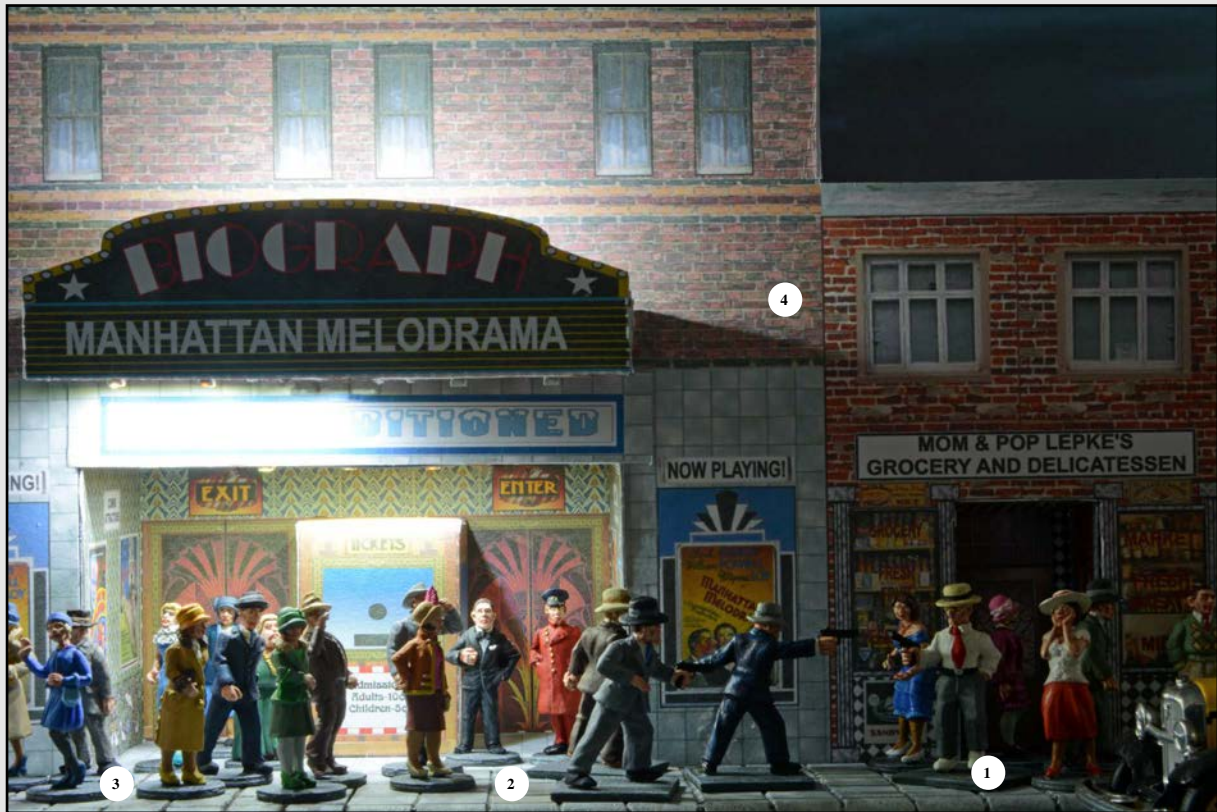
(1) Dillinger is a conversion from a Copplestone Castings gangster figure, and dressed according to Bureau records. Anna Sage is actually wearing an orange skirt, and is converted from a 3D-printed figure called Scared Woman, available from Mick's Bits, via eBay. Polly Hamilton comes from the same source.

(2) The Bureau men are Copplestone Castings figures, with some conversions.

(3) The civilian crowd is made up of figures from Copplestone Castings, Pulp Figures, Great Escape Games, and Old Glory (Blue Moon).

(4) The movie theatre is from Virtual Armchair General's Mean Streets carboard cut-out downloads, with some tricky-but-effective miniature LED lighting rigged up. The sidewalk is scratch built.

They resurfaced in June 1934 to rob a bank in South Bend, Indiana. On this occasion, another policeman was killed, and Nelson survived a direct gunshot, due to his bullet-proof vest. It is possible, but unconfirmed, that 'Pretty Boy' Floyd had joined Dillinger and Nelson for this caper. After this, the gang scattered once more, and each member was tenaciously hunted by the Bureau, working with local and State police.

Tommy Carroll and Homer Van Meter died later in June and August of 1934, while Dillinger's demise is well-known. He was betrayed by the brothel madam with whom he had taken refuge with - Romanian ex-pat Anna Sage. Whilst taking Anna and his new girlfriend, Polly Hamilton, to the movies, he was approached by Bureau men, again led by Melvin Purvis. While resisting arrest, Dillinger was shot four times by Bureau men Clarence Hurt, Charles Winstead, and Herman Hollis (not Melvin Purvis) as he tried to escape down a back alley.

The best movie depiction of this is in the 2009 movie *Public Enemies*, starring Johnny Depp, and based on Brian Burrough's book of the same name. Dillinger's death mask could still be seen at the FBI building in Washington DC when I visited a decade or so ago.

COME BACK FOR MORE IN *Wi*442

Nick will be back next issue, and will reveal who was next awarded the title of Public Enemy Number One, in the second part of his pictorial journey through the gangsters of the 1930s.

Below: Nick poses with his lunchtime drink.

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

GRAND BATTLE SCALE

We talk to Wargames Atlantic's Hudson Adams about his company's new venture into producing plastic 10mm figures.

Scale is a subject that can still spark spirited debate in the world of wargaming. From hobbyists who cherish the details present in 28mm figures, to battle recreation enthusiasts who revel in the sweeping vistas and tactical options of massed 2mm armies, there's always a justification to go big or small with minis.

Choosing the scale for a collection, or for a single display game, is as fundamental a hobby decision as the wargamer's chosen period, preferred ruleset, and favoured method of miniature production. Until recently, those who prefer things at the smaller end of the scale have been somewhat starved of plastic options, but things are changing. Warlord revealed their Epic scale (about 13.5mm) plastics a couple of years ago and now Hudson Adams, the driving force behind Wargames Atlantic (WA), is pushing the development of Grand Battle Scale (GBS) - an expansive new approach to the more conventional 10mm scale. We chatted to Hudson about WA's plastic plans in this new scale.

Above: The figures measure 10mm to their eyline.

A TALE OF TWO SIZES

"I've always thought that there should really only be two sizes for wargaming figures," Hudson started out by telling us. "28mm, of course, is God's own scale, but, if you want to put on effective mass battles, 10mm can't be beaten."

Is it a coincidence that these are the two scales WA now produce? Of course not - but it does seem that the WA team is wholly committed to their choices through more than just production practicality. They see 6mm as too small to show off individual figure detail, while 15mm offerings are particularly disliked, sitting at an awkward intersection of scale: a little too big for mass combat, and about as time consuming to paint as 28mm. "They basically do everything that 10mm and 28mm do, but they do those things incredibly badly." Hudson chuckled. "I've previously referenced Bryan Ansell's infamous rant on 'those nasty little 15s', and I wholeheartedly agree with him!"

While Hudson admits to spending a lot of time in his hobby bunker, hatching nefarious plans for WA releases, Grand Battle Scale is a project that's been incubating for a while, and one that's been a collaborative process. Operations Overlord (or, Chief Operations Officer, to normal folks) Charlie Monaghan was heavily involved in brainstorming ideas, and planning the new products in what is already a three-period range, with other advisors pulled into the process whenever appropriate.

Between them, they've created a selection of plastics that - despite each individual combatant only reaching a centimetre to the eyeline - is becoming a range that is quite monstrous in its scope!

Above: Samurai and Ashigaru on the tabletop.

Right: The Ashigaru frame includes men armed with yari (spear/pike), naginata (pole arm), yumi (longbow), and teppo (musket). Three casualties are included on each of the four frames that come in a set. Rather than all strips of infantry containing the same number, they range from five to one man, allowing players to form ranks of varying size and dispersal.
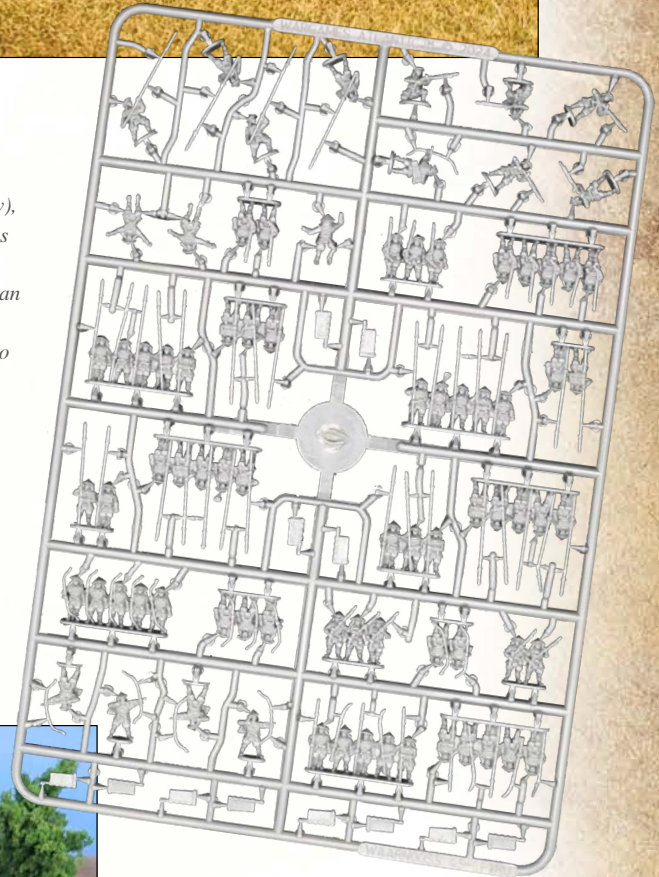
Above: Mounted Samurai lead the way.

CRAFTING THE GRAND BATTLE SCALE RANGE

Rather than downsizing the existing 28mm figures from Wargames Atlantic's selection of digital sculpts, the GBS range has been crafted from a fresh start. The resulting models not only look fantastic at 10mm scale, retaining a high level of appropriate detail, but also work well in plastic, and will be practical for gamers to paint in bulk.

Hudson explains, "For Grand Battle Scale - which is our branding for our 10mm range, which will eventually cover a vast array of options - I spent a lot of time with the sculptors, getting the style of the models down. You can't just downsize (or upsize, for that matter) something that's been designed for 28mm and have it work at a new size. When you think about it, 28mm models are a

very odd construct. If you blew one up to human size, you'd go running for the hills at the grotesqueness you faced! Even the most 'true scale' or proportional sculpts still feature choices around the size of the head and hands: which details to minimise, and which to enhance to make something that looks right on the tabletop, etc. The same is true with 10mm, but different areas need to be considered.

Right: The Samurai frame boasts yari (spear/pike), naginata (pole arm), yumi (longbow), and katana (sword) armed men mounted and on foot.

"I wanted to make sure that GBS models not only looked fantastic at scale, but could also be tooled with the highest level of detail."

So far so good, with the first two periods that have been revealed - Sengoku and Azincourt - boasting some seriously impressive and inspiring plastic options.

The Sengoku range, which includes Samurai and Ashigaru, will be the first available. Troops should be on sale already, with command boxes following soon after, and expansions planned. As with much that WA do, the contents of these follow-on box sets will be determined by community polling, but Ikko Ikki and Sohei Monks are likely to join the range later in the year.

Above: Sengoku Command.

The Azincourt range is not at the tooling and production stage yet, so its release is further off, but the little *amuse bouche* we've been given suggests this is shaping up to become a rather tasty and expansive Medieval range. While the Azincourt name relates, of course, to the Hundred Years' War, figures for the Wars of the Roses will broaden the historical scope, and there are Scots in the plans too.

A third, yet-to-be-announced range is in the works, and there are plans to introduce new rules for GBS towards the end of 2024. Unfortunately, even our Medieval information extracting devices couldn't loosen Hudson's tight lips for further details on those. Perhaps, by the time this article goes to press, more will have been teased on wargamesatlantic.com.

GRAND BATTLE SCALE Azincourt

Above: A taster of some of the Hundred Years' War figures on the way.

We may not have been given specifics, but Hudson couldn't help but get rather enthusiastic about the future of the range: "After that lot, we plan to do new 10mm ranges covering a variety of historical periods, releasing things on a regular basis, but we also want to continue to support each range by putting out additional hard plastic sets over time. We have never liked the 'fire and forget' approach to ranges or rules, and are committed not only to broadening the number of GBS ranges available, but also putting a lot of depth into each one. There are currently four core gaming systems in development that we will use for a variety of periods, genres, and scales."

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

One of the unique aspects of Wargames Atlantic is their strong emphasis on community feedback. Many companies in the wargaming industry tend to create products based on personal preferences, or what might be seen as marketable at a certain time, but Wargames Atlantic really do make the effort to involve customers in the development process. This is most obvious in their Vox Populi system - a four-step voting process that determines what new plastic sets will be produced - but it goes further. While projects such as GBS might appear to be near completion when they are shown, that's not the case, and products get modified before release based on community feedback, ensuring a better fit with what painters and players want.

"We work really, really fast here. We can take something from sculpture to finished tool [the tooling process is when production moulds are made - Ed] in as little as a month if we're rushing, so there's time for input." Hudson explains, detailing how in-house capabilities such as design, sculpting, engineering, and tooling, bring WA close to the efficiencies seen at larger companies like Games Workshop, but with the responsiveness and ability to make changes that define smaller, more bespoke producers.

Transitioning to 10mm has presented new challenges for Wargames Atlantic, particularly when it comes to the sculpting. Maintaining detail at a smaller scale and overcoming production limitations (largely related to thickness and undercuts) has put their team's experience to the test, but the models really do seem to speak for themselves!

WA regular Rob Macfarlane, who had the task of taking on the Sengoku figures, has truly risen to the challenge, presenting figures that have the perfect balance between detail and practicality, and the Hundred Years' War options are looking splendid too.

LOOKING AHEAD

WA's not just about 10mm, of course, and we couldn't help asking Hudson about everything his company does. He was passionate about collaborations, such as the ranges connected to Grey For Now Games' *02 Hundred Hours* (and the upcoming *Guards of Traitors Toll*); Footsore's *Mortal Gods, Gangs of Rome*, and *Barons' War*; and ZombieSmith's Quar.

"We love partnering with other great wargames companies!" he enthused. "We have three or four other collaborative projects in the works right now with other companies set to bring game-in-a-box products out. We'll also continue to support our existing partners with new plastic sets. *Barons' War* is slated for even more, as are the Quar; these intriguing creatures have proven to be one of the hits of the summer of 2024!"

The success of Atlantic Digital, which puts out 19 new digital file sets each month, means that a huge catalogue of models can be downloaded online (currently almost 300 digital file sets and 1000s of figures). This can act as a testing ground before plastic production

Above: The Grand Battle Scale box art is by Marco Capparoni, who also put his painting skills to good use illustrating the cover of this issue of Wargames Illustrated!

Above: The Barons' War Levy are one of WA's many collaborative projects. These figures, though connected to the Footsore game, would work rather nicely in our own games of Ruckus and Billhooks!

with sets like Les Grognards Cavalry, Werewolves, and SneakFeet [see Observation Post on page 8 - Ed] making the transition to box sets.

"I'm a big believer in digital 3D production, and it's a growing market. It's interesting because in many cases it's a completely different customer base. Andy Hobday (of Footsore fame) has expressed the opinion (which I absolutely agree with) that there is a whole new hobby of folks that just collect 3D files!"

CONCLUSION

The Wargames Atlantic motto is a simple one, 'Happy Wargaming!', but in producing quality plastic sets and expansive digital ranges, then selling them at a very reasonable price, they do a good job of encompassing it and passing on the benefits to wargamers around the world.

With a new scale and rules on the horizon, things look set to get even more exciting!

Above: Just a small selection of Atlantic Digital's vast offerings (left to right): Genoese Crossbowmen, Donkeys with saddled luggage, and Hittite Unarmoured Infantry.

THE EVOLUTION OF BOLT ACTION

A Q&A WITH ALESSIO CAVATORE

James talks to the author of *Bolt Action* (and numerous other wargames) as he prepares himself for the launch of Warlord Games' popular WWII ruleset's third edition.

Wargames Illustrated: Alessio, readers will soon get their hands on your new baby, the third edition rules that you've written for Warlord Games' *Bolt Action*. How are you feeling about everything now that the game's locked, loaded, and ready for release? [James interviewed Alessio in July - Ed]

Alessio Cavatore: Excited! Anxious! Relieved! This is the third edition of a game that has been going since 2010. It's been a big game, a successful one, and, frankly, there's nothing really wrong with it. It's a slight concern that I could kill the goose that lays the golden egg!

Also, this one is a big one. The second edition was effectively more of a *Bolt Action* 1.5 because the army books and supplements that were available remained valid. That made it less of a trauma for the game - and for Warlord Games, as they didn't have to take stuff off the shelves. It restricted me somewhat, though, as I didn't have the chance to make big changes that would 'break' the books. In this new, third edition, it's a proper overhaul, with a lot of stuff

that we could only do by viewing it as a restart point.

That's a big responsibility, and I was afraid of changing it too little, and people responding, "It's just the same game, isn't it?", but if I changed it too much: "Oh, you broke it, it doesn't work anymore, you ruined my favourite hobby, boycott Warlord Games!"

Wi: How do you move past that mixture of real, perceived, and predicted pressure?

AC: Advice and input from Jervis Johnson was particularly reassuring: "Alessio, you know what you're doing, so go ahead and don't worry. You have experience, you've done a good job of systems. Trust yourself, and go for it." A lot of other people, like Warlord Games CEO and founder John Stallard and Rick Priestley, playtested the game with me, and the reassurance and encouragement from people like that, people that I look up to and admire, is huge. Rick is my game design *sensei*, Jervis is my *senpai*, and when they're playing and giving honest feedback, it's a reassuring thing.

Wi: Jervis certainly faced his share of negative feedback when Games Workshop released *Age of Sigmar*. That was a massive change to an established system, and was not well received initially, but he weathered that storm. Are you wary about how players might react to the *Bolt Action* changes?

AC: I think fantasy and science fiction worlds are riskier. With *Age of Sigmar*, they didn't only change the rules (even though that change was huge), but also destroyed the whole of the Old World and rewrote the background, which obviously isn't possible with World War Two! History requires things to be a little bit more conservative, so you have less freedom, which I guess (in this case) is an advantage.

With the way the internet is these days, I make sure I avoid reading anything online about my games when they come out, to preserve my mental health. The proof of whether you've done a good job or not comes over the years, the sales, and the ongoing play.

SWITCHING SELECTORS

Wi: It's been quite a long time since the last *Bolt Action* editions, and there have been a lot of changes in gaming trends since then, such as activation mechanics, dice systems, use of tables, etc. How has your perspective shifted since that '1.5' release of *Bolt Action*, and how has that been reflected in the third iteration?

AC: Well, the original *Bolt Action* was groundbreaking in its own ways. The mechanic we did with the dice activation was very different at the time, and I'm glad to say that I've seen it inspire systems in a lot of other games that came after, which is a compliment to me as a designer.

We certainly didn't want to change that in the new edition; that activation mechanic IS *Bolt Action*! I think it's worth saying that *Bolt Action* was already a good game - it worked - so the third edition is more a case of changing the way people pick the armies and giving things a bit of a refresh by bringing more variety to the selections. So, while there was no major, rules related reason for a new edition, there was a desire to change the way people collect their armies. That's up there in the three or four biggest new changes.

Wi: Please tell us more!

AC: Previously there was just one selector, which we called the reinforced platoon, essentially representing an infantry platoon with attached heavy weapons, and maybe vehicles from other groups that were not on the map. "Oh, this Sherman tank has been attached, so there must be a Sherman platoon somewhere far away." It was quite abstract in that sense.

We wanted to give more flexibility to people picking their armies in the third edition, so we now have a series of platoons in the rulebook. You have the rifle platoon, which is still the core of *Bolt Action* - infantry with a few attachments, like an anti-tank team, or air observers, but it doesn't have vehicles. It has transport vehicles, but doesn't have fighting vehicles, heavy weapons, or artillery. For every rifle platoon, you can now pick a different platoon, like a heavy weapon platoon, which is full of machine guns, mortars, anti-tank rifles, bazookas, and all that kind of stuff.

You can field an army that is just that heavy weapon platoon if you want, or you can have a rifle platoon and a heavy-weapon platoon side by side, working together. The choices have expanded to rifle platoon, heavy weapon platoon, artillery platoon (battery), and vehicle platoon. The vehicle platoon is

a big one. You can have an army that is only vehicles if you want, just tanks even, though it probably wouldn't be very effective.

I think this new way of selecting the force means that people will hopefully try very different forces.

Wi: When you're making that kind of change, do you at any point consider how it's going to look in the book (which is very pretty, by the way), or do you work out the rules, and then it's over to the designers to sort out the presentation?

AC: One of the key points in the initial brief for this project was to focus on the selectors, and once I had implemented that into the rules, I began to interact with graphic designers on how best to present them clearly, and make them easy to interact with.

Osprey does the layout for *Bolt Action*, so it's different to how it might have been done by an in-house Warlord designer. We supply Osprey with a

document, diagrams, and photos of figures, have a chat about the basics, then, once they've done their work, we provide feedback. They make changes, send us a new version, we provide feedback, and the cycle continues until it's too late and the book must go to pre-order!

"TAKE COVER!"

Wi: Now that you've had a little time to reflect, is there a particular part of the rules that you're most happy with?

AC: I think the biggest impact on the game is going to be the way you pick your army, because it makes for a completely different experience… But that's not really my baby; that came from a lot of collaboration. I'm particularly happy with the way smaller changes have been managed from edition to edition. It's always delicate; you have an existing game, and you want to retain everything that people like about it while adding more value. You don't want to change something for the sake of changing it. You're trying
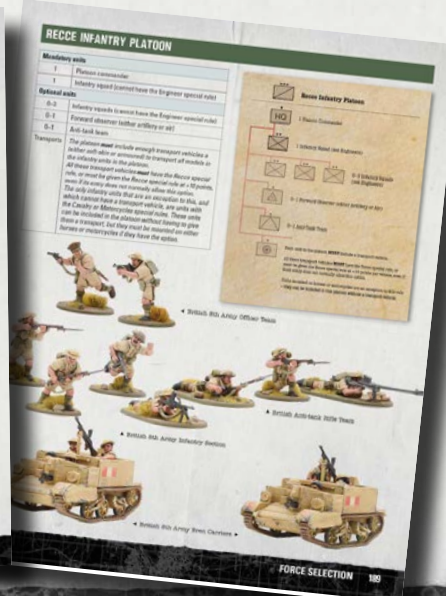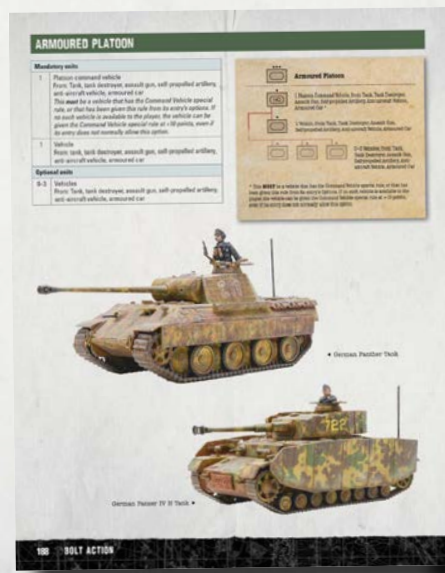
to fix a few things that you know don't work well enough from the old rules; there are a few balance issues here and there, some points values that you don't feel are right… We added a few new weapons that were missing from the first edition, and the response has been very positive to all of that.

Another of the 'big' changes in this version is that I've reduced the complexity in terms of calculations you need to do during play. I wanted to remove maths, because there was a lot working-out required - calculating what you needed to hit, for example, wasn't difficult, but was time-consuming, and I've noticed that even the hardcore tournament players occasionally get it wrong because there are so many modifiers. They'll suddenly have a moment of realisation: "Oh, I didn't apply the small team modifier on that shot three turns ago!"

In a bid to rectify that problem, I've trimmed some modifiers and changed how they function. The target being in cover no longer modifies the to-hit roll, for example, but those in cover get to roll to save the hit. I was worried that adding an extra dice roll would make the sequence longer, but because it's so much easier to work out what is needed to hit, it ends up being faster… not slower, anyway, and certainly simpler and smoother.

Wi: Rolling more dice tends to add enjoyment to the game, too.

AC: Well, that depends on what type of player you are. A super competitive tournament player doesn't want to roll more dice, as they want to optimise and minimise the randomness. I'm sure, in that realm of players, the new cover roll may not be welcomed, but I really think it is more important that newer players - the kids, the dad, the granddad, the people that play together, the people that play for fun - find the game easier to learn, easier to approach, and smoother. Cutting out the basic maths should allow players to focus more on the gameplay.

Wi: Close combat looks like it's had a somewhat significant change in this third edition too.
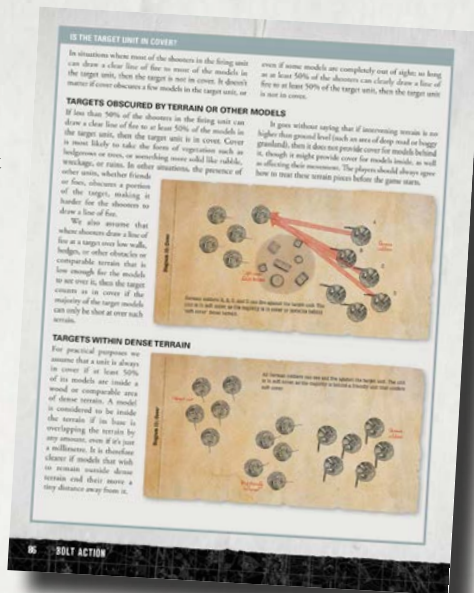
AC: The big horde armies, with bamboo sticks, were doing a bit too well! That wasn't really the right feel for World War Two, so I opted for a very simple fix. In the previous editions, if you charged somebody, you struck first, and if they survived, they would strike back. In this edition, the charging attacker and the defender strike at the same time. This is a small change in terms of wording but big in impact! A huge mass of troops charging against some veterans will no longer be a cut-and-dried result. Charging against troops defending a building in the previous edition was a simultaneous fight; now the defender has the advantage. This encourages them to fire at point blank range instead, which is far more WWII, I think, representing them lobbing grenades in.

MANY MISSIONS

Wi: That's three notable changes. You said three or four; are we missing anything?

AC: I think the last of the big changes is to scenarios. There were six missions that were balanced, in the sense that there wasn't an attacker or a defender; it was an equal situation for both players. Another six scenarios were present that were more narrative, with defined

attackers and defenders. In this new edition, I've taken the victory conditions and setups, and split them out. You roll for these and consult a matrix to generate a much larger number of possible scenarios. This matrix determines how the game is won, how armies enter the table, how they deploy, etc.

I wouldn't say every game is different, but there are lots of possible combinations. There are a few victory conditions that are wackier, and there's one possibility where where you can come onto the table from any side - a kind of lost-in-the-mist element. I'm pretty sure some tournament players will hate the condition, but I find it very entertaining!

Wi: That should all make for some interesting alterations to army selection and play. Do you think the meta will change dramatically with this new version?

AC: Horde armies should be less effective, and elite armies a bit better, while vehicles - the big heavy tanks - might play more of a role, as we've made them cheaper. It's one of those weird things about new additions: that you're going to shake things up, and some people will be upset about that… But, what's the point in doing it if you don't shake things up? Otherwise you're just repackaging the same stuff.

I keep telling the marketing guys to keep stressing one really important thing to the fans - play it! In playtesting, one of the main trends was that players found the game faster and smoother.

Wi: Perhaps I should have asked this at the start of the interview - when did you actually start working on *Bolt Action: Third Edition*?

AC: Officially, work on the next edition begins as soon as the new one is released. We accumulate feedback and develop FAQs while keeping an eye on future directions. The actual work on what will be published in the new edition, including playtesting, started over a year ago, with internal tests progressing to wider testing as the rules were refined.

Above: Japanese SNLF Infantry Squad.

Above: Hungarians dig in near a knocked-out Soviet T-34.

Community feedback played a significant role. One of the most requested features was an index, which we have included. Another focus was improving machine guns, which had been a persistent issue. It's difficult to represent how powerful they are on a game of *Bolt Action*'s size, so I always resisted the idea of making them radically different, but they get an extra shot here, and we've differentiated between those operated by infantry and those mounted on vehicles. Infantry-operated machine guns now fire more shots, reflecting their increased effectiveness compared to vehicle-mounted ones. This represents the stability of firing from a fixed position, aiming carefully, with a team feeding you ammunition. It's not so easy to fire with accuracy from a bouncing tank, through a small view slot, while doing other things!

KEEPING IT TIGHT

Wi: Do you have to fight any desire to get too specific, such as focusing on how to make a sniper team feel just right, and, in the process, ending up devoting 30 pages to them?

AC: The more you go into detail and sophistication, the more you risk ending up with *Advanced Squad Leader*, which is a nice read, but would you want to play it on the wargames table? *Bolt Action* has been accused of being simplistic: "you have four types of anti-tank guns - light, medium, heavy, super heavy - that's it? How is it possible that L70, 75mm is the same as an 88mm?" Well, as the designer, I must make those calls. Some weapon systems obviously need a little bit more fluff - the flamethrower, mortars with indirect fire, multiple launchers,

etc. There must be some systems that are more complicated, to bring the flavour, and some which are simplified, to bring fun and speed to the gaming.

When I first started to play with the Perrys, they asked how their men throw grenades. Well, you don't do that via a rule, but when you get within 6", in point blank range (also called grenade range), your shooting becomes lethal, canceling the cover. That's because the rule represents that, as well as shooting, grenades are now being lobbed. It's not explicitly stated, but it's happening!

Wi: We see a lot of new rulesets each month at *Wargames Illustrated,* and it does seem that the more experienced the author, the more pared down and concise things tend to be. Those first rulesets, from eager new authors, tend to be absolutely packed with ideas, but, because the rules have everything and the kitchen sink, there are fewer standout, punchy moments in play. Does experience bring the confidence to make vital cuts?

AC: Absolutely! Simplicity is difficult, complexity is easy. You know that your design is finished when you don't have anything left to take out - this is something Jervis Johnson always mentions. Morale in *Bolt Action* is simplified, compared to many other games, as an example. In other rules, a broken unit might start to retreat. That raises questions: which direction do they retreat in, what if there's an enemy in the way of their retreat, how do they retreat, how do they recover? The approach I took in *BA* was that if your unit is broken,
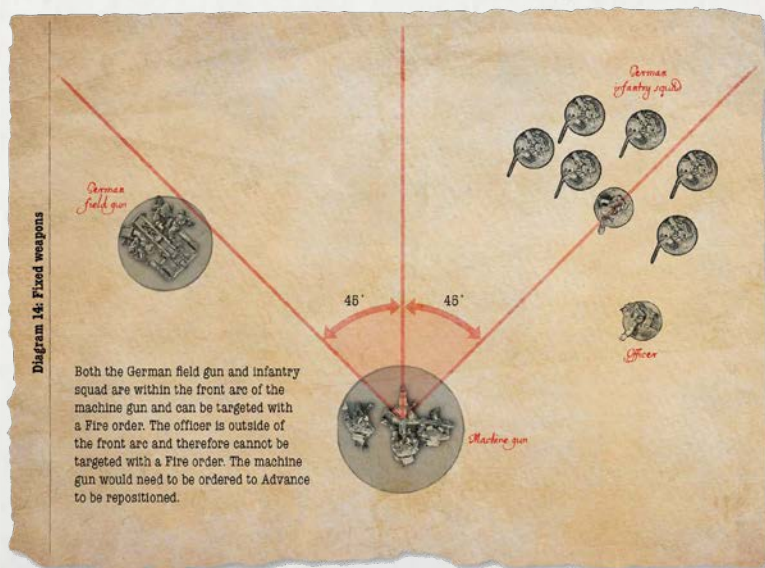
Above: The new book contains many useful diagrams to show key concepts in action.

Above: British Airborne Infantry Squad

then they're not effective anymore, so they're gone. It's pointless to add a lot of extra rules to manage them retreating with the chance they might rally. They're just taken off the board for the rest of the game; that will mean that the fun gameplay stuff is less diluted in those vital final turns.

Wi: Maybe you can do a small skirmish game some time, with just ten or so figures to a side, and get more granular in the rules?

AC: It's been a long time since I've been involved in that kind of design, not since *Mordheim* in the late '90s. I'd love to have a go at it, for things like small commando raids, but I am terribly busy these days. I've tinkered with some small skirmish ideas (the working title for my notes is 'Playing with Single Men'!), but if you follow the other stuff that's going on for me - work with Mantic, lots with Warlord, projects with other customers - I'm not sure how I will find the time.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Wi: We assume that you're not completely done with *Bolt Action* now. What's the trajectory for the third edition once the core rulebook's out?

AC: The army books are something that I've always seen as part of the job; they're very directly connected to the rulebook. I work with another writer to do those. In the second edition I was less directly involved in the campaign and sector books, although I make sure the rules within them work.

Wi: You've been doing this job for quite a while now, and quite a lot of your peers are retiring or semi-retired. Are you reaching the point where you're starting to feel like winding

Above: British armour on the move in the Western Desert.

down? Do you have plans to maybe keep tinkering, work on a passion project, like Jervis is doing with *Valour & Fortitude*?

AC: Well, funnily enough, that kind of 'winding down' was the intent when I sold my company, River Horse, a couple of months ago. I planned to keep up my commitment to Warlord and Mantic, but was going to drop some of the other stuff, and maybe work on my own projects. What happened was that the moment I announced that River Horse was gone, I got bombarded with requests to write new systems! So, it doesn't look like I'm going to retire anytime soon.

Wi: How do you feel about River Horse now you've let it go? Did you find it was a worthwhile experience running it?

AC: I've learned so much by effectively running a company since about 2010 - things I would never otherwise have learned about production, licensing, sourcing from China, export, etc. I don't think I'm suited to being a proper entrepreneur, as I feel too strongly about the people who work for me. I would need to be more ruthless. I'm happy as I am now, as a consultant.

Wi: Do you ever think about a future where you must let go of the systems that you've designed, like *Bolt Action*? Unless you keep working forever, you're eventually going to have to hand it over to someone else. Is that something that you've emotionally and practically prepared for?

AC: That's a very good question. I think *Bolt Action* is the one system where I feel more like the master, in control of everything. As a control freak, that works well for me! If Warlord wanted me to stop being that lead, or if I decided to retire, then I guess we would have to find somebody and hand it over. That

wouldn't be an easy process, and I haven't thought about it, to be honest.

A lot of the companies in the Lead Belt, that spawned from staff members leaving Games Workshop, are very much driven by a few individuals, some of whom are the faces of the businesses too. I'm thinking about Mantic, who I work with. Ronnie is Mantic! He is my age, possibly a year younger, so I think we still have a few years in us, but not too many. It will be an interesting evolution.

Wi: With all the work you are doing, do you get to try many other systems?

AC: Not as many as I'd like. I played Games Workshop's *Warcry* for the first time this year at Play Modena, the Italian gaming convention, and that was interesting and enjoyable in parts.

Tuomas Pirinen is doing a new game, *Trench Crusade*, and I had a go at that at Play Modena too - it was very *Mordheim* in style.

I got in a game of *Star Wars: Armada* from Fantasy Flight for the first time recently, and that's heavy on components. Playing with all those tokens and plastic bits, I felt a bit like the German general in *A Bridge Too Far*, looking up at two or three airborne divisions flying over, thinking: "Just for once, to have all the power at my disposal."

Wi: But you've put your focus into streamlining Bolt Action instead, which we're very happy about! Alessio, thanks so much for chatting to us and providing insight into this splendid third edition of the game.
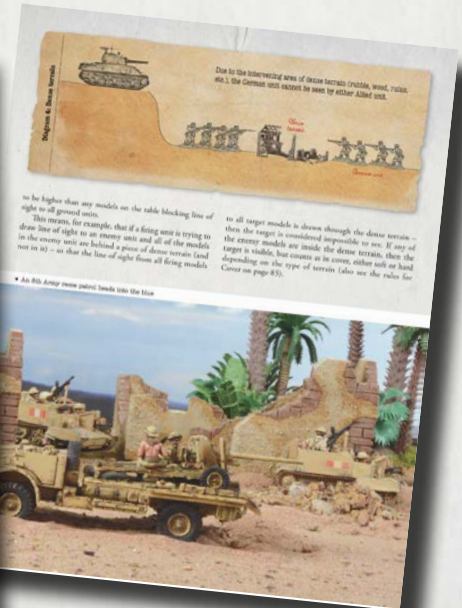
ON THE TRAIL

In the second part of James' Vietnam vehicles trilogy, he traverses the Hồ Chí Minh Trail, and suggests a 'rolling road' scenario.

Last issue, I presented a deep dive into some of the land and air transports of the Vietnam War. In this part, I had planned to dive into the country's waterways, with a look at the US's Brown Water Navy, but I've pushed that back to part three. This leaves me able to keep my focus on the ground and air for now, as I look at Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombing campaign that dropped hundreds of thousands of tonnes of explosives across Vietnam.

Rolling Thunder made the Hồ Chí Minh Trail a primary target and this weaving network of roads and trails offers intriguing wargaming options.

Looking at the brave men and women who drove the Trail feels like a fitting progression and escalation in my Vietnam vehicles trilogy, and it's an opportunity to present a very different, but tactically-challenging and (most important of all) fun wargame.

NOTABLE TRANSPORTS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

On the Trail - the Truong Son Strategic Supply Route (1959 onwards)

This transport artery, better known by the name the US gave it - the Hồ Chí Minh Trail - was an iconic representation of the North Vietnamese's unwavering determination as much as it was an essential supply route. The perilous, winding, 10,000-mile network of tracks and dirt roads was a hive of activity that saw transportation and rebuilding taking place at all hours, to keep the supplies coming, no matter what.

Above: Dave Docherty's 8' x 4' board shows the kind of terrain you can construct to represent the Hồ Chí Minh Trail. This great-looking setup is built with simple hobby techniques and a truckload of aquarium plants!

The Trail's development began in the late 1950s, expanding on existing tracks that had provided trade routes between Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia for centuries. The Hồ Chí Minh Trail (Truong Son Strategic Supply Route, to the locals) was largely footpaths and bicycle tracks at first, but, as the war escalated, and the need for more supplies grew, its reach and scale evolved. The Trail traversed the mountainous terrain of the Annamite Range in Laos, and crossed multiple international borders, which meant that the US would always struggle to disrupt transport from the ground.

VEHICLES ON THE TRAIL

A far cry from the M113s and Hueys of last issue's article, many of the the vehicles that ferried supplies and personnel over the Trail were far less advanced, but each played a vital role, and featured intriguing adaptations.

Porters and bicycles

Early supplies were moved by peoplepower. Human porters showed incredible endurance as they carried heavy loads on their backs in the oppressive humidity, while bicycles provided a slightly easier means of movement. These 'steel horses' were modified to carry the loads and, with cargo reaching up to 500 pounds, would usually be pushed through the rough terrain.

Animals

Pack animals were used to move materiel through areas that were impassible to vehicles. Mules were an effective way to traverse dense jungle and steep mountain paths, but another option is available to ambitious hobbyists. Following the example set by the Vietminh in the French Indochina War, elephants were occasionally used to move heavy ammunition and supplies. You'd need to build elephant conversions before they could tread your tabletop Trail, but the large creatures were prized for their strength.

It was a rare occurrence, but South Vietnamese units occasionally used elephants in combat in the early war, as a counter-guerrilla measure, which could make for an extremely interesting and visually spectacular gameplay addition.

Above: Assorted cyclists, riding and pushing, from Full Metal Miniatures.

Trucks

With the rapidly improving Trail infrastructure, truck convoys became ubiquitous. Soviet-made ZIL-150s and GAZ-63s ware particularly common, as their all-wheel drive ensured they were well-suited to the terrain. They were robust and no-frills, too, which made them easy to maintain and repair. Chinese and Eastern European trucks were also used, modified with additional armour and camouflage.

Soviet and Chinese aid did not just come through the provision of trucks; there was the need for spare parts and equipment to keep the vehicles running, and training in vehicle repair.

Other vehicles

In addition to standard trucks, the North Vietnamese employed amphibious vehicles, such as the Soviet-made PTS-M. These were used to carry troops and supplies across rivers and to navigate flooded areas.

Above: A Soviet ZIS-150.

Motorcycles, such as the Chinese Chang Jiang 750 and Soviet M-72, were able to speed through even the narrowest trails, making them another transport option - one that was vital for reconnaissance and communication. A network of messengers ferried information up and down the Trail by day and night.

Above: A South Vietnamese elephant patrol from the early war.

Above: North Vietnamese elephants being used for supply transport, rather than attack.

ROLLING THUNDER

Operation Rolling Thunder, initiated in March 1965, was a major US attempt to halt the Trail from far above. An extensive bombing campaign, Rolling Thunder was designed to sever supply routes and stymie the North Vietnamese war effort. Over a three-and-a-half year period, aircraft dropped over 800,000 tonnes of bombs, targeting roads, bridges, and depots, but (as with much in the Vietnam War), the North had a reliable ally:- the landscape of their country. The dense jungle canopy was natural cover, and pilots struggled to identify and strike targets from far above. Much of the bombing was speculative, but, for those traversing, protecting, and repairing the Trail, it must still have been a constant source of fear and danger.

Aircraft, such as the F-105 Thunderchief and B-52 Stratofortress, carried out relentless attacks, aiming to reduce the enemy's capacity to wage war, but also doing untold damage to the landscape, people of Vietnam, and stirring up further anti-American sentiment.

REPAIR AND COUNTERMEASURES

The Hồ Chí Minh Trail, despite the huge amount of ordnance sent its way, was a surprisingly resilient web of roads, paths, and river transport systems. Peppered with supply depots, resting places, and even hospitals, the NVA and Viet Cong engineers braved the constant threat of air strikes while maintaining it.

After each bombing raid, engineers and labourers - men, women, and children - would rush to repair damage and, with simple hand tools or their bare hands, they'd clear the paths, rebuild roads, and construct bridges.

Above: A Skyraider from Dave's collection, with a converted Gringo 40s pilot.

Natural foliage, netting, and painted tarps effectively hid roads and vehicles from aerial surveillance, and North Vietnamese 'sappers' became adept at concealing the spiderwebbing infrastructure. As the bombardments continued, fake trails and decoy structures were built, misleading the airborne US further afield. Supplies were increasingly moved after sunset, and under the cover of adverse weather, with Vietnamese 'drivers of the night' calling on incredible skill and bravery to traverse the winding, narrow pathways, with headlights off to avoid revealing themselves.

Defences weren't all pacifistic, of course! Early warning systems were employed, and anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles were on hand to cause concerns for the US pilots.

THE TRAIL ON THE TABLETOP

The difficulty of finding suitable miniatures to take onto the Trail comes with the number of manufacturers you'll have to scan and the different scales you'll need to contend with. It's always harder to find a one-stop shop for civilian figures, and this is true of the vehicles used on the Hồ Chí Minh Trail, too.

While companies like Empress Miniatures offer ranges of 28mm vehicles, made from resin and metal, the closest you'll get to what's needed tend to be US trucks and APCs (these could have been captured and put into service, of course). Rubicon Models' plastic kits (a recurring company in this series) include the ZIL-150 and GAZ AA/AAA, which is a bit early, but still works if you squint! You could use their Studebaker US6 kit instead, which has a similar look to the later GAZ trucks.

For those with access to a 3D printer, there are Soviet trucks, amphibious vehicles, and motorcycles to expand your collection. These can be printed at an assortment of scales. Diecast options are out there, too, but may prove to be a costly investment.

Plastic Soldier Company's 1/72 scale Russian GAZ Trucks (below) could be a fine way to build a convoy on the cheap. A set of six vehicles costs just £35 and, at this scale, you can also consider military modelling kits, dramatically expanding your options.

Above: A Studebaker US6 2½ ton 6x6 truck from Rubicon.

GHQ Models have some great options if you're ready to scale down to 6mm, which would be perfect for larger-scale battles, or for representing more of the Trail in a smaller space.

If you want to switch to two wheels, then it's worth noting that the Soviet M-72 motorbike was a direct copy of the German BMW R-71, which will boost your options, but you'll need to do some rider conversion. For push bikes, Full Metal Miniatures have some options, along with carts that could be dragged down the Trail by livestock.

Left: Rubicon's motorbike looks the part, but the riders are rather off for the period!

FURY ROAD!

The more one investigates the scale, scope, and resilience of the the Hồ Chí Minh Trail, and those who traversed and maintained it, the more incredible its story becomes. This vital transport artery is a monument to the ingenuity and determination of the North Vietnamese during the Vietnam War, maintained in the face of a biblical-scale bombing campaign.

Bringing the unusual drama of the Trail to the tabletop, however, may be tricky, or even counterintuitive. If you're ready to open your mind to some unconventional mechanics, however, you'll find that wargames, or indeed a full campaign, can be based on the history of the Hồ Chí Minh Trail in dynamic ways.

Let's roll

A 'rolling road' mechanic can effectively simulate the hazardous nature of traveling down the Hồ Chí Minh Trail for the Vietnamese while providing a challenge to the US player's airborne assault.

The Trail should be represented as a progressive series of terrain features (turns, junctions, rivers, narrower trails, offroad cut-throughs, etc.) that the Vietcong player holds as playable cards. Each should represent a 2' x 2' stretch of terrain that they will drive their convoy down.

Before the game starts, they should secretly lay down the first three cards of their choosing, ready to be revealed as they progress along the Trail, then turn over the first and place their convoy on it.

When they reach the end of one terrain section, they turn over the next card, lay its terrain out ahead of them, and move on. This means that, on a standard 6' long tabletop, there's space for three sections. It's essential that the Vietnamese player keeps their convoy on the move, so, once a new section causes a previous one to 'slip off' the table, any vehicles on it are considered lost.

Making progress

The US player should pick the next five cards, then pass them to their opponent, who can play them in the order of their choosing. This gives the airborne attackers some idea of the route ahead, but they won't be 100% sure, representing the inaccuracy of the information observers above passed on.

As well as these five cards, the Vietnamese player can add in three cards from another deck - defences and distractions - which will modify the terrain section that is revealed.

Thus, with this system established, the convoy can (should you want the game to continue) have another five cards passed to them by the US player once the previous ones ones are navigated, and the system repeats.

Movement

Each turn, the convoy's vehicles can move at the distance of your preferred ruleset's profiles. Each terrain setup will impose its own challenge on their movement, however, and the convoy can choose to move its vehicles cautiously or aggressively, instead of as usual. Each choice will further impact the difficulty of traversing the Trail.

Attacks from above

The US player can call in air strikes on the Trail but, each of their bomb drops will be an educated (or uneducated, cross-fingers-and-hope-for-the-best) guess. At first, they have no idea what the terrain is like, but after the first three sections, once they've added cards to the mix, their decision-making will get a little easier. From the start of the second turn, each of their airborne attackers (use your rules profiles again) can make a bombing run against one of the three terrain sections in play, then skip two turns, before attacking again.

Above: A basic rolling road setup can be made with little more than trees and some simple 'path' sections.

The tricky bit here, of course, is that the US player must plan their bombing runs two turns ahead.

If they wish to bomb on turn three, they must declare their intended action before the start of the first turn, picking section one, two, or three as their target. This is before the Vietnamese convoy is on the move, and with the US bombers having no knowledge of the terrain. This could create a situation wherein they target an area the convoy has moved past, the bombs land ahead of the convoy (this may damage the Trail, which could slow the trucks when they reach it), or they might target somewhere that is a decoy or a well-defended part of the Trail packed with anti-aircraft guns.

Repairs and subterfuge

North Vietnamese players should be able to deploy engineers and labourers to repair damaged sections of the Trail, or to obfuscate vehicles with camouflage.

These actions can be represented by resource points or action tokens, depending on the system you are playing.

Left: While not essential, you could add in gameplay bonuses for getting injured convoy drivers (whose skills behind the wheel were valued) to safety.

Decoys and countermeasures

Make decoy vehicles and fake Trail sections an option to mislead US air strikes.
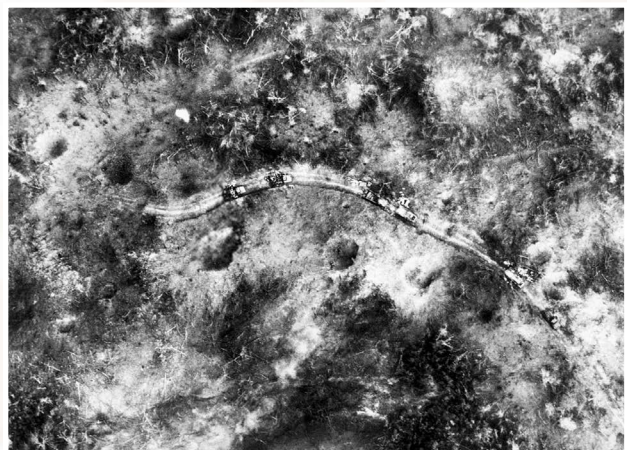
Above: Overturned trucks and craters can be seen from above, after a bombing run by the US Air Force in Laos.

MODIFY YOUR ROLLING ROAD

You can add more flavour to rolling road gaming by throwing in extra challenges such as these:

NIGHT CONVOY

Play the scenario using night-time conditions, reducing visibility and altering movement and engagement rules.

Driving in darkness, without using headlights, made for an incredible driving challenge, but massively reduced the chance that a US airborne attack would be able to home in on targets. The US will have to make more guesses about where to bomb here, but the Vietnamese player will need to drive slower or risk crashing off the road.

RIVER CROSSING

Including a significant river section on the Trail, which the convoy must cross, could require the use of amphibious vehicles and engineers for the North Vietnamese player.

You could include the construction of makeshift bridges or swapping supplies into amphibious vehicles to cross the river. Delays in crossing will, of course, make the convoy vulnerable to attacks.

Above: AC-130A 56-0490 "Thor," a Surprise Packet-equipped gunship, attacks three trucks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail near Pakse in southern Laos on December 21, 1972. The pilot, Capt Harry Lagerwall, fired his forward M61 20mm guns, but during his left-hand orbit, a 37mm shell hit the AC-130A at 7,500ft. Two of the 16 crew members bailed out. It was the final AC-130 loss of the war. "Thor" carried ANALQ-87 ECM pods because of the increased threat from SAMs in Laos. Under-wing SUU-42A/A chaff and flare ejector pods could also be carried. Heat deflectors shielded their engine exhausts to deter Strela missiles. By Adam Tooby. © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com.

OPERATION LAM SON 719

Operation Lam Son 719 (a reference to a historical Vietnamese hero, the year, and the main highway used: Route 9) was primarily executed by the ARVN between February 8 and March 25 1971.

It began with ARVN forces crossing the Laotian border and seizing key locations on Route 9. From there, the intent was to disrupt the Hồ Chí Minh Trail, but the NVA hit back, and despite US air support (US ground troops were not involved; taking them outside of Vietnam was fraught with difficulty) ARVN units struggled with coordination and morale.

By mid-March, the operation was faltering, and when the South Vietnamese forces began to withdraw, the NVA intensified its assaults. Lam Son 719 exposed the Vietnamization strategy that was now in play in the war, making the containment of communist expansion seem increasingly less likely, as the US moved away from Americanisation.

CAMPAIGNING LAM SON 719

This operation, which included sections of Laos and key points along the Hồ Chí Minh Trail, is a chance to play more conventional wargames around the Trail and would be well-suited to a campaign at a small scale. The landscape here will benefit from the expansiveness that can be modelled at a smaller size, with supply depots, base camps, key transport arteries of the Trail, Route 9, and river crossings all worth including in the setup.

The map

Design a campaign map that includes sections of Laos, key points along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Route 9, river crossings, and supply depots. Each point on the map represents a strategic location that can be controlled by either side.

Right: This simple hex setup can have sections marked on the underside of tiles, to be flipped, revealing the areas of the Trail.

Forces

The South Vietnamese player should command a mix of infantry, armour, and artillery units, and get the support of coordinated US air assets. To begin with they should be allowed relatively free reign of the area's initial objective points, deploying troops where they choose on the points along Route 9.

The North Vietnamese player controls regular army units, anti-aircraft defences, and guerrilla forces, but will not deploy any to begin the campaign.

Initial deployment

The ARVN player starts with a mix of infantry, armour, and artillery units. They have initial control over the starting points along Route 9, and can deploy their forces strategically.

The NVA player places markers, indicating potential defensive positions, but does not deploy their regular army units, anti-aircraft defences, and guerrilla forces.

Advancement on the map

The ARVN player rolls dice to determine their progress as they advance deeper into NVA-controlled territory. At the beginning of the campaign, rolling for progress is relatively easy, but as they move further, the difficulty increases to reflect mounting NVA defences and logistical challenges.

LAM SON 719
February 1971

Axis of Advance
Firebase
Landing Zone

0 ——— 10
Miles
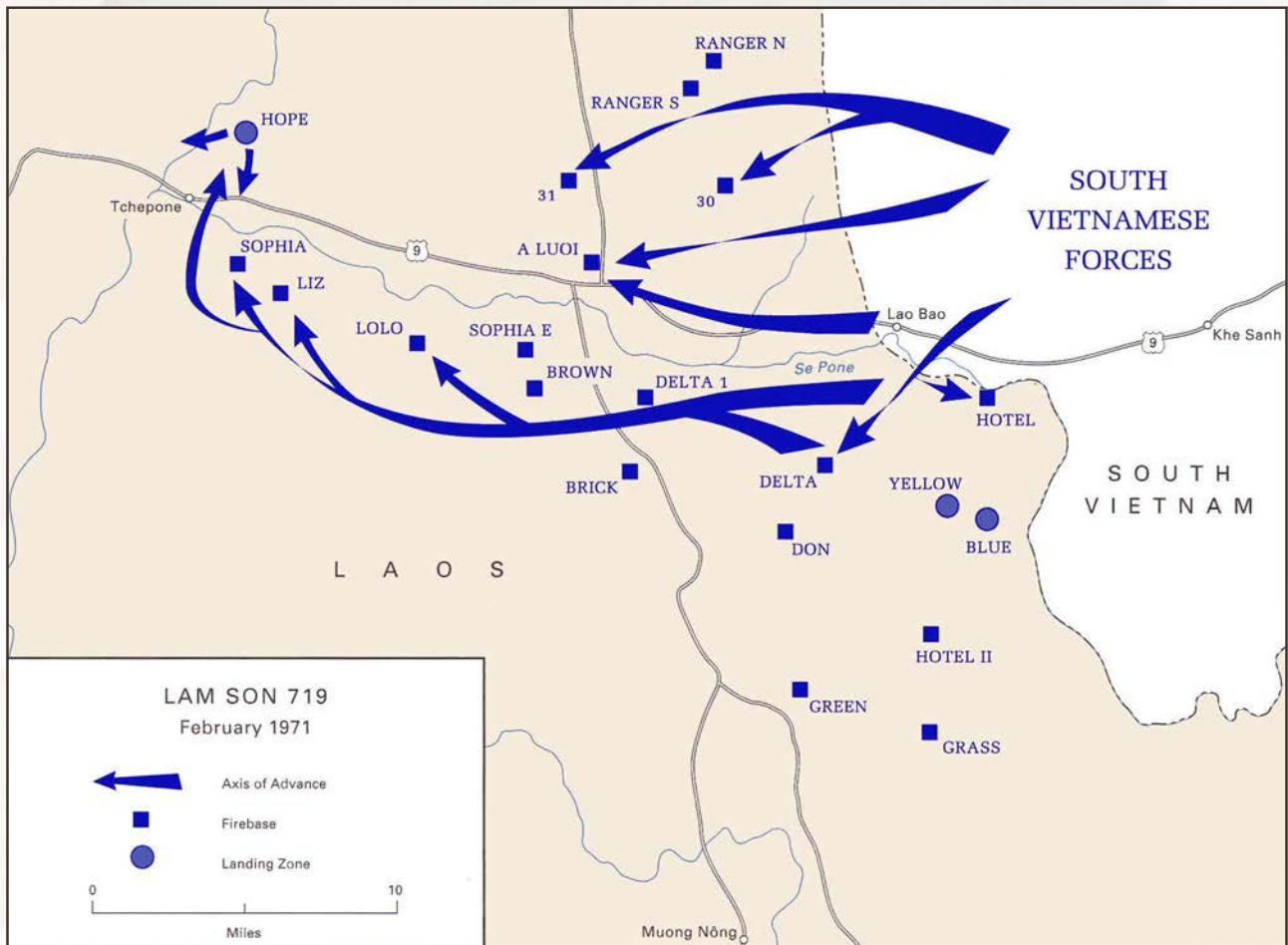
Progress rolls can be modified by factors such as the presence of NVA defences, control of supply routes, and the effectiveness of air support.

The NVA player can choose to launch counterattacks against the ARVN. Before each ARVN progress roll, the NVA player can decide to place more markers (potential defenders), or reveal army units or guerrilla forces that can move to attack the ARVN. Their movement should be guaranteed - this is their territory, and they are ready to attack.

When forces clash, play the battles out with forces equating to those on the map.

Any victories the NVA achieve should push their enemy back, but the NVA being defeated should not equate to the ARVN getting a guaranteed advance. This reflects the increasing difficulty of pushing into the unknown dangers of enemy territory for the South Vietnamese.

Objective

The South Vietnamese player's goal is to advance, moving onto and along the Trail, capturing key points, and disrupting the supply network. These objectives include major supply depots, river crossings, and strategic chokepoints. Capturing these objectives disrupts NVA supply lines, and strengthens ARVN control over the area.

The North Vietnamese player must defend these points and counterattack where possible.

Air support

South Vietnamese (ARVN) Player

Airstrikes

The ARVN player can call in airstrikes using US air assets to target NVA positions, supply depots, and key defensive positions along Route 9 and the Trail. These can be called in by declaring the target area and rolling dice to determine the effectiveness. The effectiveness roll can be modified based on factors such as weather conditions, NVA anti-air defenses, and the accuracy of intelligence.

Effects of accurate airstrikes

• Reveal counter and damage troops: if there are NVA troops under a targeted counter, they are revealed and are reduced in strength.

• Damage or destroy revealed troops: reduce the strength of targeted NVA troops, or, for a high roll, destroy them.

• Damage or destroy defences: reduce the defensive strength of NVA positions, or, for a high roll, destroy them.

• Disrupt supply lines: target supply depots and transport arteries to temporarily halt the availability of counters for the NVA.

• Cause a loss of morale: reduce the morale of targeted NVA troops and the closest NVA troops to the target.

Observation

Before committing ground forces to an advance or assault, the ARVN player can conduct aerial reconnaissance. This allows them to scout NVA positions and fortifications, providing bonuses to subsequent combat rolls, or reducing the effectiveness of ambushes and surprise attacks by the NVA.

Anti-Air Defenses

North Vietnamese (NVA) Player

The NVA player can deploy anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) to defend key positions against ARVN airstrikes.

DEATH FROM ABOVE

As part of the increasing air support, the Vietnam War witnessed the introduction and widespread use of new and devastating weapons that left a lasting impact on combatants and civilians:

• Napalm could effectively clear vegetation and expose Viet Cong hiding places, but its fiery effectiveness in jungle warfare made it a controversial symbol of the war's brutality, causing horrific burns, which were not always limited to the enemy; civilians and US/ARVN troops could get caught in the heat of the blasts.

• An herbicide doesn't sound particularly brutal when compared to superheated explosive gel, but Agent Orange, used to defoliate vast areas of jungle, to deny cover to enemy forces, had profound and ongoing consequences. It continues to impact Vietnamese civilians and US veterans who were exposed to its toxicity.

• Cluster bombs, which dispersed smaller bomblets over a wide area, were employed to target troop concentrations and supply routes. Their indiscriminate nature, as with so much in the War, led to significant civilian casualties, and long-term unexploded ordnance.

Despite the technological and strategic advancements in air attack, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army adapted swiftly, with tunnel systems and other camouflage used to evade and counter US air superiority.

The era of large-scale air mobility in Vietnam left its legacy on military doctrine and international perceptions of conflict. It underscored the complexities of asymmetrical warfare, and its introduction of new weapons sparked essential debate on their ethical and humanitarian impact, influencing subsequent military strategies and international standards.

Right: A massive napalm strike from one of Dave Docherty's display games.

Before airstrikes are resolved, the NVA player should declare the deployment of anti-air defences they have made, and roll dice to determine their effectiveness. Successful anti-air actions can reduce the effectiveness of ARVN airstrikes, or even shoot down aircraft.

By incorporating these air support rules, you can create a dynamic and strategic gameplay experience that mirrors the challenges and decisions faced during Operation Lam Son 719. Players must strategize and adapt to changing conditions, making tactical use of air assets to achieve their campaign objectives or anti-air defences to keep the Trail in action.

Victory

ARVN Victory

The ARVN player wins by successfully advancing along Route 9, capturing key objectives, and maintaining control over strategic points on the Trail.

NVA Victory

The NVA player wins by repelling ARVN advances, maintaining control over key defensive positions, and inflicting significant casualties and morale loss on ARVN forces.

Come back in *Wi*442 for the third and final part of James' Vietnam epic. This time he promises us it will feature boats, along with all kinds of tanks!

Above: Tanks roll in a Vietnam game at the Partizan Wargames Show.

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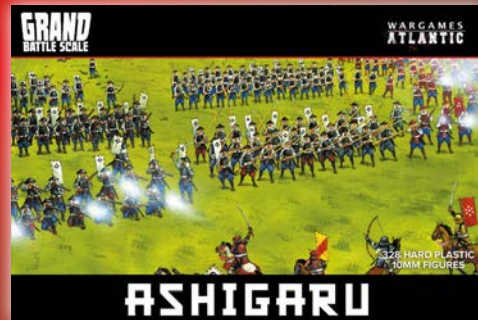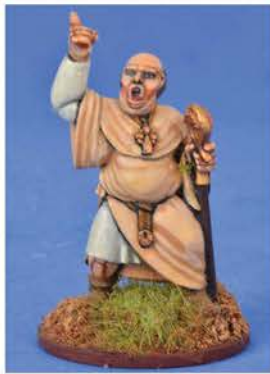and presenting new sheets for The Indian Mutiny.

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