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THE OTHER PARTIZAN 2024
A close look at the best games

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WHAT'S INSIDE



THEME: WINTER WAR - FROZEN BATTLES THROUGH THE CENTURIES

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FROM THE EDITOR

'Tis the season to be jolly, and, these days, that seems to mean everything yuletide related needs to be given a covering of snow and ice. So, in the spirit of seasonal solidarity, we felt we should give *Wi* a smattering of winter weather this month, with a Winter War theme. What better way to do that than by providing you with five Winter War articles **and** a frame of *Bolt Action* Winter Fallschirmjäger?

Fresh (or probably fatigued) from the battlefields of the Ardennes, your squad of six German paratroopers are currently only available as a Platoon Box Set from Warlord Games, so this freebie frame provides you with a unique opportunity to either 'try before you buy' or add some reinforcements to your platoon.

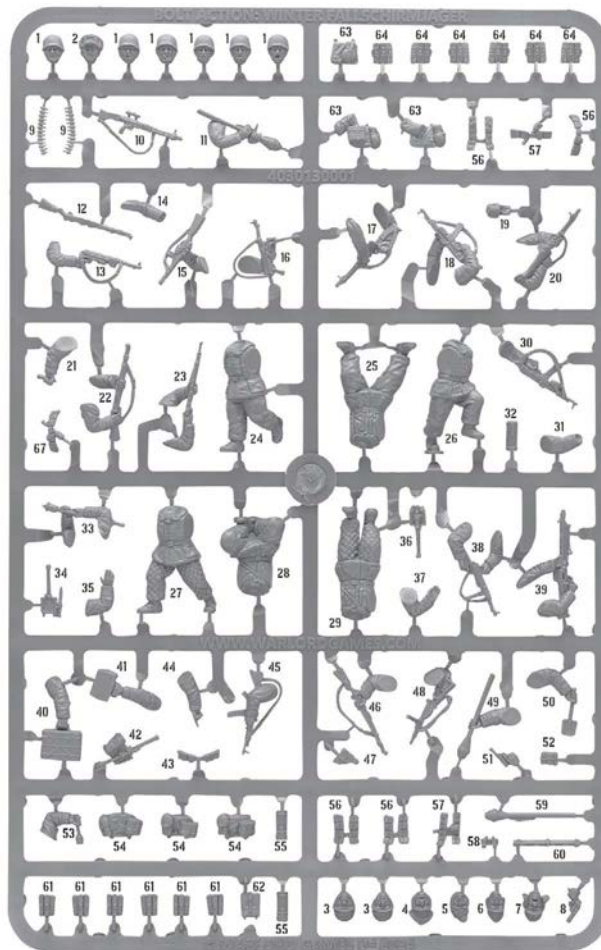
Arm yourself with everything you need to know about what's on your free sprue by taking a look at information provided by Warlord Games below, and find more at warlord-community.warlordgames.com

Dan Faulconbridge

Editor

Cover artwork: Fallschirmjäger
in the Ardennes by Neil Roberts.

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CREDITS

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THEME: GETTING COLD FEET IN NORWAY 64

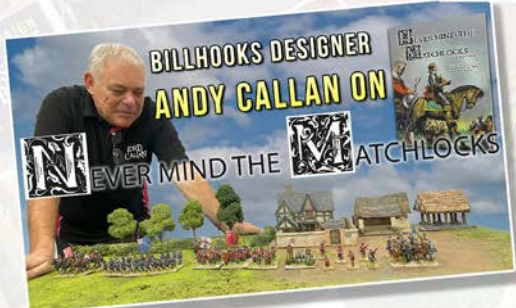


THEME: WINTER BASES 72

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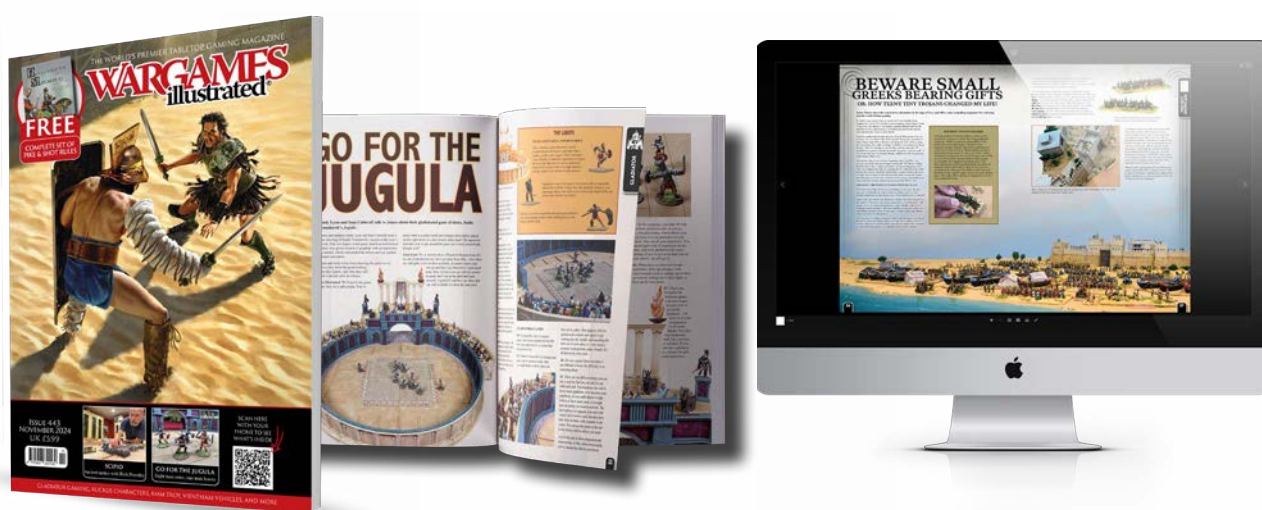
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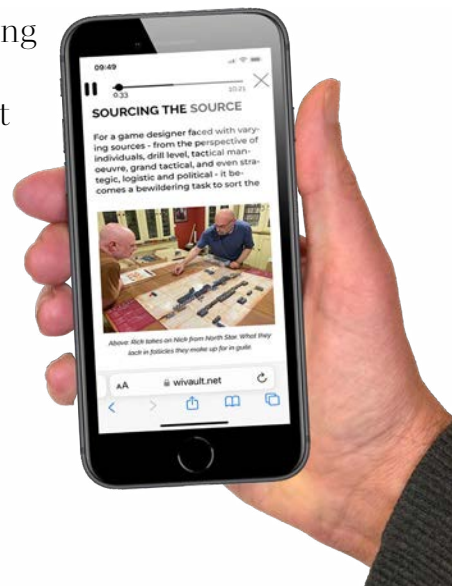
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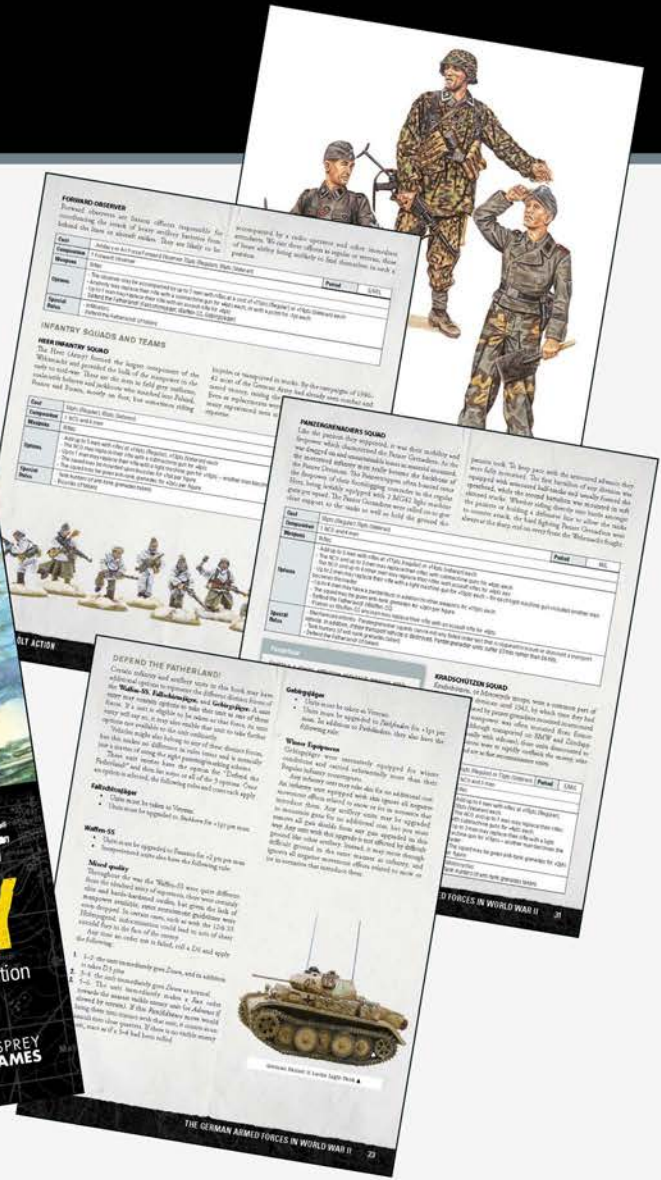
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ARMIES OF GERMANY

Released:
30th January 2025



Special Book Figure: Josef 'Sepp' Allerberger

The essential companion for all Bolt Action players wanting to deploy the might of the German armed forces on the tabletop, *Armies of Germany* puts you in command and gives you everything you need to use your German miniatures in battle!

Armies of Germany is your complete guide to fielding the forces of Germany in Bolt Action: Third Edition! With over 100 full-colour pages containing all the rules you need to create and play unique German forces in the world's greatest WWII wargame. Choose your army from a huge range of infantry, vehicle, and artillery units, organise them into platoons, and prepare for tabletop action. Alongside the rules are a brief history of German participation in the Second World War, force selection guides for the early, middle, and late periods of the conflict, and gorgeous artwork and miniatures photography to guide and inspire you!

RRP / MSRP - £25 / €30 / \$35

PRE-ORDER AT: WARLORDGAMES.COM

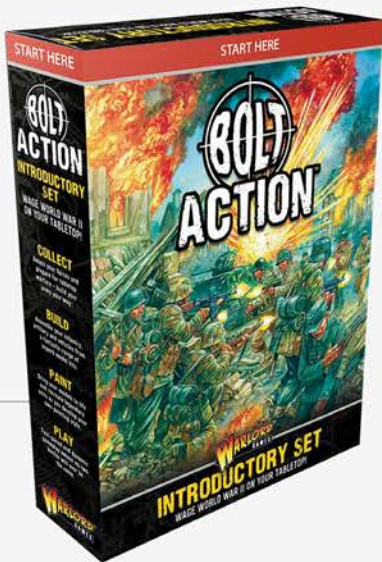
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IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT!

A BRAND NEW WAY TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY!

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If you've ever wanted to try playing Bolt Action but have never had a go, this is the perfect place for you to start. This new set gives you everything you need to start playing. It also makes the perfect gift for any of your non-Bolt Action playing friends! Look out for our time limited, refer a friend offer at warlordgames.com.

The 64 page Field Manual guides you through assembling the included miniatures, playing your first games using basic rules, and contains loads of information to help you take your next steps in collecting an army and playing Bolt Action!

Released: 30th November 2024

RRP / MSRP - £42.50 / €51 / \$68

Contents: 64 page full colour handbook, 24 Plastic Miniatures (12x German Grenadiers, 12x US Rangers), 1 Cardboard German Half-track, 1 Plastic Ruined Farmhouse Terrain Piece, Double-sided Playmat, Cardboard Gaming Tokens, 6 Bolt Action Order Dice, 8 Dice and a Dice Bag.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS INTRODUCTORY SET AT WARLORDGAMES.COM/INTRO

OBSERVATION POST

New and forthcoming wargames stuff you need to know about

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

CROOKED DICE - BENEATH THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS



Continuing their mission to blend weird retro aesthetics, cinematic gaming mechanics, and a smidgen of history, Crooked Dice have released *Beneath the Mountains of Madness*. As with many of Crooked Dice's releases, this one started out as a Kickstarter; with that crowdfunding campaign fulfilled, we can all get our hands on the *7TV* expansion (Feature Pack), along with a range of quirky figures connected to the release.

Packaged inside a VHS tape box, which adds nicely to the retro feel, you'll find all the bits you'll need to immerse your group of brave players in a Lovecraftian horror movie-like adventure. The Episode Guide book, the Cast cards (character options), Make Up and Prop cards (extra gaming modifiers), and Grimoires (magic abilities) add a lot of richness to the Antarctic-during-World-War-Two setting, and the wild adventure that occurs there.

DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: WWII (but with a fantasy twist)
- PRICE: £25 for the Feature Pack. From £5 for the miniatures.
- MATERIAL: 104-page full colour, small-format, softback book and an assortment of high-quality cards. White metal miniatures.
- AVAILABLE FROM: crooked-dice.co.uk

FROM GREATER SHOGGOTHS TO MUTANT PENGUINS

As you have probably guessed, the Nazis have been meddling with the occult again! Rather predictably, they've dug up some badness in the ice, and things have gotten rather... messy! The US have sent an OSR (Occult and Science Reserve) team into the frozen landscape to investigate what's going on. This is where the gaming gets into its swing, but there's a fair bit of background provided first, allowing you to immerse yourself in the film-like world. This sets up the environment and key cast members (many of whom get new miniatures) before a five-part campaign. This takes up about two thirds of the book, and features special themed rules, along with a good dose of classic historical adversaries, all given a bit of a cold-weather twist (rather fitting for this month's Winter War

theme). There are far stranger gaming options to choose from, too, with everything from ancient, otherworldly horrors to monstrous mutant penguins out for blood. It's an intriguing blend of horror and quirky comedy of which the likes of Sam Rami and Bruce Campbell would be proud!

Beneath the Mountains of Madness does a great job of adding new mechanics to each of the scenarios, building up the tension, dread, and isolation for players as the games progress. Each scenario result impacts the next game: a minor victory might weaken a key opponent, or gain you the initiative, whereas a major victory will give the conqueror bonuses such as new Props (bits of equipment) to use, or specialist cast members to bring into play.



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

IT'S ON THE CARDS

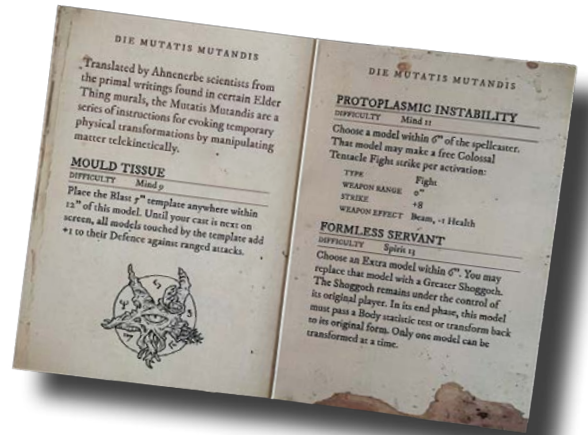
There are 26 neat accessory cards included, split into Props and Special Effects. The Props are more your good-guy basics: a Hand Camera that can immobilise a target with its flash, Binoculars to increase a shoot attack's range, Snowshoes to traverse the environment with ease, etc. It's the Special Effects that are a bit more fun, with Contact Lenses allowing the wearer to ignore cover when targeting a foe, Mortician's Wax making a model cause the Scared status, and Air Bladder used as a knock-down option, no doubt spraying some kind of blood mix at the target. This blend of 'movie magic' with gaming mechanics is very appealing, and a part of the *7TV* world we really enjoy.



BUILDING TENSION

Things get weird and then a whole lot weirder as the drama of the campaign escalates. The scenarios move from the snowy dangers above to underground horrors of a more Gothic and ancient kind. There's certainly an element of psychological terror here, alongside environmental hazards that will force you to move around the tabletop more strategically.

Each scenario is presented rather nicely, with very neat isometric maps that show the ideal setup. Crooked Dice's production quality always shines brightly, and this Feature Pack is no exception. The small dimensions of the Episode Guide remain divisive in the *Wi* office (seen right), and we'd probably prefer it if it was twice the size, but there's a lot packed into its dinky pages. Richly detailed prose, tidy scenarios, and great-looking models bring the Mythos creatures to life, making this a visually immersive experience.



Lovecraft fans will, of course, find a lot to like, but this is a carefully considered gaming experience that has enough history woven into the horror fabric to appeal to a wider range of players. If you've not given *7TV* a go yet, then maybe now is the time to get started!



Above: Ahnenerbe Villains (General, Kommandant, Chief Scientist, Scientist).



Below: Husky Sled Team.



Right: Antarctic Heroes.

Below: Cthonic Aberration.



Above: Elder Thing.



Above: Albino Penguins.

OSPREY GAMES - THE SILVER BAYONET: ITALY - THE SHADES OF CALABRIA

T.C. Stephen becomes the third author to add to the world of *The Silver Bayonet*, taking readers to early 19th Century Calabria in his new expansion for Joe McCullough's Gothic-horror Napoleonic skirmish game.

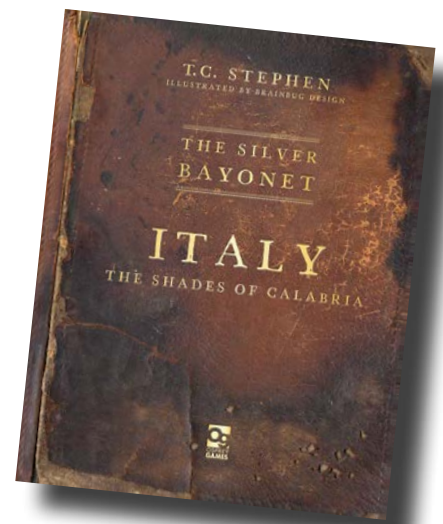
This book begins by painting a vivid picture of the history and landscape of Calabria, detailing remote villages perched dramatically on hillsides, the ruins of Greek and Roman antiquity to be discovered, and expansive forests adding their own dose of drama. This somewhat wild and rugged terrain is, of course, going to be a challenging locale for your Silver Bayonet Units to do their work in. The author describes the geography as 'a dichotomous concoction of both wondrous beauty and terrible danger', which sounds like a great start for our horror-themed adventures in Italy!

NAPOLEONIC REALITY MEETS HORROR GAMING

The book takes the challenges that the environment and natural hazards presented to Napoleonic-era troops, and adds monsters and myth to the mix. Local wildlife is made all the wilder, the sometimes-brutal weather (including the hurricane winds of the *scirocco*) add to gaming challenges, and other hazards get a mention, too, such as the 1783 earthquake that ravaged Calabria, and the subsequent banditry that became a way of life.

This is all covered in a rich and descriptive introduction that takes up the front fifth of the book, but the history and detail is then carried across to the gaming systems. It seems the author has delighted in working these elements into the Unexpected Event tables, the Bestiary, and the different scenarios, and it's great to see historical inspiration adding interesting friction to the gameplay.

You'll deal with challenges presented by sudden weather shifts, impassable roads, marauding brigands, French invaders, Calabrian insurgents, and more in the games you play. There are the more supernatural elements, too; key to *Calabria* is the mysterious Green Mist, which veils the darker magics of necromancers. It obscures visibility and quite dramatically reduces shooting accuracy. Targets more than 7" away are at -1 to hit when the mist blankets the battlefield, and more than 14" away they are at -2. This makes the safer ranged attacks that players tend to use much less appealing, and it doesn't take a tactical genius to see that much of Calabria's combat will be up close and personal.



DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Napoleonic horror
- PRICE: £14.99
- FORMAT: 96-page full colour, large-format, softback book
- AVAILABLE FROM: ospreypublishing.com



Above: Left to right: Grenadier, Sapper, Conscript, Agent Provocateur.



Above: Left to right: Provincial Soldier, Light Infantryman, Irregular, Officer.



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

NEW GAMING CHALLENGES

Calabrian Briganti (bandits) are rooted in the region's history of local resistance and insurgency, and they are one of the four possible Roaming Patrols you'll encounter, along with Deserters, French, and British. How these Patrols interact with you depends on your own faction alignment, but the Briganti, along with Deserters, will always try to hinder your efforts if they join a battle. They will join the game from a random table edge and work as a three-figure group (or five if you're playing Hard Mode), activating with the Monster Action mechanics.

Necromancers join the Halloween party, and they will Raise the Dead if enemy figures are close, or use their Dark Gift if they are further away. This allows undead or the Necromancer to recover health, making for a potentially-unending onslaught of attack. It's another reason for you to get your troops in close: to engage the Necromancer and take them out before their minions overwhelm you.

A BRUTAL BESTIARY

Unfortunately for the soldiers in your Silver Bayonet Unit, who now benefit from getting into melee range, there are a plenty of enemies you'd do well to keep away from. The region-specific horrors are particularly notable, reflecting the rich folklore of Calabria. A Grave Golem is a massive creature, formed from cemetery debris, who has the Large and Hard to Put Down attributes. La Janara (the Nightmare Witch) is an adversary inspired by Italian witch legends, and they can use their *malocchio* (an ability called Curse of the Evil Eye) to impact luck. It allows them to reroll low dice, and forces their enemies to reroll high dice. How frustrating! Wild boar, which are rife in the region, can be inhabited by an angry spirit - and, when they are, become more hardy opponents who are resilient to pain.

Complementing these creatures are some new attributes, such as Brittle, which makes certain undead monsters fragile. Ethereal Firearm is a scary addition that lets some creatures fire spectral weapons without the need to reload. To make matters worse, these unnatural projectiles ignore armour, and if you opt to play in Hard Mode, they even ignore cover! Raise the Dead is a Necromancer essential, letting them summon reinforcements and swamp you with their hordes.

LOCAL SUPPORT

The local beasts aren't all bad news, however. With Quick Healing and Hard to Put Down, the Lupo Mannaro is a resilient Calabrian Werewolf that a Calabresi Unit can enlist for 30 Recruitment Points.

Joining the cast of characters available to you are Agent Provocateurs, Calabrian Clergy, Conscripts, Light Infantry, Provincial Soldiers, and Voltigeurs. These new options are getting some fantastic North Star figures. This is a range that goes from strength to strength, and the Italy options are amongst the nicest yet, with a good mix of characters that will fit very well into any historical army, alongside a club-wielding nun and gun-toting monk (who seems to resemble a well-known miniature painter!).



Above: The horror of the mighty Grave Golem.

ALL ALONE IN CALABRIA?

The main campaign is presented for solo play, although the author includes notes on how to make it competitive. We still like our games to be *mano a mano* at *Wi Towers*, but we do recognise that solo play is becoming more popular (perhaps in part because it's a darn sight easier to playtest), so we're not going to take issue with it. This is a carefully crafted narrative campaign that takes its inspiration from the historical background. The French aim to establish control over Calabria, but must deal with Calabrian bandits, British-backed insurgents, and local superstitions that - what, with this being *The Silver Bayonet* - are far more than simple folklore.

The design of the campaign includes advice on creating a tabletop that reflects Calabria's landscape, encouraging players to include Mediterranean-style architecture, scattered tombstones, and wilderness. There's a foreboding ambiance in the settings of the scenarios, and a lot of Gothic horror, with missions such as rescuing a gravedigger from the dead rising around him. After the campaign proper, which consists of six scenarios, there are also four multiplayer options presented.

Moody black-and-white artwork accentuates the book's tone of horror and gloom, but we do (as always) rather wish that some space would be given to scenic shots of miniatures in action. It's a splendid range of figures, and they deserve their place in this wargaming ruleset's books!

OVERALL

If it wasn't clear from the many details we've crammed into this review, we're impressed with this new expansion for *The Silver Bayonet*. Calabria feels like a character here, described in a way that makes its environment feel as exciting and immersive as it does spooky and oppressive. It's the kind of place in which you'll want to play a good few games, and it might be the most cohesive of the game's locales so far.



Above: Left to right: Clergyman, Champion of the Faith, Irregular, Highwayman.



Above: Left to right: Lupo Mannaro, Officer, Irregular, Occultist.

GREAT ESCAPE GAMES - DEAD MAN'S HAND MOUNTED GUNFIGHTERS

Great Escape Games (GEG) have made some positive forays into plastic production over the last few years, releasing two variety-packed gunfighter sets and some great terrain options, along with a wagon. In the process, they have widened the accessibility of their *Dead Man's Hand* ruleset, and provided affordable options to those wanting to explore the Old West in a broader context. One thing that was missing, however, was the all-important and iconic 'car of the Old West', better known as the horse. With the release of their new set of Mounted Gunfighters, that gap in the range has been filled. Let's take a closer look at how the new frames go together.

Opening the box reveals three of them - bases, riders, and horses - and you get two of each, to make ten figures in total. That makes these an incredible value set at £2.50 for each mounted figure. That's not just rootin' - it's also tootin'!

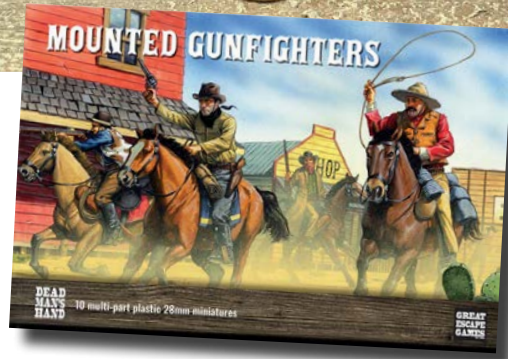
PEERING AT THE PLASTIC

While they aren't the most exciting of the trio, we'll get the base discussion out of the way first. These are neat, slim, oval designs that will stop your figures falling over. They provide simple form and function, which is fancy enough for our needs!



Let's gallop to the frame of riders next; it's notable that they are listed as 'Mounted Gunfighters I', suggesting that, while this set is all male, there could be a double-X-chromosome option to come. The style of the figures, and the layout of parts on the frame, will be familiar to anyone who has built the male Gunfighters on foot. As with the ten-figure plastic Gunfighters set, the frame for the riders is packed with parts.

Riders are split at the waist, and the legs are spread to straddle their mounts, with stirrups around their boots. If you're a *Dead Man's Hand* fan who is already invested in the plastics, you'll notice that a fair few parts here are familiar. Is this a cynical, cost-cutting exercise, wherein reusing existing bits reduces sculpting time? No, this is because the same character from your gang will need to be represented on foot and mounted (below). The crossover of bits means that your riders can dismount during gaming and continue looking like the same character, although you can still vary up their poses a good amount.



While the matching head and body styles is necessary, and there's nice variety with cowboy, bandit, Civil War, more civilian, and weirdo styles included, we would have loved it if GEG had crammed in a hatless head. There's an unworn Stetson on the frame, which is a nice little bonus, but one that makes us hungry for a bare head to go with it. That would have been a well-considered touch that allowed for dynamic builds where the hat is coming off mid-gallop or as the rider is shot in the saddle. Such things may be the picky details you only spot as someone who reviews new plastic figures month in, month out, while being a rather obsessive kitbasher, but it does feel like a slight missed opportunity. Not quite so picky, and a less forgivable feature is that some of the same fit problems from the on-foot frame remain. Some arms sit poorly on most bodies and that's really something that should have been fixed.



Above: Repeated from the Gunfighters on foot frame, this part barely fits on the torsos, and if there are coat-edges flaring out, you can forget about it. It's perhaps a forgivable sign of Great Escape Games' relative newness to plastic production that this hasn't been fixed.

DETAILS

- SCALE: 28mm
- PERIOD: Old West
- PRICE: £25
- FORMAT: Hard plastic
- AVAILABLE FROM: greatestescapegames.co.uk



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

RIDING OUT

The hobby has been blessed by some great and dynamic plastic horses of late (Wargames Atlantic's light horse are a standout), and we're happy to report that the frame of horses included in this set can stand head-to-head with them. Well, maybe not quite head-to-head, as it looks like these mounts are styled to match the American Quarter Horse, favoured by cowboys, and a couple of hands shorter than some others!

The explosive pace of this breed is well represented through some dynamic poses, and the built look is great, especially when the riders are in place. The different halves fit together specifically, and are marked on the frame accordingly.

New duplicate heads from the two frames in this box could be used in conjunction the foot frame, to create new 'twins'. E.g. on the mounted frames you have two 'kepi heads' - so you could create a figure on foot wearing a kepi, and one mounted.

The frame includes water bottles, canteens, bedrolls, blankets, and saddlebags, so your Gunfighters are well set for a long ride. These extras will add character and narrative elements to your builds, and the quality of the horses makes for a wonderful group of mounted figures.

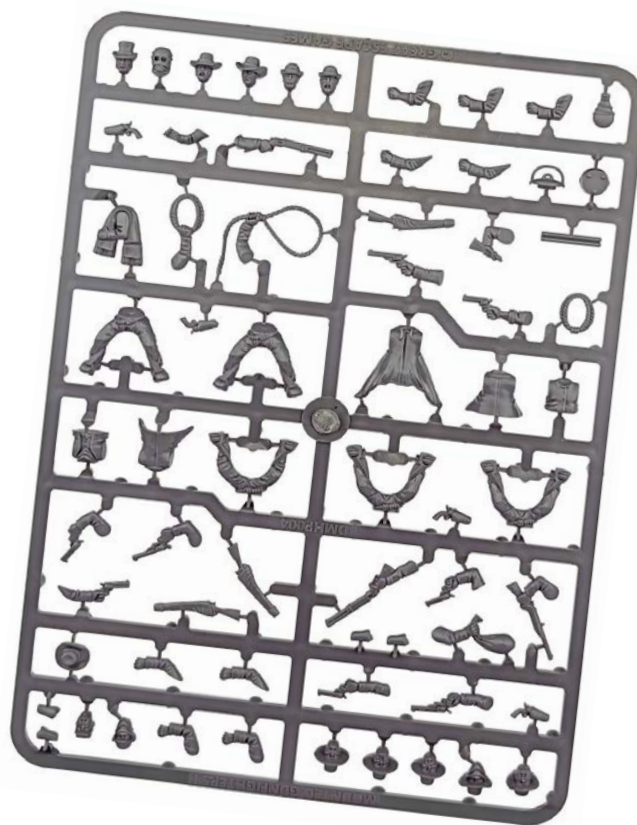


Above: This menacingly-odd bandit has his worldly possessions slung over his horse's saddle behind him.

Getting a big gold star for GEG, though, is the number of arm options, which boasts impressive variety and versatility. The same weapon loadouts are present here as in the Gunfighters on foot, but arms gripping at the reins, carrying bags, and roping from the saddle are included, too. This makes for some fantastic-looking builds, and to say this set is everything you could wish for from a cowboy in the saddle is... well, it's wrong, because we know that wargamers are perpetually and insatiably greedy for more, but it's certainly a great offering! There's nothing stopping you from putting some of these arms, such as the one swinging a lasso, onto a figure on foot either, making for even more variety.

Production quality is great, and these are hard-plastic casts at their finest, with well-represented details, sharp edges, and very little clean-up needed. There have been some weird scaling issues on a few parts in previous GEG sets (huge Sheriff's badges and a scarily massive cat), but here everything seems right.

Overall, this is a brilliant set, and, while we're impressed by its quality and variety, it is its value that really can't be overstated. There's never been an easier way to build a posse of riders with this amount of variety for such a great price.



We couldn't fit all the great new stuff we got into this month's magazine. **WiPrime Members** can head to our website to see what we thought of the rest, including some new Gringo40s Texas Rangers.



FOUNDRY PAINT SYSTEM

20ml non toxic water based acrylic paint suitable for painting metals, plastics, resin, canvas, murals etc.

1A	1B	1C	17A	17B	17C	33A	33B	33C	54A	54B	54C
LEMON			WINE STAIN RED			ARCTIC GREY			CONKER BROWN		
2A	2B	2C	18A	18B	18C	34A	34B	34C	55A	55B	55C
YELLOW			SHADOW PINK			CHARCOAL BLACK			BUTTER FUDGE		
3A	3B	3C	19A	19B	19C	35A	35B	35C	56A	56B	56C
ORANGE			ROYAL PURPLE			CHAINMAIL	ARMOUR	SPEARPOINT	PALOMINO		
4A	4B	4C	20A	20B	20C	36A	36B	36C	57A	57B	57C
OCHRE			DEEP BLUE			BRAZEN	GOLD	SHINY	STONE		
5A	5B	5C	21A	21B	21C	37A	37B	37C	58A	58B	58C
FLESH			SKY BLUE			TERRACOTTA			DEEP MAUVE		
6A	6B	6C	22A	22B	22C	38A	38B	38C	60A	60B	60C
DUSKY FLESH			VIVID BLUE			SCARLET			MADDER RED		
7A	7B	7C	23A	23B	23C	39A	39B	39C	61A	61B	61C
BUFF LEATHER			TOMB BLUE			STORM BLUE			PEATY BROWN		
8A	8B	8C	24A	24B	24C	40A	40B	40C	62A	62B	62C
CANVAS			TEAL BLUE			VIOLET			NIGHT SKY		
9A	9B	9C	25A	25B	25C	41A	41B	41C	63A	63B	63C
BONE YARD			BRIGHT GREEN			BRIGHT BOTTLE GREEN			QUAGMIRE		
10A	10B	10C	26A	26B	26C	42A	42B	42C	64A	64B	64C
BASE SAND			FOREST GREEN			BAY BROWN			DEEP MAROON		
11A	11B	11C	27A	27B	27C	43A	43B	43C	65A	65B	65C
RAWHIDE			STORM GREEN			BURNISHED COPPER			FRENCH BLUE		
12A	12B	12C	28A	28B	28C	44A	44B	44C	66A	66B	66C
DRAB			PHLEGM GREEN			BURNING GOLD			PRUSSIAN BLUE		
13A	13B	13C	29A	29B	29C	45A	45B	45C	67A	67B	67C
SPEARSHAFT			MOSS			DEEP BROWN LEATHER			AUSTRIAN WHITE		
14A	14B	14C	30A	30B	30C	46A	46B	46C	68A	68B	68C
TAN			RAW LINEN			CADAVEROUS GREEN			BRITISH REDCOAT		
15A	15B	15C	31A	31B	31C	47A	47B	47C	69A	69B	69C
BRIGHT RED			GRANITE			COPPER WASH	BROWN WASH	BLACK WASH	RUSSIAN GREEN		
16A	16B	16C	32A	32B	32C	53A	53B	53C	70A	70B	70C
NIPPLE PINK			SLATE GREY			CHESTNUT			FRENCH DRAGOON GREEN		



The Foundry painting method involves using three shades of each colour; building up in layers from dark to light to achieve a shaded three-dimensional effect. The three layers of colour give greater depth and subtlety to your work, enabling you to produce very fine, high quality models that will grace any

model soldier collection. We've arranged the colours in to sets of three, each providing a main colour teamed up with the shade and highlight that we would choose to use ourselves. We have over 350 different shades to choose from arranged in matching sets of three.

A more comprehensive description of how to use our paint system can be found in the Foundry Painting & Modeling Guide by Kevin Dallimore. Visit our website for thousands of Historical, Fantasy & Science Fiction models, painting guides, brush sets, military history books and more.





RELEASE RADAR

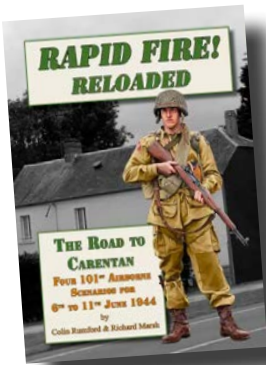
Dom Sore celebrates our current wargaming golden age with more new and upcoming releases.

SUCCINCT SUPPLEMENTS AND NEW RULES

BelloLudi (belloludi.nl) have released a new book to join their increasingly expansive range: *BelloLudi Kalashnikov*. Set at the skirmish level - 25 to 30 figures each - the book covers conflicts from 1970 to the present day, and beyond. Each player controls a few units that activate alternately with their opponents, and friction is provided by the BelloLudi Commander Dice, a special D20 that contains five values: B, 0, 1, 2, and 3, which determines the number of orders a unit receives in a turn, whether some weapons hit, and if units rally. Shooting and hand-to-hand combat are simple to follow, and stats for troops and weapons are generic enough that you could use them for lo-fi futuristic games, as well as modern recreations. The rules come as a PDF for just shy of 10€, but a printed version is available at twice that price. Other than the BelloLudi Commander Dice, all you will need to play are figures. If you haven't played any historical games, or perhaps want to introduce a friend to wargaming, this is a reasonably cheap and easy-to-understand way to dip your (or their) toes into the water.



New games come out frequently, new products even more frequently, and older games get additions, or new editions! The democratisation of the gaming space, through home production options, is allowing creative minds to make their own rules and figures, and put them out there, too. I am enjoying seeing what is new, and this month's releases are just in time for Christmas!



Rapid Fire (rapid-fire-uk.com) continues to be blessed with a steady stream of extras, this time in the form of *The Road to Carentan*. Across its great-looking 36 pages are scenarios featuring the US 101st Airborne Division, as they progress from D-Day to the capture of Carentan. Rather than the usual organised rosters that players will be used to, the Americans make rather random and hastily-assembled formations after their parachute- and glider-drops. The main adversaries of the 101st are the 6th Fallschirmjäger Regiment, and, in addition to details of force-assembly and the scenarios, the book also includes vehicle and gun details, as well as gaming info on reducing an Intact building to a ruin.

Bronze Shield, Silver Coin is a new Ancient-period wargame from Raymond Weilacher (wargamevault.com) that weighs in at 80 digital pages, and is a very well-presented ruleset with neat design and some good miniature photography. Beyond looking good, it presents a miniature-agnostic ruleset for skirmish gaming, with about 10 models in each mercenary warband on the tabletop. Gaming is built around campaign play, and an Intrigue system that brings bribery, treachery, and surprises to play has me... well, intrigued! As well as rules, background, abilities, and profiles, there are eight scenarios. This could be a great introduction to the Ancient wargaming period, or a fantastic pick-up game at your club, using just a smattering of figures from your existing miniature collection.



No.	Ability Name	Notes
1	Chain-Attack	Once per turn, when this character defeats an opponent in a fight, they can immediately move that attack to another opponent and start Make a Run!
2	Defensive	This character never suffers a status loss due to damage.
3	Dueling	When this character is in combat, with only one opponent, they may roll the dice to Quality and not any other.
4	Engaging	Whenever this character defeats an opponent in a fight, for the remainder of the game, until the start of the next turn, they may roll the dice to Quality and not any other.
5	Intimidating	Whenever this character is in a fight with this character, the enemy must roll a Fight Quality test. If they fail, the enemy must retreat and their activation ends.
6	Mercenary Talent	At the start of each Campaign phase, when an enemy has Quality and/or Fight Quality tests, this character may roll the dice to Quality and not any other.
7	On Strength	Once per turn, when this character fights, they may roll the dice to Quality.
8	Philanthropy	Capitulate only once per a Campaign round, as opposed to the opponent's longest turn. If this character is in the combat, and a single Quality test is required, they may roll the dice to Quality and not any other.
9	Sharp-Eyed	This character can see and identify their opponent's quality test.
10	Tough	The first time this unit would be defeated, and their quality test, they may roll the dice to Quality and not any other. This unit may roll the dice to Quality and not any other.

ODDITIES LARGE AND SMALL

I like an unusual figure or two, even when I don't have a game to use them in, and this month I've spotted some excellent examples that are burning a hole in my wallet. The new Gnome Henge, from Antediluvian Miniatures (antediluvianminiatures.com), is set to scorch my credit card with its characterful sculpts. You may think of gnomes as small creatures but, judging by the henge shown, these curious creatures were bigger than we thought. Either that, or these druids have confused their inches for feet when drawing up plans for their stage decoration! While clearly aimed at fantasy gamers, or fans of comedy classic *Spinal Tap*, their clothes have enough 'generic medieval' styling that I may be able to sneak them into historical armies as a little vignette.



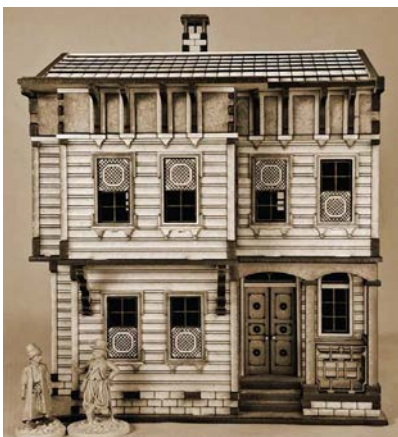
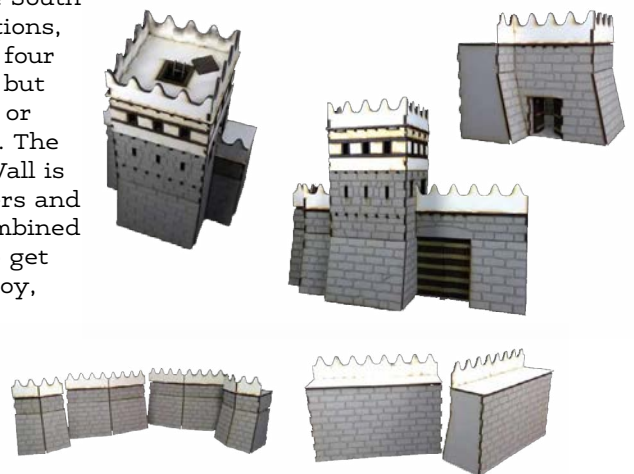
Above: Gnome Henge.

Even more out-there are the new Martians from Miniatures 4 U (etsy.com/uk/shop/Miniatures4uGB). Many of us in the UK of a certain age will see these and instantly want some mashed potato. If you know you know, and you might also hear the sound of a special - some would say maniacal - kind of laughter; sadly, print media doesn't lend itself to representing that faithfully. There is a full set of figures here to make an interesting sci fi force for the game of your choice: *Stargrave*, *Five Parsecs from Home: Tactics*, *Beyond the Gates of Antares*, *In Her Majesty's Name*, and *Grimdark* worlds come to mind. These are sold as 3D-prints, coming as multi-part figures, so you will be able to mix and match bits between some of the sets to create your own unique fighting force. These figures are possibly my favorite release of the year simply for the smile they have put on my face. My main problems to work out are what colour to paint them (metallic purple?) and how to base them. If you fondly remember classic UK adverts, you should certainly get yourself some of these 'Smash'ing minis.



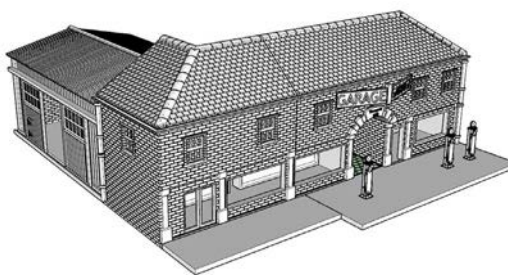
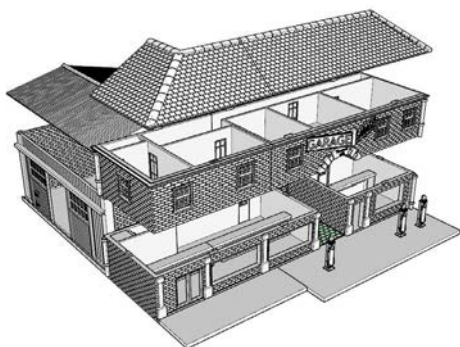
BUILDINGS THROUGH TIME

Supreme Littleness Designs (shop.supremelittleness.co.uk) have two new releases that clash somewhat with their company name, in that they're rather large pieces of terrain. First, it's the Walls of Troy (seen right), which consists of five kits: the South Gate and Tower, East Tower, East Gate, Straight Wall sections, and Angled Wall sections. The Angled Wall set comprises four parts that form a 90-degree corner when added together but these can be used separately to create a shallower angle, or combined with other sets to make a more extreme corner. The walls come in at around 14cm in height, and the Angled Wall is 53cm long, while the Straight Wall is 36cm long. The towers and gates are all different, with the South Gate and Tower combined in one piece, and all have removable parts to allow you to get inside. They will get you started on building your own Troy, but I wonder, is there a wooden horse kit coming along?



Their other new item is an Ottoman Wooden House (seen left). It wasn't until I saw this that I realised just how rarely products like this come along. It depicts a common Ottoman style of wooden house found in Istanbul until quite recently. The structure comes with excellent external detail that will lend itself to reproducing the riot of colour that I associate with Istanbul. You can choose to go with a plain-wood alternative for the door, rather than the more ornate option, and the shallow sloping roof means it will fit in well with pretty much any South European buildings.

Bringing buildings closer to the present day are MarDav Miniatures, who are building a 1940s Town (mdminis.co.uk) that will be 3D-printed to their usual high standard. Their range includes a Bank, Department Store, House, Pub, Roadblock, and Garage. If you are wondering what kind of detail you will get, the Garage comes with three Avery Hardoll 888 pumps, the Department Store has a rooftop fire-watcher's post, and the House has a walled yard attached, with a brick pillbox hiding in the wall. It looks like my dream WWII table may become a reality without too much effort on my part!



CAVALRY AND CIVILIANS

The Assault Group (theassaultgroup.co.uk) have released some new Dutch and Spanish Cavalry for your late 16th Century armies. Both armies get six new 28mm metal figures. The Spanish are Gente d'Armes, and there are three with lances levelled, and three with lances raised. I suggest putting the levelled lances at the front, unless you are good at positioning figures, or use spacious bases for your units! They get half-armoured horses that match with other figures in the range to give you more options. The Dutch are Cuirassiers armed with swords and pistols, and their pistols come raised or levelled. To go with these, you have Maurice of Nassau, in his pre-Prince of Orange stint, who comes with a pair of friends to round out a command group.



If you like cavalry, and the 17th Century, then keep your eye on Hetman Miniatures (hetman-miniatures.com), a newcomer to the wargames scene that is getting ready to launch a new range of Polish figures. So far, we have seen various cavalry, including dragoons and the anthemic Winged Hussars. These will initially be white-metal figures, but there are rumours of possible digital offerings down the line. It is an exciting range coming to the market, and I can't wait to see more of them.



After the horses come the civilians, and we start with Athena Miniatures' new 28mm Wars of the Roses civilians (athenaminiatures.co.uk). There are four new sets of civilians: beggars, blacksmith, stocks, and archers. Archers may not sound like civilians, but these are practising at the butts, and you get two targets with four archers. You could easily use these in your army as actual archers, but I like the vignette possibilities. There's a lot of character here, and these are the kinds of figures you can use to break up painting your regiments and units. Combine them all in one excellent base camp scene to add sparkle to your battlefield, or scatter them around the tabletop to breathe life into your representation of the past.



You wait for one set of civilians, and two come along at once! This time it's a 28mm Napoleonic Armed Mob from Eureka Miniatures (eurekaminuk.com), so they're not exactly of a pacifist mindset. There are currently three Mob packs available, containing 8 or 11 figures, armed with a variety of improvised weapons, muskets or pikes. They are perfect for adding a bit of unruliness to your French army to keep the nobles in line. Vive la révolution!



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

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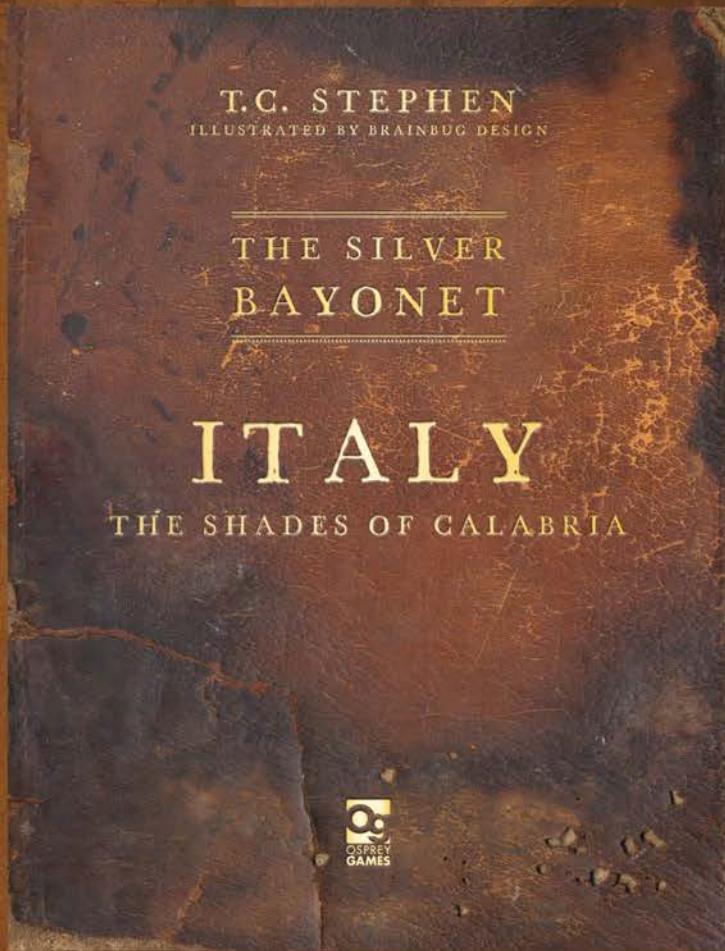
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QUICK FIRE!

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

NEVER MIND THE SALTPETRE!

By Steve Wood

As *Billhooks* continues to expand; with the game now stretching into the Pike and Shot era via *Never Mind the Matchlocks*, it raises the question: how far can the rules be pushed? I have seen discussions as to whether a Napoleonic version could be produced, which got me wondering if it could be an opportunity to get my Napoleonic collection back onto the table.

As a longtime fan of *Black Powder*, my first instinct was to persuade my gaming buddies that we should get our Napoleonic forces out again and go back to those rules. After a couple of games, it seemed that something was missing. The I-go-U-go rules procedure for *Black Powder* meant that one side was doing all the 'playing', while the other side sat there, waiting for the inevitable onslaught. The back-and-forth nature of the game wasn't quite as much fun as the random activation we were used to with *Billhooks*.

It became clear to me that there was no need to rewrite the basic rules. I could introduce random activation to the game, making cards for the brigade commanders, and use these to initiate orders, activating movement and firing for each brigade. As the cards would activate the commanders from both sides in a random sequence, there would be no 'turn' as such, just a continuous battle, with both players permanently engaged.

Surely, it couldn't be that simple. There was only one way to find out... Fight!

First, though, I needed to make up some cards. I used a deck of blank playing cards to create a card for each Brigadier and added in cards for the cavalry commanders and marauders, to ensure that these were activated under their own command. Finally, I decided to add a separate card for each Army Commander. We often forgot to move our general in the game, so this would prompt the players to do so, allowing them the opportunity to benefit from the general's ability to reroll a failed order.

It became easy to give the brigadiers the 'traits' that are available in the *Black Powder* rules. In the past, we had tried to add this mechanism, but had invariably forgotten to use the traits in the heat of the battle. By adding a *précised* version to the appropriate Brigadier's card, we were prompted to check the effect of the trait whenever his card was played. We may extend this to cover other areas, particularly for specific units, such as British Heavy Cavalry or French Lancers, both of which have their own special rules.

In *Billhooks* the last card is not played - we chose that all brigades had the chance to be activated, even the last, as there is already a risk of a brigade failing its orders in the game.



Above: Sample activation cards.



Above: Battle for the hill - will the French get to charge?

HOW DID IT PLAY?

For our test battles, we used four players (two on each side) commanding three infantry brigades (including guns) and two cavalry brigades (one heavy and one light). As we were playing on a smaller 6' x 4' table, we reduced movement and shooting ranges to 66% of the usual distances and used half-sized units.

There can be an issue representing formations with just twelve figures, particularly if they are in movement trays. Line and march column are straightforward enough, but squares and attack columns need a bit of imagination. We used markers or a couple of skirmishers to denote these.

The turn sequence was as follows:

- Flip over brigade card to activate brigade
- Issue orders - roll to see if successful
- Move/Rally/Attack as per standard rules
- Fire at any available target, as per standard rules, and apply effects
- Resolve combats/melee as per standard rules
- Complete brigade activation by removing any disorders that were placed on the unit in the previous turn (i.e. the unit started it's turn with this marker)
- Flip over next brigade card.



Above: Battle rages and the order of random activation starts to have real impact.



Above: The French and British wings square off.

We fought ongoing melees whenever any of the engaged unit's brigade cards were turned, just as you would in the standard rules.

Once we got into the rhythm of the new system it worked brilliantly, bringing the excitement and uncertainty that we enjoy. It made for a quick-to-play game with plenty of added drama; thanks to the random activation of the brigades, you could never be quite sure that your plan was going to be carried out by the troops, let alone in the sequence that you hoped for!

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

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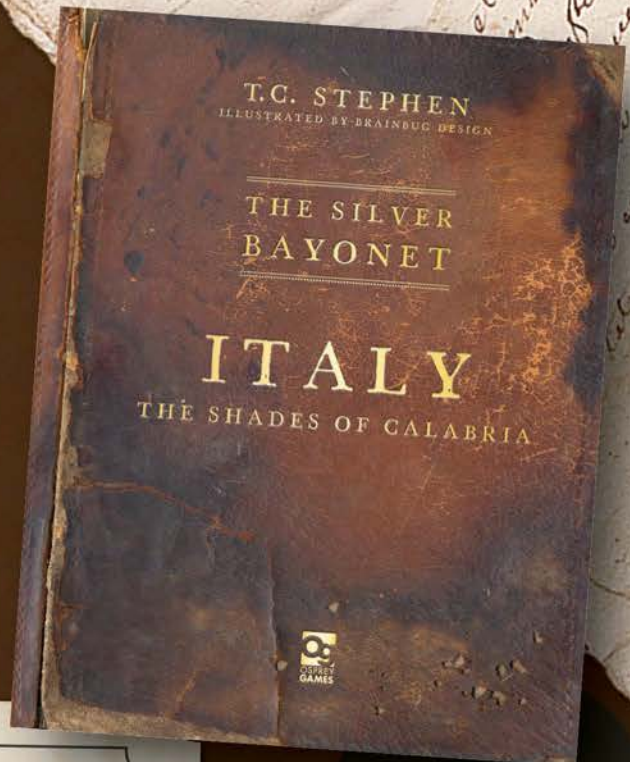
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THE SILVER BAYONET

ITALY

THE SHADES OF CALABRIA

*A Wargame of
Napoleonic Gothic Horror*



**OUT
NOW**

Something sinister has risen in Calabria, the hauntingly beautiful yet dangerous province of southern Italy. Still recovering from the destructive earthquake that killed tens of thousands of people, the region's clergy preach a crusade against Republican France and its allies. Meanwhile, rumors spread that the dead no longer rest easy, but rise from their graves to wander isolated valleys and mountain paths...

Amid the chaos, you will encounter enemies both mortal and monstrous, including a variety of undead... and those who command them. A solo/cooperative campaign and competitive scenarios will challenge your troops, so recruit new soldiers and steel your nerve to face the many perils of mysterious Calabria.

Written by T.C Stephen
Illustrated by Brainbug Design

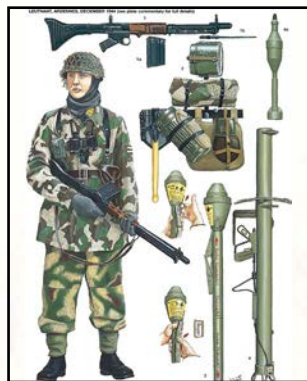


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WINTER FALLSCHIRMJÄGER DIORAMA



In celebration of the fantastic freebie frame that's included with this issue, we tasked Matt Parkes with building a diorama connected to our Winter War theme. He explains the inspiration, construction work, painting, and the winter effects he added.



The main inspiration for this scene came from a colourised photograph of a repurposed Sherman Tank, which was captured from the Allies by the 5th Fallschirmjäger Division near Wiltz, Luxemburg in December 1944, and ended the war parked outside the Hotel Des Ardennes (seen above left). This issue's cover art, which was in turn inspired by the photograph of Fallschirmjäger fighting around a wrecked Sherman (above right), also provided inspiration. I used online material, along with various Osprey books, for uniform guides and other colour references (above center; illustration from Osprey WAR 38 Fallschirmjäger German Paratrooper 1935 - 45), although when we showed the diorama to various World War Two luminaries, like all wargamers, they found several points of contention with my colour choices, as I'm sure many of our readers will! The final scene works overall, and it tells a story, which I think is the most important thing.

ELEVATING THE SHERMAN...

...IN HEIGHT

When constructing a diorama, it is vital to get the narrative across straight away, so the position of the individual elements is very important. The captured Sherman is the inspiration for this scene, and, though the Fallschirmjäger are the human interest and the real narrative focus, I wanted to place the tank front and centre so it got some attention, too. I elevated it, which made it look more dynamic, moving over the ground as the troops take cover behind it. This adds drama, giving the impression they are taking fire and using the tank as protection during their advance.

Realistic ground can be constructed with various materials, but I've used dry bark to edge the slab of high-density polystyrene that makes up the core of the platform. Bark chips like this have a texture that makes for surprisingly realistic rock effects. It's not so obvious when they are unpainted, as you can see in the early photos over the page, but once gaps are filled and dried out, an application of basic drybrushing, washing, and weathering pigment changes their look completely!

...WITH PAINT

Painting the tank required the application of multiple layers of detail. It was an Allied vehicle originally, and I've made sure to leave traces that show its former role. The Allied five-pointed star insignia is still visible on close inspection, even though it is obscured by the repaint the Germans have applied.

This effect was achieved by painting the tank 'as it should be' at first. Once I was satisfied with its 'pure' form, I added the thinned German paint job over the top progressively, wiping much of the paint off, waiting for it to dry, then going again. This left a covering that was nicely faded. Once that had dried, I added the Iron Cross over the top with bolder, more saturated paint. I figured they'd have wanted that key detail to really stand out! The 47 was also faded out (to give the painted-over effect) in the same way, remaining visible as a nod to the tank's origins.



FRAME
FOCUS



Above: The tank with its original coat of paint.



Above: Ghost marking revealing the tank's previous owners.

As an intriguing aside, sometimes the original crew in the armoured units would paint out the star, or add a ring around it, for fear that it looked too much like the Germans' cross from a distance, and would draw friendly fire!

Compared to the historical photo of the tank, my miniature version of the repurposed Sherman is rather desaturated. This is in part an artistic choice, and it fits the winter theme, too. By restricting the paints to less bold choices, the tank appears more neutral, and 'fades out' somewhat. This allows the large vehicle, which would normally be the obvious focal point, to become more of a framing element, with the more saturated Fallschirmjäger standing out against it. This ensures that the eye is drawn to the action!

The greyer colouration also enhances the cold feeling of the scene, making the tank look like it is dusted with snow and frost.

It's worth carefully considering details like this. You can use warm and cool colours, along with saturated and desaturated paints, to convey a lot of atmosphere to the viewer, and draw their focus to key areas.

BARKITECTURE - BUILDING BETTER PHOTO SETUPS

James: Matt's use of bark to make rock texture gives me the opportunity to sing its praises, too. It is, indeed, perfect for such basing applications, and I've built plinths for single miniatures with it, along with some cliffs for gaming tables.

I want to talk about an alternate application, though. At *Wi*, we use bark pieces frequently when we're doing our big, scenic miniature shots. We have a large tub of painted pieces of bark, drybrushed quite simply, to look like grey rock or sandy stone, and we regularly add these bits to tabletops before we snap photos. The bark has countless applications, from breaking up the otherwise repetitive groundwork of a gaming mat, to covering seams between boards, elevating elements, blending backdrops, and even creating whole cliff areas and other terrain features.

Now that you know about our penchant for bark, you'll see it everywhere in our photos. Perhaps I shouldn't have revealed the trade secret!



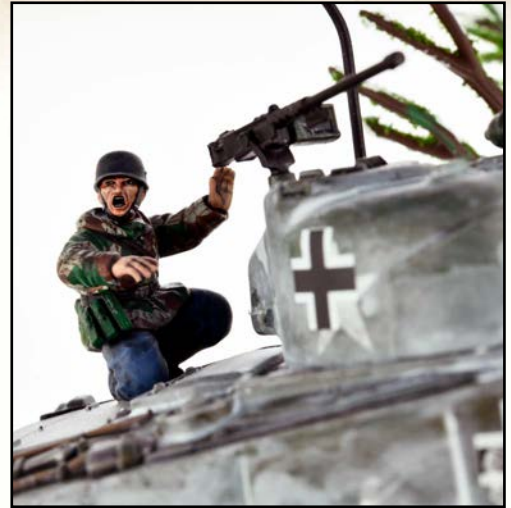
SETTING UP THE SOLDIERS

CONSIDERED CONVERSIONS

The soldier on the tank hull (seen right) has been converted so that he no longer has a weapon in his hands, as he is reaching for the .50 calibre machine gun instead. I like to make a story around the characters on my dioramas, and I decided that he's not overly familiar with the big gun, so he is shouting at his comrades to hurry up and assist him. I chose the open mouth head to represent him yelling for help; I think it shows the right level of tension, as I certainly wouldn't want to be up there taking fire!

SHOWING THE COLD

The setting for my diorama, The Battle of the Bulge, was fought in very cold winter weather, using subpar equipment and weapons, especially as the German advance pushed so far ahead. With that in mind, these guys look cold, with red faces and wrapped-up heads. I decided to include some smokes, even if it might seem a little unlikely that they'd be puffing on a cigarette as they took fire. This is, perhaps, a reflection of my own mindset. If I was in this kind of battlefield situation, I would be smoking, as it might be my last, and I'd want what few pleasures I could get!



MUDDLED KIT

One of the men (seen below) wears a helmet that is far better suited to desert combat than the cold of the Ardennes Offensive, but this isn't an error on my part. The kit to which the Germans had access during the Battle of the Bulge was quite a hodgepodge, and I wanted to represent this on a figure. The Warlord frame has a ton of parts available, and you'll be spoiled for choice when you build your own troops, whatever theatre you decide to put them into.



WARPLESS WINTER

When building larger scenes on simple plastic bases, there's always the chance that they will warp and tug up at the edges. This often happens as things dry, and it is something to avoid. In the early construction I clipped the groundwork I was building to a mirror (you can use anything that's smooth and flat), which ensured that it stayed perfectly flat on the secure surface while the glue and groundwork paste were drying. If I had fixed it to the base from the start, there was a chance it would have curled up as the drying process 'pulled' at it. I left the groundwork clipped to the mirror for a few days, ensuring everything was perfectly dry and looking good before carefully removing it and sticking it onto the plastic base.



WARRING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Applying snow, slush, and mud is quite a forgiving and relaxing process compared to the detailed nuance required in a lot of miniature painting. The products you add can cover up quite a lot of your original basing sins, but the real trick is not to overdo it, so it is worth ensuring the initial basing detail is good.

I like to consider the different ways that the elements would sit on the surfaces and react to the movement of men and vehicles, enhancing the realism and telling little stories where possible with tracks and prints. As Paul Mackay has already shared a lot of wisdom on his winter-basing techniques, I'll not bore you by repeating many of his suggestions!



Above: I bent a stock model railway tree into shape for the scene, as I wanted it to hang over the tank. This creates a sense that the Sherman is powering through the undergrowth, and it frames the diorama quite nicely.

OTHER SETTINGS

Now that you know how I approached my scene, why not try making your own Fallschirmjäger diorama with your free frame? You have a lot of winter environments and countries to choose from for your terrain. The Fallschirmjäger:

- were involved in the invasion of Norway, where they helped secure Norway's ports and airfields
- battled through the Low Countries, launching daring airborne operations, and (notably) taking the Belgian fort of Eben-Emael
- fought as ground troops on the Eastern Front
- fought in the Ardennes Offensive (Battle of the Bulge), as I've represented
- were part of Germany's final defence on Western and Eastern Fronts, including the defence of Berlin.

If you make a diorama, please send photos and some text to our Quick Fire section [see page 22 - Ed], as we love to see what our readers get up to.



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INSIDE THE WHITE CASTLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES SHARP OF OSHIRO MODEL TERRAIN

In *Wi440* we featured the unveiling of the massive Gradara tabletop in northern Italy. The Master Model Maker behind the Gradara Project was James Sharp of Oshiro Model Terrain. We caught up with James to ask him about all things Oshiro, beginning with the most obvious...

Wargames Illustrated: Let's start at the very beginning. What does Oshiro mean?

James Sharp: One of two things; either white, or castle. Because I have always been interested in Japanese castles, it seemed like an appropriate name to use for my company.

Wi: Is the connection between you and Japan born from an interest in Japanese buildings and architecture?

JS: Well, my wife is Japanese, so that helps, but my love for all things Japanese actually pre-dates me meeting her. Two things stick in my mind as big influences; when I was very young, my dad introduced me to the film *Red Sun*, starring Charles Bronson, Toshirō Mifune, and Ursula Andress. It's about a samurai who travels to the 'wild west'. It was the first time I had seen a samurai, in any context, and I was fascinated; I wanted to learn more about who he was and where he came from. The other inspiring moment is watching a documentary about the construction of medieval Japanese castles. That really got me interested in the architectural aspect of the Japanese built environment.

Wi: Am I right in saying your professional background is in architectural design?

JS: Architectural model-making, specifically. Originally, I wanted to be an architect, but then 'fell' into architectural model-making as a career. I was wargaming as a hobby throughout this time, and somewhere along the way, the two got interconnected.

Wi: When did that interconnection happen?

JS: I started Oshiro as a part-time operation in 2007, just doing things for friends to begin with. This is how I gradually built my Japanese model catalogue, which I have constantly expanded over the years. Finally, in 2018, I was able to go full-time with Oshiro.



Left: *Red Sun* (1971) poster.



Wi: And what is the extent of your catalogue now?

JS: I was all about 28mm Japan until I went full-time. I just felt there wasn't much out there for this fascinating part of the world and wargaming period. Since Oshiro became a full-time outfit, I have added Chinese, Victorian (and Victorian science-fiction), medieval, Middle-Eastern, and sci-fi terrain, as well as movement trays and counters.

My main focus at the moment is expanding on the half-dozen medieval buildings I currently produce. The chapel might just be out by the time this interview is printed, and I will be producing several packs of 'set-dressing', or scatter, similar to what I do for the Japanese range: signposts, barrels, market goods, wood piles, etc.



Above: Oshiro Medieval buildings.

Wi: Your buildings are all produced in resin, right?

JS: Yes, two-part epoxy resin. Obviously there has been a massive expansion - and improvement - in wargaming MDF kits in recent years, but I still prefer the organic - and, frankly, more realistic - look of resin. To my eyes, MDF is just a flat surface.

Wi: And how do you begin the creation of the models?

JS: The masters are made by hand. I like working in mounting card - the sort used in picture frames - 1.5mm thick. Some of the smaller items are designed on computer



Above: James hold a master Mediterranean roof.

and 3D-printed but I prefer making masters by hand, unless it's uneconomically time consuming. That's how I began my architectural work: making everything by hand.

Wi: Are you still doing some architectural work?

JS: A bit; I still like to keep my hand in, and it pays much better that the wargaming work!



Above: James with some of his models.

Wi: As well as your catalogue of off-the-shelf items, you also take commissions, making bespoke models, like the Gradara display you created.

JS: Yes. Within the hobby, I've never taken on anything as big as the Gradara project before. Architecturally, I worked on a model of the Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest skyscraper, located in Dubai), which is in the gift shop of the Dubai Mall. That was three meters high, made of layered acrylic and aluminium, with lights on the inside (the Emiratis love their bling!). I didn't work alone; it took a team of six of us, working for a couple of months, to complete it. Wargaming-wise, most of my commissions tend to be a foot square and self-contained buildings, or a cluster of buildings, that often form the centrepiece of a large tabletop (see over page).



Above: James with the Burj Khalifa model.

Wi: Thank you for this fascinating insight into Oshiro. Lets end with the ubiquitous "what's next?" question.



Above: The Gradara Town - a massive Oshiro project.

OSHIRO IN NOTTS

In July 2024, after meeting up with James in Gradara, *Wi* editor Dan played in Alan Perry's 'Gradara Reunion' game, *Return of the Princess*, in Alan's wargames room. You can read all about the game on the Perry Miniatures Facebook page, and in a recent Editor's Exploits, via the *Wargames Illustrated* website if you're a *WiPrime* Member. Here are a few photos of the smashing Oshiro terrain that featured on the tabletop that day



JS: As well as the medieval stuff I've already mentioned, the Gradara Project has led me into designing a range of Mediterranean/Italian buildings. I will start releasing those by the end of the year, and there are more on the way. Keep an eye on my website: oshiromodels.co.uk



Above: A couple of typical Oshiro commission builds.

MIDGARD

HEROIC BATTLES

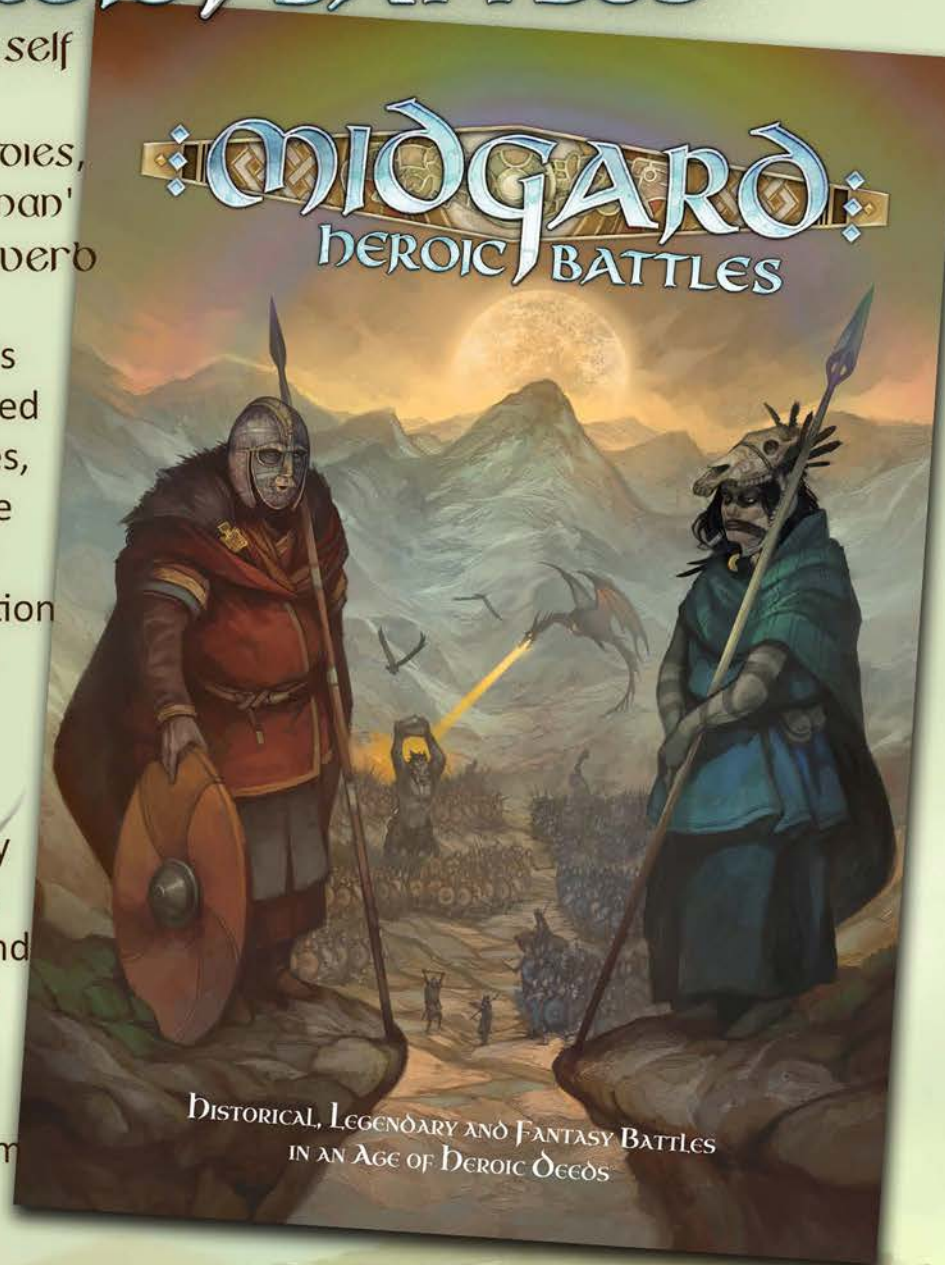
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The Ice Fortress



Frank Becker, who will present an impressive Napoleonic game at TACTICA 2025, gives us a pre-event preview, along with a taste of the historical context, in a dispatch from northern Germany.

In 1813 and 1814, the river island of Wilhelmsburg, just south of modern-day Hamburg's city center, became a site of fierce clashes between French and Allied forces. The very spot where the Wilhelmsburg community center stands, and where the annual Hamburg TACTICA event takes place, was the site of the great military road linking Hamburg and Harburg, which witnessed critical moments in the 'French Times' (1806-1814) - an era that left an enduring mark on Wilhelmsburg and much of northern Germany.

The battles fought in northern Germany during the Napoleonic Wars may be seen as a lesser chapter in the grand events of the time, but their history is certainly not dull. Rich with drama and diversity, these conflicts are the inspiration for the TACTICA 2025 theme-room dedicated to this short - yet captivating - period.

One highlight of the room will be the The Ice Fortress, a gripping recreation of the Battle of Wilhelmsburg that took place on 9 February 1814. The game will be played with the *Valor & Fortitude* rules, and this immersive event will be led by none other than Alan and Michael Perry, along with Jervis Johnson, the rulebook's author.

As a teaser to the main event, and perfectly tied to this issue's Winter War theme, I have penned a brief history of the period and jotted down some details of the crafting of the terrain and armies so far, as final preparations for the show are made.

WILL HAMBURG HOLD OUT?

At the dawn of 1814, Hamburg stood as one of the last French strongholds in Germany. While Napoleon fought desperately against the Allies in France during his Winter Campaign, Marshal Davout was locked in a fierce struggle to defend Hamburg from Russian besiegers, led by General Benningsen. In early February, the Russians launched several assaults on the strategic island of Wilhelmsburg, the key connection between Hamburg and Harburg, aiming to sever the connection between these two fortresses, but Napoleon had anticipated this threat. He had ordered the fortification of Hamburg and Harburg, as well as the construction of a vital military road between the cities.



Above: Jouselin, inspector of the Ponts et Chaussées, supervises the repair of the bridge (Perry Miniatures).



Each end of this critical route - at the North and South Elbe - was fortified. The ferry terminals themselves were transformed into small fortresses, and two blockhouses made of heavy oak planks stood guard at both ends. These structures served as lookout towers, barracks for soldiers, and shelters for ferrymen; they reinforced the lifeline that kept Hamburg and Harburg connected during the final, grueling months of the Napoleonic Wars.

The armies involved

At the outset of the siege of Hamburg, the French forces were formidable with 42,000 soldiers, 7,500 horses, 76 mounted field guns, and 350 fortress cannons defending the city. By February 1814, when the battles for Wilhelmsburg erupted, the numbers had drastically dwindled, and only about 18,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalymen remained to defend Hamburg and Harburg. The Allied siege army - 20,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry - strategically redistributed its forces around the city, tightening the noose.

The Russian army, led by General Benningsen, completed the encirclement of Hamburg on Christmas Eve 1813. In the weeks that followed, skirmishes and larger clashes broke out regularly, with the fiercest fighting concentrated in the southern approaches to Hamburg. By late January, the weather took a brutal turn; a deep freeze locked the Elbe and surrounding rivers in ice, allowing Benningsen to launch a coordinated large-scale attack. He launched assaults on multiple fronts to push the French back into their inner defensive lines.



Above: General Osten gathers his troops (Perry Miniatures).



Left: Marshal Davout and his staff (Perry Miniatures and Tactica Miniature).

TACKLING THE TABLETOP

The landscape and the buildings have all been made and/or painted by me. The farm buildings are 3D printed and come from 3D Print Terrain. Jens Najewitz designed the buildings and many others on the theme of the Napoleonic Wars in Northern Germany, such as city gates, guard houses, city buildings, ships, etc., especially for this project and the TACTICA theme room. The city buildings are model railway buildings that I reworked and repainted, and all buildings are between 23mm and 25mm scale, which still works well with the 28mm-scale figures while taking up less space on the gaming table.



Above: French skirmishers of the 105th Line Regiment (Perry Miniatures).



Left: Russian infantry of the Markov Corps, marching to their assembly point (Wargames Foundry).

Wilhelmsburg island's defence was in the hands of General Osten, commanding the 2nd Brigade of the 50th Division, which consisted of the 3rd and 105th Line Regiments. If the Allies attacked, these troops were tasked with holding their ground long enough for reinforcements to arrive from Hamburg and Harburg via the critical communication road. The frozen landscape of early 1814 set the stage for a desperate struggle, with the fate of Wilhelmsburg - and the entire defence of Hamburg - hanging in the balance.

The full assault begins on Wilhelmsburg

On February 9, 1814, General Bennigsen attacked the vital island of Wilhelmsburg, with its crucial communication route, and the heavily-fortified redoubts on the Black Mountain near Harburg. His strategy was bold and carefully orchestrated, with three attack columns ready to strike. The 1st and 2nd columns, positioned on the left wing, were commanded by General Dokhturov and General Tolstoy, respectively, while General Emme also played a crucial role. On the right wing, the 3rd column, led by General Markov, was joined by Bennigsen himself, ready to oversee the assault firsthand.

Each column was a formidable force, comprising eight to nine infantry battalions, a unit of fierce Cossacks, a small cavalry detachment, four light field guns, and engineers to navigate the treacherous terrain. This coordinated attack marked a turning point in the siege, as Bennigsen sought to break through the French defences and cut off their vital supply and communication lines. The frozen landscape, the precision of the columns, and the determination of the Allied forces made this a decisive moment in the battle for Hamburg.

As dawn broke, the 1st column advanced, crossing the frozen river, and their swift flank-attack overwhelmed a strong French outpost, securing the first victory of the day. A thick layer of unexpected condensation on the ice made the second column's path nearly impassable. The Citizen Guard suggested a detour, but General Tolstoy, determined to stick to Bennigsen's strict orders, refused to deviate, and time slipped away, causing the 1st column to halt its progress.

In the northwest, the 3rd column fared better. They crossed the frozen Elbe and left a small force behind to secure their rear. Pushing forward, they stormed the islands of Neuhoof and Ross, capturing a French battery with five cannons, and seizing additional outposts. The 1st column spotted this action in the distance and resumed their march, heading toward the military road, still clinging to the hope that they would meet the 2nd column there and press forward together into the heart of the French defences.



Above: French artillery shells the Russian advance (Perry Miniatures).



Above: The French infantry of the 2nd Brigade await the attack (Perry Miniatures).



Above: The Russian Ladoga and the Orel regiment march to the front (Wargames Foundry).

The French response

The French, quick to recognize the enemy's advance, swiftly rallied their forces. The garrison at Wilhelmsburg, along with the 3rd and 105th Line Regiments, fortified their positions at the road's entrenchments, the bridges, and the main dyke. General Osten, overseeing the defence from his quarters in the Red House, had an excellent field of fire over the surrounding landscape, and fired artillery at the Russians as they struggled through the network of dykes, ditches, and ice.

Meanwhile, parts of the 30th and 44th regiments, under Lieutenant General Vichery, launched a fierce counterattack, recapturing several farms that had already fallen to the Russians. At this critical moment, the Russian 3rd column reached the right flank of the French, while the 1st column threatened



Above: French artillery in one of the redoubts of Wilhelmsburg (Perry Miniatures).

UPPING THE SCALE

At the beginning of the project, I didn't have a single painted figure for the game, as I usually play the Napoleonic Wars in 1/72 scale. It was only thanks to a generous gift of 28 mm figures from a fellow hobbyist, and the wide range of different 28mm armies available, that I decided to use 28mm scale.

I painted all the figures for the project, most of which are from Perry Miniatures, although some are from Wargames Foundry (also sculpted by the Perrys), and a few are from Front Rank. There are no conversions yet, but there will be a few done before the project is finished.



Above: Russian infantry reaches the village of Kirchdorf (Wargames Foundry).



Above: Russian artillery struggles to find a good position (Perry Miniatures).

their left. Under withering fire from both sides, the French were forced to retreat toward the bridgeheads, suffering heavy casualties along the way. The retreat turned chaotic, with the roads clogged by the dead, wounded, and panicked horses.

The two battalions of the 105th Regiment, now under Vichery's direct command, struggled to make any progress through the confusion. General Osten was gravely wounded, and most of the French officers had fallen. With their leadership shattered and their forces in disarray, the French defence crumbled. Finally, the 1st and 3rd Russian columns succeeded in joining forces, overwhelming the French and seizing control of the main dyke, marking a decisive blow in the battle.

HALTED AT HARBURG

To the south, near the gates of Harburg, General Arentschildt positioned several battalions of the Russian-German Legion along the dyke, sending patrols across to Wilhelmsburg to establish contact with the advancing 1st column. Meanwhile, Arentschildt's main force - composed of Hanoverian troops and other units from the Russian-German Legion - set up near the villages just south of Harburg, awaiting reinforcements.

At the scheduled time of 3am, his troops stood ready in the darkness, anticipating the order to launch their assault, but it wasn't until an hour and a half later that the distant sounds of battle echoed from Wilhelmsburg, signaling that the fight had begun. The 4th Battalion of the Russian-German Legion advanced, soon followed by the 6th Battalion, covered by their rifle unit, while the 3rd Battalion held back as a reserve near a small village. The Jägers of the Russian-German Legion quickly infiltrated the first gardens and houses, capturing a few prisoners, and the French, numbering only a few hundred men, retreated and regrouped behind a parapet fortified with two cannons. This defensive line had been strengthened by digging through the dyke, and the French guns had the added support of artillery fire from the Harburg Citadel. The Russian-German Legion took cover and maintained a steady exchange of skirmish fire with the French infantry and artillery.

DAVOUT TAKES THE LEAD

At Wilhelmsburg, Marshal Davout himself took command, determined to turn the tide of battle. With the elite companies of the 15th Light Regiment - his personal reserve - he crossed the bridge to the summer dyke, to a small blockhouse. Bringing his reserve to Wilhelmsburg, Davout bolstered the garrison, reinforcing the left flank and securing the blockhouse. This maneuver created a fallback position for the beleaguered French troops still retreating from the battle. General Vichery soon arrived with his 105th Regiment, rallying to this defensive point. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, Davout sent a signal rider galloping back to Hamburg with urgent orders: every available soldier was to be sent to reinforce Wilhelmsburg.

Meanwhile, the Russian forces struggled to push further north, with the congested bridgehead bottleneck preventing them from bringing artillery into effective position, buying the French precious time to establish a defensive line along the summer dyke. The French situation was still dire - outnumbered and outgunned, Davout's forces were unlikely to hold against the overwhelming Russian assault for long - but, in a bold attempt to bolster morale, the marshal led his staff across the bridge and into the thick of the



Above: To the cheers of the population, the Hanseatic Citizens' Guard marches into battle (Perry Miniatures).



Above: Russian hussars and cuirassiers attack over the icy ground (Perry Miniatures).

battle. Shoulder to shoulder with his soldiers, Davout braved the relentless musket fire, and - while the inspirational moment was cut short when General de la Ville was wounded, forcing Davout and his small entourage to retreat - the act of courage bolstered the resolve of the weary French soldiers.

Reinforcements strike

Leaders in Hamburg began to doubt that the Russian militia posed any real threat to them, and started to send substantial support to the embattled French troops at Wilhelmsburg as the day progressed. General Pecheur led a large contingent, crossing the southern Elbe and the bridge to reinforce Wilhelmsburg, forcing the Russians to pivot and form a defensive front to the south. An hour later, at 4pm, Marshal Davout had gathered enough reinforcements to launch a counterattack, with three columns ready for a coordinated strike. The first and largest column surged westward toward the main dyke, pushing the Russian forces back; the second column, composed of elite companies from the 105th Regiment, attacked eastward through an open field, and, with a fierce bayonet charge, drove the Russians to the Honarts Lock.

Meanwhile, the elite companies of the 15th Light Regiment, along with every available soldier under General Vichery's command, launched a bold assault on the main dyke from both sides of the bridge. Their ferocious attack succeeded in recapturing the critical bridgehead on the main dyke, dealing a heavy blow to the Russian forces. In just a few decisive hours, Davout's reinforcements and well-coordinated counterattack turned the tide.

A rapid withdrawal

South of the Elbe, Harburg faced a fierce assault from the west. Hanoverian troops had been stationed in the area, with the Lueneburg Jägers leading the charge. At 3am, they launched their attack, striking the French positions along the Elbe dyke, and, in a swift and forceful move, the Jägers stormed the French defences, forcing their adversaries to retreat into Harburg. The Lueneburgers set to work dismantling the French entrenchments, preparing for further action, but the order to advance on Harburg never came.

Meanwhile, the Kielmannsegge Jägers were tasked with storming the Black Mountain - a critical position - but as the day dragged on, each attempt was repelled by the French defenders.

By 4pm, just before the French counterattack began, General Bennigsen gave the order to withdraw the Russian forces. Light was fading, occupying Wilhelmsburg had proven impossible, and Bennigsen knew the exhausted and significantly weakened French were in no condition to pursue the retreating Russians.

As darkness fell, the Russians safely reached their original positions. General Arentschildt, who had pulled back his troops earlier in the afternoon, remained on standby, ready for further action should it be needed; both sides withdrew, preparing for the battles yet to come.

Allied forces had over 450 men killed or wounded, while the French endured a heavier toll, losing nearly 1,000 soldiers. Among the fallen were prominent leaders, including General Osten, who succumbed to his injuries three weeks later, along with General Romé and Colonel St. Pierre. The Russians also took 14 officers and 600 soldiers prisoner, along with twelve cannons, 50 tons of gunpowder, 30,000 cartridges, and ample supplies of food and wine - spoils that would strengthen their hand in the ongoing campaign.



Above: The French avantgarde is surprised by Cossacks (Perry Miniatures and Wargames Foundry).

THE END

Following this brutal day there were further assaults, skirmishes, and advances on Wilhelmsburg, with small and large engagements in the tense standoff. Despite the ongoing clashes, it wasn't until nearly two months after Napoleon's abdication that the tide truly turned. On May 29, 1814, Marshal Davout, commander of France's northernmost stronghold, finally surrendered the city to the Allies. With the conflict behind them, he and his troops began their march homeward, marking the end of an era in the waning days of Napoleon's empire.

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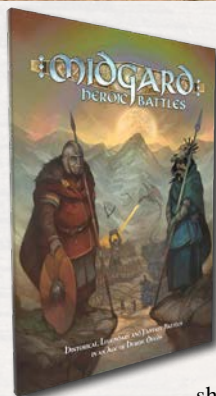
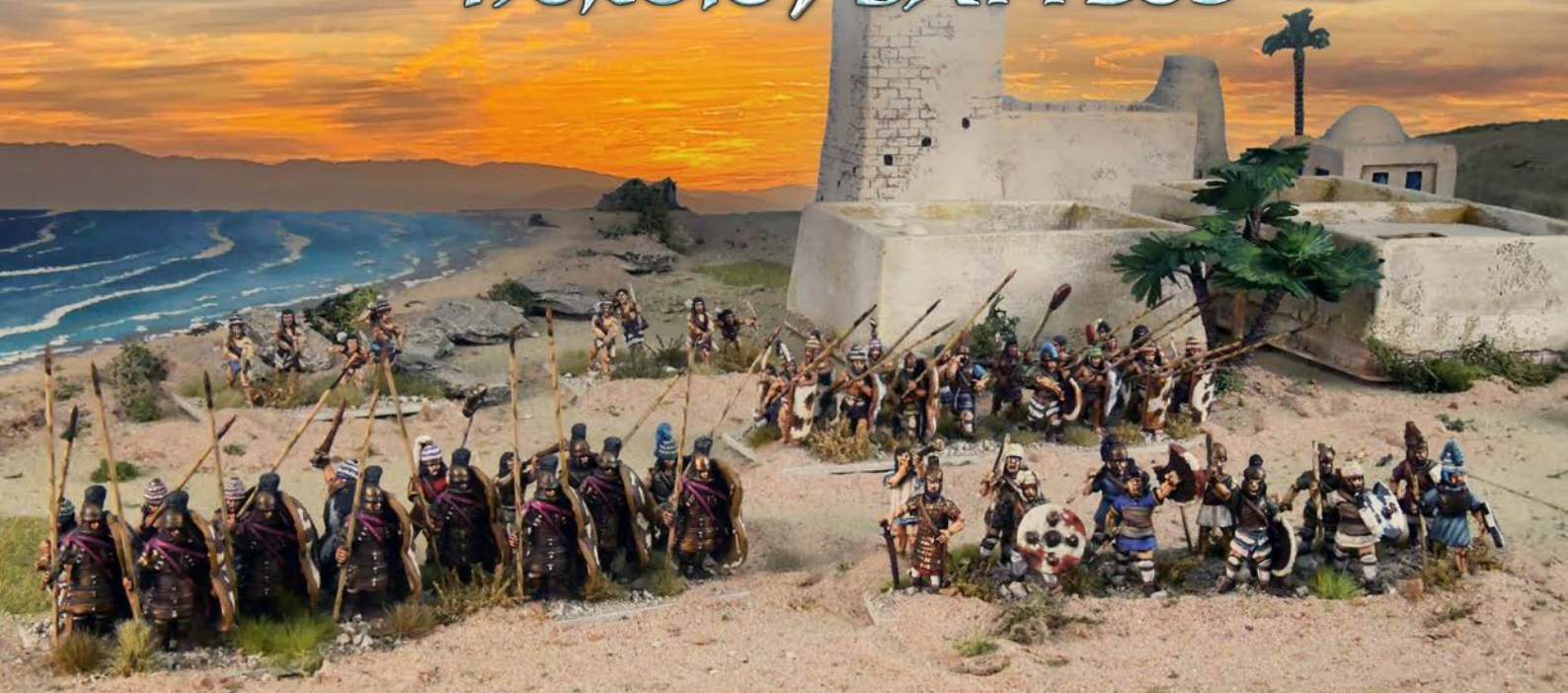
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Above: The 5th and 42nd Jäger Regiment of the 26th Russian Division form in line (Perry Miniatures).

PLAYING HOMER'S ILIAD WITH MIDGARD HEROIC BATTLES



James Morris visited Wi HQ to demo his new ruleset, *Midgard Heroic Battles*, and show how it works alongside the heroes of the *Iliad* in a battle set during the Trojan War.

In writing *Midgard Heroic Battles*, I was seeking to create what I have since taken to describing as a 'narrative legendary battle system where the heroes are the stars of the show.'

Exploring the idea of heroic leadership, *Midgard* paints units of warriors with a broad brush while focusing on the deeds of the great leaders and champions of the age. *Midgard* is therefore a set of rules that fits closely with the battles of Irish mythology described in the *Book of Invasions*, Spanish hero El Cid's single combats and conquests, the last stands of Y Gododdin and the Battle of Maldon described in Early Medieval poetry, and, of course, the conflict of Homer's *Iliad*. Whether or not the Trojan War was an actual historical event is irrelevant; the themes of heroism, single combat, and reputation run strongly through Homer's work, alongside the realities and human cost of battle.

I only possess a handful of miniatures for the Trojan War, but well-known Nottinghamshire gamer, Dr Nick Gilmore - who owns a veritable host of Trojans and Achaeans - kindly brought them along to Wi HQ for an introductory game using my prototype Trojan Wars lists.

"Hector cried to them all, 'Trojans, Lycians and Dardanians, fighters in close combat, stand firm: the Achaeans have set themselves as a wall against me, but they will not check me for long; they will give ground if the mightiest of the gods has indeed inspired my onset.'"

Homer, *The Iliad* c. 800 BCE (translated by Samuel Butler)



Above: The players assemble for battle: (left to right) me, Dr Nick Gilmore, Nick 'The Mole' Buxey, and Pete Jenkins.

KEEPING IT HEROIC

Heroes are by no means invulnerable in *Midgard* - most have only two points of Stamina (wounds), and will not survive fighting a unit of warriors single-handed - but their leadership and combat prowess are essential to success in the game. Each Hero is rated from Level 1 (Champion) through to Level 4 (Legendary Hero); the latter are a rarity in the game, though Achilles naturally falls into this category and made an appearance in our battle, cleaving his Trojan opponents left, right, and centre!

Heroes are provided with between one and four Mighty Deeds, depending on their level, which can be used to encourage and inspire their troops, carry out heroic deeds of battle, and trigger special traits. Heroes are also essential to gain Reputation - the means by which victory and defeat are measured in *Midgard*.

WARRIORS DIE, BUT A GLORIOUS REPUTATION LIVES FOREVER

Reputation is the driving force of *Midgard*; the heroes are the stars of the show, but their role is to gain Reputation while destroying that of their enemies. Reputation Tokens can be thought of as a kind of 'force morale', showing the fluctuating fortunes of both sides on their way to either victory or defeat. When a force loses all its Reputation, its morale is in tatters, and the battle is lost. You can keep track of Reputation however you like - we prefer a metal goblet with glass beads for the satisfying 'ding' sound that you get as each token is lobbed into the vessel, but any other kind of token, or a simple tally, is completely acceptable. Reputation is gained during the game when heroes lead charges into melee or fight single combats but can also be lost when troops are destroyed, heroes leave combat, or - perish the thought - refuse a challenge. All of this, I feel, would have been familiar territory to Homer and his audience.

WHAT PERIODS DOES MIDGARD HEROIC BATTLES COVER?

Given that *Midgard* is about heroic leadership of warriors armed with swords, shields, and spears, it has a huge number of potential settings, ranging from straight-up historical (Early Medieval clashes like the battles of 7th Century Mercia and Northumbria), through legendary (Age of Arthur with some mystical elements), to full-on mythological or fantasy (Irish myth or Tolkien's Middle-earth). Whichever part of the spectrum you play on, you'll find that units of warriors and sound tactics are always needed alongside the deeds of heroes. Additional rules are provided for giant creatures (rated as Monstrosities), flying beasts, and a limited number of spells using the Sorcery trait, but leaders remain both heroic and vulnerable, and a wall of shields is key to success.

Dr Nick's reaction to the game was somewhat typical of historical players: "*Midgard* delves deeper into fantasy than my poor soul has been before, but I found myself getting excited, rather than being put off. That's good for a mainstream historical player like me. I've even started looking at Foundry's Greek Myths range!"

THE FIELD BRISTLED WITH LONG AND DEADLY SPEARS

Backing up our bold heroes are, of course, the spearmen, archers, and charioteers that serve in any self-respecting hero's warband. In *Midgard* terms, these are grouped into units. Individual figure-basing is completely irrelevant; as long as all your units have predominantly rectangular bases with a similar frontage, you can play the game. For our playtest games, we've used a standard unit frontage of 12cm for 28mm miniatures, which works well on a 6' x 4' (180cm x 122cm) table. However, we had more space and figures available for this game, so decided to scale things up.

Nick's rather lovely collection is on 8cm-wide group bases, which, when used in pairs, gives a frontage of 16cm per unit. His chariots are on 5cm-wide bases which nicely combine to make a unit frontage of 15cm with three chariots - not exactly the same as the infantry, but near enough to make the game work.

I should point out here that *Midgard* is by no means a tournament game - if you're looking for protractor-accurate angle measuring, this may not be the ruleset for you.

Units occupy the same footprint until destroyed, and Stamina damage is recorded using any method you like; figure removal, micro dice, and markers are all ideal for this (the maximum Stamina for a unit is four, so you don't need to go overboard here). For the purposes of the Trojan Wars, Nick has painted up a load of Warbases dials, complete with selected casualty models, which are perfect for the job.



Above: Dr Nick's casualty dials are used to record Stamina loss. This one is by Warbases, and it holds a Redoubt Miniatures model.



Above: Heroes prepare their warriors for battle as the lines close.

SPEAR THROWS

One of the features that makes *Midgard* eminently scaleable is the Spear Throw. This isn't an original idea, by any means, but it simplifies the game and makes it playable with the space that you have available. The unit frontage sets the size of a Spear Throw (ST), which is both the range of a javelin and the basic movement rate for foot units. Although most of our games use a standard 12cm Spear Throw, Nick's bigger units meant that 16cm was used instead.

Our *Midgard* measuring sticks were printed from STL files, which are available from Reisswitz Press. You don't need these to play the game; using a ruler or tape measure is fine, though we have found that the sticks speed up play.



THE COMPANIES THUS ARRAYED

After a quick raid scenario, which allowed the players to learn or refresh themselves on the basic mechanics of the game, we set to with a bigger battle upon the Plain of Ilium. While there are several alternative scenarios included in the *Midgard* rulebook, we decided upon a good old-fashioned pitched battle, with the Greeks challenging the Trojans to battle outside the gates of Troy.

The forces were as follows:

GREEKS OF THE TROJAN WAR

Total Points	Hero Points	Unit Points	Reputation	Reputation Tokens
462	129	333	44	11

Like the Force list presented in the *Midgard Heroic Battles* rules, all Heroes have the trait **Mounted**, to represent their being transported around the plain of Ilium in chariots (whether the models have one or not). **Spears as Tribute** is a Trait given to elite Units; it gives them a limited bonus in melee combat.

HEROES									
Name	Type	Points	Combat Dice	Shooting Dice	Armour	Stamina	Reputation	Missiles	Traits
Diomedes of Argos	Major Hero (Level 3)	31	3	0	3	2	4	None	<i>Army Commander, Hold Fast, Mounted</i>
Achilles, son of Peleus	Legendary Hero (Level 4)	44	4	0	3	2	4	None	<i>Favour of the Gods, Mounted, Proud, Today We Fight to Win</i>
Antilochus	Minor Hero (Level 2)	21	2	0	3	2	2	None	<i>Battle Smiter, Mounted</i>
Odysseus of Ithaca	Major Hero (Level 3)	33	3	0	3	2	3	None	<i>Favour of the Gods, I Foretell Mighty Deeds, Mounted</i>

UNITS										
Name	Number of Units	Type	Points	Combat Dice	Shooting Dice	Armour	Stamina	Reputation	Missiles	Traits
Myrmidons/ Veteran Greek Spearmen	3	Warriors (Heavy Infantry)	32	12	0	4	4	4	None	<i>Fearsome, Spears as Tribute</i>
Greek Spearmen	6	Warriors (Heavy Infantry)	21	12	0	3	4	2	None	<i>Fearsome, Spears as Tribute</i>
Greek Chariots	3	Light Riders (Noble Riders & Light Chariots)	26	8	4	4	2	3	Javelins	<i>Counter Charge, Disengage, Evade, Marksman, Spears as Tribute</i>
Greek Skirmishers	4	Skirmishers (Shooters)	12	6	6	2 (3)	2	1	Bows Slings Javelins	<i>Agile, Evade</i>

THE DEFENDERS OF TROY

Total Points	Hero Points	Unit Points	Reputation	Reputation Tokens
464	151	313	50	13

Here we have Hector, Sarpedon, and Paris, ready to fight off the Greeks. **Battle Smiter** is a common Trait amongst the Heroes, giving an advantage in Single Combats. **Divine Intervention** gives Paris and Aeneas the chance to escape death with the assistance of Aphrodite or Apollo.

HEROES									
Name	Type	Points	Combat Dice	Shooting Dice	Armour	Stamina	Reputation	Missiles	Traits
Hector, Prince of Troy	Major Hero (Level 3)	39	3	0	3	2	5	None	<i>Army Commander, Battle Smiter, Hold Fast, Mounted</i>
Paris, Prince of Troy	Minor Hero (Level 2)	32	2	1	3	2	3	Mounted Bow	<i>Divine Intervention, Legendary Missile, Marksman, Mounted</i>
Sarpedon, Prince of Lycia	Major Hero (Level 3)	37	3	0	3	2	4	None	<i>Battle Smiter, Mounted, Today We Fight to Win</i>
Glaukus	Minor Hero (Level 2)	19	2	0	3	2	2	None	<i>Battle Smiter, Mounted</i>
Aeneas, Son of Anchises	Minor Hero (Level 2)	22	2	0	3	2	2	None	<i>Divine Intervention, Mounted</i>

UNITS										
Name	Number of Units	Type	Points	Combat Dice	Shooting Dice	Armour	Stamina	Reputation	Missiles	Traits
Trojan Spearmen	5	Warriors (Heavy Infantry)	21	12	0	3	4	4	None	<i>None</i>
Lycian Warriors	4	Warriors (Heavy Infantry)	21	12	0	2	4	2	None	<i>Impetuous</i>
Trojan Chariots	4	Light Riders (Noble Riders & Light Chariots)	26	8	4	4	2	3	Javelins	<i>Counter Charge, Disengage, Evade, Marksman, Spears as Tribute</i>
Trojan Skirmishers	4	Skirmishers (Shooters)	12	6	6	2 (3)	2	1	Bows Slings Javelins	<i>Agile, Evade</i>



SALLYING FORTH FROM THE SHIPS

Although it works perfectly well with one player per side, *Midgard* has been designed to work easily with multiple gamers, each controlling one or more heroes and their warriors. The Trojan force came under the command of Pete and Dr Nick, with Nick Buxey and I sharing the Greeks.

Both sides took the sensible approach of a battleline centred around the massed spearman units, arranged in double lines where possible. Being supported by friendly units is critical in *Midgard*, as nearby unengaged troops can 'save' hits inflicted by the enemy in close combat, thus increasing the resilience of fighting units. Both Greeks and Trojans sent some skirmishing javelin men and archers out front, with Dr Nick's bare-naked slingers causing quite a stir with their lack of clothing and their dice-rolling later in the game! Lastly, the chariots pulled up into position on the flanks of the formations.

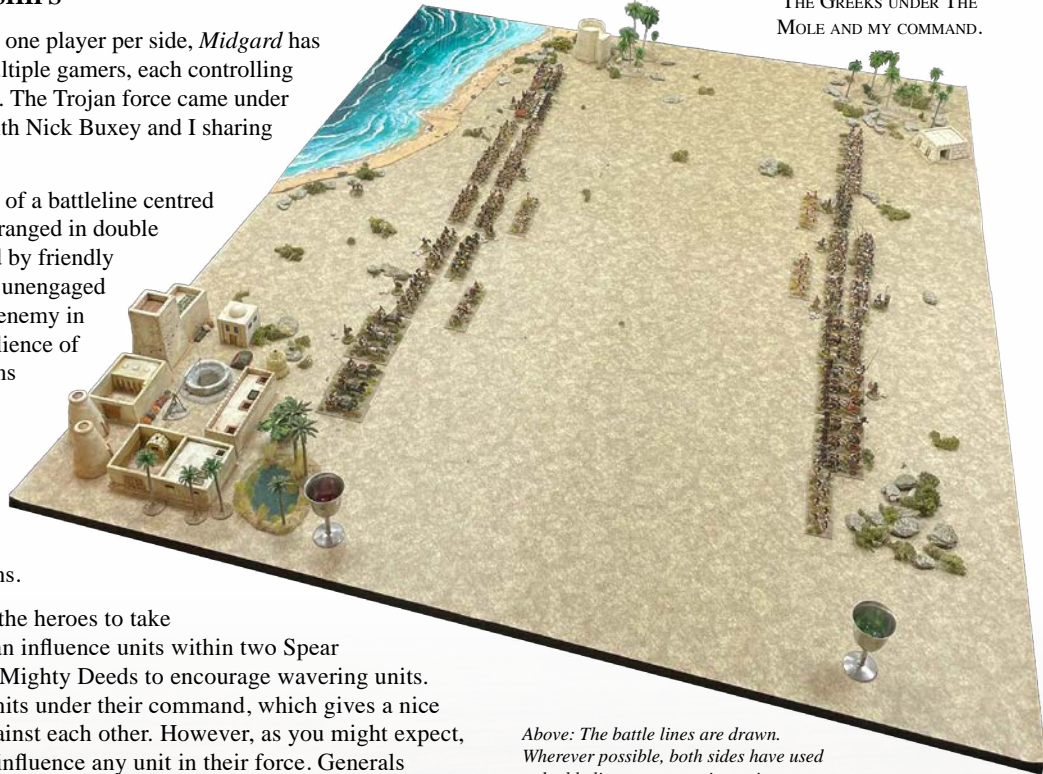
With the units down, it was time for the heroes to take command. Under the rules, heroes can influence units within two Spear Throws of their position, using their Mighty Deeds to encourage wavering units. Usually, heroes can only influence units under their command, which gives a nice dynamic of rival lords competing against each other. However, as you might expect, charismatic Army Commanders can influence any unit in their force. Generals Hector and Diomedes both took up positions in the centre; Sarpedon and Glaucus took command of the Lycians in the centre of the Trojans. Achilles, of course, placed himself in the front rank of the feared Myrmidons. Paris was dispatched to command the chariots on the Trojan right wing - Hector clearly hoped that his brother would attract less attention there!

READING THE ENTRAILS

Once the battle lines had been drawn up, sacrifices were made by the respective leaders and their priests. Units and heroes in *Midgard* can take traits (special abilities) to add colour and flavour to the game, one of which is Omens. This trait - eminently suitable for ancient armies of a more superstitious age - is only useable at the start of the game by expending a Mighty Deed. Both leaders made the sacrifice, but only the Trojans were favoured, rolling a 4 on the dice, and gaining a further two Reputation Tokens in their goblet. Athena was clearly looking the other way - the Achaeans rolled a pitiful 1, and lost two Reputation Tokens! Needing to save face, Antilochus created a distraction by challenging the Trojans to single combat.

THE TROJANS COMMANDED
BY PETE AND DR NICK.

THE GREEKS UNDER THE
MOLE AND MY COMMAND.



Above: The battle lines are drawn. Wherever possible, both sides have used a double line, as supporting units are essential to success in *Midgard*. The two goblets of Reputation Tokens can be seen at the bottom edge of the table.



Above: Only the mightiest heroes get the best headgear!

Achaean chariots cover their left flank, but avoid the rocks on the edge of the village! These are 28mm Redoubt Enterprises figures.



LET HIM THAT WILL FIGHT ME STAND FORWARD AS YOUR CHAMPION!

Challenges to single combat are right at the heart of *Midgard*; although it may not be tactically advisable and is unquestionably anathema to the more modern military mind, single combat is a way to gain Reputation. With Antilochus issuing a challenge, the Trojans would have lost Reputation had they turned it down; naturally, they did no such thing, and sent Glaucus out to test his mettle in the centre of the field.

Single combats take precedence over unit combats, and are usually fought to a conclusion over three special rounds. A challenge to the death can also be issued if you're feeling bloodthirsty, though many single combats end in the demise of one (or sometimes both) of the heroes, anyway! Heroes roll one dice per level that they have, and can expend Mighty Deeds to add extra dice; the problem with the latter is that they are not renewed until the start of the following turn, so you must choose carefully when to use them. Often there is no right answer - once committed to battle, you will never have enough Mighty Deeds for everything that you want to do!

Sensibly, Antilochus used both of his Mighty Deeds to enhance his three combat dice to five; Glaucus had the trait Battle Smiter, which allowed him to add an extra dice to his existing two in single combat, thus rolling three dice total, but decided to hold back his two Mighty Deeds for the next round. Anyone hoping for an epic three-round scrap from this combat would have been sadly disappointed, as we got a wild disparity in dice scores: Glaucus scored but a single hit, while Antilochus scored a massive four hits. Usually, the loser would lose a single point of Stamina, but in this case, Glaucus had been beaten by such a margin (equal to his Armour Value of 3) that he was struck down with a single blow and killed. The Achaeans roared as Antilochus held Glaucus's helmet as a trophy, gaining them two more Reputation Tokens. Clearly the entrails had been faulty - new goats required!

This turn of events signalled a general advance by both sides, as the Trojans sought to avenge Glaucus, and the Greeks tried to push their advantage. *Midgard* uses a modified IGO-UGO turn sequence; while games that activate individual units can be great fun (such as *Dragon Rampant* and *SAGA*), I needed a system that would allow a full battle to be resolved in a couple of hours without slowing down the action. As the movement system is so simple, there is little waiting around for either player before getting stuck in. Both sides roll during shooting and melee combat, so no-one sits around without throwing dice for very long.



Above: With just a single hit versus Antilochus' four, Glaucus has his Armour Value bested, and he is struck down.

SLINGS AND ARROWS

Although there is a general shooting phase towards the end of the turn in *Midgard*, skirmishers and light chariots may shoot as soon as their side has finished movement, allowing the kind of harassment tactics we might expect from fast-moving troops with ranged weapons. The bare-naked slingers and their rival skirmishers were the first to meet, exchanging missiles and insults. Most missile fire in *Midgard* is harassing rather than destructive, although it forces Risk to Heroes tests on units containing characters, creating tension at this stage of the game. There was some damage done to a unit of skirmishers and Lycians, but no heroes fell wounded, and the skirmishers fell back through their lines to allow the spearmen to advance.



Above: Dude, where's my tunic? The bare-naked slingers strike fear into their enemies (and perform the useful function of screening the warriors behind).



Above: Nick 'The Mole' Buxey and I begin to advance our army, trying to keep the battle line together.

CALAMITOUS COMMAND TESTS

Hector's caution in putting Paris out on the wing with the chariots paid off; little brother fluffed several Command Tests in the early stages of the game. In *Midgard*, a Command Test is a simple catch-all test taken when units are under pressure; a standard D6 is thrown, with a score of 3 or more indicating success. In this case, Paris' chariot units needed to pass a Command Test to make a second move, which they failed. Fortunately, a hero can spend Mighty Deeds to reroll these, which is great news... unless you roll like Paris!



NOBLE CHARIOTS GLEAMING

While the skirmishers were doing their thing in the centre of the field, massed Greek chariots descended on the Trojan right wing. To the surprise of both sides, following his earlier wobble, Paris - commanding the Trojan chariots - did a fine job in holding off the enemy. With the low Stamina values of the chariots (rated as Light Riders with two Stamina points in the game), the combat swung back and forth, as damaged units pulled out to hurl javelins at a distance rather than risk destruction in close combat.

CLAD IN BRONZE AND BRANDISHING SPEARS

The centre was where it was all going off, as spearmen with tower shields pressed into one another, trying to push for an advantage. One of the units of bare-naked slingers left it slightly too late to run, and was crushed underfoot by the Trojans, which also had the effect of holding up Achilles and his Myrmidons on the way into combat. The Greek veterans (using the fabulous dendra-armoured Redoubt Miniatures) held firm against the Trojans. Both Hector and Diomedes were now fighting in the centre, laughing off multiple Risk to Heroes rolls as the blows fell all around them.



Above: Paris redeems himself by holding off the Achaean chariots.

HIS HEART WAS BLACK WITH RAGE...

In the press of the melee, Sarpedon saw his chance to avenge his comrade Glaucus on the Achaeans. Seeing Odysseus across the battle lines, he issued a challenge, which was readily accepted. Athena had clearly deserted Odysseus by this point, as Sarpedon wounded him on the first round.

Wounded heroes roll one less dice than usual, which in our game reduced Odysseus to just two dice for round two; Sarpedon had kept a Mighty Deed back, which he used to good effect to add another dice in the second round, striking down the Greek hero.

The loss of Odysseus was a severe blow for the Achaeans, as, with a Reputation value of 4, that number of Reputation Tokens was lost from the Greeks' goblet when he fell. Although units in *Midgard* also lose Reputation when they are destroyed - two Reputation Tokens for most units - the loss of a high-ranking hero can prove the turning point of the game.



Above: Full-on Trojan Wars action!



Above: During the melee, Sarpedon challenges and defeats Odysseus.

WHERE ARE THE GODS?

In some parts of the *Iliad*, the Gods make their way onto the battlefield, rather than just inspiring and protecting the heroes. I chose not to represent this, as it was the two Nicks' first experience of the game and I didn't want to overcomplicate things, though it's entirely possible in the rules. The *Midgard* book contains a full chapter on Force Creation, in which Gods can be represented as high-level heroes with additional traits and spells. Thinking about it, this would make a great future article!

... AND DARKNESS VEILED HIS EYES

Sarpedon's luck ran out a few minutes later; injured by a javelin in an earlier melee, he was singled out by Antilochus, slayer of Glaucus. Being wounded meant that Sarpedon was considered a Level 2 (rather than a Level 3) Hero, but he was still a dangerous opponent. However, he had expended all his Mighty Deeds this turn, whereas Antilochus still had two available, which would prove decisive in the duel.

The first round of their challenge was a draw, as blades clashed and sparks flew (this result gains one Reputation Token for both sides as the watching warriors thrill to the spectacle of the heroes duking it out), but a second round saw victory for Antilochus, and more Reputation gained by the Greeks as Sarpedon fell.

DRIVEN TO BATTLE

The Greek right flank was being pushed back by multiple Trojan chariots; unable to keep pace with the fast-moving vehicles attempting to get round their flank, the Achaean spearmen were forced to redeploy, and found themselves pinned down, though they held their ground.

FLY IF YOU WILL!

With Hector and Diomedes leading seemingly charmed lives, it was down to the warriors to end the battle. Unable to engage in single combat, Achilles and his Myrmidons had been scything down the enemy in the centre of the field. In the final round of melee, the war of attrition in the centre finally went the Achaeans' way, as two more Lycian warbands broke and fled, reducing the Trojan Reputation Tokens to zero. The goblet was empty! Although the Greeks were also teetering - with just two Reputation remaining - Hector was forced to withdraw to the gates of Troy, leaving Diomedes the master of the battlefield.



Above: Sarpedon eventually falls to Greek hero Antilochus in single combat.



Above: Greek spearmen just about manage to hold off the advancing Trojan chariots.

KILLING ZONES

All units in *Midgard* have a Killing Zone, an area of one Spear Throw square directly in front of the unit (shown here using a square base to the front of the chariots). This area is the best place for units to fight, shoot, and intimidate their enemy. Troops within an enemy Killing Zone may not move sideways or redeploy, meaning that manoeuvre in the face of the enemy is highly restricted. For this reason, the Trojan chariots in this situation were able to inhibit the movement of the Achaean spearmen and control the flank!



And so it ended. It was a fine game enhanced by Dr Nick's inspiring collection of miniatures and friendly players. Although the game didn't feature the dramatic fall of a hero in the closing act, with both Hector and Achilles surviving the day, we had single combats aplenty, and much to talk about afterwards. Clearly a rematch will be in order!

Dr Nick sent me a kind message after the game:

"That was a most enjoyable day in great company! I think your rules run well, the draft is well-written and easy to learn - after our introduction today, I reckon I could play it again from the play sheet, without reference to the main rules, which is always a good sign."



In The Bleak Midwinter



Simon MacDowall considers history and fiction as he creates an email campaign and concluding tabletop clash based on the midwinter crossing of the Rhine in 406AD.

A coalition of Suebi, Alans, and two Vandal tribes - Asdings and Silings - are pushed westward from what is now Germany and Poland. They are not a cohesive army; their traditions, structures, fighting methods, and even languages are different, but they are united by their pursuit of a better life inside the Roman Empire.

Meanwhile, Roman Gaul is in a state of turmoil. Endemic uprisings see groups of people, known as Baccaudae, setting up semi-independent enclaves that break free from the heavy hand of Roman rule. Perhaps some of the Baccaudae feel that they would be better off joining up with invaders, rather than passively waiting for their villages to be sacked, but that will be decided in your own telling of these events (historically, they broke apart and fought each other).

“Savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun all parts of Gaul. The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the Ocean, has been laid to waste by hordes of barbarians.”

St Jerome, describing the aftermath of the Rhine crossing by Vandals, Suebi, and Alans.

Those interested in a broader picture of the historical background might like to read my book, *Conquerors of the Roman Empire - The Vandals*, published by Pen and Sword, 2016.



There is not the space in a single article to go into all the details of this devastating invasion, so I'll begin with a smattering of the key historical points behind the game I present, set in the bleak midwinter, when the barbarian storm broke across the Rhine frontier.

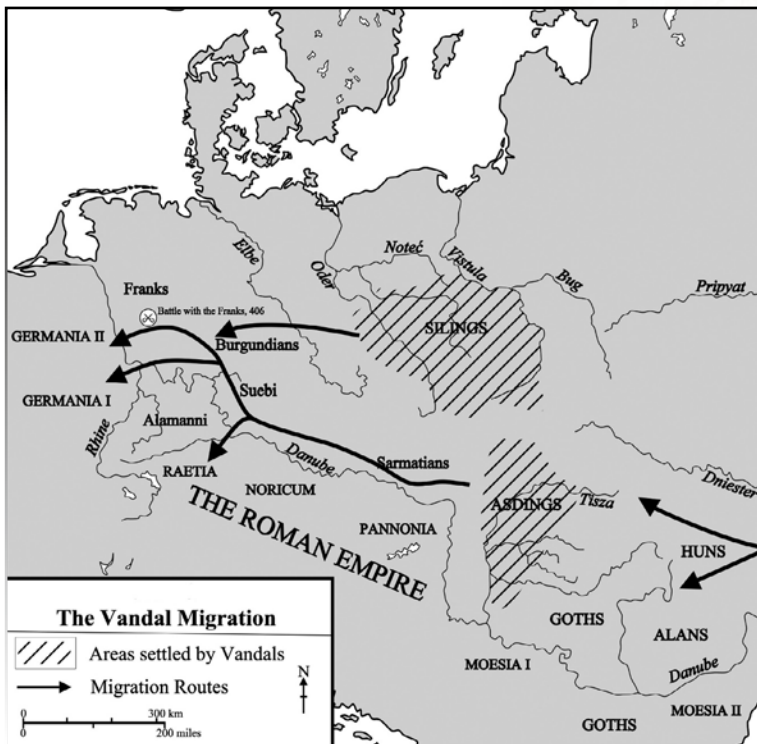
A SEASON OF DISCONTENT

A large invasion of Italy by Goths in 405 prompted the Romans to reassign troops who were guarding the Rhine to move to Italy's defence. The Romans cut a deal with the Franks on the eastern side of the Rhine, paying them to defend the frontier in the absence of Roman troops.

When the Vandals pushed up against the Rhine, the Franks fought them, probably less in loyalty to Rome than in their own interest in keeping other tribes out of their lands. The Asding king was killed in battle with the Franks, but the Vandals were saved by the timely intervention of their Alan allies, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

Roman defence relied on frontier troops' ability to garrison strong points and patrol the frontier, but, in the event of a major incursion, they were not expected to hold the line (except in key walled towns). Field armies, kept in reserve, would be tasked with moving up to deal with the invaders.

When the barbarians crossed the Rhine, the Gallic field army made little or no effort to intervene, probably because the focus remained on the defence of Italy. At the same time, army revolts in Britain resulted in the proclamation of a rival Emperor,



Above: A map of the barbarian migrations, AD 405-406.

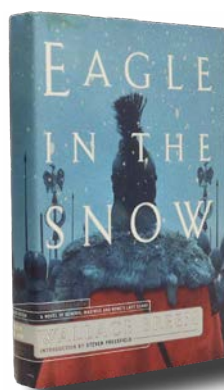
which imperial authorities perceived as a greater threat than a mere barbarian incursion. When the Vandals and allies crossed the Rhine there was little or no Roman defence, and many cities were captured without a fight.

Starting a campaign in the dead of winter probably meant that the tribes were desperate for food and supplies, which could only be found in the Roman stores on the other side of the Rhine. It is widely believed that they were able to cross the river because it had frozen over, but there is no real evidence for this. The idea comes from Sir Edward Gibbon who wrote, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: "On the last day of the year, in a season when the waters of the Rhine were most probably frozen, they entered, without opposition, the defenceless provinces of Gaul."



Above: The Romans keep watch over the frontier as winter closes in.

EAGLE IN THE SNOW CAMPAIGN



If there was little or no organised Roman defence when the barbarians crossed the Rhine, there would not be much scope for a wargame, so I turned to fiction to help me out with the gaming here. *Eagle in the Snow* is a wonderfully evocative novel by Wallace Breen, set during the midwinter crossing of the Rhine, and centred on fictional Roman hero, Publius Maximus, who

is given an impossible mission to defend the frontier with a woefully inadequate number of men and precious little support. Not all details are historically correct, but the novel does beautifully convey the atmosphere of the twilight of the Roman Empire in the west.

It provides fertile soil in which to plant my scenario, drawing upon the book's plot and characters to create a multiplayer wargame with elements of roleplay mixed with history. Players on all sides have conflicting motives and objectives, some drawn from the novel, others from the historical events.

THE CONTINGENTS

The game needs at least three players to take charge of the following contingents:

Romans - Commanded by Publius Maximus, charged with defending the middle Rhine. If another player is available, divide the Roman command between Maximus and Quintus Veronius, the fictional second in command who led the cavalry in *Eagle in the Snow*, and who had strained relations with Maximus. Having two Roman players better balances the game, and, as a roleplay bonus, allows for a lack of cooperation.

Vandals - The two Vandal tribes could be run by one player, on the assumption that the allies cooperated well. If another player is available, one could command the Asdings, and the other the Silings. Godigsel led the Asdings, until he was killed in battle with the Franks and succeeded by his son, Gunderic, but we do not know who led the Silings. For my scenario I have named the Asding leader Godigsel and the Siling leader Gunderic.

Suebi - The Suebi were the largest contingent, and they ended up breaking with the Vandals, so their objectives are not necessarily aligned with the other tribes'. In *Eagle in the Snow*, they are led by Rando. There was a historical Rando, who sacked Mainz several years earlier, but we do not know who led the Suebi in 406.

The game is more fun if there are extra players, as they can take on the additional roles below. If no more participants are available, these can be umpire-controlled:

The Alans - Led by Respendial, they operated quite separately from their ally tribes. Later, a group of Alans made terms with the Romans, while others stayed with the Vandals. The Alans could, therefore, be susceptible to bribery; in the novel they switch sides.

Baccaudae - A coalition of escaped slaves and deserters who controlled much of the Gallic countryside in the 4th-5th Centuries, the Baccaudae were a perennial thorn in the side of the Roman authorities. They would support anyone who gave them the chance to run their own affairs without interference. Tibatto led a prominent band of Baccaudae several years later, and here, I've stretched history to put him in charge of this band.

UMPIRE EXTRAS

The Franks played a major role in the events of the winter of 406, helping the Romans, but I decided to have them as an umpire-controlled option, which affords the possibility that they'll aid the Romans if they get paid enough.

Theoretically, the commander of frontier troops should have been able to call on a depth of reserves; historically, the Gallic field army made no attempt to intervene when the Rhine frontier



Above: Publius Maximus with his *comitatus* at the 30th Milestone.



Above: Crossing the Rhine - an illustration by Pierre Joubert from *Forni and Périn's So lebten sie zur Zeit der Volkerwanderung* (1982).

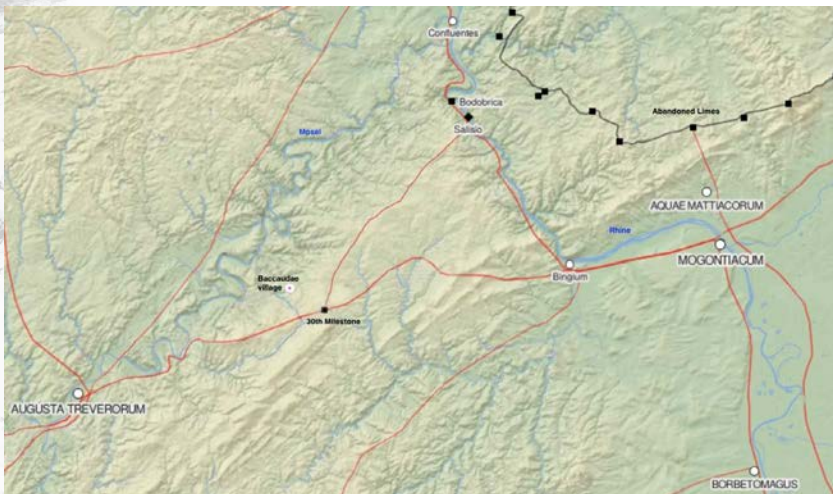
was breached. I thought it would make for a better game if the beleaguered Maximus had the option to call on reinforcements (even if they fail to arrive), hence the addition of two umpire-controlled characters:

Artorius, Curator of Trier - A fictional character from *Eagle in the Snow* who commanded a small garrison in Trier. The Bishop of Trier (who wielded the power in the city) was hostile toward pagan Maximus, and hindered his support. Artorius might provide a small reinforcement to the 30th Milestone (see the Roman brief).

Chariobaudes - The commander of the Gallic field army had 20,000 men far from the Rhine frontier, at Arles. His participation is unlikely, but, if called upon early enough, he might release a unit or two to come to Maximus' aid. The key here is letting the Maximus player hope that reinforcements might be available.

THE STRATEGIC EMAIL CAMPAIGN

To determine where the tabletop finale takes place, and the forces available, the players must negotiate a campaign, set before the Rhine freezes over (or, perhaps, doesn't). This gives them several strategic choices, and allows the formation of alliances.



Above: The campaign map distributed to all players.

I find email exchanges are a fine way to develop the distribution of troops and to negotiate the choices of crossing points for the barbarians, but you could do the same on paper, in person. Whatever form it takes, the campaign begins with briefings that each of the main contingents must follow.

Right: The Vandals ready to fight on foot. It is quite probable that the Vandals did not have many horses at the time of the Rhine crossing.



ROMAN BRIEF

Winter is approaching, and the locals all say it will be severe. The Rhine is beginning to freeze, and tens of thousands of barbarians have gathered on the other side of the river. Your fleet has been successful in preventing any major crossing, but you must remain vigilant.

The banks of the Rhine are very steep in this sector, and there are only three practical crossing points: Confluentes (Koblenz), Mogontiacum (Mainz), and Borbetomagus (Worms). The barbarians are currently concentrated near the abandoned city of Aquae Mattiacorum (Wiesbaden), but small bands of them are active everywhere.

Respendial, king of the Alans, has recently let it be known that, if the price is right, he could be persuaded to come over to your side - or at least stay neutral. The Franks on the east bank have been a good source of recruits. They are not happy about this sudden new influx of migrants, and your sources tell you that there have been serious clashes between Franks and Vandals. The countryside on your side of the Rhine is largely depopulated, and vast swaths are controlled by the Baccaudae - bandits, runaway slaves, and deserters.

Your aim is to prevent a crossing of the Rhine, and, if that fails, to defend the cities as best you can. Above all, the barbarians must not be allowed to take Augusta Treverorum (Trier).

AVAILABLE TROOPS

At Mogontiacum

- Maximus and his comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry
- 3,000 Legionaries (units of 1,000)
- 1,500 auxiliaries (units of 500)
- 1,500 archers (units of 500)
- 300 light cavalry (one unit)

At Bingium

- Veronius and his comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry
- 600 heavy cavalry (units of 300)
- 600 light cavalry (units of 300)

Patrolling between Confluentes and Borbetomagus

The Classis Germanica: four small galleys and a number of smaller vessels.

At Augusta Treverorum

There is a garrison here, controlled by Artorius, but this force is not under your command. Artorius is the civil authority, but the bishop, Mauritius, wields considerable power and influence. You are a pagan, so the bishop likes you as much as you like him! Unless placated, Mauritius may hinder reinforcements.

At Arle

The main Gallic field army, under Chariobaudes, is based far to the southwest. Theoretically, if you run into trouble, they should come to your aid, but don't count on it.

DEPLOYMENT

You need to decide how to distribute your troops to defend the cities of Confluentes, Bingium, Mogontiacum, and Borbetomagus. To keep the civil authorities on-side you must station at least 500 men in each of the cities, otherwise there is a risk of defections to the Baccaudae.

There are abandoned but serviceable forts at Bodobrica (Boppard) and Salisio (Bad Salzig). The run-down fortification at the 30th Milestone, which protects the only viable approach to Augusta Treverorum, is manned by 1,000 local militia, and must be held all costs.



Above: Quintus Veronius, commanding the Roman cavalry, could be controlled by a second Roman player.

ROMAN WAR CHEST

You have a war chest of 50 soldi, whose expenditure could be made in some of the following ways:

- Hire a band of 500 Franks at 10 soldi each (there are several bands available).
- Engage local drovers and wagons for 5 soldi.
- Buy in stores of additional arms for 5 soldi.
- Engage a skilled engineer, to improve fortifications, for 5 soldi.
- Buy slaves for construction and other miscellaneous tasks for 5 soldi.
- Buy in a good stock of wine, to make the winter more pleasant, for 5 soldi.
- Upgrade the condition of the Rhine fleet for 10 soldi.

You may also wish to influence those around you; the more you give, the more likely it is you'll see a positive outcome. You could:

- Give 'gifts' to the local Baccaudae, to keep them from allying with the barbarians.
- Bribe the Franks to provide you with intelligence on enemy movements on the east bank.
- Bribe the Alans to stay out of the fighting - or even to join you.
- Provide funds to Chariobaudes to facilitate the release of reinforcements from the field army.
- Donate to the Bishop of Trier for church improvements.

The following options have no cost, but they may cause resentment among the local populace:

- Press local drovers and wagons into service.
- Press local peasants into service to build fortifications.
- Requisition extra food supplies from the surrounding countryside.
- Round up extra horses from the surrounding countryside.

The church at Mogontiacum owns a large amount of gold and silver artefacts which the Bishop of Trier wants you to protect. You could appropriate some (or all) of them to increase your war chest - the total value is estimated at 30 gold soldi - but doing so will make a mortal enemy of the Bishop of Trier, and upset your more religious Christian soldiers.

VANDAL BRIEF

The cold is here, and your people are hungry and short of supplies, but, lo, a stroke of good fortune: a wise woman threw the rune stones and predicted that the Rhine will freeze over. You will be able to cross without needing boats or having to keep to bridges. However, the banks of the Rhine are very steep, so there are only three practical crossing points, found opposite the fortified towns of Confluentes, Mogontiacum, and Borbetomagus.



Above: Godigsel, King of the Asding Vandals, was killed in battle with the Franks.

Much of the countryside on the Roman side is largely depopulated and controlled by the Baccaudae - bands of runaway slaves, bandits, and deserters. Their leader, Tibatto, has let it be known that he might be prepared to help you in exchange for a share of your loot.

Each Roman town has treasure for the taking, and Mogontiacum is by far the richest on the frontier; it is also the best defended. The big prize, however, is Augusta Treverorum. If you can break through to take it, you will have all the loot and supplies you could hope for.

Leading your men into victorious combat and killing enemy leaders will greatly enhance your prestige, and increase your following.

Note: The above information should also be contained in the Suebi and Alan briefs - to save space in the article, it has not been duplicated.

AVAILABLE TROOPS

You are camped to the east of the abandoned city of Aquae Mattiacorum with:

- Godigsel's comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry
- 1,500 Asding heavy cavalry
- 500 Asding foot archers
- Gunderic's comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry
- 1,500 Siling heavy cavalry
- 500 Siling foot archers

All mounted warriors are quite happy to dismount and fight on foot.

Note: Although the Vandals fought mounted in later years, it is probable that, at the time of the Rhine crossing, most would have been on foot. Therefore, except for the leaders' comitatus, the heavy cavalry could be replaced by infantry.

GOALS AND FURTHER DETAILS

Rando's Suebi have more men than you, but they are far lesser warriors. The Suebi have a reputation for being rather slow and cautious, which you find frustrating, while the Alans are an untrustworthy race of nomads, and the smallest contingent.

Your aim is to sweep aside the Roman defenders and to gain as much honour and loot as possible. In order to keep your pre-eminent position, you need to show the other tribes that you are the most glorious and powerful war leader, able to distribute valuable gifts to your followers.

In consultation with your allies, you need to decide which of the three possible crossing points you wish to attempt. Your allies are likely to have their own ideas about where to cross and you do not all have to choose the same place. Each city captured by your men will give you more loot so you should, ultimately, put your own goals first. You also need to decide whether or not to enter into negotiations with Tibatto and, if so, what is your proposition. There is no need to consult your allies on this.

Note: the last two paragraphs in this section should also be included in the Suebi and Alan briefs.

SUEBI BRIEF

Note: Repeat the information from the start of the Vandal brief.

AVAILABLE TROOPS

You are currently encamped to the east of the abandoned city of Aquae Mattiacorum with:

- Rando's comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry, which may dismount to fight on foot.
- 6,000 foot warriors
- 500 archers

GOALS AND FURTHER DETAILS

As the leader with the greatest renown and the largest contingent, leadership should be yours. The Vandals, however, assume a sense of self-importance that is not justified. The Alans are an untrustworthy race of nomads and the smallest contingent.

Note: Repeat the information from the end of the Vandal brief.



ALAN BRIEF

You have little in common with either of the other tribes. You joined them because you saw an opportunity, and, leading a relatively small contingent, you hope that you can take advantage of their numbers to cross into Roman territory; from there, you may be able to strike a separate deal with the Romans.

Note: Repeat the information from the start of the Vandal brief.

AVAILABLE TROOPS

You are currently camped to the east of the abandoned city of Aquae Mattiacorum with:

- Respendial's comitatus of 300 heavy cavalry lancers
- 600 heavy cavalry lancers
- 1,000 light horse archers

GOALS AND FURTHER DETAILS

The Suebi and Vandals are already beginning to run low on supplies and, if the predicted harsh winter emerges, they will be in a perilous situation. This will affect you, too - but, thanks to your smaller numbers, it will be easier for you to feed yourselves.

The Suebi are led by Rando, a man known for caution, and are the largest contingent. The more aggressive Vandals have assumed de facto leadership of the Germanic peoples. Your Alans are Sarmatians, not Germans, and your very different language and customs set you apart.



Above: Alans sought to make a separate accommodation with the Romans.

Your aim is to get across the Rhine and cut a deal with the Romans that will give you land to settle in return for military service. While you remain on the east bank, you will need to cooperate with and support the Suebi and Vandals, but, once across to the west side, all bets are off. You can side with whomever gives you the best offer.

There is plenty of opportunity for loot on the Roman side. The accumulation of loot will allow you to reward your followers, keep them loyal, and attract new recruits. On the other hand, taking more loot will reduce your chances of striking a deal with the Roman authorities.

Note: Repeat the information from the end of the Vandal brief.

BACCAUDAE BRIEF

You and your followers have adopted a sort of 'Robin Hood' existence, living free of the heavy burden of Imperial taxation, and managing your own affairs. The Imperial authorities see you as rebels, and have been doing their best to crush you, but, so far, you have managed to survive by hiding out in the countryside, where the local population supports you.

Paulinus Maximus (based at Mogontiacum) has been appointed to defend the Rhine frontier against the tens of thousands of barbarians gathered on the east bank. If these invaders succeed, they may prove to be more benevolent rulers than Rome, though there is a risk they could plunder your village and massacre the population.

The situation offers opportunities and risks; you could make overtures to the authorities, to gain legitimacy in exchange for your support in defending the Rhine, or you could aid the barbarians. It is perfectly possible to deal with one contingent and not the others.

AVAILABLE TROOPS

Your main base is located not far away from the 30th Milestone - a rundown fort, garrisoned by local militia who control the approaches to Augusta Treverorum. There is a garrison at Augusta Treverorum, and the Bishop of Trier wields considerable power and influence. There is friction between the Bishop and Maximus.

You have a small, dedicated band of 500 fighters: Roman army deserters and a few Franks. You can call on many local villagers, who will provide enthusiastic volunteers, though they will have limited military experience.

GOALS AND FURTHER DETAILS

Your aim is to continue to live free from outside control, whether Roman or barbarian. Decide if you wish to enter negotiations with any of the factions (if so, which ones), and what your propositions are. What would you be willing to accept in return?

HOW OUR CAMPAIGNS PLAYED OUT

In one campaign, Maximus chose to concentrate his troops in Mogontiacum and, when it came to the Baccaudae, his orders were to 'deal with them in the traditional Roman Way', crucifying any that he could get his hands on. He also pressganged the local peasants to dig fortifications, resulting in good defensive positions for his troops, but no control over the countryside. His convoys were ambushed, and lines of communications cut by bands of Baccaudae!

There will usually be a lot of player discussion - and deception - in the campaign. After a failed attempt by the Vandals to induce the Suebi to conduct a feint against Borbetomagus, the barbarians concentrated all their forces at Confluentes, bypassing the strong Roman forces at Mogontiacum. The Alans sought an accommodation with the Romans, but were rebuffed. This drove the Alans reluctantly back into the arms of the Vandals and Suebi. When it came to the battle, the Alans joined in on the barbarian side, but did not engage decisively. The Vandals accepted

overtures from the Baccaudae, offering them a significant share of loot, much of which they intended to appropriate from the Alans. The Suebi deceived the Baccaudae, intending to destroy them after victory. As a result, the Vandals gained the support of the Baccaudae and their assistance in the battle that followed. Such prolonged negotiation, alliance switching, and intrigue is part of the extra tactical challenge that email campaigns can present to players.

The barbarians overwhelmed the garrison at Confluentes, but some survivors were able to retreat to the 30th Milestone; the victors were held up with the necessities of pillage and plunder!

As he had no enemy in front of him, Maximus was able to withdraw all his forces from Mogontiacum, reaching the 30th Milestone to block the enemy advance on Augusta Treverorum. His engineers had been able partially to fortify a position around an old signal tower there.



Above: Alans ride out.

FROM CAMPAIGN TO TABLETOP

I have played this game several times, once with only three players (the Alans and Baccaudae were umpire-controlled), and in another where there were seven players (I introduced additional incentives for possible competition between duos of players on the Roman and Vandal sides). The aim of the strategic campaign is to set the scene, offer the chance for alliances to be made and broken, and to allow available troops to form, ready to fight a tabletop game with miniatures.

Planned assaults on the frontier cities were always umpire-determined through simple dice rolls to give the result, based on the troops deployed by the players (as described in the email exchanges leading up to the attack).

THE FINAL BATTLE

The strategic email campaign sets the stage for a Roman last stand, set at the

30th Milestone, with the outcomes of assaults and tactical decision-making on the frontier having an impact on how the final clash is played.

A final encounter on the tabletop is inevitable; it is impossible for the Romans to defend against every approach, and, eventually, the barbarians will break through to advance on Augusta Treverorum. The 30th Milestone is the last line of defence for the Romans.

Of course, with many options open to both sides, the number of troops available, potential reinforcements for the Romans, dissent amongst the barbarians, and the wild card element - the Baccaudae - will ensure this is a very different experience for each group of players that reaches this point in the game.

We played the game using my *Comitatus* rules (legio-wargames.com/about-3) with 15mm figures on a 9' x 6' table, using a scale of roughly 20-30 men per one figure. To make things more interesting,

I introduced a chance of winter weather hindering operations.

THE TERRAIN

The battlefield at the 30th Milestone should be relatively open, with woods and hills closing in from the north and south table-edges, and a road running east-west. A signal tower and fortifications should take up the centre of the table; the state of these will vary, depending on the efforts the Romans put into shoring them up during the strategic campaign. The Baccaudae stronghold is in the woods to the north.

THE TROOPS

The 30th Milestone is garrisoned by 1,000 militia, backed up by whatever troops can withdraw from the Rhine in good order. Depending on how the Romans played their hand, and spent their gold, they may be reinforced from Augusta Treverorum, or even from the field army.

HOW OUR FINALES PLAYED OUT

In one of our campaigns, dissent grew between the Vandal, Suebi, and Alan players, culminating in a collapsing alliance during the final battle. The different forces mostly left it to the others to do the fighting, but the Suebi did eventually break through the Roman defences, only for their leader, Rando, to be killed when he sought out Maximus in personal combat; this shattered the morale of his men.

As this drama was unfolding, the Vandals emerged on the Roman northern flank, guided through the woods by the Baccadae. Seeing the Alans coming around the rear of the Roman position, the Vandals incorrectly assumed the Alans had switched sides and attacked them instead of the Romans.

Perfectly timed, to coincide with the chaos and confusion, Roman reinforcements arrived from Augusta Treverorum. This resulted in a Roman victory, due, in no small measure, to the untimely death of Rando and the frictions within the barbarian camp.

In another game the Romans were defeated, in part because they had alienated the bishop of Trier. The righteous bishop prevented any reinforcements coming from Augusta Treverorum, and, facing a more cooperative collective of Vandals, Suebi, and Alans, the Roman defenders were overwhelmed at the 30th Milestone.



Above: The Suebi break through the Roman fortifications, but Rando is killed in the fighting.

CONCLUSION

By giving players free strategic choices of alliances, available troops, and their deployment in advance, the campaign sets the stage for a finale that can be radically different each time. Combining strategic moves with a tactical game does take some preparation, but the result is more than worth it.



Above: The Suebi storm the fortifications at the 30th Milestone from the east as the Vandals close in from the north.

THE OTHER PARTIZAN

OCTOBER 2024

PART ONE



There's nothing worse than a long show-report preamble when all you really want to see are as many photos of the games as possible, with some explanation of what you are looking at. So, to that end...

XXX Corps Breakout - Old Pikeys

We begin with the winner of the Best Demonstration Game award, inspired by the history of WWII's Market Garden campaign, and by the Dickie Attenborough-directed classic movie *A Bridge Too Far*.

The Pikeys love to get a lot of their collection onto the tabletop, and this battle was the perfect excuse for them to cram the road - which ran the table's length - with a fine collection of armour, mostly made up of Warlord Games tanks.

The game covered the slowed advance of the Irish Guard, progressing down what became known as Hell's Highway. It brilliantly captured the drama of the film, and was one of the show's most spectacular displays, with the engagement challenges changing as the advance slowly trundled on.





Michael Caine's Lieutenant-Colonel Vandeleur surveys the advance.



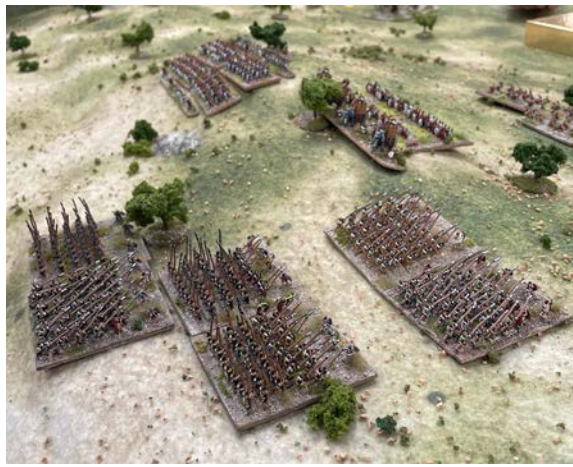
While many hobbyists might prefer the shift to plastic kits for their tanks, the resin hull here allows for some effective and easy battle-damage addition.



The detail on the Dutch buildings is printed out from photographs taken of the real architecture, trees are from Last Valley, figures are mostly a combination of Warlord Games and Offensive Miniatures, and the road is textured wallpaper raised up on a line of ceiling coving.

THE LARD ZONE

The Lard Zone, featuring games from TooFatLardies, included the winner of the Best Participation Game award, Mark Backhouse's Battle of Cynoscephalae. Played in 2mm scale with Mark's *Strength & Honour* rules, this pitched battle, over the crest of a hill, showed how dropping the scale can give a better impression of the way elevation impacts strategy. The battle comes from the upcoming *Strength & Honour* supplement *Conquest-Alexander and Hannibal*.



"Purple! Start the purple!"



ВОЛКОВ БОЯТЬСЯ - THE BODKINS

David Imrie spearheaded a game by the Bodkins wargaming collective. A passion project of his, 25 years in the making. Волков бояться (a Russian proverb roughly translated as “if you’re scared of wolves, don’t go in the woods”), was a theoretical encounter between Russian and Prussian forces, inspired by events that took place after the Battle of Zorndorf in 1758, during the Seven Years’ War (SYW).

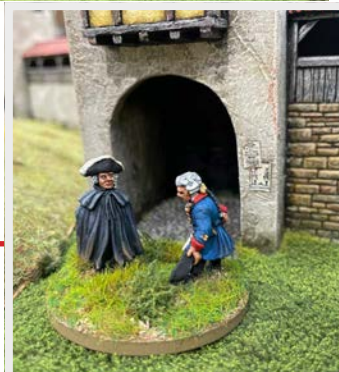
David supplied all of the figures on the table, most of which come from his own Claymore Castings range, but other Bodkins chipped in with contributions to the game, including Seven Years’ War amendments to *Valour & Fortitude* - the rules of choice used on the day.



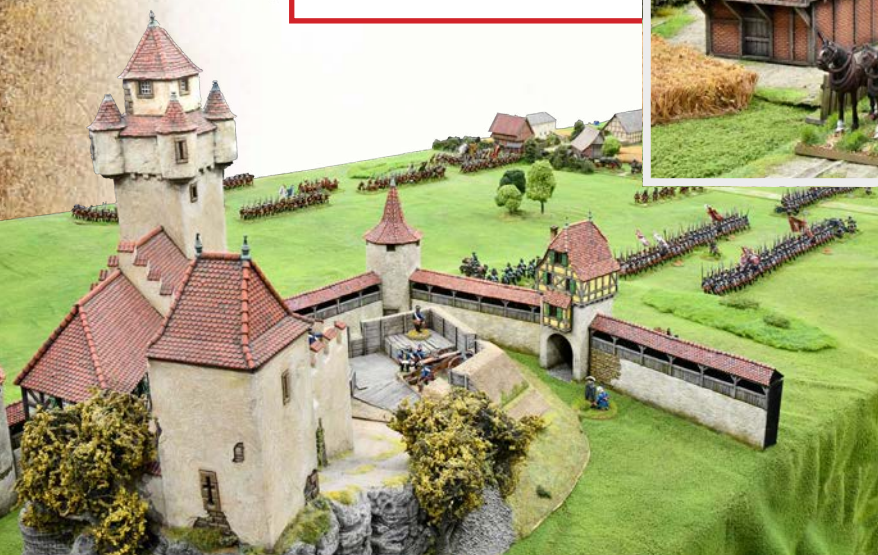
After the real battle of Zorndorf, the Prussians shadowed the Russian supply train; in this ‘what if?’ the Prussians catch up with the train and attack. The wagons are by Warfare Miniatures, which perfectly fit the SYW.



As with all the buildings on the table, the castle was a commission build for David, made 25 years ago by master model-maker John Boadie.



Subtly pasted to the castle gatehouse wall was a miniature copy of a 18th Century Prussian recruitment poster.



BEST VIGNETTE AWARD WINNER - THE GOODS INSPECTION



David Imrie: “It’s a bit of bawdy fun. The figure of the woman was sculpted/converted for me as a gift by Brian Rigelsford. It arrived out the blue, and wasn’t a pose I would normally request (!), but it was so funny and cleverly done.

“The mounted officer (with a love heart on his cheek) was a gift to me from Thomas Foss in the States, ten years ago. The monk was painted by fellow Bodkin Nick Murray. The Prussian officer and soldier were painted by me and Bodkin Andy Mulligan, who also supplied the wagon. I just worked in some highlights here and there to bring it all together. After all, what on Earth was I going to do with the Rigelsford figure?!”



THE METEORIC RISE OF THE DUNELM FLEECE

While the cloth mat has been a stable covering for wargames convention tables in the US for a quite a while now, it has taken longer for UK demonstrators to embrace the fleece. Leading the charge for table coverings at the present time must be the Dunelm Soft Fleece Throw. We photographed three tables that were using this material as the starting point for their terrain. Billed as a 'soft fleece for added warmth and comfort, this machine washable throw is plain and simple in design and is available in a choice of colours' by UK soft furnishing giant Dunelm, wargamers have clearing latched onto the fact that, by using various creative techniques, the Dunelm fleece can be sprayed, brushed, trimmed, and generally converted from something designed for people to snuggle up under on the couch, into a miniature warzone representing pretty much anywhere across the globe.

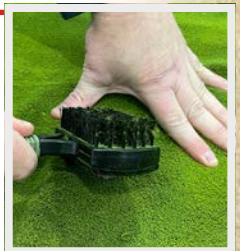


Flexible enough to be used from the SYW to Napoleonics (and beyond), these buildings were commissioned by David and constructed (scratch-built) by James Sharp of Oshiro Terrain.

Sitting under the buildings are small felt mats to which David has added texture using Vallejo Weathering Effects Thick Mud.



David achieved the finished results he wanted for this Dunelm fleece by using cheap spray paints to create a 'camouflage effect' with various shades of green. The final colour - the lightest green - is sprayed from a low side angle, to create a highlight effect. After the spraying comes the brushing: a wire pet-brush is combed across the whole surface of the fleece (for about an hour) to bring out the texture, and merge the colours together.

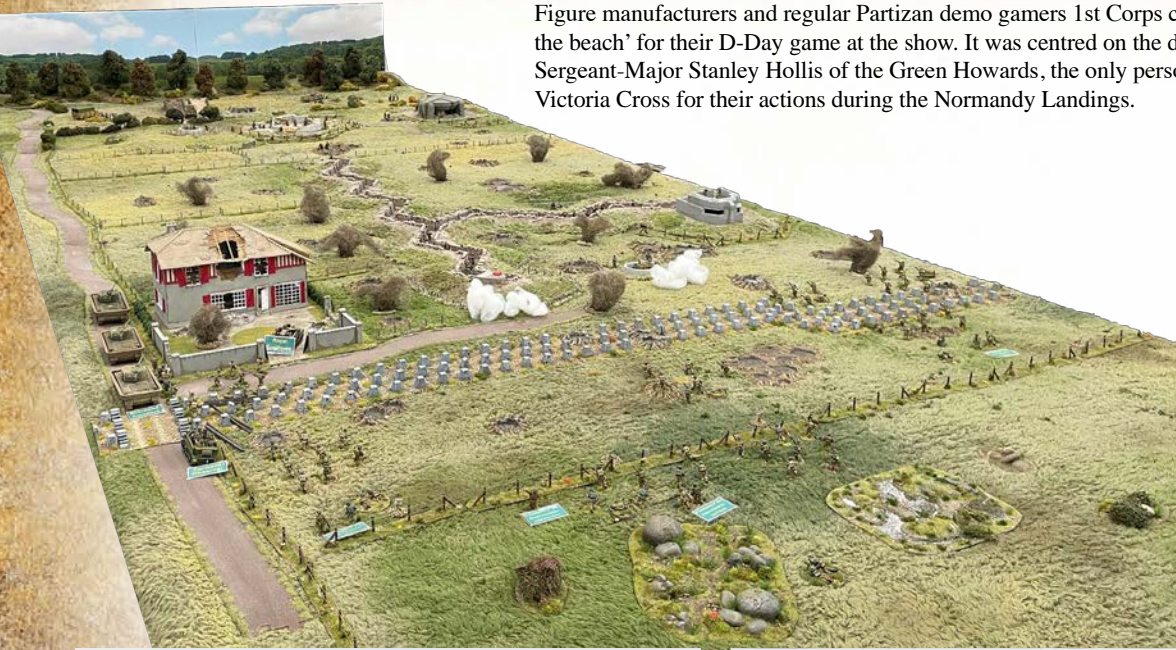


David trimmed the fleece, leaving some patches longer (seen bottom right) and creating rough areas to break up the green of the main board.



KING RED SECTOR, GOLD BEACH, D-DAY 1944 - 1st CORPS

Figure manufacturers and regular Partizan demo gamers 1st Corps chose to focus ‘beyond the beach’ for their D-Day game at the show. It was centred on the daring deeds of Company Sergeant-Major Stanley Hollis of the Green Howards, the only person to be awarded a Victoria Cross for their actions during the Normandy Landings.



Hollis' VC citation highlights two incidents of bravery during D-Day; the first concerned a German Pillbox, depicted on the 1st Corps table and seen in this photograph. The citation describes the action: "Hollis instantly rushed straight at the pillbox, firing his Sten gun into the pillbox. He jumped on top of the pillbox, re-charged his magazine, threw a grenade in through the door and fired his Sten gun into it, killing two Germans and taking the remainder prisoners."



The objective of the game was to advance inland and capture the (3D-printed) Mont Fleury battery, situated at the top of the gently sloping table. The rules being used were I Ain't Been Shot Mum by TooFatLardies, which allow for the individual heroism displayed by CSM Hollis.



The trenches were scratch-built (with added Renedra sandbags). Cut-off sections of Dunelm fleece were glued to the bases of the trenches (and bunkers) in order to blend them into the rest of the mat/table, and disguise any joins. The 3D-printed dragon's teeth are a tweak on history; there was actually a trench in this part of the battlefield.



The Sherwood Foresters advance along the road, passing the iconic Lavatory Pan Villa - seen on the skyline in several photographs from D-Day - and scratch built for the table by Michael from 1st Corps. The tanks and other vehicles were a mix of 1st Corps, Tamiya, and Corgi.



The table featured the Flexible Resin Roads by 1st Corps, and soon-to-be-released Flexible Resin Tracks, both featuring the inter-locking jigsaw design.

THE BATTLE OF LUTZEN - THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY KRIEGSPIELERS

The League of Extraordinary Kriegspielers (or League, or LEK) don't like to do things by halves, so nine months ago, when they collectively decided to demo the famous Thirty Years' War Battle of Lutzen, 1632, they needed to beg, commission, and construct everything from scratch, including all the scenery, armies, and even the rules, which they wrote themselves, based on *Honours of War*.



Getting the Swedish brigade formation correct was critical. It's a point of great debate, but the Kriegspielers think they have cracked it with three squadrons in a brigade, fighting as three units.



Driven by a desire for maximum visual impact, Steve Langan of the League of Extraordinary Kriegspielers wanted the game to look like Peter Snayers' contemporary artwork of the conflict. At 1:20 scale, with big and deep infantry blocks, the biggest units on the table are 72-men strong.



The LEK love their vignettes, and, in an effort to capture and colour and character of the Thirty Years' War, they added a camp as a side-table, allowing for a whole host of small scenes to accompany and complement the battle. Taking inspiration from contemporary etchings by Jacques Callot and others, the vignettes included: a hanging tree, brothel (hidden inside a tent), soldiers gaming, and - Kriegspieler Steve's favourite piece - an orange tree in a cart (seen right), which (for no apparent reason!) appears in the 1973 Richard Lester film *The Three Musketeers*.

In a breakaway move from the ubiquitous Dunelm fleece, the Kriegspielers chose to go with Minky Fabric for their cloth. LEKer Steve told us he prefers the 'short pile' nature of Minky, which doesn't crease, and isn't as long as the Dunelm Fleece. The finished colour of the fabric was inspired by the famous Peter Snayers painting of the battle, whose grass has an autumnal-yellowish hue. Steve also maintains that the lighter-coloured cloth helps the figures 'pop', whereas dark cloth washes the colour out from the figures.

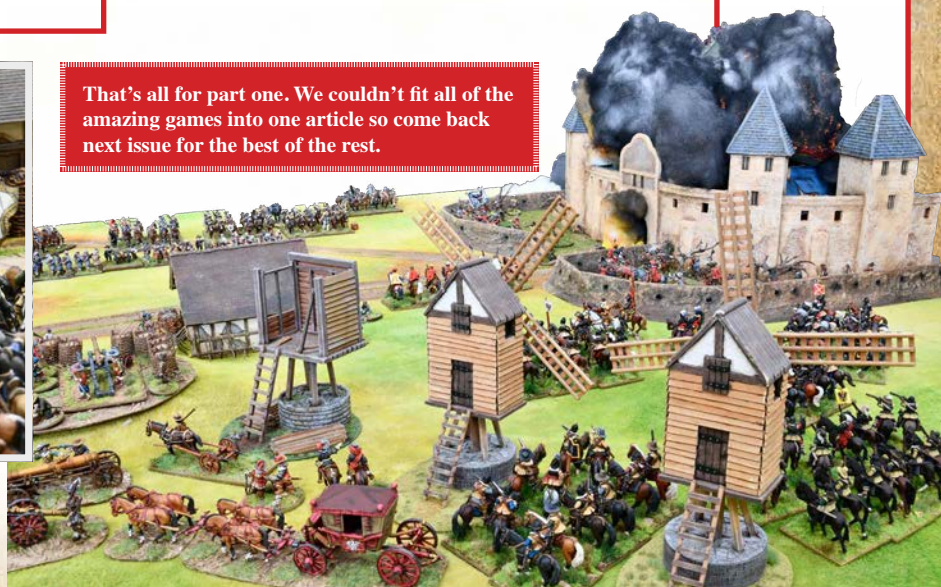


All the terrain was made by David Marshall of TM Terrain.

That's all for part one. We couldn't fit all of the amazing games into one article so come back next issue for the best of the rest.



Although there are figures from several different manufacturers across the table, The Assault Group are particularly well represented, along with Foundry and Empress.



Getting Cold Feet in Norway



The Battle of Trangen, 1808

Jan Karrman's latest impressive project, in preparation for Salute 2025, is perfect for our Winter War theme, featuring a dramatic capture in a snowy forest, and Napoleonic ski troops!

When deciding on a new project, there were a few things I sought out. I wanted the chance to experiment with snow effects, which I had not done before, and I wanted to try creating the look of a real forest rather than just having a few trees scattered around, as is the style on most gaming boards. Additionally, I wanted it to be of interest to other gamers from my locale by creating something set in Northern Europe. When I stumbled upon a little-known battle that involved the regiment with which I did my military service, I knew I had found my next project.

Right: Swedes with skis and snow shoes.



THE DANISH-SWEDISH WAR, 1808-1809

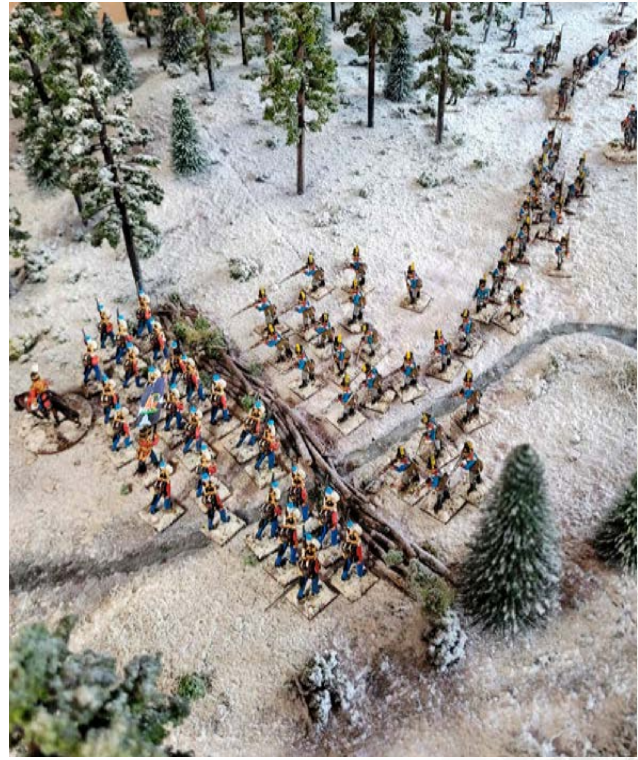
On 14 March 1808, Denmark, pressured by its partners in the continental alliance, presented a declaration of war to the Swedish government. In response, Sweden, encouraged by its ally Great Britain, attacked Norway, which was then part of Denmark. General Arnfeld was in charge of the main Swedish force, and, after a victory at Lier on 18 April, advanced toward Kongsvinger. To help with his plan to conquer the well-fortified town, Arnfeld ordered the 2nd battalion from the Dal regiment north, even further into Norway. He hoped it would force the Norwegians to commit troops to repel the attack; if the Dal regiment was successful and managed to advance along the Glomma Valley, the Swedes would be able to catch the Norwegians in a pincer movement.

The Dal regiment was one of the oldest and most trusted in the Swedish army, and the 2nd battalion was known as 'the flying corps' due to its ability to move quickly. However, in these particular circumstances, there was still a lot of snow and ice on the ground, which made advancing very difficult, even for them. Colonel Gahn, who oversaw the battalion, was reluctant to attack, explaining in a letter to Arnfeld that there were "insurmountable difficulties in moving in this deep snow slurry" and that even marching two abreast was almost impossible. When the regiment finally crossed the border on 25 April, they left behind two horse-drawn 3-pdrs and the regimental colours to ensure that the battalion could move as quickly as possible.

The battle

In an attempt to bypass any Norwegian troops, Colonel Gahn decided to follow the Flisa River on the south side. It was a narrower and less-frequented route than the main track on the northern side, but it would give the Swedes the element of surprise, hopefully allowing them to press on and join with the main Swedish force. Military intelligence had reported to Gahn that there would be no more than 400 Norwegian troops in the area, but in reality, there were closer to 800 troops under the command of Colonel Staffeldt.

When the Swedes approached Trangen, a narrow pass between two tall hills, they encountered 270 grenadiers from the Second Trondheim Infantry Regiment, who were waiting behind simple field fortifications. Colonel Gahn ordered an immediate attack, and, even though the narrow path made it difficult to use the Swedish numerical advantage, the ferocity of the Swedish attack began gradually pushing the grenadiers back.



Above: The battle begins.

Staffeldt, who had positioned most of his troops on the northern side of the river, was aware of troop movements on the other side, but was unsure whether this was the main Swedish attack or part of a deliberate trap. He received messages claiming that all would be lost unless he sent reinforcements. He chose to wait, and only when his scouts reported that there were no more Swedes on their way did he finally order his remaining troops to join the battle.

Leaving some troops to secure the north side, Staffeldt, with a company of sharpshooters, the Elverumske ski troops, and the remaining grenadiers, crossed the river at Gammelseter (situated just beyond the edge of the board, on the eastern side). They encountered some Swedish troops who had been left behind to protect the river crossing, but drove them back toward the main Swedish force. At the same time, the Hoffske ski regiment crossed the still mostly-frozen river from the north to fall upon the Swedish flank.

NORWEGIAN SKI TROOPS

The ski troops tended to be very capable units with high morale and good marksmen. They were trained in light infantry tactics and feared by the Swedes. With winter conditions stretching into May, their ability to move quickly was very useful, and they were used in a similar way to light cavalry. They were organized into two battalions, each with three *compagnier*. Each unit acted independently and contained roughly 150 men. The Elverumske and Hoffske ski companies were part of the Søndenfjellske battalion and were both involved at Trangen.

They wore a distinctive low mitre-shaped felt cap with a Norwegian lion on the front. The skis used were very different from modern skis; one was over two and a half meters long and designed for gliding, while a shorter ski, covered with either seal or reindeer skin, prevented the skier from sliding backward when going uphill. Only one ski pole was used, which also provided support when firing, and the units had a multitude of different guns and rifles but, shortly before the outbreak of war, were issued surplus rifles from the Jaeger corps. All ski troops were provided with gun covers to protect them from snow and dirt during transport.



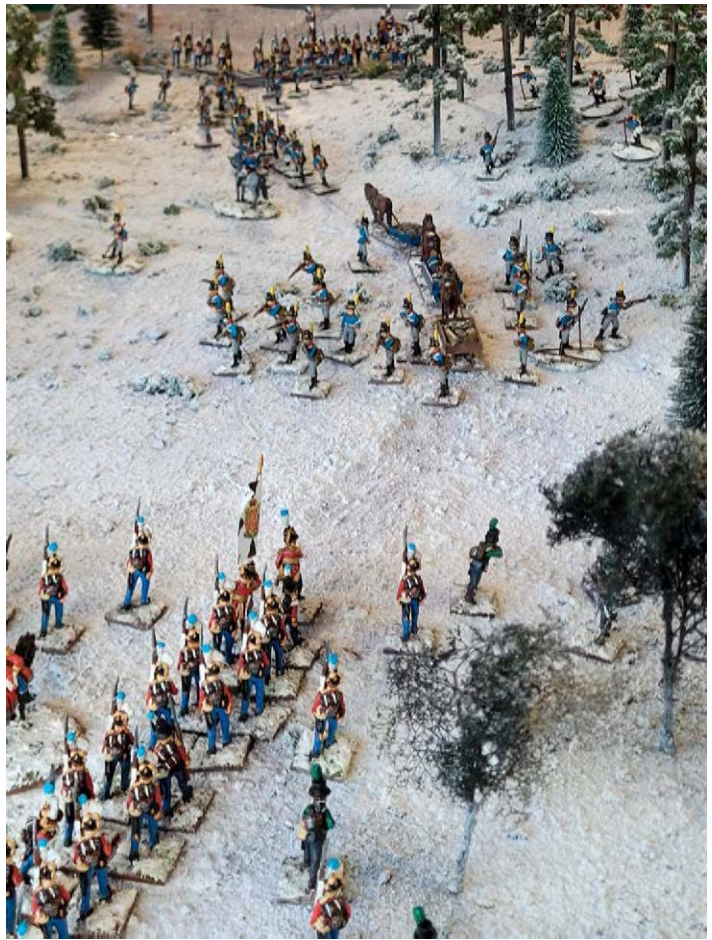
Colonel Gahn, realizing that he was being attacked from three directions, ordered the whole battalion to turn around and try to fight their way back toward the Swedish border. The final part of the battle took place on a hill between Trangen and Gammelseter, with the Swedes fighting hard to make it back to safety across the border. In Norwegian history, this is the point when Captain Dreyer rallies the wavering Norwegian troops, managing to maintain the attack when the Swedes were threatening to break through the encirclement. The Swedes finally started to run out of ammunition, and Colonel Gahn, realizing the hopelessness of the battalion's position, made an unconditional surrender.

Aftermath

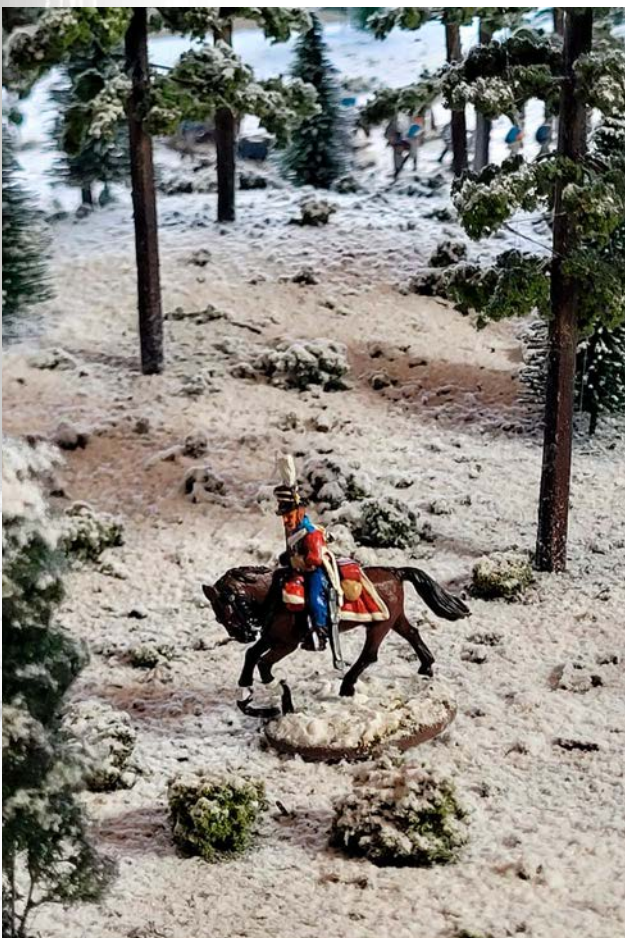
The Swedes lost 25 soldiers, and 385 were taken prisoner while the Norwegians lost 15 dead and 53 wounded. The Norwegians also captured 416 guns, 16 sabres, six drums, and one trumpet. The war continued with skirmishes and smaller battles, but the full onset of winter eventually ground it to a halt.

The Swedish forces, having recently been defeated in Finland, were ravaged by disease. Norway, suffering from a crippling naval blockade conducted by the British Navy, was also keen to bring hostilities to an end. Against Danish wishes, the Norwegian crown prince agreed to an armistice on 7 December 1808. The armistice held, and the war finally ended on 10 December 1809, with no territorial gains for either country.

Colonel Gahn's career did not suffer from the defeat; he was ennobled shortly after being released from captivity, promoted to Major-General, and put in charge of the main Swedish force during the Norwegian-Swedish War of 1814.



Above: The Norwegian main force arrives.



Above: A lone Norwegian Dragoon surveys the snowy landscape.

FROM HISTORY TO THE TABLETOP

The miniatures

Perry Miniatures has a good range of Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian troops for the period, but there are some gaps in the range, so it has been fun to create some of the additional figures that were needed.

A Norwegian sharpshooter became Captain Dreyer after extensive remodelling, while the Swedish skiers were made by modifying the Perry's Swedish line infantry. Luckily, the Norwegian ski troops were already available from Steve Barber Models - who carry out commissions for gamers wanting unusual figures - which are then made available for purchase by anyone once the commission is fulfilled. Whoever needed the Norwegian ski troops in the past, thank you!



Left: Converted Swedish skiers and snowshoers.

SLEDGES

The Swedish battalion had eight sledges with them when crossing into Norway. A widely-used type at that time was the *fora*, a ruggedly constructed sledge with a large loading area. It had articulated runners at the front, and could be pulled through very difficult terrain.

I also modelled a horse-drawn M1788 ammunition sledge for the Norwegian ski troops. It was made from wood and featured a canvas top, and it served multiple purposes, including transporting wounded soldiers.

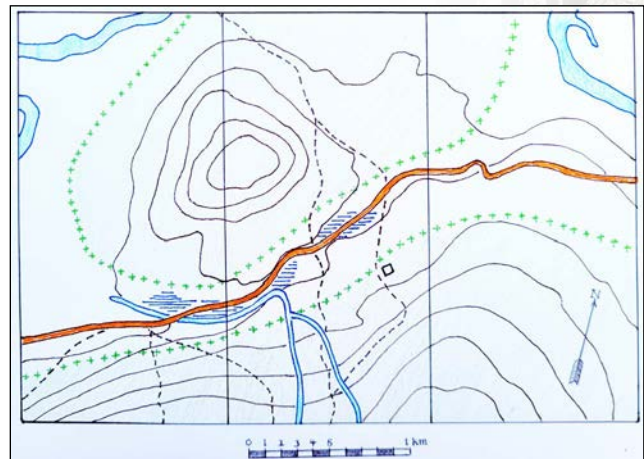


Above: A *fora* is pulled across the snow.

The landscape

When I built my last landscape - the Battle of Oravais - I injured my arm quite badly while moving boards around, so making these ones lighter was a prerequisite for the project. I avoided thick MDF, instead constructing the boards from 6mm plywood sheets, supported by simple pine frames.

I built the landscape up using 5mm-thick paper-based flooring underlay. It's easy to cut and sand, but quite a few layers were needed for the hills. I used anything I could lay my hands on, like paint pots and old books, to ensure the underlays were held down firmly while the PVA glue was drying. Using the underlays meant I did not need much filler, and the boards turned out considerably lighter than my previous ones.



Snow and basing

I did not want a clean, white landscape or bases; the troops were marching through snow and mud, and the ground would have quickly turned into a mess (as described in Colonel Gahn's letter to Arnfeld). A friend suggested mixing baking soda, white paint, and Modge Podge for figures' bases. I also bought a couple of tubs of AK snow, since I felt that there might be ready-made products that did a better job.

I based the figures as I would for less chilly terrain, and then applied the snow mixtures, making sure the basing material poked through in places. I have seen some really good results with the AK snow, but I actually preferred the baking soda mixture, probably because I was after a rather muddy and messy look. I used more paint than glue in my snow paste, as I have been advised that the mixture can turn yellow over time.

I prepared the ground on the board in a similar way to the bases, and added stones and bushes before applying any snow effect. I carefully applied the baking soda mixture at the sides of roads and rivers, and covered the rest of the ground with snow scatter from WWScenic and Noch. The WWS snow is very white, while Noch snow has a slight yellow tone that I thought looked better on the landscape. Both were easy to apply using a large kitchen sieve.



Above: The board takes on a suitably chilly look while nicer weather shines through the windows around it as Jan progresses the build.

Trees

There are 187 different types of pine in the world, but in Scandinavia, we are talking about Scotch pine in huge numbers. I have tried several different methods to make them for previous projects, but have never been quite happy with the result. This time, I started by analysing pictures of pine trees, and tried to find ways to simplify the structure while maintaining the 'feel' of the trees. I estimated that I needed over 30 trees for the board, to even begin to look real. I would like to say that I found an easy way to make them, but the truth is that they were extremely time-consuming.



Shaping and drilling balsa wood trunks, inserting lots of pieces of thin aluminium wire, shaping and gluing the wires, spray-painting, hand painting, and finally gluing clump foliage on each branch took a long time, but I was very happy with the result.

Some people spend a huge amount of time painting figures, or researching the most detailed historical aspects of uniforms, weaponry, or facial hair, so I guess it all depends on what you want to prioritise!

To ensure that the forest was dense enough, and to spare my sanity, I mixed my eventual 36 pine trees with some spruce models I purchased, and added some birch trees at the edges. In total, there are close to 80 trees displayed on the board.

NEXT UP - PLAYING THE GAME!

The priorities for this project were to experiment with creating a winter landscape, and to showcase a conflict that is almost totally unknown. To turn the battle into a playable scenario, let's look at how to balance the forces, and how to replicate Staffeldt's reluctance to fully commit his troops.

What would constitute a victory, especially for the Swedes, is also an interesting question. Some of those questions will be answered in the spring, since my friends, the experienced wargamers Ken Baldock and Colin Brewer, have offered to run the battle as a participation game at Salute 2025. We hope to see some of you there!

CAPTAIN DREYER

Captain Dreyer was a Grenadier officer who gained fame when he managed to rally the Norwegians at a late stage of the battle, when the Swedish troops were threatening to escape the encirclement. Standing on a tree stump, with soldiers loading weapons and handing them to him, the captain kept firing at the Swedes while encouraging his men to maintain the fight.

He was hit several times, and died shortly after the battle, but he and the Battle of Trangen became important symbols in the Norwegian struggle for independence. It's difficult to know how true the story is, but I enjoyed making a vignette of Dreyer firing, and a sharpshooter frantically getting another rifle ready for him.



ORDERS OF BATTLE

NORWEGIAN TROOPS		Men	Figures
Commander	Colonel Staffeldt		
Second Trondheim Infantry Regiment	1st Grenadier Divisjon - Capt. Lied	669	13
	2nd Grenadier Divisjon - Capt. Knoff		13
	3rd Grenadier Divisjon - Capt. Stang		13
	4th Grenadier Divisjon - Capt. Nægler		13
Sonnenfjellske Skiløperbataljon	Elverumske Ski Company - Lt. Gänster	312	14 1 Sledge
	Hoffske Ski Company - Capt. Arntzen		14
First and Second Trondheim Infantry Regiments	One Sharpshooter Company - Capt. Siegholt	161	14
Oplandske Dragoon Regiment	One Dragoon Company	30	3

SWEDISH TROOPS		Men	Figures
Commander	Colonel Gahn		
Dal Regiment 2nd battalion (One company acts as jaegers)		12 Officers 13 Sub-Officers 506 (18 on skis, 24 with snowshoes)	
	Västerdals Company		12 (1 with skis)
	Orsa Company		12 (1 with skis)
	Mora Company		12 (1 with snowshoes)
	Rättviks Company		12 (1 with snowshoes)
Baggage Train		8 Single-Horse Sledges	Horses and Sledges



Left: Ski troops with ammunition sledge.

THERE AND CRACK AGAIN

Mike Peters reports on Crack Con Five - a wargaming event close to his heart, and one at which he showcased his game, *Ruckus*, this year.

Lockdown was responsible for a lot more than the Barnard Castle incident and Partygate; it was also the origin of Crack Con, a delightful day of wargaming at Boards and Swords Hobbies in Derby. Martin Brook, of 7th Son and Ragged Staff Minis, explains how it began:

“The Plastic Crack Podcast started in 2020, during Lockdown, and it was just a couple of the guys (Ken and Dom) having a chat. After a few episodes, they invited Ste and me on and we never left! The four of us got on well, and the audience seemed to enjoy our chemistry, so we stuck at it, and it grew.

“The first Crack Con was in October 2021, and the whole thing started as a joke on the stream. We were saying that when everything opened again, we should all meet for a game, which kept coming up. People in the audience started asking if they could come, then we thought we should make it happen. We booked out Boards and Swords for 30 of us, and I told Hayley, my wife, who laughed and said, ‘What are you going to call it, Crack Con?’ How could we not?”

BIG GAMES

Crack Con Five (CCV) was a healthy mixture of big participation games (places at the table are booked in advance) and small participation games that folks can come to play on the day, and these take up both floors at the venue. At CCV there were six big games and five smaller participation games, one of which was my skirmish game, *Ruckus*, run with the assistance of Ben Mallet.



The Ruckus table was well attended. Here it is being ably run by Ben Mallet.



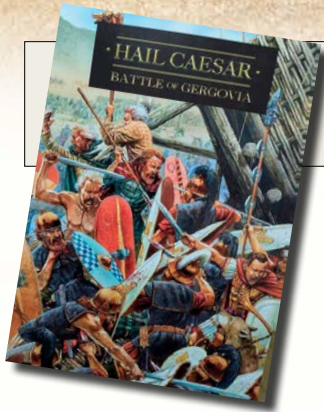
Magnificent terrain and beautifully-painted figures brought this game, run by Martin Brook, to life.



The Romans ultimately won the game, although Caesar fell in battle.



One of the two huge games downstairs, the battle of Gergovia, was run by Martin Brook using Warlord's *Hail Caesar* rules. This was a magnificent-looking game, played on an 18' table, with two splendidly-painted armies, and Caesar (in a somewhat more modernised form) in attendance.



Martin produced a professional-looking handbook to go with the game!

The other huge game downstairs was a *Black Powder* Napoleonic affair. This was run by Dominic Cook, another Plastic Cracker, and it was the kind of battle that you dream of playing, and usually only see on the pages of *Wargames Illustrated* or at bigger shows.



Black Powder gaming on another big board.

My only regret was that, because I was running a game, I could not partake in any of the others, or keep track of how they went, but I was delighted to see *Soldiers of Napoleon* during a brief break from *Ruckus*. This is a recent acquisition for me, and an excellent game about which I was happy to chat to author, Warwick Kinrade. He was a very affable man, and quite happy to discuss various aspects of his rules in a way that made me feel like we could probably have chatted away all day long, if I hadn't needed to get back to my own game!



WORTH THE TRIP?

Martin Brook explains what he thinks is behind the event's success: "We run it as a day for people to join games they might not normally play, to meet other like-minded people, and to show off the games they love. We are so happy when people come to demo systems, and this time there were eleven games in total, 72 people, and 64 raffle prizes. These come from a mixture of community members and companies, and they helped us to raise £1,300, which is going to Haven House Children's Hospice and SENSE."

There was a painting competition, too - one in which I am delighted to say I got Gold for my unit (below), The Grail Knights, a somewhat irreverent Ruckus Retinue.



This *Dead Man's Hand* game, run by Martin Stuart, was a popular come 'n' play game.

In all, the latest Crack Con was an excellent event. It is a friendly, sociable occasion, where the hum of happy gamers filled the air, and everybody cheered when Caesar died (on the tabletop, I hasten to add!). I had a great time, will certainly attend CCVI, and will happily raise my next glass with the toast, "Up the Crack!"



The Plastic Crack Podcast is broadcast live on Monday nights on YouTube, and features Martin from 7th Son, Dom from Boots on the Table, Ken from Miniature Wargaming Warriors, and Ste from On Point HQ.

Winter Bases



Multi-award-winning painter Paul Mackay highlights some of the products available for creating snow effects, and shows off some of the great finishes he's achieved on the bases of his wintery figures.

There are countless historical scenarios that feature a winter setting: Teutonic Knights in East Prussia, Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, American troops fighting off German forces in the Battle of the Bulge, and so many more.

Various wargaming companies produce figures for these campaigns (and for many other snowy battlefields), including a new range from Victrix (above), if you fancy going on a European Crusade, rather than fighting in the Holy Land. Warlord's recent release, for the Third Edition of Bolt Action, has Americans in winter gear, along with similarly-attired Fallschirmjäger [Free with this very issue - Ed]. Perry Miniatures' Retreat from Moscow range is one that I'm particularly partial to, with some brilliant figures that would be as perfect in showpiece dioramas as they are on the tabletop. If you're more inclined toward a sci-fi or fantasy setting, how about Games Workshop's Space Wolves, on the snowy wastes of Fenris, or North Star's miniatures for fantasy wargames in the frozen city of *Frostgrave*.

In short, there are more winter war options out there than you can shake a collection of paint pots at; what you need to go with them are some suitably themed bases, and that's where this article can help.

The products I use in this article cover just a small selection of that which is commercially available; I will discuss how to use the options I know, and highlight each item's respective qualities. As a competition painter, as well as an army painter,

I find it handy to have various options at my disposal, with products that can represent many different types of snow and frost. You can identify which will best fit the vision you have for your army by comparing the results in my photos. What is 'the best' is a wholly subjective choice, and one I leave to you.

A WINTER WONDERLAND OF SNOW

I have used different snow products on seven 25mm round bases, which I scored with a hobby knife, to facilitate adhesion. I also covered bases four to seven with Vallejo's Thick Mud Terrain paste before adding any winter details.

I have added slate pieces to represent rocks, and 4mm grass tufts bring another natural element to the setting. Applying similar details before snowing things up will hugely elevate the overall look of your finished bases, too.

I painted the rocks with Army Painter Uniform Grey, washed them with Citadel Basilicanum Grey Contrast paint, and drybrushed them with Army Painter Great Hall Grey. Like all natural products (sand, grit, twigs, etc.), slate tends to look unrealistic when it is not painted, and it will not blend seamlessly with your painted miniatures.

I sometimes read that tufts must look brown or dead to suit a winter setting, but, in the UK at least, green shrubbery and grasses certainly don't suddenly die when it gets cold and snows; for this reason (and because it increases the visual interest), I use a variety of coloured tufts on my bases.

The tufts in this tutorial are mainly from Gamers Grass, and I've reduced their size by cutting them in half. I think this better fits the minimal real estate available on a 25mm round base.

When you've got the preliminary terrain sorted out and are ready to apply your 'snow', consider where it would most naturally fall and lie on the ground, rocks, and grass.

1. BICARBONATE OF SODA/BAKING SODA

This is a classic approach that has been recommended for decades, but it's one where the naming caused me quite a bit of confusion. Some tutorials referred to bicarbonate of soda, and some suggested baking soda, eventually, I realised that they are the same ingredient, but the name varies depending on where you are in the world.

This is by far the cheapest way to make snow bases, and, if you are planning to complete a large winter-themed army that includes tanks and terrain, bicarb (or baking soda if you're in North America) is well worth considering. I recently bought a large pot for just 65p, the only other ingredients needed are PVA glue, water, and (optionally) white paint (I used Liquitex Titanium White). The last is to overcome the issue that afflicts some armies whose bases can yellow over time. That sort of snow effect is not what you want!

I do not recommend sprinkling the bicarb straight over your mix to achieve a powdery effect, as this top layer may yellow, too.

Rather than use a specific ratio of bicarb, PVA, water, and paint; I just aim for a nice, creamy consistency, then apply it with an old brush or cocktail stick. These have been my tools of choice for all the snow products I have used in this article.



2. VALLEJO SNOW

This Vallejo product comes as a thick paste, and gives a very convincing crunchy snow look that I really like. It is very white, and has a liquid paint element to it - if you applied it to a model, then wiped the solid part off, it would leave a residue of white paint.

Like all the commercially-produced pastes that I have tested here, it dries rock hard.



3. CITADEL VALHALLAN BLIZZARD

This product from Games Workshop gives a result that is perhaps closest (although, to my mind, superior) to the bicarb effect. As with the Vallejo Snow, it has a crunchy effect that is pleasing to the eye. It is also relatively easy to tease out little clumps that can be placed onto figures, in places snow might naturally accumulate.

It's a great little product that is available on the high street, but you will need deep pockets if you want to base a large army with it.



4. AK TERRAINS SNOW

A smooth application of ready-mixed filler would give a similar effect to this product, but the colour would not be as pure. AK Terrains Snow is a great way to make deep, smooth snow, and it takes imprints beautifully. This is a brilliant way to make hoof or footprints, enhancing the narrative of the setting.



Note: The next three products are best used in conjunction with the other snow effects that I have used above - to add extra detail.

5. AK SNOW MICROBALLOONS

This is marketed as a product that resembles the first phase of snowfall. It is a very fine powder, so I recommend wearing a mask when you use it, to avoid inhalation. Apply the Microballoons with diluted PVA glue, gloss varnish, or a resin product like Vallejo's Still Water.

In addition to basing, this is great for adding snow detail to figures and vehicles, placed where snow would accumulate.

A very light dusting onto a base is good for dirty snow. A thicker application, like the one I've done here, will take on a purer white finish.



6. AK ICE SPARKLES

Designed to show the last phase of snowfall or a thaw, Ice Sparkles can be sprinkled on top of the other snow products to make them - surprise surprise - sparkle! It will need fixing in place like the Microballoons, or you can sprinkle it onto any of the snow pastes while they are wet.



7. AK SNOW SPRINKLES

You will need to stir this very well, as it tends to separate in the tub. A light application is great for slushy-snow effects, and the makers suggest it is best used to replicate thin layers of snow.



DELUXE MATERIALS SCENIC SNOW KIT

This set comes with 70g of Scenic Snowflakes (fairly similar to the Microballoons, although a little coarser), 25g of Icy Sparkles (just like AK's version), and Scenic Bond (a tacky glue). The simplest way to use the kit is to sprinkle the Snowflakes over the Bond (PVA would work too), but the Snowflakes can be mixed with the Scenic Bond, creating a paste that's ideal for forming mounds of snow. Adding water to this paste will result in a melted-snow effect. Before things dry, Icy Sparkles can be applied to create a glistening effect.

On the base right I have used the Snowflakes over the Scenic Bond, and added a little extra shine with the Icy Sparkles.



SPEARED IN THE SNOW

You do not need to invest in a lot of snow products to make good-looking winter bases. The majority of this Victrix Saxon display miniature's base is a sand and grit mix, painted as I normally do, with some earthy pigment powders added in. I have added little patches of Vallejo Snow to suggest a fine covering of snow or frost, while still showcasing the other base detailing.

Blood drops in the snow can also look fantastic, but demands a 'less is more' approach. Try Tamiya Clear Red X27 (a firm favourite of *W*'s James, I believe), or Technical paints such as Citadel's Blood For The Blood God.



SANTA'S STEP

I created the base on this Wargames Foundry Santa using the bicarb method, and, while my mix was still tacky, I added it to the underside of the figure's boots. It's a subtle little touch, but one that rewards a closer look.



A MORE DETAILED BASE DURING A THAW

1) For this ground texture I used coir (coconut fibre), and, after making sure that was firmly fixed, I washed it with Liquitex Umber Inks. I placed a variety of tufts and shrubs to make the scene look more interesting.



2) I used AK products for the snow effects, starting with the Snow Sprinkles, which I placed sparingly before sprinkling a small amount of the Ice Sparkles and Snow Microballoons onto the still-wet paste. I then added little patches of additional snow to a few of the tufts.



3) With a good sense of the scene's progression, I added more Snow Sparkles, bit by bit, until I was happy with the finish. I then made sure the Wars of the Roses figures, from Ragged Staff Minis, were realistically placed in their environment, creating a nice little scene where plans are hatched in thawing snow.



SIMILAR METHODS, SLUSHY RESULTS

1) For the base of this 13th Century Knight in Great Helm from Victrix, I started with Vallejo's Thick Mud paste...



2) ...then added a variety of coloured tufts.



3) I mixed AK Snow Sprinkles with Microballoons and Vallejo Still Water, with the goal of making wet and muddy snow. I applied this mix sparingly with an old brush.



4) Clumps of AK Snow, applied to the earth and areas of the tufts, completed the scene. It looks more realistic if these denser snow elements are placed in the middle of your slush mix, as it will look like the snow is melting around the edges. Although it is difficult to see in the photograph, I placed little puddles of Still Water to suggest spots where the snow had completely melted.



DRAMA ON ICE

This display miniature has a far more advanced base, with a patch of icy water in which an unfortunate French soldier has met his fate. The soldier was painted, as was all the terrain detail around him, before being submerged in a pour of resin. This is a technique that goes beyond the remit of this article, but the rest of the basing details were applied with similar approaches to those that I have described above.

I used a mix of AK and Vallejo pastes for the snowy bank under the Cossack, and added Ice Sparkles around the snow's edges, to give the effect of frozen snow on the ice.

I made little icicles by pouring Still Water onto a piece of plastic, waiting for it to dry, then cutting out tiny triangles and fixing them in place.



Cossack and French Napoleonic Casualty from Perry Miniatures. The Cossack has been extensively kitbashed, with many areas sculpted from scratch.



ICY CRACKLES

I normally use crackle-type effects to represent dried earth in arid environments, but they can be used for wintry effects, too. For some reason this method feels more suited to fantasy and sci-fi figures in my eyes, so I've used a Death Fields Einherjar from Wargames Atlantic to show it off.

1) First, apply PVA or gloss varnish all over the base and wait for it to dry. After that, apply your crackle paint of choice (I use Citadel's from their Technical range). Having glue or varnish beneath makes for more convincing cracks as the crackle paint dries and splits, and it also ensures better adherence, which prevents flaking.



2) Undercoat the model and fill in any cracks that were missed. I used a rattle can, then finished things off with Liquitex Titanium White.



3) Wash the base with diluted Army Painter Arctic Gem.



4) Drybrush the 'ice' with white paint, and add patches of Valhallan Blizzard for extra detail. I placed little clumps on the model's boots, cap, cloak, and shoulders, too.

I glazed Citadel Mephiston Red onto the nose and cheeks of the Einherjar to show the effects of the cold. Reflecting the environment that your soldiers are fighting in on parts of your figures is a great way to add more realism, and it works just as well on historical troops.



CONCLUSION

As you can see, there are loads products to choose from; I've shown but a handful of the options out there. I thought I had more than enough winter basing products in my collection, but, as I type, my mate has sent me a link to a video from AK, showcasing their new frost effects. Oh, dear! It looks like the wallet is going to get another hammering, but, hey ho, 'tis the season!

I hope you will find one or more of the products and methods that I have showcased here useful. If this article inspires you to bring snow to your tabletop or display cabinet, then my work is done!



Above: A trio of Einherjar ready themselves for the trauma of last-minute Christmas shopping!



New releases from Helion & Company

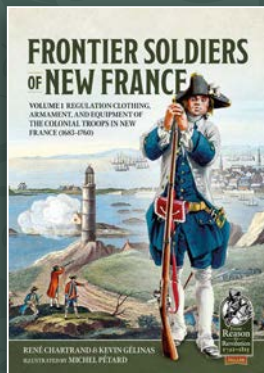
*History books for the
enthusiast and gamer*

Frontier Soldiers of New France

Volume 1: Regulation Clothing, Armament, and Equipment of the Colonial Troops in New France (1683–1760) René Chartrand and Kevin Gélinas

Frontier Soldiers of New France examines the official and regulation dress, weapons and equipment of the regular colonial troops maintained by the French government in North America from 1683 to 1760, including unpublished information with a focus on new illustrations, line drawings, and photos of rare portraits and surviving artefacts from public and private collections.

The book is lavishly illustrated with period paintings and prints, as well as museum-quality artwork by internationally acclaimed military artists lauded for accuracy combined with fine art. Indeed, some works have already graced academic publications and displays in museums and historic sites.

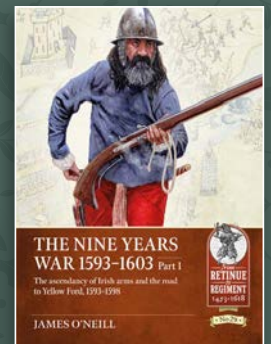


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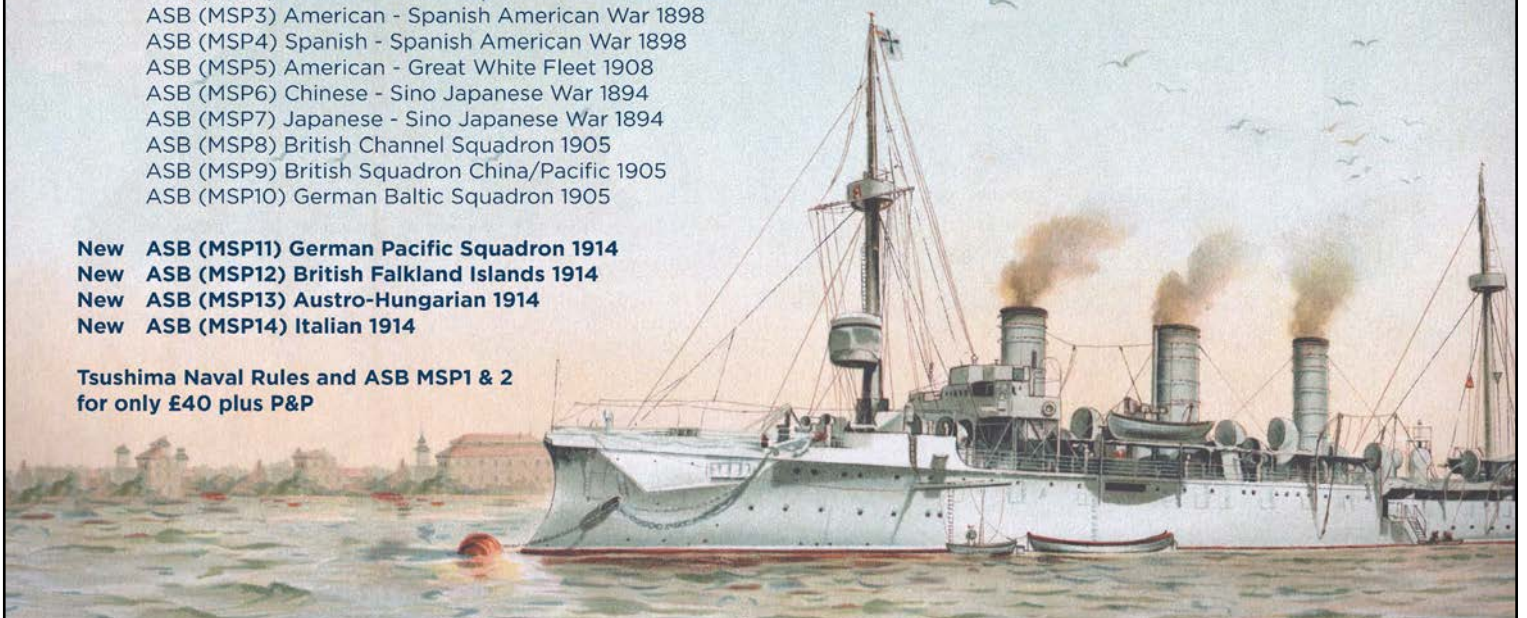
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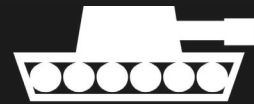
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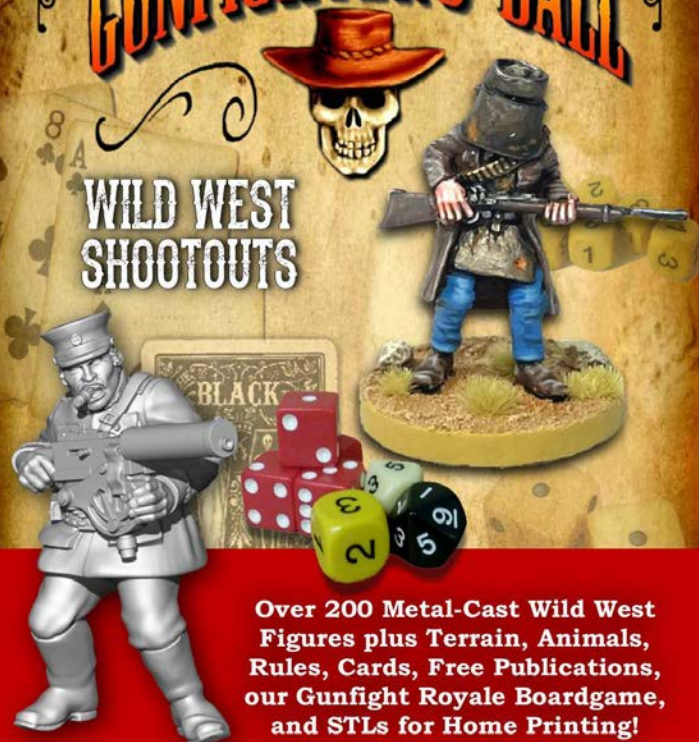
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Genghis attacks an opponent using the normal attack rules; however, he is joined by a horde of (unseen) Mongol followers, giving him a +2 dice modifier.

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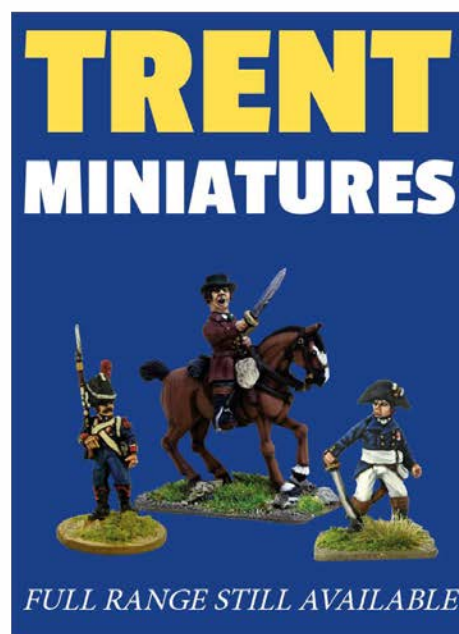
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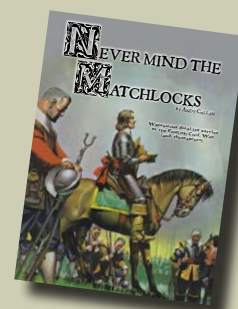
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