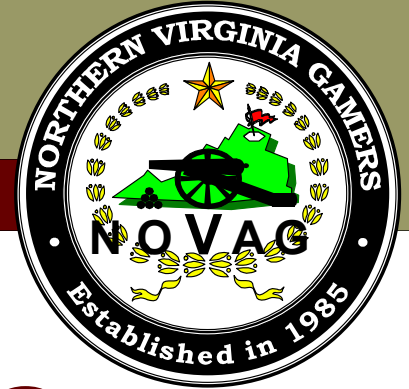




Issue 54

www.novag.org



The Gamers Closet



The Magazine of the Northern Virginia Gamers

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FALL IN. Well I hope everyone had a good time at FI. There certainly seems to be a large number of games. It seems to me that WWII continues to grow and almost crowds out other periods. There are very few Napoleonic games any more. Although a fellow from California told me that at SHIELDCON out there they have over 20 Napoleonic games. He also related that the Flames of War people are working on a Napoleonic variant. Should be interesting.

NOVAG at Cold Wars. There will be a Might of Arms tournament at CW 2007, hosted by local gamer Mike Hillsgrove of Maryland. Mike runs great games and I am sure will have some interesting scenarios. This will be a team effort with two rounds of play and Roxanne Patton is heading the NOVAG team. Contact her if you wish to play.

Shirts. Brian DeWitt has ordered the new dark green shirts and we should have by Christmas.

Computer Problems. Our web pages is now hosted by Perigrine Computer Consulting Corporation. They also do computer repair. Recently I had some minor but irritating problems with my machine. PCCC fixed it fast and for a reasonable amount. Therefore if you need computer repair/help contact them at:

3927 Old Lee Hwy
Suite 102-C
Fairfax VA 22030-2422
(703)359-9700

Since they are hosting us free of charge the BoD has agreed to let them run an ad in the newsletter.

GAME DAY. Just a reminder that Game Day is Jan 20th, 2007 at the Game Parlor in Woodbridge. See the info under news and Notes.

News & Notes: Barrage XI. Our friends, the HAWKS, will again host a one day con on January 13, 2007. The location is Arch Bishop Curley High School in Baltimore. Cost is \$4 if running a game, \$6 for pre-registered, and \$8 at the door. Active Duty military are \$2. Kids under \$13 are free. There will be a vendor/flea market area as well.

To run a game contact Todd Hartland-White at **todd @ alum.mit.edu**

To register contact George Graff at **ggraff7 @ verizon.net**

To sell things contact Duncan Adams at

dnbadams @ aol.com

Web page: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqmab>

NOVAG Game Day. The club will again host a one day Game Day at the Game Parlor in Woodbridge on Saturday January 20th, 2007. GMs should contact Brian De Witt **Brian.DeWitt@ngc.com** for a table. There will be a \$3 per person cover charge. Children under 18 are free. The money raised will be used to purchase TGP gift certificates, which will then be raffled off. The \$3 cover charge gets you one ticket for the raffle.

PREZCON. This is a great board game convention with some miniatures. It is just down the road in Charlottesville and will be held 21-25 Feb 2007. This year will feature a Rev War contest with players competing in a number of Rev War games. See for further details: **www.prezcon.com**

COLDWARS. HMGS East will host Cold Wars March 16 – 18 in Lancaster PA. The Theme will be “The Road and the Wall” a look the role of military engineers. Check out **www.coldwars.org**. It’s not too early to begin thinking about running a game while wearing your new NOVAG shirt.

TANK SHOCK is an annual open house at extravaganza at the AAF Armor museum in Danville on Aril 28th and 29th. See the enclosed article for further details.

Cover: Painted figures of Napoleon and his Staff by Ben Pecson. You can find out about Ben’s Ben’s figures at <http://www.brush-warriors-by-ben-pecson.com/>



I DON'T CARE TO BELONG
TO A CLUB THAT ACCEPTS
PEOPLE LIKE ME AS MEMBERS.
-- CROUCHO

Club Directors and Officers

Tim Tilson (President) (Editor; Gamers Closet) ([hmslydia @ msn.com](mailto:hmslydia@msn.com))

Dave Luff (Assistant Editor; Gamers Closet) ([dluff20164 @ yahoo.com](mailto:dluff20164@yahoo.com))

Brian DeWitt (Operations) ([Brian.DeWitt @ ngc.com](mailto:Brian.DeWitt@ngc.com))

Roxanne Patton (NOVAG Might of Arms Tournament Coordinator) (Web Master) ([rcmp1213 @ verizon.net](mailto:rcmp1213@verizon.net))



Webpage: www.novag.org



Welcome to our new gaming magazine for the Northern Virginia Gamers (NOVAG). Because of the new digital format we will be publishing our newsletter, or should I say, magazine, in color and with unlimited space we can fill with as much articles that we receive. No more printing costs, folding, handling, and postage. Be proud of what you, as a member of NOVAG and a member of the gaming community can do for the hobby and let the world read about it.

With this new format we will be needing your help in the way of articles and photos to fill the pages for this magazine to work. One important aspect of our hobby is its visual medium from the colorful miniatures and gaming terrain. That is why I am asking that all articles include color photo(s) or graphs. Just like the “professional” magazines like “Miniature Wargaming” and “Historical Miniature Gaming” photos are used to show off their articles. If you cannot take a photo for your article just see if a related image can be found on the web (include the URL in your article). For ideas, here is a list of articles (but not restricted to) that we will need in future issues:

- Battle Reports
- Painting Tips & Terrain Making
- Product Reviews
- Rules Reviews
- Movie Reviews
- Convention Reports
- Military Report or Reviews (going to a Battlefield or Museum?)
- Special Events

We are looking for writers who want their own section in the magazine which to cover their own interests in the hobby for general subjects like:

- Cardgames
- Boardgames
- Roleplaying games
- Miniatures games
 - Historical
 - Fantasy
 - Science fiction

Or specialize and write about your favorite game system or rules like (but not restricted to):

- Flames of War
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Magic: The Gathering
- Settlers of Catan



Newsletter within a Newsletter: Do you belong to a gaming club without a newsletter? Do we have an offer for your club! Start your newsletter right here within the pages of The Gamers Closet. We will give your club its own section where your club can design its own cover and section to fill with articles from the clubs members. No cost for this offer and best of all everyone gets to read about your clubs events and activities.

Retail Stores, Manufactures, and Conventions: Submit your information to us and yes, this is a free service to our readers. Tell your in-store clubs about our magazine and we will give them their own section. How about an article about your store?

We must stress one more time that all articles must come with a color picture or graphics. Every week table top battles are fought on gaming tables, places like Game Parlor or in some ones game room, and not one camera will be found to record the action. So when you pack for your next game knock the dust off that camera and pack it with the terrain. Now when you break that British square with your French cavalry you can record it for your next article to your magazine.

On the technical side we are using MS Publishing for the magazine and PDF used to send it to you. The main body is 10 font using Times-New Roman. A copy of the magazine will be downloaded on the NOVAG webpage.

Due Date for Next Issue: January 30, 2007 but submit early, submit today!





FISTFUL OF TOWS 2: Higher Echelon Artillery Order of Battle

OB

One thing missing from the rules is an order of battle for supporting Division, Army, and Front level action. I made a graph showing the TO&E of assigned artillery to be used with the Fistful of Tows rules. Each stand equals 3 - 5 vehicles or platoon of infantry. So when sending in your Division make sure to get that Division and Army artillery support. These Order-of-Battle can also be used for rules such as Combined Arms modern rules from Command Decision set in the 1970s & 1980s.

SOVIET COMBINED ARMS ARMY ARTILLERY

Artillery Brigade



Gun Artillery Regiment consisting of three Battalions
130mm guns or 152mm guns or 152mm 2S3 SP

Gun Howitzer Regiment consisting of two Battalions
of 152mm gun or 152mm 2S3 SP



One Multiple Rocket Launcher Battalion of BM-27

SOVIET TANK ARMY ARTILLERY

Artillery Brigade

Instead of an artillery brigade, it generally contains just a BM-27 Multiple rocket launcher battalion.
This is identical to a divisional MRL battalion.



One MRL Battalion of BM-27

SOVIET DIVISION ARTILLERY

Artillery Regiment

Used by both for the Motorized Rifle Division and Tank Division



Two Howitzer Battalions of 2S1 (122mm SP)



One Howitzer Battalion of 2S3 (152mm SP)



One MRL Battalion of BM21





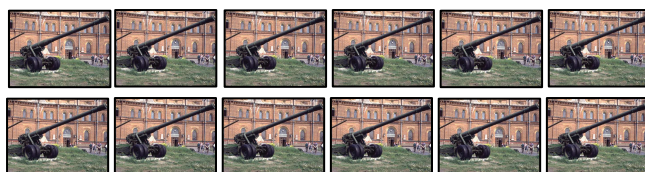
FISTFUL OF TOWS: Higher Echelon Artillery Order of Battle (con't)

OB

SOVIET FRONT Artillery Division



Three gun Regiments of
3 battalions each
130mm guns,
152mm guns, or
2S5 (153mm SP)



Heavy Artillery Brigade of 203 mm guns



Two Heavy Mortar Battalions of 240mm towed or SP



Two gun Regiments of 152mm guns or 2S3 (152mm SP)



Heavy gun battalion of 180mm towed or 203mm SP



Three battalions of MRLs
BM-27

Reference: Use Frank Chadwick's COMBINED ARMS modern war gaming rules from Command Decision.



= Artillery Battery



= MRL Battery





AREA GAMING CLUBS

Maryland

Army of Central Maryland Wargaming Club. POC Jim McWee, 8204 Black Diamond Ct, Pasadena, MD, 21122, phone (410) 439-1020, jmcwee1@cablespeed.com. Website: <http://www.geocities.com/aocmwc/>. Meetings are held in Glen Burnie.

Colonial Boys Club. POC Bob Giglio, 5732 Goldfinch Ct, Ellicott City, MD 21043, phone (410) 465-7688, Email: ECWCaptain@AOL.Com Meets one or two Saturdays a month using *Soldier's Companion* rules.

Delmarva Legion of Historical Gamers. POC Den Leventhal, phone (410) 810-2521, Email leventhal@md.net, 143 Charnor Manor Blvd, Chestertown, MD 21620-2407. Wargamer's on Maryland's Middle & Upper Eastern Shore.

Harford Area Weekly Kriegspielers (HAWKS). POC Geoff Graff, 4027 Old Federal Hill Road, Jarrettsville, MD 21084, phone (410) 557-2456, Email ggraff7@verizon.net and web site <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqnmab>

Monocacy Association of Historical Gamers. POC Ken Carter, 501 Second Ave, Brunswick, MD 21716, phone (301) 834-6516.

Potomac Wargamers. Meets second Saturday of every month, various locations in Washington DC area. POC Club President, Fred Haub, phone (202) 267-1448, Email fhaub@comdt.uscg.mil.

Silver Spring Civic Guard. POC Ed Mueller 602 Lanark Way, Silver Spring, MD 20901, Phone at work (703) 907-2621, Email edmuel@hotmail.com and current Website at <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/civicguard/>. Meetings in Silver Spring, MD and as arranged between members.

Southern Maryland Partizans. Meets at 2904 Crewsview Ct. Waldorf, MD 20603. Website <http://www.smpartizans.com>. POC Andy Turlington, 122 Circle Avenue Indian Head, MD 20640, (301) 885-2820, Email: andrewturlington@hotmail.com.

Warparty on the Monocacy. POC Marcus Jurado, 10303 Stirrup Ct. New Market, MD 21774, phone (301) 865-6986, Email dedonta@hotmail.com. Meets monthly for FPW, ACW, etc.

Virginia

Battle Barn Gamers. Williamsburg area gamers. Points of Contact: Hugh Way hway@widomaker.com or Rich Villella rvillella@widomaker.com. Meet every other Saturday night. Check the Battle Barn web site for listing of games and times. Website <http://www.freewebs.com/battlebarn/>.

Dulles Wargaming Club. The point of contact is Ben Lacy, 43326 Butterfield Ct. Ashburn, VA 20147, phone 703-282-9208 or blacy@adelphia.net. We specialize in 20th Century Historical Skirmishes (WWII) in 15-54mm.

Wellington Wargamers. POC Andrew Birtle, 1908 Jamestown Rd, Alexandria, VA 22308, ph (703) 765-3726.

Warrenton Area Game Club. The Warrenton Area Game Club is a group of adults and families that enjoy miniature gaming, role-playing and board gaming. We are always looking for new members in our area that enjoy these same activities. The members game at private residences in the Warrenton (Fauquier County) area and at local game and hobby shops. Anyone interested in participating or desiring more information can contact us at our Yahoo groups site at: http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/Warrenton_Area_Game_Club/

NOVAG at The Game Parlor. POC is Tim Tilson hmslydia@msn.com. Meets Friday nights at the Game Parlor in at 13936 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly. Start time is 7:00 p.m. Historical miniatures.

Winchester Table Top Gamers. POC is Dave Luff Email dluff20164@yahoo.com. Contact him or check out their yahoo group at <http://gamers.group.yahoo.com/group/WTTG>.





HAVOC XXIII



HAVOC XXIII



*Looking for Trouble in the Fields of France**

Havoc is the premiere miniatures convention of the Northeast and has been running continuously for 22 years. Sponsored by BGBoston, Inc. ("Battle Group Boston"), Havoc XXIII will be held April 27-29, 2007 at **Maironis Park**, Shrewsbury MA.

Visit our web site at <http://havoc.battlegroupboston.org/>

*Scene from Tom Haller's Hunt-Vent's Game Havoc XXIII March 2006



PREZCON 2007



PrezCon Feb. 21-25, 2007 Charlottesville, VA
www.prezcon.com
Come game with us at the Winter Nationals!

Some of the 80+ tournaments planned at Prezcon 2007



Visit www.prezcon.com for more details (or turn over this sheet)



A description of the Full Thrust science fiction miniature game by Ground Zero Games

Full Thrust is a science fiction starship miniatures combat game published by Ground Zero Games. It is reasonably well paced, and relatively well detailed, while maintaining a level of simple (but not simplistic) game mechanics. Players first design their starships. There are fleet books available for those that don't wish to go through this step, though a lot of fun is found in creating your own ships. A point system helps balance out the ship designs against one another (though there are imbalances which will -- hopefully -- be ironed out in future versions or in house rules). A 1500 point fleet (large super dreadnoughts are in the 600 to 800 point range, while destroyers are in the 75 to 125 point range) usually takes less than two hours to play for experienced players. Movement consists of "cinematic" and "vector" movement but I prefer "cinematic" for ease of gaming. The cinematic movement is easy to use and simple to understand. The vector rules are amongst the most streamlined vector systems I've seen for miniatures. In both cases players plot their ships' movements and then move them accordingly. After movement comes combat. Players alternate firing weapons at each other's ships. Combat is resolved with 6-sided dice, but each weapon system is quite unique. Beams (representing laser beams or energy weapons) roll lots of dice, but only 4s, 5s, and 6s do damage (modified by ships "shields"). Pulse torpedoes, though, roll one dice to hit and then a number of dice totaled up for damage. The result is a number of weapon systems with their own unique abilities and resolutions.

Damage is marked by crossing off a ship's hull boxes (a system that goes back to early naval combat games). The wrinkle with Full Thrust are the threshold checks. When an entire row of boxes is crossed off, each ship's system is checked to see if it is temporarily knocked out of action. This simple but elegant system results in ships losing weapon systems as the ship takes more and more damage.

Currently the Full Thrust rules are found in 4 books. The main Full Thrust rule book is needed to play the game. This book is sometimes known as Full Thrust 2 (or simply FT2), as it represents the 2nd version of the game (the first version being rare). The first supplement to the game was More Thrust, which added new weapon systems and introduced the alien Kra'vak and Sa'Vasku races. Fleet Book, Volume 1 (FB1) took the game in a new direction. Not just a list of starship designs, FB1 included new rules and new weapon systems. The vector movement rules debut in FB1, as do the new fire arcs, and salvo missiles. This is the direction Full Thrust will take with the third edition, due in a year or two. Fleet Book, Volume 2 continues this trend of adding new rules along with starship designs. While FB1 covered the major powers of the "official" universe (which some of us have called the Tuffleyverse after Jon Tuffley, the game's developer), FB2 covers the alien Kra'vak, Sa'Vasku and (the new) Phalon alien races. Vector movement is clarified, and the expanded fighter types from More Thrust are included. Go to <http://www.gtns.co.uk/store1/commerce.cgi> and download the rules for free from PDF.

Full Thrust was always conceived as a generic game system. Being a generic game Full Thrust isn't married to one particular set of miniatures or one game background universe. You can create ships of your own design, or model ships from science fiction books and movies. I've personally seen (much of it on the World Wide Web) Full Thrust used to model Star Trek, Star Wars, Space: 1999, Battlestar Galactica, Space: Above and Beyond, a host of anime backgrounds. One of the more successful implementations has been Babylon 5. Jon Tuffley was commissioned to write the starship miniatures rules for the Babylon 5 roleplaying game, which he derived from Full Thrust. These can be found in the roleplaying game's Earthforce Sourcebook by Chameleon Eclectic.

Due to this generic nature, there are a lot of miniatures available for the game. Star Trek miniatures are quite popular, as are Babylon 5 miniatures for the Babylon 5 Wars game, Games Workshop's Battlefleet Gothic miniatures, and a host of old, out of production miniatures. However, arguably the best miniatures in existence are the incredibly extensive lines available for the "official" Tuffleyverse.

This background universe includes a combined United States/Canada/UK coalition (New Anglian Confederation), an expanded Germany (New Swabian League), a militant France (Fed Stats Europa), and a new Russian/Chinese superpower (Eurasian Solar Union). There are also a number of smaller powers (representing Africa, South East Asia, Japan, the Middle East, and a California-Texas union, among others) and the United Nations. All of these powers, and the aliens (the aforementioned Kra'vak, Sa'vasku, and Phalons) are fully covered. Each power has radically different looking ships, from carriers to super dreadnoughts down to frigates, corvettes, and scouts. If you use the designs in the fleet books, you'll also see that each power has its own design philosophy and plays differently from the others.

The universe is shared with two other games: Stargrunt II and Dirtside II. Stargrunt II is a squad level ground combat game, while Dirtside II is a microarmour/1:285/epic scale, company level ground combat game. Like Full Thrust, these games are generic but they also adhere to the game universe.

All this makes Full Thrust the one of the best spaceship miniatures combat game available.





BARTERTOWN

by David Luff

Website Review

I came across this website back in 1997 and ever since then tried to keep an eye on what comes up for sale. It is a free online website to sell or trade your unwanted figures and games. There are multiple sections to choose from for your searches or posts. The historical section is broken down into two areas: Pre-WWI and Post WWI, so just choose the era you are interested. Other areas include Fantasy, Futuristic, Painting Services, and Other (which includes Paintball, Collectible Cards, and Video games). GW has a large following and you maybe able to find those hard to find figures. Links to companies, services (like painting), and auctions can be found throughout so if you are in the mood to shop or want to get rid of those unused figures give Bartertown a try at

www.bartertown.com



THE MINIATURES PAGE

by David Luff

Website Review



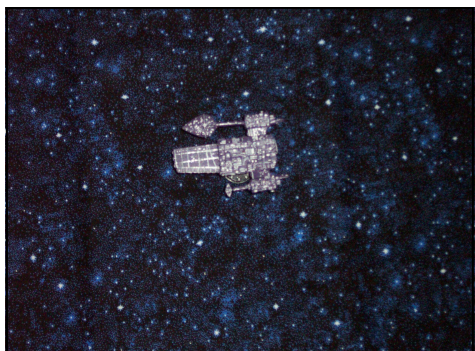
Another site you should check daily is "The Miniatures Page" run by Bill Armintrout and is must to keep up with new products. Almost daily manufactures will post new products to be released as "Hobby News". You will also get reviews from fellow gamers and what is hot and what is not. After signing up you are welcomed to post your own

reviews and keep up what's coming on the market. You can exchange or sell figures and many links to manufactures can be found. So after checking the stock market in the morning go to *The Miniatures Page* at <http://www.theminiaturespage.com/> and find out the new releases.

SPACE FABRIC

by David Luff

Product Review



During my weekly hunt for hobby materials I came across this fabric in the craft section of the local Walmart. It was on sale for \$2.99 square yard so for \$12 you get a 12'x5' section big enough for those large space battles. The material is 100% cotton so easy to work with if you want to make a large mat. This looks much better than a plain black cover and the stars have a realistic look as you can see with one of my figures (left) for the FULL THRUST rules system. Besides individual stars you can see distant clusters and even gaseous clouds in the background. The dark and medium blues make a very nice space sky and you cannot beat the price but it will be helpful to have some sewing skills if you want a large gaming mat, oh honey!!!

GERMAN WAR MACHINE

by Peter Darman

Magazine Review

New World War II Magazine: As a wargamer, you and your colleagues at the club may be interested in a new monthly magazine on the German Army of World War II. Called "German War Machine", it is 48 pages long and contains articles on battles, weapons, uniforms, awards, commanders and much more.

Each issue is filled with photographs, colour maps, colour tactical diagrams and annotated colour weapon artworks. We are currently giving away a free A3-sized colour poster to those who register on the site, and Issue 1 of the magazine is also free (with a small charge for post and packing). Please fell free to look at sample pages of the magazine at: www.germanwarmachine.com

We are encouraging people to take an active part in building the site, which has lots of free data to download and an interactive forum for the exchange of views and information. Please take a look at the site and magazine and tell us what you think.

Regards, Peter Darman, Editor German War Machine





HMG #07: I picked this issue up at Game Parlor and they continue with great photos throughout making it the only US glossy magazine. This issue has an article on building a Russian Orthodox church, a monster game run by Duke Seifried, a gangster miniature game, the art of cleaning and preparing raw miniatures for painting, interview with Scott Bowden on his new book "Napoleon's Finest", Firefight skirmish rules, product reviews, and the writings of Howard Whitehouse (from the old days of MWAN). Did I mention the color photos throughout the magazine. HMG is a conglomerate of the MWAN and The Courier magazines being printed on a little better schedule than the old Courier. You can pick up an issue at your better hobby stores or subscribe at www.hmgmagazine.com.

The Maryland Regional Science Fiction Convention

Balticon 41

Guests of Honor:

Larry Niven
Jerry Pournelle

Artist Guest of Honor:

Joe Bergeron

Music Guests of Honor:

Jeff & Maya Bohnhoff



May 25-28, 2007 Memorial Day Weekend

Hundreds of authors, publishers, artists, scientists, musicians and over a thousand fans at the area's largest & longest running Science Fiction/Fantasy convention!

Author panel discussions, readings, podcasting, Live SF Theater, Childrens' Programming, Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) charity auction, science briefings, concerts, dances, Masquerade, Writer's workshop, poetry contest, and our Sunday Night Movie Festival! Art show, dealer's room, anime, video and tabletop gaming, skill demonstrations and other special events.

Convention membership rates:

\$45 May 30, 2006 - February 28, 2007 \$50 March 1 - April 30 \$58 after Apr 30 and at the door
Group rate available, buy 10 memberships and get 1 11th free, e-mail registration@balticon.org for details.

Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn

just north of Baltimore on I-83 -- Free Parking

Hotel Rate for Balticon: \$123.00+ tax, single-double-triple-quad; call the Marriott for reservations at 410-785-7000.

Online registration and more information on our web site: WWW.BALTIICON.ORG

Phone: 410-JOE-BSFS (563-2737)

Email: balticoninfo@balticon.org

Balticon
P.O. Box 686
Baltimore MD 21203-0686

Sponsored by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society,
a 501(C)(3) non-profit educational organization.

Live in or near Maryland? Visit a BSFS meeting sometime and check out our free SF lending library.
Check out www.bsfs.org for details - or contact volunteers@balticon.org to find out how you can help!

Balticon is a service mark of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society. © 2006 Baltimore Science Fiction Society.



NOVAG CONVENTION

NOVAG WINTER GAME DAY

Historical Miniatures Gaming



**20th January
2007
10AM – 10PM**

Location: The Game Parlor-Woodbridge
14440 Smoketown Rd
Woodbridge, Va 22192 (703) 551-4200

Featuring: Colonial Era, WWII, and Modern era games.

**GMs contact Brian DeWitt at [Brian.DeWitt @ hgc.com](mailto:Brian.DeWitt@hgc.com)
to host a game**

Admission: \$3 Cover Charge for adults. Children and students are free.

Raffle: The Cover Charge money will be used to buy TGP Gift Certificate. Each person will receive one raffle ticket. Additional tickets may be purchased.

PEL: Will be posted to the club website (www.novag.org)

Directions: See: <http://www.gameparlor.com/Directions/woodbridge.html>



Triangle Simulation Society



Panzer MK IV

TANK SHOCK 2007

Greetings! This email is an invitation to the second annual TANK SHOCK gaming event to be held **28-29 April 2007** at the AAF Armor Museum in Danville, Virginia.

The museum will be holding its annual open house Military Extravaganza on that weekend and has once again extended an invitation to we in the miniatures gaming hobby for historical games focused on armored fighting vehicles. The event will include militaria dealers, RC tank battles, reenactors, and of course the museum's collection of artifacts, artillery, uniforms, small arms, and vehicles, including many items used in live-fire demonstrations. The museum is very enthusiastic about having

an organized gaming event at the Extravaganza again, and I am pleased that we are able to once again support them in this fashion. This is an opportunity to help the museum, expose a portion of the public with an interest in military history to gaming, meet other gamers from around the region, and maybe recruit a few new gamers into the hobby. The open house in April of this year had over 1,100 attendees, and the museum expects that to be higher in 2007.

Please let your club members know, and consider attending either as a club or as individuals, to put on a game or just as importantly, to come play in some great looking fun games. We will have a recruiting/info table set up at the event, please feel free to bring or send any fliers, brochures, or handouts about your club even if you cannot attend. Attendees to the museum events will come from all across the region, so this is a chance to make contact with interested people from your own area.

Hours will be 10am-5pm Saturday and Sunday, with an early setup time of 8am-10am on Saturday morning. Admission is \$10 for the weekend if you pre-register by 30 March 2007, or \$10 per day at the door. This includes admission to the museum's collection and all events during the weekend. We will also be holding a raffle on Saturday with prizes of interest to gamers, which is in addition to the museum's own regular raffle with 100% of all proceeds from TANK SHOCK attendance and raffle will go to the museum.

For more information on the museum itself, visit their website at <http://www.aaftankmuseum.com>. For more information on TANK SHOCK 2007, please visit the TSS website at

<http://www.trianglesimsociety.org/tankshock.html>

or contact me at the address below. I look forward to meeting and gaming with you at the museum!



U.S. M4A3E8 Sherman with an M2 plow

Pat Walther
Triangle Simulation Society
TANK SHOCK 2007 Coordinator
[patwalther @ earthlink.net](mailto:patwalther@earthlink.net)
(919) 556-5384



Historical Miniatures Gaming Convention

BARRAGE XI

The perfect cure for Post Holiday Depression!

Saturday January 13th, 2007

To be held Archbishop Curley High School in Baltimore.

Sponsored by the
Harford Area Weekly Kriegspielers
(HAWKS)

A one day historical miniatures mini-convention in Baltimore Maryland, for all periods and scales.

The convention will run from 9:00 'AM till 10:00 PM. Arrive early to enjoy the full day. Setup for 9:00 AM games and for flea market tables will begin at 8:30.

FREE admission for Children under 13 (with adult)

Fees:

Running a game and pre-registered	\$4.00
Pre-registered	\$6.00
At the Door	\$8.00
Active duty military, with ID	\$2.00
Children under 13 (with adult)	FREE



Vendor / flea market tables are available.
(\$6.00 for 1/2 day, \$10.00 USD all day plus admission)

Contact:

Geoff Graff 410-557-2456 ggraff7@verizon.net <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqnmab>

Duncan Adams 410-647-5734 dnbadams@aol.com

Call or write for a Preliminary Events List.

Coming from North of Baltimore take I-95 South. About 3 miles below I-695 (the Beltway) at the I-95/I-895 split, get in the left lanes and take I-895. About 1/2 mile beyond the split take the Moravia Road exit. Turn right onto Moravia Road and go about 0.7 mile to Sinclair Lane. Turn left on Sinclair Lane and go about 1 mile to the school on the left.

OR take exit 32 South (Belair Road) off I-695, (the Beltway). This is the exit just West of the I-95/I-695 intersection. Go about 3.5 miles to Moravia Road. Turn left on Moravia, and about 1 mile later right on Sinclair lane. Again, about 1 mile to the school on the left.

From South of Baltimore, take I-95 through the Fort McHenry tunnel. About 3 miles later take the Moravia Road exit. bout 2 miles later turn left onto Sinclair Lane, and again about 1 mile to the school, on the left.



Introduction

Various rules authors over the years have brought forward miniatures rules and games that were very non-traditional and innovative that in company speak we often call 'out of the box'. My experience is that most of these are interesting to play the first time or two but they can lack extended replay value. On the plus side however, they often times inspire more traditional game and rules developers to new ideas that lead to better and more interesting games. There are obvious exceptions to this such as DBA which was very innovative and different than previous rules but has had very lasting impact on miniatures rules. Crossfire was another example of a totally different and fascinating miniatures game but maybe not with the same replay value as DBA.

These rules are one of my attempts at an 'out of the box' set of miniatures rules that try to mix a medieval/dark ages miniatures game with a little negotiating/diplomacy/role playing type game. While I do not guarantee extended replay value, I believe that these rules make for an very interesting and different style miniatures game the first time or two. They also provide for more interaction between players as teams and alliances are not fixed.

Each player is assigned as either a Noble, Viking Warlord or Peasant leader and has common objectives with their own class but very different objectives from the other classes. Each class also has significant strengths and weaknesses which they try to leverage. The game tries to capture some of the interactions and interdependencies between there groups. Players can negotiate with each other to achieve common goals or sometimes negotiation takes place with the sharp end of the sword out where the peasants are often looking at the sharp end. Tape measures are not used as each player stakes out an area they try to develop and players may raid or campaign to any area on the table over the course of a year which is represented by a game turn. My perception is that in the middle ages you mostly have undeveloped spaces where anyone can pass and no one has suggested rules for highway bandits to me yet.

I developed the initial version of these rules about 10 years ago and have tinkered with them a few times over the years as I have been inspired by different concepts. Various players have suggested ideas during play that I have added as twists and features.

For figures I use individually mounted 25mm figures. Each Noble has a keep I use as the stronghold. I have a Viking ship that I use as the Viking base. I use a hut to represent each village and square piece of brown felt for each field. A typical game lasts 2 hours. Coins are best used for money. Each player should be given a copy of the rules which I print on one piece of paper front and back side. The game also uses 12 sided dice which are my personal favorite for various reasons.

I will try to host a Noble-Viking-Peasant game at a Friday night NOVAG meeting this winter. Anyone participating will be granted honorary membership to what my dear friend Wally Simon use to call 'The Center for Provocative Wargaming' for being open minded toward non-traditional wargames. This is a lot easier entry than some of the other events I have heard about such as one hosted by a Sandhurst professor where they spent the evening sitting under the dining room table pretending you are on a submarine mission, plotting map positions and looking out a fake periscope.



Figures by Ben Pecson Brush Warriors





Sequence of Play

Game consists of 10 game turns with the following steps conducted each game turn. Each game turn represents 1 year. The recommended game has 3 Nobles, 6 Peasant Villages, and 1 Viking Warband. Each year Nobles roll for order of movement where high roll chooses order of all the Nobles. Before the roll each Noble and may secretly bid gold to increase their die roll 1 for each gold spent.

1.) **Move** - Peasant players may move their Village and Field to be in a different Stronghold's controlled area (may separate fields and village). However, during the Harvest phase the Peasant player will not collect the extra die roll of income per 5 peasants this turn if either their Field or Village moved. Peasant players are encouraged to find the Noble that will give them the most protection.

2.) **Patrol** - Knights & Men-at-arms may move to Fields or Villages in their controlled area to protect them from enemy troops.

3.) **Campaign** - Knights & Men-at-arms still at their Stronghold may move to attack Strongholds, Villages, or Fields in another Stronghold's areas. Vikings may also be sent out.

4.) **Resolve Battles** - Fight in rounds and may attack any piece in same area.

5.) **Pillage & Plunder** - Troops surviving battles may Pillage and Plunder.

6.) **Harvest** - Peasants produce food and gold

7.) **Raid** - One round of fighting only followed by more Pillage and Plunder (only Vikings on ships and units in strongholds may go on raids). Return to Stronghold after raid.

8.) **Taxes** - Convert food in fields to Gold in Village. Each Noble declares amount of tax due from each Peasant player with a Village or Field under their protection.

9.) **Maintenance & Recruiting** - Pay Maintenance, Recruit new figures, add 1 Peasant to each Village

10.) **Winter Quarters** - Return all figures to Villages, Strongholds, or Viking Ship



Figures by Ben Pecson Brush Warriors

Set-Up

1. Each Noble player starts with a 1 Noble, 1 Knight, 5 Men-at-arms, a Stronghold, and 20 Gold.

2. Each Peasant player starts with 10 Peasants, a Village, a Field, and 10 gold. Peasant players Villages are randomly assigned to be in a Strongholds controlled area. After all Villages are assigned it a Stronghold has no Villages in its controlled area one Peasant player is randomly chosen from Strongholds that have that more than 1 village to move.

3. Viking Player starts with 1 Warlord (i.e. equivalent to a Noble), 3 Men-at-arms, 0 Gold, and a Viking Ship.

Battles

Battles are fought in rounds where each piece makes a simultaneous attack against another opponent's piece. After each round, any piece may withdraw (except pieces defending a Stronghold) and is placed at their Stronghold after all battles have been resolved. Attacking players must declare before defending players. Peasants may also withdraw to their respective Stronghold. Noble players may decline to let Peasants into the Stronghold and the Peasants are left at the Stronghold but on the outside. After each round either side may reinforce the battle with troops from friendly areas not under attack. Normally only players involved in the battle may send reinforcements however when being attacked by Vikings, players involved may call for help from any other player and then that player may send troops.

All of an enemies' pieces must be attacked each round before a second attack (i.e. roll) on the same piece. A 5 or higher on D6 to kill an equal level piece. Levels are

1. Noble or Warlord
2. Knight
3. Men-at-arms
4. Peasants

Modifiers

- 1 to kill number for each level higher than opponent
- +1 to kill number for each level lower than opponent
- +1 to kill number if defender in castle

If need a 7 to kill need to roll 11-12 on 2D6.





If need an 8 to kill need to roll 12 on 2D6.

Battles continue until one side withdraws or one side is wiped out. Peasant and Patrols are considered to be on the same team. When Vikings attack, all players who responded to the call for help are on the same team with defenders.

Peasant Revolt

Any Peasant player who has been refused protection in a Noble's Stronghold or lost figures from Nobles extracting taxes, may oppose that Noble in battles and raids and may call for help from other Peasant players and may reinforce other Peasant players in any battles against that Noble.

Areas

Areas are defined as either Strongholds, Villages, Fields, or Viking ship. Noble player's money is stored at their Strongholds, Peasant's money at their Villages, and Warlord's money on their Viking ship. Each Stronghold has a controlled area around the keep and may have a number of villages and fields inside its controlled area.

Pillage & Plunder

During the Pillage & Plunder phase each Knight or Men-at-arms figure at a Village or opponent's Stronghold may roll 2D6 for Pillage & Plunder. 1 point of each figure's total is destroyed and the rest of the total is kept by the Plundering player. Excess Pillage & Plunder beyond the total gold at the location has no effect.

Harvest

During harvest phase each peasant in their home Village produces 2 gold. Each peasant in their own Field produces 1,2,3 or 4 gold depending on a single weather roll (D6) that year that applies to all players.

6 = Good year, produce 4 food per peasant

4-5 = Average year, produce 3 food per peasant

2-3 = Poor year, produce 2 food per peasant

1 = Disaster, produce 1 food per peasant

Also for each 5 peasants or fraction there of a player controls roll D6 and produces that much Gold in the village (Still roll if 0 Peasants left).

Food stays visible to all players at the field until the Taxes phase.



Raids

During Raid phase, any troops (i.e. not peasants) in a Stronghold or Vikings on the Viking ship may move to any opponents Stronghold, Village, or Field to raid. One round of fighting occurs after which raiding force may Pillage & Plunder if no Nobles, Knights or Men-at-arms are protecting the area just like in the Pillage & Plunder phase (except Raids only get 1D6 of Pillage & Plunder and 1pt is destroyed only on roll of 4-6). Raiding figures are returned home at the end of the phase. Additionally if there is not enough money or food at the location to pay, rolls of 5 or 6 kill one Peasant there and collect no money or food. When raiding food each figure may only carry home 2 food per figure and rest is left at the field.

Winter Quarters

All Peasants are returned to their village, Vikings to their ship, and Noble's troops to their stronghold.

Show me the Money

If at any time a peasant player shows his money to a Noble or Viking player, other than during the Taxes phase, the noble player may confiscate it (however, the last turn of the game the confiscated funds will be turned in to the umpire).

Viking Player Special Rules

Unlike Noble's troops, Viking player's Knights and Men-at-arms are not automatically disbanded when no maintenance is paid. There is a 50% each figure is disbanded if no maintenance is paid (4-6 on D6) and 33% if part of the maintenance is paid (5-6 on D6). If the Warlord is lost another figure may be promoted to Warlord during the Maintenance & Recruiting Phase.





Figures by Ben Pecson Brush Warriors

Taxes

Convert all food to gold. Each Noble states the amount of taxes each Peasant player with a Village or Field in their Stronghold's controlled area is expected to pay. Rates may be different for different Peasant players and is typically set as a rate per Peasant or rate per Village. Payment is voluntary. Nobles may send Men-at-arms or Knights from the Stronghold out to extract unpaid taxes from Peasant players in the Stronghold's controlled area. Also Noble's figures already in a Peasant player's Village or Field (field must have Peasants there), may extract taxes from the Peasant player they are protecting. Each figure extracts 1D6 worth of taxes (i.e. gold from the village even if in the fields) but a 6 also kills a peasant. If there is no gold in the Village, rolls of 5 or 6 extract no taxes and kill a peasant. Rolls of 1-4 collect the money from

the bank when the Peasant player is out of gold.

Maintenance & Recruiting

If a Noble is lost a Knight may be promoted to Noble by that player.

Peasants need 2 gold per year to survive. Peasant player normally pays the gold but when inside the Stronghold, the Noble player must pay at least 1 gold per Peasant, if able, of the maintenance for each Peasant in the Stronghold. With 1 gold they have 50% chance to be lost (4-6 on D6). 1 Peasant is added to each village each year at no cost plus extra are added at cost of 3 gold each. Maintenance for Nobles and Viking Warlord is as follows (otherwise disband):

Knights – 3 gold each

Men-at-Arms – 2 gold each

Peasants in Stronghold – must pay at least 1 gold each

Extra troops may be recruited as follows

Knights – 5 gold each (Viking player may not recruit Knights)

Men-at-Arms – 3 gold each

Victory Points

After 10 turns players score victory points as follows:

Peasant Players score = 3 VP for each Peasant left at the end
1 VP for each gold.

Noble Players score = 2 VP for each Knight in service
1 VP for each Men-at-arms in service
½ VP for each gold in Stronghold
½ VP for each Peasant in a village in controlled area
-5 VP for each Noble lost

Viking Players score = 2 VP for each Knight in service
1 VP for each Men-in-arms in service
1 VP for each gold in the ship
-5 VP for each Warlord lost





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CONVENTION REPORT by Andy Turlington TRIADCON Directors AAR

Well, TriadCon has come and gone, and I have almost completely recovered. What a mad 4 days! This was my first time running such a convention, and I am not an experienced writer, but here are a few thoughts that I have as I look back over the weekend.

TriadCon was the brainchild of Walt O'Hara and Otto Schmidt. In the wake of NOVAG giving up on running a Fall convention, and instead concentrating their efforts on smaller 1 day events throughout the year, it was decided that now would be the perfect opportunity to start a local convention in the spirit of the old Atlanticon's from the 80's, all encompassing shows that welcomed all gamers, whether Role-players, Board Gamers, or Miniature Gamers. To this end, some posts were made, and some phone calls placed, and a team of volunteers started to form around August of 2005. Wyatt Bogan, a board gamer, mentioned that he worked for the University of Maryland in College Park MD, and that he thought he could secure us a good location with ample lighting, and at a good cost. As it turns out, he did exactly as he promised, and we signed a contract. About a month into the process, Walt was overcome by outside events, and needed to step down a lead kitten herder, and I stepped into that position. Being my first time in such a position, Walt had experience running HMGS conventions, I was a little worried about screwing up, but I think everything came off nicely in the end.

When we first started the idea of the show, we asked each other where we thought we needed to be to call the show a success. We decided that 50 people would be our benchmark for success or failure. As January 2006 rolled around, we were able to get the Football schedule for the college, and a date of September 16th and 17th was settled upon. At this point, many of us had had a chance to start talking the show up to friends, and we re-assessed our expected numbers, and decided that 100 was a likely expectation, and would be our new goal for calling the show a success. As the date for the show grew closer, we were at the 109 pre-registration mark, a success in our minds before we even opened up the doors! In the end we had 156 individuals attend the show. The breakdown was:

- 8 from Washington DC
- 58 from Maryland
- 73 from Virginia
- 2 from Pennsylvania
- 2 from New Jersey
- 2 from North Carolina
- 1 from West Virginia
- 10 who did not give an address

While I was very happy with the attendance overall, we still have a lot of work to do in getting the word out. I hope that positive word will follow the event. We have a few advertising strategies being headed up by Mr. Schmidt, so I think we are moving in the right direction. I would like to see both the Miniatures, and the Euro gamers better attended next year. We had a stellar turn out for GM's of miniature games. I actually cancelled my 2 games to allow others to run theirs. As is the case at many cons,



even the big ones, some games just don't get enough players to get off the ground. While I saw one or two disappointed GM's that this happened to, I saw a lot of very happy gamers rolling dice. Most games went off without a hitch, and looked like a lot of fun. For 2007, we are committed to run just as many mini games, and maybe more, so if you were on the fence about attending in 2006, please give some consideration to making it out in 2007.

The board games were well attended, though the war games seemed to have a better turn out than the euro games did. We will also work to make the euro gaming more appealing next year. We have already had some discussions as to how to go about this, so look for more information in coming newsletters and advertisements.





On the war game front, we had a very respectable show of support by gamers. We had several guests at the show, designers of games who live in the local area. These designers were on hand to give demonstrations of their games, and to answer questions. I believe that this approach attracted many gamers, and we look to continue this trend in 2007 with even more designer guests at the show.

Most of the feedback I received during the show, and have seen online after the show, was positive. We still have a few things to work on however. One of those is to better integrate the miniature and board games. This year they were on separate sides of the building, next year, each genre will be represented in each room, which should give us a much better flow.

The issue of parking will be taken care of by next year as well.

This year, on Saturday, sometime around 1300, the parking garage marked itself as being full, even though it was more than half empty. This caused several people to get lost while searching for visitor approved parking areas on campus. We have been in contact with the school, and next year we will have an emergency number for a technician to assist in fixing the problem should it happen again.

The only other complaints I heard were about signs to get people around campus. We are on top of this issue, and will have more than ample signs next year, not only leading you into the campus from the highway, but from the parking area to the show. We will also endeavor to get better maps and directions on our web site well in advance of the show.

I had time to speak with each of our vendors, and spend some cash, on Saturday and Sunday. I received a unanimous response from them all; they would like to return next year. We will also be placing a couple of demo tables in the dealer's area for them to run some games on for customers to get their hands dirty.

We hope that you will be able to join us in 2007 for our second annual show. We will be at the same location, but we are unable to set a date until the college releases the home football schedule in January. Look for further details in the next NOVAG newsletter, or on our website at <http://www.triadcon.org>.

Thanks all, I cant express enough how happy I was with the effort that everyone put in to the show, be they an organizer, GM, or gamer. I hope to see you all, and many new faces next year. And a final thank you to those who made this all possible, first, my wife Chris, (otherwise

I wont be around for next years show!), and Wyatt, Walt, Otto, Rich, Kaarin, Fritz, and Mark, the show wouldn't have happened without all your hard work! Also, thanks are due to NOVAG, AOCM, The Civic Guard, GCOM, SMP, and anyone else whom I forgot to mention by name!





THE FOG OF WAR: DEFEATING PLAYER KNOWLEDGE

by Ben Lacy

Perhaps a definition of the term *Fog of War* is appropriate. The phrase implies confusion and uncertainty that yields indecision. The commander needs to know three things about the battlefield: enemy location, strength and intentions. If this intelligence is available, it permits him to assess the situation and create a counter-strategy. This strategy may include calling for reinforcements, digging in or launching a pre-emptive strike. Most games assume that this information has already been gathered completely. However, players can also enjoy this aspect of the game if absolute player knowledge is removed. Then they won't know how many troops are opposing them or where they will attack. This also translates well to a skirmish level, especially if one attempts to *find, fix, flank and finish* the enemy.

In *Final Combat*, the *Reason to Look* mechanic reduces player knowledge during the acquisition process. However, it does not address the issue of troop reactions based upon a player having complete military intelligence. Let's say your opponent notices that you have "changed weapons" and are now preparing to throw a grenade. He can formulate a plan to evade your attack long before the soldier on the ground would have inkling that such a prospect is imminent. Suppose he believes he has you outnumbered in a building and orders an assault. Imagine his surprise when he discovers too late that instead of three men defending, you have an entire squad.

Frequently players lament that removing the miniatures is egregious because of the time invested in preparation. They want the *minis* on the board. If the minis are on the board prematurely, it compromises the *fog of war*. A commander should not be able to determine the enemy's exact location, concentration, movement and weaponry without some reconnaissance. Patrols were used during WWII was to gather intelligence, and in spite of their best efforts, it was seldom perfect.

The initiative systems employed by many rules allow the player to experience the randomness and uncertainty associated with getting one's troops from point A to point B. Troop quality may determine how efficiently the soldier carries out his orders or how quickly he arrives at point B. However, it is the *fog of war* that proves difficult to replicate.

A double blind system may succeed initially, but it requires two of everything, including terrain, trees and miniatures. Notwithstanding, once a unit is spotted, it is placed on the board for all to see. Now a player has the ability to observe the entire board as if aided by some imaginary, dirigible, and ostensibly the advantage of the double blind system is lost.

On a skirmish level, the NCO or junior officer is not omniscient, nor does he have privileged intelligence about the enemy's every move. Once a unit is spotted, we typically place the miniature on the board. Then regardless of any subsequent movement, it remains visible. Under these conditions, it is not possible for a squad to send an assault team to surprise the enemy with a flank attack, because the opposing player can see the move as it develops and react accordingly. This author submits that if the squad's approach is concealed, the defender should not be aware that a flank attack is looming. This would preclude any counter measures other than those dictated by the intuition and instincts of the player.

So, how can one simulate this on a miniature gaming table? The advent of digital cameras and various software programs provides us an opportunity to create detailed maps. Movement can be charted on the map until such time as a target is detected and/or acquired. That may involve a Hearing save whereby a poker chip can be placed in the general vicinity. This will indicate that something is there, but its exact identity is still as yet unknown. Once the target is positively identified, the poker chip is removed and the miniature is placed on the board.



Club's game at Historicon 2006 taken by Max Tessier





At this point, a referee is critical to maintaining the *fog of war* element. For example, let's suppose an enemy squad has taken up a position behind a stone wall. After a brief exchange of fire with your men, the squad decides to break off the engagement and withdraw out of sight. Although your men observe this move, the enemy is no longer visible because they are now concealed. Under normal game circumstances, the miniatures would remain on the board, and any subsequent move would be readily observed. However, this ignores a critical element of close quarter battle which is the uncertainty associated with a loss of contact, and the enemy's new position.

A better mechanic would be to replace the miniatures with a poker chip and record it. The players make a note regarding the strength of the unit their squad just encountered, and the chip reflects the last known location. The commanders revert back to the map and the game master monitors play until such time as the units' location is once again confirmed. 🎲

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HEROES AND VILLIANS HOBBY STORE

by Dan Roem



It's bland outside.

White bricks, gray bricks, bricks with spots on them ... The sidewalk is chalk-like. The building is only one story high and there is room for about 20 businesses to operate, one right next to the other. Black pavement and white lines divide parking spaces.

The offices still need to be filled with businesses. Except one.

On the tinted window, at the back office of the building park at 7556 Gardner Place, is a picture of Wolverine from X-Men. Inside, his friends and foes shine behind glossy wrappings and reflect from shiny cover paper. The floor may be a plain, blue carpet, and the ceiling typical, white, removable office tiles with little holes in them, but it's what is between the ceiling and

floor that counts at Outpost Games in Gainesville.

The comic book store opened its doors to the public Saturday, Sept. 21, though a bit behind schedule. Its team of three men - owners Tom Chillemi and Dave Hazlett and assistant manager Phil Esposito - run the anime, comics and games store that operates 10 hours each day, Monday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m., an extra hours on Game Nights and seven hours on Sunday, from noon to 7 p.m.

While this is not the first comic book-based business venture for Chillemi, it is for the 23-year-old Esposito, who had done part-time work with Chillemi at his store in Vienna. Esposito, a George Mason University student, started out by just having an interest in the games Chillemi sold at his store. The more he came back, the more Esposito was able to establish a friendship with the store owner. So when the Vienna comic book market became oversaturated and Chillemi wanted to relocate his business to Gainesville, he asked Esposito to come aboard.

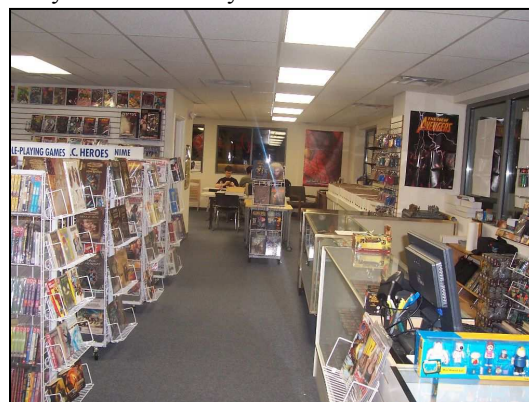
The location of the business park, across the road from Wawa on U.S. 29 in Gainesville, suited the entrepreneur well because of the site's proximity to a main highway and Interstate 66.

Each of the three prongs that make up Outpost Games's business model sells itself in a different way.

Esposito said people who are into comic books generally have an idea of what they want when they come into the store. A customer will order, say, the Civil War series by Marvel, which the red-haired, blue-eyed Fairfax native said is the biggest thing in the comic book world right now since it involves virtually all the big name superheroes from Marvel. But those involved in a subculture like comic book collecting are not likely to be in a rush to leave the store.

"There's a big social aspect of it," Esposito said. "People don't just pop in and out; they interact."

Collectors tend to belong to communities of other people who share their interests, and so when customers come into the store, they genuinely are interested in hearing about what Esposito and Chillemi find interesting about the merchandise. They're eager for their input on any given type of comic book, Magic: The Gathering set or other collectible items and he relishes hearing the collectors' and gamers' stories as well. Chillemi got his start by collecting, after all.



While D.C. Comics and Marvel Comics do most of the marketing for their books, selling games, which makes up the second-largest part of Outpost's revenue, actually requires ... selling.

Tables in the back of the office, near wooden boxes filled with other comic books play host to gaming tournaments on Saturdays and Sundays. Customers who are interested in learning how to play particular games stop by for lessons.





Esposito, Chillemi and Hazlett tend to play games like poker and chess amongst themselves. Chillemi is a "chess nut," Esposito said, laughing - but they also know how to play other major card games that gamers are into, such as Dungeons and Dragons and Magic: The Gathering.

Magic: The Gathering, Esposito describes, combines the strategy of chess and the bluffing skills of poker. Having knowledge that gamers know their opponents do not have, and vice versa, is part of the mental intrigue of the game, he said.

Selling is also accompanied by buying at Outpost Games, as the staffers will purchase collections from private sellers after having a professional assessor evaluate the products to determine their worth. At Outpost Games, customers are also encouraged to trade products to each other and to leave fliers for general interest groups. One blue paper in the store had the name and e-mail address for someone who wanted people to join a Mage: The Awakening group.

Actually taking part in the gaming process is how the three-member staff is able to sell products while also keeping the job amusing. According to Esposito, "the job is half real work, half fun."

"Real work" for Esposito includes taking inventory - more than 3,000 items have been marked in the store's computer and there are hundreds more to go, he said while looking at the raw data from behind a computer monitor.

The fun part, however, is what brings the college student his job's biggest thrill. When Esposito can teach someone how to play a game and that person progresses on his or her own, it's just something "that is very positive for me," he said.

More information about Outpost Games can be found at www.myspace.com/outpostgames or by calling (571) 248-6722.

Store Events Schedule

Monday-5:00pm World of Warcraft
Tuesday-8:00pm Magic Booster Draft
Wednesday-New Comic Day
Thursday-5:00pm Heroclix
Friday-5:30pm Pokemon League
Saturday-2:00pm Magic Type 2





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FALL- IN 2006 CONVENTION PHOTOS

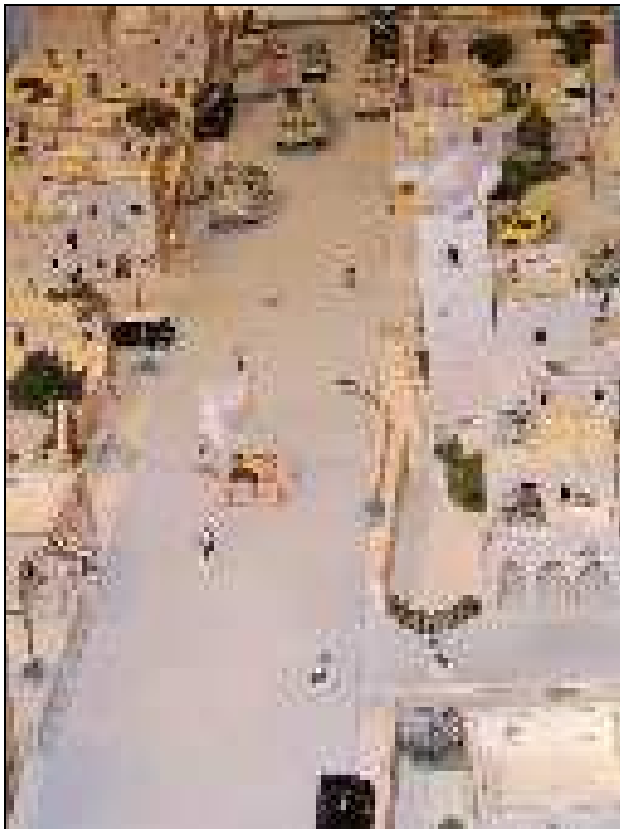
by Jay Mischo



B-52 Strike over Chinese HQ "Marching on Beijing" circa 2015 Dan McDonagh's ongoing massive Microarmor post-modern campaign, The "Buff" soldiers on!



Detail from "Lapanto Wars" Brian Whitaker "dreamed-up" this eye-candy of Spaniard and Turk having at it on the high seas.



Iraqi Scenario inspired by the "Thunder Run" (No other notes on this one.)



One wing of tables for "Marching on Beijing" From top to bottom the US Marines, Japanese and Russians will launch a concerted assault after a massive air attack to punch through Chinese lines.





British defend their legation from the "Righteous and Harmonious Fists" aka "Boxers" --- and I don't mean shorts. To be brief : a Bob and Cleo "55 Days at Peking" spectacular!



Chinese Imperial Troops attempt to block the relief column . Just coming into view of the city the allies were ambushed but dodged the volley when the Brigadier pointed and yelled "Peking duck"!



Prominent Friday night Novagii go at one another. Greg, Frank and Tom are our "Disposable Heroes" in Tim Schwart's "Battle of Timograd"



Russian's in the finest accommodations that Timograd has to offer. Partying likes its 1943.





TRIANGLE SIMULATION SOCIETY CLUB

by Patrick Walther



Greetings to all from the Triangle Simulation Society (TSS), and our thanks for being invited to participate in this newsletter. For those of you not familiar with us, here is a bit of a thumbnail sketch to help you get to know us better.

First formed in 1969, the TSS has always striven to be at the forefront of the miniatures gaming hobby. From our humble beginnings until today, TSS members have worked hard to improve their presentation and execution of historical miniatures games of all genres and scales. The TSS is also home to several of the “Founding Fathers” of the HMGS, otherwise known as the

men who gathered in “Wally’s Basement” for the meeting that laid the groundwork for what was to become the HMGS. Our commitment to historical miniatures gaming is always at the forefront of our efforts as a club. While we have no dues nor officers, we do have a number of very committed people who are willing to take on projects and lift up the banner of the hobby.





Some clubs have a genre or scale that captures the essence of the clubs efforts, but the TSS is home to a cross-section representing nearly every genre and scale of historical miniatures. From 6mm to 40mm, ancients to the most modern, you'll likely find someone who games it in the TSS. We do have a very strong presence of the "traditional" wargaming periods such as ACW, Napoleonic, and WWII. They complement the many varied periods such as the Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, The Spanish Civil War, The Seven Years War, The English Civil War, Vietnam, and others that members enjoy.

Our members come mostly from Central North Carolina, although like many clubs we have members from far and wide including some who are deployed overseas to places like Germany and Afghanistan. Thankfully even our deployed members have internet access, so we have been able to keep them up to date on club activities as well as hearing

their opinions on a number of club issues.

Currently the TSS has several avenues for public outreach and recruitment in an effort to educate the public about the role of history in our culture as well as to reach those who are



interested in taking part in the historical miniatures hobby. Our first outreach event was held on 4 July 1971, on the campus of NC State University. Today, members regularly do displays and games for events such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day in locations such as the North Carolina History Museum. We also do regular outreach at events like the Games Days held at NC State University (<http://ncgameday.dhorizon.org/index.php>) and in several local game stores in the Raleigh-Durham area. We also put on two gaming conventions every year, the first being our (in)famous Southern Front. Held in Raleigh, NC, and having just celebrated its 35th anniversary, Southern Front (<http://www.trianglesimsociety.org/southernfront.html>) continues to grow and is a regular site for some fantastic games. The American Armour Foundation Museum in Danville, VA is the home of our second con, Tank

Shock (<http://www.trianglesimsociety.org/tankshock>). Tank Shock was a new event for 2006 and is notable in being the only con in the US (at least that we are aware of) where attendees can wargame inside an armour museum. We invite everyone to join us in both Danville and Raleigh in 2007.

Like any wargames club, the TSS is home to a number of very talented folks. Look for upcoming features on some of them (the ones willing to stand in front of the camera, at least). Members of the TSS have regularly won awards for their painting and games at all the HMGS-E events among others. This talent is not hidden under a basket, however, as anyone who is willing to learn how to paint or build miniatures or scenery will find members ready to show them how to do it. We hope to share some of that knowledge in future articles.

Our photo selection in this issue includes games from past Southern Front conventions. These and many, many more can be viewed at our website - <http://www.trianglesimsociety.org/index.html>





FUN TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS

by Michael Koznarsky

A Review of Cool Wargaming Related Items in time for the Holidays

DICEWARGAME

Available from Warm Acre <http://www.warmacre.com/>

The makers of “Hour of Glory” and “Bunkerstorm” have come out with a very simple yet elegant game using dice (the former game is a very subtle and fun departure from the standard “shoot-em up” game involving espionage and stealth where Allied agents attempt to infiltrate a German stronghold to steal information before time runs out, hence the “Hour of Glory”.) The object of *DICEWARGAME* is to capture four cities or beat your opponent until he surrenders. The game is small enough to be carried in, well, a small dice bag and can be played anywhere a flat surface can be found, like a pub (another quaint olde English custom.)



Each player has 10 dice representing a mix of several different modern land forces; more than one item may be on a die and some faces of the dice are blank! There are “combat dice”: regular infantry, AT infantry, armored transport, tanks, armored recon and artillery and “special dice”: city, special forces, mines, AT mines, camo and night attack. Simply put, the combat dice are used to pick off and destroy an opponent’s die. The twist is that certain dice (both combat and special) can modify or support the defense of attack. That is where the game gets very tricky – when to choose to support the attack or defense, when to cut and run or even *not* attacking (what evil gamer thought of that possibility!) so you can try to “roll up” some desperately needed reinforcements?

Because not all of the dice faces have troop types on them, the replay value of this is quite high. The rules are on one side of a sheet of paper with a handy reference battle matrix guide on the opposite site. Best of all, the game is extremely well supported (like all of their products) with an online Forum – got a question? Merely write the designers and you will have an answer in a day from across the pond. *DICEWARGAME* is a game that is easy and fun to play but tough to master. It is an excellent game to play when you have some free time but do not wish to set up something complicated.

HAVOC – The Hundred Years War

Available from Sunriver Games <http://www.sunrivergames.com/>

“Cry Havoc! and let slip the Dogs of War.” Combining the current poker craze with history, *Havoc* allows up to six gamers to play a card game similar to poker with lots of nice twists and no chance to lose money (unless you are truly hardcore.) The game is played over nine hands representing battles from Sluys in 1340 through Agincourt in 1415 to Castillon in 1453. The object is to win as many points as possible from the battles or hands. One key to understanding how to correctly play the game is to use both the rules and the quick reference cards included (noting that no extra markers go on battle #5 as there are no points for second place here!)

There are six suits of 18 different cards from which to make poker hands and no limit to the number that can be held in the hand. There is a special “Dogs of War” card that allows such cool things as “fetching” and “looting the dead”. Play begins after seven cards are dealt to each player. Players can recruit troops (draw 2 cards, discard 1), use their dogs or start playing cards to start a battle. This goes around three times per round with one person playing the “Peacekeeper” – yes, some turns go around without a battle being fought (peace – no fighting – that is another concept of a twisted mind!) The Peacekeeper draws some benefits for battles not being fought during his turn. Battles are “fought” when one player Cries Havoc! and plays at least two cards from his hand. Other players may join the battle, in turn, by playing at least two cards – the poker hands will consist of up to six cards. Then the players may choose to withdraw from the battle or remain by playing at least one card. The winner of the hand collects the token for the top points; points for second or third place, if any, are then awarded – some battles are a winner takes all contest!



In this game the strategy and decisions begin with the turn of the first card – how much will players risk early battles for quick points to build an early lead? Is it better to save cards for the later battles hoping to build larger and better hands? Early wins can gain quick points but deplete the playing hand, however, waiting too long to fight may make the points needed to win insurmountable. Another twist is that no player turn occurs after turn 8 and the start of turn 9 – this means you need to plan for two poker hands in advance! This does not even count the neat things the Dogs of War can do!

Havoc is a game that plays quickly and is fun. It is a nice break from the usual board, card and poker games. And you do not lose any money.





FUN TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS (CONT)

by Michael Koznarsky

15mm WWII POLISH INFANTRY

Available from True North Miniatures

<http://www.truenorthminis.com/>



True North Miniatures makes the only available line of 15mm WWII Polish infantry figures. They have a selection of 40 different packs for infantry, cavalry, tanks (in the broadest sense of the word as far as the Poles were concerned!), ATGs, artillery, assorted vehicles and even planes! I chose to base mine according to the unofficial Flames of War army list suggested by Rob Smith (Great Hall Games) and available on line. (<http://students.cs.tamu.edu/miller/flames-of-war/>) A more highly polished and updated list is available if you write me at: weesp@yahoo.com.

The regular infantry comes 24 to a pack with 6 different poses, however, this is actually doubled as they come in both helmet and czapka (traditional four sided Polish hat). The command pack has 12 figures

with four poses. The choice is not limited to regular infantry as gamers can select from figures designed to represent the Highland Division, the 10th Mechanized Brigade (the “Black Coats”) and for those who truly like a challenge, the National Guard! (8 different poses each) Each of the different types of infantry is supported by a heavy weapons pack with a selection of LMG, HMG, mortar with crew and ATRs. Cavalry also have a total of 8 different poses in Adrian helmet and czapka; they are armed with rifle, sable and lance! 6 figures are in the command pack; horse poses are available standing or galloping (request galloping!) They are also supported with dismounted figures all wearing the Adrian helmet (7 poses) with command (3 poses).

The heavy weapons are meticulously cast and most come with a caisson. There are 37mm ATGs, 75mm and mountain artillery pieces and beautifully sculpted 40mm Bofors AA guns. Vehicles include the 7TP tank, TPS tankettes (with choice of barrels), trucks, staff cars and two types of armored cars (WZ29 and 34). Rounding out the figures are two types of horse trains and motorcycles in cavalry or mechanized uniforms. Last but definitely not least are the Taczanka wagons – HMGs with crew on the horse drawn wagons – figures just too cool to pass up!

These figures are 15mm from the base to their eyes and 17mm to the tops of their heads. They clean up nicely and paint up very quickly with lots of nice detail visible (pouches, backpacks, ammo containers and the complicated strap system are all there for the painting!) The dismounted cavalry looked particularly nice with their long coats – you have got to love an army that carries its medieval love of cavalry into the mid 20th century! The poses of the infantry show lots of action and with all of the poses available, none of my stands were individualized – no mean feat when considering my regular infantry company needed almost 40 rifle stands of 4 to 5 figures each! The cavalry on their charging horses really give you the feeling that the cream of the Polish Army is about to sweep all in its path! Fully completed, the army looks *very* impressive indeed!

What is nice about this collection is that, while developed independently from what Rob Smith developed after living in Poland, these figures offer the gamer the ability to build any of forces suggested! If anyone is interested in building a very fun, challenging and unique army – for whatever rules system you prefer – True North has the figures to support it!





FESTUNG EUROPA

Available from Battlefront

<http://www.flamesofwar.com/>

Festung Europa, 149 pages with multiple full color illustrations, is the latest intelligence handbook for the very popular Flames of War rules system. It contains army lists for American, British, Soviet and German forces available from January – August 1944. Like the previous books in the series, it is beautifully presented, illustrated with vintage black and white photos as well as full color photos of painted armies.

After successfully completing the compilation books (Ostfront – Soviet, German, German minor allies and Afrika – US, British, German, Italian) that covered the mid war period 1942-1943, *Festung Europa* represents Battlefront's first foray into the final years of the war. It is the first of several books that offers gamers the ability to replay the European battles that doomed the 3rd Reich. It is not merely a rehashing of the force statistics and costs from the previous books, but a completely updated text that more accurately reflects the late war period. For all those waiting for the big tanks – this series will allow those AFVs to be introduced onto the gaming table!

Each nationality has a small intro describing, in a story format, the forces they possess. The army lists provide the gamer to build all sorts of military companies: armored, armored recon, armored car, rifle etc. To this add specialized units like rangers, commandos, guards and Waffen SS as well as variants in the British army to allow Scots, Irish and Guard regiments and other Commonwealth contingents. Each army or contingent has special rules that give each its own “flavor” and individuality; there are specific guidelines for different theaters like Italy and Northern France for the western Allies. Keep in mind that just because you choose an infantry army you are not excluded from having armored support – it is just a matter of what you deem important within the confines of the points available (usual battles are fought between forces of 1500 points). Do you buy AA guns because you know your opponent favors air support or do you spend those points on extra artillery to neutralize his infantry? Do you choose mortars over artillery instead? What about several light/medium tanks instead of one very heavy AFV? The selections are almost limitless and completely up to you.



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One of the many advantages of the Flames of War system is the outstanding support the company provides. A single figure was missing from three packs – I wrote to them and had replacements from New Zealand within 10 days. Have you got questions (or better said – do you have a question you think has not been asked) about anything FoW related? Merely go on the site's Forum and you can find the answer – check out the “Lessons from the Front” to get answers and interpretations on many aspects of the game. The website itself is full of interesting articles about campaigns, battles, painting tips, errata and new releases.

Another nice thing about FoW is that the game offers the ability to play a game to a conclusion in a reasonable amount of time – and it is fun! There are *many* different scenarios that can be played on the barren sands of North Africa to the rocky Italian peninsula to the bocage of France to the endless steppes of the Soviet Union. The *Festung Europa* handbook is the first of the “late war” books; more are planned over the next year. With endless choices of armies, battles and battlefields the replay value will be quite high - and it is fun to play!



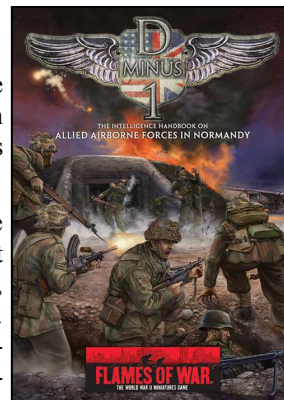


D-1

Available from Battlefront <http://www.flamesofwar.com/>

D-1, a new supplement to compliment the *Festung Europa* book, is 61 pages long and supports the Allied airborne units that fought in the Normandy Campaign. It contains army lists for both American and British parachute and glider/air landing companies. Beautifully presented, it completes the units that fought in Europe through the early months of the late war 1944-45

One may think that the choices available to airborne operations to be limited but this is truly not the case as the variety of troop types and support weapons really quite varied. The fighting platoons that are available to the British airborne can be selected from more than a dozen different types: mortars, MGs, pioneers, ATGs, Royal Engineers, to name just a few to heavier items like Tetrarch light tanks. Airlanding companies have even more choices available to them; a major difference is that the airborne companies may have two support platoons for each parachute platoon selected whereas the airlanding may have but one. The option to include heavy armor allows the gamer to recreate the fighting the airborne units experienced around Pegasus Bridge in the early part of the Overlord Campaign.



The American airborne forces are similar to the British but with enough differences to make each side unique, challenging and fun to play. While most of the support platoon choices are similar, the Americans can select from a few more options than the British. AAMG and Chemical mortar choices are a few of the unique US options. Both the US parachute and glider forces may have two support platoons for each platoon selected, however, the US glider troops are Confident Trained, whereas all of the other base companies are Fearless Veterans.

Included in the supplement are maps of the combat areas, unit histories, a discussion each of a specific US and UK airborne battle and a US and UK “Hero”, figures that offer some specific and interesting skills that can be used in the game (though I am just not sure how confident I would be if my superior’s last name was “Pine-Coffin”!) There are also many pages of beautifully painted and prepared figures and battles/games to offer inspiration to the gamer. Rounding out the supplement are rules for airborne operations as well as a new scenario/mission for the Allies: “Seize and Hold”. While I have not, as yet, had the opportunity to play-test the mission, it does appear to be very challenging for both the attacker and defender. As will most of the FoW supplements, there is an excellent painting guide with Vallejo paint suggestions for the Red Devils and the US Paratroopers. Excellent advice is given to the wargamers on the colors to be used, methods of painting and suggestions on blending (the recommendation to use light colors other than white for highlighting to get less stark changes, is one that is often overlooked and a well deserved tip.)

Each month new figures are produced and introduced on the Battlefront website. The company produces all the figures necessary to run the armies that are found in the supplements. Whatever army you decide to build, you can find figures to support it!

WWII JAPANESE INFANTRY

Available from Brigade Games

<http://www.brigadegames.com/>

Taking advantage of the my renewed interest in the Pacific War after watching “Flags of Our Fathers” and looking with anticipation of the Japanese version of the battle (entitled either “Black Sand/Red Sun” or “Letters from Iwo Jima” due to be released in Japan in December) I wanted to include a look at the Imperial Japanese Army figures released at Historicon by PacWar. The packs include a command pack and two infantry packs with soldiers wearing soft hats.



These figures expand on the line of WWI Pacific War figures first reviewed in the Historical Miniature Gamer magazine issue #6. The new Japanese figures include Command (Pack A) and two for Infantry (Packs C & D). The Command pack has 6 assorted Officers/NCOs complete with samurai sword and set up perfectly for the platoon level (so one pack is exactly what is needed without any wasted figures.) The Infantry come 4 to a pack with soft hats and a mix of hat flaps and measure 25mm to their eyes and about 28mm to the tops of their heads; the Japanese soldier of WWII is shorter than his American counterpart and the figures demonstrate this difference very appropriately. These figures are all very well proportioned and uniquely posed with plenty of realistic action. All of the figures were well cast with little flash and were easily and quickly prepared for painting. The IJA figures come with a varied array of field gear so that all of the figures completed to date are unique (one even has camo netting on his helmet, a very nice touch) and the detail/quality remains high. (note: the reason the IJA are packed in groups of 4 and the USMC in groups of 6 is for unit construction so you will not have left over figures that cannot be used – a very subtle and well thought out system!)

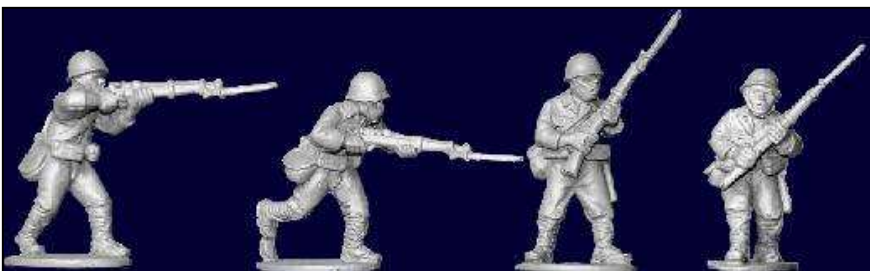




FUN TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS (cont)

by Michael Koznarsky

While the Command and previous infantry packs are great, there is just something awesome about the figures wearing the cap flaps (2 each in both C & D). The IJA infantry figs with the hat flaps fall into my “gotta have them ‘cause they’re too cool” category. There is just something that “strikes” me about these figures – the action in the figures combined with the way the flaps look on the hats makes me want to build coconut log defenses, assemble palm trees and game the WWII Pacific theater. They really look *that* good!



The IJA figures paint up very nicely (using the guide from the Resistant Roosters website at: <http://www.resistantroosters.com> - look under “Tutorials”) and look great when finished – I plan to break out all the IJA in my collection to paint them up! These figures represent the next phase in an ongoing project to produce figures and vehicles to replay the Pacific War campaigns. A LMG pack is also available as well as an artillery piece; the crew for the artillery piece as well as an anti-tank gun with shirtless crew are coming out as this is being written. Soldiers with “knee mortars” as well as specialty individuals (a John Wayne character, for one) are also planned. They also have a growing line of USMC figures to compliment the Japanese opponents (please forgive the “glossy” appearance as I have not completely finished them.) These figures are 2mm taller than the Japanese to accurately reflect the actual height difference between combatants from each country during WWII.

March Warden/Border Reivers Available from Vendel Miniatures
<http://www.vendelminiatures.co.uk>

Vendel Miniatures make several lines of figures including those specific for Border Reiver period. Six different “families”, a raiding party, additional and the March Warden are produced along with many other items for this turbulent period in English/Scottish history (e.g. flags, mastiffs). Many of these figures are based upon drawings in the Osprey MAA 279 Border Reivers book illustrated by Angus McBride. There are sister lines to include the “O’Neils”, an Irish family just in case you wish to take the fight to Ireland.

The March Warden set comes with 5 horse and 26 foot figures. The riders include figures like the March Warden, a bugler and three lancers (one of whom I will use as my rider holding a bit of burning sod) and are another of my “gotta have them ‘cause they’re too cool” favorites. The foot figures have an assortment of weapons, separately cast so that you can pick and choose who will carry what and to allow more variance in the figures. Both foot and horse figures measure 28mm to their eyes and match very well with my existing figs from well known US and UK companies. Another of the amazing things about this “family” is that *all* of the figures are unique! 26 foot figs = 26 different poses! There are two figs with pistols, 12 with muskets and another 12 with hand held weapons. The pack comes with more than enough shields and hand weapons from which to choose including swords, spears and halberds. While there was an assortment of trousers/pants, each figure sported breast and back plates as well as morion type helmets – well, they *are* the March Warden’s men aren’t they?! There was very little flash on the figures I chose to paint for the article. The figures were a breeze to prepare; the riders fit very naturally and easily onto their mounts without the need to trim anything. The faces are very animated with lots of detail in each figure making them a lot of fun to paint!



No warden would dare set out on a dangerous “Hot Trod” without the assistance of his faithful mastiffs. Vendel makes three different types; those included here were both the resting and upright. These figures needed little cleaning and painted up very quickly with great results! Very nicely animated and aggressive looking, these fellows are a must for those autumn forays across the border.

Speaking of a “Hot Trod” and border reiving, Vendel provides a set of FREE rules entitled “Hot Trod and Red Hand” to allow gamers the opportunity to use these beautiful figures. Merely click on the “Border Reivers” icon from the website and the link to the rules is next to the first large photo on the page. All you need do is pick a family, paint them up and start picking on someone else!





NUMBERS AT FALL IN 2006

by Robert DiStasio

I went on Saturday to Fall-In and was struck by the numbers everywhere.

22.2: The number of miles from my home to Point of Rocks, VA bridge.

62: The number of miles from my home to the Gettysburg exit.

2: The number of games I played in

1: The number of musket armed (!) infantry regiments I had in my American Civil War game (S008: Volley and Bayonets). My regiment moved well, evaded serious damage from the artillery, got to the wall, began firing point blank into another regiment, and promptly panicked and laid down when it lost its first figure!

It is also the number of cavalry regiments on the union side, run by the game designer, who nearly charged infantry in the woods, slid to the left, was fired on by another regiment and promptly lost control and charged a regiment behind a wall! (Kilpatrick strikes again!)

4: Number of Musket armed regiments on the UNION side. Did we have the Irish brigade?

2: The number of Civil War re enactors playing, which made for some interesting discussions on this tactical scale game.

54: The scale of the figures in S008

15: Minutes I had for lunch between S008 and my next game S022, Birth of the broadside

6: Number of Spanish ships I had in my squadron to fight 5 English ships, including the formidable 'White Bear' and a renegade Spanish traitor!

2: The number of ships I had to fight myself AND the number of teenagers I had fighting with me on my side! Actually did quite well, one of them disabled the rudder of the White Bear, after she hammered it for several turns.

3: Number of bowsprits destroyed on Spanish Ships. Also number of fires started on ships (2 English, 1 Spanish). None of the fires got out of hand.

2: The number of bowsprits destroyed on English ships and Rudders destroyed on Spanish ships. Both sides' gunners (in other words our dice) really concentrated on the stern in this scenario!

1: Main masts lost on Spanish ships.

4: The number of bow rakes my Flagship gave the lead English ship before it rammed me. The fact that it survived with a mast is a tribute to English builders and the lightly armed nature of Spanish vessels. Sadly I could not grapple with it to use my much larger number of soldiers. By then it was a foregone conclusion, even with the White Bear drifting...

40: Minutes I spent walking around in the flea market, sparse pickings by late Saturday, and the vendors (where I spent a grand total of \$1!)

6:30: Time when I returned home to hop into my wife's car to go to a fundraising dinner. Going back to reality can be such a drag.





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For photos, directions and calendars of events, check our website at:

www.gameparlor.com



NEW COMBAT SYSTEM IN BOARD GAMES

by Rob Weigend

I was happily surprised by some recent board games that introduce new methods of combat using dice that both reflect the spirit of the type of combat of the period depicted in the game, and provide new methods of calculating the odds and casualties for battles. Here are a couple of samples:

Axis & Allies **Battle of the Bulge**

The first innovative combat system is contained in Hasbro's new game called *Axis & Allies Battle of the Bulge* (AVH 95817, \$50.00), which depicts the German counteroffensive that took place in Belgium and Luxembourg in December 1944 at the end of World War II. The game uses the standard infantry, artillery and tank pieces found in Hasbro's other *Axis & Allies* games.

In other *Axis & Allies* games, players roll a d6 for each unit, and hits are determined by the strength of each unit. For example, on offense an infantry unit hits on a roll of one, an artillery unit hit on a roll of one or two, and a tank unit hits on a roll of one, two or three. Thus, in terms of odds, infantry should hit 16.6% of the time, artillery 33.3% and tanks 50%, and the player whose pieces were hit selects casualties.



However, in *Battle of the Bulge*, players roll d12s, and all units hit on rolls of six or less (which means that each roll has a 50% chance of hitting). The difference is that each unit rolls a variable number of dice, with infantry rolling one die, tanks rolling two dice and artillery rolling three dice. The innovative part comes next.

The numbers rolled on each d12 die not only determine hits, they also determine which of the opponent's units are hit. Before the battle begins, the defender uses "combat strips" which are pieces of cardboard that slide out from under the game board, to show the number and types of defending units. The order of the strips, and the number of unit boxes revealed on each strip, is used to determine which units are casualties.

For example, if the defender has 2 infantry, 2 tanks and 1 artillery, then the defender would slide out the first strip enough to reveal 2 infantry boxes, the second to reveal 2 tank boxes and the third to reveal 1 artillery box. The topmost infantry box is in position "one," the second infantry box is in position "two," the topmost tank box is in position "three," the second tank box is in position "four," and the artillery box is in position "five."

Next, assume that the attacker had enough units to roll ten d12s, and rolled 1, 3, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 8, 9 and 12 on the dice. The rolls of six or less are hits, and the rest are misses. The hits are assigned by placing the each die on a box with a position corresponding to the number rolled. Thus, the infantry box in position "one" gets the die that rolled a one, and the tank box in position "three" gets the two dice that each rolled a three, and the artillery box in position "five" gets the die that rolled a five. Since the die that rolled a six is also a hit, it "rolls over" onto the infantry box in position "one." One die in a unit box means the unit retreats, while two or more dice in a unit box means the unit is destroyed, so in this example an infantry and a tank are destroyed, an artillery retreats, and an infantry and a tank remain.

The beauty of this system is that it eliminates the bias that results in a two-player game when one of the players gets to choose the casualties. For example, in games like regular *Axis & Allies*, the defender gets to choose casualties, and usually chooses the cheapest and weakest units which creates a bias in favor of the defender; and in games such as *Fortress America*, the attacker gets to choose casualties, and usually chooses the most expensive and strongest units which creates a bias in favor of the attacker. In *Battle of the Bulge*, game mechanics and random chance determine casualties, not players.

The randomness of casualties makes each attack in *Battle of the Bulge* unpredictable, and therefore exciting and at times frustrating (in a good way). You think you've assigned sufficient units for a successful attack only to find that some defenders unexpectedly held out. You think your meager number of units can't hold out, and they do. The game is fresh and interesting, and you have to maneuver your units to defend in depth or attack in waves just because you can't be sure what will happen in any particular battle. I think this game is fun and can be played over and over.





Conquest of the Empire



Conquest of the Empire (EGL 060, \$47.95), by Eagle Games, is a remake of an old Milton Bradley game that was part of the Gamemaster Series featuring such titles as Axis & Allies, Fortress America and Shogun (renamed Samurai Swords). Conquest of the Empire depicts ancient warfare during the time of the imperial Roman Empire. The Eagle Games version of Conquest of the Empire was published in September 2005, and since then Eagle Games has gone out of business, and the game became unavailable. However, Funagain Games recently purchased the assets of Eagle Games, and Conquest of the Empire will again be offered for sale in December 2006 at Game Parlor.


I just got my copy of the Eagle Games version of Conquest of the Empire, and was overjoyed to find that all the flaws of the original Milton Bradley version were fixed, and this game is now a joy to play. The old version had a good concept, playing board and components, but the rules weren't very good, and the worst thing was that the combat system so favored catapults that experienced players rushed to purchase them at the beginning of the game, and the winner was usually the one who successfully had the most catapults. Other units in the game, such as cavalry, lacked cost-effectiveness, and thus were usually ignored. The game just didn't feel right.

Ah Ha ... in comes the new version, and the game now has everything right. While all the components and rules have been improved, I'll just mention the new combat system. There are still only three land combat units (infantry, cavalry and catapults), leaders and ships. However, now each unit has unique advantages, and the combat system is fun in both large and small battles.

The combat system starts with custom d6 dice, which have symbols of combat units on each side: two sides with infantry, three sides with cavalry, catapult and ship respectively, and one blank side. The basic rule for land combat is that you select up to five combat units to form a combat legion (or less if you have less than five units in the battle) and roll a die for each unit in the legion. You determine hits by matching the symbols rolled on the dice with the units in your combat legion. For example, if your combat legion has four infantry and one cavalry, and you roll one infantry, two cavalry, one catapult and one ship, you would only get two hits (since you only have one cavalry unit, the second cavalry roll is a waste). After the combat round, each side can decide to stay and fight another round or retreat. It's a simple but effective system.

But there's more. You get to have an extra unit in your combat legion for each general you have present. If you have more units than those in your combat legion, they form your reserve, and catapults in your reserve add combat dice (although they cannot become casualties since they are in the reserve). The typical grouping of units in Conquest of the Empire is the legion, which is defined as up to seven land units. One general can move one legion on land, and one ship can transport one legion by sea. So, if you have a well-balance legion consisting of 4 infantry, 2 cavalry and 1 catapult with a leader, all 7 units can fight because 6 units can form the front line (5 units + 1 more for the leader), and the catapult can fight from the reserve area.

This combat system is extremely flexible, and provides for exciting battles both large and small. Large battles may go 2 or 3 rounds before one side decides to retreat. The side that doesn't retreat gets a pursuit roll against the retreating legions, which consists of rolling one die for each unit and hitting on each cavalry roll that matches a cavalry unit in the pursuing legions. Thus each combat unit has a advantage of one sort or another; the infantry having a better chance to hit, the cavalry being able to pursue, and the catapults being able to attack from the reserve area.

All in all, these combat rule changes, together with many other subtle rule changes in the game, makes Conquest of the Empire one of the best multi-player war games around. 

Rob Weigend is the owner of Game Parlor, a chain of two game stores located in Northern Virginia. One store is located in the Sully Place Shopping Center at 13936 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly, Virginia (Tel: 703-803-3114), and the other is in the Prince William Square Shopping Center at 14400 Smoketown Road in Woodbridge, Virginia (Tel: 703-551-4200). Both stores have large game rooms that are available to customers for free, and both stores are open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. every day of the year except Christmas. For pictures of the stores, directions, and calendars of events, visit www.gameparlor.com.



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PHOTOS FROM FALL- IN 2006

by George Busby

This first group shows a Command Decision game I played Friday night. It involved British and Italian elements in North Africa:



Italians advancing across the desert



British armor counter-attack



British armor over-run Italian forces



Here's a photo of Baxter and his son's vendor Booth - FAA



Here's a photo from Saturday's game, the Battle of Timograd. It was a Disposable Heroes & Coffin for Seven Brothers Game hosted by some guys from Rockville, MD. This photo shows my Soviet tanks' costly advance across an open field:





...and here's what was waiting at the other side





NEWS FROM NORTH OF NOVAG

Having been invited by David Luff to contribute news of our little basement group's activities to the NOVAG newsletter, I thought I'd send along some pictures (saving about 1,000 words per, using the age old algorithm) and also brief description of the group and its recent activities.

The Silver Spring Civic Guard is a basement gaming group (mostly historical miniatures) that meets on the "other side" of the beltway from the great NOVAG nexus, (if you know where US 29 crosses 495, then you know where we are). We play primarily historical miniatures in a recreational atmosphere (win or lose is not part of our game). Like so many other yahoos, we use our Yahoo Group as our primary forum and place to post pictures of ongoing projects and games. As the basemaster/host, I try to schedule one meeting (called "musters") per month, and I invite everyone to run games, which has turned out very well. Matter of fact, we have something of a waiting list developing, and the variety of our gaming has been rather wide in comparison to our small numbers (ranging from Dark Ages in 15mm to PLO vs IDF in 25mm, and much else in-between and others still to be played, like small unit WWII in 54mm, 15mm Napoleonic, and 25mm TSATF early Boers vs Zulus). Our December muster found us embroiled in Ben Pecson's 20mm American War of Independence game using Volley and Bayonet rules (a bloody affair, with a close decision going in favor of the Americans).



The American militia before the battle in our recent AWI game.

We matured as a gaming group this September last ("to mature" being used in its plastic sense when applied to fellows who tend to chortle alot and play with toy soldiers), managing to hold down a club table at TriaDCon without wrecking anything.

George Rutherford, a returning gamer, ran his first ever convention game there (a French and Indian War scrum), Ben Pecson returned to hosting convention games after a long hiatus (a Spanish Civil War extravaganza), and your unworthy correspondent resumed convention GMing there after a one year absence (a 2nd Afghan War affair). Our collective hats are off to the organizers of this local convention, and everyone is looking forward to next year's TriaDCon. Until then, we will continue our bumptious group activities below ground here in Silver Spring.



Ben's 20mm AWI figures up close.

Our virtual meeting place is: <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/civicguard/>
Feel free to visit.

Excelsior!



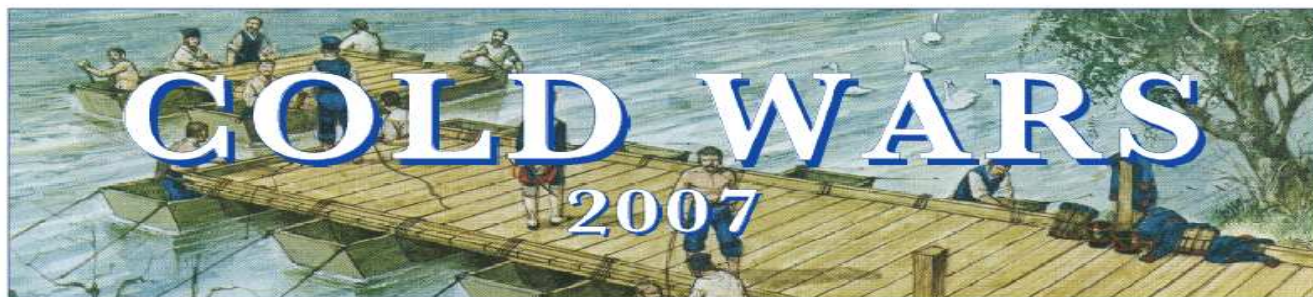


PARTING SHOT

by David Luff



I hope you enjoyed this first try at getting a new type of newsletter, eh, magazine out to our members and interested gamers. This idea will only survive with your help, the readers, with your articles and photos to fill our pages. We now have the means of unlimited pages, in color, and a way to get it out to the gamers. The next issue will be in February 2007 so send them in today, articles or review, large or small, we will need them to fill the pages. Take care and have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Asst Ed



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