

July 2022

HMGS Historicon 2022: Back in Lancaster

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Tiger Eye Candy: Photo



*Wally's Basement Flea Market:
Saturday 10:30am.*



Think Ahead:

A promotional poster for the 'Fall In! 2022' event. On the left, there is a photograph of a large, colorful, and somewhat rusted tank model. The background of the poster is white with blue and grey geometric shapes. The HMGS logo is in the top right corner. The main text reads 'FALL IN!® 2022' in large blue letters, followed by 'NOVEMBER 4-6, 2022' in smaller blue letters. Below that, it says 'Wyndham Resort and Convention Center, Lancaster, PA'. At the bottom right, there is a dark blue bar with the hashtag '#FALLIN2022' in white.

As this is a Historicon special issue, I'll have a double-sized book review section in the August 2022 AAR.

HMGS Historicon 2022: Back in Lancaster

by Russ Lockwood

You could feel the excitement just entering the hotel lobby. Historicon was back in town and the 2022 attendees greeted old friends and met new ones with all the panache of a pre-pandemic convention. Games everywhere, projects described, dice rolled, and laughter echoed off the walls as Historicon strutted back into Lancaster at the downtown Lancaster Convention Center (LCC).

Remember, HMGS held Historicon 2021 in November at Valley Forge, and kudos for doing so with all the iffiness of a then coronavirus surge. I certainly enjoyed the masked-up convention. Historicon 2022 had no convention-wide mask requirements. Personal and GM preference, of course, but with games spaced out and the air conditioning thankfully on full blast, HMGS and the LCC made it as safe as you could ask for.

The real question? What to see and do first...

The answer: Dealer area!

Dealer Area

The usual whiplash occurred to me as I reconned the aisles. Go here, go there. No, over here. Definitely there. Hmmm. What's this? Of course I ended up chatting with dealers and attendees as the hours on Thursday melted away faster than an ice cream cone outside the LCC.

For those that weren't at Hcon, the temperatures flared into the high 90s and touched 101 degrees on Saturday as I drove home. The LCC air conditioning never faltered.

I'll come back to the Dealer Hall later, but for now, let's head to the gaming areas.

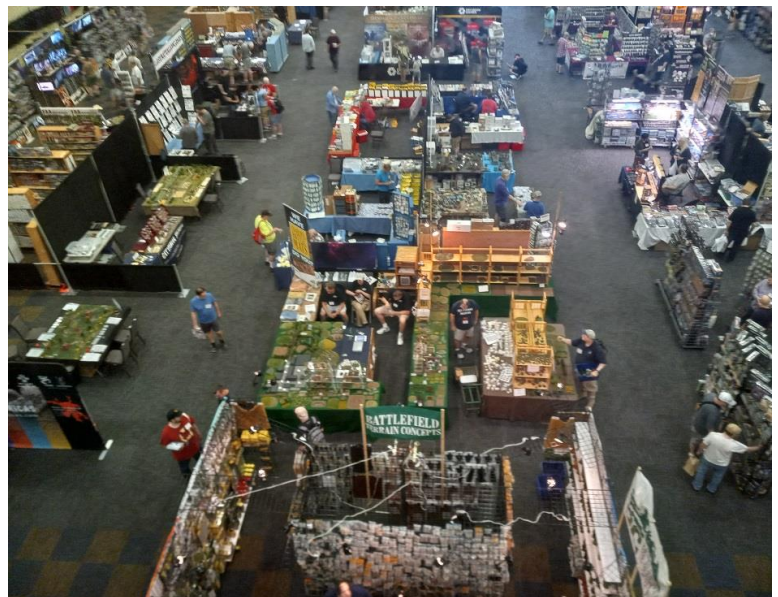
Hanging from the rafters, I took a couple aerial views of the dealer area before security tasered me down. Kidding....

Walkabout

The LCC offers three main levels of gaming: the hall next to the dealer's area, the ballroom on the floor above, and the floor above that. Everything is connected by escalators and elevators. In addition, you could find games in the corridors around the ballrooms, on some of the balconies, and in the circular tower. I chugged up the circular stairs of this convention Barad-Dur, oxygen thinning with every step. When I got to the top, I discovered it had an elevator. I really need more cardio...

The ballrooms had the dividers cutting up the rooms to dampen noise. Smart move.

Obviously, I couldn't see every game even though I meandered my way through the various ballroom sections at various times. I saw some old favorites, and many new ones that sure looked like the gamers spent two to three years working on that special project.



HMGS Historicon 2022: I Spy With My Camera Eye... Games

By Russ Lockwood

I would like to take you on a wonderful journey, in no particular order, on a walkabout around games that caught my eye.

ACW Ironclads

My notes say I took this photo at about 6:30pm on Thursday. Those islands sure look good as did the ships maneuvering around them.

ACW action.



British Grenadier

I came across this lovely table at 10pm on Thursday night, apparently late in the game.

I took a close-up of the middle of the table, where the American Revolution action was the hottest.

American Revolution action from far away....



...and American Revolution action closer up.



B-17 Bomber Raid

I talked to Tom briefly about his three-year project. He went all out in identifying each individual bomber and its associated markings. Indeed, he noted that he researched what happened to each plane.

I don't recall the rules, but I remember that the first game session was the flight and fight to the target and the second session was the flight and fight back to base.

Tom, center with the black shirt bearing the B-17 image, sees the fruition of his three year quest.

The gamers certainly showed appreciation for the work and the game. This shows what you can accomplish if you work consistently towards a goal.

Close up of Tom's tabletop action as B-17s face the onslaught of the Luftwaffe.



Brazen Chariots

By now, Adam and his *Brazen Chariots* spread needs no introduction. He's been hosting these for years, except his setup get ever more impressive.

I was fortunate to play in a Cold Wars 2019 game (see my 3/22/2019 AAR or here on HMGS.org for the game recap and convention write up) and he has a number of fans among our gaming group.

Adam (right) explains the scenario. The unsuspecting convoy seems like it is unprepared to face the tanks.

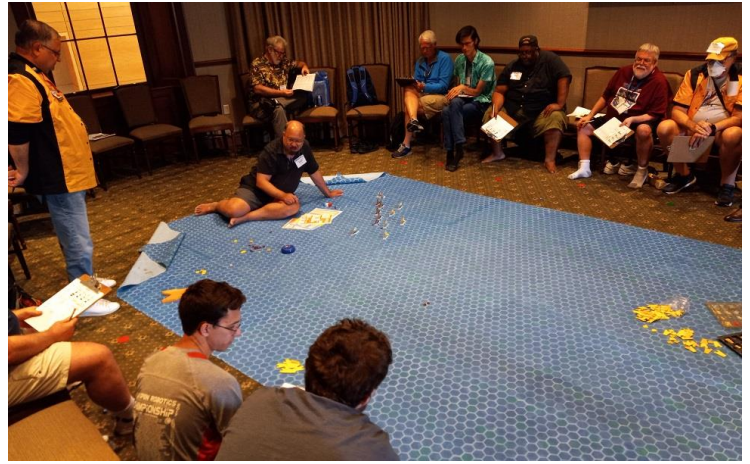


Close Action

Mark took over the top floor of the tower for his age of sail miniatures game -- a perennial favorite as you can tell from all the players. Mark runs a crisp game, calling for player moves and then moving the ship according to what the player calls out. He includes running commentary of moves clever and not. The players call out the die results for firing.

Let me also note that the players get interactive, with requests for the last move of enemy player ships as they puzzle out their own moves.

Mark Campbell keeps the Close Action game running smoothly.



Pirates vs. Dutch

Thursday 7:54 pm says my notes as I gawked at this game between pirates and Dutch. I count 10 major ships from the docks to the fort atop the hill at the end of the table. I don't know how the game played or what rules were used, but it was eye candy to me.

The calm before the storm on a great-looking game.



Fantasy Triumph

Just outside the dealer area was a 54mm (?) Egyptian game using *Fantasy Triumph* rules. I've passed their demos in many a show, but this one caught my eye. Last gamer I remember to host a game using large plastic figures was Chris Parker and his *Day of Battle* rules.

Fantasy Triumph looked fantastic. I think the volcano was used for die rolls.

Fantasy Triumph (left) and *Hastings*.



HMGS Hastings

John runs games as part of HMGS Next Gen using his homegrown rules



dubbed *Halbard, Mace, and Great Sword*. I've played in his Crecy game at Cold Wars 2020 (see my 3/26/2020 AAR or here at HMGS.org for a game recap and rules analysis) and he ran a 100 Years War game for HMGS NG (see my 6/29/2022 AAR). Yes, I'm sure you already figured out the acronym for this rule set.

In any case, here he runs through possible moves. A prepared GM is a great GM! Gorgeous figures, too.

Have Gun Will Travel

A returning favorite from last Historicon brings the Olde West to the tabletop. It is even more remarkable that his miniatures version is based on a 1950s? 1960s? board game that is based on the TV show. While a little before my time, I can certainly appreciate the multi-table effects. The terrain is marvelous and gamers enjoyed going after the outlaws.

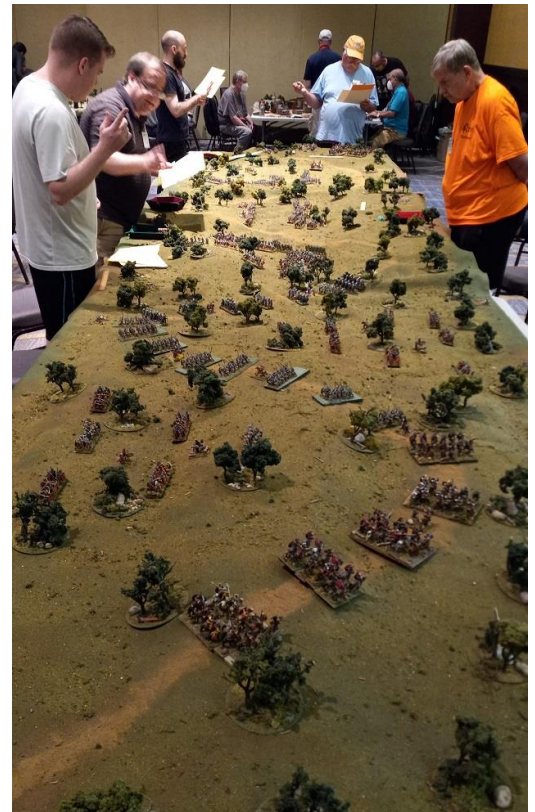
I may be mistaken, but is the tabletop setup getting larger? Bring it on, I say!

Fantastic fort in Have Gun (left). Right: Joe Hack gets players hacking across the tabletop.

Joe Hack

If you've been around the hobby long enough, *Classical Hack* and all the historical *Hack* variations are legendary creations by Phil Viverito. Sadly, I didn't see Phil, but I meet Joe, who created the *Joe Hack* variation of the *Hack* system. I didn't play, but folks were as entertained by Joe as they had been by Phil.

Big table. Lots of 25/28mm figs. Action galore.



Malta

This is one of those show-stopper games. I first saw Bruce's magnificent effort via the Little Wars TV show.

Bruce (head of table in dark blue shirt) oversees Operation C/Operation Hercules on his magnificent table.

His set up was in the Hawks room, but tucked away in the corner. In fact, I was one of those people who asked LWTV host Greg where I could find it. I'm glad I persevered.

The map shows Malta as it was in 1942. As I understand it, Bruce downloaded a GoogleEarth map of Malta and then photoshopped it to reflect 1942 terrain. I.e. Shopping malls and other modern constructions were replaced with orchards and fields, so to speak. The image was printed on a durable cloth.

Here's where I get a bit sketchy on the details. The terrain is textured with hills and valleys and so on. You can run your finger up and down one and feel the changes of elevation. Better yet, you can see the elevation. It's slight. It's subtle. It's like your eyes are being fooled with an optical illusion, but it works.

The troops and houses were 3mm Pico Armor figures.

You'll have to watch LWTV for more details, but I remember that the LWTV game ended with a couple of odd die rolls that mandated an Axis withdrawal just when they were closing in on Valetta. I understand Bruce changed the rolls or the rules prior to the show to better reflect Axis gains.

Well done, indeed!

Speaking of Little Wars TV, view Malta and Historicon 2022 recaps: www.littlewarstv.com



Air Battle Over Malta

A different type of Malta game showcased an aerial battle over Valetta. Those cockpit control panels are always so cool. And let's not ignore the Malta map and the Italian MC-200s vs British Hurricanes. They're just getting started with the *Aerodrome* rules on Thursday at 7:30pm.

Explanations before the aerial scrum.



Mushroom Mayhem

Don't ask. I have no idea. The set up of mushroom villages looked cool...and colorful...and did I mention cool? It's like the Keebler elves are going to war with the Smurfs.

The figures show infantry, cavalry, and cannon, plus bigger fantasy figures.

Well, yes, of course they're fantasy figures.

I just thought it was all cool.



Computer Napoleonics

I'm guessing we're in the middle of a *Carnage and Glory* game, as it's Friday night at 10:14, a laptop is open, and David (white shirt) is tableside, although not typing. These always draw a crowd and all the magnificent 25/28mm troops bring the eye appeal to the tabletop.

Analog Napoleonics

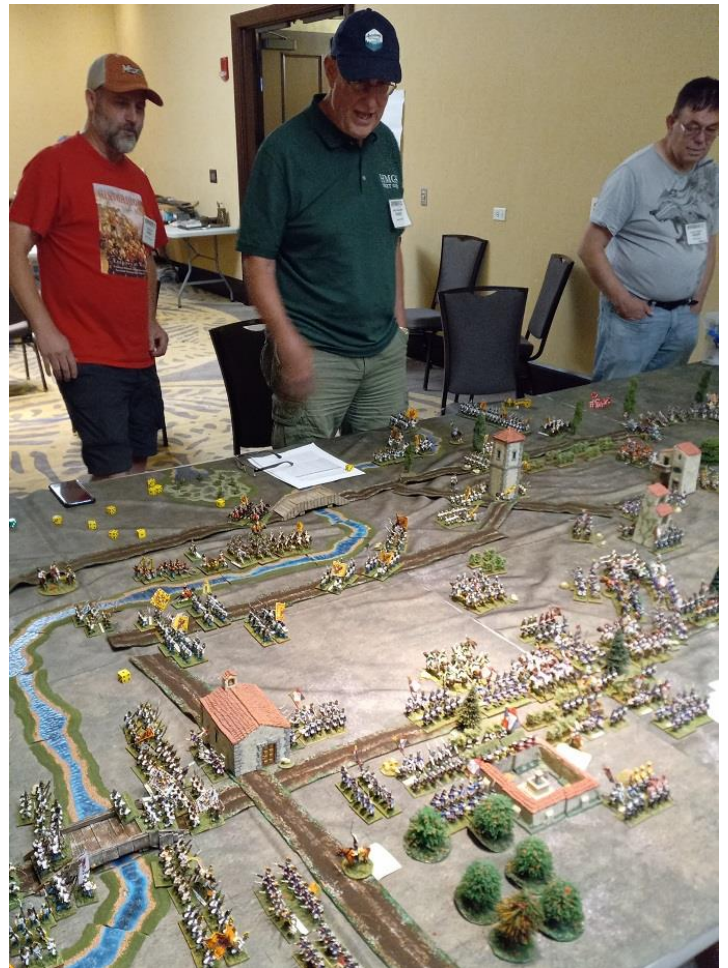
Peter always puts on a number of good looking games at Historicon. This is his Marengo game on Friday. It's French versus Austrians on a gridded tabletop using Joseph Morschauser-inspired rules.

His favorite of the four games he ran at the con was Caldiero 1805 using *Field of Battle* rules. During the 10-player game, the Austrians narrowly salvaged victory from the jaws of defeat.

Visit his [BlundersontheDanube](#) blog for full details and a lot more photos.

Peter (in green) hosting Marengo [right].

Caldiero 1805 game in progress. Photo by Peter.



Patriot Games

The tabletop gets a workout with an American Revolution game, Freeman's Farm. It was a good-looking game with considerable player participation.



Ravenna 1512

A favorite comes back to Historicon. It's big. It's colorful. It's a WAMP game. Those guys always put on a spectacular looking table with lots and lots of figures. I've played in a few WWII ones put on by Lou and Pat (far side of table, both standing), but Ravenna is Martin's baby.

You just want to sit down and start pushing lead!

A WAMP classic!



War of Roses *Test of Resolve*

Tim ran a number of *Test of Resolve* games at the convention. It's card driven, uses a d12 die, and meant to reflect War of the Roses historical results within two hours.

I got a set of the core rules, a scenario book, and a deck of cards. With figures furnished by War of the Roses buff Dan, I plan to play a game or three to see how the rules work. You'll be able to read about it in a future AAR recap.

Tim in red shirt points to an activating unit.



Roman and Carthaginian Warships

I played an early version of the rules back in June 2021 (see my 6/29/2021 AAR for the recap) on a 6-foot wide table. At the time, the game was fast and furious fun, but the table was too small for the 25/28mm ship turning radius.

Playing on the floor? Now you got the room!

Colorful models and figures and simple rules make this a fun bash 'em and board 'em game.



What a Tanker



I chatted with Eric a bit about his big scale WWII *What a Tanker* (WaT) game, Barkmann's Corner Overdrive.

Ooooo <Grimace>.

Now you know why I like talking to him.

Give me you pun-ey, please.

At left, Eric with the table set up. No, it's not Fury. That's a Panther, not a Tiger.

At right, Eric can't believe Russ's commentary. I'm sure I can repeat it here in this family AAR...if I could remember the quip. Photo by Dan.

When I played *WaT* at On Military Matters back in March 2020 (see my 3/26/2020 AAR for that recap), we used 15mm tanks, so you don't need the big boys...although it looks great in the great big scale.

Saipan

Another nice looking game I wandered across.

I don't know why, but I thought that this would be a cool scenario to include hidden mines on the beach. I don't know if any mines were part of the scenario, but it's just one of those spur of the moment inspirational, or irrational, thoughts that pop into your head as you watch the game go on.



Other Games

The above are a small subset of the hundreds of games that populated the convention. I did miss one game that I had really wanted to see -- John's *Axis and Allies Naval* miniatures. Among our group, we have a goodly number of these 1:1800 scale ships, along with 1:2400 scale GHQ ships that we also use. We played the system a lot when it first came out.

I'm always curious to see how another GM approaches a system we played and adapted with house rules. Next time.

Alas, there are only so many games to observe in a day. Besides, I came to game, so let me hop to Friday morning and the Mexican-American War game.

Mexican-American War: The Mexicans Stood Me Off

by Russ Lockwood

One of the great aspects about Historicon is signing up for a game outside your usual time periods. So, I pre-registered for a Mexican-American War game. The last time I recall playing that period was the mid 1990s...at a convention.

Umpire Don (right) goes through the rules with us. Bernard at left in blue.

This was a 15mm battle called Bloody Crossroad in Mexico, umpired by Don of ODGW using the *Historical Battleline* rules. As I was sitting on this side of the table, I took the Americans in front of me. I had not played the rules before and neither had the Mexican player, Bernard.

The rules were relatively easy enough to understand, with each unit basically getting two actions, although only one fire action. A charge required both actions.

Firing was by tallying up the number of figures targeting a unit and cross indexing a d20 roll on a chart. Hits generated morale checks with the usual sliding scale of modifiers depending on casualties. Units might be shaken or forced to retreat or forced to rout. The general could try and bring them back with a d20 rally roll.

The field was flat and populated with cacti galore plus a small village at the crossroads. Movement was six inches for foot and artillery and either 9 or 12 inches -- can't quite remember -- for cavalry.

Wile E Coyote vs Roadrunner

As the crossroads were the victory conditions, I had to go "Beep, beep" and sprint across the desert to the town. I had but five units: three regiments, an artillery battery, and a cavalry regiment.

My American command.

The Mexicans had seven. That's not good. Also, Mexican militia already start in the town. That's worse. The Mexican artillery battery had 50% more tubes. That's the worst. However, it was pulled by oxen and was slow, so I had a few turns to hustle up and use the 1:1 odds before it became 1:2 odds.

I charged ahead and deployed my battery atop a small hillock, its left covered by infantry and its right covered by cavalry.

Bernard brought his infantry forward and in front of the village. Comparing infantry units, I was slightly outnumbered in men: 24 Mexican figures per eight-stand regiment versus my 20 figures per five-stand regiment. I saw that as a slight advantage as I could bring fire on only part of the line and avoid fire from the extended Mexican line.

Not exactly.



Firing Distance

As noted above, the firing mechanic was simple. However, you measured from center of firing unit to center of the target unit. As the right side of my unit overlapped the left side of the Mexican unit and the right side of the Mexican unit overlapped my left side, the measured center to center distance proved quite long indeed compared to firing at closest enemy stands. That meant a big negative modifier. We plugged away.

Artillery vs Cavalry

Bernard closed with his cavalry, allowing me a shot or two as they came closer. Then he charged. When charged, the target gets a reaction roll to see when they fire at the charging unit. I rolled a sweet point-blank canister range. Then I rolled a nice low number that decimated the Mexican cavalry and prevented the charge from striking home. Whew!



American artillery repels a bold attack by Mexican cavalry, which retreated beyond the road in a mob.

My covering cavalry chased the now banged up Mexican horse away, where the general rallied them.

Artillery vs Infantry

The next thing I knew, Bernard charged his infantry against my infantry, but his line was so long, it stuck out just about to my artillery. Did the artillery get to fire even though it was not the target of the charge?

Umpire Don saw that the left-most infantry based kinda nicked the artillery and said it did. I thought it would be one big melee, but Don divided it into two: one versus the infantry and one versus the artillery.

Once again, the artillery delivered a devastating canister shot, taking out four of nine figures in a game where one figure is an average shot and two is a great shot. Four? Wow!

My infantry did little and lost a couple figures. So, the Mexicans won the infantry fight, and my infantry blew a morale roll and routed, while the artillery stood firm.

Now what?

As with other melees, Umpire Don ruled the victorious unit could stay in place or take the position/pivot with a morale test. Bernard's infantry passed its morale test and he pivoted backwards to prevent presenting his flank to my infantry unit.

One artillery blast, an infantry fire, and an infantry melee later, the Mexican unit was hurting and retreating.

However, remember that slow-moving Mexican artillery unit? It arrived just in time to set up on a hill and start blasting me.

Mexican Cavalry Cohones

On the far right flank, I managed to rout the one cavalry unit that had been so bold as to charge my guns and charge my infantry. It got tangled up in melee and was jumped by my cavalry, but boy did they stand tall. A couple of times when it had to make a morale check, Bernard rolled a 1, which made it super bold and it turned around, even though in the end it had but one stand remaining out of the starting five stands. 80% losses and still in the fight? Tough hombres. I ended up having to eliminate it the old fashioned way with melee.

Umpire Don (right) adjudicates Bernard's cavalry move in the face of my victorious cavalry. Yet the thin line of Mexican infantry bar my way to the village garrisoned by militia.



Yet, that left me facing the other Mexican cavalry unit and getting the occasional cannonball sent my way. So it ended.

Rules Conundrums

A couple of rules needed a bit more attention.

My infantry may form square. Now what?

Charge: We played that a charge generated the melee right then and there and then we played the melee occurred at the end of the turn and then we played it was an impact melee and if still locked, then fought an end-of-turn melee. Any of the three worked, but it should be one. It's a convention game, things happen amid the noise and confusion. No worries. Bernard and I both benefitted at times.

Cavalry vs. Square: When infantry get charged by cavalry, they make a reaction roll. If passed, as I did, one reaction is "Form Emergency Square." That sounds like a great idea against cavalry, only the melee modifiers make no mention of what exactly happens. Don poked through the rules and that apparently made no mention, either. As time ticked away, I said I would shoot instead. A lucky roll emptied many a saddle and my infantry did not break from the resulting melee. My cavalry swooped in to join the melee and decimated the bold Mexicans.

Other than those two blips, Bernard and I got the basics of the rules down and gamed away.

End Game

The Mexicans held the town as I never even had a shot at the militia. Mexican infantry and artillery remained between me and the town. I had whittled down two full cavalry units to three stands, but I only had three stands, so that was a Mexican standoff on my right flank. I only had two infantry units left in almost pristine condition, but I'm still outnumbered. Umpire Don declared it a Mexican minor victory. I agree.

Well played, Bernard. And thanks to Don for hosting the game.



Caesar Hails Me for 20 Minutes: Boardgame

by Russ Lockwood

While wandering the dealer area, I came across the PSC booth and noticed they were showing *Blitzkrieg* and a new game called *Caesar*, both from designer Paolo Mori. As I had enjoyed *Blitzkrieg* (see my 02/21/2020 AAR for the replay and review) and Caesar's throne (OK, a chair) was vacant, I sat down with company rep Zen to learn the game.

The taglines promise you can play a game in 20 minutes. I'm not sure that's entirely accurate, but definitely under a half-hour for a demo and likely under an hour given more careful play -- just like *Blitzkrieg*.

In this Caesar versus Pompey representation of the Roman Civil War, you draw tokens from a bag and place them on the borders of areas, matching the token icon to the board icon for that area. Of course, sometimes you want a warship and don't have any. A couple of wildcard tokens are included to help you out, but you have to draw them from the bag first.

An area contains between two and six borders and possesses an inherent benefit (extra draws, overturn a token, and so on).

During set up, the benefits are drawn and placed randomly for replay value. The tokens are too, so both boost replayability even more.

The tokens contain two numbers (strength points) separated by a middle border line, akin to a domino. When placed, the border line on the token lines up with the border on the board. One strength point value applies to one area and the other applies to the other area. Remember, you place the token on a border. You can choose which area gets which strength point value.

At start. Some of the bonus token explanations on inside of your card.



The last player who encloses an area with a token gains the inherent benefit of the area, but the player with the most strength points gains control of the area.

There's no die-rolling, just placement, like a variation of *Go*.

Countdown Clock

Each player starts with 10 control markers -- first player to place all ten on the board wins. However, if you gain control an adjacent area, you place a control marker on the border between your two controlled areas -- a double control marker placement.

One of the benefits is a Senate vote: this allows you to place a control marker off to the side. If you get one vote (benefit), you place one control marker, but if you gain a second vote, you place two markers. If you get a third, that's three markers, and a fourth will use up four markers.

The Game

Caesar is pretty easy to understand after a couple turns. Understanding where best to play a token will take more time than a half-hour demo.

I placed my Pompey tokens as best I could, trying to capture adjacent areas. I was pretty bad at placing the area token -- Zen grabbed most of the benefits. I was better at having the most strength points to capture the area and place a control marker. At one point, I was up, er, down to five control markers and Zen was still at nine.

Just to show that all is not lost, Zen proceeded to start to catch up with the Senate vote mechanism. I set sights on the Middle East and proceeded to trap myself with an ill-placed token that allowed Zen to gain two Senate votes and two areas. Zen drained his control marker pile in an instant for the win. Yes, Pompey found yet another way to disarm himself!

Caesar offers just enough of a riff on *Go* to be clever, entertaining, and replayable.

Enjoyed it.

More on the web: <https://www.pscgames.co.uk> has downloadable rules.

Middle of the game.



The PSC booth. That's Zen in the foreground. Technically, he's from Dara Studios, serving as a consultant for PSC's games.

Next game coming from PSC: Dogfights.



HMGS Historicon 2022: Dealer Area

By Russ Lockwood

If there is one spot where I should be better at taking photos, it should be the dealer hall. Alas, I gawk and flit and poke around and chat and do everything else except take photos. Sometimes, sometimes, I manage to stand at an intersection of aisles and take a photo. Sometimes I even remember to take my finger off the lens.

Each year I promise myself to do a more comprehensive look at the dealer area for folks who can't make the show, and each year my brain gets overloaded walking to the first booth. You may find that amusing, or maybe tragic, but I was chatting with a gamer from the South who thought two hours was enough for a dealer area run. Six hours later, he was one happy gamer filling his car with purchases!

What I need is to get the Google camera car and have it drive up and down the aisles to create a version of Google Streets called HMGS Aisles.

And here, in no particular order, is a photo gallery of dealers.

*I remember when games were young,
Me and Tibor had so much fun,
Moving troops and rolling dice,
But the battle terrain wasn't ever this nice...*



Mythos brought the biggest miniature! And their Mythic America demo display attracted lots of gamers.



Badger Games



Brigade Games.



Outland Games in foreground.



Gettysburg Soldiers. Custom ACW leader figures.



Battlefield Terrain Concepts. The west face of a north-facing Doug in the middle of the photo.

Right: George Nafziger (seated) keeps translating to make booklets available to customers.

Scott (left) continues to add to Paper Terrain.



Dave (right) offers protective baggage.
Steve (below) offers full service game printing.



Steve (right) revels in his Age of Glory.



Right: Over the years, Armchair General expanded from video into T-shirts and signs.

Below: Chris (seated, nearest camera) of Decision Games continues to publish S&T and wargames galore.



Fireforge Games brought out a naval game this year.



Perennial favorites On Military Matters and Winged Hussar create one big booth. WH's Vince is just visible behind the shelves.



Gaddis Gaming. A 28mm haven.

A Phalanx Consortium WWI terrain board captures the bleakness of the front. Exquisite.



HMGS Historicon 2022: Tournaments

By Russ Lockwood

Freedom Hall, next to the dealer area, hosts the tournaments. The program lists a dozen sponsors holding 33 tournaments. I managed to snap photos of exactly four. Sheesh. I need a half a dozen clones...



Flames of War tournament gets underway.



Oak and Iron tournament in progress.



Blood and Plunder tournament.



Above: The L'Art de la Guerre tournament players await pairings on Saturday morning.

Right: Freedom Hall at 9:30am on Friday morning.



Below: Alex of the 23rd adds some re-enactment color just outside Freedom Hall. I think he wins the show award for best dressed...



HISTORICON 2022: Counterstroke at Stonne, May 15, 1940

by Daniel Burkley

(Rules: *Squad Leader*, up to *Crescendo of Doom*)

F10:111: *Counterstroke at Stonne*, Northeast France, May 15, 1940

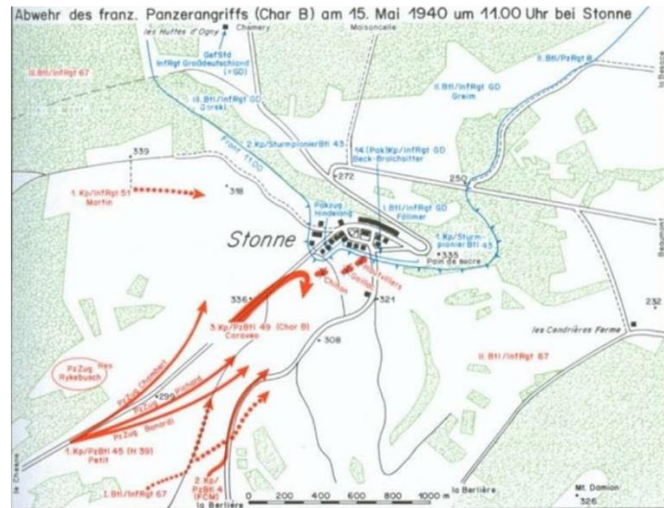
GM: Patrick LeBeau Sponsor: Battlefield Terrain Concepts

Description: The Grossdeutschland Regiment, after hard fighting and a harder forced march, had finally taken the village of Stonne.

Exhausted, they were now the target for one of the few determined French counterattacks during the campaign. Supported by the 3rd Motorized Division, elements of the 45th and 49th Tank Battalions hurled themselves on Stonne.

It promised to be a hard day for Grossdeutschland.

Victory Conditions: Occupy the most stone buildings by end of Turn 10 (1 VP per ground hex). The Chateau on Board 6 counts as 7 VPs.



This was a rare treat for me: Playing a miniatures game using one of my favorite boardgame rules: *Squad Leader*. I've been playing *Squad Leader* since 1974 and embraced its expansions *Cross of Iron* and *Crescendo of Doom* – but only used a few rules from *GI: Anvil of Victory* and the later *Advanced Squad Leader* system (such as Battlefield Promotions and Heat of Battle). Fortunately, I have a gaming group that also likes playing “old school”.



Image 1:
View of French center before game starts.

(Corresponds to blue square on following board map.)

Image 2:

View of German left flank before start of game.

(Corresponds to pink box on following board map.)

Patrick LeBeau set up a beautiful miniatures game that looked outstanding, figures *and* terrain, duplicating the *Squad Leader* Boards 3, 6, and 4 used for Scenario 28: Counterstroke at Stonne.

This was designed as an 8-player game, but some players exited and new players joined, winding down with 5-players by the time we ended. A few special rules to reflect that this was a miniatures game were explained, and off we started. I played one of the French commands with a mix of tanks and infantry, assigned to capture the chateau for the French machinegun teams to use as a fire base.



Situation on May 15, 1940

The French have the burden of attacking and have an impressive force to accomplish their mission: An unusually well-led force of 7 leaders, 28 squads (French Infantry, Foreign Legion and Colonial troops), 6 machine gun teams, and 10 tanks (5 x Char 1B, 5 x Hotchkiss H39).

The Germans are represented by elements of the *Grossdeutschland* regiment, now defending their recently hard-fought positions in the town of Stonne. They are outnumbered compared to the French about to attack them, with 5 leaders, 12 squads, 4 machine gun teams, 2 x 75mm Infantry guns, and 1 x 37mm AT gun, but start hidden. They are rapidly reinforced by a mobile column of 2 x StuIII assault guns, 3 x PzJagl tank destroyers, 2 x 37mm mounted halftracks, and 3 x SPW251/1 machinegun halftracks with two towing 37mm AT guns.

Both forces start the game already set-up, representing the end of the French Turn 1 movement (if you're following *Crescendo of Doom* Scenario 28), but all that are visible are the French. All the French armor start in front of the largest building on the table, the 3-story Chateau.

The Battle Begins

There are plenty of Germans in the Chateau and they announce their presence during the opening German defensive fire phase: 6 squads (half the German infantry), a 75mm Infantry gun and a machine gun team open up. Another 75mm Infantry gun fires from a building on the far left and a heavy machine gun team in a church tower far to the rear also announce their presence. Between the German defensive fire phase and the opening German Preparatory Fire phase, one French leader and 3 French squads are killed and 3 more routed – but the guns fail to take out any tanks.

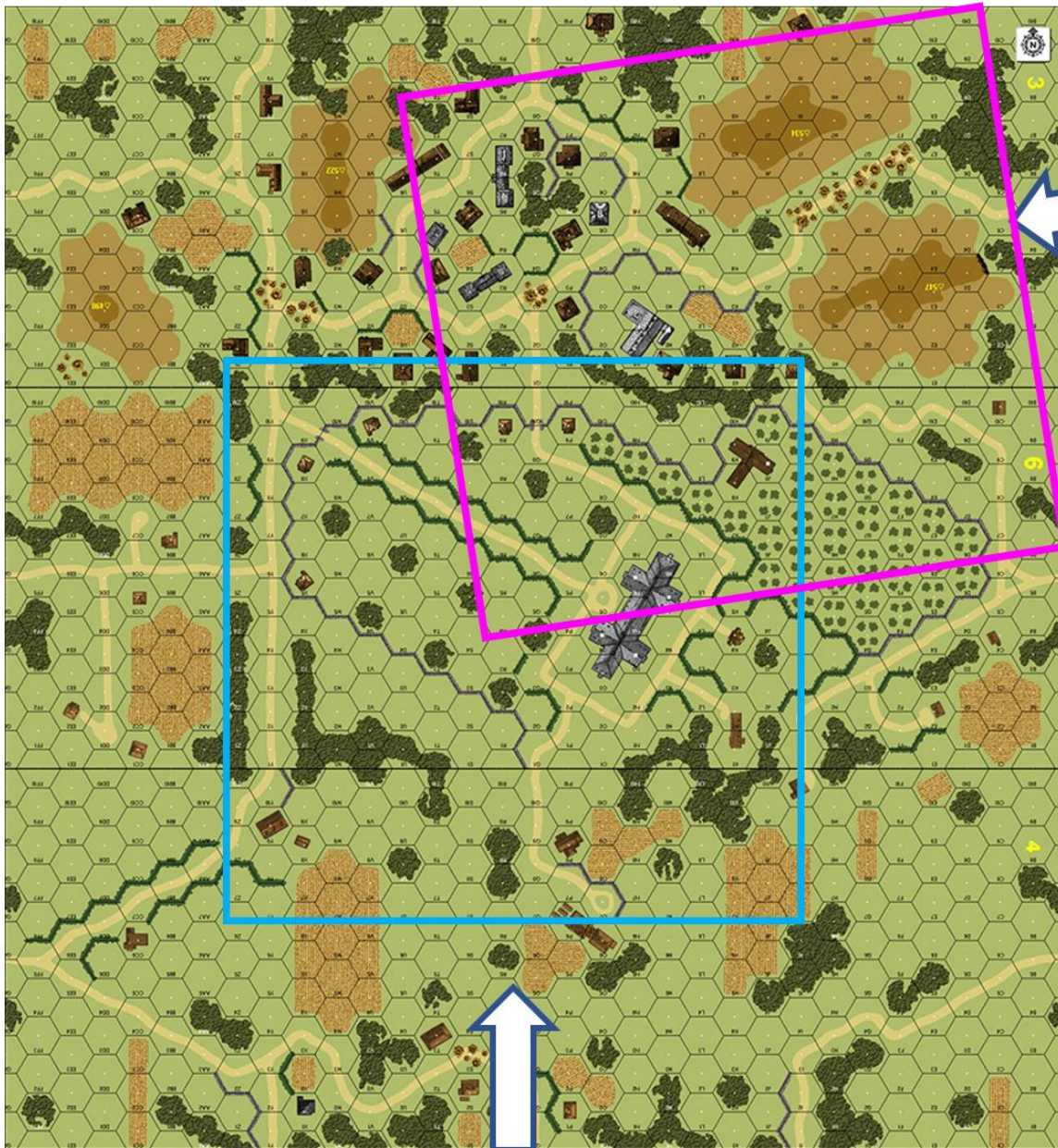
The French armor bombard the Chateau during their defensive fire phase. Four Char 1B's and one H39 stay to engage the chateau on the next French turn with promising results: the German Infantry gun is hit and destroyed and four of the six German Infantry squads are routed.

The French armor wheels into action: Four H39's, one Char 1B, and six French squads go left to turn the German right flank and deal with the German Infantry gun on this flank, while one H39 drives around the

chateau to cut off the German defenders as the supporting French infantry start to enter the chateau from the front as French colonial troops start to approach the chateau from the right.

The Germans respond with a desperate counterattack, entering into close combat and eliminating the first French squad that dared to enter the building, but French fire from three sides keep the other broken Germans in the building from rallying. By French turn 3, all the Germans in the chateau are dead or captured. The German 75mm gun on the flank malfunctions and the position is captured by turn 3 as well.

Squad Leader boards used for *Counterstroke at Stonne*.



Viewpoint
for
Image
2.

Viewpoint for Image 1.

The momentum shift to the French now shifts back to the Germans, as the three PzJag1's establish a position on the right flank hill and engage the H39s and Char 1Bs, eliminating one of each. A vicious tank

battle rages for 3 more turns, ending with three H39s and two Char 1Bs (half the French armor) destroyed by the time the three PzJag1 are eliminated, along with a halftrack and 37mm AT gun.

On the German left, the heavy machine gun in the church tower continues to snipe at the advancing French Foreign Legion and Colonial troops advancing to the orchard, until most duck out of line-of-sight in the orchards. The Germans establish a StullIB, 37mm AT gun, and two machinegun halftracks on the hill left of the village, but their field of view is limited and the French take advantage of every blind spot the orchards and chateau have to offer, sneaking into the next multi-story building behind the chateau.

This prompted a respond from the last concentration of German infantry in Stonne itself: two infantry squads are dispatched to re-capture this building, led by a young inspiring officer. Charging into the building, an inconclusive melee starts. More colonial troops enter the fray and now the Germans are outnumbered, but against the odds, they vanquish all but lose half their force doing so. Still, the Germans declare a significant morale victory, despite 5 more French squads closing in on the building.

A 37mm armed halftrack and the second StullIB enter Stonne and guard the road from the gateway leading into Stonne, responding to a Char 1B advancing to the gateway.

Disappointed at the absence of targets, the StullIB and halftracks on the hill depart to harass the French infantry in the orchards, routing two of them. There is no clear pathway to the French rear, unless the StullIB is willing to risk a breakdown roll (as the halftracks are not allowed to cross walls or enter buildings unless an armored fighting vehicle has successfully crossed and created a "trailblazing" pathway).

The French establish six squads and two machine gun teams in the chateau (most at the top level), now challenging the German heavy machinegun team in the church tower after breaking and eliminating the last two German infantry squads on the German right flank. Only a 37mm halftrack and 37mm AT gun are intact on this flank, facing one H39, two Char 1Bs and six French squads.

After 6 and a half hours of play and 5 turns played, the GM asks the Germans if they wish to continue. The Germans are willing to stop playing, prompting the GM to considering if the game is a draw or a French marginal victory. The Germans still have the two StullIB assault guns and two 37mm halftracks, but only have three infantry squads remaining, with one of them about to be assaulted by 5 French squads. The French armor on the German right have the lone 37mm halftrack out maneuvered, which will force it to retreat, leaving the 37mm AT gun alone and out of position to prevent any French infantry from advancing on Stonne.

The German center is well protected from any advance by French infantry or tank. Their senior leader and heavy machinegun in the church tower are still operational and two squads are in the church as well, exchanging fire with 6 French squads and two medium machinegun teams in the chateau.

While the German StullIB and halftracks are harassing the French infantry in the orchards on the German left, they cannot stop the French infantry from taking back the building with only one German squad present.

Considering that both the French and Germans have each lost half their armor, it is the infantry that will ultimately win the game by capturing buildings. The French have lost 30% of their infantry (9 squads), while the Germans have lost 75% of their infantry (9 squads), so with 5 more turns left to play the GM ruled it a French marginal (and morale) victory.

HISTORICON 2022: The General is Dead

by Daniel Burkley

**S09:528: The
GM: Joe McGrath & LARD America-**

(Rules: *Chain of Command*)

**Operation Mercury: the airborne
attack on Crete, May 1941.**

Nicely framed shot: A still from the Little Wars TV Historicon 2022 report.

When an Australian patrol comes upon a crashed glider, they get more than they bargained for. Unbeknownst to them, it contains the remains of the Fallschirmjager general, his HQ section, and the Mercury invasion plans! Can they hold off the fierce German counterattack long enough to realize their intelligence bonanza? Can the Germans recapture their general's glider and save the invasion? And who are those armed civilians lurking about...?



I've been a fan of *Chain of Command* since I started playing it five years ago, and I try to play in at least one *Chain of Command* event at each show I attend. Fortunately for TwoFatLardies, these events fill up fast, and 4 days after HISTORICON opened registration, ALL of their events were "sold out". So, I do the next best thing and arrive early, hoping there will be an opening from a "no-show" – and that's what happened.

Most events I've attended have been Spanish Civil War scenarios, but today it's WWII on the island of Crete.

My teammate and I represent the two senior leaders of a *Fallschirmjager* platoon sent to recover the plans in our general's crashed glider. We have 3 squads of 12 men each, plus one anti-tank rifle team, so we're "traveling light" today. Each squad has 8 riflemen, a 3-man LMG team, and the NCO with a submachine gun. We can also attempt to request air support from a single Me109 made available to us for this mission. We have three "jump-off" points pre-set to deploy on the table from.

The opposition is an Australian platoon of two squads, but they have plenty of support: a medium machine gun team, a 51mm mortar team, a Vickers Mark VI machine gun tankette, and three Cretan partisan teams (13 men total armed with 3 submachine gunners and 10 riflemen). The Australian squads are 11 men each (7 riflemen, a 3-man LMG team, and a SMG-armed NCO). Their "Jump-off" points are much closer to the glider than ours are, and the terrain is very favorable to them.

The Germans primary advantages are having 2 senior leaders versus the Australian's single senior leader, and the *Fallschirmjager* platoon is considered Elite for Command dice only (meaning we roll 6 dice instead of 5), but the troops are considered Average for combat purposes. Otherwise, we're outnumbered and outgunned, unless the Me109 can deal out some significant damage – if it shows up... and we start further from the objective, so we have to move fast before the Australians deploy everything they have.

We get to deploy first, which could be a mixed blessing – but our initial roll is very disappointing for a first turn roll: 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6. The "6" is always a "dead" die unless you roll more than one of them, which gets you a "bonus" phase. The "5" results go towards a *Chain of Command* die, which can be useful later in the game. With this particular roll, we can only deploy a single squad and bring on one of the senior leaders. My teammate deploys a squad and leader behind the small dwelling.

The opening Australian roll is quite good: 1, 1, 3, 5, 6. This lets them bring on the 51mm mortar team, the MMG team, and one squad. The squad and MMG deploy behind the glider (that's how close the "Jump-off" point is). And the 51mm mortar deploys on a second "Jump-off" point on the corner about 30 inches from the dwelling the Germans are behind.



Halfway through the game: Germans occupy the dwelling with a second squad trying to go around it, while the third squad is in the rocky ground between the olive groves and the street where the Mark VI is parked. Both Australian squads are in the field, behind and by the glider. The MMG is along the stone wall. The mortar team is at the near corner. The Me109 has been "called", so it's in the sky, but hasn't made a strafing run. Daniel Burkley is in the middle with the red checked shirt.

The next German roll is a bit better, but we need to decide whether to bring everyone else on the table or hold a squad back and call for the Me109. We deploy the squad, such that we have two squads by the dwelling and one across the street from them. The Allies bring on their second squad and the Mark VI tankette, so we will have an uphill battle and we have to move fast. The initial Australian squad has made it to the glider and will start searching, so we need to interrupt that before they find something useful.

The olive groves delay movement, so we go around them. The German 1st squad reaches the dwelling and starts to receive fire from the Australians, who conveniently have a stone wall to protect them as they try to loot the glider.

Considering I have the last squad deployed, I manage to cover a lot more ground than the first two squads and reach the rocky ground between the road and olive groves, but that's the road the Mark VI is coming down (see picture below). I take fire from the tankette and receive one casualty, but on the "check your leader" roll, I roll a "1", meaning the NCO is hit – and he's dead! That prompts a roll on the "Bad Things Happen" table and our Platoon Force Morale drops. I quickly see that I'm going to be the "Forlorn Hope", but that's the hand we're dealt. Time to call in the Me109...

On our next turn the Me109 makes its strafing run. I indicate the flight path and target and roll the dice to see what it actually does: it overshoots the target and the burst shoots up some vegetation. I'm not impressed. The GM asks me to roll the die again and informs me that the Me109 is still circling the sky (meaning it hasn't taken off and I can get a second run later in the game). We manage to get a very fortunate roll: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 6. We get a "bonus" round! It's now or never, as they say: I move my senior leader close enough to order the squad to move across the street to the glider, which they accomplish. My teammate continues the firefight and gets the anti-tank rifle team into action against the Mark VI, but all they accomplish is a loud "PING".

Now we get our “bonus” round and it’s very disappointing: we need a “3” to call in the Me109 for a strafing run, after which I wanted to close assault the Aussies, but we get a 2, 2, 4, 4, 5, 6 instead. You can add dice in *Chain of Command* to create a 2, 3, or 4 result, but we can’t even do that, so as quickly as the moment came, it rapidly vanished. I use my “4” to have the senior leader tell the squad to lob grenades over the glider. They are effective, since the glider itself blocks my line of sight to the enemy, and the Australians lose a figure and take two Shock (best described as “fatigue”). My last order is a desperate one: order the LMG to fire at the tankette. The LMG fires and automatically scores no hits, but the tankette still has to roll saves: its armor is a “2”, so it gets 2 dice and fails to save on either of them, which means it must respond on the “zero its” table, which gives me a 1/3 chance to “scare” it back 6” (and off the table). While the ploy works in forcing a roll, the enemy passes. The Germans can’t seem to make any of their opportunities pay off.

During game play, the other wing extended from the fuselage to the bottom right corner of this still from the Little Wars TV report.



Now a bad situation starts to become worse. Two partisan groups appear and start to snipe at the overextended German squad, while the second

Australian squad starts to flank the glider, and the Mark VI opens up on the Germans as well. Our 12-man squad is now down to 8 men and taking on Shock as well (“fatigue”). On our next turn, we are able to call in the Me109 again, but it won’t strike until the next German phase. Meanwhile my teammate’s squad in the dwelling is losing the exchange, while the second squad seems to be taking forever to get around the dwelling and through the vegetation to engage the Australians from the other side. My senior leader orders two more grenades to be lobbed, which are embarrassingly more effective than all the fire the Germans in the dwelling can dish out – but he does manage to hit the Mark VI with the anti-tank rifle team and disable the main armament.

During the Allied phase, the Australian first squad tosses a grenade back and a partisan group that occupied my previous position in the rocks across the street fires at me. Now I’m down to 6 men and have become pinned. The second Australian squad that flanked me last phase now charges and wipes out all 6 men, losing one in the close combat. Our Platoon Force Morale suffers significantly from that loss and drops down to 3, which drops our Command dice down to 3 dice (instead of 6). Bad news indeed, but their presence had prevented the Australians from searching the plane as soon as the Germans were adjacent to the glider, so we bought time in exchange for their lives.

Now the Me109 makes its second strafing run. Let’s see if this is a non-event as well. I indicate which direction the fighter will make its strafing run and what the primary target is. This time it’s on target and I roll 18 dice against the first Australian squad, scoring 13 hits! The enemy rolls for effects, doubling any Shock received, resulting in all 5 riflemen killed. Too bad my senior leader didn’t live long enough to see that, but the rest of the Germans were impressed.

The end of our 4-hour session is fast approaching, and the Allies have decided to switch strategies: instead of searching the glider to try to win the game, they now try to force the Germans off the table by bringing

their Platoon Force Morale to zero – and they have a good shot at it. The force in the dwelling is down to 8 men and they have 6 Shock. If they get more Shock than the number of *living* figures on the table, the squad will become *pinned*. If Shock become 2x's the number of figures, the squad routs.

The men in the dwelling desperately try to hold on: Their senior leader removes two Shock, but casualties drop the squad to 6 men and they become pinned. The second squad finally gets through the vegetation and opens up on the MMG that has caused so much trouble throughout the game, finally eliminating it, but now they are taking casualties and they gained 4 shock just from running through the vegetation, so they are not in much better shape. The Allied Platoon Force Morale is still quite high, despite the losses they have taken, because they rolled very well on the “Bad Things Happen” table, and used their *Chain of Command* die to avoid one Force Morale check.

The Germans gain another *Chain of Command* die and use it to avoid a Force Morale check when an NCO is killed in the dwelling. The remaining senior leader removes enough Shock to keep the pinned squad from routing and soon the game comes to a close.

The GM Rules It a Draw

The Australians failed to get enough information out of the glider: Each phase they searched gains 1D6 worth of information. If they gain 20 points, they win the game immediately. The Germans could turn in a *Chain of Command* die to subtract 5 points of Allied information. During the game, the Allies searched 3 times for 11 points before the German third squad made it adjacent to the glider. If any Germans get within 4” of the glider, the Allies cannot search, so the German third squad’s actions saved the game from a loss to a draw (but too close to having the whole platoon driven off and losing the game that way).

Had the Allies resumed searching after the German third squad was eliminated, could the Allies have gotten 9 more points of information? The Germans eventually gained another *Chain of Command* die that could drop 5 points of information, but could the Allies have gotten their 9 points of information before the Germans get that *Chain of Command* die? We’ll never know...

Both sides felt at one time that they were on the verge of losing, so it was a well-balanced game that really could have gone either way, but I’ll take the draw today...

Wally’s Basement: Flea Market

By Russ Lockwood

It was crowded at times, but it was a glorious series of traffic jams as the conga lines of gamers slithered from table to table looking over the wares and making purchases. It’s always one of the highlights of the convention!

Russ (purple shirt) pokes through the tanks before making his purchase. Photo by Dan.



The Red River Run: Martian Melee

By Phil Gardocki; Photos by Phil Gardocki.

By: A Headless Body Production

Location: Lancaster County Convention Center (LCC)

Event: Historicon

Game: All Quiet on the Martian Front

Version: Original Rules

Scenario: Save the Civilians

Players: Phil Gardocki and one more gamer playing Mobile forces of Pod 19, Hive 5 (फली 19, हाइव 5) versus two playing Texans.

The Venue

The LCC has lots of room for gaming, is clean, and validates parking. On the other hand, its hotel food was lackluster and the restaurant closed early. Parking was limited.

The Scenario

The Southern Front has gone to hot war. Despite numerous warnings, some of the civilian population refused to accept the Martian was coming, until it was too late. Other late departures commandeered what vehicles they could, and raced to the relative safety of the Red River, whose single bridge was defended by valiant Texans.

The 36th "Lone Star" division, commanded by General Funston has set up defenses of the only bridge for 50 miles and set it to explode, looked helplessly through his binoculars at the fleeing civilians, being pursued by a pack of the faster, but lighter tripods. After the disaster at Tyler, he had limited heavy weapons. He would have to rely upon surprise with small arms to save what civilians he could.

The Forces

Texas forces: 10 units. Texas Tea Tossers (tanks), Rough Riders, 2 Infantry and MG Platoons, 3 Armored Cars, and a Command unit.

Martian forces: फली 19, हाइव 5, the mobile forces of Pod 19, Hive 5: A



total of six tripods: Three equipped for gathering and drone control, one Harvester, and two Scouts and supported by 6 drones.

The Martian force is light. Most of the hulls were based on the armored value 10 Scouts. In addition, some of the scouts were modified as gatherers. A basket for putting prey in, two reaper tentacles to work the field, and no heat ray!

The convoys race for the fords.

Victory

A total of 15 civilians are fleeing from the Martians in a rag-tag convoy of cars and trucks towards the only bridge left standing over the Red River. By turn 6, the Martians win if they either capture more civilians than cross the river, or break the Texan blocking force.

The Texans win if they have more civilians over the Red River than the Martians have captured, or destroy three of the six Tripods.

Deployment

The Martians start on the board. The Texan infantry is all hidden. The fleet of cars and trucks will arrive on Turn Zero.

At the center line of the two tables, is a bluff, represented by putting 4" risers on the table legs. Unknown to the Martian there are alternate routes up and down the bluffs.

The Gatherer is armed with 2 reaper coils. The Harvester has 4 reaper coils and a medium heat ray. Down the line, the Martians deploy about 1 tripod per 2 feet..

Turn Zero

The pregame turn brings the arrival of escaping civilians in their convoy. It offers an almost "Wacky Racers" feel.

That's a total of four Fords on the bluff, racing for four fords in the river.*

Turn 1

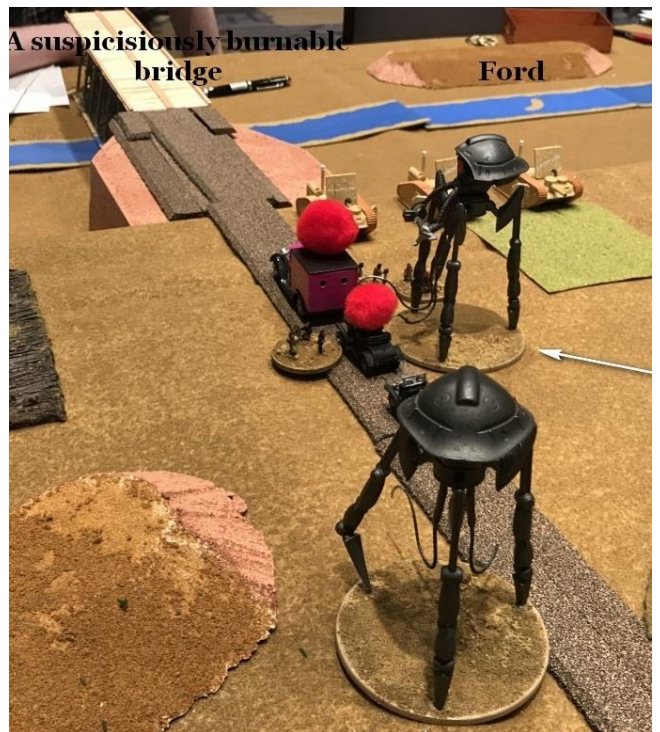
The Martians were not asleep at the controls, and successfully roll for the initiative, moving first for turn 1.

The drones disable the engine of the Corbin Vanderbilt Cup Racer with their heat rays and the Harvester rips its top off. Then with a well-practiced move, the Martian machine plucks all four screaming humans out of their seats.

A sweep of a heat ray, and two more cars are wrecked, forcing more humans to "dismount" and flee on foot.

The humans all arrived either on the road, or north of it. That leaves two hunting tripods without prey.

Texas General Funston gives the order to engage. Troops emerge from their hiding holes, with some directly



assaulting the Harvester and scoring 7 points of damage. Other troops are directing the escapees down a wash cut in the bluff.

Turn 2

The Martian wins the initiative and herds their captured prey to a waiting Gatherer. Once in the basket, they will count for a score of 7.

Up from the wash, arrives the Rough Riders, who proceed to tangle the Harvester with tow cables.

More close assaults occur in a bid to aid the civilians to freedom. In the shadow of the tripod, grappling hooks are thrown, and men with explosive satchels begin to climb.

Turn 3

Heat rays dance across the defense line, digging out emplaced machine guns and destroying an ammo compartment of a Texas Tea Tossler.

Meanwhile, a Gatherer, his basket full of grim produce, retreats from the battlefield. Its retreat is covered by one of the effective war machines. The Harvester flails its reaper coils ineffectively.

Turn 4

The Texans win the initiative roll! This means they will move and shoot first this turn, effectively getting two shots before the Martians can reply.

Ascending the wash of the bluff, the final reserves consist of a unit of armored cars.

No one will ever know which unit scored the disastrous hit. Or maybe it was a poor power connection, or a loose armor plate.

The few survivors report a brief scintillation of sparks, then a flash, a hundred times as bright as the sun. Then utter silence, as all nearby were deafened by the blast. It leaves a full 12 dead, their bodies burned clear of their bones such that even vultures wasted no time picking at the carcasses.

South of the road, more armored cars appear, bringing down another tripod.

Guided by the Texas Rangers, the first of the vehicles to reach the river begins crossing at a ford.

End

With the mission to acquire prey a failure and two war machines destroyed, the Martian commander orders a retreat. With five units destroyed or routed, the Texans also retreat.

The technical victory goes to the Martian for defeating the Texas blocking force. But the Martian only got 3 civilians off the board, 4 were burned in the exploding Harvester, leaving 8 escaped. A strategic win for the humans.

** Fords? fords? Get it? Tough room...*



War of the Roses: Battle of Stoke Field 1487

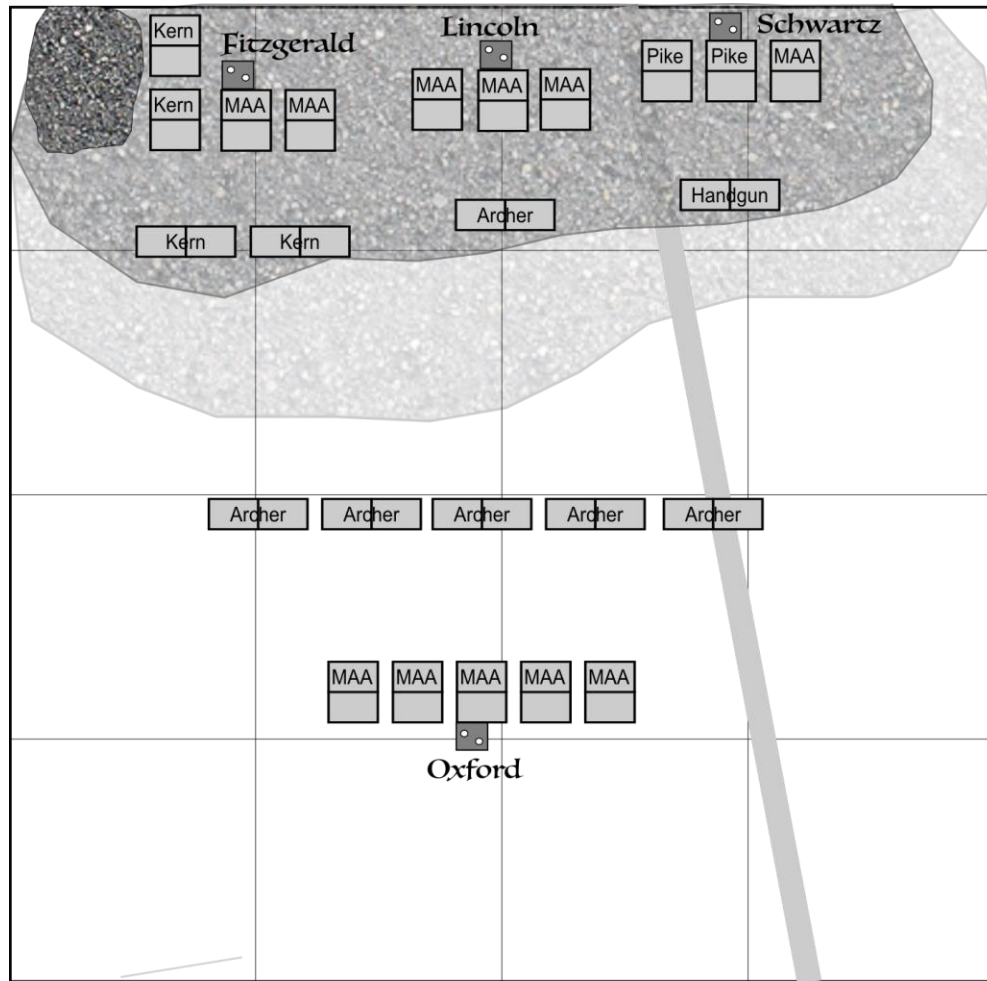
By Tim Couper

Tim crossed the pond to run his new War of the Roses rules Test of Resolve. Core rules are in one booklet, but he's also published scenario booklets. It requires a specialty deck of cards. Info, video walkthrough, reviews, and free downloadable quick reference sheets available on the www.testofresolve.com website. The game uses d12 dice. -- RL

On May 24 1487, Lambert Simnel was crowned as King Edward VI under the guise of Edward Plantagenet, to be a figurehead behind which those still supporting the Yorkist cause could rally, raising local forces in Ireland - archers and billmen from the anglicised part of the country as well as Gaelic Kern. Landing in northwest England they gathered some additions, ending up in the Midlands near to where Henry VII had advanced. Superior Yorkist scouting positioned them in a good defensive position on a hill. The Tudor army resumed its march, Oxford in the vanguard.

The two armies had camped overnight relatively close to each other but the Yorkist scouting was superior and they expected battle to be joined the following day whereas the Tudor forces seem to have been unaware of the proximity of the Yorkist army. The Yorkists positioned themselves in a good defensive position on a hill with their right flank anchored on its summit. The Tudor army resumed its march north but the vanguard under Oxford found itself facing the entire enemy army without the expectation of immediate support.

The position at the start of the game:



Layout 120x120cm (4x4ft)

Henry VII enters here

Test of Resolve

Wars of the Roses

Innovative Wargame Rules



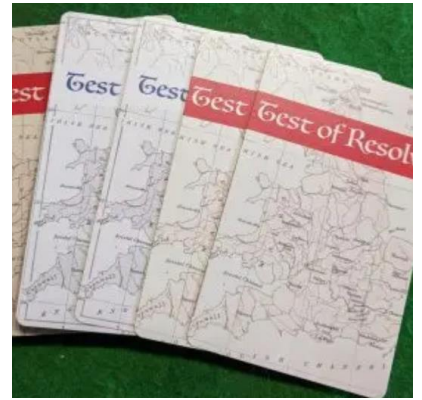
Tim Couper & David Knight

The Battle of Stoke Field

Henry's forces arrive on the second occurrence of a Yorkist event card - indeed the first card turned was that one - but fate determined that it never appeared again in this game! The Tudor archers moved into effective range, forcing the kern (and continental mercenary handgunners) off the ridge to engage at their effective ranges .. the kern proving their worth dispatching one of the archer companies. Eventually Oxford was overwhelmed by pike and bill and his battle dispersed - so the King decided that he wouldn't fight!

The cards, red and white for the roses, of course.

The players enthusiastically asked to play it again, and as the playing time had only been an hour, so we reset the game. This time Lincoln & Schwarz's battles and Oxford's wore each other out as the King arrived, who then won a tense final engagement with Fitzgerald, both battles having 0 Battle Morale Points remaining.



The battle in progress. Photo by Russ.

Tiger Eye Candy

By Lee



Historical Tiger...and Lee's tabletop Tiger. Photo by Lee. Will this appear at Fall-in 2022: Theme -- Vehicles of War: Trains, Tracks and Trucks.