

Rank and File

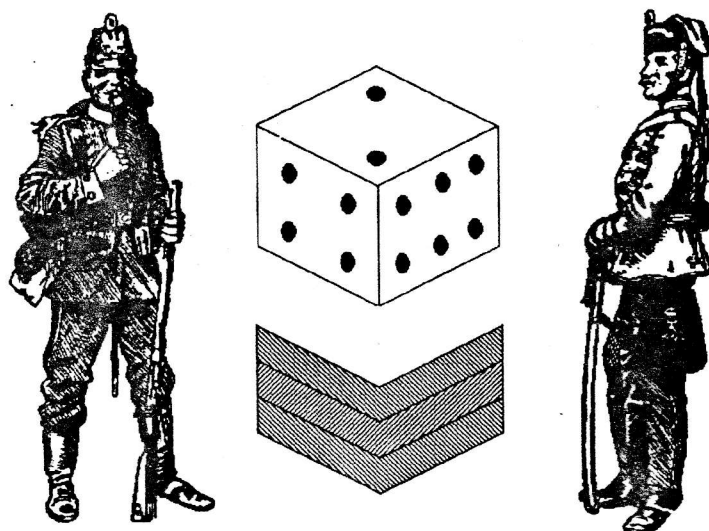
Journal

of the

Tunbridge Wells

Wargames Society

Issue 3/92 April 1992



Editorial

I will keep these rabid ravings short this month as I need the space for your outpourings. I have some excellent articles for you of a scurrilous and defamatory nature, esp. the AGM minutes for 2012AD. Will we be there I wonder... and will it all come true... I think it probably will.

The remarks from Blind Pugh, our reporter with the braille experience, have touched a chord, and as from this issue the print typeface is slightly larger. (I must admit that even I find it hard to read at times!)

I am considering producing an annual compilation of the best articles from the magazine, which could then be sold at the Open Day for a sum to yet be determined. I also suggest that we might care to advertise the Compilation elsewhere, partially to en-

able us to reach the huge profit expected in 2012AD, and partially to promote our club. I would like to suggest that the Committee discuss the idea at the next meeting (soon).

I had intended to fulminate about the current frothings in Miniature Wargames where the Klu Klux Klan seems to have landed and are burning poor heretical fantasy players. It seems that wargaming is only WARGAMING under controlled circumstances. We have pulled down one wall, but are now constructing one among ourselves.

The next edition of our esteemed magazine will be at the June meeting, and will include the last part of A Patriot's story, and a report on the latest World Game experience of our great Secretary.

TWWS Sunday Meetings for your 1992 diary

April	5th (Bring & Buy)	August	2nd
May	3rd	September	6th
May	24th TWWS 25th Anniversary Special ONE DAY ACW day	October	4th (Bring & Buy)
June	7th (Painting Competition)	November	1st
July	5th	December	6th (A.G.M. & Painting Competition)

TWWS AGM 2012 AD
Extracts from the Minutes

Anon

Mr. M. Dove (65) Treasurer, confirmed that the Club now held approx £2,097,418.36 invested in the National Westminster Bank, making the Club one of the largest individual investors in S.E.England. The Club has been invited to nominate a director to the main board of NatWest.

He warned against complacency, however, and informed the Club that the hire of the hall would rise by £1 per month in 2014 AD. As a consequence he felt that subscriptions should increase by 40% p.a., with members taking out second mortgages as necessary to pay for it. This was in order that funds did not rely exclusively on the reserves and the revenues from the Open Day. Two million and ninety seven thousand pounds did not go as far as it used to, he said. In a graphic warning of the results of profligacy, he advised members that if no visitors at all arrived at the next seventy three Open Days, and if members failed to themselves purchase and consume all the sandwiches on these seventy three Open Days, club reserves in total could fall below the critical £2 million mark.

Shock, horror and dismay were duly recorded by the membership at this dire prediction, and an overwhelming show of hands confirmed a new vault would be constructed in the Treasurer's house, to accomodate the Club's petty cash.

Mr. D. Redhead (80) raised from the floor the possibility of purchasing a new hill and a tree, as the Club hill had disintegrated and the Club tree had no branches left on it and was being used by Mr. I. Metcalf (78) as an ACW telegraph pole.

Mr. Dove said this was the sort of rash suggestion that had impoverished countless clubs, and could if taken seriously, tip our club too into bankruptcy, destitution and ruin. He felt sure that if put to the vote, wiser councils would prevail and that upon due reflection Mr. Redhead would realise the dreadful consequences of proposals such as his, if heeded by younger, more impressionable members and Fantasy Players. A roar of support from serried ranks of Committee members greeted this declaration and, deeply ashamed, a chastened Mr. Redhead withdrew his suggestion in ignominy.

Mr. P. England (17) speaking in support of the Treasurer, asked if the membership realised that no one could guarantee that the St. Stephens School

would always be available for Open Days, just because it had been for the last 41 years. If it was not available, did the membership appreciate that to hire the Albert Hall could cost £15,000, and the Sydney Opera House considerably more? He felt that if anything, £2 million was cutting it a bit fine. £3 million, he felt, would enable the membership to sleep more easily at night, content in the knowledge that their Committee had covered most eventualities.

Mr. A. Finch (71¹), Editor, announced that he had achieved a new technological breakthrough, and would henceforth be able to produce the magazine in print so fine it would be completely invisible to the human eye. All agreed that this would be a giant step forward compared with previous issues, in which one or two eagle-eyed members had still been able to decipher the odd word or two.

Row upon row of thick, pebble-lensed spectacles gazed myopically at the Stage, as the Editor continued that, as a result of this breakthrough, the magazine would now be produced quarterly, on the back of a postage stamp. He appealed for more articles from the membership, and waves of applause and the rhythmic tapping of scores of white sticks greeted this tour-de-force, and a great pride filled the Club. Another first — U.K.'s first totally illegible Wargame Club magazine!

Mr. G. Gush (91) President-For-All-Eternity, in calling for new blood for the Committee, again told the assembled membership that the Club was a democratic institution, and that for it to flourish and maintain a healthy balance, members should stand at elections, contest Committee posts and generally involve themselves in running the Club. It was, he said, their Club, not the Committee's. He himself felt sure that members would prefer a participating democracy to a self-perpetuating oligarchy, no matter how benevolent.

Mr. G. Charles (64) raised from the floor the possibility that in that case, he himself would not mind standing for the position of President-For-All-Eternity.

An awful hush fell over the Committee at this heresy. Mr. G. Gush rose from his wheelchair, vowing vengeance on "smart-ass troublemakers" and on "barrack-room lawyers", and flew at Mr. G.

Charles with a primeval howl of rage. Mr. G. Charles fled the AGM, with Mr. G. Gush in hot pursuit, snapping at his trousers as they sprinted down Vale Road towards the Glenys Kinnock Multi-Ethnic and Fantasy Wargames Workshop.

The annual assault by Mr. G. Gush on anyone rash enough to challenge his title is the traditional end to all TWWS AGMs, and so it again proved. Mr. M. Dove, in Mr. G. Gush's temporary absence declaring the AGM well and truly closed, invited departing members to pick up a TWWS Club magazine apiece, from the stack of several hundred which the Editor had placed in a matchbox by the main door...

For Sale

Squad Leader

This collection includes basic original Squad Leader plus Cross of Iron, Crescendo of Doom, and GI Anvil of Victory. Between 10 and 20 different game boards, and masses of counters

I am open to offers.

Campaign World

You may have heard of Columbia Games Fantasy / Medieval world of Harn. I have for sale the complete series to date including all the data for the actual planet itself (Kethira), maps of the main towns and cities of the country of Harn, and maps of the adjacent territories. This would be a useful aid to someone running a campaign.

Again, I am open to offers

25mm painted Fantasy and Medieval figures.

I am selling my collection of Fantasy and Medieval figures. These are priced from £1.50 per figure upwards, but I will give a special price to club members of 50p reduction per figure/set. These will be available at the March and April meetings, otherwise at home.

A D & D Rule books and Scenarios/Modules

Hardback volumes of all the DM guides etc are available. I will sell the complete set or separately. Offers to me.

For further details, contact

Andrew Finch



Advertisement Feature

For further details of Warrior Figures, and to obtain their latest catalogue, contact them at:

Warrior Miniatures, 14 Tiverton Avenue, Glasgow, G32 9NX, Scotland.

Their telephone number is 041 778 3426.

Making the most of your wargames scenery

Alan Butler

To my mind there are few better sights than superbly painted armies marching across well made and evocative terrain. The terrain sets the scene, adds local colour and provides a tactical challenge and interest. Spain is recognizable by the sunbaked houses, pantile roofs and vineyards. The American Civil War games have checkerboard roads with clapboard buildings and a swamp. Likewise, a snowcapped mountain indicates a Fantasy game in progress!

The scenery must be strong so that it survives years of being tumbled into a box, lightweight to transport, but solid to the touch, and be low in cost. It should provide a useful function on the tabletop such as concealment, and let troops stand on it without falling over. A tall order! The trouble is that the more mature gamers tend to take terrain for granted and assume that everyone has the same knowledge and skills required, which of course is not true. This article therefore explores some of the materials and techniques needed to improve the look of your tabletop.

Commercially available items

A lot of resin cast items look attractive at first glance, but they have limitations. The mouldings are often poor, with bubbles and parts such as windows filled in where the mould has broken up. They are heavy to transport, somewhat expensive and are fragile, and probably won't survive dropping on the floor. On the plus side, the surfaces are rough and very suitable for drybrushing, and there is a wide range available. The 15mm and 1/300 ranges are better, as the detail is not so important at the smaller scales and they are more cost effective.

Hills are now very good, for example those from TSS which are made from expanded polystyrene and electrostatically flocked. They are an excellent colour, cheap and reasonably strong. For rougher terrain or craggy hills you can use large pieces of cork bark. This is available in model shops, but it's also used for flower arranging and I got some very large sections in the flower arranging section of a garden centre for a fraction of the price.

Dark green, brown and grey felt is useful, as it can be used to define the extent of a wood or built up area. Cut it into an irregular circle and place a few trees or houses on top. Foot squares of felt are obtainable at haberdashers or craft shops in a wide variety of colours. Fabric offcuts in muted browns or yellows can also be used to form field patterns to break up an otherwise flat landscape. Whilst at the haberdashers, you can often find 1" or 2" wide bind-

ing tape (not the bias kind) which is ideal for roads. Both this and the felt benefit from being ironed now and again to remove any creases.

Bellona vacuum formed plastic pieces are very good, as George Gush said in the January issue. I have several items, including bridges which are now 20 years old. I mounted them on card bases, which have warped over the years, so I would now use hardboard for the bases. Without mounting the plastic is a bit too light and can move about unexpectedly! The wall sections didn't stay straight, but this because I trimmed them close to the edge.

Materials you can use to make your own scenery

A base for your scenery is important because it protects the edges from damage, and adds structural strength to buildings by stopping the walls flexing. I find that hardboard is the best material for the bases of scenery. It is fairly easy to cut and shape with a saw and sandpaper, and is very cheap.

Cutting curves is not so easy, but a Surform or a power sander does the job. A 3 foot by 2 foot sheet in a DIY store currently costs about £1.50. It makes an excellent base for trees, which are topheavy otherwise, because you can drill into it to take the trunk. You can also use mounting board, a type of thick card, which is available in Art shops and costs about the same. The big advantage of mounting board is that it comes ready coloured, Sage Green being ideal for troop bases.

Household fillers are widely used to build up ground work on models, or coat the outside of building models to make a plaster effect. Tetrion is often used, but I find that Woodflex is slightly more durable as it has a plasticiser. I have also used Poly-plasta, but this lacks strength and only comes in large tubs. I tried it because I had some over from decorating. However, it is lightweight and dries to an attractive earthlike finish. If you are using a filler to build up the base, finish the surface of the filler whilst it is still wet by dabbing a piece of damp sponge onto the surface. This will produce a roughened surface suitable for drybrushing.

Foam card or "Foamex" is an unlikely but very useful material found in art shops. It is often sold for mounting photographs on, and is a plastic foam sandwiched between thin card, 3 or 5mm thick. It costs about £2.30 for a 3 foot by 2 foot sheet. It can be used instead of balsa sheet as it is cheaper, stronger, and easier to cut, and is particularly suitable as the basis for building models, bunkers or ruins.

Spray primer paints are available from Halfords in matt black, white, grey or red. They are the best way of getting an even undercoat for figures and scenery. The black can be used as a basic shadow colour for much of your scenery items. Make sure you don't breathe the overspray when using them.

A new product to be found in DIY stores appears to have great potential. This is textured masonry paint, and is available in a variety of colour. Several brands are now available in large tins, but for our purposes a small sample tin for £1.20 may be ideal. You can paint this onto almost anything, and it seems to adhere to plastic as well. It is water-bourne so dries in an hour to leave a hard wearing, rough surface which can easily be drybrushed.

PVA adhesive has many uses, and is sold as Uni-bond or woodworking adhesive. It is water soluble when wet, but dries waterproof and colourless. It won't stick to smooth plastic.

Drybrushing

I have often mentioned this process, which works especially well on scenery with a rough texture or raised detail. First, the theory. Warm colours, that is those with yellow or red in them are perceived as closer to the viewer, and cool colours of blue or black as more distant. A combination of cool shadows and warm highlights will therefore produce the sensation of perspective or depth. This is exactly the technique used by Rembrandt to achieve the illusion of 3 dimensions on a flat canvas.

The brush you use makes quite a difference. Use the largest brush you can handle. The process wears out the brush rather quickly, and nylon hairs seem to last better than natural. I use Beatties' own brand of Sablene, in a number 3 size, which has a ferrule 3mm across. If you are working on a model house, you can use a 1/2 inch brush. Acrylic paints are very well suited to the technique because they dry so fast, which helps the process.

First, apply a dark shadow colour to your model. In the case of scenery, this can often be brown or black, or dark green for the moulded on foliage. Make sure that the paint goes into all the hollows, and make sure it is dry before moving on to the next stage. Now take a little of the main colour you want the area to look, and spread a little onto your palette or mixing tray. Spreading out the paint helps it to dry out a little, which works better. Now stroke your brush over the paint and pick up a little on the hairs. It is better not to work straight from the paint pot as you will get too much on the brush. The brush itself must be dry at this point. If you have just changed colour by rinsing in water or solvent, wipe it fully dry on kitchen paper. Flick or drag your brush across the surface to be painted, and

keep the brush moving rapidly in short, sharp movements, with the brush at right angles to the surface. You should find that the rough surface or moulded detail picks up the colour, but the recesses remain in the shadow colour. The overall appearance of the surface will light your main colour, but with the showing through in places. Keep adding a little colour to your brush until you are happy with the appearance. Now clean your brush and repeat the whole process with a highlight colour, either a brighter version of the main colour, or the main colour with some white added. This time use a lighter stroke, to leave less paint.

When doing the highlights, you can try to move the brush downwards so that the upper surfaces are highlighted still further and appear to catch the light. You should now find that your model suddenly looks 3-dimensional. I would say that 3 colours, shadow, main and highlight were the minimum, but you can improve the appearance still further by adding lighter colours, a little less each time, and finishing with white in a few places.

Grass coverings

There are several ways of finishing the bases onto which you have mounted your scenery or troops. For many years, I used the Gush recipe of making a mix of green emulsion paint, PVA glue and sawdust, which worked onto the base. It looks fine, but it was quite time consuming to work the coarse mixture around the feet of figures, and the emulsion paint is no longer easy to find in the colour and consistency needed. Also, because of the coarseness of the sawdust it is not suitable for smaller scales. I experimented with minced plastic foam flock, made by Woodland Scenics, stuck onto the bases with PVA. However, the colours are too dark for grassy areas and make the model look dull.

Then I tried the chopped nylon flock, available from SLS and others. This is available in a wide range of colours, many of them too vivid. This is the same type of flock used by TSS on their hills and game blocks, so try to get a green which matches theirs. Stuck on with PVA, it adheres well, although a little falls off with handling. It looks better applied in patches over earth colours which have been dry-brushed sand/white. To get a better colour, first paint the area to be grassed green, and use two coats of flock. However, I don't think it looks right for the smaller scales.

Currently I am using a technique of building up the shape of the bases of figures with Milliput, then painting on PVA adhesive and dipping it into a box of fine sand. When dry this is painted green, then drybrushed with yellow and white. I find that this is quick and easy to apply around the feet of figures, looks good at all scales, and is very hardwearing.

A HISTORY OF THE GREAT REBELLION 1861

PART II

By A Patriot

Editor's note — As in the previous article, I have placed comments on the running of this campaign in italics.

In the first part of this accurate and objective historical account, the reader was taken as far as the glorious Union victory of Brentsville. Alas, that it must next be admitted, that a dangerous point in the affairs of the Union would follow within a few months! However, this part shall describe how the crisis was reached, and passed, with the cause of our nation undefeated.

INVASION BY SEA (January 1862)

In the Mid-West, late 1861 was notable for the action at Humbolt in Western Tennessee, the first cavalry battle of the war, and the first, and only, Confederate victory, a petty skirmish in which the divisions of Lloyd and Shirmer forced the retreat of General Smith's Union horsemen. The Western Theatre then saw mainly consolidation and digging in by both sides in early 1862.

In the East, however, the genius of George B. Gush ensured the Union against any such setback. In December, 1861, he launched Buford's raid, in which that gallant cavalry leader rode with his division past the Rebel forces in the Richmond area and as far South as the port of Wilmington, North Carolina. He was soon flushed out by Confederate infantry (*cavalry can retire without fighting if attacked by an all-infantry force*). The Rebs had little reason to celebrate, however, for Buford remained deep in the rebel heartland, and, in January 1862, was there to support the Union's masterstroke, a seaborne invasion of the Confederate Atlantic coast (*this can only be launched, under 'House Divided' rules, if the Union — the Eastern sector commander in this case — throw a 6 for marches*). There was a brisk fight against the coastal defence forces before Reynolds' Corps got ashore at Savannah, Georgia (*coastal recruitment towns are allotted a small notional defensive strength against attack from the sea, when not actually garrisoned and on this occasion the defenders proved remarkably tough in a map battle*).

The losses were worthwhile, for the brilliant stratagem cast the Rebel military leadership into panic! Despite the urging of President Louch, who wisely recommended Confederate counter-raiding with cavalry into West Virginia or Ohio, to prevent the Union reinforcing Reynolds, the terrified Generals (if such they may be called!) allowed their whole Western strategy to collapse, as they rushed their troops

back to Atlanta to prevent wholesale loss of their recruiting centres to the invader.

ST. GEORGE (February 1862)

This map-battle was precipitated by the ill-judged lunge by JEB Stuart's Confederate cavalry against Buford's men, screening Savannah. When Reynolds brought two divisions from Savannah into the field and smashed Stuart before he could be reinforced, the Rebs fled. Stuart suffered the ignominy of having his division disbanded in disgrace, and being transferred to the infantry! (*Divisions brought below a certain level of strength had to be either built up with recruits that turn, or, as here, broken up and distributed to other divisions*).

ARMS RACE IN GEORGIA

March and April saw the Confederate build up massed forces to threaten Savannah, while the Union despatched Tebbitt's Corps and numerous recruits to strengthen the defence. The race was won by the Union, in that the Rebs lacked the courage to try the Savannah fortifications. They turned North instead; first sending Jones' cavalry corps in a dash to Roanoake, in the Appalachians, threatening to lunge past the army of the Potomac (entrenched at Mannassas covering Washington) and cause mayhem in the rich recruiting lands of the North-Washington. The Union lose instantly if they lose Washington, but ALSO face instant defeat if their total of recruiting towns ever falls below that of the Confederates, so this was a real danger; especially as the Union throws for marches in the East became pretty dire at this point.

CRISIS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

For the first time, the union high command began to feel threatened. They managed to move cavalry in the nick of time to cover the Northern exits from the Appalachians, but then faced the one real crisis of the war, as the massed Southerners from outside Savannah poured North! The Confederates were exploiting their advantage of 'Interior Lines', by which their armies, lying between the divided Union troops at Savannah and Mannassas, could reach either more swiftly than the Union could reunite. Could George B. Gush have made an error?

Things looked ugly as the grey hordes, supported by their cavalry corps, poured towards Mannassas — and Washington! Another Southern army was concentrating around Chattanooga, whence a lat-

eral railway could swiftly whisk them too to the North-East. Though, fortunately, (thanks to the foresight of General Buell) a Union cavalry division was across the line, at Knoxville, it was only able to delay them, being driven back by Rebel cavalry in June. Northern defences were none too strong, with two corps of the Army of the Potomac far away in Savannah; all available recruits had been sent there too, so some of the Union divisions defending Washington were perilously weak. Was this the end?

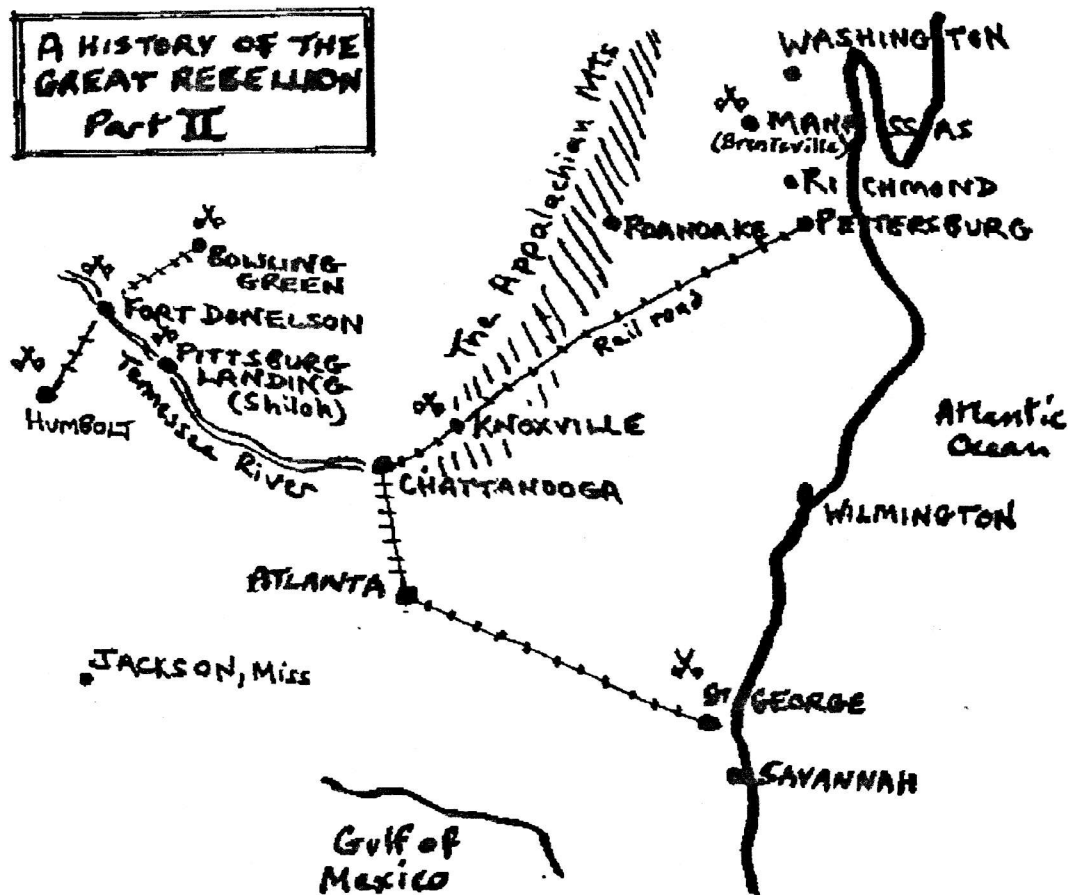
Troops were rushed back by sea to Washington as fast as possible — but each unit moved by sea costs one march, whereas on land you can move all the units in any one map box with one march — so the movement was perilously slow! Washington was strengthened, but the Confederates could still have fallen upon the relatively weak force at Manassas in massive strength, and won a great victory, if not the war.

The Union was saved, firstly, by Divine Providence and the justice of its cause, but also by rebel failures of nerve and co-ordination.

Their Chattanooga force moved not North-East, but West! To Union sighs of relief, it forced-marched up the Tennessee River, to assault Thomas' Corps of Grant's army (Clive McLeod) and Fremont's corps of Buell's army (Malcolm Dove), close to Fort Donelson.

Beauregard (Giles Fitzherbert), deprived of this reinforcement, lacked the courage to assail the Yankee entrenchments around Manassas on his own, and a stalemate set in in the East. Had Buell, by launching Smith's cavalry raid into the enemy rear (reaching Jackson, Mississippi, in June) unsettled the Confederate Western command and made them unwilling to support in the East? We may never know.

(To be continued...)



ALLAH AKBAR !
(Or how the Iraqi Helmet was won)

Anon²

The Austrian army, glittering breastplates and gleaming cuirasse, watched in contempt. How could such peasants as this throng of polyglot Turks, a rabble of skirmishers in the plains below, face the might of the Imperial Habsburgs, and their dread general, Gregor Gusch. His commanders too were seasoned veterans, their names legendary for what they had done on countless battlefields: Stephan Loutz, and Ivan (The Terrible) Metzkalf. Prior to the battle, none had realised his ability to live up to that name...

The Turks were led by El Duv, an experienced warrior, who gathered about himself such reasonable troops as the True Believers possess: on one side of him stood Lazlos Flintz, leading a detachment of Portuguese cavalry allies and their armed Nubian slaves, together with Turkish pillagers. On the other side, Pasha Denos with small groups of bow-armed nomads, roaming out across the Turkish left.

The Austrians resolved to end such a one-sided battle with a crashing charge of cavalry. A torrent of powerfully armoured knights and reiters surged down from their hills, on towards the cringeing Turks...

(At this point a mighty barrage of sound engulfed the battlefield: none could hear above it. It roared for what seemed an eternity — but may have been less. It was a fabled McLeod Anecdote! The battle paused but the Anecdote — of some far off war in the Americas — droned noisily overhead, and eventually detonated amongst a group of Fantasy players, who mistook it for an Orc.)*

Encouraged by the barrage and by the sounds of drums and cymbals, such Turks as could fired volleys of shots at the Austrian tide — and were gratified to see swathes of reiter crash down, as well-aimed Janissary fire, and El Duv's solitary cannon wrought unexpected havoc in the centre!

The Turks were as surprised as the Austrians: El Duv, from his tent far behind the Turkish lines, stood on a peasant to watch the Austrians' distress.

Encouraged, Turks on either flank probed forward, firing on the endless ranks of Habsburg foot soldiers. General Loutz countered the Turko/Portuguese challenge by advancing his foot and horse boldly, side by side, after the stricken reiters. In the

centre a sea of Austria's finest knights led by Gregor Gusch himself, surged forward, more foot and more reiter close behind. On their right Ivan the Terrible took up position behind a wide river, great stands of pike and musketeers all about him, ready in case a Turk (!) came into sight. Sighting a skirmisher, Ivan moved smartly to the rear, the better to encourage his brave lads...

In the centre, El Duv sighed as the knights poured down towards his feeble peasantry. Further firing had emptied more saddles, it was true — but they seemed still as numerous as ever — and closing fast. To evade the entire line of knights was impossible — to "do an Ivan" unthinkable for a True Believer. He resolved to die for the Cause and as if to mark his valour a fresh McLeod spluttered noisily up at that very moment!

A Sign from the Prophet! It too whistled aimlessly over the heads of the protagonists, exploding about the head of a harmless spectator, who reeled back, bemused, and offered £5 for a year's membership...

The blood ran hot at the Sign! The Turks fired again — bows, muskets, arquebus — even the ancient cannon boomed. You could hear it above the crash of anecdotes and the groans of their victims. Austrians died in their hundreds and General Gusch, ashen faced at his losses, rode out onto the field to command the centre IN PERSON!

On his left the worthless Portuguese harried the broken reiters from the field, whilst their Nubian slaves looted the dead. There, the Turkish skirmishers, emboldened by their location close to the anecdote firing zone, set about an isolated detachment of Austrian foot with enthusiasm, whilst Turkish swordsmen crept closer, hidden in dense woods.

On the Austrian right, Ivan the Terrible had no woods to conceal his bold fellows. Only a river stood between them and a band of Turkish irregulars which at best his troops outnumbered by no more than five or six to one. Ivan shrewdly judged this an untenable position, and sought General Gusch's consent to withdraw. He was particularly keen on a field with a wood in one corner and a great stone wall all about it. But to no avail. General Gusch had spotted that field, too, and occupied it

2 But I know who...

with regiments of soldiers and rows of cannons, and showed no enthusiasm to vacate it.

So Ivan's men stayed on their riverbank, and died heroically as a blizzard of arrows fell on them. The occasional lucky shot killed the occasional unlucky Turk, but it was poor recompense. Units faltered under the stinging hail and inevitably some, more exposed than their fellows, fell back to gain respite...

Aghast at the enormity of the impending defeat — the word was now openly on Austrian lips — Gregor raced fresh guns to a prominent hill, alongside the ordnance of Stepan Loutz — but too late. They were engulfed in a tide of fleeing knights and reiters, with jubilant Portuguese riders hacking amongst them... That position soon fell, and with it all Stepan's army was swept away, apart from one far-off regiment of foot, deep in a forest, who were beset by a great host of Turkish irregulars, and Portuguese horsemen, and special close-range anecdotes.

In the centre crisis became disaster, as fewer and fewer of Gregor's men kept their stomach for the fight. A body of pikemen broke under deadly fire at closest range, and fresh reiters, ordered forward, refused. Their fellows had been slaughtered, rank and file, and these were the last of the Austrian horse...

Away on their right, Ivan's men grew restless in their role as human targets. A full quarter of their force lay dead or wounded all about, and fresh Turks seemed to be arriving by the minute. Never reluctant to sound retreat, Ivan judged the time was due — overdue — and those few units not already going back were ordered to do so — away from the protecting riverside...

The time for greatness was to hand: The Turk's blood was alight — the centuries old Jsanissary war chant echoed down the battle line

AN-AN-EC-DOTE — AN-AN-EC-DOTE — AN-...

The Austrians trembled: one had been expected, and was overdue — it had been carefully prepared and its owner was only waiting for an inopportune moment to launch it...

Amidst a glittering shower of hyperbole, the massive anecdote soared aloft. The battlefield perforce fell silent, as the sound echoed and reverberated, stunning Turk and Austrian alike with its devastating prolixity. The Austrian Generals grew panicky amidst the uproar — in vain did Gregor, the scars of a thousand anecdotes worn with pride, try to rally them.

"It's alright," he implored, "hold fast — or in Ivan's case don't run away any faster than you already are. You've heard them before — they're harmless and will soon pass over and crash amidst some other battle. They only hurt Worgs — be brave my men, and endure it with fortitude..." but to no avail.

Ivan the Terrible cracked first. "It's no good Gregor," he cried, "I can't take any more. First all these Turks, and their arrows, then all those armoured Spahis, then all your men running away. And all the time, the anecdotes..." His eyes glittering, his voice a half-sob.

"I would take the Turks, the arrows, the losses — I could even stand up, instead of lying under this hedge — but it's the anecdotes... no..." and he sped from the field at the head of a small body of survivors, jostling past Gregor as he too scurried from his stone lined ramparts, volleys of anecdotes detonating all about them as they fled.....

Product Review: WARRIOR MINIATURES

Andrew Finch

Warrior Miniatures have subscribed to our magazine and provided us with a catalogue of their product together with some samples.

Warrior produce figures for mainstream wargaming with well over 1450 items in their catalogue in 25mm and 15mm scales. The range includes:

Napoleonic
ACW
Ancient
Middle Ages and Renaissance
Colonial
American War of Independence
WW2
Vietnam

One item of interest to wargamers will be their reasonably priced army sets in 25mm for Napoleonic (choice of 6 nations), Landsknechts, Normans, Samurai, and Mex-American War. In 15mm scale they have armies at under £10.00 for ACW, ECW, Napoleonic and Roman.

Warrior have also started to produce 10mm SciFi figures and sent a selection for review. These are well cast and have a good detail for their small scale. The range at present is limited to Marines and Aliens. I am a bit uncertain about the choice of 10mm scale, but they can easily be used with 6mm figures and represent a sort of giant humanoid race possibly encountered. The catalogue is available for all to view and order.

Product Review: Dirtside

Published by Ground Zero Games £3.25

I bought this set of rules for SciFi wargames in 1/300th scale at the Open Day, having been searching for a set of sensible rules which allow for believable game-play and technology without hordes of proto-fantasy thingies. Aliens have to be alien, not recycled creatures from other parallel universes.

I must say that the rules are very good and follow the standards set by other mainstream wargame rules. The technology is explained and plausible.

Play sequence follows alternate moves with the opportunity for Overwatch fire (allowing the traditional club bellow of "challenge!", which is sadly missed). I felt in the test run I did with Chris Avery and Alan Butler that the ranges were rather excessive and we scaled the whole thing down using centimetres. This did tend to make the moves too slow and ranges too short, so I have been testing an interim solution which may well work.

Direct gunfire is handled quite neatly with a roll to hit at a certain range, where does it impact, and does it penetrate? Most hits will in fact kill a vehicle outright. There are 4 DF weapons and Guided Missiles as well.

Infantry small arms are fired using points factors based on elements of 4 men. Fire is combined on single targets, die are rolled, and results ascertained.

Indirect fire is usually very accurate unless untrained troops (any non O.P.) control the fall of shot, when there is a chance of deviation. All elements in a zone must test for damage, with various forms of barrage against armour and infantry. You can also seed a battlefield with a minefield by artillery fire.

The rules are comprehensive and allow for air support with simple but effective AAA rules as well, so the aircraft have not got it all their own way!

Morale is covered in two stages. Infantry coming under fire which could cause casualties becomes engaged and can only move if it makes a morale check. It can fire without checking, and can move if it ceases to be under fire for a turn.

At other levels if a unit breaks due to losses it can be rallied by a higher command echelon, but if this fails, then all that commander's troops must test morale. Here we have the domino theory in practice.

The set is rounded off with some comprehensive points tables to construct any vehicle you choose.

I heartily recommend these rules to any serious wargamer who wants to try something different, as these have no silliness in them at all.

Ground Zero Games also offer a set of SciFi space battle rules called Full Thrust, which is appearing in a Second Edition this month. A review will follow in the next issue.

Ground Zero Games can be found at "FIZNO", Barking Tye, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8JB. The catalogue costs 75p (refundable coupon attached for use with orders).

I have received a catalogue from GZG, who stock a very large range of SciFi stuff in 25mm, 15mm and 6mm scales. Club discounts are available on orders made on the club bank account. I will be pleased to coordinate orders.

Product Review: LONG RANGE LOGISTICS

Andrew Finch

LRL were at our Open Day in February and stock a good range of various products. The prime range is of 6mm resin based buildings and scenic for all periods. The items on display at the Open Day were all very attractive indeed, I see from their catalogue that they produce scratch built terrain features for use with any scale using plaster on plywood which is then flocked. Club terrain features are for instance available for £100 for 24 items plus assorted trees.

They also stock a large selection of other ranges for WW2 and SciFi in 1/300th scale. I bought the basis for my SciFi army from them.

The catalogue is available for perusal and Gary Harbottle-Johnson has offered us a club discount. For more information see the Editor.

RECENT MEETINGS

George Gush

FEBRUARY 1992

There was no new 'Rank & File' this month, the editor having set fire to his kitchen!

Plenty of activity in the meeting though; we are very glad to welcome back Dennis Love, who was a member of the TWWS years ago and has now moved back into the area. Since leaving us, Dennis has been one of the moving spirits of the Reigate club, whose very splendid demonstration games have often featured at our open day.

Games in the Hall included a large 25mm Napoleonic, British vs. French, using rules by Peter England which involve drawing from a pack of cards. They look interesting, and your correspondent has attempted to persuade Peter to write them up for 'Rank and File'. There were many attractive units taking part, notably Ken Bulmer's Naples City Guard, based on an old 'Empire' magazine article and painted by Alan Butler, and some nice Spanish irregulars by Redoubt, belonging to Gabriel Copus.

Another large multi-player game was 'Kasserole Pass', a 1/76th scale WW2 contest in which advancing Afrika Korps were held by low-morale Americans, ill-equipped French and some British reinforcements, in narrow passes between hills which only the British Churchills could climb! This was to Gush rules, but there were two other WW2 games in the same scale using other rules; Ian Foster and Tim Freeman were fighting a recce encounter using 'Command Decision' and there was a big contest in the back room using some very nice tank models.

Fantasy and SF were represented by a 25mm Medieval/Fantasy game using Warhammer rules, and 'Space Marines' involving Dave Cooke, Alan Butler, Chris Avery and John Hurst, and there were also two 15mm games: Tony Wyatt's Nikephorian Byzantines taking on some Avars under WRG 7th Edition Ancient rules and a Medieval English vs French contest using WRG Renaissance rules.

First of a new series:

'TWWS Tactical Precepts'

"If you're going to go in — go in mob-handed!"

(Overheard from Dave Cooke at this meeting.)

MARCH 1992

The Editor, having restored his kitchen, produced the new issue, and hopes for a monthly appearance in future! A miracle if he can achieve it — in

the past we've usually considered yearly to be pushing it! Andrew will need all the material he can get if he is to fulfill this ambition, so GET WRITING!

This seemed to be DBA day. Dennis Love was running a most interesting looking series of DBA games, but using 25mm rather than the usual 15mm figures. This not only worked well (inspiring me to get out some of my under-used Ancients and try it later) but also gave useful experience to several Junior members. The other DBA-type game was between Dave Cooke and Mark Summers, but used the Fantasy version, Hordes of the Things, while Clive McLeod had a new experimental Horse and Musket version using the same mechanism. A notice asking about support for a one day DBA contest later this year showed a lot of support, so this is a definite possibility (see below).

Other games included a Poles vs. Swedes battle in 25mm to WRG rules, the Poles having the better of it, while the Poles took on the English in 15mm to the same rules. There was another Fantasy game, in 25mm, and two SF ones (Star Trek Ship combat and 1/300th Space Marines) but only one 1/76th WW2 this month.

POSSIBLE DBA CONTEST

For anyone not familiar with them, DBA are a set of ultra-simple Ancient rules produced by the War-games Research Group; a game can be played in half an hour or less and the rules can be learnt in a few minutes (though skill is very much involved, and it takes longer to learn to play well). With 15mm figures, a card table is big enough for a game. The projected contest would be on a Swiss Chess rather than knockout basis, giving each player several games. If any readers are interested, but did not put their names on the notice at the March meeting, please let the Editor or the Secretary know. You do not have to know the rules OR have your own army. We shall try to set up some training sessions for anyone wanting to learn the rules — in fact Dennis Love was doing more or less this in March! — and armies will be available to borrow — the Club owns several.

It would be possible to run the contest on the basis of having historically matched pairs of armies on particular tables, and then having players move around, so you would use several armies in the course of the day, or alternatively, players might want to use their own army against all comers. Could we have any suggestions and comments to the Editor please, as soon as possible!