

Rank and File

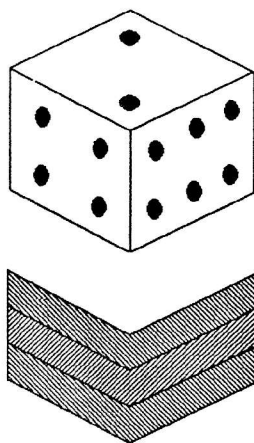
Journal

of the

Tunbridge Wells

Wargames Society

Issue January 1992



EDITORIAL*

Andrew Finch

The New Year message from your Editor for 1992 is a request to each and every one of you to write me one Article this year. If you do that, then I will have enough material to fill a Magazine every month. MY New Year resolution is to achieve this target, please let it be yours as well.

I dedicate this particular issue to George Gush, who has provided me with so much material that my fingers have been rendered numb from all the typing over Christmas. The next issue will be have more reviews and tips from George and from myself.

In his review of recent meetings, George asks how it is that we can get so many similar games running at one time. If you discover that you have several identical games running, and here I mean same period and same sets of rules, it might be possible to push the tables together and have an instantly larger game.

In the two or so years since I returned to the fold I have observed some subtle changes in the way we operate. There is less crucifix-waving and garlic-carrying than there used to be from the hardened historical wargamers, and I am very pleased to see that. We are still a club of individuals with widely varying tastes in wargaming and I think that is what makes us successful.

On the subject of rules, I am considering putting together a set of SCI-FI rules for land, sea, air and space warfare (in one combined set). I will be glad of some assistance in the production of these rules which will be intended for use with small scale figures (not for 25mm). These rules will be aimed to allow for conflict between Humanoids, Aliens, ... whatever, but should be believable in operation. Anyone interested in this should contact me.

Again on the subject of rules: have you ever written rules which you want to have reproduced to professional standard with laser printed originals (which photocopy much better). I can offer my assistance with the production of the original sets using the hardware and software I use to make the magazine. If you are interested, please contact me.

I am pleased that the Bring and Buy was a success at the recent meeting... it was just my luck to be away on business when it took place. If anyone has anything for sale at times other than when the Open Day or Bring and Buy are near, why not advertise the fact in the magazine. There is no charge (!)

1992 Open Day

This annual event will soon be on us. Peter England has done sterling work in setting this up, and obtained permission to use more of the school than before so we can have the Bring and Buy in one place. He will be needing plenty of help and Stewards will be very necessary on the day, as well as "setters up" on the night before and "takers down" afterwards. Please give him all the help you can and make the day a success for all of us. Do not forget that we are the hosts of this do and the more all of us do to help means the more time each of us has to get around and look at the show.

RECENT MEETINGS

George Gush

August 1991.

About 23 present; the combination of hot weather and holiday time seemed to have left the back rooms unwontedly empty, but the main hall was pretty active, with sightings of those rare birds Lance Flint and Paul Colebrook; the former had a good excuse for having missed some meetings - the Gulf War - and presented the club with a captured Iraqi Helmet. Suggestions for its use are invited - perhaps some form of trophy? Games included Advanced D & D, a large SF battle with robots battling it out on a crater-strewn landscape, a Command Decision WW2 game with Churchill Flamethrowers attacking German paratroops, an assault on a Dark Ages Maginot line by the Shermans, and a large Fire & Fury ACW 15 mm game with no less than ten players.

September 1991.

I am afraid that I have lost my notes for this one, but I do recall there were TWO Fire & Fury games, in one of which I achieved one of the run of disasters I have described elsewhere, losing the whole of an infantry corps AND getting Jeb Stuart shot dead, while my totally inexperienced ally, a new member, held his flank and even drove back the opposition! Paul Colebrook was organising a tryout of some new SF/Fantasy rules, but I do not recall the other game.

TEA seems to be a problem; a roster has been put up for volunteers to sign on, but in August at least no one did so; many thanks to Chris Sherman who stepped in to hold the fort. No thanks at all to those members who criticise the quality of the tea but will not take a turn to make it! (*Here, here - Ed.*)

October 1991.

This meeting saw an innovation — our first Bring and Buy outside an Open Day. An idea dreamed up by the Committee, it seemed quite successful, one whole side of the hall being lined with tables for the sale. Business was quite brisk — personally I spent nearly everything I made! There was certainly enough interest to justify continuing this new feature: we shall run club Bring and Buy twice yearly in future, the relevant months being April and October, so take note.

Games were heavily dominated by World War 2 in 1/76th scale. — it is odd how often we seem, without any pre-arrangement, to get a whole lot of games of the same type at a meeting. Can anyone explain it?

In this case, they included a Western Desert game run by the secretary, using his rules; the usual Ian Foster / Tim Freeman game using Command Decision rules, a very attractive game by Simon Russell and Ian Briggs, fought over a built up area of North West Europe, which used their own skirmish rules, and another skirmish between Peter England and Russell Hanson — I am not sure what rules they were using, but even when we agree on period and scale we seem to make up for it by the diversity of rules in use...not at all the standardisation that magazine articles sometimes attribute to club wargaming.

The back room provided further diversity (there were more games in there than usual owing to the space taken up by the Bring and Buy — we made sure it did not reduce the number of actual tables available for wargames though). Fantasy and SF dominated here: there was a Space Crusade game; an interesting fantasy one using card tokens, but model scenery, and a 6mm "Space Marines" game- small scales, long established in historical wargames, seem to be getting going in other fields. Given how relatively overpriced fantasy and SF figures are, this seems a sound development.

There was also a 25mm Ancient game (Romans vs. Seleucids) using the "Early Warfare" rules developed for the "Vailavenu" one-day campaign, and a very rapidly improvised Foreign Legion vs. Arabs skirmish, using the Gush Colonial Rules and an Eastern village built by our Chairman, both of which had been bought at the actual meeting.

December 1991.

About 29 members were present. This was the AGM of course — the business meeting passed even quicker than usual — a new record, it is believed! — and the election went like clockwork — the whole party list elected unopposed as usual (Perestroika has not reached Southborough yet). Election results (!) are as follows (there are some changes on the committee, but these result from retirements and new volunteers, NOT democracy !)

Officers and Committee for 1992

| | |
|------------|---|
| Chairman: | Ian "Gorbachev" Foster |
| Secretary: | George "What coup ? I was in my dacha" Gush |
| Treasurer: | Malcolm "What Gold reserves" Dove |
| Committee: | Andrew "Pravda" Finch |
| | Mark Summers |
| | Peter "Yeltsin" England |
| | Dave Cook |
| | Ivor Metcalf |
| | Tony Wyatt |

Other news of significance is that, on the recommendation of the Treasurer, the meeting voted to keep the subscription at the present level — Senior members £5 per year, Juniors £2.50 per year.

Our twice yearly Painting Competition was of course also due at this meeting. Unusually, there were few Fantasy/SF entries, and lots of historical ones. Winners were:

Class 1 (Fantasy/SF):

1st Alan Butler
2nd Chris Avery.

Class 2 (Historical Wargames Unit):

1st Gabriel Copus
2nd Tim Freeman.

Class 3 (Other Historical Entry):

1st J. Tutt and S. Hooker (this was a really splendid large WW2 diorama)
2nd George Gush
3rd Tim Freeman.

(As well as winning his class in the painting competition, Gabriel had volunteered to do the teas this month, and innovated by bringing along some biscuits. These were much appreciated, and I think the club might pay for some in future, if the committee agree).

The Iraqi Helmet Award was given jointly to Ivor Metcalf and George Gush, who, in alliance, were considered to have amassed the most impressive record of disastrous wargames defeats in the previous year. If awarded in the same manner in future, I would like to suggest that the winner should be the player who meets the worst defeat described in a Rank and File article (by himself, naturally)*. Or have others got better ideas? If so, write to the Editor with your suggestions.

There was plenty of wargaming both before and after the business session, with a varied selection of games this month. WW2 still raged on in 1/76th scale in the back room, with a 1944 NW Europe game, but in the hall there were two Napoleonic, one in 25mm and one in 15mm using the club armies (members are reminded that these are available for use at Sunday meetings), a very picturesque Zulu War game with a railway and a sort of Rorkes Drift, two lots of "Space Marines", and two tryouts of new or newish rules, with 1:300th scale figures, while Clive McLeod and Malcolm Dove were trying the new Shieldbearer Ancient rules produced by ex-TWWS member Michael Young, pitting Early Germany against Romans (How about your findings for the magazine, gentlemen?).

Players Wanted

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

I am still looking for 3 or 4 players to start in a new A D & D campaign as early as possible in 1992. New characters will start at 1st level (it will not normally be possible to introduce high level unusual characters into the campaign due to certain features I have incorporated into this). Players can have any number of characters, but normally it is best to play with a maximum of 2 - 3 per player. Time and bookkeeping are controlled by PC. Initially play will be at the weekends, but during the week may also be possible. If you are interested please contact Andrew Finch to arrange a date to start.

War of Wizards

I have a copy of this old game based on the Petal Throne RPG by M.A.R.Barker. It is quite entertaining and I propose that we run a wizard knockout competition using these rules during 1992. Is there anyone interested in this. If so contact Andrew Finch at a Sunday meeting.

* George has written an article on his string of valuable victories, which will appear next issue — Ed.

PRODUCT REVIEW

George Gush

BELLONA WARGAMES SCENERY

I believe that I mentioned in an earlier article that **Ballards Model Shop** in Tunbridge Wells now carries the Bellona vacuum-formed plastic wargames scenery (Ballards is in Grosvenor Road not too far uphill from Five Ways). Recently I bought and painted up several bridges. The larger ones I mounted on a thin plywood base, using impact adhesive, the smaller ones I turned upside down and filled with Tetrion plaster, scraping it off level with the base of the bridge before it had fully dried. Once dry, the plaster-filled bridges had their undersides covered with flocked paper or baize (again using impact adhesive) to protect the plaster against scrapes and bumps on the wargames table.

Hitherto I had not gone to so much trouble with the Bellona pieces, but I can now say that it is well worth the effort, mounted or filled like this the normally rather flimsy plastic becomes solid and much more durable, as well as sitting better on the table. The bases on the larger bridges also prevent the unsightly gap which used to appear between river sections and unbased bridges on my battlefields. The only limitation is that the plaster-filled versions cannot have the archway cut out, so I left this filled in with plastic, which is how it came from Bellona, and just painted the under-arch area black. This looks quite good, I think, and again prevents bits of table-top showing up unrealistically under the archway of the bridge*.

I finished them off with Acrylic paints (which are excellent for scenery of all kinds), using a dry-brush technique to highlight the stonework with white or tan. I am not very adept at this but again it is well worth the trouble; even done badly it makes the model look much better quality and brings out the rather low relief surface detail which is one limitation of the Bellona method of construction. Grassy areas on the bridge approaches, and on the ply bases of larger models, were painted green and later treated with the scenic scatter in grass colours, after coating with dilute PVA wood glue (this is also the method I usually employ with movement bases on which figures are mounted; it is far quicker than using plaster, Basetex, etc., and only slightly less effective — providing you avoid the very lurid colours of scatter which are common in model and toy shops. It stands up quite well to wear after the loose bits come off in the first battle or two, so I think it will last on the bridges). The river, on those bridges with a base, was painted in using gloss dark brown, to match my other river pieces (many of which are also Bellona). I think this is closer to most rivers than the blues and greens often employed. Gloss brown was also used for pools of water showing among the wreckage of the destroyed bridges which Bellona also produce to match their complete ones — a very useful touch for wargamers; in fact with the smaller ruined bridge they even give you a wooden roadway which can be laid over the gap to "repair" it.

My modelling techniques are nothing out of the ordinary — PLEASE will Alan Butler, who makes scenery about 1000 times better than I do, write us an article? — but the bridges still look very good and feel nice and solid. If you have not used Bellona scenery before you might be put off because it is not new and does not look very impressive in its untouched form in the packet — just a bit of grey or buff plastic — but it is cheaper than the more recent resin stuff, and I think you will be surprised at how good an effect can be achieved with a little trouble. The plaster-filling technique would work well, I think, with the stone walls and modern emplacements that Bellona make, also the 1:300th and 15mm scale items (my bridges were in 25mm scale, though I have also used the smaller ones for 15mm battles).

Playtesters wanted

I am in the process of developing ideas for some Club Sci-Fi rules (for details see the Editorial). If anyone is interested in participating in the playtesting, to start no later than March, please let me know.

I also want to develop my rules for the Dark Ages Skirmish Game and would like to ask for playtesters and other victims to come forward.

Contact Andrew Finch at any Sunday meeting.

* How about also basing these, and putting some bullrushes or such tall water plant against the black-in archway — you could do this with the large bridge as well — Ed.

Wargaming The Korean War

Bernard Garraty

The Korean War has long been neglected by wargamers, for the most part being overshadowed by World War 2 and perhaps the later Vietnamese wars. We have played a couple of Korean games at TWWS using 1:200 scale models, fighting over a typically bleak, hilly, landscape with the occasional village full of hovels and tin huts, one made of sheets salvaged from a US bomber! The rules we use are a one-page set I originally wrote for 1:300 modern games. I became disenchanted with the size and complexity of existing rules and decided to write a relatively simple set which although covering most of the important types of modern weaponry (such as A/T missiles, helicopter gunships), would emphasis command, control and communication aspects, as well as fitting on one sheet of paper! The full set of rules (together with several explanatory pages) were published in Miniature Wargames No 88, back copies of which are no doubt still available.

The rules themselves work on the basis of individual tanks, guns and small groups of infantry dicing to spot, then fire (as in the WRG 1950-1985 set) but I've added an interlaced move sequence, where one player will move and fire one platoon of vehicles etc, then their opponent does the same, either in direct response or on another part of the board. It sounds complicated but it does work, and gives a much more flowing game where both players are involved at all stages. Armoured vehicles are restricted to 3 types; APCs (including armoured cars etc), medium tanks and heavy tanks. The effect of more powerful guns is taken into account by using different types of dice when trying to hit and knock-out. For example, in our Korean game the Churchill tanks were using a D10 to hit, but a D8 to K/O, reflecting the poor penetration of their 75mm guns. On the other hand, the communist T34/85s were using a D8 to hit (Their gunners being notoriously poor shots) whilst a D10 was used to K/O. In our modern games tanks such as the M1 Abrams and Challenger use a D12 to hit AND K/O. The rules are intended for 1:300 scale tank battles and so the infantry combat is rather simplified. A large number of tanks were used by both sides in Korea but for the most part it was an infantry war. Because of this I am now in the process of overhauling my rules to make better use of 1:200 scale and to give more of the "feel" of the period, where a lot of the fighting was done at night and often involved relentless "human wave" attacks.

Terrain

Much of Korea is hilly and fairly barren if the photographs from the period are anything to go by. The majority of the population lived in the rural areas, growing rice in paddy fields (often terraced into the hillsides) Although the terrain is bare there are of course numerous undulations, "dead ground" which we read so much about and which can have a profound effect on locating troops. I find it easier to represent this with lichen and call it scrub. This has the dual effect of providing infantry with cover and making the board look more interesting. An alternative would be to use pieces of coloured cloth or cardboard scattered with bark, small stones etc and to treat this as rough terrain. The odd railway line features in our games together with several overturned locos and carriages (the "Shredded Wheat" train!). There was a considerable amount of fighting in built-up areas when the US marines re-took Seoul, but you have to be a bit careful about your choice of buildings. N gauge railway kits are a useful (though expensive) source. It is possible to use some 1:300 scale buildings for 1:200.

History Of The War

The Korean War is a most interesting war to study, pitting the highly mechanised and well-equipped US and UN forces against what was almost a guerilla army fighting mostly with infantry weapons. It is also one of the few occasions when the United States has been in direct confrontation with a communist power. The war began on 25th June 1950 when the North Korean army, well equipped by the Soviet Union, invaded the South with the intention of reuniting the country by force. Some of the North Korean troops had spent years fighting alongside the Chinese communists in their civil war and so were experienced soldiers. The South Korean army was poorly equipped and was forced to retreat before the communists, eventually managing to stabilise their lines in the Pusan perimeter with the help of UN forces pouring in. At one point the North Koreans were outnumbered but the communist attacks were so fierce and determined that they kept punching great holes in the allies defensive line and threatened to drive them into the sea. By this time however the North Korean army had suffered a large number of casualties and supplies were running down rapidly, their lines of communication stretching back several hundred miles and being under constant UN air attack.

It was at this point that MacArthur, the UN commander-in-chief, decided to counterattack and carried out an amphibious landing at Inchon on the Korean coast. This succeeded in recapturing Seoul (the South Korean capital) and cut off the North Korean forces in the south. This time it was the turn of the North Koreans to retreat, hotly pursued by the UN forces. This they did until the UN forces moved too close to the border with communist China. The Chinese had infiltrated over 300,000 men across the border under cover of night and on 1 November 1950 they attacked the advancing UN columns. Here the war took another turn, with the UN troops reeling under the Chinese assaults (mostly launched at night with the benefit of surprise). It was after this second long retreat that the UN troops again stabilised the line and a series of drawn-out peace negotiations began. An armistice was eventually agreed but no peace treaty was signed. Thus technically the two countries are still at war, making this area one of the worlds potential flash points.

COMPUTERS IN WARGAMING

Andrew Finch

The Gentle Art of Flying

This issue I would like to touch on the subject of flight simulators. There are a number of established flight simulators for home computers, the first of which is the Microsoft Flight Simulator, whose world has now expanded to include terrain and scenery disks for the USA, Japan, Europe, and now also UK. This is regarded as the best and most realistic, and is also counted towards flying hours to get a pilots licence. For the purpose of this article, I will concentrate on simulators dealing with military machines.

Surprisingly it took some years before someone thought of producing Flight Sims for the home computer based on military aircraft. For the home enthusiast a number of short cuts had to be taken to simplify the controls to allow all the aspects of flight and weapon control to appear on the screen at one time. The current list of Sims is very long and I will comment only on those I know. I use a PC and most of the Sims appear on Atari and Amiga as well.

Modern aircraft such as the F 14, F 15, F 16 and F 117 have been simulated. These are very attractive to use because the originals are largely computer controlled as well. I was disappointed by **Spectrum Holobyte Falcon AT** which flew so fast in a limited area that it was over the edge almost as soon as one took off. It could have been a quirk of my machine of course. I hope that the new version due any day now will be more "realistic". The number of missions was very limited as well.

Microprose F 15 Strike Eagle is a very good simulation with continually varying missions and several theatres of operation including the Gulf. From the same stable **F 19 Stealth Fighter** is another good buy, especially now that the upgrade version **F 117** has been released. This latter is limited to very fast ATs and 386 and higher with VGA graphics. If you have the equipment this is the game to play. There are strict rules of engagement and combat must be avoided unless spotted, and then you have GOT to get the enemy.

Dynamix A 10 Tank Killer in its original version was rather poor despite excellent graphics. Unfortunately the plane could not be flown in the way it actually is flown. (see my later comments on flight control).

You are warned that there is more to flying a jet than just shooting down the enemy. Trying to land is definitely hairy, and requires practice to make perfect.

For helicopter fans, **Electronic Arts LHX** is a good simulation offering a number of different helicopter types. **Microprose Gunship 2000** updates an earlier favorite dealing with the same sphere. Flying a helicopter is rather fun and also quite challenging. You must find other strategies to overcome enemy fire when the machine you are flying goes no faster than Essex Boy Racer. **Gunship 2000** offers additional challenges with command of a flight of helicopters when you get to a high enough rank. This Sim offers the theatres of the Gulf and Europe, with the promise of additional extensions in the future.

World War 2 Sims are quite rare. Lucasfilm seem to have cornered the market largely, their first offering being **Battlehawks 1942**. This was limited to operations surrounding the Carrier Battles in the Pacific with players having the chance to play either side, attacking and defending carriers. This was followed by **Their Finest Hour** which was much improved and allowed individual missions and a campaign game. This Battle of Britain Sim has so far no competitors, though there is one in the offing. Their most recent release **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe** deals with the strategic day attacks on Germany. In this game you get to fly various American or German planes to attack or defend industrial installations. As German player you also decide what aircraft to produce. Lucasfilm are to be congratulated on these three Sims for giving the player so many choices to make these games replayable for a long time. The most recent two also offer a mission builder so you can create your own scenarios as well.

Dynamix Aces of the Pacific is due in 1992 and will offer a more complete game in the Pacific theatre as a fighter pilot on either side. Alas bombers are not expected to feature as a player option, rather as an object to be escorted (or shot down).

You will find that handling a WW2 plane is much easier and speeds are so much lower that landing is a doddle.

1990/1991 saw the first releases of WW1 Sims. **Dynamix Red Baron** lets you fly as a Tommy or a Hun, and **Microprose Knight of the Sky** lets you be a Tommy or a French flyer. Both these games are well put together with campaigns for player to complete and enemy Aces to shoot down. When you get to be an Ace then you will be challenged to an aerial duel as well. Flying a WW1 plane is great fun. They are slow and tend to get well shot up; some fly like birds, others like bricks! The game play in these allows for aerial combat and also trench strafing, balloon busting, zeppelin hunting, bomber escorts etc.

The aircraft fly very easily and land anywhere (preferably behind your own lines).

Flight Characteristics

In all Flight Sims you must have the opportunity to effectively control the movement of the aircraft. This requires a fast computer to allow the screen to update smoothly and prevent jerky scenery. When it comes to the implementation of the flight itself, the player must be able to slow the aircraft down using lower throttle and flaps. Sims without controls for flaps and landing gear are not acceptable really. This was my grouse with **A 10 Tank Killer**. This had as mentioned good graphics but was ruined by oversensitive joystick control. It is impossible to arrange your flight path in a long low shallow dive with guns blazing as the original aircraft. What you do get is instant stall and sudden plummet which ends with your becoming integral with the landscape!

Another fault sometimes found in Sims (notably **Electronic Arts Chuck Yeagers Air Combat**) is the flight pattern of other aircraft. NO aircraft other than a helicopter can zoom past you, do a three point turn between the curbs, and then return from exactly where he left your sight. This much hyped game allows just this, but try it yourself and you get digitised Yeager telling you you have pulled your wings off. This sim tries to be over accurate with the flight characteristics and cut corners with the artificial intelligence. It has some very annoying and unhelpful additional features (which luckily can be turned off).

In a combat flight sim you must be able to estimate where the enemy has gone to based on his trajectory. By looking at the other out of cockpit views you should see him bank round and turn to get another shot at you. Similarly by some nifty flying you should be able to get on his tail. In **CYAC** he seems to be bolted onto your tail and nothing seems to shake him (other than wing ripping manoeuvres).

These faults are a great pity because the game had so much going for it with some most unusual encounters from WW2 to Vietnam. It also allowed for mission building flying FW 190s versus F4 Phantoms which is of course nonsense, but possible nonsense.

To close some remarks on what makes a game more enjoyable to play:

1. Graduated sky - this shading gets lighter towards the horizon and merges as it does in life.
2. Clouds are only implemented in the WW1 game. These are your only cover in pre - radar games and should be there, as is a true effect of attacking coming out from the sun.
3. Weather makes things more interesting.
4. Day and Night options for missions where this would be a possibility in real life.

BOOK REVIEW

George Gush

MILITARY LESSONS OF THE GULF WAR

By Bruce Watson, Bruce George, Peter Tsouras and others
Published 1991 by Greenhill Books at £16.50

This book is rather less interesting from the military point of view than it sounds. Out of 16 chapters, at least half are devoted to relevant but non-military considerations such as diplomacy, media access, the just war controversy and so on. Those dealing with military operations and tactical or technical lessons are thus perforce rather brief and tend to be a bit general. It suffers also from being one of the first attempts at such a survey and has been brought out at a point when much of the military experience is either still secret, or has not been analysed and the results of analysis published. A study of the references shows how much parts of the book rely on contemporary media reports and so on. Most of the authors are American professional analysts working for the Defence Intelligence Agency, the Threat and Analysis Centre of US Army Intelligence, or else academics. This probably reinforces the emphasis on diplomacy, conflict avoidance etc., which is not only of less direct interest to the wargamer than the strictly military details, but is also in fact much better-known and reported already — I have only read the more serious papers and monthlies like Newsweek and the Economist on this sort of thing, during and since the war, yet found nothing that I had not already come across on the diplomatic/political and ethical side, so that the book is a useful quick reference on this kind of thing, rather than a source of new information, ideas, or interpretations.

The American military-academic background for me also affected the readability of parts of the book. American academics are addicted to a sort of Germanic New-Speak not intended, so far as I can see, to convey meaning but rather to make people think they are clever. Try yourself on this gem from Gerald W. Hoppo on the problems of intelligence and policy: "The theoretical prism maximised the role of external Cuban and Soviet influence, despite the convincing evidence that the Grenadian revolutionary process was unfolding in line with a purely domestic trajectory". Both academics and soldiers are also potty on acronyms and find it necessary to talk about, say "HUMINT deficiency" when what they mean is that the allies did not have many actual spies in Iraq. Sometimes of course these abbreviations can be necessary and handy, but in a book for general as well as specialist readers you do not actually gain anything by, say, calling electronic warfare EW or intercepting enemy communications COMINT, especially when you have to explain the acronyms on first use anyway.

All that said, I did find the chapters on the air, ground, and sea wars interesting and there were things that were new to me — for example, that there were more tank vs. tank combats than I had thought, in some of which the better Iraqi formations showed considerable determination but seemed to be totally defeated by better imaging and sighting equipment on the Coalition side, which led to their being knocked out at very long range before being able to reply effectively; that the special forces in Iraq contributed to the Iraqi communications breakdown by destroying the protected land lines (including optic fibre cables) which they had as secure backup; that Tomahawk naval missiles proved unable to navigate over desert terrain because of its lack of recognisable features, and so on. The book is also interesting on the use and problems of space in the war, particularly for providing guidance systems for ground and air forces, and has quite full appendices giving the orders of battle.

At £16.50, though, I do not consider it to be one of my best PRADs (Personal Resources Allocation Decisions)...are they getting to me? You, however, do not need your hard-earned cash if you want to read the book, as I will be glad to lend my copy to TWWS members.

VISITS

George Gush

EUROMILITAIRE

It is less surprising that this annual get-together is boycotted by TWWS members than it is with the Reading meeting, since the emphasis is much more heavily on the related hobbies of military modelling and toy soldiers rather than wargaming proper. However, there is lots of interest and, as with Reading, you can normally get there for nothing, since I drive down every year and usually have three vacant seats.

It takes place in the Lees Cliff Hall at Folkestone, so it is not far; the hall is a very pleasant place with a very large central hall with a gallery on which some of the stands are situated, and several adjoining rooms in which are the bar, the painting competitions etc.; it has its own sizeable underground carpark near at hand, and a separate cafe at the top on the upper promenade, the rest of the building is below that promenade and overlooks the attractive seafront, with very pleasant terraces outside almost overhanging the sea and giving a wonderful view. These are excellent for getting a bit of coolness and fresh air on, as the main hall does get rather hot and crowded (the terrace outside the bar can get crowded too!).

A feature of the meeting is the European connection, with various firms from Italy, France, Spain and Germany exhibiting and dozens of European visitors. One regular stand, for example, is Preiser of Germany with their excellent, though expensive, large scale plastic figures - they also make small scale vehicles and figures though. Other stands of direct interest to wargamers included, this year, Connoisseur, Hovels, Wargames Illustrated, Lead Sled, Model Transport, Cromwell Models, Miniature Wargames and Military Hobbies Magazines, and there was one wargames demonstration by the local club, of a Zulu War game. However quite apart from these I always find this a very good chance to get magazines, books, and in particular things like paints and brushes which are on sale in great variety. This year I bought some Rose Models metallic paints. It is hard to get good golds and silvers and these are said to be outstanding; you have separate pot of the medium, dip your brush in it and then in a pot of the metal powder of the appropriate type. I saw some figures on which they had been used which certainly looked good. I also found a magazine quite new to me: "First Empire", billed as "The Worlds First Napoleonic Wargaming Magazine". No. 1 came out in June/July 1991 and it is bi-monthly; it can be obtained from:

First Empire Publishing
6 Cranmore Drive,
Highley
Bridgnorth
Shropshire WV16 6DS

Cost is £1.50 per issue. I bought numbers 1 and 2 at a discounted price at the show and was quite impressed. It is well produced, with a coloured cover, and is not confined to Napoleonic topics alone, though obviously concentrating on them. Number 1 had one of the most useful scenery modelling articles I have read, for instance, while number 2 had an equally good one on painting wargames figures. If you have an interest in Napoleonic wargaming well worth getting.

Euromilitaire is also a good chance to marvel at the skill of the military modelling fraternity; there is one of the main military modelling competitions held in this country, and besides the entries in this which are all on show - hundreds of them, this year saw personal displays of figures etc., by many famous modellers. My favorite item was here, in a display by a woman modeller. Entitled "Catnap", it showed an irascible 18th Century general sprawled in his chair, while his cat shared the footstool with his gouty leg - not unlike a scene in the Gush household, actually. There were also displays by firms; I liked a German firm, all of whose figures were medieval and had a sort of gnome-like quality about them, as if they had stepped from a Dürer engraving. A sign of the times was a Russian figure maker looking for an outlet in this country - some very attractive types of the Tsarist and Red Armies in 54mm scale.

Among the competition pieces I found the endless array of rather-too-beautiful-to-be-real Tigers and Panthers a bit dull, but there were lots of marvellous original figures and dioramas - one very good one, for its handling of water especially, showed an American patrol in Vietnam wading ashore from a river craft. There were also some superb flat figures, exhibited in picture frames and really looking like medieval illuminations or stained glass in their softly glowing colours. Lots of tips for wargames painting and scenery can be picked up, especially as there were several experts displaying their modelling and painting skills on the spot - a rare thing at wargames meetings.

VISITS

George Gush

COLOURS

This was held at the Hexagon in Reading over the weekend of 14/15th September. It always surprises me how few of our club members go to this meeting, which is possibly the biggest wargames gathering in the country and quite easy to get to; we always have at least one car going and usually free seats, and it is an easy motorway drive. This year Dennis Redhead, who is normally one of the regulars, was kept away by business, but our Treasurer and myself went - we could have taken two others - and Clive McLeod (who might get the official title of our Club Competitor since he is the only member of the club who regularly takes part in wargames competitions) was there as usual playing in the wargames competition, though his colourful 15mm Cossacks did not carry him to his usual top spot this year. There are seven championship periods, but a drawback for us is that they are exclusively to Newbury Rules, which few TWWS members presently use.

As always it was a very good show, with 30 wargame or re-enactment demonstrations and SIXTY-TWO trade stands. If you cannot find something you are interested in or want to buy at Colours it would be hard to find it anywhere in the wargames world. It is a great place for picking up lists and samples of new products you have not heard of, or seeing those figures you HAVE got a list of but do not know if you will like. I spent too much as usual, but as on past visits was able to pick up a bargain. There was a very big bring and buy in a separate hall which is usually good for this - last year I was able to buy really well painted and based 25mm Napoleonic at about £12 per 30 or so. This year there seemed to be fewer bargains, but I was able to get about 350 quite well painted and based 15mm Confederates for £30 (!) from one of the many small-trader type of stands that you do not seem to get so much elsewhere.

There is a large painting competition, a bar and several food stalls, from sweets and snacks to cooked lunches, all in the main Hexagon, and plenty of car parking very close by (free if you go on Sunday). Naturally it is popular and can get quite crowded, but it is much better than the rather similar London meeting "Salute" in this respect. Unlike many such meetings, there is considerable space with tables and chairs, both indoors near the bar and outside near the re-enactments, so you can both eat your lunch or have a drink and chat in reasonable comfort. What is more, it is in the central shopping area of Reading, so wives and families might appreciate a Saturday visit even if not too keen on the wargames (they might enjoy some of the re-enactments too, which take place in a garden just outside the Hexagon, so can be seen from above on the walkway without paying to go in. I watched a Medieval one in which ALL the participants seemed to end up dead !).

TWWS Sunday Meetings for your 1992 diary

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|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| January | 5th |
| February | 2nd |
| March | 1st |
| April | 5th (Bring & Buy) |
| May | 3rd |
| June | 7th (Painting Competition) |
| July | 5th |
| August | 2nd |
| September | 6th |
| October | 4th (Bring & Buy) |
| November | 1st |
| December | 6th (A.G.M. & Painting Competition) |