

**Rank and File**

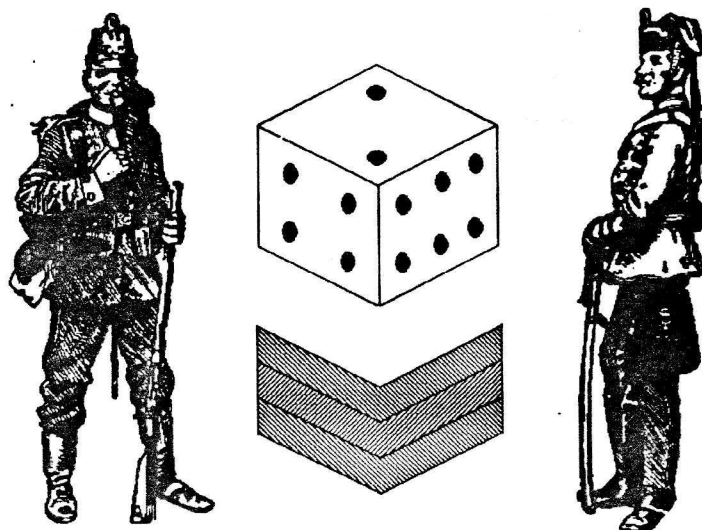
**Journal**

**of the**

**Tunbridge Wells**

**Wargames Society**

**Issue January 1993**



Editorial

Andrew Finch

Welcome to the 1993 series of Rank and File, your club Journal. This year I hope to provide you with some new ideas from the pens of our fellow members, and provoke you into writing some articles to amaze your friends. YOUR New Year Resolution should be to write one article for the journal, even if only half a page.

The main aims for the Club during 1993 MUST be to canvass new members. We must actively advertise our existence as much as possible, as the membership is dwindling, which cannot be due to cost as our subs have not gone up at all in years (a mistake in my view). The Committee will be asked to look at methods of achieving new members urgently.

Some of you will have noticed that Alan Butler, Dave Cook, Chris Avery and myself have been quite involved in some play testing of Sci Fi Planet-based wargames rules. We have now got to the stage that we want to have some volunteer play testers to question parts of the rules to expose the gaps we have not yet found. If any of you want to volunteer, please contact us as soon as possible. Playtesters will get credit in the introduction, and will even get a free copy of the final result.

The Open Day approaches even closer, and I know that Peter England will be grateful if I put in a plea for assistance in the evening before, and on the day. The Committee has already discussed some method of providing some tangible reward for help with the set-up and close down work. Full details will be given at the Sunday Meetings in January and February.

As Editor I must also reveal also that we have had some small misunderstanding within the Committee, partially because we failed to have a Committee meeting in December. The difficult questions are those of the badges, and providing the Magazine to ALL members regularly. Some of you may recall that there was a poll in the magazine, with about 50% of the club responding at the time. The majority result in this poll was either yes to the two proposals, or that the committee should decide, as long as there would be no additional cost to members. The committee decided to go ahead with the badges, which I did, and to look at the question of regular despatch to those not at a meeting in the New Year, tied into an accurate members address list.

At the AGM both these items were again discussed with the whole membership, with the result that much of the work I had put into organising the badges was left up in the air again. I was asked to find out how much it would cost for a smaller number of badges. The answer is that the cost would be the same (£100 for 1000). Needless to say, in addition, these badges arrived within days of the meeting. By the time you read this, I will have resigned from the Committee in protest at being given the thankless task then bamboozled afterwards. In the true spirit of democracy and membership participation for which the TWWS is world famous, I will have been co-opted back onto the Committee, sentenced to hard labour for a further 99 years.

## Winter Offensive

This game will be played as a 1 day campaign at St. Thomas Hall, Southborough, on 17th January 1993 from 9 a.m. until 7 p.m.

### Tabletop Conditions

- 1) Roads are considered cleared and frozen, so allow road movement.
- 2) All other terrain is snow for movement.
- 3) Boats can move on unfrozen sections of river and lake.
- 4) Ice covered sections may be crossed safely by infantry, cavalry, ski troops, aerosans, and horse drawn vehicles and artillery. Other vehicles must dice, falling through the ice on a score of 1. They leave a gap in the ice; they can be extricated by a recovery vehicle, or by a throw of 6 for the river or lake, 5 or 6 for the stream.

### Interaction between tables.

- 1) For the first four turns, moves on all tables will take place simultaneously.
- 2) Subsequently, tables will move at their own speed, and need not synchronise their moves with those on other tables.
- 3) Movement onto or between tables is generally limited to that indicated on the map. Troops will move off their current table in their own sides turn, and will have to wait for their own sides turn on the table to which they are going before they move on there.
- 4) Shooting between tables will be permitted where necessary to avoid distortions in the game, but, except for indirect fire, will be discouraged by the umpires. Only indirect fire is possible between A and B and their neighbouring tables (see below). No firing is possible between the German base table and any other.
- 5) No ground action can take place on the Russian set-up tables A and B, but the Russians may have off-table guns firing from these tables onto tables N1 and S1 respectively, and if they do, Germans may use indirect artillery fire or air attacks against such guns. Probably there will be no ground action on the German Base Area table - but in a situation like this, who can be quite certain?

### Russian Set-up.

- 1) Commander of the 49th Army places all his forces on table A and table B, thus committing the forces on A to attack North of the marshes, those on B South of them. He must have at least an infantry company (4 platoons) on each table.

The Russians take the first move, and must move forces onto both N1 and S1 on that turn, though they may withhold part of their forces on A and B in reserve or support if they wish. The Russian commander is reminded however that the more he delays, the more German reinforcements will appear.

- 2) Commanders of Russian flanking forces, partisans, naval forces and paratroops will check on the day with the umpire (George Gush) as to where their forces will come on.

- 3) These forces:

- a) cannot come on during the first Russian turn.
- b) cannot come on during the second Russian turn on a throw of 6,
- c) can come on during the third Russian turn with a throw of 4, 5, 6.
- d) can come on automatically on the fourth Russian turn.

Their commanders may retain some or all of their forces off-table until a later turn if they wish.

- 4) Russian air support enters via A or B, but may leave from any table. Aircraft leaving the table will be returned to the available pool two turns after doing so (plus repair time of damaged). Aircraft lost do not return to the pool.

The commander of the 49th army may dice each turn for air support, needing a 5 or 6 to bring on two aircraft from the pool of aircraft available. If there is a choice, aircraft not previously used must be selected.

### German Set-up

- 1) The German commander may place all his units, positions, mines, and wire available at the start, on any of the tables N1 to 3 and S1 to 3, subject to the following restrictions:

- a) He must have forces on every table, to a minimum strength of at least one platoon and at least 1 AFV or support weapon.
- b) He can only place mines on tables N1 and S1.
- c) On N1 and S1 then only things he may place East of the German front line (which is 18 inches

from the Eastern edge of the table) are mines and snipers.

- 2) The German commander must place an airfield on one of the tables N2, N3, S2, or S3.
- 3) He will be provided with four Supply dumps, and must place one dump on each of the tables N2, N3, S2, and S3.
- 4) German air support will be based on the airfield, and is subject to special rules (see below).
- 5) German reinforcements: will be placed on the German base area table by the umpire, during the game and at present times. Once they are on this table, the German commander or a delegated sub-commander must allocate them to a particular player and direct them onto table N3 or S3; they arrive on those tables via road or rail. Reinforcements can be kept on the base area table as long as the German commander wishes, before being so allocated.

### Special Rules

- 1) Destroying Bridges Neither side is allowed to damage bridges by shooting, though explosive charges may be used to destroy them.
- 2 Destroying Dumps Neither side can destroy dumps by shooting, fire or other means unless they control the dump concerned.
- 3) Aircraft
  - a) Only aircraft can cross the swamp area, ignoring it for movement.
  - b) an aircraft cannot fly over more than two tables in the same turn.

### 4) Using the German airfield:

- a) It takes one full turn to take off and gain operational height over the airfield table.
- b) It takes no extra time to land on returning to that table.
- c) It takes two turns on the ground to replenish an aircraft so that it is ready to take off again.
- d) If the airfield is captured, no German air support is possible.
- e) If the aircraft on the ground are shot at or bombed, they are counted as F class vehicles for damage effects.

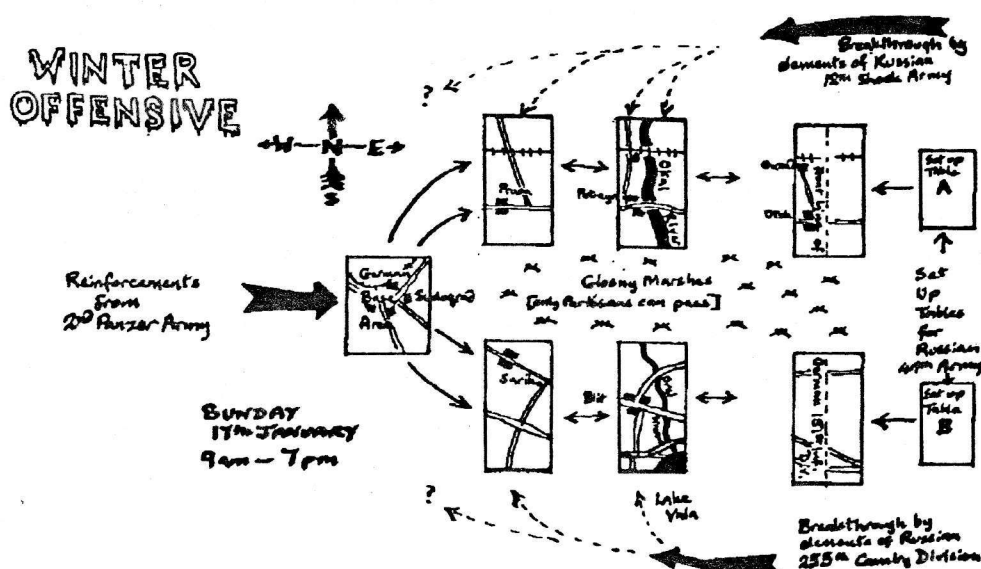
### 5) Effect of losing Ammunition or Fuel Dump: If a German ammunition or fuel dump is held by the Russians, or has been destroyed:

- a) Ammunition dump lost: every German MMG, HMG, Mortar, Antitank gun, AA gun, Artillery piece, or AFV that throws a 6 for shooting (take a special throw if using indirect fire) runs out of ammunition after its current shot, and receives a special marker showing it can no longer shoot.

- b) Fuel dump lost: Every German motor vehicle, before moving, throws a dice: score of 6 means out of fuel; receives special marker showing it can no longer move (does not affect aircraft or trains).

- 7) Replenishing Ammunition or Fuel: The Germans will be allocated some supply truck off-table, and some markers representing a truckload of either fuel or ammunition. A supply truck which does not move can expend its load to re-ammunition or re-fuel all weapons or vehicles within 5 inches of it at the time, their markers being removed.

- 8) Note that there are one or two special rules known only to the Umpire !





Victory Points

## For control of tables:

N1, S1:Germans	50	Russians	20
N2, S2:Germans	30	Russians	30
N3, S3:Germans	20	Russians	50

(If control of a table is disputed, umpire will award each side a proportion of their possible points for that table)

## For Control of undamaged dump:

Germans	2 to 10	Russians	2 to 10
---------	---------	----------	---------

## For any dump being destroyed:

Germans	0	Russians	1/2 points
---------	---	----------	------------

(Dumps have values marked underneath, known to Germans but not to Russians)

## For control of airfield:

Germans	10	Russians	20
---------	----	----------	----

## For control of unbroken bridges over River:

Germans	5	Russians	10
---------	---	----------	----

## For control of unbroken bridges over Stream:

Germans	3	Russians	5
---------	---	----------	---

The Riting of the Wrules

by Andrew Finch

The idea of this article is to give budding Rules Writers some ideas how to go about the subject, also how to avoid some of the main pitfalls.

This all came about, because Alan Butler, Chris Avery, Dave Cooke and myself have been tinkering with various SciFi sets of rules which seemed to us to be incomplete or open to gross misinterpretation, with devastating consequences for the victims of the misinterpretation. This article will be based on our efforts to write some rules of our own for Land-based SciFi games.

The main rule you must obey is to go about the effort in a structured manner. We of course failed to do this, with the result that sometimes we are brainstorming around about five different matters at the same time. I am not saying that you should not brainstorm, BUT if you do, one person must act as scribe to retain all the notes, legibly, destroying those bits which are surplus to requirements to avoid confusion. At a brainstorming session it is also good to talk things over on the basis of "how would xxxxx (ab)use this rule ?" (for xxxxx insert the name of any notorious rules-parer you can think of.

Return to structure. This first aim is to set the game setting, period, theme, etc. Our rules are aimed at late 21st Century (i.e. less than 100 years ahead of today). Technology today is such that what was SciFi 20 years ago is almost Old Hat today. At the same time, you have to create an open-ended system which allows for the introduction of Alien weapons, but within the structure you create. What assumptions are you making with the rules, what scale are you using, and what sort of game do you want. I think never try and write super-detailed rules, what you need are playable rules, which can

be tweaked to give balance. Our scale is 1/300th, but I think that the rules will allow use for 1/200th with no problem. The other main assumption is that troops (i.e. land based beings (humans?)) will still be in fashion, therefore they are the slowest troop type.

Next, how far to they move, and what relationship will be create between men and vehicles for movement. We have allowed a base move of 10cm for a squad, with no modifiers for broken ground, and ONLY squads can enter a close wood (they can hide somewhere). The squad can buy a jet pack, doubling their movement, again into any terrain. The next is a wheeled vehicle, which can go faster, and double speed if on a road at the start and end of a move (you cannot go part of the move on road getting a partial benefit in movement). We made this rule to specifically avoid calculations on distances. Also, a unit which moves into broken ground must stop, even if its allowance is the same on normal ground. If it starts in broken ground it can move its full allowance (for broken ground even if leaving that terrain into open ground). The assumption made is that the vehicles will take care not to shed tracks, rip hover skirts, etc. when they enter rough terrain.

We then looked at Tracked vehicles, Hovercraft, Grav vehicles, and lastly Walkers. The relationship between all of these, and the human move was then tidied up, and terrain definition for broken ground made (this was open woods, scrub, ruins, water crossings, and steep hills), linear obstacles (walls) were impassible or passible to movement types, and close woods only available to infantry.

Now we addressed the vexed question of weapons, what is the range, and what effects are there. The types we have been left with are:

**Lasers:**

Longest Range  
Poor penetration

**Plasma Fusion Guns**

Short Range  
Good penetration (therefore damage)

**Solid Shot**

Medium Range  
Good penetration

**Smoothbore**

Medium Range  
Poor penetration but very good damage

To this we added a number of other weapons, missiles, miniguns, etc, with effects which fitted to each other quite well, and latterly also an equivalent to the current modern ordnance as fitted to the M1 Abrams MBT.

Now we looked at the cost of buying the vehicles. This we cribbed and modified and the results are quite good. It allows anyone to custom build a vehicle type as he wants. To avoid over stuffing of vehicles, we then added certain overriding provisos regarding capacity of both machines and men.

We play tested some of the rules at a Sunday meeting and this triggered a full scale rule writing session which is not yet over. We have adopted some interesting fire effects (cribbed but to be tweaked as well). Gun size determines how well it penetrates, but not if it hits. If it penetrates, the better the gun the better the damage, so we would draw a damage chit per gun size (with various effects such as structural damage, loss of weapons etc. & which could also affect the firer as there are a limited number of 'misfire' chits). A vehicle has a

defence value equal to its basic points value, and when the structural damage equals this, then pop goes the weasel. Following some surreal results in close assault vs tanks, we have adopted a result using the chits as well when infantry attack a tank. If the tank wins, a simple points value (determined by the result of the combat) kills infantry.

Let us now move on with our development. In a later session we decided to abandon the damage chits themselves, but retain the idea of damage points for vehicles. The damage was resolved by means of a D6 rolled after successful penetration. This determined whether damage to the structure or fittings ensued. Damage to main armament was ruled out because we decided that the vehicle would become relatively useless without it and the final destruction result may in fact be the destruction of the main weapons.

Artillery fire and air vehicles have been added and several brainstorming sessions have been held to tweak some of the rules, and throw out several rules which have become superfluous. We decided that both air, and later water vehicles would be subject to the same rules as all other elements, including fire and damage. Any weapon could fire at any target, therefore ruling out a requirement for special weapons for AA fire.

A further playtest at a Sunday meeting determined that it was necessary to determine certain set up rules such as game style (Meeting Engagement, Attack/Defence, etc), and objectives before laying out the armies but after setting out terrain. It was felt these should be random.

Morale levels of Infantry (and other) units have also been determined, and they will affect artillery observation, and close assault. Gunfire would not be effected because it was felt that the weapon systems would be more sophisticated and only require the trigger to be pulled when ready. In engagements, the units with the higher morale grade would pin those of equal or lower morale.

---

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS TACTICAL PRESENTS - AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

(Overheard at Club Meetings)

George Gush

"They are not retiring, they are moving to a new position !"

(Graham Charles)

"Never turn your back on a goblin !"

(Chris Avery)

Confusion at Moosejaw Mountain**Some recent operations of the Army of the Lower Potomac.****A report by  
Wilfred Prune of the Tunbridge Wells Gazette.**

Washington, Monday. A recent press release (Rank and File 05/92) is now known to have been fraudulent. Written before the campaign even began by the Special Correspondent of the Stinkweed News (Othello P. Glumm prop.) sitting in the terrace bar of the Hotel Splendide, Washington, under the influence of a new drink known as a "cock tail", it has been overtaken by events.

An ADC to Lieutenant General Perfidious B. Glumm, Commanding General, Army of the Lower Potomac, has now reached the terrace bar in safety, if in a rather bedraggled condition and with his tongue hanging out, and the following account has been pieced together between rounds. A copy of the Order of Battle is appended.

Perfidious B. Glumm (known as "Old Goldylocks" to his troops which may have something to do with several mysterious jars in his personal baggage wagon) is a pessimist with a big "P". He habitually overestimates the strength of the enemy by a factor of ten. Thus if ordered to advance he can point to the complete impracticality of such a course, while insisting that he will hold his present position to the last man just as soon as he completes his defences in a couple of weeks. If ordered to hold his position he will immediately withdraw to save his army from the disaster which the dunderheads in Washington evidently intended. If ordered to withdraw - well, this hasn't actually happened yet, fortunately, but it may be anticipated that he would immediately resign his command and travel post haste to Washington to address Congress in person. You see the cleverness of it! He is the GENERAL WHO NEVER LOSES BATTLES.

Glumm is popular with his troops. When ever the battles waxes not and he finds he does not really understand the situation ( a not infrequent occurrence) he gets a headache and leaves his headquarters for an hour or two until it gets better. He will spend his time usefully inspecting rear details, examining the axles of the wagon train, or joining the jolly soldiers who seem to flood the rear areas when they can hear that "Old Goldylocks" is about, singing songs around the camp fire, chewing tobacco and cracking jokes with the best, or worst of them.

When he hears the cannon fire easing off he will return to his headquarters to see if the situation has changed in his favour. If it has not he will express his displeasure to his staff. But the staff dont really mind. They are all hand-picked local boys from Glumms home town of Stinkweed, Min. (pop. 256).

Whenever their general is away they pack up the headquarters, repair to a quiet spot out of cannon shot and get on with the poker school, drinking applejack and singing patriotic songs.

This leaves the actual conduct of operations to the general of divisions and brigades, who can do more or less what they like. So they are happy too. Everyone is happy in the Army of the Lower Potomac; well fed, often provided with boots, they write cheerful letters to the folks back home and General Glumms reputation as a popular hero soars. he is quite obviously unsackable.

The aforesaid fraudulent press release had a map appended. As it happens it was the wrong map. (It wasnt Glumms fault, his wife packed his kit). A copy of the right map is now supplied.

Glumm ordered a general advance from Hayseed Landing along the Hicksville Turnpike to take the Confederate Fort Dixie in the rear, having been assured by his scouts that "there aint no darn Rebs this side of the Blackhorse Swamp". Having failed to find the Blackhorse Swamp on his map he felt doubly reassured.

OBunion ("Galloping Joe") led the advance with the cavalry brigade, only to discover that the Confederates had three or four infantry divisions in process of forming up behind breastworks. (With fiendish ingenuity they had taken out a subscription to the Washington newspapers which described the Glumm Plan.) Not wishing to disappoint his general with such news, OBunion decided to keep it to himself, but being fired upon by a Confederate battery on the Turnpike he immediately sounded the charge and made for the hills. The last Glumm saw of him was a receding dust cloud above the trees of Moosejaw Mountain. He was really quite pleased about this as OBunions fiery temperament often gave him a headache, and the army pressed on in complete ignorance of what lay before them.

OBunion is a natural leader of men. He is one of those many officers in history of whom it can be truly said that his men would follow him anywhere, if only out of curiosity. Having successfully evaded both the enemy and his commanding general he continued along the slopes of Moosejaw Mountain. He happened to be away chasing a jackrabbit when the column made a one hundred and eighty degree turn. Consequently this small detail escaped him but, as he afterwards said, one side of the mountain looked much like the other so he could not be altogether blamed. One may imagine

his surprise when, emerging from the trees, he discovered he had completely outflanked the Confederate position. The Confederates were quite surprised too, and sent a complete infantry division to drive him away. Thus the force they had to deal with Glumm and the main Union Army was considerably reduced. naturally, when he eventually heard about it, Glumm proclaimed OBunions Ride as his master stroke.

But that was not for some time because when he saw the Confederates massed behind their breastworks he had one of his headaches.

So it was left to General Noxious P. Weed of the Second Division to organise victory. OBunions troopers, feeling sore after so much riding, had dismounted and were gradually driven back towards Moosejaw Mountain where Weed had sited two batteries which caused great execution in the advancing grey ranks. "Stinker" Blotts brigade was sent onto the mountain to support the guns, "Fishy"

Snooks brigade advanced to take the Confederates in flank, and their combined fore wreaked havoc in the Confederate division whose desperate charges were bloodily repulsed. As the sun set their shattered remnants withdrew.

Meanwhile, Ulysses C. Flywheels two batteries deployed on the Turnpike suppressed the Confederates battery opposite it. Only the two Confederate batteries on their left achieved any success, decimating "Dumbo" McCoys brigade which was standing in their line of fire awaiting orders that never came.

So night fell and General Glumm returned to his headquarters, and the staff put away the poker dice and congratulated their general on his brilliant victory, the ADC was despatched to Washington with the glad tidings. Clearly Glumm is the coming man of the Union Army, and the Army of the Lower Potomac will go on to further triumphs just as soon as the reinforcements Glumm is demanding arrive.

## ORDER OF BATTLE

### ARMY OF THE LOWER POTOMAC

#### GOC: Lieutenant General Perfidious B. Glumm "Old Goldylocks"

##### FIRST DIVISION

Major General Ulysses C Flywheel

First Brigade (6 stands)  
 Brigadier General Hannibal J. McCoy  
 Second Brigade (6 stands)  
 Brigadier General Gustavus Shmalk

##### SECOND DIVISION

Major-General Noxious P. Weed

Third Brigade (6 stands)  
 Brigadier-General Silus K. Blott  
 Fourth Brigade (7 stands)  
 Brigadier-General Hercules Snook

##### CAVALRY BRIGADE

(8 stands mounted - 6 stands dismounted)

Brigadier-General Joseph Q OBunion

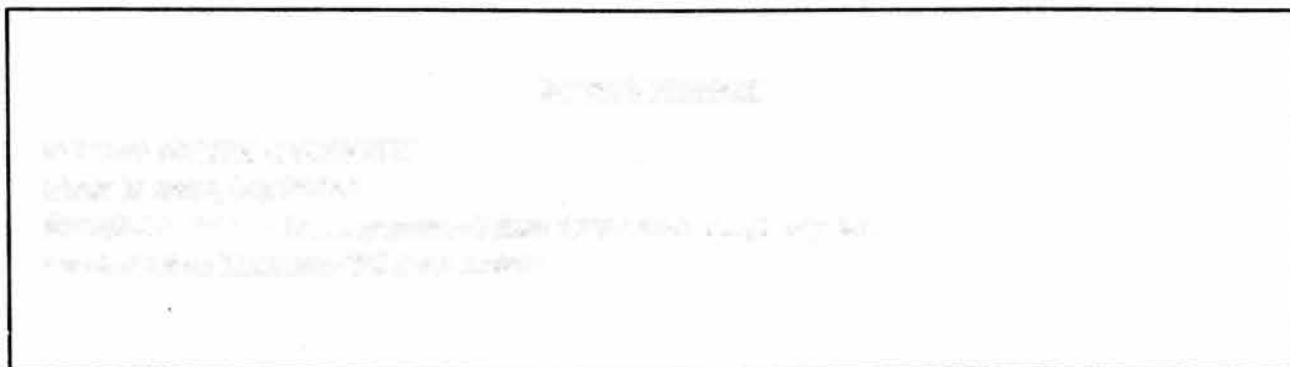
##### ARTILLERY

4 batteries

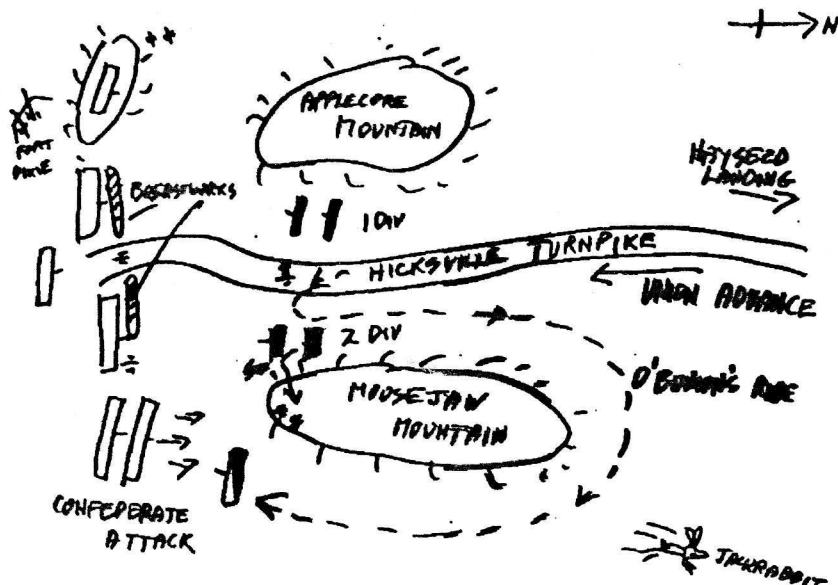
##### TRANSPORT

1 wagon

(Presidential approval is being sought for the following reinforcements : 8 stands infantry to bring brigades up to 8 or 9 stand each; 2 batteries reserve artillery and 1 battery horse artillery).



## SKETCH MAP. NOT TO SCALE.

Some Recent Meetings

George Gush

**June**

There were about 23 present. Rather an interesting "Dungeons and Dragons" game was in progress in the back room, being fought out with figures in a model village. The juniors involved got a bit excitable at times, and their "Dungeon Master" had a good system which appeared to involve a "Speaking" marker, without which you weren't allowed to say anything!

The main hall was dominated by a big refight of the Peninsular war battle of Corunna, in 25 mm and using the Gush simple Napoleonic rules (themselves based on WRG ones - but quicker). This used an "L"-shaped arrangement of tables to represent the battlefield and involved half a dozen players. There were also a W.W.I naval game run by Russell Hanson, a 25 mm Sci-Fi game and a 25 mm WRG rules Renaissance game pitting Imperialists against Swiss.

Tim Freeman had some of Platoon 20s new range of lead 1/76th WW2 tanks on show. Originally made by RAFM, this is a wide range including some French 1940 vehicles, with good detail and notably cheaper than most lead vehicle kits in this scale. Tim, who is probably our chief WW2 expert also had several new Osprey Books on show, including one on the Rumanian Army of WW2, which, after the Germans, was the largest Axis force on the Rus-

sian front, but never gets into wargames - perhaps now it will.

June is also the month of one of our biennial Painting Competitions. Results were as follows:

**Class 1 (Fantasy and SF)**

- |         |                                  |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| First:  | Wood Elf War dancers by Tom Bell |
| Second: | Elven Hero by Stephen Churchill  |
| Third:  | Time Bandits by Bernard Garaty   |

**Class 2 (Historical War games Unit)**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| First:  | Napoleonic Algarve Militia by Gabriel Copus |
| Second: | Russian Napoleonic Hussars by George Gush   |
| Third:  | US Infantry WW2 by Tim Freeman              |

**Class 3 (Other Historical Entries)**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| First:  | French 100 Years War DBA Army by George Gush |
| Second: | Dying Knight by Mark Summers                 |
| Third:  | Marder III by Tim Freeman                    |

Dont forget, the Painting Competitions are in June and December with prizes for all three winners.



## July

There were about 28 members present. Games included a large "D Day" type World War Two game in 1/76th scale run by the secretary, with two separate but connecting tables, running at their own speed. One, placed transversely, was the beach on which the landing was taking place; the other, at right angles to it, had a road running inland; paratroops were dropping to secure a vital bridge over which German panzer reinforcements would have to make their way in order to support the coast defenders. There was a further World War Two game in the back room, suggesting that, currently, this is probably the most popular historical period in our club.

Other periods were well represented, however, with a large fantasy game out back, a Science Fiction

"Space Marines" game in the main hall (to the unpractised eye such as your reporters, these games appear to be fought out by WW1 tanks in a 50s tower block housing estate. Maybe those involved could do us a bit for "Rank and File" explaining more about them for the uninitiated ?)

Russell Hanson (fresh from successfully completing the London Marathon) was running a First World War Naval game, using General Quarters rules (a very good set if you want a quick and simple game in 1:3000 scale) complete with plumes of black smoke.

There was another SF game, and an attractive 25 mm contest involving Renaissance Poles.

## August

Science Fiction confirmed its relative ascendancy over Fantasy in the TWWS, with the usual back room game and a large one in the main hall involving our editor and using some very interesting model planets. These are made by "Village Green" who advertise in the wargames magazines, and do a lot of interesting models such as Dark Ages forts and a complete 15mm mosque.

World War Two had apparently ended, at least for the time being, and the upsurge of American Civil War prompted by the excellent new "Fire and Fury" rules was confirmed by two games; one was a practice session for those who did not know them but wanted to play in the large one-day game being organised by Dennis Redhead, the other "Hayseed Landing" organised by Russell Hanson, a very attractive looking game with an ironclad operating on a Western River in addition to the fighting on the land.

Gabriel Copus and Dennis Redhead fought out a challenge game in the Seven Years War period (for which Dennis has millions of 25mm figures), using the rules of the old Crowborough wargames club. They were using the new river pieces owned by the club, and with masses of well painted figures the whole looked very good.

Another pretty game was a Renaissance one to WRG rules, fought out between Graham charges beautiful English Civil War period Scots and the early 17th Century French army of Clive McLeod.

Announcements included the glorious story of the TWWS National Convention Team - Clive, Mark Summers and George Gush. All had been knocked out in the preliminary round in July (Clive after winning his first game) ! The applause was deafening ! It appears the Nationals will be in London again in 1993, so surely we could get together a full team this time ? Perhaps even of competent players ??

## October

This meeting was one of our six-monthly Bring and Buys which seem to have been a successful innovation. There was a quite lively trade going on - I think many, including myself, managed to spend everything they had made at the same sale!

Games included a large 1/76th World War II Russian Front one to the Gush rules, with the Russians limited to their starting sectors and forced to continue advancing in order to simulate rather rigid planning and control, while the weaker Germans were given full flexibility. This seemed to work quite well and resulted in a draw. There was a large 15mm Napoleonic game with very attractive Rus-

sian and Austrian armies fighting the French, rather like Austerlitz. This was to the WRG rules.

There were a lot of very nice Roman type figures in a large 25mm Ancient game run but the Shermans, and the Gall also saw two SF games,, one of them a playtest for new "Dirtside" rules for 1:300 surface combat, using a neat system of drawing chits for damage. (Andrew Finch, who is a hot contender for the Clubs Unluckiest Wargamer Trophy, needless to say drew the one chit that caused his giant impulse cannon to blow up as soon as it tried to fire (1)(2)!)

In the back room, Russell Hansons new Confederate army took on Paul Cuthbert in a 15mm Ameri-



can Civil War battle to the "Fire and Fury" rules that have reinvigorated this period in our club. There was also the usual large Junior game of, in this case, Wargs versus Orcs, to Fantasy Battle rules, plus a Space Marines game.

Most enterprising were the junior who bought some figures etc. at the sale and set up an instant game with them, using club terrain !

(1) In fact the reading of the chit was wrong - it should have meant the obliteration of the target we heard afterwards.

(2) The unluckiest wargamer trophy of course went to Graham for managing to obliterate his army in a Tuesday game without actually being attacked by his opponents!

### Random Musings provoked by visiting "Colours 92" and "Euromilitaire"

As usual a small contingent of TWWS members was at the "Colours" meeting in Reading. Thugs widely advertised show must be one of the best in the country, and certainly the best if you want to buy anything connected with wargames. It always surprises me how few, relatively, of our members go to it. We ought to be able to finance a minibus trip!

Those few made up in reckless expenditure what they lacked in numbers: if everyone was like Malcolm, Clive, George and Dennis in this respect, there wouldn't be a recession (a balance of payments problem, perhaps).

Talking of recession, as wargames traders like others endlessly do, it often strikes me that some people carry their own recession round about with them, so to speak. For example, the traders who always have many boxes of unpainted figures to sell but don't put a price on them...and why not take the trouble to sort them into periods, so that, for example, all Napoleonic are in one box? If there is no price, how do customers know if it is worth looking through them? And if they aren't sorted, who can take the time looking through, especially at a large show where there is always a bit of a crush at the trade stands? and how does a trader expect to sell second-hand books that have no price marked in them? I came across several examples, and one can't keep asking about one volume after another.

I did discover in conversation with the maker of the Revo flag sheets, the reason for their failure to name the flags on the sheet, which always maddens me - you have to find their list and check the number of the sheet on that, and the list is not only too small for an elderly person like myself to read, but usually the one you have is out of date and hasn't got the sheet of flags you just bought on it. However, in this case it was tax that was the cause, there would have been tax on a sheet with words on it that was escaped by one without, or so he says.

I also joined in a discussion between a wargamer and the chap who distributes "Old Glory" figures in this country; they are excellent American 15mms, but you can only buy them in a box of 100, and we were regretting this. In my case (and I should think many others) I have a large ACW army already, and am only interested in adding odd figures and units, I don't want hundreds. Thus I was buying from others at the show, but not from him. He had a valid point in that bulk sale allowed them to keep their prices low (and they are), but also said "Well, my customers tell me they like it this way". It didn't seem to occur to him that people who didn't like it weren't going to be among his customers, which was exactly our point.

Clive McLeod, as usual, was playing in the large (10 class) wargames competition they always hold at "Colours". The main disadvantage of this competition is that the rules are mostly Newbury ones that aren't all that widely used, but this year there was a "Fire and Fury" class we ought to be able to find some entrants for. Clive did less well than usual, finishing fourth in the Renaissance period, and out of the money, mainly as a result of the terrain. This (and my own experience in the Convention) set me off wondering about wargames competition terrain. Why do organisers always fill the middle of the battle with almost impassable obstacles, which usually make a decisive game in the short time available impossible, tend to favour some armies over others, and create situations in which most historical commanders would have been careful to avoid fighting? It's a very old habit - I remember one of our early members, Alex Marcoff, winning the Napoleonic class in the Nationals many, many years ago, by entering an Austrian army made up almost entirely of rifle-armed Tyrolean Jaeger. The terrain was reasonably like the Tyrol - wild impassable high ground right across the centre - and opponents with normal, balanced armies had no chance. It was worse than usual at Reading this year; one poor chap with eighteen elephants had to fight on a battlefield where the objective was a steep hill, en-

tirely surrounded by streams and thick woods; Clives final game was on one that was blocked on each side by crags, thick woods and rough ground, leaving about a foot of frontage in the centre where the main troops of both armies (pike men and heavy cavalry) could sensibly move or fight! In one game, both sides gave up as they saw no possibility of getting at each other at all! (The points effect of this probably lost Clive third place.) WHY DO THEY DO IT???

I sat outside to eat my lunch at "Colours" and was able to watch a re-enactment display. These seem to have got odder over the years, and in this case a horde of ill-disciplined dark ages, mediaeval and similar persons attacked a unit of English Civil War pike men, who very properly (but not very convincingly) slaughtered them!

I have just returned from "Euromilitaire" and was again surprised that so few of our members go to this very big show, which is well publicised, and pretty accessible to us, being in the Lees Cliff hall at Folkestone, a very nice site with balconies overlooking the sea, a cafe, bar and so on. There were re-enactors here too, but they were rather more imposing; the "Garde Imperiale" not only looked impressive, but caused quite a stir among the general

public, and the seagulls, by firing salutes from no less than four full-size and very authentic Napoleonic cannon drawn up on the promenade and manned by their splendidly uniformed artilleurs, while a corps of pipes and drums performed Scottish marches on one of the balconies. The show itself is rather overcrowded but very lively and colourful - a Scots friend of mine down from Glasgow for the day said it reminded him of the war-games convention years ago, and I know what he meant. It is orientated towards the military modelling side of the hobby, and the competitions really need seeing - there are the finest examples of the modellers art you can see anywhere. This year I was particularly impressed with an exhibition of flats, beautifully painted by Michael Taylor, and depicting the Ottoman Turks of the 16th Century. I dont usually like flats, but these were like beautiful oriental miniature paintings. Wargamers can find lost of interesting things too; it is an excellent place to pick up odds and ends, particularly in the area of painting equipment and tools; I even bought a regiment of very well, painted Minifigs 25mm Napoleonic British Guardsmen for 20p each! Go in 1993 - you wont regret it.

---

## WARFARE IN THE AGE OF REASON or THE EDUCATION OF A 16TH CENTURY GENERAL

George Gush

I once won my period in the National Wargames Convention. Unfortunately, this was in September 1848 or thereabouts, and the fact that I was using my own Renaissance rules led to cries of "All right for some!" and so on. I resolved in future to enter, if at all, for other periods.

Thus it was that, in 1992, with the Convention nice and accessible, in London, I found myself leading an 18th Century army and playing to the WRG 1680-1840 rules. I never play 18th Century, especially in 15mm, I didnt write the rules and had only used them for Napoleonic games. This time, my final victory would demonstrate sheer military genius, perhaps supported by that strength of character and emotional sang-froid for which I am justly noted.

I decided to use a British Seven Years War army for sound tactical reasons: being mostly high-quality troops it would mean I didnt have to buy as many figures as I would have done for one of the "rub-bish" armies, such as Turks. The figures I did need I could mostly get from Warrior, whose 15mms are only 7p each if you buy a complete army, as I did (be warned, however, that Warrior "18th Century"

gun crews contain mainly 17th Century figures which are not really suitable). The small number of figures required also minimised painting time.

18th Century has the advantage of not being one of the widely played periods, and I hoped that I might thus avoid a preliminary play-off. Alas, it appeared there were two entrants in the period from the Southeast and I was forced to drive to London in July to dispose of the doomed fool who stood in my path to fame and fortune. I would have done so, too, had it not been for two unfortunate circumstances.

First of these was the terrain, picked from a number of possible maps by throwing a die. The one thus selected contained 400 points worth of objectives, all of which were woods or rough ground, into which my powerful cavalry could not go at all, and in which my disciplined regulars would be at a grave disadvantage, whereas my opponents Jacobite Scots irregulars would not even be slowed down.

The second problem was, however, my fault. I had realised that irregular foot could not stand against cavalry, and managed to sweep away part of my opponents army with my horse, but he had hordes of them, and when the rest came sweeping down on my infantry, I had the nagging feeling that there was something I was doing wrong. When crazed clansmen swept away my trained redcoats in a series of Killiecrankie-style routs, I knew I had forgotten something - but what? It came to me later: **YOU SHOULD HAVE FORMED SQUARE**. I checked the rules. Yes, regulars in square enjoyed a plus five advantage over irregulars. I knew there was something. Actually, it would not have been so bad had I met the Scots in Line, when firepower might well have stopped them, but my vague Napoleonic memories caused me to choose a wide column formation, neatly getting the worst of both worlds - little firepower and no advantage in hand-to-hand fighting.

That was that, I thought, and went into exile in France, but on my return, I was astonished to find a note from the organisers stating that I had qualified for the convention as a member of the East Midlands team! Mine not to reason why, so I duly arrived at the Royal Horticultural Hall with my new toolbox full of figures. It had meant a very early start, as we were instructed to sign on at 8 a.m. and I had to drive to Tonbridge and get a train there, but I made it - only to spend the next hour and a quarter standing round doing nothing (motto: ignore anything organisers say).

At least, I thought, I had learned my lesson in the preliminary round and now would be ready to drive all the irregulars who would be hurled against me from the table if not the hall. Alas, I never so much as saw an irregular!

The competition was on a "Swiss Chess" basis. I dont really understand this, but it seems that the winners in the early round play other winners, while losers play losers, so that you dont get knocked out, but are able to play several games however badly you do. Sensible, the organisers had fixed the number at three, so all competitors would have at least one morning or afternoon free to chat, watch demonstration games, look at trade stands and so on.

My first game was against a French Revolutionary army, which is allowed to use Napoleonic-style column tactics, unlike other 18th century armies! I succeeded in charging some of his columns with my cavalry and routing them in fine Napoleonic style, but fell victim to a new problem of my own making. I dont normally play with 15mm figures, and could not get used to the short moves given them by WRG rules; thus I formed my best infantry so far from the main objectives - two low hills in the centre of the table - that even if the enemy hadnt inter-

fered with them (which he did) they wouldnt, in a short convention type game, have arrived in time to do anything. Never mind, next time I would form up as far forward as possible and really get stuck in!

Next time I faced a British Army similar to my own, except that my eight Hanoverian Hussars meant I out-scouted him. Thus he laid out first, and I could see his dispositions were faulty. The mass of his army was on the right, aiming to secure a hill that was the objective on that side, but leaving him very weak along the rest of the line. He didnt threaten the hill on the opposite flank at all, so my horse could get that, and if I could force back his weak centre two woods, also objectives, would fall to me. Victory at last!

I put some horse and one infantry unit to keep his right busy, and concentrated against the weaker part of his army.

At first, things seemed to go well but then I saw an opportunity: the fool had exposed some of his left flank infantry, in line, to a mass downhill charge from my elite cavalry. Any old Napoleonic hand, such as myself, could see the folly of that. In a moment, I had launched the battle winning charge!

Only it wasnt. I had forgotten the several pages of rules amendments issued by the organisers to make the WRG rules suitable for 18th century Warfare. Instead of running away, the enemy lines calmly stood firm and poured a deadly fire into my oncoming horse, who were at first halted and then shattered - a crippling points loss. Elsewhere things went slightly better, but my defeat was confirmed when the single infantry battalion facing the enemy right was overwhelmed. Another case of 25mm fixation - I need never have exposed it there, since with the short 15mm moves, and in a short competition game, his troops could never have gone on to affect the rest of the battle, even had they been totally unopposed.

That completed my first day of competing in the Nationals. Clive rather unkindly suggested that competing wasnt quite the right word to describe what I had been doing, but never mind; as Scarlett O'Hara memorably observed, tomorrow is another day.

On the morrow the 18th Century players had the morning free to wander round, a welcome break. There were a fair number of trade stands and some good demonstrations (as especially attractive one was a "Hornblower" style cutting out expedition into a French harbour, the whole thing fought as a 25mm skirmish with full scale ships and excellent scenery), but considering that the organisers were trying to revitalise the Nationals, which have been in something of a decline, had put in much money and got sponsorship from Osprey books, it was a little disappointing. A bring and buy stall was organised during the weekend as an after-thought,

publicity wasn't outstanding, and the very expensive entrance fee of £5 seemed to have put many people off, since attendance by non-competitors was very thin compared to any of the larger shows. Admittedly, the ticket was valid for both days, but casual visitors would not benefit from that. Let's hope it does better next year.

*(My observation of the Nationals tallies with Georges - I went to have a look and given some moral support to our competitor. Unfortunately the dates clashed with our own Club Sunday meeting, but I actually went to both days, and our meeting, more because I was trying to sell stuff on the bring and buy. This was a real shambles and I actually removed my stuff and sold it direct to someone else in the coffee bar! The traders had to pay a fortune for stands - over a hundred pounds a go - and the gate figures were not good. You could actually go to stands and spend ages without being pushed and shoved - Ed.)*

Finally it was the afternoon, and my last game. The Swiss Chess system ensured that the two worst commanders in the 18th century section were now facing each other. It would be a tough, level fight - who would crack first? My opponent had an Austrian Seven Years war army, which gave him an edge in numbers, me one in quality.

We lined up approximately face-to-face along the stream, which, in the way of competition terrain, lay right across the field of battle between our armies. I had beefed up my right flank and withheld my left,

and was actually successful on both. On my left, I despatched a single cavalry unit to prevent his making a dangerous turning movement, and they actually chased off his cavalry on that flank, though I did not get any points for the objective on that side, a wood, although my horse were between his troops and it, because I had not had a figure actually in contact with it (the cavalry were about half an inch away, whereas one of his now-routed cavalry had touched it). A bit odd, I thought, but it didn't affect the outcome. On the right, my infantry had secured the woods and flanked his line of foot, while my cavalry hovered around trying to look fierce enough to stop his charging - in which they succeeded. Generally I won this game not because he was a worse player, but because he was a pessimistic one who took counsel of his fears.

This was also true on the centre, where it was mainly a firefight; he did not press home attacks that might have been dangerous, withdrew the right of his line when it came under fire from the wood, and withdrew his battery from the centre hill, another objective, when my Highlanders (I had two small units of them) got lucky, charged home and routed a battalion of his foot.

Victory at long last! Flushed with triumph, my 18th century army has now retreated into its winter quarters, but will emerge next campaigning season, when its now experienced commander will doubtless make no mistakes!