

RANK AND FILE

The Newsletter of the Tunbridge Wells Wargames Society
April 2000

EDITORIAL

I have volunteered to take over the editorship of this newsletter for the time being, the previous editor, Huw Griffith, now having his time fully taken up with more vital matters. Our thanks are due to him for the good issues that he produced.

I propose simply to bring out what I can, and wait for contributions to come in. Many thanks to Malcolm, Russell and Andrew who have provided material. Thanks to them I now have a little in hand for the next issue, but after that the appearance of 'Rank and File' will depend on **YOU**, dear reader! The long gap since the last issue may have discouraged contributors, so may I now appeal to all our members. Anything of relevance to wargaming, military models or the club is welcome. If you can produce a historical or modelling article, a battle-report on a recent game, give a report on a meeting you have attended or a set of rules you have used, please do! If you can just let me have a paragraph or so; for instance how you base your figures (or ships – how about it, Andrew?) or the address of an internet site of wargames interest, or brief news of a relevant book, range of figures or TV program, please send it in to one of the addresses below, or hand it to me at a club meeting. Such items, no matter how short, are vital for filling the pages, and no real trouble to do. Relevant quotes, jokes, cartoons and historical anecdotes warmly welcomed. Longer reviews of books, figures, films or whatever, analysis of rules or army lists, general articles about wargames and wargaming – all will not only earn my almost tearful gratitude, but also enable our club to continue having a newsletter. I can and will type things out, so handwritten material is welcome, and we should be able to scan and use maps, drawings and photos. Of course typed material is easier to use, and an e-mail attachment or 3.5 disc with the contribution as a Word document or as text only would be ideal (I should be able to handle WordPerfect documents too).

SUNDAY MEETINGS

December 1999: The AGM: the business part of the meeting was as usual dealt with quickly in good old Soviet style with unanimous votes and minimal discussion, and the 18 members present then got down to the real business of the day – wargaming. Paul Hookway was presiding over a large game in 15mm, to the new Principles of War Napoleonic Rules (how about a comment on them, lads? Ed.) There was a seasonal World War Two game in snow conditions between Philip and Ross and an SF game played in an outer and unheated room – I've heard of the cold of space, but this is ridiculous! There were two naval games: Andrew, Alan and Chris were playing a sort of 'River Plate' scenario with Andrew's very nice 1:3000 ships. When I asked Alan what it was called the gloomy reply was "A debacle", so I gathered he wasn't winning. I meant the rules, of course, and it transpired they are a new set, possibly to be called 'Fire and Flood' or 'Warship'. More news later, no doubt. I always

think a strength of this club is the number of members who produce their own wargames rules, and would like to offer anyone with a short set which has tested well the hospitality of these pages. To be able to produce the occasional set of rules in the magazine would be a definite service to members. The other naval game was of the Russo-Japanese War, run by the Munroes. I usually run a Hordes of the Things fantasy game or games at the AGM, as these need little setting up and play very quickly. Anyway, they are excellent rules. On this occasion a six-player, six-army punch up between Good and Evil ended in favour of Good (as always) so the world has been saved for a few more years! Not the rules, but the army lists for HoTT do tend to favour the Good, the armies of evil being rather over-burdened with feeble Hordes – but then, why not? as Barry Norman would say.

Sunday Meetings (Continued)

January 9th, 2000: 21 present. Half a dozen games, predominantly Second World War. Two in 1:300th scale. One was run by the Munroes and the other by Paul Colebrook, I believe using his own rules. Your editor ran a large 1/76th scale game set in the Normandy bocage, 1944, using his own rules, which were also employed by junior members Philip and Ross, whose game might have been entitled 'Tigers in the Snow'. In contrast to their white cloth the only Science Fiction game, involving Stephen Churchill and Tony Wyatt (I didn't recognise him with his new hairstyle !) employed a black hex cloth to represent space. On the stage, Andrew and Alan seemed to have progressed far beyond mere physical games to an abstract variety – "We are trying to sink subs mentally" was Alan's description. There was also a display of books and models relating to the Spanish Civil War, as an advance taster for the planned Spanish Civil War one-day campaign.

February 6th, 2000: A good attendance of 25, including several old faces not seen for some time, such as Graham Charles. Among the games were a large English Civil War one in 25mm scale, a game in 15mm to Principles of War Napoleonic Rules and a naval game of the Russo-Japanese war using John Hurst's Pre-Dreadnought rules.

March 5th, 2000: This followed the very successful Open Day the week before, which beat previous records of attendance. A vote of thanks was made to our organiser, Alan Butler, for yet another success, and Treasurer Malcolm Dove was so moved as to authorise the purchase of some chocolate biscuits for the meeting (against all normal treasurer attitudes to spending club funds).

There were 19 present, and six largish games were played. The POW Napoleonic Rules were in use again, this time Swedes against French c1813. There were no less than three 1:300th scale games. One was a very colourful Science Fiction game which apparently had orcs in it (I thought they were Fantasy ?). The other two were both Second World War games using 'Spearhead' rules. These are also to be used for a forthcoming one-day campaign set in the Western Desert. Will someone please give us a review of these rules ? Ed.

Another game was a 'training' game for the forthcoming Spanish Civil War one day campaign, to help players learn the new rules being used.

THE CONQUEST OF VERGUENZA

One day Spanish Civil War campaign., Sunday March 19th, 2000.
 Umpire/Organiser's Report by George Gush.

It was perhaps taking rather a risk to run a one-day campaign in a lesser-known period, for which only three club members had any troops, and it was even more of a risk to use a newly-produced set of rules incorporating some new ideas. Despite these problems, for which the organiser is solely responsible, the game worked out fairly well, keeping all participants fully engaged throughout, ensuring the four 8' by 4' tables used all saw more or less continuous battle during the day, and producing a decisive result before the deadline set (this latter unprecedented in a one-day campaign). The basic principles of the rules worked well, though even after modifications resulting from earlier play-testing, casualty rates remained on the high side, something which, along with the restricted number of troops available, contributed to the early decision. They definitely speeded up play, however, again contributing to a quick decision.

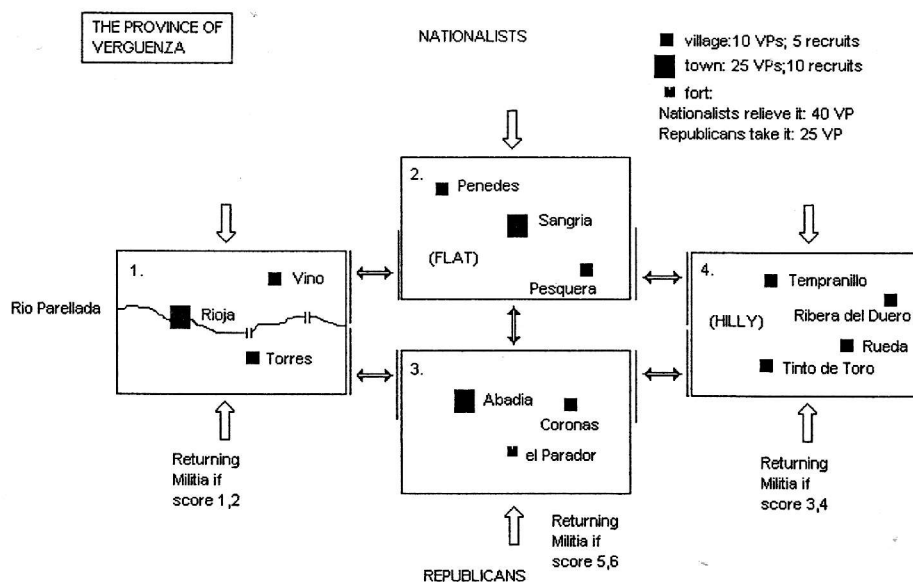
The outcome was a decisive Nationalist win, since they controlled three out of the four tables at the end (see map on next page). The Republicans had succeeded in taking the Nationalist held fortress of 'el Parador' in the heart of Republican territory and had secured the city of Abadia, despite a fierce attack by Moors and the sudden appearance of the Nationalist 'Fifth Column' within the city, but this was not enough.

THE CONQUEST OF VERGUENZA (Continued).

I have to admit the Republican defeat was partly my fault as organiser. The Republicans were outnumbered in infantry figures by about 300 to 220. I tried to make up for this by giving them more and better tanks, and by allowing Republican militia units to appear as new forces when destroyed, like 'horde' in HoTT and DBM rules, but probably did not do enough to redress the balance. On the other hand, I could not have allowed for the 'Ivor Factor'. Ivor Metcalf, who was only present for the morning, threw practically nothing but sixes ! This helped to cause the huge Nationalist advantage in air power (each side had 8 aircraft; needed 5 or 6 to bring one on, but in practice the Nationalists, partly thanks to Ivor, got at least twice the air support) and led to the slaughter of the Republican advance forces on Table 2.

I think that if I had been the Republicans I would have had only Militia on this forward table. Despite their lower fighting value (another weakness of the Republican side), this would have ensured that when overrun they would all re-appear on another table. As it was, a good many of the precious elite International Brigaders were lost to Ivor's dice onslaught, and the campaign rules which allowed recruiting replacements when taking a town or village did not permit the replacement of elite troops. In practice, I had to change from Umpire to Nationalist general in the later stages, owing to a slight shortage of players. Unfortunately, four of those who had put their names down for the game were unable to play.

I look forward to printing (if not believing), the promised reports of the Nationalist Generalissimo, Dennis Redhead, and of the Republican Democratic People's General, Clive McLeod. The latter was almost certainly a Russian in disguise – by the end he had ordered the shooting of practically all his subordinates, though in most cases the Nationalists had already saved him the trouble. In proper historical fashion the other Republicans largely ignored him throughout. Any other personal memoirs would also be gratefully received.



At the start, both sides could deploy limited numbers of troops on their respective edges of tables 1 and 4. On Table 2, the Republicans could lay out troops anywhere from their edge to Sangria, whereas the Nationalists could only do so on their edge; on Table 3 the Nationalist had a limited garrison in 'el Parador' while the Republicans could only place troops on their edge, but had some trenches for the besiegers of 'el Parador'. The Nationalists could also secretly record a "Fifth Column" of one unit in any settlement on any table. The arrows show where table-to-table movement was permitted.

The Nationalists controlled tables 1, 2, and 4 at the end, and had also taken Coronas on Table 3, thus defeating the Republicans by 130 points to 50.

I call for all true lovers of freedom to get painting Republicans, so that this minor setback may be avenged!

PAINTING COMPETITIONS

This page is devoted to painting competitions, which have been flourishing under the new arrangements made by Andrew Finch and Alan Butler. A fresh scheme, which leaves the classes unchanged, but alters the allocation of points and prizes over the year, was put forward by Alan at the AGM and is mentioned later.

CLUB PAINTING COMPETITION LEAGUE RESULTS FOR 1999

Entrant	Points Total
Rod Somerville	66
Andrew Finch	32
Ross Ovendon	29
George Gush	26
Eric Hall	14
Simon Comben	14
Paul Hookway	13
Hugh Munro	7
Ian Foster	6
Malcolm Dove	4
Tony Wyatt	4
Dennis Redhead	2
Stephen Churchill	2
Chris Blackman	1
Clive McLeod	1

All received varying numbers of cash vouchers, to be spent with traders at our Open Day.

The competition entries at the Open Day itself were somewhat up this year, to about 60 entries. This meant hastily manufacturing extra entry numbers, and, as we clearly need some more of these, properly presented, for next year, I would be glad to hear from anyone who can suggest how to obtain something suitable.

In the Open Day results below, the names of TWWS members are in *Italics*. I think we did quite well this year, or perhaps it would be truer to say Rod Somerville did. Congratulations Rod !

RESULTS OF THE OPEN DAY PAINTING COMPETITION, 2000.

Class 1: Wargames unit 1:300 or smaller.

1st: Chris Thompson 2nd: *Hugh Munro (German WW2 Battalion)*

Class 2: Wargames unit, any period, 15mm scale.

1st: Barry Harman 2nd: *Chris Avery (Assyrian army)* 3rd: *George Gush (Early Prussian army)*

Class 3: Wargames Unit pre 1900 AD in 20mm or larger scale.

1st: James Fisher 2nd: Les Birch 3rd: *Rod Somerville (Janissaries)*

Class 4: Wargames Unit 1900 to 1999 in 20mm or larger scale.

1st: *Rod Somerville (NW Frontier cavalry)* 2nd: *George Gush (French Battalion Legere 1940)*
3rd: Andrew Hayhow

Class 5: Wargames Equipment Group any period or scale.

1st: Les Birch 2nd: *Rod Somerville (French WW1 Artillery)* 3rd: Russell Valentine

Class 6: A single military figure of any period or scale.

1st: James Fisher 2nd: *Rod Somerville (Indian Mutiny Elephant)* 3rd: Graham Smith

Class 7: A single military vehicle of any period or scale.

1st: *George Gush (Soviet WW2 Radio wagon)* 2nd: Russell Valentine 3rd: *Chris Avery (halftrack)*

Class 8: Any Science Fiction Entry.

1st: Andrew Hayhow 2nd: *Hugh Munro (Epic Chimeras)* 3rd: *Chris Avery (Daggers)*

Class 9: Any Fantasy Entry.

1st: S.Young 2nd: *George Gush (HoTT Orc Army)* 3rd: Geoff Davis

Class 10: Any military, fantasy or science fiction entry by an entrant under 16.

1st: Stephen Duffy

Class 11: Miscellaneous military entries including dioramas.

1st: *Rod Somerville (Viking and the Church)* 2nd: Barry Harman 3rd: Andrew Hayhow

PAINTING COMPETITIONS (CONTINUED)

Painting Competition League: latest news for 2000:

Alan Butler	37
Rod Somerville	29
Chris Avery	13
Tony Wyatt	12
Andrew Finch	11
Hugh Munro	10
Tim Freeman	9
Dennis Redhead	6
George Gush	6
Eric Hall	5
Philip Morton	5
Steve Churchill	5
Clive McLeod	3
Ross Ovenden	1

Under the new rules, **those voting should put down first, second and third for each class.** I don't think all TWWS members are aware of this, and it strikes me that we shall require new voting papers, as I don't think the current ones have really got enough space. Is this in hand ?

At the end of the year, prizes will be awarded for each class, rather than overall as before, though there will be a small token such as a plaque for the overall top scorer. There will be six prizes in each class, ranging from £15 to £2.50 in Open Day tokens.

What is the effect of this system on people, perhaps not regular entrants, who under the old system wound up with only a point or two, but still got something for their trouble at the end of the day ? Members' comments and statement from the organisers of the ideas behind the new system would be most welcome.

FAVOURITE INTERNET WEB SITES

FROM MALCOLM DOVE

I am sure that many club members have access to the Internet, and have favourite web sites they visit regularly. I thought it might be useful to share them with other members, so if there is something you like, let the editor know and say why.

To start us off here are my current most frequently visited sites

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission site has a superb search engine for relatives lost since 1914 at <http://yard.ccta.gov.uk/cwgc/register.nsf> this gives details of the inscription on the grave or memorial and a brief history of the grave site and directions should you wish to visit it.

German Armed Forces in WW2 on <http://www.uwm.edu/People/jpipes/start.html> is a mine of information which I have only just started to tap but well worth a visit if you are interested in this period.

Warflag <http://www.warflag.com/> this site has pages of flags, which can be downloaded and printed. Of course the final quality depends on how good your printer is, but I have used the flags for 15mm French Dragoons and they look ok.

De Bellis Homepagius or everything you ever wanted to know about DBA, DBM and DBR rules on <http://tetrad.stanford.edu/DBMP2.html#hott> Lots of articles on ancient related sites.

Grandiosity <http://www.erinet.com/bp/website.html> this has lots of links to other wargames sites.

Wargames Forum <http://www.wargames.co.uk/> this has been advertised in WI and MW and has several sections of interest to UK wargamers including a bring and buy section.

Peter Pig <http://www.peterpig.demon.co.uk/> just a trader, but I like them and they have full lists of their ranges plus supporting information. Also they had a stop press announcement of the birth of one of their employees children – bless!

The portal <http://www.wtj.com/portal/> this is an USA site which has lots of interesting links including several sets of free wargames rules.

More of my favourites in later issues, but what do you like?

LESSER KNOWN ARMIES OF WORLD WAR TWO

By George Gush

Older members may recall that I did a series under this title in 'Rank and File' a few years back. Andrew and Alan suggested publishing it as a booklet, which caused me to do some additional research and cover some extra armies, which I shall cover in occasional articles (or constant articles if no-one else contributes anything - you have been warned!).

The first of this occasional series is the Chinese Nationalists (I have found it much harder to get anything on the Chinese Communists of this period, and would be very grateful for reading suggestions, information, or of course an article if someone cares to write one).

CHINESE NATIONALISTS – PART ONE: UNIFORMS AND INFANTRY WEAPONS

General Information

Northern troops were defeated first by the Japanese, in the 1930s, and by World War II only the Southern ones survived. Nationalist policy during World War II was to stay on the defensive, waiting for the Americans to win the Pacific War, so the most likely scenario for a wargame would be a Japanese offensive against numerous but ill-equipped Chinese defenders. An exception would be Northern Burma, where several American equipped Chinese divisions and tank battalions took the offensive against the Japanese.

Uniforms and Personal Equipment

These were far from standardised, the Nationalists being organised very much on a local basis, with local commanders equipping their own men as best they could.

Nationalist Northern troops:

Grey padded cotton uniform. . *Head-dress:* peaked cap similar to British WWI cap, but with smaller crown or a greyish fur cap with peak and two earflaps (normally turned up over the crown) or a kepi on French lines.

Nationalist Southern troops:

Summer: khaki to mid-brown cotton 4-pocket tunic and trousers. Knee-length puttees, usually of darker khaki material, sometimes with a lighter tape 'garter' near the top.. Black boots or black felt slippers, the latter showing white socks (or having a white top ?) and being usually bound on with ribbon or string. Officers might wear brown riding boots, or boots and leather gaiters. Photos show troops in shorts and shirt also; puttees are often shown being worn with the shorts.

Winter: Blue or blue-grey padded cotton two-pocket tunic and trousers, or puttees.

Head-dresses: 'Ski' type cap. Helmets include German type, British/American WWI 'bowler' or French 'Adrian', or Chinese-made helmets which might be of 'sun-helmet' pattern, or similar to Japanese ones. Actual captured Japanese helmets (and other items of equipment) were also worn. In wet or very sunny weather Chinese straw hats could be worn, shaped like a flattened cone about two feet across.

Nationalist 'sun' symbol (see end of article) appeared in white or light grey at the front of caps, on the left-hand side of the German type helmet and the front of the British type. It was also often carried on flags in battle.

Equipment: would not have been standardised, but common items included: brown leather waist-belts and ammunition pouches; canvas bandoliers, and blanket-rolls worn over one shoulder. Rolled blanket or greatcoat could also be worn round top and sides of backpack. Webbing, if not of leather, was usually of light brownish-white canvas. Rice ration might be carried in a cloth tube, tied to the pack or round the neck. Officers or NCOs sometimes carried swords of oriental pattern, and might wear Sam Browne style brown leather belt with a diagonal brace over the right shoulder.

CHINESE NATIONALISTS – PART ONE (Continued)

Nationalist Troops equipped by the Western Allies:

These would normally be serving in Northern Burma. Uniform a mixture of Chinese elements (especially the usual puttees and ski caps) with British tropical dress or American uniform. Also had American steel helmets.

Arm of Service Distinctions

Branch colours, worn on rectangular collar-patches, were: Infantry – red; Cavalry, tanks, and staff – yellow; Artillery – blue; Engineers – white; Transport – black; Medical – green. Troops seem usually to have had a unit badge, in the form of a large white patch, two or three inches square, and bearing Chinese characters, just above the left breast pocket. This sometimes had a coloured edge in branch – of-service colours.

Rank Badges

These were carried on the collar-patches; NCOs had a horizontal blue stripe across the centre of the patch with one to three gold triangles, point up, on it. Officers were similar but with gold bar or bars and triangles; Generals had solid gold patch.

Wargames Troops Available

Lancashire Games make five sets of Chinese Nationalist regular infantry, including an LMG and SMGs but no support weapons (all wear the German helmet and light equipment).

LKM (75 High Rd., North Weald, Essex CM16 6HW) do a large range of Chinese, including support weapons and porters. From the samples I have these are mostly in light equipment, and are available with most of the caps mentioned as well as the British (and perhaps other) helmets. They are fair figures, tending to big-headedness, and, oddly, seem to wear trousers but no puttees. Possibly padded winter dress is intended.

In plastic, Japanese WWII sets would provide figures needing little or no conversion, and British WWI infantry (as made, eg., by HAT Industries) would be suitable for Northerners wearing the peaked cap. Chinese straw hats can be made from a disc of card with one segment cut out. Glue the edges of the missing segment to form a cone, which is then glued on the figure's head.

SMALL ARMS AND INFANTRY SUPPORT WEAPONS**Machine guns and other small arms***Submachineguns:*

Swiss Solothurn SI-100. Carbine-type wooden butt and stock, pierced metal cover for barrel; straight horizontal magazine on left. This was made in China as well as imported.

German WWI MP18; Spanish-made version. Description exactly as for SI-100 above.

Light machine guns:

Madsen. Like a spindly Bren; models of the latter would do.

Finnish (!) M/26; had drum or box magazine.

Czech ZB vz/26 and ZB 30, some imported, some produced in China. Air-cooled, with bipod, similar to Bren but with straight magazine and finned barrel.

Browning Automatic Rifle; (found on many American lead or plastic, and Polish lead figures).

Medium and heavy machine guns:

US Browning .30. Water-cooled, belt-fed, tripod-mounted, smooth water-jacket. (Some lead versions; plastic soldier sets include Vickers guns which could be used).

Czech Kulomet vz/53. Air-cooled (probably French Hotchkiss models would do).

French Hotchkiss. Air-cooled. Several lead and plastic models.

Pistols:

Mauser pistols were carried by all officers.

Mortars

Type 31 60mm mortar. Chinese copy of French 60mm Model 1935 – 'standard' Brandt mortar appearance. Models of the French version or the US M2 60mm mortar (another copy) would be suitable.

82mm Mortar. Also Chinese-made, probably Soviet model.

81mm Mortar. I think probably Brandt type, but don't know for sure.

Anti-Tank Weapons

The Chinese had anti-tank rifles – possibly Russian ones as the Soviets gave considerable support to the Nationalists in the '30s– which they were still using in 1945. At that time they also had 37mm Anti-tank guns, probably the American type (available in plastic, and in lead from Skytrex). Again the Soviet 37, identical to the German one, is a possibility, and they bought some German equipment in the '30s.

Light Anti-Aircraft Weapons

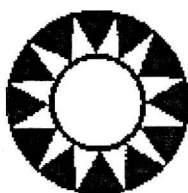
SEMAG 20mm cannon (this later became the Oerlikon, available from Bandera).

2cm Madsen cannon.

German 2cm Flak 30 and 3.7cm Flak 18. Both available in lead from Skytrex etc.

Breda Canon da 20/5 Modello 35 (standard Italian 20mm, available in lead from Raventhorpe, also used as Anti-tank weapon.

A later article or articles will cover heavier weapons, AFVs, aircraft, organisation and available books.



The Kuomintang 'Sun' symbol: light blue and white on aircraft, helmets same but lack the blue background to the 'rays'.

INVITATION

The Ilford Wargames Group invite our club to their 'RAMPAGE' Open Day, which is to be held at the Frenford Youth Club, High Road, Ilford, Essex, on Sunday 25th June from 10am to 5pm.

They welcome ordinary visitors, but also invite us to put on a demonstration or participation wargame. There will be prizes for games – best participation, best demonstration, best terrain and best painted figures.

I cannot put on a game, though I hope to attend, but I have the official form applying to put one on, and will pass it on to anyone who wants to do so.

FEATURES

I hope, in future issues, to continue two features introduced by Huw Griffith, though this depends on public response.

The first is **FOR SALE AND WANTED**, so if you want to acquire or get rid of any wargaming items, or relevant books etc., please take advantage of 'Rank and File'. No charge for members' adverts, so what can you lose?

The second is **ASK AN ANORAK**, which, as Huw pointed out, on the one hand gives a chance for TWWS members to acquire information useful for painting figures, writing, or even interpreting, wargame rules, or obtaining wargames products or services. On the other, in his words, it is a chance to share your useless (but esoteric) information and show how little we all know compared to your great intellect – something highly popular with most wargamers!