



The Grumbler

The Official Newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society



Volume 17 Issue 3

September 2017

Contents

Diary	3
General Notices and Announcements.....	3
Membership Fees.....	3
Open Day Tables.....	3
Second Hand Stall Reminder	4
Military Hobbies Moved.....	4
Sunday Games.....	5
Game Survey.....	5
Tournaments and Events.....	8
Companion 17 Call	8
Lightspeed Episode 8: This little one's not worth the effort.....	9
Annual Tattoo 2017	10
Rimmer's War Diaries.....	21
Bolt Action Battle Report.....	21
Editor's Note	26
Words of Wisdom	26
Articles.....	27
1775 – 1783: The American Revolution.....	27
Technique or Just Plain Lucky	29
Let's Roll the Die!.....	31

Cover image: Grenadier of the Old Guard, by Édouard Detaille

Editorial

Welcome to the September edition of The Grumbler! Many thanks the contributors: Paul Webb, Mike Cook, Lance Holden, Rowland Dickinson, and Sasha Pushkarov.

The current issue presents a variety of topics, beginning from the art of winning (or losing) a battle to the art of miniature painting, calls for a new tournament and results of a past competition, notes on historical uniforms and banners, discussions on dice rolling (and cheating) techniques – all are there, showing the breadth of our hobby. And finally, the game survey results show the impressive range of war game genres we play.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Sergiy, Editor

Submission guidelines:

Items for “The Grumbler” can be e-mailed to: TheGrumblerGNHWS@gmail.com. Files could be of any format supported by the Open Office: plain text (.txt), .doc and .docx, .rtf, .pdf, etc. with embedded or attached pictures. Paper submissions (“hard copies”) can be dropped into “The Grumbler” box in the Society’s Library room. Finally, paper submissions can be posted to the club mail address (see below).

The November issue submission deadline is 31 October. Don’t be stressed if you’ve missed the deadline – there will be more future issues with enough pages for your writing! There will be an additional Christmas issue of the newsletter this year – if you have something in mind, please feel free to submit for this issue before 30 November.

Club address: A. E. Martin Hall (building 36), Penfield Avenue, Edinburgh SA

Mail address: PO Box 1040, Salisbury, SA 5108

Web: <http://www.grouppnorth.club/>

Diary

Gaming nights:

Regular: every Wednesday from 19:00

September: Wed 6, 13, 20 & 27

October: Wed 4, 11, 18 & 25.

November: Wed. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29.

Subject to members' interest: Fridays from 19:00 (must be confirmed with a "key master" from the Club's Committee)

Sat 28/10/2017	Working bees before the Open Day (tentative)
Sun 29/10/2017	Open Day
Sun 19/11/2017	Warrior Kings tournament

Other Clubs:

The Wargamers AU forum provides updates on the current and future wargaming events. Go to <http://www.wargamer.au.com/forum> and scroll down to the Tournaments and Conventions sub-forum. The direct WargamerAU link for the SA 2017 game calendar is:

<http://www.wargamer.au.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=187630>

General Notices and Announcements

Membership Fees

As a reminder your annual subscription is due by 30 September, please see our executives: Rowland, Lance, Mike, or Sasha.

Regards,

Rowland Dickinson (Treasurer)

Open Day Tables

It's time to work out the games for this year's open day. Most of us know how this works, down below I will have an example of the information we need to get this started. Here are a few things to take into account.

Sheets around the tables – for a few years now we have had sheets pinned around the table, this is for two reasons. Firstly it was to be more presentable, secondly it was to store and conceal our bags, boxes and other stuff that are not in use. This keeps them away and safe.

Addition space – when you list that you need a 6'x4' table to play this is the space you will be given. For a lot of games extra space isn't required as all accessories or dice can be on the table. However if you require extra table space for books or accessories then please say so in the notes section and I will contact you about it.

Other requirements – you may have other requirements that could change where you are or how you set up. This is something you can put in the notes section also.

Just about any game is fine, the only thing to keep in mind is that we do want to be able to include the visitors in our game whether by them joining an in-progress game or doing it as a come and try type.

If our have any questions let me know and hope to hear from many of you soon.

Entry template:

GAME: Please tell me know what game you will be playing (rule set).

TABLE: Please tell me what size table your game needs and if you have a preferred colour.

NOTES: Please let me know any other requirements you may have.

My entry (as an example):

GAME: Dystopian Wars

TABLE: 6x4, blue/water

NOTES: Would like access to a power

Cheers,

Adrian Cameron

Second Hand Stall Reminder

There will be a second hand stall at this year's Group North Open Day on Sunday 29 October. The stall raises funds for the club to spend on useful stuff such as scenery and rule books for use by our members. The stall is seeking donations of wargames and roleplaying game items that we can sell.

Over a few Fridays in September and October I will be basing and repairing plenty of scenery for the stall or for use by the club. So far I have plenty of trees and plants to work on. If you have some spare scenery, no matter how shabby, please bring it in and I will have a go at fixing it up for the stall.

Donations can be left with me each Wednesday or Friday. If I'm not at the club, please leave the donations with a club committee member: Lance, Rowland, Mike, Sasha, Shaun, Heinz, or Nic.

If you have full units or boxes of figures, the stall is also doing commission sales. For commissions the club takes 10% of the sale price as our fee, the seller keeps the other 90%. I will provide some forms so that people can fill them out beforehand. Printed forms will be on the attendance sign-in table or can be downloaded from the club website.

Regards,

Ross Dawe

Military Hobbies Moved

In case you have missed the e-mail announcement, Military Hobbies moved to 27 King William Road, Unley.

Cheers,

Sasha Pushkarov (Secretary)

Sunday Games

I have been thinking about whether we should be making more use of the club at the weekend. Having said this, our attempts to use Friday as an alternative to Wednesday have pretty much fizzled out. One thing, at least for me, Wednesday night doesn't do is allow for big games or more complex games which need more than a couple of hours. So I'm floating the idea of having a "Big Game Sunday" once a month at a set time and date. Now everyone is going to go "great idea" but let's be real here. Think about the next three weekends and how many could commit with confidence to game on any of them, seriously.

After all if we are to open on Sunday someone has to open the club etc. and I don't think it is fair on someone to give up their Sunday and no-one turns up! For this reason the Sundays should have pre-arrange and "published" events where the organiser is known to all. We all get busy so the idea would be to publish a list of dates so we can all get them in the diary. This could also be an option for those who'd like to play on Wednesday nights but live too far away or work nights. The Committee could look at appropriate membership type for those who only come on the Sundays. I'd suggest March to November to avoid the hottest weather. Let's hear from members and potential members for their views. Over to you.

Please post your comments on Facebook or email to the club group for others to see: gnhws-members@googlegroups.com

Thanks,

Mike Allen (Vice President)

Game Survey

Every year the club runs a survey of members to see what games are played. This survey helps existing members see the large variety of games and to let new members see what is played. The results are never conclusive, every member has more games they'd like to play than time and the club and not every member responds. This year has shown that Field of Glory and Kings of War are some of the most popular games played in the club, but the list below shows a lot more of the options available.

Games were scored based on the number of replies and the number of times each person played. The responses were lots (4 points), occasionally (2 points) and rarely (1 point). Lots, occasionally or rarely were subjective but based on how often the respondent felt they played the game at the club (we excluded games not played at the club, which means items not all our members games are listed). We had 18 responses.

We also have a good list of games people are interested in, Blood and Plunder is sitting at the top of that pile but there is also Warpath Firefight, Bolt Action, Black Powder, Blucher, Maurice, Warhammer 40K 8th, Rogues Stars, Arena Rex, Kings of War, The Men Who Would be Kings, En Guarde, Age of Sigmar, Dust 1947, Robotech, Massive Darkness, Firestorm Armada, Mordheim, Wings of Glory, Warhammer 9th Age, Warhammer Historical, Dux Bellorum, Of Gods and Mortals, World Aflame, Test of Honour, Relic Knights, Blood Red Skies and Frostgrave.

Lance Holden (President)

Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Post-Apocalypses and Dystopian games

<i>Game genre and title</i>	<i>Club score</i>
Fantasy	59
Kings of War	17
Kingdom Death	14
Guild Ball	10
Song of Blades and Heroes	4
One-Hour Wargames (fantasy)	4
Saga	4
Frostgrave	3
Warhammer Fantasy	1
Mordheim	1
Tail Feathers	1
Sci-Fi	37
X-Wing	10
Infinity	9
Planetfall	4
Warhammer 40K	4
Battletech Alpha Strike	3
Rogue Stars	2
Black Ops (Osprey)	2
Star Wars Destiny	2
Battlefleet Gothic	1
Post-Apocalypses and Dystopia	9
Zombicide	5
Dust 1947	2
Dystopian Wars	2
Total score for Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Post-Apocalypses and Dystopian games	105

Historical games

<i>Game genre and title</i>	<i>Club score</i>
Ancient and Medieval	35
Field of Glory	17
DBA	8
Test of Honour	5
L'Art de la Guerre	3
Lion Rampant	3
Black powder and Colonial	48
Blucher	14
Maurice	8
Lassale	6
The Men Who Would be Kings	4
Sharp Practice	4
Muskets and Tomahawks	3
Black Powder	2
Warhammer Historical English Civil War	2
Republic to Empire - Napoleonic	1
American War of Independence	1
En Garde	1
On to Richmond	1
Command and Colours	1
Modern land warfare	35
Bolt Action 2	15
Flames of War	11
Tanks	6
Russian Civil War	1
Team Yankee	1
Battlegroup	1
Air warfare	10
Wings of Glory	10
Naval warfare	1
Naval Thunder	1
Total score for historical games:	129

Tournaments and Events

Companion 17 Call

Here is a heads up for Companion 17, a Field of Glory Ancients tournament at Group North.

This year there will again be TWO separate round robins, one for each figure standard size and basing used by players:

- 15mm figures based on standard 40mm frontage
- 28mm figures based on standard 60mm frontage

Players are welcome to enter one or both of the round robins. If you do enter, please make it clear which version you are entering.

Both round robins will use armies of 700 points with armies from any of the Field of Glory Ancients lists.

It will run from late August to the end of March next year.

The format is our usual self-organising round robin, but with some minor differences between the 15mm and 28mm versions.

15mm round robin

Each player registers two armies for the competition and plays each other player up to twice. The first time you play someone, you have a choice of the two selected armies. The second time you play, you use your other army choice.

Armies can be from any of the FoG Ancients lists. However, it is suggested that one of the two army choices be from the late Dark Age through the Medieval period, roughly 1050 to 1500 AD.

We have had some early sticks and stones armies used for the last couple of years, so it is time for the tin cans to get a run. However, medieval armies seem to be most fun and interesting when playing each other 'in period'.

Playing area will be the standard 6' x 4'.

Game time is 3 hours maximum.

Tournament placings will be based on your best five game scores, regardless of how many games above five you play.

28mm round robin

Each player registers one army for the competition and plays each other player once. This is different to the 15mm version as players at the club tend to have fewer 28mm army options.

Armies can be from any of the FoG Ancients lists.

Playing area will be the larger table of 8' x 4' or 8' x 5' so there is reasonable room to manoeuvre.

Game time is 3 hours maximum.

Tournament placings will be based on your best set of game scores. Five players: best 3 game scores, six or more players: best 4 game scores.

Entry is free but is limited to Group North members. There are no trophies or prizes, just some bragging rights.

Loan Armies: for those players who want variety, there are loan figures available. Please let me know if you want help with extra figures.

If you are interested in playing in this round robin tournament, please let me know.

Regards,

Ross Dawe

Lightspeed Episode 8: This little one's not worth the effort

By Lance Holden



Lightspeed perpetual trophy.

And may the Schwartz... err... the Force be with you!

On the 12th of August a small fleet of Rebel commanders joined together to fight an action against the Galactic Empire. The Rebels tried valiantly to win, but the overall might of the Imperial forces held together to disband this armed resistance and to continue their reign of terror over the quadrant.

The latest in the Lightspeed competitions, held by Group North since 2013 when it was the first X-Wing event organised in the state, saw the Imperial players win with 9 victories to the Rebel 7. The clear winner of the event and of the Imperial side was Christopher Dunn with four clean victories using his triple TIE-Defenders list. Evan Becker took the top Rebel spot. Both players received a ship blister pack provided by Nerdvana Games. Jake Kroker won the door prize of a voucher to Table Top Warfare. The remaining players received trophies prepared by Jackal Designs.

Imperial			Rebel		
Overall place	Player's name	Victories	Overall place	Player's name	Victories
1	Christopher Dunn	4 wins 743 MP	3	Evan Becker	3 wins 490 MP
2	Shane Higgens	3 wins 652 MP	4	Casper Fertier	2 wins 350 MP
6	Catherine Dunn	1 win 264 MP	5	Daniel Lawrence	1 win 300 MP
7	Jake Kroker	1 win 224 MP	8	Lance Holden	1 win 187 MP

This will be last Lightspeed in the pure Rebel versus Imperial format. From Lightspeed 9 the Scum faction will be allowed to enter and will be distributed between the Imperial and Rebel factions to balance out the forces. The competition will continue to run as a series of dogfights and scenario based missions.

Annual Tattoo 2017

Group North Historical Wargaming Society 2017 Annual General Meeting Painting Tattoo Report

Compiled by Sasha Pushkarov, with individual contributions acknowledged

Dear fellow readers, I am very pleased to compile this joint report on the painting tattoo event that was held in conjunction with the 2017 Annual General Meeting in our club. I use the term joint, because its' not only my reporting (actually the least of it), but also an input from the club members. This will not be a review of whom gained what final competition standing (of which was given in the previous newsletter), but, more on the art concept. Thank you to everyone who wrote a report on their painting; they are now in the records of history for everyone to see. We are still welcoming reports or any painting updates from other participants over the coming issues.

*Painting Tattoo 2017 or
"How I cleaned up by entering twice in everything"*

A Note from Lance Holden, the Painting Tattoo Organizer

This year Painting Tattoo was a change from previous years. Instead of the large number of categories with few entries it was reduced down to being based on display space size. The Army category allowed for 12" square area, Skirmish a 6" square, and there were also Individual and Monster/Vehicle. The space categories allowed the bigger scales to compete against smaller scale armies that could show a bigger range of models in the same space. Except for the Monster category all were populated with lots of models.

Entry by Paul Webb



Paul Webb – Zulu attack on a British Naval Brigade unit

Paul: I submitted a Zulu War vignette with a Zulu attack on a British Naval Brigade unit. The Zulu impi has suffered a few casualties but have managed to partially burn the British supply wagon. The Naval Brigade is however standing firm, and they have some colonial cavalry in support. I originally tried to work out how to represent the effect of the wagon being burnt and after much deliberation I simply set fire to it with a match. Result was a more realistic effect!

Entries by Lance Holden

Lance: I submitted two entries in each of the categories. I spent a lot of time painting and picked only from models that were painted after the last tattoo. I ended up performing very well, taking first place in three categories and lots of seconds and thirds. To ensure our sponsors prizes were shared around I let other places take some of the prizes (I'll keep the result though). I wish to thank Military Hobbies and Table Top Warfare for providing prizes for the tattoo.

My individual entries were an Elf general, the old Tyrion Elf General from Games Workshop.



Lance Holden – Elf Army General

My elf army is a very brightly coloured force, almost at lollypop levels. I wanted the general to also look strong and bright but it needed some darker colours on it to show off the highlights. The horse caparison has various decorations across it, made up constellations and other medieval inspired designs. The elf itself is a lot of non-metallic gold and red offsets with purple cloak for the extra look of royalty. The gold is an okay level, but it works with the cartoon colour scheme. The whole model was about 24 hours worth of work and is a stunning centre piece of my army. It took third place.

My first place individual was the old Games Workshop Ork Kommando model, with a power claw and Grot on his back (Mad-Max master blaster style, though I suspect the Ork doesn't care what the Grot says).



Lance Holden – Ork Kommando

Oddly enough this was a piece added to fill in my entries to each category. It didn't have a lot of work done on it and was a completion of work I started a long time ago. I had finished it off recently to use in a game of Rogue Stars where I wanted a leader for a mercenary fighting unit. It must have appealed to the voters though taking first place.

My Monster entries were a Winged Slasher and Giant for my Kings of War Orc army.



Lance Holden – Winged Slasher (left) and Giant

I had a few choices for this category but decided on these two because they look good and work together. Both are Reaper Bones miniatures, my choice of model for large monsters. The giant wasn't modified, the slasher had lots of reshaping from a Bones Jabberwocky to fit nicely on a 50mm base and to have a rider added. Both took lots of time to paint, I figure if a model is this big it will be looked at a lot on the table and deserves the extra effort. The category was easy to place in, there was only one other entry. The Slasher took the first place, the Giant the second. I really like both but I favour the Slasher. The pose is a bit wonky as the bones material started to sag under the cuts I'd made but I like the look of motion it adds. The rider isn't just perched on the top, he's wrestling to gain control of it back.

The Skirmish category was one that had a lot of good entries. I had two entries in this, my female warband of Hasslefree miniatures (mostly for Song of Blades and Heroes) and Enforcers from Deadzone by Mantic.



*Lance Holden – Female Warband from Song of Blades and Heroes (top)
and Enforcers from Deadzone*

The Enforcers are a simple paint scheme on appearance but it took a few washes and highlights, especially edge highlights, to get the look I wanted. I didn't want overly bright highlights of white everywhere (the GW/Infinity super-bright edge look) and a few highlight colours so it wasn't just a boring sea of grey. They worked out well but didn't take a place. The Hasslefree miniatures were collected and painted because I wanted models in sensible female adventurer attire. Each has her own personality and her own story to paint. They aren't meant to be a cohesive look as models, their differences are what define their strength as a group. Individually each is really good and I was thinking about using some in the individual section. The group as a whole made second place in the Skirmish category.

My final entries were in the Army category. My first entry was my elf army.

The elf army is brightly coloured, I feel elves would have no need for hiding on the battlefield. I also didn't want white or blue elves, so they all got bright greens and oranges and gold highlights. I couldn't fit them all in though, so it was only a representation of most units. I really liked the cavalry (Mantic models), though the troops don't appeal much to me (also Mantic). The treemen units were my first big try at multi-basing and they have worked pretty well. The small treemen were old 1996 Maurauder miniatures filled up with some Reaper bones. The large treemen are a mix of GW Treemen, Reaper Bones and Mantic. The really large one was close to being my entry in the monster category, but with their general in the individual category I still wanted something big to tie the army together. This army won the best army.



Lance Holden – Elf Army

My other entry was all of the birds and mice from Tail Feathers painted up.

They're also a really good job (I spent ages on each bird alone) and made equal 3rd place, but there was some really excellent competition in this category.

I really enjoyed seeing all of the miniatures on display. I think the new category system worked really well and made it easier for a large range of models to compete against each other. It's always appreciated getting recognition for all the hard work spent painting models. I encourage everyone to join in next time.



Lance Holden – Birds and Mice from Tail Feathers

Entry by Ross Dawe

Ross: Here is an article on the figures I entered in the army category of this year's club figure tattoo – the T'ang Chinese Army (the Santa Claus skirmish warband will be covered in my article for the December Grumbler issue).

This army has been a pride and joy in my collection for nearly thirty years. I had been looking for an army completely different to the Romans I had been playing. As luck would have it, I chanced upon a book on an exhibition of Chinese T'ang dynasty art and that decided me. The initial core of the army was painted by my friend Tim Hill and I have added further units over the years. Most of the figures are by Essex Miniatures. Some years later the ancients equivalent of button counters (or rivet counters) decided the figures were incorrect, but I don't care and I'm happy to keep using them!



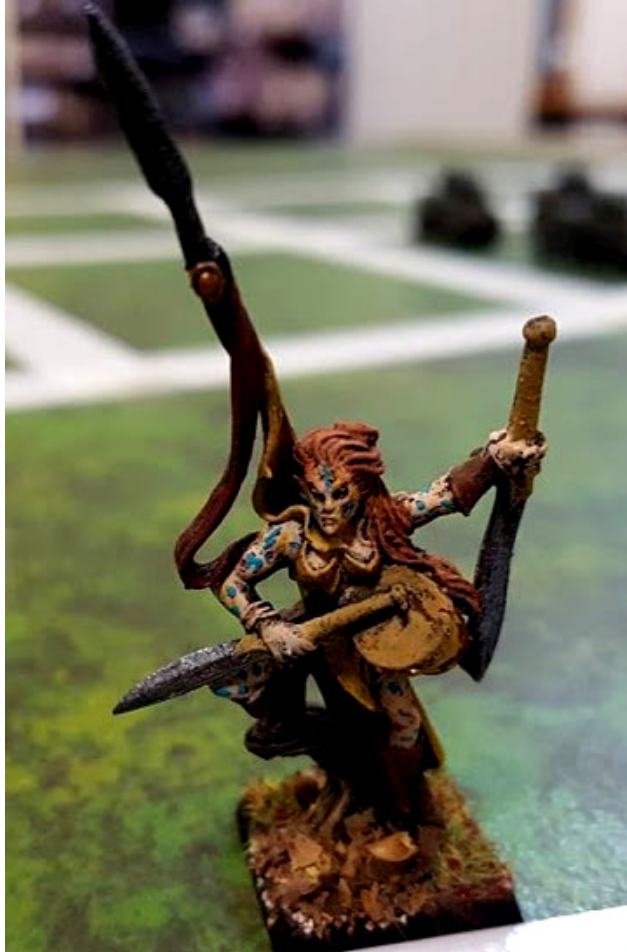
Ross Dawe – T'ang Chinese Army (7th – 10th century AD)

Entry by Sasha Pushkarov

Sasha: Autumn is my favourite season. It is the season of colours, the beautiful season of parade that is authored by nature herself. Being a Wood Elf player, you may mind my artistic digressing, but that was exactly my inspiration. The last drop that filled my mind with plans of how to paint my Wood Elf army, was after a visit to the Mount Lofty botanical gardens during Autumn. I decided, it should be a great paint scheme to create a stunning army... and so I set of to work. This miniature here is just the beginning of the long road of getting my army painted (which will hopefully appear in the next tattoo).

Painting the Wardancer drummer was not much of a problem. It was more of how would I make a base that would tie with the feel of the season? Just putting static grass and/or stones will definitely not do it. I watched a couple of videos online with how people solved this problem for miniatures basing and/or miniature railway dioramas. Some talked about buying pre-made autumn theme basing material. This option is costly, and more importantly, very difficult to get. I have also looked upon websites for the materials that were mentioned, and found that they did not provide an adequate “feel” to the theme I had in mind. Another source talked about buying a miniature leave-form punch from a craft shop, and using either coloured paper or real leaves. Coloured paper will just look synthetic and as for real leaves... good luck in preserving the colour. A third source mentioned an interesting idea of using acorn shells... Now that idea had merit! But, there are no acorns in the vicinity of my neighbourhood. So I had to think of an analogy. Walking my dogs on one day, I looked under my feet, and alas – a

revelation! I could use Norfolk pine scale-like leaves. Plus, I collected some dry tree foliage during my walks, which I thoroughly dried, crushed, and mangled into very tiny pieces. I then mixed these two in a small tin, and upon spraying out on my table surface, I got what I wanted – these looked like dead leaf foliage from late autumn. Mix these with scorched static grass and small stones – and you get an autumn feel base, which is what you see below.



Sasha Pushkarov – Wood Elf Wardancer. The right photo shows tattoo patterns of arms and shoulders; the left photo shows a view from a different angle with drum runes visible

I do have one critical note about the model though. I have tried to make some ritual tattoos on the Wardancer, thinking it would go with the ritualistic feel to the army. Unfortunately, I was wrong. I “overdid” the model with details, and didn’t get the desired effect. In fact, the model only lost from this excess detail. Mental note for this army – don’t overweigh with details, and don’t try to get individual tattoos on each miniature, it just won’t work at this scale. However, I must note, that the talisman runes on the drum (barely seen in the photo), actually did fit with the model.

So it is a matter of choosing very carefully where I put the runes...

My favourite

Sasha: The following miniature unfortunately did not have any responses neither about its author nor on its concept. I however think that the author should have

some story behind this model, as the painting and basing techniques are quite striking.



An Unknown Heroine from an Unknown Painter. The painting and basing techniques are quite striking, and a huge adjustable spanner on the background is especially intriguing... should we make it a mystery contest?

Concluding note

Well there you have it. There were some interesting stories behind these miniatures that involved the techniques used and/or the inspirations behind them. There were, of course, many more entries, and hopefully we'll get reports on them over the coming issues. I hope that as this Grumbler magazine will continue to live and publish people will start to show off more of their work and we will see more interesting and motivational ideas. I hope you enjoyed the read.

Rimmer's War Diaries

"Rimmer's War Diaries are composed so that, for future generations of tabletop commanders, the experiences and insights of successful (and not so successful) commanders can be made available to them. Through such magnanimous generosity of their predecessors, the future commanders can be suitably informed and over-awed by the brilliance of those who have gone before."

Bolt Action Battle Report

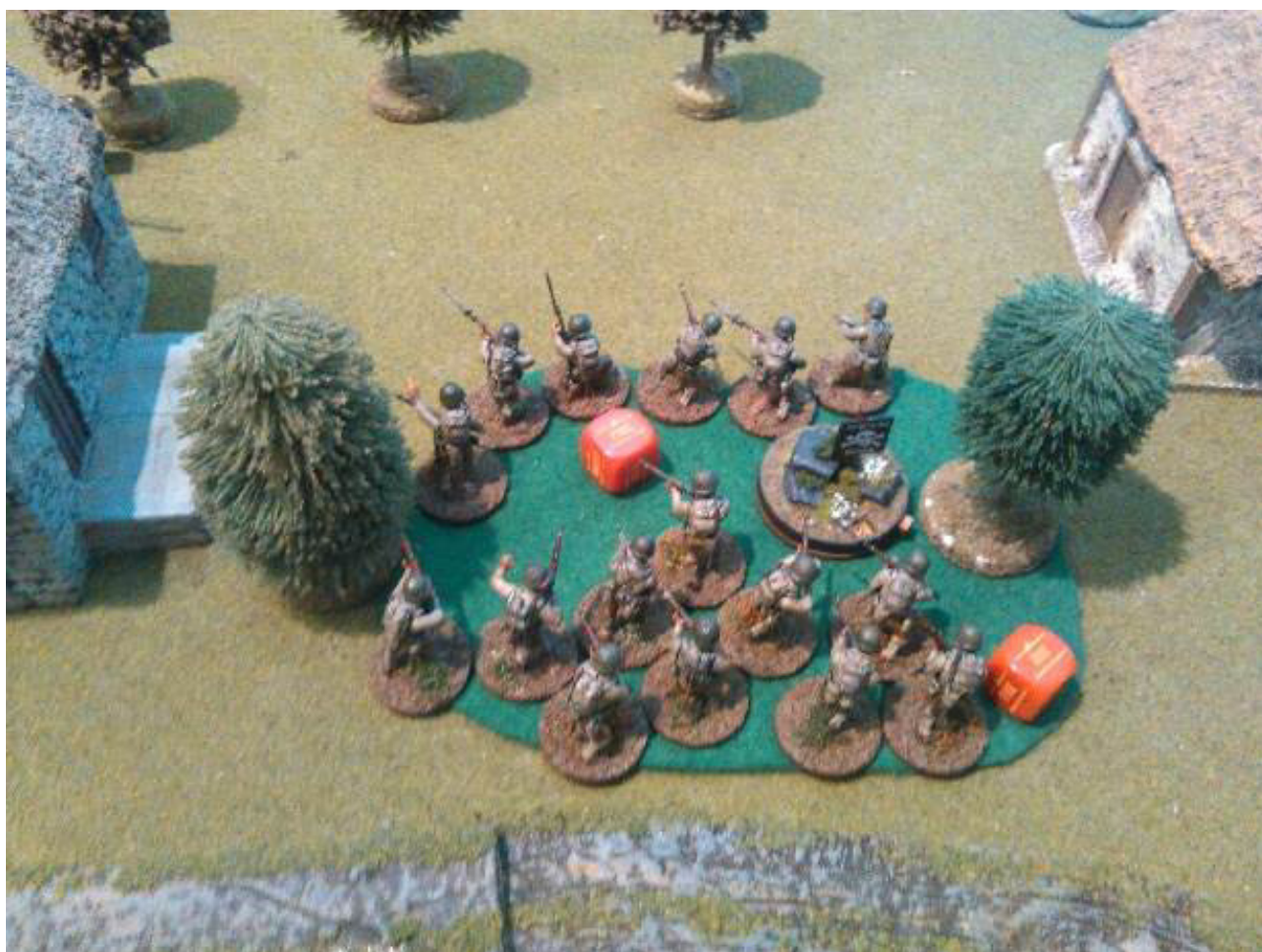
By Paul Webb

The picture below says it all! Three Russian vehicles destroyed and burning fiercely. The British, under Field Marshal Heinz Schroeder Bernard Law Montgomery, are well pleased with their victory over Russian General Alan Schultz Dmitri Grigoryevich Pavlov, supported by his loyal Kommissar Paul Webb Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (also a part-time pianist, composer, painter and decorator).



The picture below says it all!

A lesson learned from this battle is to "know thy enemy"*. Like most war-gamers we tend to concentrate on our own army and get to know its rules, peculiarities etc. Having this information is obviously very important but we should also know the opposition. The battle that took place at Field-Marshal Montgomery's residence (7 July 2017) was a classic example. In the British army there is a special rule called Preparatory Bombardment that the Russkies were not aware of in detail, much to their cost. How one firstly becomes aware of this type of rule and, secondly, how one attempts to mitigate it, we do not know as the wealth of information across numerous armies is sometimes too much to absorb (ever tried playing Lord of the Rings and all those damn good/bad armies and their special rules!). Also, if you are a conspiracy theorist then it could also be a way of you having to purchase copies of the other relevant books/booklets. We do not believe that war-gaming producers/publishers could be so shallow!



*The Russian troops take shelter in the forest
(GIs' masquerading as Russians to make up the numbers)*

* Sun Tzu, The Art of War: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle." – P.W.

Anyway, to the battle. Army ORBATs were:

British: 3 infantry units including 1 veteran, various support weapons, Daimler recce vehicle, firefly tank, Achilles TD, and 6pdr ATG.

Russian: 5 infantry including 2 veteran, 1 med mortar, 1 med machine unit, 1 34/85 tank, 1 half truck, a blind Katyusha, 1 recce vehicle and command unit.

Field Marshal Montgomery initially launched his special rule and ended up, due to exemplary dice rolling, by putting pins on each Russian unit he attacked, together with a few dead guys. It just went downhill from there. In short duration three of the four Russian vehicles were destroyed. Blame on two of the losses was laid at the feet of Kommissar Shostakovich but were vigorously denied by him and blame was therefore laid on lower level Russian Army personnel who, if they survived, were sent on a holiday to Siberia. The rest of the battle was basically the brave Russkies trying to manoeuvre their troops into combat with Perfidious Albion troops while, at the same time, avoiding Brit vehicles. The picture on the previous page shows the Russki troops (GIs' masquerading as Russians to make up the numbers) sheltering in the forest, but just peaking around the corner of the building on the left is the gun-barrel of a Brit tank which is ready to attack. It must also be said that the Brit sniper and spotter in the windmill contributed to the Russki defeat by picking off unit leaders.



It should be mentioned that the Brit victory was only achieved by their pious devotion and by hiding in the church until it was safe to re-emerge

The much vaunted Russki Katyusha failed to match its reputation due to less than spectacular dice rolling as it needed an initial six to commence its action. Next time! Also, one of the Russki veteran units failed to hit as it had been drinking behind the inn opposite the church and when they came out to shoot the Brits they got caught in the open in a drunken stupor. This unit contributed to its own demise as it failed to cause a wound on the Brits after rolling fourteen dice but then received five kills. It should also be mentioned that the Brit victory was only achieved by their pious devotion and by hiding in the church until it was safe to re-emerge.

Another Russki unit kitted out in their winter gear, as they did not have time to change for the battle, were a force to contend with initially but were finally confronted by a Brit force of troops and two vehicles (as below) and the rest is history as they say.

Overall Russkies lost four out of twelve units and the British had no losses. As a Kommissar, Paul Webb Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich was able to save some Russian pride by having General Allan Schultz Dmitry Grigoryevich Pavlov subsequently shot for cowardice under Order № 227 issued on July 28, 1942*.



Another Russki unit kitted out in their winter gear as they did not have time to change for the battle

* Order № 227 was issued by Joseph Stalin who was acting as the People's Commissar of Defence. It is famous for its line "Not one step back!" – P.W.



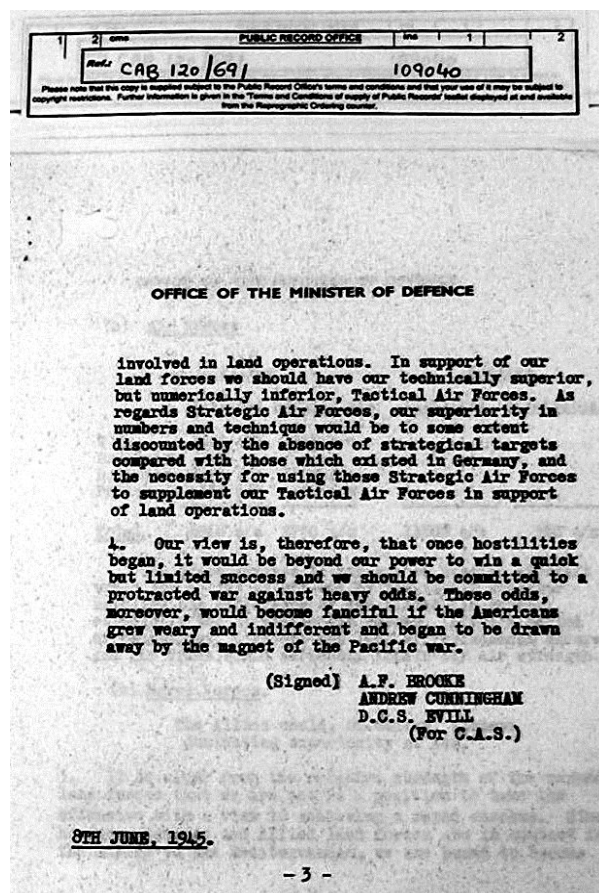
And the rest is history as they say...

Editor's Note

This battle was from the realm of light-hearted fantasy, as neither could the protagonists possibly exist in 1945 nor could the fight possibly happen then.

Say, Dmitri Shostakovich never was an army commissar as he was a volunteer firefighter during the war (on top of being a part-time pianist, full-time composer, and occasional teacher). In 1945 (same as for most of the war) there were neither commissars nor Kommissars in the Red Army but political staff officers without command authority. Finally, British and Soviet troops were allies in 1945 and hence couldn't clash in Central Europe. That's what we all know from history.

However, as a matter of historical fact, in April 1945 the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the Joint Planning Staff to conduct planning for a surprise attack on Soviet troops stationed in Germany (the exercise was properly named Operation Unthinkable). The goal was no less than "to impose upon Russia the will of the United States and British Empire". According to the Churchill's idea, the American, British, Polish and German troops (yes, at least ten ex-Wehrmacht divisions – read on) would attack the Red Army positions near Dresden. The attack was tentatively scheduled on the 1st of July 1945. In a final document dated the 8th of June 1945 the planners concluded their analysis with a rather sobering statement: "Our view is, therefore, that once hostilities began, it would be beyond our power to win a quick but limited success and we should be committed to a protracted war against heavy odds. These odds, moreover, would become fanciful if the Americans grew weary and indifferent and began to be drawn away by the magnet of the Pacific war". By that time the United States already started moving their troops from Europe to the Pacific and was more interested in getting the Red Army on their side against Japan than playing Churchill's war games, so the plan never became a reality.



*The last page of the Chiefs of Staff memo
(Source: British National Archives)*

Words of Wisdom

We spend a great deal of time studying history, which, let's face it, is mostly the history of stupidity.

Stephen Hawking

Articles

1775 – 1783: The American Revolution

Part II: American Riflemen in the Revolution

By Mark Cook, with thanks to Steve Haller

Perhaps some of the more fascinating units raised during the revolution were the American riflemen. Their inclusion in most AWI wargames is both essential and interesting. Imaginative and artistically-inclined wargamers are given nearly full licence; riflemen were seldom identical in appearance with a few exceptions, even within individual companies. The basic uniform consisted of hunting shirts or frocks, slouch hats, hunting pants, or various leggings, shoes or moccasins, knapsacks, canteens, powder horn and rifles with no bayonets. Dress varied widely in colour and the following descriptions of some of the more famous rifle units is only a survey and no attempt at completeness is intended.

CAMPBELL's (Richard) Virginia Rifles numbered 200 men at the Battle of Guilford Court House. A smaller number of his unit fought at the battles of Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs. They most probably wore light coloured hunting dress.

CAMPBELL's (William) Virginia Rifles numbered 400 at the Battle of King's Mountain and with another unit under Campbell numbered nearly 600 in the 1781 Virginia Campaign with General Lafayette. Considering their large numbers, they probably wore a wide variety of browns, buff and white hunting dress.

KACHLEIN's Pennsylvania Rifles, (Berkshire and/or Bucks County Militia) served in the 1776 New York campaign and fought bravely at the Battle of Long Island alongside General Stirling's Brigade. They numbered 150-200 and probably wore civilian dress.

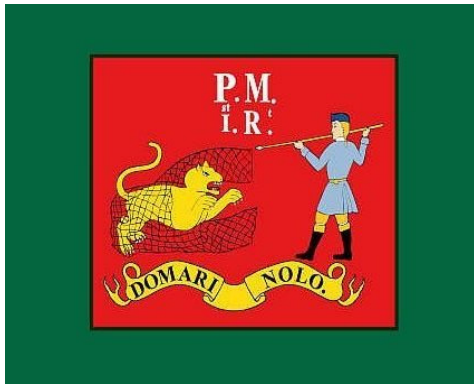
LYNCH's Virginia Rifles, numbered 200 at the Battle of Guilford Court House and a smaller number served under Greene in the southern campaigns till the end of the war in 1783. They were much travelled and much used unit. They wore pale coloured hunting dress.

MILES' Pennsylvania Rifles, were raised for the 1776 campaign in New York along with ATLEE's Pennsylvania Musket Battalion. Miles' unit consisted of two battalions of six 100 man companies each. The 1st Battalion was decimated at the Battle of Long Island and Colonel Miles captured. The remnants of the two rifle battalions were combined with Atlee's shattered musket battalion under Lt. Colonel Brodhead for the remainder of 1776. The riflemen supposedly numbered 500 at this time and many were under Colonel Hand at the Battle of Trenton and Princeton. In 1777 the remainder of this unit were absorbed into the Pennsylvania Line regiments. Their hunting dress was usually dark grey/black or light brown. One might paint one battalion basically black and the other buff/brown.

THOMPSON's Pennsylvania Rifle Battalion of 1775 (later Hand's 1st Pennsylvania Rifle Regiment in 1776) originally consisted of the nine 80 man individual rifle companies which responded to Congress' call for riflemen in 1775. It became the 1st Pennsylvania Rifle Regiment early in 1776 under Colonel Hand and supposedly numbered 600 men. This regiment fought in most of the major engagements in the war in addition to numerous skirmishes (e.g. Canada 1775, NY-NJ 1776, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth and Yorktown). Early in the war their hunting dress was usually light buff often trimmed white or yellowish buff but later they wore darker shades of brown/black. The 1st Pennsylvania was more of a line regiment than a rifle unit by the war's end. It

served most of the war in "Mad Anthony's" Wayne's Pennsylvania Brigade. The flag below was carried for most of the war.

MORGAN's Virginia Rifle, after 1775 they were listed as the 11th Virginia Regiment, but during 1777-1778 the riflemen from several states were formed into this famous rifle corps. This corps numbered 300 at the Battle of Saratoga and 500 in 1778. The Virginians usually wore white hunting dress sometimes trimmed brown. The flag they carried is shown below.



Flags of Thompson's Pennsylvania Rifles (left) and Morgan's Virginia Rifles (right)

RAWLINGS' Rifles, they were a Maryland/Virginia Rifle Battalion during the 1775-76 campaigns and numbered around 250 men. Their hunting dress and round Canadian cap were dark green trimmed with brown fur. This battalion served in the 1776 New York campaign and surrendered with the garrison after the Battle of Fort Mifflin and the unit was not reformed.

Several other rifle units were raised during the war for various lengths of time. One possible solution to the variety of rifle units is to paint several small units in basically buff, brown, black or white. Whenever a very large force is needed, several of these units can be combined together and give your unit that varied and motley look. Riflemen in your rules should have a longer range in shooting and be able to use cover and field craft to an advantage. They should always be in open order/skirmish. Their lack of bayonets will always put them at a disadvantage when going into close combat. Morale of these units should reflect their time in service. A good weapon does not make one a good soldier.

Gun carriage colours in the Revolution

English/Loyalist - Dark bluish grey woodwork with black iron fittings, polished brass barrels.

French - Dark red woodwork with black iron fittings, polished brass barrels

American - captured English guns as above, French supplied guns dark red etc. as above, and homemade gun carriages were often left natural wood with black iron barrels and fittings.

Spanish - Dark red woodwork with black iron fittings, polished brass barrels.

NB. With most countries their ancillary vehicles: limbers, caissons and battery wagons - are painted the gun carriage colour to protect them against the elements. Requisitioned civilian vehicles would be natural wood etc.

Technique or Just Plain Lucky

By Rowland Dickinson

Ever experienced the following:

You're at the playing table and a critical die roll is coming, your opponent reaches for his 'lucky' die.

Your opponent is using an open dicing cup which he shakes it mildly from side to side, looks into it and either places it upside down on the playing table, or carefully slides the dice out onto the playing table.

When you opponent is about to roll dice places each die a certain way up, then he rolls always with exactly the same technique and exactly the same force.

Your opponent uses a dice tower. Before dropping a die he ensures it faces a particular way up and drops it from exactly the same height and into the same place.

For a critical roll, your opponent always taps his die 'for luck'.

My opponent rolled a 6 so the next roll cannot be a 6.

If one is using perfectly balanced die then what happens for one roll does not affect what happens in the next. For a balanced six sided die the chance of rolling any of the numbers is $1/6$ for every roll. So a sequence of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 has the same probability of occurring as a sequence of 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1: exactly $1/46656$.

But over six rolls (before we do the first roll) we would expect to see one 1, one 2, one 3, one 4, one 5 and one 6. This rarely happens but over 6,000 rolls for a balanced die we should get reasonably close to a thousand rolls for each number.

Back to 'Technique'

I am not saying the people who do the things listed above are cheating – in nearly all of them they have noticed over time that if they adopt a certain technique then they will get a certain result. For them the process remains random.

Now let's consider each of the cases.

Lucky Dice

So what is happening when a person pulls out their lucky die which seems to always rolls high? One could reasonably suspect that the die is not balanced but weighted towards the high numbers. Very few of us spend money, time or effort to ensure we have unweighted dice. The other person may not have weighted the die and believes all dice rolls are random. They may have noticed over time that this die had a tendency to roll high and so declared it their lucky die to be used in dire situations. The continued use of such dice is not ethical.

Looking Into the Dice cup

No-one likes dropping the dice out of a dice cup, have a '6' die balanced on top of another die and then the die falls off and becomes a '2'. For our dice cup looker he is most likely checking that all the dice are flat on the bottom. However, as opposite faces of a die add to '7', one cannot but feel that they are checking to see which number is face up and then a quick inversion of the cup with no bouncing should produce the opposite face; for a '1' in the cup, a '6' on the table.

I have played a young player who shook his cup madly, looked inside, shook it again, looked again. Once satisfied with what he saw he carefully slid the dice onto the table. I had a chat with his father who was most indignant I should be so picky with his son.

Perfected Rolling Technique

Professional Craps players learn that if they can duplicate the start conditions perfectly and apply the same technique each and every time then they should get the same result. What they have learnt is a direct consequence of the laws of physics – given the same start conditions and applying the same forces you get the same result – such a system is called ‘deterministic’. Similarly players have learnt that if they set the dice in their palm a certain way they tend to get a particular result. Place the die in your hand with the ‘2’ up roll it thus and you get your ‘6’. I will leave it to you, the reader, to conclude if this is ethical or not.

The Dice Tower - Perfected Dropping Technique

The dice tower is the same as the ‘Perfected Rolling Technique’ except instead of rolling the die, the player always drops the die from the same height, to the same point on the dice tower and with the same number face-up.

Talking about dice towers there is the consistency of getting the dice out of the tray. Consider the player who removes high die from the tray when they are ‘rolled’ but leaves low ones in there; presumably in the hope they will be knocked higher.

The Die Tapper

I will concede that some may have picked this practice up from people they have observed – that tapping a die makes it lucky. Tapping is the least excusable due to ignorance. The die to be manipulated has a hollow in that has Mercury in it. Under normal rolling the Mercury is smeared evenly around the hollow and so does not affect the die roll. When tapped the Mercury goes down towards the face that was on the bottom at the tapping. The die is rolled, the extra weight results in that number being on the bottom and voila, surprise, surprise, the desired number is on top.

Conclusion

This concludes my little missive on die manipulation techniques. So now when you see me wildly shaking my dice cup this way and that and then giving the dice a healthy roll do not comment derisively, I am making sure that indeed (within the limitations of the dice) the roll will be as random as possible; sometime good for me, most often good for you.

P.S. To those who say one can pick up a handful of cheap dice and roll them and the results will be average I say bollocks. Mass produced dice from a factory are all produced the same way hence if one is bad, all are likely to be bad. If they are from different factories then it is no guarantee that the badness will even out plus who rolls dice of different sizes and makes.

Further Reading

Believe it or not, dice rolling technique became a scientific subject, thanks Steve Wold for finding:

Dice Rolls are Not Completely Random, by Ben P. Stein,
<https://www.insidescience.org/news/dice-rolls-are-not-completely-random>

Let's Roll the Die!

By *Sergiy Kravchuk*

On seeing the Rowland's note, I took a challenge designing a procedure which works even with a cheating player and/or biased (weighted) dice. An extra roll which "moderates" biased dice (as well as cheating players) will make chances more uniformly distributed among the possible roll results (a more fair roll).

Before the dicing player rolls his how many dice, the opponent rolls just one "moderating" die. This die is not exposed to the dicing player but remains concealed (say, under a foam cup) until the player rolls all of his dice. Then the "moderating" roll is added to each roll of the dicing player, each sum is divided by 6, the remainder is calculated and 1 is added to it (for those computer-minded, it is $\text{roll} \bmod 6 + 1$).

Since I am not good in mental arithmetic (I suspect I am not alone here), a pre-calculated look-up table might be handy: you find the moderating roll column, the player's roll row, and where they cross – voila – is the number the dicing player should take as the roll result.

Player's roll	Moderating roll					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	3	4	5	6	1	2
2	4	5	6	1	2	3
3	5	6	1	2	3	4
4	6	1	2	3	4	5
5	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	2	3	4	5	6	1

Example:

Player A has to roll three dice aiming high (5+). His opponent player B puts a die in a foam cup, shakes the cup and slaps it bottom up on the table. Since Player B doesn't know the Payer A's roll (he hasn't rolled yet) there is no point in cheating the moderating roll. Player A now has to roll his dice. If the roll is fair, chances of getting at least one winning die are pretty high (approximately 70%), but chances of getting all three winning dice are low (less than 4%). Since Player A doesn't know the moderating roll (it hasn't been revealed yet) there is no point in cheating; however following the old habit he reaches for his "lucky" die and rolls it three times, getting 6, 6, and 5. Player B reveals the moderating roll of 3; the resulting roll of Player A is 4, 4 (instead of 6), and 3 (instead of 5).

Example 2:

Now Player B has to roll three dice aiming high (5+). Player A puts a die in a foam cup, shakes the cup, looks inside, makes sure that 6 is on the top (so the moderating roll would be 1, spoiling any high roll of Player B), and slaps the cup bottom up on the table. Player B casually rolls his dice,

getting 2, 3, and 5. Player A reveals the moderating roll of 1; the resulting roll of Player B is 4 (instead of 2), 5 (instead of 3), and 1 (instead of 5).

The only technical condition for the procedure to work is that dice are not extremely biased – that is, there should be *some* realistic chance to roll any of the marked numbers. It can be proven mathematically that the moderated roll is fairer than the original biased roll. Also, if the moderating die is fair, the resulting roll of the other die is fair regardless is it biased or not. And if the rolling dice are fair, the resulting rolls are also fair regardless of the moderating die biases.

A similar procedure can be adopted for other dice; some candidates are pictured below.

It would be interesting to see should the club adopt this technique for tournaments and championships.



D3 (Wikimedia Commons)



*D20 from Egypt, dated II BC – IV AD
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art)*



D34 (Wikimedia Commons)



D4 (Wikimedia Commons)