The Grumbler

The Official Newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society

Volume 18   Issue 1   **March 2018**

Contents

Cover image: 1er Grenadiers a pied, Tambour, Tenue de ville, 1811, by Eugène Bucquoy.

Editorial

Welcome to the new edition of The Grumbler! Many thanks to Mark Cook and Ross Dawe for contributing articles to this issue, Sasha Pushkarov for sharing his notes to Rimmer's War Diaries, and Lance Holden for starting a new Workshop section with an introduction to the art of building papercraft terrain.

Hope you enjoy the read.

Sergiy, Editor

Submission guidelines:

Items for "The Grumbler" can be e-mailed to: TheGrumblerGNHWS@gmail.com. Paper submissions ("hard copies") can be dropped into "The Grumbler" box in the Society's Library room. Please feel free to include pictures, maps, drawings, and photographs – these will be scanned and returned to the owner. Finally, paper submissions can be posted to the club mail address (see below).

The next issue is planned for May 2018 with the submission deadline on 30 April. Don't be stressed if you've missed the deadlines – there will be more future issues with enough pages for your writing!

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Web: http://www.groupnorth.club

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Society

Diary

Gaming nights:

Regular: every Wednesday from 19:00

        March: 7, 14, 21 & 28

        April 4, 11, 18 & 25 (ANZAC Day)

        May 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30

Subject to members' interest: other days must be confirmed with a "key master" from the Club's Committee

Sun 8/04/2018	Big Game Sunday – see the announcements below
Sun 6/05/2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Sun 24/06/2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Wed 27/06/2018	Annual General Meeting
Sun 29/07/2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Sun 9/09/2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Sun 21/10/2018	Big Game Sunday – see the announcement below

General Notices and Announcements

President's Awards

Dear members,

On Wednesday 28 February night I announced several President's Awards to members for their services to the club.

Our first award was for Ross Dawe for the work performed in setting up the second hand stall and preparing/repairing club terrain over that period. His excellent work continues to raise money that can be spent on new terrain or gaming accessories.

The next award went to Adrian Cameron for stepping in to manage the Open Day to ensure it was running smoothly on the day.

The final award went to Andrew Cameron for organising the end of year function dinner.

I'd like to congratulate these members for their services to the club. If you feel someone else has been performing work worthy of the executives attention please feel free to pass on the details to any executive member.

Lance Holden (GNHWS President)

Call for BBQ Volunteers

Before Christmas we ran a trial of running a sausage sizzle style BBQ before our Wednesday and Friday meetings. The purpose of it was to threefold: encourage a social atmosphere in the club, get people to talk to people they might not ordinarily talk to, and to provide something to the early bird arrivals.

People seemed to like it and we have had some enquiries if we are doing the same this year. We would like to but as with everything it needs people willing to set aside some of their time to man the BBQ and clean up afterwards.

Rowland has indicated he is happy continue purchasing food for the BBQ and taking utensils home to be washed so the 'duties' would be:

- Setting up the condiments table and preparation table

- Get the BBQ up and cooking between 5:30pm and 6:00pm
- Man the BBQ until about 7:15pm (or food runs out)
  - Cooking stuff
  - Cutting up onions
  - Collecting monies ($1:00 for one, $1:50 for two)
- From 7:15 pm:
  - Cleaning up
  - Putting away the BBQ
  - Storing unsold food, and
  - Passing the monies on to Rowland (treasurer) or another Committee member if Rowland is not there

We anticipate the cleaning up etc. would be completed by 8:00 pm, so games for the volunteer will start later.

Ideally there would be a roster for this, especially among the repeat customers for the event. Please talk to a committee member if you are interested in helping to keep this activity running.

Lance Holden (GNHWS President)

Figures Wanted/Swap/Sale

Figures wanted:

- One or two 28mm skeletons with crossbows.
- One or two 28mm skeletons with bows.
- One 28mm medieval spearman with large pavise (big shield).

Contact: Ross Dawe at manth@westnet.com.au .

Lord of The Rings Armies for sale

Hi all

Allan Schultz will soon be down-sizing his collection of Lord of The Rings miniatures. He will have figures for sale from the armies as follows: Gondor, Rohan, Arnor, High Elves, Wood Elves, and Dwarves.

These will be sold initially in "bulk" as he does not want to particularly prolong the activity by selling in small/very small lots. However, he may then decide to sell in smaller groupings at a later date.

Allan & Paul Webb will be cataloguing in the next few weeks and then we will send out emails to everyone as the items for sale become available. There may even be a few cases for sale!

If you are interested feel free to approach Allan or Paul at the club or via email with any requests/questions etc. Sales will result in funds being donated to the Club, as per the usual Open Day scenario.

Regards

Paul Webb

Games Workshop Dragon for sale

I have an old Games Workshop metal dragon for sale. The miniature is painted to a very good standard. See Sasha at the club or contact by e-mail at oleksandr.pushkarov@student.adelaide.edu.au

Thank You to Nerdvana Games

Group North Historical Wargames Society would like to say thank you to the support that Nerdvana Games SA has provided to the society over the last few years. The business is being wound up by Darryl. He has sponsored various competitions and Open Days from the club and his support has been valued by us. Nerdvana Games is gone but we still have lots of other supporters around still, including long-time supporter Military Hobbies, local producers Jackel Designs and retailers TableTop Warfare and D'Ambra Computers from our last Open Day.

On behalf of Group North we wish Darryl the best in any future ventures he takes.

Lance Holden (GNHWS President)

Club Events

Big Game Sunday 8 April

On the 8th of April we will have our first "Big Game Sunday" from 10am to 4pm. This day is open to all members and visitors as a "normal" club day. So "big games" are not compulsory!

So far 3 members have offered to put on games: myself, Ross and Sasha. Covering ancients, pike & shotte and WW1 aircraft v Martians!

However … We need your support.

All three of us are providing all that is needed to play the games and no experience is required. We will all repost our outlines for our games in the coming weeks.

So to help us make these days successful please indicate via email gnhws-members@googlegroups.com or Facebook if you intend to come along on the 8th of April as this will really help those organising the games. Ideally each game will have 4+ players.

It's only worth having these days if people want and use them so it is over to you… yep you!

Feel free to ask any questions.

Regards,

Mike Allen

Big Game Sunday 8 April – Wings of Glory WWI

There will be a multiplayer Wings of Glory WWI game I am planning for the 8th April games day. Everyone is very welcome to join into the mayhem.

Though, I must warn the unsuspecting pilot joining - the Martians are here! So basically both sides of the conflict forgot about their differences to fight an onslaught of invading Martian tripods (think War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells).

You as a pilot may side with the human resistance (err… resistance is futile?), or join the ranks of the walking casseroles on three legs (I mean drive one of those).

These alien jar-heads can also do infighting at their wish - all will depend upon the scenario, so it will truly be mayhem! The rules will be provided upon the day, no prior knowledge of the WoG rules necessary. I have a load of lend planes available for people to borrow for the day. So everyone is very welcome, and if you

are completely new to the system, pilot training will take only about 5 minutes, no harder than that.

Hope to see some of you on the day!

Cheers all,

Sasha Pushkarov

Big Game Sunday 8 April – Field Of Glory

Group North will be open for wargaming from 10am to 4pm.

I am running a couple of linked multiplayer games based on the Wars of Alexander's Successors. The games loosely follow the rise and fall of Antigonos One-Eye, who came close to rebuilding Alexander the Great's empire before it completely fragmented.

The games will have two sets of victory conditions, based on winning the battle and also surreptitiously nobbling the forces of rival commanders who are temporarily on the same side!

The games will be using 15mm figures. While figures will be provided for all the players, people are welcome to bring their own. I'm borrowing the basing concept from Kings of War, so the figures will be temporarily based as units for convenience in moving and fighting: contact me for details.

The rules are a simplified version of Field of Glory previously used for games of Agincourt at the 2015 club Open Day. Everything you need will be on one handout sheet. Prior knowledge of the game rules is not needed.

For prospective players with some knowledge of the Field of Glory rules, you will recognise the basic combat mechanics but I am leaving out a lot of the fiddly bits that only occur occasionally in games. I am also using a simplified set of morale rules, with some changes to suit unit behaviour in the Wars of the Successors.

If you want to join in these games for some or all of the day, please contact me at manth@westnet.com.au . This is so I have an idea beforehand for how many commanders and special units to paint and base.

If you are unable to attend the club on Sunday 8 April but still want to try the game, I will be running a practice multiplayer game at the club on Wednesday 4 April.

Regards,

Ross Dawe.

Big Game Sunday 21 October – WWI Game

Group North will be open for wargaming from 10am to 4pm.

I will be organising a multiplayer game marking the centenary of the First World War. This game will be a grand campaign of 1918 played across a number of tables, each representing an important sector of a separate front.

The games will be using 28mm figures. Figures will be provided, but people are welcome to bring their own.

Rules are still being decided. The current front runner is 'Victorian Steel' with Great War modifications.

Please contact me at manth@westnet.com.au if you want to join in these games.

Regards,

Ross Dawe.

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."

Grand Aerial Battle 29 November 2017: After Action Report

Last year, on the 29th of November there was yet another grand aerial action in the skies at Group North Historical Wargaming Society halls – 12 people attended in total, and it was a cluttered space with a huge traffic jam. But in all this confusion, all participants seemed to have a lot of cheer – which is the main objective in the games.

As was stated in my forum posts previously (and through our club e-mail for my club readers), these games are a part of an ongoing "casual" campaign. Casual it means that I am not tying it to any specific dates, theatres and squadrons. Players choose their planes before the game, and depending which side they are fighting for, score victory points to their sides as according to a specific scenario. Also, all pilots vie for becoming aces – the way this works is that when the player fights for either German or Entente side, he scores enemy planes downed results (they are either auto-confirmed or specific rules call for a roll of a D6 to have it confirmed), and gather a tally to their scores. Once they reach 5 enemy downed results, they become an ace, and can pick one ability from the table of ace skills – this continues on for every batch of 5 planes they shot down. However, victories do not transfer between factions, so if you are fighting for German one game and Entente for the next, your scores will be separate. Oh, and yes, if you are downed, you roll a D6, on a result of 3-6, your pilot survives the crash (perhaps by gliding to safety) and keeps his tally, and if you roll a 1-2 the pilot quits the game: either he died, or was seriously wounded (so he is no longer fit to fly), or maybe just cured from his flying bug and joined cavalry instead. Anyway, the players must start freshly new with the "kill tallies" for the side they were just fighting.

The battlefield

We played the game on a map made of 24 sections, the same map featured on the last Open Day. Yes it was the mystery map from the last Grumbler; it is of the town Kolonia on the island of Ponape, or Pohnpei in Micronesia. I took the original from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas, Austin. It has a wealth of maps of all sorts, from operational charts (1:1000000) to tactical pilotage (1:500000) and down to topographic maps (1:100000 – 1:12500), as well as historical stuff, of all parts of the world. Highly recommend. Just Google the collection name or go to:

https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/

So yes, the map we game on has nothing to do with the Eastern or Western Front. However, Ponape was a German colony before the end of WWI, so one can say that it is somewhat related. Interesting why the Germans would be so inclined in bombing their own colony, while the Entente would defend it… I think the world has gone upside down here, that's for sure.
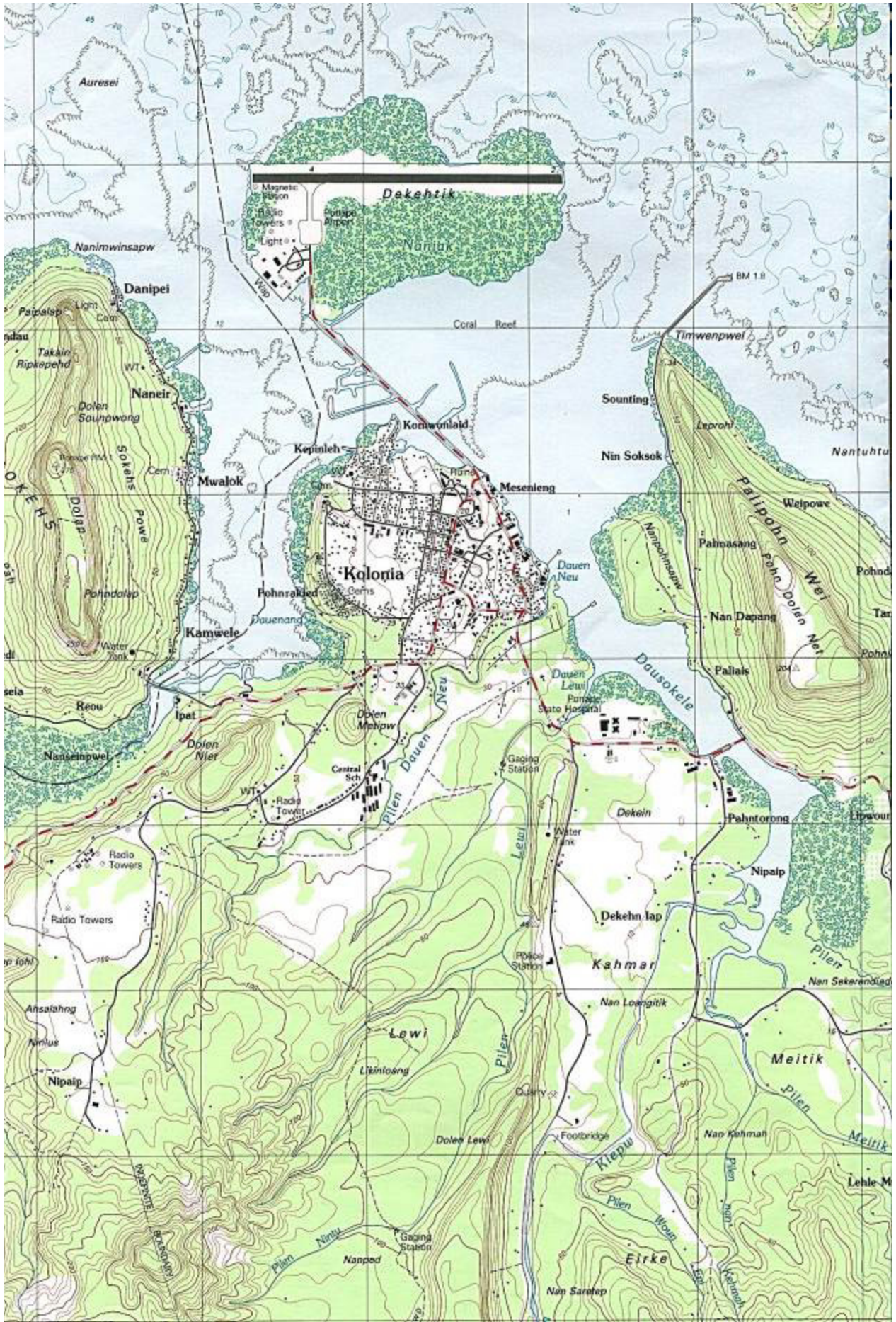
The original map of the area; the grid size is 1 km.
We used the central 8 by 3 part for the game.

Scenario 1 – Balloon busting

That night we had two scenarios played out. The first one was an artillery observation balloon busting. The idea is the same as with the airplane artillery observation[*], just that the Balloon is stationary, and it has unlimited observation range (i.e. across the board). Every time it is shot at, it cannot perform artillery observation. However, when it is not shot at, the designated target is under fire (and must draw a "C" damage card). The target has to lose 12 hit points in total before the Germans call it a day.

The balloon is already taking damage… will the Germans bomb their target in time? The photo was taken somewhere in the middle of the game, while the balloon is still up and had already helped the German artillery bomb the target to 6 points of damage.

We had in total 12 people crowded around one 9 by 6 feet table. Soon the balloon went down – from collective effects of shooting and collisions (cluttered space, so many planes scraping the beautiful work off the surface of the balloon! The Entente really knew how to vandalise private property). After the balloon was finished we had another new player wandering into our game right in the middle, so I immediately recalled my Pfalz (which frankly wasn't doing anything more than just being a nuisance to my comrades) and had the new player's Ufag C.1 take its place, and a jolly dogfight it was then! All players vigorously flew around, shooting at their liking all they could see… it was fun, full or cursing and giggles.

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[*] See The Grumbler vol 17 № 2, July 2017, p. 10

*Someone's poor little Sopwith Camel already out of action on the side lines,
getting repaired (top left corner)*

At some point, when only two German planes against five Entente remained, with the Germans completely failing their mission and getting pretty much wiped out, we decided to call it over for this scenario, and take a 10 minute break (pilots need tea and sandwiches or snacks, you don't fly well on empty stomach from experience).

Bombing mission

The next scenario was supposed to be an airfield raid, however looking at the number of players, we all decided to scrap that scenario and instead go for a simple bombing mission with a slight twist – the German side was taking the bombing initiative and fielding the largest bomber in the game, the Zeppelin-Staaken R.VI.

The *Riesenflugzeug* was really a monster in this game, with 4 machine guns at the rear (and two of them having a 360° field of view) and one in front – it was basically a gunship of the air. However, being such a large and juicy target, it was the primary thing of interest and attracted all of our lead. Alas, this was not enough to stop it from getting to its target and bombing it successfully. The scenario was lost for the Entente this time – yep, there is justice in this world. So the end-game result – lots of airplanes were shot down, with only two remaining for the Entente side, and the bomber attempting to turn around and run.

The Riesenflugzeug *is taking off. "But… how will I learn to fly, Herr Colonel? – The way we do everything in the German army: from the book of instructions!"*

Off everybody went… look at this mess, what fun and mayhem!

The bomber successfully reached the target, now is turning back home for Kransky, pretzels and beer – but will they make it?

In the photo above one can see an interesting approach on the Camel to show that the plane is in flames – one of those tube cleaner rods in red colour and looped around one of the side struts – a simple but effective way of marking out "I am in flames" sort of thing (a grey one would indicate smoke).

At some point we called it a day, the bomber successfully bombed the target, the Entente side nearly completely decimated and the bomber not down yet. The Entente planes flew back home to water their failure down with some whiskey or brandy... just to get revealed to us by the bomber player that he had only one (yes, ONE!) damage point to go before dropping like a rock! That was cheesy, so close of knocking this relentless behemoth out of the sky, but, nevertheless, one does not know of how close it was until after they leave.

So, in short, we had a very noisy and crowded and fun table. We had even, at the end of the game, one of the new players of Wings of Glory asking where he can get planes! What agitation, I see this game slowly gaining popularity. Well, my next aim is maybe having twenty people cluttered around one table – could we ask for a double table? I think there is a good saying on this: "never say never". We see where we will get.

1775 – 1783: The American Revolution, Part IV

By Mark Cook

What Should AWI Wargames Terrain Really Be Like?

Terrain is a vital part of a wargame, but all too often it is a subject on which the minimum of care and thought is lavished. Terrain has a profound effect on warfare but wargamers often have only a vague idea of the nature of the terrain of the geographical area and period of interest. Like many historical subjects it is fairly difficult to find hard facts about the terrain of the past, but at least some of the sites of American War of Independence battles are generally known and identified and can therefore be researched. A study of Revolutionary terrain has the additional advantage of a fairly large number of books and primary sources in English and a war that generated quite a number of battles (even if the battles were relatively small affair) so that quite a lot of information is available.

Changes in Terrain since the 18th Century

The countryside of the twentieth century is fairly familiar to most of us, but what was it like in the late 18th century in American colonies at the time of the Revolutionary War? Any attempts to accurately simulate 18th century terrain must begin with a look at how the landscape has changed in the 250 years.

Woods and Forests

"The woods here are immense, and a European can hardly get an idea of their extent without having seen them. They are marshy, full of underbrush and almost impassable, large trees having fallen down, barring the way... Each soldier must do his best to seek cover behind a tree and advance without command, keeping an eye only on the movements of the whole body of soldiers, to which our regular troops are not accustomed."

Journal of Du Roi the Elder

Since this was written in the 1750's not much had changed in the colonies by the time of the American War of Independence (AWI) in 1775. Woodland fighting was THE method of combat in the Americas. Primeval woods and forests were more common than in the mid-19th century when the Civil War raged across the eastern states. The northern colonies and the Deep Southern colonies had the deepest and most extensive woods with little clearing at this time. In the southern colonies this woodland was sparser but swampy ground more prevalent. The further from major population centres the more "wild" the country was with vast tracts of uncleared and primeval forests interspersed with swampy boggy ground. In populated areas small woods or coppices were much more common and should be present on every battlefield.
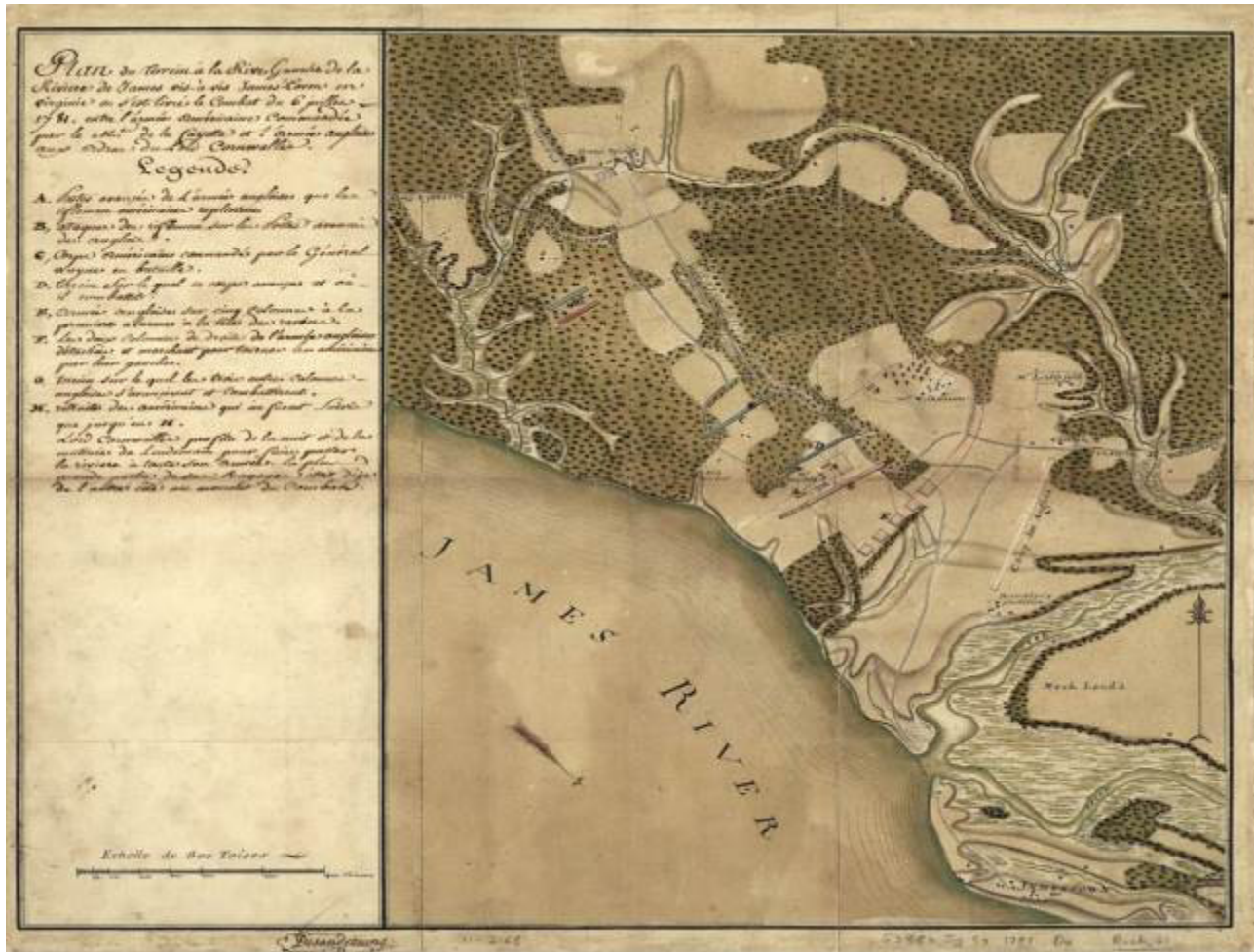
The map of the Battle of Green Spring, Virginia 1781, showing the Patriots in blue and the British in red. A very good example of the pattern of clearing of woods for habitation and crops. Note that it takes place along the roads and at or near farms and villages

Cleared and Uncultivated Land

There was little cleared or uncultivated land in the thirteen colonies in the late 18th century. If this was to be the case it was clustered around the principal cities of the New England states. So there was "Common Ground" for all to use. To have cleared primeval forest took considerable time and labour. So if you cleared it went under the plough or was built on. If the land was not worth clearing it was left in its wooded nature. Swamp and morass were common. These wet places have not been drained and it wasn't till the early 19th century considerable draining of swamps and boggy places took place to increase the amount of arable land. Areas of low land between hills and river banks were wet and boggy places far more than we would think. Many maps and diaries speak of places of wet ground which tactically were places to be avoided.

Villages and Towns

In the more populated New England states; New Jersey, Massachusetts and coastal areas of New York and Connecticut villages occurred every couple of miles. In the less populated parts of the colonies smaller villages occurred due to smaller and more dispersed population. The occurrence of isolated farms was correspondingly higher in these areas. Important road junctions often had taverns or churches or other public buildings placed to service the dispersed population.

We find structures made of stone in the northern colonies where supplies of stone, brick and slate plentiful. This applied to fencing and enclosures and stone walling was common. In the south it was a mainly wood based culture with most structures and fencing made out of local timber.

John Chad's House overlooking the crucial ford at Brandywine, New Jersey.

Chew House garrisoned by the 40th Foot at the battle of Germantown, Pennsylvania

Fields and Enclosures

Of the changes in the American colonies since the 18th century the proliferation of fields and fences is probably the greatest. Then cultivated ground was divided into fields defined by walls or wooden rail fencing. The amount of the total cultivated ground enclosed in fields varied from one part of the colonies to another. In the south where populations were sparser fields were clustered around buildings and a larger unfenced field of rice or cattle grazing land was common.

Walls were almost entirely confined to the vicinity of buildings and those parts of the colonies which have stony soils. In these areas the walls were built as a result of the stones being cleared from the fields and there by providing convenient building materials.

Hedges were not common at this time. The most famous mention of a hedge that I have found affecting the tactical combat in a battle was in the Battle of Monmouth New Jersey 1778, where a large hedge running across the line of advance of the British formed the rally point and defensive line for Patriots forces early in the battle. So it appears that they were rare features. The populated areas in New England had a distinctive "English" look to the landscape and this is what you would expect from a northern hemisphere colony of Great Britain.

A typical "snake rail" fence

Great setting for a "rock and rail" fence

Hills

Hills obviously haven't changed much in the last 250 years, apart from the provision of better roads crossing them (or in extreme cases by the provision of roads where roads did not exist 250 years ago). Hills however (in the sense of individual areas of ground substantially higher that all the surrounding ground) are relatively rare in most coastal states in the U.S. Most of the countryside is rolling ground not hills. Typically you would not be able to see more than 1000 metres in most if not all directions. Not only would any woods or buildings severely restrict your vision but in many parts of the countryside even an obstruction as low as small patch woodland would be a problem. A person moving across this sort of countryside will find that the distance one can see in any direction constantly varies as one climbs slight rises or drops into hollows.

Generally it can be assumed that all these offered a greater obstacle than today. The Santee River in South Carolina, which was the major barrier between the Deep South and the central colonies, was in parts a mile wide and subject to flooding when it rained.

Brandywine Creek, New Jersey.

Major rivers were always crossed by ferries at this time. With no bridges and reliance on ferries this would stop passage over the river till the water receded. Ferry sites on the Santee were fortified and blockhouses set up by the British to regulate the crossings. In the more primitive area fords not bridges crossed the small water features. Bridges, wood mainly not stone, would be found more frequently in the more populated New England areas. But as pointed out even in those areas crossing major rivers was by ferry as Washington did crossing the Delaware to attack Trenton in 1776.

Reflecting Terrain on the Wargames Table

Having decided on what the countryside was generally like one wants to reflect it on the wargames table. When it comes to representing terrain there appears to be three schools of thought. The first puts individual terrain pieces or models on top of a flat, cloth covered or hard board base. The second builds up slopes and the like with books and magazines or similar before spreading a cloth over the top. The last use pre-built terrain, generally in two or three foot sections. For various reasons, (mostly to do with convenience), I prefer the first method. Any details on how to represent terrain therefore assumes this method.

The following list contains the features that I suggest could (or would) be found on an American War of Independence battlefield together with some construction or purchasing ideas. I play with 28mm troops which I have had now for about 3 years, before that I gamed with 15mm figures from about in the mid 70's. Most ideas are appropriate with both scales.

Woods

A veteran wargamer and my mentor in AWI gaming, John Savage, once said that we should see the table top differently in the AWI period. Normally we have an empty table and we add a few terrain pieces to give "some" realism, to which we usually fail. The AWI table top should be (at least mentally) wholly covered with woods and the terrain pieces; fields, farms, streams roads etc. are placed in positon and the trees in taken out.

Hessian Regiment Von Rall marches flanked by dense woods and swampy lowland

South Carolina Action I
Colonel Tarleton leads his Brigade out of some open woodland
towards the Patriot militia in a clearing

If you're going to wargame the AWI having lots of trees in your collection is important. This can be an expensive exercise. To save on model trees use lichen to help expand the forest, and it helps enormously in the look of your miniature forests. Bags of green lichen are a wargamer's best friend in the terrain game! Scattering a few appropriately sized twigs and a few rocks around really does give the impression of forest that's been there for a while and not planted as part of a plantation! Reversing your thinking on how terrain is set out helps create that forest fighting feel. Remember the quote earlier *"The woods here are immense..."* Demand rules that give different density of woods and real line of sight and movement problems.

Fields and Fences

Rail fences are a must in this period, both post and rail and snake rail fences. Fortunately there are a few manufactures that offer these very American terrain pieces. In northern battlefields some stone walls with be needed. Citadel (Warhammer) makes very nice dry stone walling, just carve off the skull glyphs and they paint up and look a treat. Most if not all fields were enclosed. In many battles holding or assaulting fence lines will be one of the main objectives. Those rebels love to line their troops along rail fence for that rested weapon bonus with some light cover bonus thrown in as well!

Hessian Fusiliers advance along a road flanked by post and rail fences

Villages and towns

Villages and towns are unlikely to be actually on the battlefield (unless you are doing the battles like Germantown, Pennsylvania; Trenton, New Jersey or Charlotte, North Carolina etc.) but are likely in the vicinity. A small village or hamlet would have a minimum of about 2 to 4 substantial buildings, with fencing, small outbuildings and close-in kitchen gardens. Larger villages or small

towns would contain 5-10 or more buildings including some large public buildings, church, mills etc. generally following along the roadway with buildings straggling along both sides of the road. Germantown is a classic street battle and offers a different type of the 18th century wargame.

South Carolina Action II
Colonel Tarleton leads his Legion against the Patriots in dense hilly terrain

15mm wargamers are well catered for with buildings etc. but in 28mm the field narrows somewhat. Although there is no specific resin AWI buildings, ACW buildings and accessories are the way to go. 4Ground with their MDF range of American Colonial buildings are to my mind on the large size but nicely pre-painted and distinctive; Perry Miniatures have a small range of plastic ACW buildings of the "build and paint" type with some nice accessories thrown in, and Hovels Ltd have an extensive range of 25mm ACW buildings. They fit in very well and I prefer them. In most cases the 25mm range looks better on the table top with its slightly smaller footprint. Unless skirmish warfare is your taste, the footprints of big buildings on the table top blocks up the table and takes up too much space.

When thinking about farmsteads in this period most tended to be of the subsistence type so they can be quite modest affairs with a main house and one or two outbuildings and a small field or orchard nearby with some fencing.

Hills

Hills are probably the most difficult thing to represent in a wargame due to the fact the countryside does not consist of single hills on a flat plane. In real life vertical changes in terrain come in a number of different types and have a number of different effects.

In "undramatic" terrain one of the main effects of this or rolling ground is on visibility. In most areas there are only very small undulations the main effect of which is to limit visibility. Perhaps this effect can be simulated by providing a large number of "low hills" whose only effect is to prohibit visibility across them.

The next most common feature appears (to me) to be a ridge. Ridges vary between that at Peregrine Ridge at Monmouth, which runs from the edge of the battlefield and across the British approach roads from low lying ground to the south. It is at places 400 feet high steep, and visible from all around, and there are more modest affairs such as Dilworth Hill at Brandywine. I suggest that a ridge should be represented by a continuous line of hills or a specially made long ridge model which may have some or all of the following effects on troops:

a. Gives a view, often excellent, of the ground to the front.

b. May give an advantage in hand to hand combat.

c. Affects movement.

Lastly there is that most unusual feature, the isolated hill or knoll. Since I can't think of that many, Kings Mountain perhaps comes to mind, it is hard to give any descriptions, although I think that they would probably have the effects on a wargame as described for a ridge.

Hills are easily built out of polystyrene or foam rubber painted with two or more coats of acrylic paint to give them the right colour and extra strength. Manufacturers like Flames of War offer single pieces of terrain which although expensive can be used immediately and often.

More beautiful terrain by wargamer John Savage, showing the very realistic effects that can be made from common wargame items

River, Streams and Swamp

Streams, swampy low lying areas are common in the vicinity of the battlefield and may occur on the battlefield itself. Many manufacturers produce streams etc. "Miniature World Maker" is the best. Or you can use stripes of blue felt or coloured glossy card and lay it directly onto the table covering to represent streams and rivers. Place some twigs and rocks and lichen along your model water ways to make them look at home not just a blue line of the table.

Conclusion

The thing that surprised me most on researching battlefields was that battles that I had previously thought to be fought on hills were not. Brandywine is usually portrayed as being fought across a valley. Whilst this is strictly true the gradients are so low that they could not affect combat or movement although they would provide an excellent view across the battlefield. What is more surprising is that the surrounding countryside is much more "hilly" and a battlefield with much steeper gradients, for tactical advantage, could not surely had been found. The terrain of Guilford Court House turns out to be surprising, too. The battle was fought on sloping terrain granted but again it had more a height advantage that a tactical advantage.

Another surprise (for one used to wargames terrain and the modern countryside) was that closer reading of accounts of the battles suggests that most battlefields were largely devoid of rail fences, buildings, and other man-made structures, but the ever-present woods were common to most battlefields. Overall the sites chosen by commanders for fighting seem strangely empty at the point of contact for the combatants, but enclosed by woods, swamps and other natural obstacles closed in. That claustrophobic feeling pervades European accounts of fighting in America. With that in mind, see if you can give your gaming partners a touch of Revolutionary War claustrophobia when setting up your table top.

Suggested Reading:

Brown, R.H. and Cohen, P.E. *Revolution: Mapping the Road to American Independence, 1755-1783.* W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2015

Carrington , H.B. *Battles of the American Revolution 1775-1781.* Promontory Press, New York, 1974

McDowell, B. *The Revolutionary War.* National Geographic Society, Washington, 1967

Spring, M.H. *With Zeal and Bayonets only: the British Army on Campaign in North American 1775-1783.* University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 2008

Words of Wisdom

In the first place, Gentlemen, you are to consider, that a great empire, like a great cake, is most easily diminished at the edges.

Benjamin Franklin

Christmas Wargames

By Ross Dawe

Photos by Ishtar Dawe

Over the past fifteen years Group North members have been bemused by my occasional Christmas themed games. The rules used for these games have depended on the background setting.

Initially I used the Hordes of the Things fantasy rules. The first set of games saw Santa fight off a hostile takeover attempt by the Easter Bunny. The next year Santa was smacked down by the Snow Queen, in an attempt to curb excessive consumerism that was contributing to global warming. This was followed by Mrs. Claus rescuing Santa from Camp Gamma Ray. Santa then had to find a new base of operations. The AR:SE (Akula's Rules: Special Edition) were used for the skirmish battle as Santa defeated Dorothy and the Wicked Witch to take over the Land of Oz. The AR:SE rules work very well for zombie games.

Dorothy then sent in a team of cracked wizards to loot Santa's magic factory, with the game using the Frostgrave rules. Some wizards were successful, others woke up to find themselves chained to a production line.

Most recently Dorothy found a group of people willing to try looting Santa's special vault, in order to find something special to free Oz. This game used the attached bespoke rules, with the characters being mainly 1960s Batman TV villains. They heard the words "loot" and "vault" and couldn't resist the caper.

The Joker, Penguin, Riddler and Catwoman succeeded using teamwork, after their initial foray came perilously close to disaster. A big surprise was henchman Lucky Gomez surviving being 'thrown under the bus' in several deadly encounters. The team had a big surprise when they opened the vault. It broke a sleep spell and released the Hero of Oz: Skippy the Bush Kangaroo. They also freed Skippy's friends Blinky, Croc and others.

This year's Christmas game is already set. It will be a big Kings of War game, as Skippy leads a themed Oz Herd army versus Santa's undead minions.

Finding Christmas Game Figures

I have been asked where I find all those odd figures and scenery for Christmas games. It turns out there is a good selection of figures, but it does take a bit more collection effort than just placing a bulk order with one or two companies. This article is a summary to get prospective Christmas wargamers started.

The Victory Force Miniatures (VFM) 'Storybook Wars' range and Copplestone Castings (now available through North Star Military Figures) will give you a solid start.

Some of my theme figures are now hard to get. Santa with the chain saw is from Excalibur Miniatures in Germany. That company website sets off warnings from my malware scanner, so probably best to leave that one alone. Many of my snowmen came from Team Frog Studios, which sadly is now defunct.

Here we have some examples from different companies.
A snowman with a flamethrower: what could possibly go wrong?

The clear ninja figures I use come from a board game by Mattel called "Batman Begins: Shadow Assault". Twenty ninjas and four differently posed Batmans in the one box, bought on clearance for $5 per box. I wasn't interested in playing the board game. I have been tempted to use all the Batman figures as a Tortured Souls unit in a Kings of War army.

The blue figure in the photo is a Mage Knight figure that I use as Jack Frost. Another Mage Knight figure I use is RoboSanta: he has seen prior use as a decoy against zombies.

The decorative parcels are just painted Hirst Arts plaster blocks. Group North currently has tray loads of these blocks in various shapes available for scenery making. For painting, I suggest coating the block with a watered down PVA glue first, then undercoat as normal.

More cheap Santa minions can be obtained from toy Advent calendars. I have even used the wind up music box these toys came with as the buildings for Santa's sweat shop. When the music stops, the animated hordes attack!

Snow globes can also be a useful scenic item. Small decorated Christmas trees can be found in season at some knick-knack shops, such as Cheap as Chips and

Daiso. Quite a few shiny baubles can be used as scenery, so keep an eye out for useful goodies from the start of November onwards.

The dungeon walls and floors in my Christmas game last year are Mage Knight. I have been buying up these kits on eBay for years. It turns out I could have saved myself a small fortune and used the cheap downloadable paper models now on the market, or some of the robust cardboard plans from various science fiction and fantasy games.

The Batman themed characters from last year's game are from a Heroclix set. Other themed character figure sets from Heroclix or other games would also work well. My figures for Skippy, Blinky, Croc and friends for the next Christmas game come from a fantasy football Kickstarter.

Other potentially useful figures for Christmas games include a selection of Santas and related figures from Wargames Foundry. I have several of their dark elf figures painted to a Christmas theme, and this range also provided my Snow Queen. Heresy Miniatures have a barbarian Boris Santa and a monstrous Santa/Krampus: I have used both in games.

Reaper Miniatures have Christmas figures based on their mascot character Sophie. The 2004 Sophie flying Santa's sleigh is still available for USD$35.49. If you think the price is steep you are a historical wargamer, if you think the price is reasonable you are used to paying the fantasy figure tax.

For fairy tale themed Christmas games, a few of the figures for the Malifaux game can also be suitable with the right paint scheme. My Snow Queen Hordes of the Things army included Mage Knight and Dungeons and Dragons miniatures. My Easter Bunny army included yellow, pink and blue chicks from decoration packs: some of these figures have gone on to become Abyssals in a Kings of War army.

The main trick with finding figures and scenery for Christmas games is simply to keep an eye out for opportunity.

Happy gaming!

2017 Christmas Game Rules

Turn sequence:

- Characters and henchmen move.
- Roll to emplace or escape traps, open locked doors.
- Santa's minions are deployed in an area, or can move from area to area.
- Characters and henchmen may adjust their positions within the area.
- Characters and henchmen conduct shooting and fighting.
- Remaining Santa's minions shoot and fight back.
- Recovery by characters (not henchmen).
- Santa restocks minions, traps are reset.

Movement: Characters and henchmen move from area to adjacent area (e.g. room to room, or corridor to room, or room to corridor) on the overall game board. Placement within an area is not overly important. Adjusting positions within an area during a fight is one or two squares.

Each character has a number of abilities: Fight Skill (FS), Ballistic (shooting) Skill (BS), Toughness (T), hit points (HP), plus skills and equipment.

A character, henchman or Santa minion has one fight attack or shooting attack per turn. It assumed that the model always has a basic melee weapon or can readily improvise one. Only models depicted with missile weapons are allowed to shoot.

Fight skill (FS): roll the given number or higher on d6 to hit.

Ballistic Skill (BS): roll the given number or higher on d6 to hit.

Toughness (T): an opponent successfully fighting or shooting at this model must roll the Toughness value or higher on d6 to cause damage.

Damage is normally 1d6 hit points. Adjustments are noted on the character, henchmen or minion card.

Hit points (HP): the amount of damage the character can take before being KO'd. Characters normally start with 14 HP. Santa's minions may have a variety of hit points.

Skills of note (all characters have at least one of these skills, see their sheet):

- *Escape Artist.* If a character is trapped, they escape on d6 roll of 2+.
- *Plot Armour.* If a character is about to be KO'd, the damage roll is instead reduced so they only have 1 hit point left. Plot Armour does not work if the character had 1 hit point left before the damage roll.

- *Throw Under Bus.* If the character is about to be KO'd, they may substitute an adjacent character or henchman to take the damage instead on a d6 roll of 3+.

Combat sequence:
- Roll d6 versus own FS or BS to hit target.
- If there is a hit, roll d6 versus target's Toughness (T) to see if damage is caused.
- If target damaged is a henchman, they roll 1d6: on 4+ they are fine, on 3 or less they are KO'd.
- If target damaged is a character or any of Santa's helpers, roll d6 for the number of hit points damage.

Emplace or Escape Traps, or Open Locked Doors: character rolls 4+ on d6.

Recovery: If all opponents in area have been defeated in a Fight combat, a character may roll a d6. Only one roll for each character per fight area.
- Roll of 1 to 3: regain 1 HP,
- Roll of 4 to 6: regain 2 HP.

Characters KO'd in that area may make a recovery roll: if they return to positive hit points, they are still in play.

Unusual Abilities or Items:

These example items are based on known usage by sample characters from the 1960s TV shows *Batman* and *The Avengers*.

Fancy Hat: may contain a pop-up mind control ray, or contribute to the character's stylishness in a competitive pose-off between heroes and villains.

Gas Bomb: may be a temporary knock out gas, or produce a smoke cloud to cover an escape from the area.

Hand Buzzer: equivalent to a melee attack but temporarily stuns the target.

Make Up Kit: may allow a surprise shooting attack (close range only) which temporarily stuns the target, or contributes to the character's stylishness.

Umbrella: may be used as a melee weapon (d6 damage), extends reach for grabbing someone to *Throw Under Bus* and also repels water attacks.

Utility Belt: poison antidotes, distractions, climbing gear, anything goes!

Papercraft

By Lance Holden

There are some key elements to a good wargame, the rules, the miniatures and the terrain they fight over. Traditional battles may need a few structures to represent towns, but as games move into crowded science fiction cityscapes, or the table shrinks down to the terrain heavy boards for modern skirmish games the need for lots of terrain increases. Papercraft building models provide an excellent way of making mass produced terrain that is light and cheap to fill up the table.

Wikipedia lists a history of papercraft models appearing in French toy catalogues in 1800 with a peak in interest around WWII when paper was one of the few unregulated items. After the war plastic kits started to eat into the popularity and now it competes with custom painted resin kits from boxes, MDF kits, 3d-printing and the old skill of scratchbuilding. Papercraft models used to come in specific books or attached to magazines (and can still be purchased that way today). Modern technology that enables all of the other terrain options have also improved papercraft models with many models available to download with different skins and options that can be printed at home and cut automatically.

The Inventor's house paper model

Paper models start from simple boxes with sloped roofs up to very complex building sets. I've built papercraft cities, used the textures to decorate large city boards, built cities at 6 mm scale and even built a large sailing vessel over 90 cm

long. There are many designers of papercraft models but my favourite is Dave Graffam. I buy his designs from WargameVault, a source of many excellent kits including Fat Dragon Games models. One of his more interesting designs is the Inventor's House Paper Model, a crazy growth of a building. Below are some of the lessons I've learned when building papercraft models.

Get your supplies. Cardboard, rulers, cutting boards, glue, texta's, scissors and knives; these are the main components needed.

Papercraft Components

The first step that is required is to get it off the computer onto cardboard. The designs can often be scaled for A4 or US letter, you can simply buy cardboard of that size and feed it through your printer. There may be limitations on this, particularly as a 210 gsm is recommended for the cardboard and this can be too thick for most printers. I prefer to use a laser printer over an inkjet as it binds the colour into the paper better. Luckily I have access to some high quality printers at work. Printing services can be used such as OfficeWorks but watch out that they don't adjust the scaling on a per-sheet basis which can make walls out of scale with each other. I buy large poster sized sheets of 250 gsm cardboard. Lincraft or OfficeWorks are good sources but it can be found anywhere. I prefer white cardboard over black but the colour used won't really matter.

Once all the pages are printed I then turn it into a giant jigsaw puzzle to maximise the use of the cardboard and reduce the amount of glue I use. Each cut out paper piece gets glued with glue sticks (I try the more expensive brands in the hope the glue is better than the cheap stuff) and then pressed onto the cardboard. Be sure to glue all around the edge multiple time and around any folding points. Put the paper on the cardboard and press flat carefully with your thumb. If the glue is too thick the paper will be wet and likely to tear. Sometimes you can correct a crease but it's best to make sure you don't make one. Let the glue completely dry before moving on to the next step. Don't worry if the cardboard starts to curve at this point as it'll straighten out later.


Tetris skills are handy

Once dry begin cutting out the components. Regular scissors can do most of this work for you. If you are using a knife make sure it is sharp (and that you have a good cutting board underneath). Paper will tear along the edges with a blunt knife. Kits will have instructions that define where to cut in most cases.

The jigsaw stage

The next step is to score all of the fold lines. Most of the folds will be away from the printed image, some will be towards you though. Each kit will have instructions on what the extra marks they use for folding. I use a ruler and the back of a scalpel knife along the lines to make a small indent along the line. Don't score so deep you cut the cardboard. Once scored use the ruler on the other side as a line to bend the cardboard against. Make sure you get a nice good bend of at least 90°. You'll notice the paper may tear slightly on the bend at this time; this is normal and fixed later.
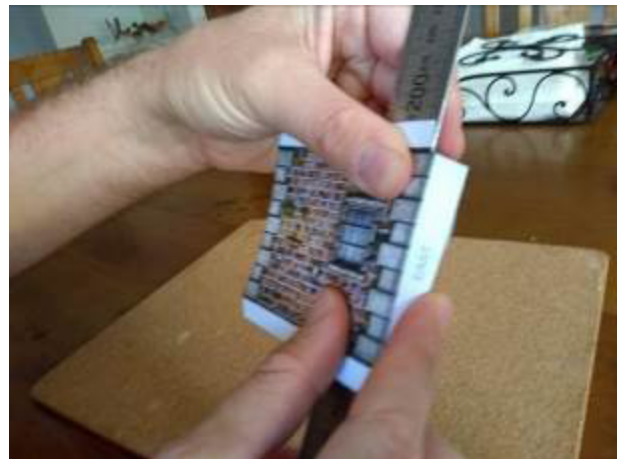
Score and bend

Before you start gluing you should use a black texta to mark the edges of all of the cardboard, where its been cut or bent. Also mark along the edges of the tab where it is going be glued to another. Doing this hides the edges against the colours that have been printed otherwise it is clearly visible as cardboard. The folds should also be darkened or you'll see white at each join. Although you would normally expect the bends to be lighter as they are corners it is better to hide the visible paper (good papercraft designs will often go darker around the bend points to help hide this).

Once done you can now move onto the fun part, gluing! At this point I like to swap to a PVA glue. This ensures it can glue all the way to the cardboard through the paper covering it. Use some spare cardboard to spread the glue evenly over all the tabs, don't just glob it on. Take the time required to ensure the joins are dry before moving on the next one. Follow the instructions to make sure you don't actually hide a part that needs to be glued later.

Blacken edges to remove paper look
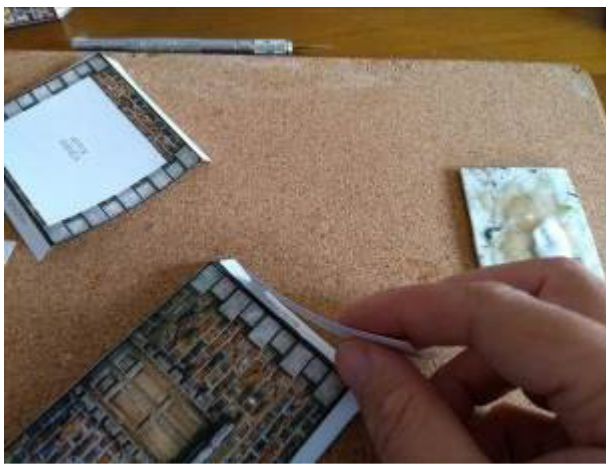
Spread glue evenly

This building had some interesting joins. There ground and first floor have support beams in place. There is a floor and roof which actually makes it harder to attach the roof cleanly. Normally you press from underneath to ensure the roof is attached well but you can't do that with this kit. This is extra hard given all of the other parts attached to the roof. Cardboard is pretty tolerant to bending it into shape when joining two pieces but I still had difficulty lining up the support beams so covered the hidden dots with some texta. I was also deciding between using some thicker poster board for the wooden railings. They add an extra thickness to the model but require a lot more work to join the two halves. In the end I decided the 500 gsm would be thick enough to look good against any model next to it (and most models on bases would be towering over the hand rails anyway).

Remember where things should go

The roof platform is normally folded over cardboard; however the folds also happen to nicely match the width of foamcore board. Putting this inside the board helps make it stronger for putting your miniatures on.
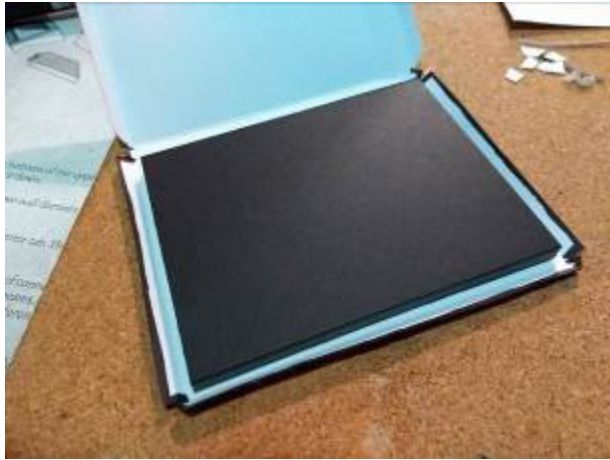
Foamcord board for strength

The project was spread over several days but was probably about 6 hours work total but that was taking its time to build and document. There are simple kits that are done in minutes and if you are using those you can fill out a table easily in a day. Despite individual buildings looking flat, when you put multiple together they create the illusion of looking more textured than they are. Add in the variety of skins most models come with via PDF layers and it is easy to create a varied table.

The finished house

Other work could be done to expand the use of this model. By using a black foam core for the main walls and roof you can actually create a model that you can pull apart and put models inside of. You'll have to account for the differences in thickness of the foam core to the paper when making most joins, or just create the base papercraft box and then slip that over the foam core internal. For even more advanced uses you can create paper to decorate the inside walls. There are even many models that provide tables, chairs or other furniture you can decorate the internal with. You can also use the papercraft skin as a base to add your own decorations onto the outside of a model, try covering all of the wooden beams with brown painted balsa wood for an immediate striking 3d look.

Papercraft models are fun to build. They are simple and effective, light and cheap and infinitely repeatable. I recommend getting some of the free designs most producers have to test it out yourself. They are also really easy to do with children who can manage scissors and glue making a nice bonding exercise within a wargaming family.

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