Military Muddling

Having run my Dietl's Diary Game, I now make time to get out another issue of MilMud. And a very varied read it is too…
Daniel T Shaw

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Events

Friday 25 September Restaurant to be decided CLWG Last Friday dining club : Contact Jim for details

Saturday 26 September : 10am - 11am In Second Life CLWG Virtual Gunboats Battle - contact Dave

Friday 9 October 2009 Pre-Conference Dinner and discussion session : 7.30pm onwards Tonight's theme : Wargaming - What is it Good For? Pub: The Shipwright's Arms, Tooley Street SE1

Saturday 10 / Sunday 11 October 2009 NOTE: 2nd Weekend in October

 PET, London Bridge Annual CLWG WARGAME DESIGN CONFERENCE : See Inside for Details

Saturday 17 October 11:00-18:00 t.b.d Universe Day - SF gaming and conversation - Contact Jim

Friday 30 October Restaurant to be decided CLWG Last Friday dining club : Contact Jim

Saturday 31 October : 10am - 11am In Second Life CLWG Virtual Gunboats Battle - contact Dave

See also http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/clwg/   and   http://www.chestnutlodge.org.uk/

Orange or Lemon Onside Report by James Kemp

As advertised in the last issue of Milmud I ran my game about the politics of the 'Glorious' Revolution in Scotland. On the day there were seven players, although I sort of co-opted Trevor as a part time umpire because of the way things turned out.

Arthur Harman - Duke of Hamilton

Andrew Hadley - Archibald Campbell (attainted Earl of Argyll) Nick Luft - Earl of Tweedale Trevor - Duke of Gordon Jim Wallman - Viscount Dundee Dave Boundy - Earl of Balcarres Jonathan Pickles - Marquis of Atholl

The game started with the first session of the Convention, which turned out not to be a convention after all. Earl Balcarres, the King's Civil Commissioner, arguing successfully that as the King hadn't called the meeting that it couldn't be a Convention. After some to-ing and fro-ing the Presidency of the meeting devolved onto the Duke of Hamilton.

On the second day of the meeting a loyal mob formed outside the Convention building. This was in part inspired by Balcarres doing some rabble rousing, something which the Williamites didn't do in the game but which was a significant effect historically.

Inside the Williamites started to get the upper hand in the debating and managed to swing a vote declaring the meeting as a proper Convention.

This prompted Balcarres to walk out and continue winding up the crowd about the traitors within. Tweedale came out and tried to reason with them and reassure the crowd that there was nothing untoward going on, distributing some alms for good measure. This had some limited success, but was outweighed with Balcarres continuing harangue.

Dundee called his troop of cavalry up to guard the Convention building to ensure that it was secure. This worried some of the Williamites inside who called for the Castle garrison to come to their aid.

Unfortunately Dundee (as Second in Command of the Army) also gave orders to the garrison who turned up to obey those.

When it became clear that the Williamites were in the ascendant Dundee secured the building and refused to let any of the members of the Convention out until they had reaffirmed their oath of allegiance to King James. For most this was enough to make them want to leave by midnight. Only a hard core of Williamite supporters were left, protesting that this action was unlawful and that they were loyal and had no need to make a further oath.

We ended the game there, no doubt for the Williamites to protest from the cells in Edinburgh Castle. I'm not sure whether or not this ending would have resulted in separate Kings in Scotland and England again or whether it would just have meant a longer and more drawn out military campaign before the inevitable re-unification. I'm also not sure whether retaining the machinery of government in Scotland would have provided enough resources to tip the balance in Ireland for King James, I sort of suspect not, but it might be worth gaming some other time.

On the whole the game was mostly plausible, although the briefings didn't give players quite enough room to work out what they could do and where there was room for compromise. This was especially important for the two 'extremist' characters (Dundee and Argyll).

In particular the briefings need to accomplish the following:

- give the Loyalist players a reason for being at the Convention, as historically they did attend and participated actively initially;

- provide more ideas for the Williamites on how they can effect the change required to recognise their man as King;

- provide rules of engagement that stop the military players from just arresting anyone who openly speaks of replacing King James;

- set the scene better so those not conversant with Scottish politics in the period understand it enough to engage - the situation they are in is not unprecedented - Mary, Queen of Scots was replaced because she was a Catholic about a century earlier.

- give an indication of religion and how bothered/tolerant each character is willing to be about that;

- give each character some specific things that can be used as bargaining points with other players to meet their objectives;

I've got a pretty good idea on how to achieve all of these, but no idea how long it will take me to put revised briefings together to be able to make another attempt at the game.

THE GLADIATOR GAME REVISITED by Arthur Harman

I first designed this card-driven game of combat in the arena between a murmillo and a retiarius for use in my Classical Studies classes nearly twenty years ago, by adapting the rules for a David and Goliath game I had seen demonstrated at COW. This simple game gave my nine and ten year old pupils great pleasure and I have since used it successfully in Latin classes, a school wargame club and aboard HMS Belfast as part of John Curry's Cruiser 2009, where – again - most of the players were children.

Recently I put the Gladiator Game on at the Games Weekend, for a very different audience. A small crowd [Jonathan Pickles] watched hard-fought bout between retiarius Nick Luft and the grizzled veteran murmillo Dave Boundy. The latter had a poor start, being wounded twice early in the contest, but fought back doggedly and finally despatched his opponent - who had, perhaps, been made careless by overconfidence – with a mortal blow to the head.

Their comments inspired me to revise the original rules [as described below], though I would probably continue to use the original version to introduce the game to younger children, only adding the randomisation of the order of play.

Firstly, instead of the retiarius always moving first, players will now toss a coin or draw a card to see who goes first each turn, so that sometimes a gladiator will take two turns consecutively.

Secondly, I have rewritten the rules so that a gladiator does not have to end his turn adjacent to his opponent in order to strike at him, but may do so at any point during the turn, and then move away.

These two changes should encourage a gladiator who has not got a good Defence Card to attempt to keep out of reach of his opponent, rather than closing with him.

I have added two new cards – CONFODIO [I stab] for the retiarius, to reflect the reach of his trident, and DEFENDO [I parry] for both gladiators – to add some additional subtlety to attack and defence.

Finally, I have rewritten several of the Latin player cards to improve the vocabulary and reflect correct usage.

I have not had the opportunity to playtest the revised rules yet, but hope to do so at the school wargames club next term and at future meetings of Chestnut Lodge. A summary of the revised rules is [Editor permitting] reproduced here for you to try yourselves. Any comments or suggestions for further improvements would be welcome.

"HABET, HOC HABET!" ("Got him! He's had it!")
A GAME OF GLADIATORIAL COMBAT by Arthur Harman aa

EXPLANATION OF THE PLAYING CARDS

ACTION CARDS [indicating gladiator's movements/actions]

ME MOVEO (I move): Gladiator may move ONE square in ANY direction, including diagonally (like King in Chess).

OPPVGNO/FVGIO (I attack/I flee): Gladiator may move TWO squares orthogonally in a STRAIGHT line, either to rush forward to enter a square ADJACENT to his opponent and attack him, or to exit such a square to put distance between him and his opponent. Should this prove impossible, treat this card as ME MOVEO (see above).

The following Action Cards may be played by Retiarii only and should be discarded from the packs of players taking the roles of other types of gladiator.

RETEM IACIO (I throw the net): Retiarius may throw his net, PROVIDED that it has been recovered since being thrown previously (see below), at his opponent if NO MORE than TWO squares (but NOT diagonally) separate them.

RETEM RECIPIO (I recover the net): Retiarius retrieves his net and coils it ready to throw again. He may not throw the net until this card has been played, but may both recover and throw again in the same turn.

CONFODIO (I stab): Retiarius may use this card to stab at his opponent across ONE square (but NOT diagonally) between them, PROVIDED he has his trident.

TRIDENTEM IACIO (I throw the trident): Retiarius throws his trident at his opponent, PROVIDED that NO MORE than FOUR squares separate them orthogonally. To retrieve his trident, the Retiarius must move into the square where it is deemed to have landed (directly in front of the opponent if blocked by SCVTVM; immediately behind his opponent's original position if avoided by VITO) and not be involved in combat whilst in that square.

DEFENCE CARDS [how gladiator will react to attack]

VITO (I avoid/dodge): Gladiator sidesteps any attack or the Retiarius's net. Player moves his figure ONE square in ANY direction of his choice, including diagonally, PROVIDED that the figure ends the turn OUT OF CONTACT with the attacker (ie NOT in an adjacent square), or TO ONE SIDE of the line of flight of a trident.

DEFENDO (I parry): Gladiator parries a thrust with trident or sword, but NOT a thrown trident or net (he will be deemed to have avoided the net ONLY if he can guess the Retiarius's choice of Hit Card on the first comparison - see below), without moving his square, forcing his opponent to move out of an ADJACENT square.

The other Defence Card may be played only by Murmillones or other gladiators carrying shields.

SCVTVM TOLLO (I raise the shield): Murmillo blocks any blow or deflects a thrown trident, but does NOT automatically avoid the net (he will be deemed to have avoided the net ONLY if he can guess the Retiarius's choice of Hit Card on the first comparison - see below).

NB Any Action or Defence Cards which are played, but cannot fulfil their intended purpose – TRIDENTEM IACIO, for example, when the Retiarius has previously thrown, but not yet recovered, his net - count as ME MOVEO.

HIT CARDS [indicate the area at which the attacker is aiming/which the defender is protecting]

CAPVT (Head): A blow to the head KILLS a Retiarius, who has no helmet, immediately but only WOUNDS Myrmillones and other gladiators with helmets who can take several blows to the head.

CORPVS (Body): WOUNDS any gladiator quite severely, as none wear body armour. When a gladiator has two hits to the body, he is badly wounded and must plead for mercy.

MEMBRA (Limbs): WOUNDS any gladiator: both gladiators wear guards on their right arms; Murmillones' left arms are also protected by the shield, and their lower legs by greaves.

THE PLAYERS' DECKS OF CARDS

MVRMILLONES		RETIARII
21	MOVEO	19
3	OPPVGNO/FVGIO	5
2	VITO	5
3	DEFENDO	3
3	SCVTVM TOLLO	0
0	RETEM IACIO	3
0	RETEM RECIPIO	3
0	TRIDENTEM IACIO	2
0	CONFODIO	3

THE HIT CARDS AND THEIR EFFECTS

MVRMILLONES	HIT CARDS	RETIARII
2 hits = 1 card lost	CAPVT	1 hit kills immediately
1 hit = 1 card lost	CORPVS	1 hit = 1 card lost
3 hits = 1 card lost	MEMBRA	2 hits = 1 card lost

Successful Hits are recorded by giving the victim tokens – coloured counters or smaller copies of the appropriate Hit Cards – which result in the number of cards a player may hold in subsequent turns being reduced, as above.

[For a simpler introduction to the game for younger children, have ANY hit, other than CAPVT on the Retiarius, cause the loss of 1 card – though this does, perhaps make it too hard to disable the latter!]

When a player has only one card left (which he must play as a Defence Card) or the combination of cards in his hand permits no movement (eg VITO and SCVTVM TOLLO) he must appeal to the crowd for mercy by drawing either:

TVRBA POLLICES PREMIT (The crowd signals thumbs down): Mercy! Gladiator lives to fight another day...or

TVRBA POLLICES VERTIT (The crowd signals thumbs up): Death! The winner cuts the loser's throat.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

1. Decide which player will be the Retiarius and which the Murmillo by dicing or tossing a coin.

2. The Retiarius discards all SCVTVM cards from his pack; the Murmillo discards all cards marked RETEM IACIO, RETEM RECIPIO and TRIDENTEM IACIO.

3. Both players put their Hit Cards – CAPVT, CORPVS and MEMBRA - to one side for use when necessary, together with TVRBA POLLICES PREMIT and TVRBA POLLICES VERTIT.

4. Players shuffle the cards remaining in their packs thoroughly and place the packs face down in front of them.

5. The opposing figures are placed on opposite sides of the arena, directly in front of the respective players.

6. The Retiarius draws FIVE cards; the Murmillo FOUR cards.

7. Both players secretly select a Defence Card (see above) from their hands and place them face down beside their packs. A player who does not have a Defence Card in his hand must play another Action Card to bluff his opponent.

8. Each turn, dice or toss a coin to see which gladiator moves first; he will play his cards first and move his figure, resolving any attacks or blows before his opponent plays his cards [For a simpler introduction to the game for younger children, have the Retiarius always go first]. The Retiarius always plays THREE Action Cards; the Murmillo TWO cards (always subject to the number of cards left in his hand as a result of wounds inflicted in previous turns) in the order in which they will be executed, from Left to Right.

9. Should the Retiarius throw the net or trident or stab with his trident, or either gladiator enter a square ADJACENT to his opponent, an attack must be resolved immediately, as described below, before any other cards are executed.

10. When both players have played their Action Cards for that turn, resolved any attacks, combats and wounds, they then return all cards (including Defence Cards), that have been played, to the bottoms of their respective packs, and draw new cards to make up their hands for the next turn, subject to any wounds received. Defence Cards that have not been played count as part of the players' hands for the next turn: they may be played again or saved for future use, as the players prefer. Alternatively, the players may agree before the game that unplayed Defence Cards must always be returned to the pack at the end of a turn.

11. Repeat stages 7-11 above until one gladiator is killed or unable to move. In the latter case the player must draw a card to determine the verdict of the crowd as described above.

RESOLVING ATTACKS/COMBATS

An attack/combat takes place whenever:

The gladiator whose turn it is to move plays RETEM IACIO, CONFODIO or TRIDENTEM IACIO; or enters a square adjacent to his opponent, or is unable to move out of a square adjacent to his opponent (such as a Murmillo trapped in a net).

When an attack is made the potential victim must reveal his Defence Card. If he has anticipated correctly, the attack fails and no further resolution is necessary; if he has not played a suitable Defence Card, the attack will be decided by the Hit Cards. The Defender chooses one of his Hit Cards and places it face down before him. The Attacker then plays one of his Hit Cards face up, whereupon the Defender's card is revealed. If the two cards are identical, the blow is blocked and the Defender escapes unscathed; if not, he is wounded, or sometimes, in the case of a Retiarius, killed if the Attacker played CAPVT (see above). Tokens representing hits are given to the victim and, if necessary, the number of cards in his hand is reduced by one for the rest of the game, as described above.

A Murmillo, trapped in the net by failing to play VITO against RETEM IACIO will be deemed to escape from it immediately if he survives the FIRST comparison of Hit Cards unwounded. If he does not, he remains in the net for the following turn only - in other words, the Retiarius takes his next turn immediately, after which the Murmillo is deemed to escape from the net (whether or not the Retiarius has recovered the net); play then proceeds according to the usual sequence above.

After the game of Barricades and Borders played the July Meeting by Mukel

I found this lying around, might be interesting after the game of Barricades and Borders played the July Meeting? Its an extract from a book.

A Short History Europe from 1849 to 1901

Chapter 5

Patelia

The Age of Revolution started with Emperor Mukul III "The Blind" in charge of the Empire of Patelia. Whether the "blind" label applied to his physical condition or his sight to good sense an reason is something still debated amongst people of low status, scholars, academics and liberals. Note 1

Taxes.

For instance he followed the simple when taxing as advised by the late hunchback of Nichstadt Lord G'Rainger, tax them until torrents of blood fill the streets. This rapacious policy was guaranteed to bring in the taxes said Lord G'Rainger, and Mukul the III a traditionalist followed the old ghosts advice. How he avoided the likely unrest amongst the masses of nobles and peasants is a part of his contrariness and strangeness which we will come to.

Note 2

Social policy.

Against all advice from other the Monarchs he gave tax concessions to his nobles, provided for the peasants work houses and for the liberals a lavish education by the whip from the start of his reign and never flinched from that course, a most benevolent policy. These rather odd policies of taxing heavily and giving them back to the people was odd. Many at the time said that this was a policy of madman, someone blind to good sense and reason but it seemed to work. For the whole of the Age a more contented and peaceful people was never seen. There was not one instance of significant political agitation, in contrast to all other Major Powers of the time. Economists and social scientists of the like Pickles have commented that in effect Emperor Mukul was a bit smoke and mirrors taking from everyone taxes with BOTH hands filled and giving the population monies and favours worth only one hand.

So peaceful and harmonious was Patelia that Mukul III had the time and resources to help other great powers with their political agitators notably helping restoring order and tradition with rifled muskets and smooth bore artillery, in the kingdom of Kempton. Note 3

Political development.

A particular feature of Patelia was the comparative lack of Political development during this Age. During Mukul "the Blind" long reign he stayed true to the absolutist inheritance even though all other Powers experimented and implemented with radical/liberal reforms of their governing systems. Mukul the IIIs policy might be explained by stubbornness an that he said such reforms would be great waste of government energy these "reforms", and that "would have me betray and dishonour may fathers legacy by abandoning rule by Divine Grace. Political scientists have said that this policy allowed the maximum freedom of action in such as in diplomacy and expanding Patelian influence in the minors powers a key part of Patelian policy. Note 4

Foreign relations.

This brings us to a review of the diplomatic policy of the Patelian empire. Was there a policy? At the start of his reign "Blind" Mukul's policy seemed fumbling and dangerous, readers will recall his initially ill put offer to suppress political agitators in Kempton. Bringing stern letters both from Kempton and Hadlonia, many thought a war imminent at the lack of tact from the Blind Emperor Quickly the Patelian policy became one of supporting fellow traditionalists and avoiding war. Many from his court recall him as an advocate of peace and harmony, at his court and his allies, making friends of most of the other Powers. The Patelian policy of peace and harmony extended to the minor powers of Slobodia and Bosorovia, which continued during the Regin of Mukul IV, whose influence was decisive in restraining Slobodia rightful anger towards Bosrovia during the crisis of 1886. As Patelian influence in these states grew these two states saw that the future of their peoples lay in an ever closer union with the Patelian Empire, a decisive triumph for Patelian policy. Note 5

Armed Forces.

Military Development of Patelian Empire has been characterised by having a small armed forces capable of making any enemy think twice before attacking. The navy squadron initially had much attention lavished upon it with new experimental designs made ready, but at trials it was found that the designs were not sufficiently developed and further development was stopped. The army was different matter it was both rapidly expanded in size and then improved in quality at which point development cease for a very long time and not until very late was the army further requipped with new equipment and doctrines, in response

to developments and threats from other Powers. The only significant action the Orange Army saw was in the 2nd Peninsula War in which Freedonia support by a coalition led by Hadleia defended an attack from Boundiland, the owner of foremost army of that time. The Patelian army on roughly equal parity with Boundian army engage in a campaign of manoeuvre and raid and cutting the supply lines won a campaign in Freedonian (note 1). One aspect of military policy helps explains a radical shift in Patelian social policy at the end of the Age. This was that the vastly increased costs of the supporting army are said to have prompted Emperor Mukul "the Rash" IV to allow the masses more of a say in political affairs in 1894. This radical break with centuries of tradition have been also influenced by the voice of High King Hadley of Hadlonia, or perhaps the real reason was the hope that Emperor Mukul could continue his fathers traditions of palace building and patronage to the arts on an even greater scale than had his father. Note 6

Cultural Legacy

Palace building in the Patelian Empire had the Most money spent in this period than in any other Power. In fact the amount of money spent upon these monuments was probably exceeded that spent all other Government expenditures during the period under consideration! The nature and cultural importance of these many palaces, halls and commissions will be reviewed later but one burning question remains why did the Blind emperor allow so much money to be spent on these things? It is said that he was enraged and goaded into this course of action after hearing the prestige and honours that fled to tsar Trevor of Farrantina upon completion the truly magnificent Golden Palace in 1853. His anger at the glory about this was something that he spoke about many a time to the ambassadors at the Blind Court. This was one track blind monomaniacal anger may well have the been the primary fount policy in the Empire.

Trade policy in the Patelian Empire was remarkably smooth and simple, perhaps a reflection of the personal traits of both Mukuls, simple. A trade treaty was proposed by Boundiland and without quibble accepted. Many courtiers wante to change the treaty to Patelian Advantage but wisely the two emperors never sought temporary advantage over long term honour and reliability. Note 7

THE RESULT

The Patelian Empire is intact. Known universally for its great palaces, impressive architecture and a population blissful, peaceful, ignorant, and a small but well developed industrial sector specialising in Gilded carriages, ornaments and fripperies.

It has expanded and welcomed into its domain, into Slobodia and Bosrovia. Its greatest achievement might have been its ability to tenaciously stick to the traditional ways for most of the Age, (only giving in and allowing the nobles and merchants some limited representation in a fit of madness, (the last turn variety).

Note 1

In one the first articles that John Rutherford wrote for milmud he suggested that a splash of role playing helps most games, I think he is still write and it helped me enjoy this game more

Note 2

A fairly concious decision I wanted lots of cash to do stuff with, though in the end fully perhaps 50% of the cash went on monuments arts and great palaces

Note 3

A spur of the moment decision influenced greatly by a pre game bet (using game money) with Dave Boundy in which I suggested that Andrew Hadley would not overtax his peasants early, so I had an unexpected spare cash, so I thought I would treat the peasants. Also surprise Dave paid up!!, a honourable man

Note 4

This was not pre game decision made but because I was getting no political agitation, because of the over generous social policy then why should I engage in political reform and then I started getting obstinate and the Empire was doing well anyway

Note 5

One Big reason for the large influence in the Minor Powers was that as a Empire I had many "spare" actions, as I was changing government type an doing armed forces stuff, so could be a busy body. Major Power diplomacy consisted of other players offering to include Patelia in an defensive treaties. At one time had such treaties with everyone expect Colin Watts. I think this diplomatic part of the game is critical s in most player games. I got lucky

by not being to nasty and mouthy. One thing I was afraid off in the game was losing a war, I really I didn't want to get lose any of my hyper expensive palaces, and was very glad the other powers didn't attempt such a thing.

Note 6

Patel rolled a 2 Boundy forces rolled a 1 a pretty low key victory. Once I decided to keep to being an autocracy an wanted the biggest an flashiest monuments then I had to keep the armed forces small

Note 7

Dave propose a very simple treaty an I felt that I should quibble and seek to get better of Dave, but I thought it foolish to do so, as Dave might get upset with me and and attack me. At other times I thought about cancelling the treaty but rejected that notion for the same reason that Dave would attack me, and it would look bad to the other players to not honour an agreement. In retrospect the trade treaties are really important, they make the differences in money received by between memoires, Republics and Democracies much more equal, and so towards the en of the game were the client states I had got.

Game Changes

I don't Think we changed to much in this game outing. (Either a bad sign of collective failure or the upside a consequence of maturing of a good game) It was suggested by some that work needs to be done on the roll of Minor Powers in the game. I think I agree with those voices.

A one of the strengths of this outing of the game was the length of the game, which was pretty well the whole meeting, its a game play that needs time to develop.

Cwm Owen and All Onside Report by Andrew Hadley

For those that weren't there today - we did the Welsh bit of the Come One and Eorl 11th century game. Jim (in exile) raided/attempted to free Gwynedd, looting Bangor, Mukul and Dave united to throw the English out of Rhuddlan but then fell out over the spoils, John struggled valiantly to promote Welsh unity all day only to be stabbed by Brian right at the end.

I've overhauled some of the mechanisms, mainly combat and post-combat, but also the titles. This should mean more (simple) mechanics and less umpire discretion and opaqueness (opacity?).

Things for me to think about (feel free to add more):

• Transfer of titles post combat (should there be more stickiness?)

• Sea movement

• Order of play vs. Simultaneous moves (also inter-table moves)

• Terrain effects on combat

Things for you to think about (feel free to comment on anything, though):

• Was the combat too random / too many dice involved?

• Is 4-6 roles about right for Wales? Could it have 4-8 or would that be too many?

• Are the names too big an obstacle?

• Would you prefer umpire/player-umpire interaction for the non-played foreign powers, or semi-transparent mechanisms?

• Should there be more or less personalisation of the player roles?

Thanks again - have been really energised by the session (not to mention the energy drinks!) and can now see some potential for the systems even beyond the megagame... That was a massively useful session for me, guys. I'd be up for running (part of) the game at conference if you're not all sick and tired of it! A separate session towards the end of August would be really good too if people are interested...

Cwm Owen and All Offside Report by Brian Cameron

I thought this was by far the best outing of the game so far. For once I could get to grips with it and it offered far more options than I first thought (though that may partly be due to the entry of the game of the exile player to harrass the lmost powerful player and open out the options.).

In reponse to your questions:

Transfer of titles post combat (should there be more stickiness?)

I thought it was too easy when I attacked John (in response I might add to a deal which have left me with nothing more than I had but which left John in a much better position; I noted John was not prepared to sacrifice anything for Welsh unity!) to have potentially gained his Prince of whatsit card = this may have been the case historically but I thought I should have had to whittle down his support first.

Sea movement.

As we discussed, I think it needs to be extended with the possibility of a delayed start or delayed on route by adverse winds, etc.

Order of play vs. Simultaneous moves (also inter-table moves)

I've certainly found in King for Bohemia and Habsburgs Ascendant that getting player sot write it down works fine and am using it again for Renaissance & Reformation.

Terrain effects on combat

Never experienced any so can't really comment.

Things for you to think about (feel free to comment on anything, though):

Was the combat too random / too many dice involved?

Combat was fine and quite easy to resolve and I liked the chancy basis of it, I really felt I was taking a risk even when I slightly outnumbered Mukul.

Is 4-6 roles about right for Wales?

Yes, it worked fine with a good dynamic.

Could it have 4-8 or would that be too many?

I think so, you could obviously six princes and the exile but I think you really need to non-played ground to fight over without potentially knocking out a player.

Are the names too big an obstacle?

A bit like the Chinese names for Interesting Times, they aren't easy to get to grips with. You might consider a similar solution, which was the combination of the player name and the real name.

Would you prefer umpire/player-umpire interaction for the non-played foreign powers, or semi-transparent mechanisms?

Easier for the umpires if its more mechanism based.

Should there be more or less personalisation of the player roles?

No harm in having ratings for eg combat, strength of religious feeling, etc.

Thanks for an enjoyable session.

Cwm Owen and All Offside Report byJim Wallman

Thanks Andrew, a good run of thegame system.IN answer to your questions:

Was the combat too random / too many dice involved?

Not too many dice. My personal preferneces are not towards 'bucket of dice' systems, but rolling 5 or 6 dice is ok, and has the benefit of simplicity.

Is 4-6 roles about right for Wales? Could it have 4-8 or would that be too many?

I think the numbers were ok - I'm not sure there would have been a benefit for more players - it might have made positions more entrenched, and there is the grater risk of marginalised players with the larger number.

Are the names too big an obstacle?

Absolutely not. It is an essential part of period flavour. You might include a pronouciation guide though.

Would you prefer umpire/player-umpire interaction for the non-played foreign powers, or semi-transparent mechanisms?

In a club game I'd prefer to interact with an umpire. In a megagame I think it is best to 'mechanise' as much as possible to ensure consistency and to keep umpire workload down.

Should there be more or less personalisation of the player roles?

A tricky one this - some players like to role play a historical personality - but few can actually do it, as ti gets a bit like acting. Most megagamers pick up on the key points of a briefing and decide what they are going for. You need some objectoves that create conflict an reasons to negotiate, but there is nothing wrong with a couple of personal objectives unique to the player. It is also a good idea to ensure that every player has at least onefairly easily achievable objective - so that no matter how badly they were shafted by the other players, at the end of the day they can say they achieved something.

Cwm Owen and All Offside Report byMukel

Sea movement make it easier for certain nations and harder for others???

Order of play? still a play problem with simultaneous, as per Brains suggestion, Dave wants his castle back of the Mercian Anglish i want Daves castle for my own reasons. We both write down again our post combat actions an we still gotta role off who gets first push at the castle? But if I had to decide and get off the fence go with write down your moves an post combat actions, but i do like the simplicity of dishing turn order cards to players and letting them decsions, its a bit more boardgamy though

Terrain effects, mountains at the momemt make comabt less decisive, but post comabt actions just as lethal, need to make to mountains more difficult for attackers without support in the area.

This is my thinking, as you said the mountain bits of wales were really hard to invade and pretty resiliant. I guess this is because of the difficulty of moving around and the greater value of local knowledge. So warriors need numbers and local knowledge, which in my book = and advantage if you have local support,

and the more of it the better??? should there be stacking limits?? How effectively did large armies fight in that mountainous terrain, might be worth having a chat with thoise memebers of the club who know about the suppression of the highlanders by the english a lot later in british history

Combat was fine, you really had to accept that luck was going to play a large part and it did make you feel edgy as Brian wrote and was simple like jim said

Numbers of players, it worked prett good as presented

Names are an obstacle, but are important reckon they may help transport into another mode of thinking and acting, ie help role playing

Foregin Powers umpires or mechs, i have had great fun with both in the past, though i prefer people or umpires

More Personalisation better but not to much the games hard enough anyway

Final comment....really really really good session; Thanks to you and the reast of the players an afternoon very well spent.

Cwm Owen and All

>>>I noted John was not prepared to sacrifice anything for Welsh unity!

Sorry Brian I cannot let that one go.

I started in Llandaff and let Brian become Prince of Ceredigion while taking nothing for myself. I asked for no bribe or subsidy to protect Brian's rear from possible English attack and did not take advantage of his absence to take Dyfed from him. Indeed I sent him two gold to buy another soldier making his victory easier.

I took on the mantle of King of South Wales which was a small advantage to me, which I used to make South Wales stronger against the English... a clear advantage to Dyfed as well as me.... but cost Brian nothing as I paid from my resources the fee he was to pay. All those things are sacrifices.

And despite Mukul's extreme aggression and rudeness I did not take anything from him though it would have been well possible for me to destroy his base in Powys and probably more. Instead, I encouraged Brian to deal with him as he had dealt with Ceredigion, and if Brian had taken Powys I would again have expected no share of the proceeds, as I had said. I am amazed that Brian did not see that Mukul was the one who was being set up to have his lands taken by Brian. It was difficult to see how everyone could be given more, as Jim was effectively landless; Jim had to be offered something to stop his attacks; Dave had to be given something as he was the biggest lord; leaving me, Brian and Mukul. It was Mukul who was being stitched up and had more cause for complaint IMHO. My aspiration was for the High Kingship, but I would have had to distribute such sweeteners to keep things stable that it would probably have ended up costing me - my view is that land and princedoms is the real solid 'wealth' [not reliant on others' veto] and I had no ambitions to get more as I figured that if I grabbed lands that would preclude me becoming High King and unifying Wales.

So just before the end of the game I had the same I started with except the South Wales Kingship, worth considerably less I think than the Princeship of Ceredigion and subject at all times to Brian's veto. I started building a very expensive castle, a purely defensive measure against English invasion which would strengthen all of Wales. Then I lost all that too - that's what can happen if you trust allies. Ah well.

I am not complaining that what Brian did was unhistorical, indeed it would explain why, as Andrew pointed out, there was an instability problem caused by disinherited Welsh lords trying to reclaim their lands... which is what my character would have tried to do, having been given no choice. It is doubtless historical that the Welsh lords used short-term calculations of advantage and did not value Welsh unity

highly enough to resist stabbing each other and hence allowing the English and Vikings to raid, and eventually crush Welsh independence.

Certainly a good game, and a very interesting political situation.

Cwm Owen and All Reply by Brian Cameron

John, you were the one who proposed that you would be king of south Wales. I figured that it would keep you off my back while I took Ceredigion, something which you didn't appear interested in doing. I agreed to submit to you as king which would have cost me gold or influence (and in less tangible form, status with the other players – you'd now negotiate with them as a king). I suggested that you pay. You did. I thus assumed that you regarded it as a price worth paying for being king. Being king might not have brought you much more in the way of resources but you wanted the position and were willing to make a deal for it. If you didn't like the price you should have haggled more. I would have paid the gold/influence if you'd insisted because it was the price worth paying to keep you off my back. I got a really good deal.

Simple as that.

When I'd determined that we could have a high king as well as the north and south king thus making three kingships open, to my amazement you proposed a deal whereby you become high king, Dave became north king and Jim became south king, an area where he had no holdings, just as he had no holdings in the north. You needed Mukul and myself to agree to Dave becoming north king and my agreement to Jim becoming south king. You offered Mukul nothing, prompting a 'robust' response. You offered me nothing, suggesting that keeping what I had was a pretty good deal. You needed my vote as a prince in both the north and south and were offering me nothing and Jim, someone with no foothold in Wales at all, no vote, to become king over me. This in no way fitted with my objectives from my brief. I think you should have been surprised that you didn't get a robust response from me.

I kept quiet and bided my time. When I'd replenished my resources I made it look like I was going to attack Mukul. I could still have been bought off at that time but no further offer was made. Mukul was off ridding north Wales of the English, in the name of unity (and grabbing a bit of Dave's lands for himself). You weren't taking out Mukul which would have gotten you his vote and left me in a difficutl position. You expected me to use my resources to do the dirty work of taking out Mukul, so that you, Dave and Jim could become kings. You were building a castle. So you were my target.

So what if you'd kept coming back to plague me after you fled in England? It would have given me something to do whereas if I'd accepted your deal I might as well have sat down and read the paper, because there wouldn't have been anything I could do accept possibly spend my resources to support a united Wales which I wasn't a king of. And what was so great about a united Wales? You seemed to automatically assume that I would see a united Wales as a desirable object. My brief was to become at least king if not high king. Nothing about a united Wales (except under me to an extent necessary to become high king). Your brief may have given you the prime object of a united Wales but I think you were wrong to assume that it was the same for me. I was working, as I expect players to do in my games, to my brief. Possibly your brief gave you the mission to become high king – fine but don't expect me to help achieve it at the cost of my objectives.

Got to have been a good game, last time we had a post-game discussion about the why people adopted the approach they did was after Washington Conference 2.

Cwm Owen and All Reply by Andrew Hadley

On the names, some of the Welsh names translate reasonably well, some do not. I definitely have no interest in using the players names which will be utterly ahistorical and very odd indeed. The question is what nomenclature to use, and to what extent it should be Anglicised, I think.

- Gruffudd ap Llywelyn - Griffin son of Lew

- Gruffudd ap Rhydderch - Griffin son of Riderch

- Bleddyn ap Cynfyn - ? - what a bleeding nightmare

- Meurig ap Hywel - Meurig son of Howel?

- Cynan ap Iago - Kenan son of Jack?

It doesn't really work, sadly. I have similar issues with the Scottish, viking and some of the English names anyway, and just twiddling with them is highly unsatisfactory, and will not make it much easier as there are no modern (English) equivalents for many of the names. It will also make me and others even more confused, as we'll have to check who we're talking about!

I think I'll probably go with Jim's suggestion and just provide a pronounciation guide, including giving each character a phonetic spelling of his own name if not standard modern English. I will use simpler names on the maps where this is possible - so I might use Clwyd instead of Perfeddwlad, and Gwent or Glamorgan instead of Morgannwg.

Probably the way to simplify things is to focus on the DYNASTIC name (as of course some players will change roles due to death etc during the day). So the player badges and umpire calls can use the (only slightly challenging) dynastic names. These will probably be (for Wales at least):

- Rhuddlan (rudd-lan)

- Aberffraw (ab-er-fror)

- Dinefwr (din-ev-or)

- Mathrafal (math-raff-all)

- Gwent / Glamorgan

- Brechin?

- The Church

The first four, at least, are in common academic parlance, and are based on the well-known tradition of naming dynasties after their key castle/palace (cf. Windsor).

As far as the Dyfed (Brian) / Morgannwg (John) dispute, I'll confess that I am absolutely delighted that you got involved enough in the game to still be thinking and talking about it. John's outrage is, given his actions and his brief, entirely reasonable, as is Brian's defence of his actions, given his brief and the opportunities that arose. John was absolutely spot on when he remarked that Wales was doomed to disunity and English domination because of this lack of trust and the endemic betrayals and naked self-interest that dominated this period, and indeed most of Welsh history. He was also quite right that the natural recourse in such a position was to seek foreign aid (how do you think the Saxons got into Britain in the first place, and how did the Anglo-Normans conquer Wales and Ireland...?).

I could not have asked for a better endorsement of the game! Thanks guys

Come One and Eorl tryout Onside Report by Andrew Hadley

Thanks to all of you that came and gave the game another go. I was really pleased at how it worked out, especially the political dynamics that seem to be generated by the situation even without briefings. Thanks to Jim for suggesting the tryout and providing space. Mukul, could you forward this to Colin, please?

Several key learning points for me:

- Turn sequence and combat summary sheets

- Make more information, particularly on land, available on the map

- Sort out the Area nomenclature

- Sort out the Scottish kingship/sub-kingship relations

- Naval combat / intercept rules

- Probably slightly too much influence floating around

- Think about public and private objectives / briefings

- Address the border areas and which set of rules apply to the Areas and land cards etc

- Make it clearer which titles and lands are within the King's gift

- Develop a game role for the Churchmen

I've been toying with a cap on the number of cards, men and Influence that can be held or moved, variable for certain players

So perhaps characters could have three 'stats':

Combat - modifier for the number of troops that can be moved for 1 gold, say from -3 (pious priests) to +4 (great warlords)

Politics - number of cards (excluding family land) that can be held, possibly also an Influence cap?

Age - modifier for birth and death rolls

This will also help make death more 'meaningful' as Factions would generally be affected by the loss of a good leader or politician.

Bishops could have some one-use cards which give modifiers, such as:

Power of Prayer +2 to birth chance roll

Divine Misdirection post combat rolls to seize or waste a religious site or town are at -2 for one post-combat phase

God's Voice +2 to effective support in one Area for one roll or process

This would give the Bishops some more clout. I think it may be more effective than building in briefings about respecting the church and actually give them something to negotiate with.

Gunboat Battles: A CLWG Game in Second Life

Onside Report by Dave Boundy (Dave Baran)

Second Life is a virtual world best known for its dubious content. But then, I remember the World Wide Web as being best known for pornography, so I suppose it's not too surprising. It is, however, a rich development environment. By which, I mean that the people running it have produced a computer-contained world which is consistent and which has a number of useful features. The world can also be modified in extensive ways. So it is possible to build things, to write programs that operate those things and to interact with the world.

What does this mean in practice? Well, a few of us have decided to try out a popular second life thing: sailing battles. Second life has seas and land, it has wind (that varies in strength and direction) and it has ways of building boats, of scripting them to "sail" and of building guns that fire missiles. This has led to some really rather nice-looking boats and ships, equipped with firing cannons that inflict damage on those boats.

Several of us have now acquired the smallest of those boats: a gunboat. This boat has room for 2 avatars: a captain to sail it and a gunner to fire the cannon. This is a view of a gunboat in dock. You will see it has one sail and one cannon. It can also be rowed (useful when manoeuvring to fire or when becalmed).

Sailing it is a bit of an art..requiring steering in a direction and adjusting the angle of the sail sheet. When going well, it achieves a virtual equivalent of about 10 knots, but this is rare. The gunboat under sail is shown in this picture. When rowing, the boat is really rather slow, taking some while to overcome virtual inertia, and the controls allow rowing, backing and steering left/right.

Cannon

Gunboat At Sea
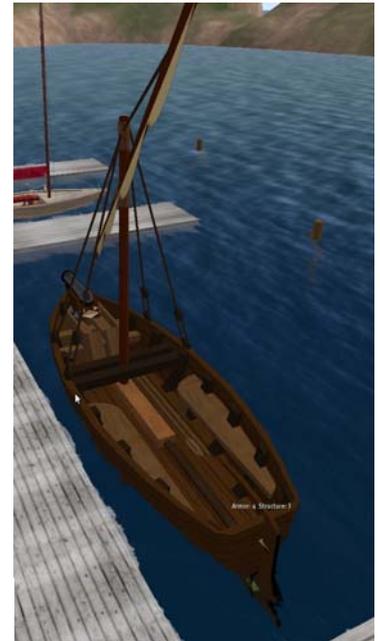
Gunboat Docked

Cannon Firing

As a small boat, it has only one cannon. The cannon can be aimed to a small extent, although obviously the main aiming is by pointing the whole boat. You can see on the picture of the cannon there are up/down and left/right arrows built into the back of the cannon, shown as lighter coloured wood.

The cannon is fired by clicking on the barrel and aimed by clicking on the appropriate pieces of wood. Reloading in this model is automatic, but takes 15 seconds. When fired, a cannonball is created by the cannon script and is projected from the cannon using second life physics (i.e. gravity etc. are taken into account). The cannon ball will either hit the water: causing a water spout (courtesy of second life) or will hit the boat: causing damage (courtesy of the boat's makers). The damage is then shown up as holes in the

sail, smoking deck timbers or, finally, in a sinking boat (it sinks in spectacular fashion and your avatar goes under water with it and has to abandon ship).

You can see the flash from the cannon as it fires and can see an avatar in front of it, giving some idea of the scale.

Four of us met in second life to fight a duel with these boats. John Rutherford, Jim Wallman, Jon Casey and I. John and I had obtained boats so Jim became the gunner on John's boat and Jon Casey came with me as my gunner.

The cannons work by creating a cannon ball at the time of firing, so it is necessary to have an area of second life available that allows this to take place. Fortunately, a number of philanthropic enthusiasts have got together and made a very large area in second life available for sailing battles such as this. The area is known as the Antiquity sims (a "sim" is a simulator: a dedicated server that handles activity in one area which is a virtual 256m x 256m) and comprises 25 of these sims.

We fought our battle in Antiquity lagoon, which also had a few larger sailing boats come along and through it, but as we had chosen a time when second life is not busy, the effect was small. I cannot remember too much about the result (he says) except that Jon and I seemed to end up in the water more often than not. The main thing, though, was that it was a lot of fun: to the extent that Jim and Jon have now also purchased a gunboat and we will be looking for 4 gunners for the next battle on 25th July at 10am BST. If anyone would like to participate as a gunner or would like to captain their own boat and can get a gunner, then please let me know and I will be able to help.

A number of us now have second life accounts. Apart from the four in the battle, Nick, Pickles and Jurrien all have accounts and I am happy to help anybody else that would like to participate. It would be good to identify other gaming areas that would be fun, so that we can have a truly international club in second life, but for now I think there is plenty to get to grips with in sailing battles. To whet you appetite, the final picture shows a much larger ship at sail in second life, ready to do war.

Dietl's Diaries An Onside Report by Daniel T Shaw

First thanks to all who attended and played the game. I am not sure it was that enjoyable for most, so I really appreciate you participating in my experimentation. I will come back to whether my experiment was a game or a simulation later. For now, I will use the word wargame to cover both,

What were my experiments? First, I wanted to use ORIGINAL material and see what happens with that in a wargame. Second, I wanted to run a wargame that reaches a conclusion, so I needed to set my time frame and pace conservatively to cover the whole of the historic framework – 09 April to mid June 1940. Third, I wanted to use Dietl's Diary as an anchor for the wargame – the level of detail would reflect the level that he as the local commander of the German forces noted in his "little black book". I have copies of the British battalion war diaries for contrast and they are so administrative in comparison.

My fourth objective somehow escaped me during the day – I wanted the British, French and Poles to write orders in the format that was required by their respective administrations. I handed out the papers for that but I got the distinct impression that the players were not up for that task – I did not explicitly ask – rather I just decided not to push it in the interests of time to meet my second objective.

Now, let me talk about my preparations. The British Library furnished me (at my expense) copies of the Chiefs of General Intelligence Staff maps of the period – 1cm to 1km scale – which were the actual maps issued to the Allied Headquarters. The Public Records Office has become the National Archives was my source of all the original British orders and as I already mentioned the war diaries provided far too much

detail about troop movements to be useful. Of interest, the HQ that was established at Harstad seems not to have followed Jim's two down principle and instead micro-managed the troop movements every day!

I mentioned Dietl's Diary – never more than a page a day – mostly only a few salient lines each day. I translated this (with the help of Google) and made copious notes about what I wanted to include and what was irrelevant.

Next, I wanted to build a game map. Attempt one was to work with enlargements of elements of the CGIS maps. That seemed too confusing to umpire. Second attempt was a hex map, with only the critical details included. By the time I finished that, I discovered that the hexes were irrelevant (what a waste of effort distorting all those fjords to make them fit with hex sides!). The point was that there were so few critical details that the map was essentially point to point with just towns and ports, roads and fjords, frozen lakes that could become airfields, and some mountain passes to defend. I did not bother to redraw the map without the hexes; rather I just ignored them on the day.

Next game design element was the level of troop detail. I had intended to do this with miniature figures – just because they look nice – but realized I would need to have some numbers to reflect troop quality at a minimum. That required placing cardboard marker on the bases, which spoilt the l look of the battle, so quickly I abandoned the figures.

Time sequence was determined from the frequency of significant engagements in the histories. Roughly, one every four days, so my turns would be notionally four days long. I was not to wed to that period and felt that it could be varied quite a bit, so long as I tell the players the current date often enough. Sorry, for the Allies who did not see ten days slip by without their thinking they had done anything – I can now say it took longer to unload four liners of troops and equipment and then ferry all that across a narrow fjord to the main land. The forward elements did not have anyone to fight anyway as it turned out!

Finally, for the design, I need the game mechanics. I did very little work here, as simple ideas seemed to work ok in my mini play tests. Troop quality of 1 for green troop (Norwegian farmers who had not been called out on exercise for years or ships crews banded together into companies), 2 for trained (like territorials) and 3 for the professional full time soldier (British Guards, German Mountain Troops and French Foreign Legion). Some plus points for skis, snow shoes, artillery and air support. Some multipliers for the action in progress (the attacker is divided by two, a dug in defender multiplied by two, etc.) No dice! Just bigger score wins meaning a push back and very big difference means some units surrender. Casualty rates in the history are too low to notice in any one unit on a game scale! A company with ten casualties still looks like a company, so I would not bother with counting the occasional dead. Morale does not seem to fade on either side.

The next task was deciding which order documents to provide the players. I put a set of pre-orders on the internet. I do know that there were several download hits – more than the number of players – so I gather some at least looked at it. Unfortunately, I did not get any feedback before the game – I had been hoping for that to help me select the right papers to print for the game. I printed more material than I could cope with! If I get enough players to make one an umpire, I would probably use more of that. Early in the game, distributing material was workable, but I quickly realized that much of it was not being read.

Sadly, we had a critical no show on the day. I had counted on Nick being able to read French, so I had not translated the few pages of French material. Thank you, Dave for making such a brave effort decoding them –of course, Murphy's Law applies – the only paragraph I gave Dave in English he omitted to read!

On the day, the set up went ok. The Allies in the kitchen had the bewilderment of sketch maps, orders that did not even say which troops would be available, and a guidebook to fill in the gaps in the sketch maps. Our Norwegian was as confused as his historic counterpart. And the Germans were cool and planned a minimalist strategy (which I had not thought about before) concentrating all their troops around just Narvik and the town on the opposing headland. That strategy was so unexpected to me that I was thrown more than a little off balance. I tried to set the Germans the task of needing to spread out, to get food from

Sweden, to secure a frozen lake to land ammo, but they chose alternative tactics staying put and negotiating food from the Norwegians!

The Allies lacked enough skis to mobilize a strong manoeuvre around Narvik, so they needed air support and an amphibious landing to dislodge the concentrated German defence. That took too long to organize before the invasion of France meant the recall of the French and British troops. The Poles followed suit. I am not sure whether the Norwegian royal family and parliament decided on exile or not, as they chose to head North for Tromso at the end of our game.

What did I learn? The original orders were far more effective than trying to invent material. In deed had if I can lay my hands on the original German orders for Dietl, maybe Jim would have had his hands tied to spreading out somewhat, which I feel would have made a more balanced and interesting combat. The original maps however distracted from the game – there was too much detail for players to find what they wanted and not enough clarity of the obstacles and sites of defence. Next time, I would use the sketch maps that went with the orders and then stylized game maps for play. As discussed after the session, a point-to-point map would work perfectly for this game.

Really, I needed one more player or rather umpire to make the game work as I had intended. The players needed more attention and answers to questions that I could provide without abandoning the others for too long.

Was it a game or a simulation? I observed that once the initial strategy was selected on each side, there were few opportunities to change path. The troop lists and equipment (particularly skis and snow shores) also largely dictate what can be done. But that is a consequence of the higher command. It throws up the possibility of working this as an element in a megagame of the whole Norwegian campaign. The level of detail locally would be fine. The question is, is there enough choice and feedback mechanism to make the hierarchy interesting or does the game run on tramlines once the troop distribution and strategy is decided early on?

My next project will be to explore some of the combat actions at the next level down. When I next make a CLWG conference, I will bring the work in progress.

CLWG DESIGN WEEKEND PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

9-11 October 2009

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'What are the elements of a successful pirate roleplay game?' - John R

Wargame Mechanisms 3 – Jim

Come One Come Eorl Development Session - Andrew H

After Dinner Game   "In Which the Plot Thickens" (Swashbuckling role play) - Jim

Past Present & Future - Design session by Mukul

Second Life Session - live - for members who can't turn up.

Minions of EVIL - designing a super villian game – Brian

Second Life for Wargames - Jim & Dave

Crete @ Duxford: A Missed Opportunity? - Jerry