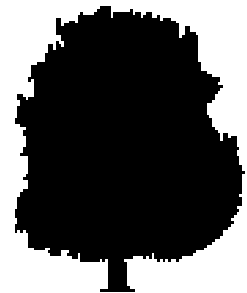




Military Muddling



Volume 16 Issue 5

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

May 2005

Editorial

Last month saw what, for many of us, are two major events in the wargame calendar: the CLWG Games Weekend and Salute 2005.

Those who attended the Games Weekend participated in playtests of a Great War map game designed to recreate the Battle of the Somme for high school pupils, and two quite different fantasy games - one a military-political map/board game and the other a face to face tabletop battle game - both based upon the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. This issue, which is being put together somewhat hastily following my return from a school trip to Normandy, contains reports by the designers of the two latter games and will, I hope, encourage others to contribute their impressions and ideas for development.

Megagame Makers presented the *Battle of Mortain, 1944*, an umpire-controlled, closed map kriegsspiel devised by Jim Wallman, at Salute. *Mortain* attracted a great deal of interest and demonstrated how a very simple, quickly and cheaply produced wargame could be just as, if not more, entertaining than the slow-moving battles between large numbers of expensive, carefully painted models on painstakingly constructed diorama-standard terrain that, as always, form the majority of display or participation wargames at Salute and – despite Jim being one of the wargame judges – win all the prizes!

Arthur Harman

Contributions for Military Muddling

To: Arthur Harman, preferably as Word attachments in Times New Roman font, point 12, by e-mail to arthur1815@lineone.net but you can also send paper or disks to me at:
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DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE: 16th May 2005

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Forthcoming Events

Sunday, 8th May 2005, at Mukul's home, from 12 noon

Please remember, when members are kind enough to allow CLWG to use their homes for meetings, to show them the simple courtesy of informing them by telephone or email that you will be attending!

Reports from the 2005 Games Weekend

After having to be rescheduled later in April, due to my wife having booked a family holiday, the Games Weekend took place on 16th/17th April 2005. Unfortunately, not many members were able to attend so that some games that had been planned did not take place. The attendance was similar to that of an ordinary monthly meeting, making me wonder whether the expenditure on the school was really justified! In future, time permitting, it might be an idea to check the number of members who would definitely be able to attend before paying for a venue.

I was not able to playtest my own ECW tactical game, described in the last issue, since I had to bring the Sunday afternoon session to an abrupt halt in order to meet my wife at Saint Helier Hospital, where she had gone to seek treatment for a severe allergic reaction. I shall present *Puissant Pike* – which I playtested on the school trip with two Year 6 classes in the guise of teaching them about the English Civil War! - at the May meeting.

Onside report – For the Light of the Trees *An i Cala i Aldallon* by Andrew Hadley

Trevor and I have been working on our *Silmarillion* game for several months now, and the original idea we discussed back in 1998-9 is finally starting to shape up. We think we're on top of the 'breeding' game for the Dark powers, and so this session was to test the 'Free Peoples' side of the game a bit more.

The Elves are besieging the Dark Lord Morgoth in his fortress of Angband but are faced with an intractable problem – their birth-rate is simply not high enough to replace their combat losses, let alone build up a big enough army to assault Angband and take back the Silmarils, jewels containing the light of heaven.

Both of us had been a bit worried that there simply wasn't enough there for the Elves to have a political game, and that they would only be waiting for the orcs and their friends to come and munch them. So I designed a simple, rules-light game to test those assumptions.

I took the idea of resource allocation to boxes from the well-known *Starfleet* and *Pirates* games, where each player puts resources, in this case man- (or Elf-) power into various boxes representing garrisons, building fortifications or cities, cunning plans et cetera. This seemed to work well and generated some discussion as well as some brilliant 'wizard wheezes', such as Arthur's Sindarin anti-air repeating crossbow weapon.

With Jerry as the 'free folk', and, in this case, also the humans moving westward into Beleriand (where the Elves were), there was a lively political game. The humans grabbed all the land and the Elves tried half-heartedly to stop them but were too distracted by the hordes of Morgoth's orcs. The various Elf players (Arthur, James and Dave) all tried various strategies, which worked well in combination, and thus fought off all of the (umpire-generated) dark power attacks. Trevor, standing in as the Dwarves and also helping me umpire, did help James develop his advanced armour, which was critical in holding off the final assault as Morgoth souped-up his orcs.

Although we didn't get to test all the issues we wanted to cover, such as what would happen when the siege was broken and what the effect of the Silmarils would be on the Elves, the game seemed to work well and several key issues were explored thoroughly, especially the Elf-human interaction. The players were very

helpful in pointing out areas we still needed to develop, such as the resolution of movement and its interaction with the political side of the game. Trevor and I have already had some ideas on that.

Another aspect I was very happy about was that at least half of the players had expressed severe reservations about Tolkien at the start of the session, and I think it is safe to say that fantasy games are not a typical sphere of interest for several of the players. The pleasing aspect was that they seemed to have connected with the game as it went along and I think this bodes well for getting people other than *Silmarillion* fans involved in the future.

Overall we were very pleased, and we look on course for running the game again, perhaps at the Christmas event this year, and then start thinking about a possible megagame of this in 2006.

Thanks very much to all the players for their input, and especially to Arthur for providing us with an excellent venue.

The Ride of the Rohirrim: Onside Report by Trevor Duguid Farrant

The session I put on at the Games Weekend was part of a project I had been working on since 1990! I'd built Minas Tirith out of paper maché but had to store it in the shed where it went mouldy.

The role of honour was:-

Jim Orcs
James Orcs
Jerry Orcs

Arthur was on the same side, but his name didn't begin with J so he was in charge of the Haradrim cavalry.

Mukul and Andrew played the Riders of Rohan, sweeping majestically across the Pelanor fields.

I had finally finished painting all my Middle Earth figures. However I was sure the rules I had written could be improved and - as it turned out - even the freshly re-written rules were still too slow. However Jim had a very good suggestion: simply treat three of my based figures as one combat unit. Hey presto! No rebasing (not what I want with about a thousand bases), same flexibility and approximately three times less resolution time. I was concerned about the speed aspect, although the full siege/battle is two and a half days long, I do plan to eventually run it in real time. The players were slower to pick-up the rules than I hoped but for the full event they would have complete rules (at the Games Weekend they only had a playsheet) in advance (an hour or two to fully understand them is small in comparison to a sixty hour game).

The movement/range sticks worked better than tape measures (note to myself: use non-soluble markers!). The combat systems achieved the right results but I think I still need fewer factors. I was happy with the army/tribe level morale (there were a lot fewer morale checks than in my original rules) but it does mean that units hit early on fight to the death (or the owner withdraws them to reform), whilst many unscathed/unused units will rout at the end. I don't see an easy way around this, more realistic but slower or faster and more abstract. I plan to modify the morale so that only if losses taken exceed morale will an individual unit then test. For army/tribe level I will state which morale values or less will retreat/flee rather than test (fewer die roles and hopefully still the right result achieved). The leader versus leader challenge definitely needs work as Jim and Mukul ably demonstrated. Still the figures did look good and with the completed terrain the game should be able to grace any show.

Thanks to all who took part and for the helpful suggestions. I will make some improvements and then try it out at a future meeting (probably the next one at my house).

Ride of the Rohirrim Rules

Purchase replacement units and place them on the battlefield

Simultaneous movement of all units with the same movement factor

Repeat for highest through to lowest.

Resolve ranged combat.

Resolve close combat.

(i) The Rohan players choose the order the combats to be resolved.

(ii) Declare which leader(s) are being committed to close combat.

(iii) Unit combat, roll the dice (defender first) \pm modifiers and consult the combat results table. Mark the number of hits taken using the appropriate small D6.

(iv) Repeat (iii) for the attacker.

(v) Morale - retreat and/or advance units.

(vi) Resolve any individual combat for leaders.

(vii) Repeat (i) to (vi) for all current combats.

Check army morale levels – resolve as required

Unit Definitions

These are in alphabetical order on the base of the unit

Attack	Defence	Missile	Morale	Movement
3	2	2	1	4
5	3	-	4	8

Leader Definitions

Attack/Defence	Morale
2	0
1	3

Units with a "-" for missile have no range combat. A unit is destroyed when it takes its 7th hit (except trolls take 13). *One* leader may add his attack/defence value to a close combat in which he is involved. A leader can take wounds equal to his Attack/Defence number for each wound suffered the Attack/Defence number goes down by 1 when this is negative then the leader is dead.

Movement

A unit may move up to its movement value (in cm) each turn applying the following modifiers:-

Moving through friendly units	-2
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Uphill	-1
--------	----

Downhill	+1
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Cavalry charge	+3
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Leaders move 6+morale on foot or 10+morale on horseback or simply move with a unit.

Ranged Fire

The minimum range for ranged fire must be >1 cm (treat as 2cm for the distance modifier).

Spear	2cm
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Short (horse) Bow	3cm
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Orc Bow	4cm
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Rock	4cm
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To calculate ranged fire roll **D4** – 4, apply modifiers and consult the combat results table for the number of hits delivered.

Missile factor	+?
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Target is stationary	+1
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Attacker height advantage	+1
---------------------------	----

Numbers involved	+ (# attackers + # defenders) \div 2 [round answer down]
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Attacker moved	-2
Defence	-?
Distance	-?

Engaging

If a unit moves into close combat range ($\leq 1\text{cm}$) both sides may use ranged weapons (if they have them!) this damage is resolved *before* the close combat.

Close Combat

This occurs when opposing units are $\leq 1\text{cm}$ away and the results are applied simultaneously (although the defender always resolves first). Roll a **D4**, apply modifiers and consult the combat results table for the number of hits delivered.

Attack	+?		
Attacking Leader	+?		
Flank	+1		
Rear	+2		
Numbers involved	\pm (# attackers - # defenders)		
Attacker moved	-1		
Attacking uphill	-1		
Defence	-?		
Defending Leader	-?		
Withdrawing	+4 defence but -8 attack		

Combat Result Table

-4 or less	0 hits
-3 to 0	1 hit
1 to 3	2 hits
4 or 5	3 hits
6 or 7	4 hits
For ≥ 8 use n	n-3 hits

Any unit that has more hits their morale value must immediately make a morale check.

Roll a **D4**, apply modifiers and assess results

Morale	+?	
Both flank secure	+1	total >0 no effect unit holds position
Rear secure	+1	total $=0$ repulsed a distance of (highest # hits - lowest # hits) cm
Hits taken	-?	total <0 unit routs their maximum movement away from the enemy now and each subsequent turn
Current army level	-?	(place a red counter)

If the loser is repulsed (or routed if the winner is cavalry) the winner may pursue at his option and moves the same distance as the loser. During the turn following a pursuit if the loser wishes to move then he must withdraw (place a yellow counter) from combat. Should the winner still wish to pursue then if (after movement) the distance is still $\leq 1\text{cm}$ neither unit has a ranged attack.

At the end of the turn all (non-pursued) routed units are removed from the map and the remaining hits recorded

Now check to see if any army morale checks are required. If indicated use the same process as above except that if a repulse is indicated *do not* move the unit now but it must attempt to withdraw (yellow counter) next turn.

Leaders in close combat

A Leader can add his Attack/Defence number to any close combat he is involved in and can add his morale factor to his unit for a morale check. Whenever a leader adds his combat factor he runs the risk of injury or death; if the unit takes any damage roll

D4+ total # hits taken (where the total # hits is the unit's hits plus any wounds the leader has already taken).

if greater than treble the leader's combat factor then the leader dies.

if more than double to treble the leader's combat factor then the leader takes 1 wound.

if less than or equal to double the leader's combat factor then the leader is unscathed.

In all the above cases roll a **D6** instead if the unit is destroyed.

If two or more opposing leaders are present they have no effect on the unit combat and *must* fight separately using the 1-1 combat rules.

1-1 Combat

Leaders double their current combat factor and divide the total between attack and defence. Subtract player 2's defence from player 1's attack add the total to a **D4** roll and consult the combat table for the # wounds inflicted and reduce his combat factor by the # wounds. If this factor is reduced *below* zero then the leader is dead.

Repeat for player two. Continue for up to 3 rounds.

1-1+ Combat

If two (or more) leaders attack another leader then choose one as a champion and double his combat factor and then add the combat factor of the other participant(s) and use the total to choose attack and defence factors. Continue for three rounds; or until the single leader is dead (stop); or the champion (choose a new champion continue). For many verses many combat randomly pair off as many leaders as possible, any excess can then be added to any combat creating multiple situations as above. Continue as usual but when leaders have killed an opponent they must join in with the other paired combats. Continue for 3 rounds. If a unitless leader(s) is attacked by a unit(s) then treat as 1-1 combat except that the unit player adds the # attackers to his attack figure and uses his defence value as is. Finally after the combats the leader is placed with the unit with which it commenced the combat phase. If that unit no longer exists then with the unit that attacked it failing that the umpire will place the leader in the nearest sensible place.

Cavalry

Cavalry can decide to charge when they attack in open ground (place a green charge counter by them). This increases movement by 3cm for that round only and has the following combat effects. *Any* missile fire gets an additional -1 penalty to hit their attack gets +3 (net +2; (-1 moving)). However their close combat defence is 1 less, they do not get a ranged attack and must advance after a close combat win. If any cavalry (charging or otherwise) is forced to retreat after close combat double the distance moved.

The Alamo reviewed by Arthur Harman

You're probably all familiar with the 1960's film of the same name, starring Lawrence Harvey as William Travis, John Wayne as 'Davy' Crockett and Richard Widmark as James Bowie, which has often been broadcast on television. This over-long epic and its elderly stars presented an uncritical view of the events of 1836, preferring, as John Ford put it in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* [also starring John Wayne] to 'print the legend' rather than the facts, and was, probably for that very reason, a great success. This film, released last year, which has been far more carefully researched and portrays many of the protagonists in a less favourable light, was hardly shown in Britain, but was soon released on DVD – and is now available in W.H. Smith's half-price sale!

Billy Bob Thornton's David Crockett is very different from Wayne's two-dimensional, posturing, buckskin-clad hero: his more subtle portrayal depicts a thoughtful, decent man who is a prisoner of a persona imposed upon him by popular books and theatrical performances, who never expected to have to fight at the Alamo, but rises to the occasion and dies bravely – not in combat, but when facing execution after being captured alive, as described in a contemporary Mexican account.

Be warned, once you've seen this film, and you'll never wish to see Wayne's *Alamo* ever again!

Signature _____

Date _____

I require transport YES/NO*

I can provide Transport YES/NO*

Smoking? YES/NO*

(Delete as applicable)*

We have a large non-smoking games area in the post house as well as the traditional banqueting hall. Play whatever games you want at whenever you want to.

I agree that Kingston Games Group or the Organisers take no liability for any personal injury whilst attending Games fortnight