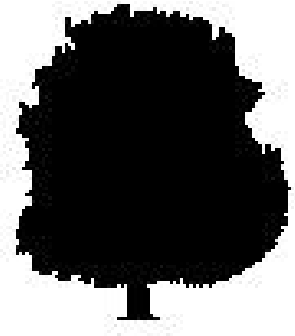


Military Muddling



Volume 13 Issue 5

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

April 2002

Editorial

Firstly I'd like to take the opportunity to say Congratulations to Arthur & Evelyn Harman on the birth of their second child.

This issue has the programme for the games weekend. If you've got a game coming up over the next few meetings then please send me your preview, or even the rules and general briefings and I'll include them in milmud.

Also in this issue are some cartoons. John Rutherford kindly sent me a few that he'd seen and I've got my scanner working so I've been able to include them. If you see any vaguely amusing or military cartoons in anything that you read then please clip it out and send it in.

I'll be in London next week doing drill displays at the Tower of London with my 17th century re-enactment unit so hopefully I'll catch up with a few of you at the games weekend, although it all depends on what Tracy is doing on Saturday evening...

With luck the Games Weekend will see a good number of onside and offside reviews of the games for the next issue. I'm sure Jim will be hassling you at the time for material.

Contributions for Military Muddling

To: James Kemp, preferably by e-mail to milmud@chestnutlodge.org.uk but you can also send paper or disks to me at 19 Castlegreen Street, Dumbarton, G82 1HG (note change of address)



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 22 March 2002

Trevor Farrant (Events Organiser) 020 8577 2573

Mukul Patel (Games Organiser & Admin Officer)

Michael Dollin (Treasurer)

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group

Date	Venue	Game	Author	Blurb
6-7 April	Jim Wallman's Office	Games Weekend		See inside for details.
20 April	Olympia 2	Salute	South London Warlords	Probably the biggest wargames show in Britain.
Sun 5 May	John Rutherford's House	Street Fighting	John Rutherford	Miniatures game involving house-to-house fighting.
Sun 2 June	TBA	TBA		
Sat 6 July	Jim Wallman's office	TBA		

Games pending.

I neglected this one but now ideas are starting to come.

By Trevor Farrant a WW2 land battle game. Very suitable size and set-up for playing at a member's home.

By Mukul Patel, Barricades and Borders the collectible card trading game. Yes I really mean it.

By Mukul Patel, Tannenburg 2, Streamline. Developing from Alsace Lorraine Streamline. A fast play game of the dramatic campaign of Tannenburg.

"None But Americans" By John Rutherford. Suitable for anywhere but his house! I hate to think what he has in mind...

Ok over to you. Let's gets some games and sessions going.

Venues

Jim Wallman's Office

The Wells
7-15 Rosebery Avenue
London EC1R 4SP
Telephone: 020 7841 3666

You need to press the button for "One Plus One Partnership" to get in. Nearest train station is probably Farringdon. Parking is restricted before 13:00 on Saturday but is free on Sunday.

Bedford Park Pub

The pub is located on Streatham High Road opposite Streatham Station. It opens at 12:00 & games will be in the upstairs room.

John Rutherford's House

125 Gleneagle Road
Streatham
Telephone: 020 8677 5427

Located between Streatham Common and Streatham railway stations. Easy to get to by train from Central London (Victoria, London Bridge or Thameslink). Parking is atrocious in Gleneagle Road (AKA the home of double parking) but you can park not too far away.

Games Organiser

Message From Mukul

Email mukulpatel@37.com
Phone 020 8769 0538
Post 215 Valley Road
London SW16 2AF

Things I need when you do make an offer

- Participant numbers how many people do you need
- Venue - how many rooms needed, equipment needed such as tables or phones or intercoms etc,
- Is the session ready to go and be included in the programme or is it still under development. If it is still under preparation when will it be ready
- When do you want to put it on or when do not want it put on.
- How much time do you want

Letters to the Editor

Jim Wallman

I just came across this rather moving web page. Certainly not news to WW1 buffs, but still a 'good cause' if ever I saw one.

<http://www.shotatdawn.org.uk/>

Of course if you disagree, then write to Mil Mud - James will welcome a discussion, I'm sure. **[I certainly do!]**

Philip Middleton

Jim (and all)

As you say a powerful and passionate site that on balance deserves to be supported. However, the site raises and conflates a number of issues including:

1. Is capital punishment an effective deterrent/instrument of control for running an army in time of war? (i.e. does it work?)
2. Is both the effectiveness and acceptability diminished in volunteer "citizen" armies/professional forces of modern democracies as opposed to conscript/pressed/mercenary forces of past ages? Where does WW1 fit in this model?
3. Should "genuine" malingerers and deserters in the British army in WW1 have been shot? (In parenthesis I have to say that it is astonishing testimony to the courage and

sense of duty of the millions who remained in the line that many more didn't run away - I'm not sure that my sense of duty would be such that I would voluntarily endure the conditions that my Grandfather accepted as his lot)

4. Were there severe miscarriages of "justice" resulting in execution of the innocent? (Almost certainly)

5. Should there be a blanket pardon for all? (Not as clear cut as today's outraged youngsters might assume - talk to old soldiers and some veterans' groups and in some quarters whilst there is grim acceptance that mistakes were made, there is strong hostility towards pardoning "cowards" as well as support for wider compassion.)

6. Were the Generals of WW1 (on all sides) incompetent butchers sending the flower of youth to their deaths? (A very convenient excuse for the politicians, perhaps). Was Haig worse than any others? (Hated by Lloyd George and a useful scapegoat) The whole issue has just been reopened (cf John Terraine, Lynne Macdonald) and there are vigorous arguments on both sides. Certainly Worth a debate although not here and now.

[I might agree that it isn't for debate on the mailer, but if anyone else would like to write about it please send an article to me and I'll publish it in Milmud]

From: AndyGrain@aol.com

Phil (and all)

Having slagged off the Home Page on this site (which does it absolutely no favours whatever) I would encourage readers to look at the articles by Julian Putkowski in it. He has made something of a specialism of mutiny and similar activity in WW1; I listened to a very good talk of his in March on the Kinmel Mutiny in 1919. He seems to me to set out the case in a thoroughly dispassionate way with suitable academic rigour.

The solution? Mindful of the feelings of some of the veteran's and other groups (and

veterans in groups nowadays (in my experience) tend to have had a relatively limited exposure to the travails of the frontline, worthy and gallant though their contribution may have been) I tend to think that a blanket pardon is the only sensible way forward.

It is quite clear that there were a significant number of miscarriages of justice but due to the effluxion of time it is not really possible to have a proper appeal process for each case. The MOD, however, has long been reluctant to re-open matters like this (and similar areas like medals, campaign / battle honours etc) and I suspect that the relevant Minister would need to issue a diktat to his civil/armed service chiefs. Whilst possible this will have a cost and that will be the stumbling point. *[Indeed it would have cost implications, but if the political imperatives were high enough this wouldn't be a problem. The cost of doing it is pretty small in comparison to the cost of the munitions that are being expended daily at the moment.]*

Games Weekend

Message From Trevor

Any other offers would be gratefully accepted, especially light hearted after dinner games since this would save me carrying a huge amount of stuff on the tube.

Timetable

Saturday

10:10 12:00

Stockmarket game 2-6 players,
Nigel Buckle

Barbarossa high level planning Mukul + 1
senior German campaign player
Trevor Farrant

12:15-12:45 Lunch

12:45-14:45

Knocking the Props Away 2-6 players
Nick Luft

Wild West RPG game 3+ players
Jonathan Pickles

14:45-17:30

Cold War political game 8-12 players
Michael Dollin

17:30-18:30 Dinner

18:30 onwards After Dinner Games
Dragon Riders 2-6 players
Trevor Farrant

Action Men in Tights. New version with
vehicles and artillery 2-7 players
Trevor Farrant

Various short board games

Trust Me I'm British! 1 player or more

Sunday

10:00-13:00

Barbarossa - month 1 figure battle 2-4 players
Trevor Farrant

Drive on Falaise
Mark Weston

13:00-13:30 Lunch

14:00-17:30

Carry On Up The Kaiser 4-10 players
Bob Maycock

17:30 windup, tidy up and go home

The Games

Cold War Politics

Michael Dollin

A reworking of the Cold War political game, which could accommodate 8-12 or more if we get a better turn out. Originally played at the Christmas meeting.

Barbarossa

Trevor Farrant

A high level planning session for Barbarossa to start off a CLWG campaign. Followed by some battles.

Trust Me I'm British!

How easy is it for terrorists/aliens to get a new identity? Players will be looking at how to establish false identities. I want to see if you lot can manage to come up with some of the more exotic scams that make many wizard wheezes seem rather mundane...

If not run at the games weekend it could be done by e-mail or post.

"Carry On Up The Kaiser

Bob Maycock

A Roleplaying Game of German Raids on the Uganda Railway, Circa 1915. Requiring a cast of six to ten players, lasting no more time than an average Kevin Costner movie, and featuring a host of African wildlife (both dangerous and benign), magnificent terrain and a supporting cast of thousands (albeit in a walk on/run off capacity.)

Stockmarket game

Nigel Buckle

An excellent game that really should be marketed. A game made for Pickles!

Knocking the Props Away

Nick Luft

This will run as a megagame in September

this year. KPA is a political/military strategic game of the First World War. At the Games Weekend I intend to run part of this campaign, probably focusing on one of the minor campaigns, to test the logistics, combat, naval & land mechanisms. Combat is large scale - the smallest unit will be a Corps.

Players won't personally direct combat; they will commit resources and manpower to offensive or defensive operations.

RESOURCES

Between 2-6 players required. Three rooms, one for the umpire/s and the main map and the others for the player teams, though I could squeeze two groups of players into one room.

DURATION

Should be able to do a small campaign in 10 minute per season turns. Would like to cover at least a year, depending on progress two years. That is 40 - 80 minutes, not including setup of 30 minutes.

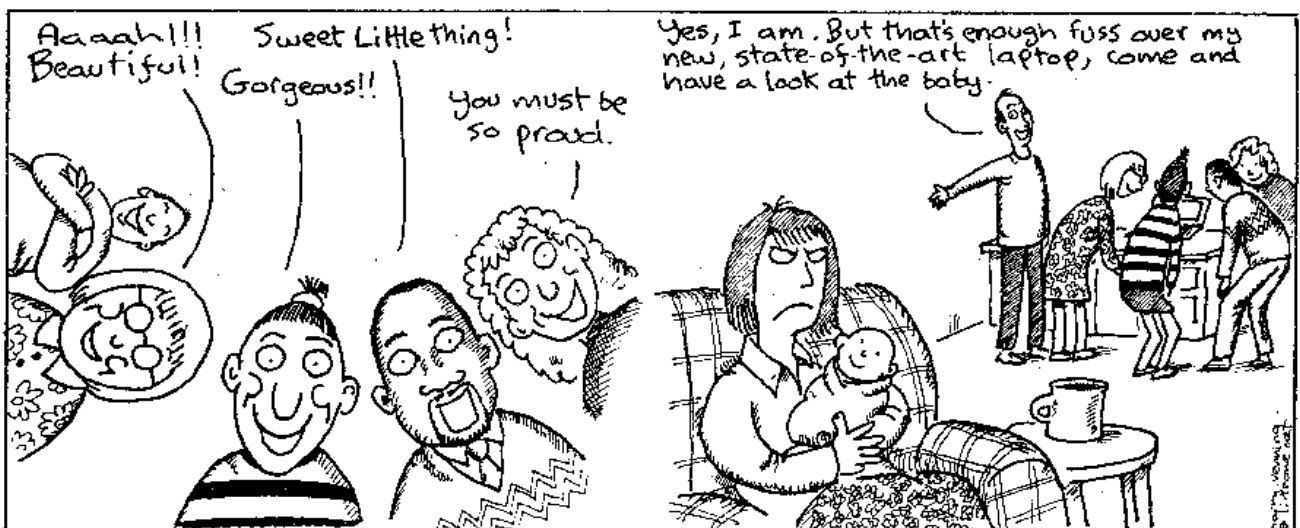
On/Offside Reports

Barricades & Borders

[Not Boundaries & Borders]

Onside by Brian Cameron

I should have contributed an on-side report about this game previously but just haven't gotten around to it. The general idea is to look at the developments, technological, political



and military among states during the second half of the nineteenth century. It's a theme I've explored a number of times over the years, this is the most successful yet. Having said that it's still in pretty crude shape at present, which accounts for glitches such as Trevor suffered. It's one of the good points about testing at Chestnut as try-outs of designs and games generally are always played quite competitively and points such as this become very clear.

I don't follow Nick's comment about games should not be tested with a 'year zero' start up. The point about doing it this way is to explore how the states develop from the same point if players explore different paths. It's hard to compare their situation as the game progresses if they start from different points. The next step would be to try and put some historical perspective to it so countries become France, etc rather than Ruritannia, a situation I went out of my way to avoid to start with as then the test becomes more of a discussion about the historical perception rather than the basics of the game mechanics. It's probably the scientist in me. I'd be interested to know Nick's logic though.

I was quite pleased with how it went and will return to it when enthusiasm strikes again. Meanwhile my solicitors, Messrs Phib, Philch and Hyde, will be contacting Mr Patel about infringement of my intellectual property rights involved in his marketing of his 'collectable card game'.

In the Valley of the Shenandoah.

Onside by Brian Cameron

This was actually the game put on by Mukul but designed by me so this is a sort of on-side/offside report by some one who wasn't at the game!

This was written for Bernie Ganley as part of the Real-time game rules that he is doing with his mate Keith. Bernie wanted to do a one-day campaign with the setting of the Shenandoah campaign of 1862, This would require a set of battle rules which would enable the actions to

be played out (preferably using the figures and scenery his mate Keith sells) in something like 30-40 minutes. As it happened this coincided with some thoughts I'd been having about wargames and movement of the units in general and Napoleonic games in particular. The most interesting set of commercial figure rules I've seen in recent years (possibly several decades) is the Square Bashing set by the firm Peter Pig. These are divisional level, battalion resolution WWI rules for which Bernie wrote a Russian Civil War variant. The playing area is divided up into a grid of roughly 6 by 4 squares and movement of units is from square to square, getting rid of all the tedious business using tape measures. As the exact position of troops in a square isn't that important it takes out the 'formation dancing' side of the game (still unfortunately common outside of game played in my lounge) and is a lot faster. It sounds very artificial but works out well and gives more of a feeling of launching and attack on, say, a village or against a ridge and away from the whole sense of slowing creeping forward at two inches a turn.

This prompted me into thoughts about how it's locations on a battlefield that are important. Taking Waterloo, there are really five important places, the two opposing ridges, Hougemont, Haye Sainte and Placenoit. The rest of it is messing about in between. I then applied this to Bernie's requirement and quite arbitrarily decided that there would be three locations on the battlefield (actually it wasn't quite so arbitrary, it seemed like that would be a number which would give sufficient options to be interesting but not so many as to extend the time in took to play the game).

Players then take the role of the army commander and make decisions as to where to commit their troops initially and then committing them to locations by switching them from one location to another (difficult) or from a reserve (easier). To save doing too many combat calculations the results of combat are only worked out at a location

when something new happens, e.g. more troops arrive or a senior commander arrives to energise the situation. It's a bit like an account in a book, "meanwhile, back at Devil's Den...". The 'fighting to the last man' syndrome is avoided by making losses smaller if one chooses a good time to retreat and the need to maintain an army for the campaign aspect (I'm really convinced that games need to be linked in some way, with consequences carried over from one to another, to make them interesting) as well as the political aspects which play such an important part in the campaign side.

John will be pleased to know that Bernie will be publishing them, as a complete campaign game. He'll be running a campaign as a demo game during the day at SALUTE (April 20th). I should mention that the campaign side of the game borrows from Peter Merritt's excellent Shenandoah game that he ran at SELWG some time back (and at which I had the honour to lead a team of crack Chestnut Lodgers).

Reviews

We were Soldiers Once

Robert <nordwind44@aol.com>

It is a good film. Character development is very slight at times, but at least it is attempted and more effective than the character development in Blackhawk Down. Even some weak attempts at developing North Vietnamese characters were made.

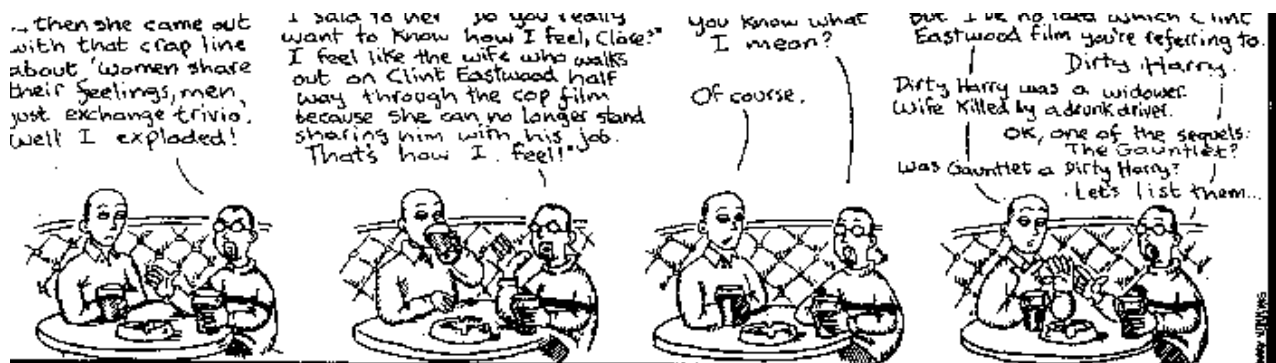
used and the tactics used then you might leave a little disappointed.

I kept expecting to see more choppers, but a reread of the account of the battle at LZ X-Ray in the excellent book "Pleiku," by J.D Coleman confirmed that the chopper total was very close to correct.

The account of the battle in the movie seems to be very accurate until the end. I won't spoil the ending for you, but suffice it to say that Mel and his boys do something that ain't in the history books. Furthermore, I think that the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment get their due in the movie's account of the final phases of the battle.

I waited in vain for the B-52 strike that occurred on the last day as well. A different display of airpower seems to have been substituted for that. However, the use of American airpower and artillery was prominently and accurately portrayed. It even included a historically accurate friendly fire incident. The airstrikes make for good theatre as well! I like seeing a movie like this with surround sound and the big screen.

The terrain for the movie seems to match the book's description, but it sure did not look like Southeast Asia (more like California, but I honestly didn't wait to see the credits and locations when the movie ended). Pleiku seems to make it clear that it was not a jungle though. So the terrain used seems to match what I have read. The only thing missing were the anthills....



If you are looking for a movie that takes the time to explaining airmobility, the weapons

Samuel Elliott plays a veteran Sergeant and gets all the best lines in this movie. I really enjoyed his character and didn't care whether or not he was historically accurate! However, something tells me that a read of Moore's book on which this movie has based will show that the real Sergeant Plumley and Elliott's character had lots in common!

I sure would have liked to know more about the NVA force and more about its commander. The movie showed their viewpoint, but I would have liked stronger development of the NVA main characters. The commie heroes were certainly heroic. I would have to say that bravery was not in short supply on the NVA side when you look at the massive firepower the Americans could call down on them from air and artillery. I sure would like to see a character study that gets at what goes on in the head of the NVA soldier though. I would like to see how many of them really weren't happy to be there. Lots of movies show the American soldier in Vietnam as an unwilling participant counting his days till he leaves, but the NVA seem to always be portrayed as stout-hearted fighters that bravely shoulder the yoke for as many years and lives as it will take. In reality, I think many of them were just as unhappy about fighting a war and many of them were forced into war by more coercive means than draft cards!

I loved the denigration of the majority of the news media at the end of the battle....

I think it was far more historically accurate than Mel's recent flicks. That said though, I really liked *The Patriot* more than this movie. *The Patriot* was great theatre and the acting was very good. It was pretty bad (actually horrible) historically speaking though.

This movie takes great pains to achieve accuracy, until the end of the battle. I found that somewhat disappointing, because they were on a roll! But we had to give Mel and his boys a chance at Hollywood heroics. I really didn't see a need to embellish the

historical account at all. It was very heroic without any assistance.

Overall, a fine movie. Is it one of the great historical/war flicks of all time? I think not. Is it as good as *Platoon*? It certainly is far more historically accurate and balanced than *Platoon*. However, it is not as good a movie. So, I guess it is in the eyes of the beholder.

[This review was written as part of a discussion on the command decision mailing list and I thought it was particularly balanced so asked the author for permission to print it in milmud - Ed]

Poetry Corner

Advice To A British Lead Soldier L'Envoi to Sand-table Sonatas by Flashdout Kasting

Dedicated To LVB

If yer shaded with oils and washed with a brush,
If yer de-tail's all crisp and yer parting-line's flush,
Remember it don't mean a tittle or tush
To the Man Who Writes The Rules

If yer coat's painted red when it ought to be blue
An yer 'at's an off-colour, yer skin's a sick hue
It don't matter a bit 'ow some fool painted you
For you lives an you dies by the Rules.

If yer paint is all chinky from years o' hard use
An yer bayonet's gone an one arm's hangin loose,
Yer as good as the next 'un an' just as much use,
To The Man Who Writes The Rules.

Oh he knows all the hist'ry, he thinks an' he reads,
And what 'e don't know 'e can fake if he needs,
'E can tell you the pace of men, camels or steeds,
An' the 2D morale o' the mules.
He's a Solomon wise with a sceptre an' crown
He's historian, mathematician and clown,
An he don't care a whit (which is good!) for renown.
He's The Man Who Writes The Rules.

If yer lined with a marker, or lined with a pen
Painted double-ought sable or camel-hair ten,
It's one an' the same when the dice roll again
For you lives an' you dies by the Rules.

If yer base is magnetic, or coinage or card,
 If yer pose is high port, or reloading, or guard,
 If yer bought by the casting or bought by the yard,
 It don't mean a toss if yer plastic or hard
 To The Man Who Writes The Rules.

On styrofoam hill or vermiculite plain
 When the tape-measures whirr and the dice roll again,
 An' the pizza-smell's thick, so's to rattle yer brain,
 It's the Rules that permit, an' the Rules that restrain,
 And you lives an you dies by the Rules.

For the painter's a grind and the gamer's a plod;
 The collector, 'es just an obsessive old sod,
 But I tell you, 'es bloody well near to a God
 Is The Man Who Writes The Rules.

Oh the rules they are fresh, or the rules they are stale,
 An' they favour the dusky or favour the pale,
 An' they're overly broad or 'ave too much detail,
 An' they don't know the difference 'twixt Congreve
 and Hale,
 And they finish too quick or they plod on too long,
 An' they figure the spears or machine-guns too strong,
 An' their cavalry movement is simply all wrong
 But when the dice sing o' their rattley song
 It's all just the prattle of fools
 For you lives and you dies
 Mind, you lives and you dies
 Yes, you lives and you dies
 By the Rules.



Colonel Waugh-Gaymer



The Voice of Reason

I'm free - and overstretched - again! Back in the uninformed [sic] services, off to War! Thanks to Poodle Blair realising that it's the Last Turn [!] of the Afghan 'War Against Terror'TM, so chuck in the super-elite +6 Royal Marines, arrgh! We all love 'Mission Creep' [aka Mr Hoon] for giving us a chance to show our Arctic Frostbite Capability now the snow-on-boots Evil Russkies are our best mates and what's the best thing about Afghanistan? - It's NOT IRAQ!

HURRAH!

Expected Issue Dates for Military Muddling in 2002

Issue	Deadline	Post date	Meeting [1]
May	19 April 2002	22 April 2002	Sun 5 May 2002
June	17 May 2002	20 May 2002	Sun 2 June 2002
July	21 June 2002	24 June 2002	Sat 6 July 2002
August	19 July 2002	22 July 2002	Sun 4 August 2002
September	23 August 2002	26 August 2002	Sat 7 September 2002
October	20 September 2002	23 September 2002	5-6 October 2002

[1] All dates for meetings need to be confirmed by the Admin Officer.

Game designers are strongly encouraged to submit previews and general briefing in advance to stimulate interest in their session. Preferred format is typed in plain text, preferably by e-mail, but you can send me bits of paper, floppy disks, CDs, or whatever other medium you can get hold of. I shall award a prize for the most notable submission at the end of the year.

Articles can be sent by e-mail to: milmud@chestnutlodge.org.uk or by post to James Kemp, 19 Castlegreen Street, Dumbarton, G82 1HG