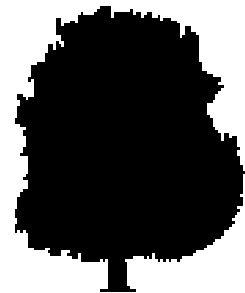


Military Muddling



Volume 18 Issue 2

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

2011

Editorial

Hi.

Blah ba-blah Mukal, Jim, blah blah thanks, blah blah book reviews, blah blah articles, blah blah fingers out.

Oh and apologies for the Balkans political bit – I'm 'renowned' for writing, ah, very terse hand-outs with minimal explanation, looking more like a computer program than a set of rules. I'll try and do a bit better for the Feb meeting...

Contributions for Military Muddling

To: pmerritt_mbx@yahoo.com



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 1st March 2011

Over The Hills and Far Away

Game by Jim Wallman

Offside report by Mukul Patel

Hi this was a re run or tweak up of an old game by Cameron and Wallman. For a handbook of the game look at the website. The first time this game was run, i had very little empathy with the political/social side of this game except for making money and stitching deals if possible. This time around I had a very decent book about Lord Cardigan of the 8th Hussars set in the mid 1800s. A slightly different period of time from this game but not totally out of period. The book gave me way more insight into possibilities of the social side of this game. So I was really looking forward to this game, especially the social political side more than the military side.

The political part of the game was fun interesting and in a parts very ad hoc. I really enjoyed a couple of the auctions for Regiments which got pretty tasty and the social stuff at the horse race, a nice example of some ad hoc gaming. The bidding for who was to lead the expedition for Santa Domingo was fun as well, we had a couple of very ad hoc coalitions thrown together who bid resources against each other, great stuff. So my expectations on the social side of the game was met, very good. I think more social events could be made such as a Kings Parade where perhaps a colonel regiment with very good drill might star, some way of dealing with consequences and opportunities of rebellions but riots which seemed to quite common, anyway there's hundred one things that could be added, but any such events need to be if possible involving of players participating together, the horse race was good thing therefore. A danger of too many diverse socail events is that a player starts playing on his own rather with the other players.

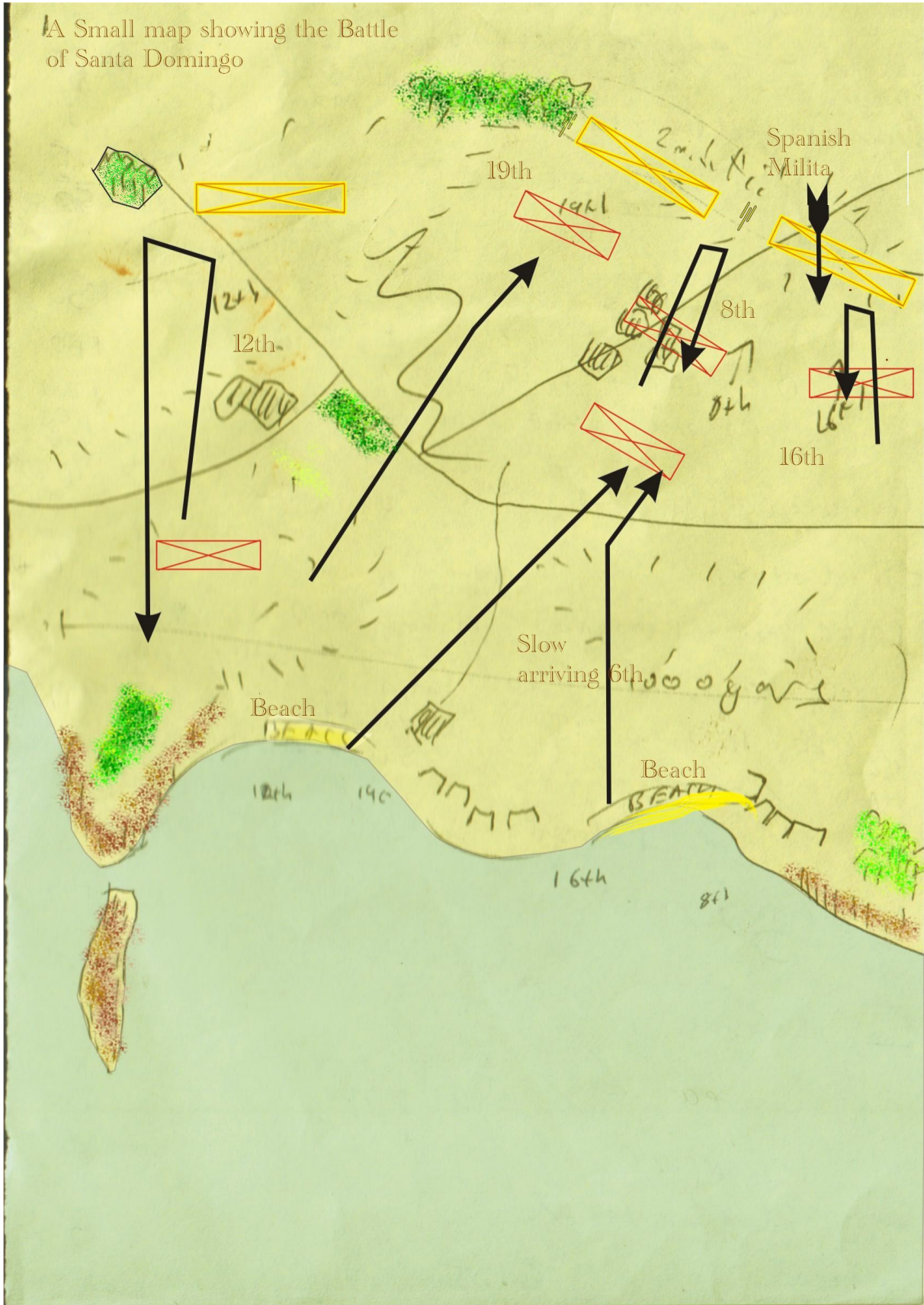
Maintaining or improving your regiment, I am not the person to comment on this as i never once supervised my regiment closely enough for them to benefit from my presence. One thing i did read about in the book about Lord Cardigan, is that officers paid to join to his regiment. so i wondered, if a very prestigious regiment might benefit from the same thing, that is an income if it becomes a very socially desirable regiment?

The Military game, fine, perhaps process heavy, but actually the systems are pretty darn simple, so a turns cracked on, need only a little clarification at times. One thing that seemed to be missing was the time taken to absorb orders. looking at the recently revised game handbook i spotted something about a turns delay in implementing orders, that we didnt do in the game. One query i might also have is the relation of tension points to casualties. I am not at all sure how big and small casualties could be in the battles and skirmishes of the time.

Anyways thanks to all the players for the pleasure and especial thanks to Mr Wallman the effort of revisiting this game, and made it work for me.

| Player / Regt | Comments |
|--|--|
| Simon – 3rd | Sir Robert Smythe-Jones (has and been acquainted with the Prince of Wales!!!) |
| Dave B – 6th | Arthur Bonithon (Argent, a chevron between 3 fleur-de-lis sable) (rubbish at judging a good horse) (whose control at St Dominga was some said distant but very equitable and gentlemanly) |
| John R – 8th | J De Vere (whose battalion charged and lost against a Spanish Militia Battalion at St Dominga) |
| Daniel S – 12th | A De Guerre (holds a good ball) (whose battalion bravely successfully distracted a Spanish Regular Battalion from executing a flank attack versus the 19th) |
| Nick Luft – 13th | Right Hon. Colonel Sir James Boyes MP (soon to be married to Miss E de Guerre.) (trainer of duff horses) |
| Martin F - 16th and 17th | St John Ffrench of Bushey Frenches (drill level 5, Yikes!!) (whose 16th Battalion was held to stand still by the same Spanish Battalion that the 8th ran from) |
| Mukul P – 19th | Colonel Mukul Northwood, MP for Outwood (Great speaker in the House of Commons) (Spoke strongly for war) (2nd in Command to Arthur Boniton on the recent expedition to St Dominga) |

A Small map showing the Battle of Santa Domingo



BALKAN WARS PART 3 – THE NATIONAL TEAM GAME

Autumn Conference Session By Pater Merritt

This was the third part of my 'Balkans Trilogy', an attempt to simulate the chaos, tragedy and confusion of the operational and political actions of the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and how each influenced the other. I've already inflicted Part 1, the 'Peace Conference' game, and Part 2, the 'Operational' system, on the group, and so it seemed high time to finish things off. These too-brief notes are therefore an outline of my ideas for how the 'internal' team game would run in a megagame setting, as players deal with personal glory, political realities, operational needs and the degradation of sovereign power... Have fun!

To allow us to concentrate on the job in hand (and as we're 40-odd people short of a full implementation), the other two aspects of this epic – peace conference and operational actions (i.e. the war!) – will be handled today by means of two simple systems stolen- err, I mean 'adapted' – from more traditional sources. I'm especially pleased with the warlike exploitation of snakes and ladders...

Actually I think S&N has a lot to offer as a 'quickie' solution to often quite linear military operations, especially sieges 9or anything involving Hapsburgs...?). I had it in mind that the advance of the parallels (from which bombardment and assaults would take place) would be handled by 'raising the bar' on how far down a snake you might slide. But I digress...

NOTE – Like the previous two parts, experienced players will notice once again the highly stylised or 'systemic' design I have attempted to use on what is frequently the least organised aspect of a game – internal team organisation & politics. This was partly a simple intellectual challenge, but mainly an attempt to write a 'simulator' political model which could accept a wider range of players with very mixed abilities. The 'shouters' may still dominate, but the more passive ones should see very quickly how they can survive – and prosper....

1. PRE-GAME PREP

NOTE – for the conference most of this will be pre-generated to speed things up

- Gain personal support from non-aligned in parliament (6+1d6)
- Decide player 'political faction colour' (ideally 3 colours split 2 per, or if odd numbers 50/50)
- Determine initial PM (largest support; roll d6 if tied); make Grand Plan!
- Set DEFCON level (Guns, not butter):
 - + set govt/national targets (i.e. determines level of *expectation* – and heads to roll)
 - + use/acquire 'favours' from Great Powers ('advantage' cards, i.e. big guns, telephones etc)
- Create armies - all players roll 1d6, then starting with highest first go round doing ONE of::
 - + set force level (strength); may also affect national 'mood'
 - + appoint initial NPC cmdrs from 'pool'; mark 'owner' (player)

2. EACH GAME TURN

PHASE 1: Politics

- Secretly deal cards from POWER pack (1 per player; PM gets an extra one)
- Cards: 'Normal' (choose any option); 'Crisis' (national cock-up); 'Blank' (busy with politics)
- PLAY (from current PM clockwise, so 2nd PM card always last); if 'crisis' card, leave face-up

| PLAYER OPTIONS: choose any ONE of the following... | |
|---|--|
| BUILD faction | 1d6 from non-aligned' pool; ONLY OPTION ALLOWED FOR 'BLANK' |
| CHANGE the PM | count-up faction support; simple majority of players; if changed IMMEDIATELY pass 2nd card to new PM; adjust factions of the two players (+/- 1d6 support for incoming/outgoing) |
| APPOINT NEW army cmdr | +/- CMD.POPULARITY of respective incoming/outgoing leaders to YOUR faction total; mark the cmdr as 'Your man' (faction colours) |
| MILITARY actions | choose an army (remember them?); generate pool of operational points (1d3?) for use this time – unused points do NOT persist! |
| FOREIGN AID | trade your independence for 'goodies' (needs player majority); choose:- <i>'politics'</i> (see conference rules), <i>'arms'</i> (army or navy; takes time to arrive) REPLACE card in power pack with 'blank' (= no action if drawn) |
| RESOLVE crisis | use either 'faction' or 'favour' to deal with crisis:- faction: any players put faction into 'pot' (one chance, clockwise from player); solved if rolling 2d6 1/e 'pot' (all who contributed – if solved - gain 1d6 'faction') favour: discard any 'foreign aid' card in your possession – gain 2d6 'faction' |
| AVOID crisis | use any 'normal' power card drawn to remove a crisis from the pack; cost = 6x 'faction', gain 2d6; make a great show of your effortless 'statesmanlike' actions... |
| CREATE crisis | Place a 'crisis' marker face-up on the team <i>table</i> (<i>whilst this may seem a tad suicidal, it is a the 'nuclear' option which allows minor factions in the government not to be completely sidelined by the big boys – my thanks to Dave Boundy for this fabulous idea.....!!!</i>) |

PHASE 2: Actions

- Military Ops (resolve army actions on map tables); see appendix 'A'
- Diplomacy (conferences, trading 'favours'); see appendix 'B'

PHASE 3: Unfinished business

- If any unresolved crises, each player loses one third of their current 'faction' holding & -1 POP.PT
- If no crises, PM *gains* 1x POP.PT

3. END OF GAME

- Each player adds POP.PTS + (faction size / 10, rounded down)
- Eliminate lowest # players = final 'target level' (popular expectation!)

PLEASE NOTE – THESE APPENDICES ARE ONLY INTENDED FOR THE CONFERENCE TRY-OUT AND SEEK TO REPLACE THE OTHER KEY ASPECTS OF THE FULL GAME, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY PROVIDE A ‘FUN’ ALTERNATIVE TO THE MEGAGAME IF YOU DON’T HAPPEN TO HAVE 50-60 SPARE WARGAMERS HANGING AROUND...

APPENDIX 'A' - Automated Military Operations

Players do not control armies directly – to do this, they must work through/with ‘NPC’ command characters who all have a simple profile. Cmdrs are rated for:-

CMD.ABILITY - so, exactly how good is this guy at his job of ‘generalizing’?

CMD.POPULARITY - how ‘well-connected’ and popular is he? If you replace ‘Good Old Marshal Zog’ (who couldn’t fight his way out of a bag), be prepared for a potential a public crisis...

CMD.MORALE - how stable is he (i.e. is he a MacClellan [who doesn’t believe he can win] or a Hood [who doesn’t believe he can lose]?!). This latter factor is important, as it can lead to NPC cmdrs ‘amending’ player/govt wishes, either by attacking too much, or (as with one Turkish army), the general suffered a mental collapse and took his army out of the field even though it was still functional! Managing these bods and the problems they cause are an important aspect of the game.

The operations take place on a 'snakes & ladders' version of the map - for each army determine LOS (= levels from army to consolidation level), then pick one of:-

- NO OP.PTS ALLOCATED!

- CMD.POP -2, ‘owner’ faction -1d6, add ‘crisis’ card to pack

- ADVANCE:

- roll 1d6 per op.pt; move ahead squares = score – LOS

- STOP if encountering enemy force or 'city'

- on ladders, move up as far as CMD.ABILITY;

- on snakes go down as far as current CONSOLIDATION level

- **any 'bypassed' enemy force** (i.e. you go up ladder to another level) is skilfully outflanked

+ it RETREATS straight up to next clear level above your current army level

+ gain 1d6 faction; remove 1x ‘crisis’ card from power pack

- **if encountering enemy army during movement**, STOP & do CMD.AB - 1d6;

+ if negative, deduct losses from strength points; add 'CRISIS' card to power pack

CMD.POP -1; ‘owner’ loses faction = SP lost

Smaller force moves back 1 square (may trigger snake/ladder move)

+ if positive, your army always lose 1 SP; enemy deducts full amount

+ if enemy force ELIMINATED, remove 1x ‘crisis’ card; ‘owner’ gains 1d6 faction; move enemy force back = difference; CMD.POP +1

+ if beaten enemy goes down snake = ROUT; remove from board,

‘owner’ gains 1d6 faction, CMD.POP +1

- adjust national targets by each LEVEL moved

- gain 1x 'conf.pt' for each clear, full level currently occupied

- add 1x 'CRISIS' card to power pack for each moved level down from start of turn

- SIEGE:

- determine garrison size (3+1d6)

- roll 1d6 per op.pt; for each 5+ they lose an SP, 2- you lose an SP

- check surrender: if 1d6 = 2x defender strength, treat as ELIMINATED army

- when/if successful, treat as ELIMINATED army

- CONSOLIDATE:

- roll 1d6 less/equal to op.pts; move CONSOL level up 1

- reduce CMD.POP -1

- cannot consolidate unless level cleared

NOTE – ANY ‘FACTION GAINS’ MAY BE DESTRIIBUTED AMONG OTHER PLAYERS AS THE OWNER SEES FIT (to keep a power block happy)

APPENDIX 'B' - Automated Peace Conference**You - For each map with an army:**

- draw 1x playing card per clear level
- +2 cards if key town occupied
- 'Foreign Aid' = (any)
- 'claim' = sets (as in Rummy)
- joker = (any)

Non-played neighbour states:

- for each map, deal 3x cards
- +1 card per turn (up to 6)
-

POST-SESSION NOTES

The session spent a great deal of time (well, all the time) discussing how the various 'action options' might work, and many useful ideas were absorbed by yours truly. Indeed, so engrossed did people become in the 'internal' game that nobody seemed to mind that we hadn't actually got around to fighting the war.....

I was pleased with the general acceptance of the 'systemic' approach to government, something usually more free-form. I am (of course) worried about the 'factionalism' aspect, but as there are no military players as such no-one will be sitting twiddling their thumbs while the 'government' resolves a major internal crisis. And their neighbouring states should be positively beaming at such discomfort – as long as they weren't one half of a major encircling plan....

Still, I'm very grateful to all those who turned up, and look forward to seeing what happens in practice at the February try-out!



Set in the early stages of World War One, this is an experiential session in the spirit of the famous 'great egg race'.

The players form teams representing the main operators of the fearsome wonder weapon – ***the Zeppelin***.

There is no doubt that, even though it is in its infancy, the Zeppelin has the potential to bring war to the enemy's heartland like never before.

Your mission is therefore to:

1. Design a Zeppelin
2. Build one or more Zeppelins to that design
3. Test and modify your prototype
4. Launch a series of terror raids over Great Britain – bringing them to their knees and ending the war with a resounding victory for the German Reich.

Teams

There are up to four teams of two players, two Navy teams (one at Namur and one at Evere) and two Army teams (at Metz and Fredrichshaven).



Whilst everyone is *obviously* pulling together for the war effort, there will inevitably be some friendly rivalry between the teams.

Components



You have a two Light Engineering General Operations power units (= LEGO clockwork motors).

These are attached under your zeppelin body (=cardboard tubes), suitably and realistically modelled by the team, with camouflage and markings..



You can have more than one LEGO power unit per Zeppelin if you wish to build something especially large.

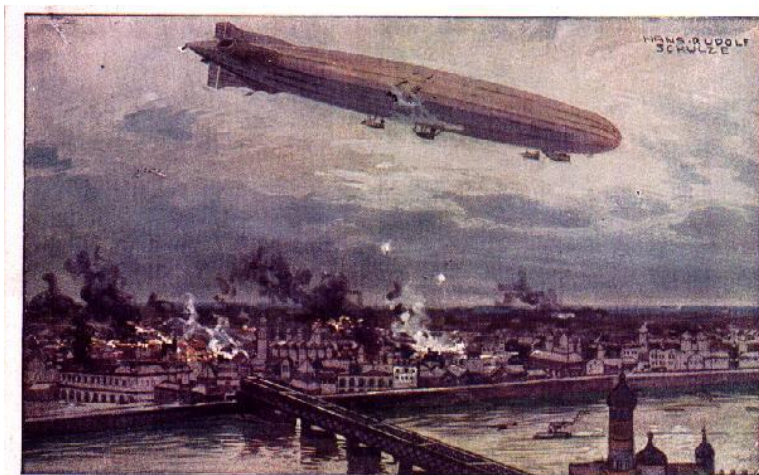
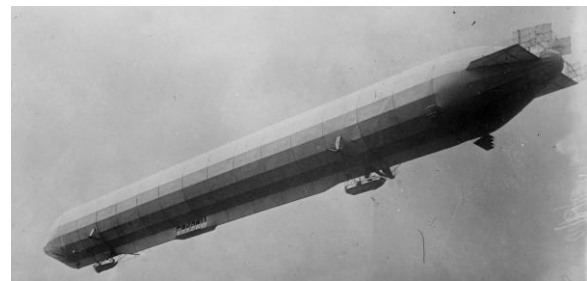
Or you can build more than one design.

Operations

The operational area will be marked out on the floor, with the coast of Great Britain, key strategic targets and the launching bases for raids marked on the floor.

The zeppelins are then launched across the floor from their base towards their target. If the model falls over or stalls or collides with another zeppelin then it is deemed to have crashed.

If it completes a run (i.e. until the clockwork runs down) then it is deemed to have completed a mission.



Each raiding zeppelin is given a 'time on target' – this is the number of seconds after the ship is launched when it drops its bombs (as the raid is at night).

One team member sits with his back to the playing area and counts off the seconds, and when the time is up shouts 'DROP'.

The other team member marks the point the Zeppelin has reached and that is the target for its bombs.

A twin-engined Zeppelin can make two drops.

**Victory!**

Hitting London or the London docks will almost certainly bring the war to an end quickly.

Whilst not as significant, hitting other Englander towns hit will certainly contribute to their ultimate defeat.

On subsequent raids there may be some enemy interference, but don't worry, the zeppelin will always get through.

Zeppelinpiel – Offside Report by Peter Merritt

Game by Jim Wallman

Lego? Build-a-Zeppelin?? How could such a game fail....?!!! Took me back to my old National Army Museum days with the D-Day assault on Pegasus Bridge - using balsa-wood or paper gliders...

As outlined by Jim elsewhere in this issue, the idea was to pose the fundamental problems of design (range, navigation, payload etc) in a practical format, especially accurate as the originals didn't really have much of an idea either!

Mukal and I formed one of two Navy teams (who thus did not share any findings with the Army). At our base in Metz, we constructed two spiffing models and in the process of testing determined several critical criteria:-

1. *Shape of model had very little to do with success, but 'trim' was critical*
2. *Guidance was problematic (but helped by increasing mass, which ameliorated the effect on small models of the 'turbulence' caused by an uneven floor)*
3. *Navigation consisted of the good old USAF approach ('Green bit- blue bit – green bit; release!')*
4. *Eventually, even the most laid-back design bureau has to show some result for all the time and cash lavished by GHQ (we were last to launch)*

Suffice to say that the two 'missions' flown by each Zep had mixed results.... Orpington, Croydon and even Henley and Romford certainly got a pasting, and several models crossed the central London marker (a postage stamp in one corner which Jim insisted was actually A3 – rubbish...). But the report from the Metz bureau would insist that this was just the start of a terror campaign which would soon blacken the, err, night skies over Britain and bring their empire to it's knees.

Oh, and can we have more cash, please? Great game....

Over The Hills and Far Away – Another Fine Officer's Mess

Game by Jim Wallman

Offside report by Peter Merritt

I'd read about this game before, and was intrigued by the character-management focus of events. In many ways the idea reminded me of some favourite commercial efforts set in the 17thC – 'En Garde' (the musketeers duelling game, which in the 2nd edition got a major career/campaign sub-system); and 'Down With The King' (an Avalon Hill boardgame).

I certainly felt the 'newbie' as, even before the game got underway, those established characters present started speaking in a form of code about favours, reputation, cash etc. Taking my name from the great-grandfather of a favourite fictional character (George MacDonald Fraser's 'Flashman'), I decided to invest my meagre starting cash heavily in

‘influence’ (easy to use, not so to gain). Well, that and acting with two other characters to drive-up the auction prices of new regiments and Mukal’s old one.....

After some considerable but free-flowing admin by an increasingly swamped ‘Horse Guards’ (Jim), almost everyone had a military appointment of some kind. The ‘social scene’ then took-off, with balls and races aplenty. There was a minor undercurrent of conversation about the previous operation against the Spanish, but the obvious disagreements were kept out of the public domain.

At this point the subject of *partners* was raised, and Jim produced a ‘stable’ of unlikely fillies, all rated – secretly - for ‘Star quality’ (as a hostess), ‘Cash’ (dowry), ‘Influence’ (how many uncles in parliament) etc. Some players used their IP to make discrete enquiries about detailed ratings. Jon invested considerable efforts (and IP) investigating one such, although I went for the more direct approach with one of leading ‘beauties’! The social scene certainly received a boost with much talk of society weddings next summer (the game began in October, using monthly turns), although the new year festivities were overshadowed by war clouds over the Caribbean....

The War of Jenkins Spleen mainly consisted of an expedition in brigade strength (3x regiments, 4x commanders; what a recipe.....) which was required to go and put-down an insurrection of slaves who wanted every other Feb 29th off and disgruntled upstart island-types. I won’t dwell on the details of the campaign – as the junior colonel, I was the rearguard/reserve, looking after the local militia. There was some slight disagreement over strategy when one colonel wanted to spread out and occupy the coastal towns (which were not in revolt), but eventually all accepted the novel idea of destroying the enemy main base and getting home before the London Season was underway (and fever killed more than the enemy).

The march inland went well, although the local militia commander (played by Dave B) showed his utter lack of modern, professional military training when he queried how two regiments in line were going to pass through a jungle clearing only half a regt wide?!! I ask you, these provincial amateurs... err, well. After some, ah, readjustment, a futile rebel roadblock was swept aside and an assault mounted. And then another one. And another.... Our ruse to draw-out every damned guerrilla in the area soon worked, and they appeared from every side – and rear... Somewhere in all this Jon went down, although he was carried away to safety by his men (quite a long way to safety, in fact, as pointed out to them by the brigadier who had to chase after them), and so with our well-drilled volleys having no effect (how many ‘3’s can you roll?!), Jim eventually called a halt, assessing that – with RN cannon in position to pound the town – the position would be carried after a short siege (although guerrilla action might continue for years).

It was a fun game and a great examination of milops viewed from the perspective of a colonel. My only problem was with the indecisive nature of the combat system when two equal forces confronted one another – I’d rather flip a coin and get on with the next turn (or, like En Garde Mk2, have a structured series of die rolls for the progress, result and personal risk of a campaign). However, I believe Jim is addressing this and even as it stands it’s a little gem which I would certainly play again, with more ‘activities’ possible, and/or special events to play for as outlined by Mukal, above.

Iron Arm: The Mechanisation of Mussolini's Army (1920-43)

- **Paperback:** 240 pages
- **Publisher:** Stackpole Books (December 30, 2006)
- **ISBN-10:** 0811733513
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0811733519

From the dust jacket: Though overshadowed by Germany's more famous Afrika Korps, Italian tanks formed a large part of the Axis armoured force that the Allies confronted - and ultimately defeated - in North Africa in the early years of World War II. Those tanks were the product of two decades of debate and development as the Italian military struggled to produce a modern, mechanised army in the aftermath of World War I. For a time, Italy stood near the front of the world's tank forces - second only to Germany in number of divisions, first to create an armoured corps - but once war came, Mussolini's iron arm failed as an effective military force. This is the story of its rise and fall.

Although the book is based on the development of Italy's armoured capabilities in the interwar years, it provides excellent context for understanding the nation's poor performance on the battlefield in WW2. This is not a book for the rivet counter, it's a "new" military history that analyzes social, military, doctrinal, and technological context which goes a long way towards explaining how, despite Italy's correct understanding of armor doctrine, it was unable to turn that understanding into success in battle.

For those familiar with the theory of Revolutions in Military Affairs (RMAs) the book demonstrates there are a variety of variables required for the development and transformation of a given military. In the case of Italy, the book discusses Italian armour doctrine, the impact, or lack thereof, of the automobile on Italian society, economic and industrial problems that impeded the development of modern armor and production, and it takes a look at the employment of Italian armor in Spain and colonial battles in Africa.

In the end the author concludes that systemic limitations in its economy, industry, and society (vis-a-vis the integration of the automobile) prohibited Italy from using its doctrine -- which was correct for the time. I'd also recommend this book be read in conjunction with *Iron Hearts, Iron Hulls: Mussolini's Elite Armored Divisions in North Africa*, which also provides strategic context for its armoured forces in North Africa, and discusses the actual battles in which the forces fought.

Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920-39

- **Paperback:** 320 pages
- **Publisher:** Stackpole Books (January 10, 2008)
- **ISBN-10:** 0811734579
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0811734578

From the dust jacket: In the wake of World War I, the German army lay in ruins--defeated in the war, sundered by domestic upheaval, and punished by the Treaty of Versailles. A mere twenty years later, Germany possessed one of the finest military machines in the world, capable of launching a stunning blitzkrieg attack against Poland in 1939. Well-known military historian Robert M. Citino shows how Germany accomplished this astonishing reversal and developed the doctrine, tactics, and technologies that its military would use to devastating effect in World War II.

This book concentrates on the reforms of the German Army during the period after WWI, the Great War. The Germans begin a top down review of how commanders should conduct wars. The actual papers the German generals write are translated to English and examined. The Germans start treating the organization of soldiers and equipment like a science. Also, maneuver is brought back to the battlefield. The Germans saw their folly in the Great War. With the exception of one battle in the east, the Germans were unable to use their forces well at all in the Great War.

It gives the origins of the need for the German Army reforms of the '20s and '30s. This book tells of the officers and how that information was sent down from the top to the bottom. Additionally, the 100,000 army of post WWI Germany was a blessing. It allowed Germany to select the best and most forward thinking. Anyway, from 1919 to 1934 was the time of the small German Army. Post 1935 the Germans were rearming and it was a large army again.