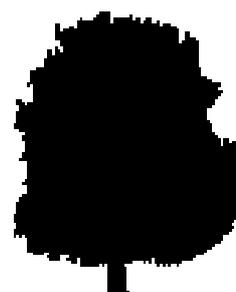




Military Muddling



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Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

1Q 2007

Editorial

The Spring Games Weekend is about to happen. Jim has been doing such an excellent job building up the program and posting details on the website, that I feel a slight sense of duplication reproducing the program here. However, I am encouraged by the members to publish for the record and to stimulate thought for the post weekend write-ups. Also in this issue are a couple of write-ups of recent Sunday sessions.

Looking forward to the Spring Games Weekend.

Daniel T Shaw

Contributions for Military Muddling

To: Daniel T Shaw, preferably as ASCII Text or Word documents, by
e-mail to MilMud@chestnutlodge.org.uk or clwg@ProjExpertise.com

but you can also send paper or disks to:

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Events

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!

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

Games Weekend Saturday 31 March and Sunday 01 April 2007

Venue The Hampshire School, 9, Queensborough Terrace, Bayswater, London W2 3TB from 10 am.

Orange or Lemon? : GAME Organised by James Kemp



This is a working title for a game about the Scottish Parliaments convention in the Spring of 1689.

The game covers the events of the time of the Scots Parliaments discussions in 1689 of whether King James VII should be replaced by his son in law Prince William of Orange. Historically this was pretty evenly balanced and only resolved when some key Jacobites left town. Most of those involved were apathetic but couldn't afford to be seen to have either backed the wrong horse, or to have left it too late to show support for the eventual winner of the struggle.

Players would be the leaders of the two main factions plus a couple of other key protagonists (notably the catholic Duke of Gordon who was constable of Edinburgh Castle).

There is a four player version with one umpire that doesn't worry about the rabble rousing in the streets overmuch. It focuses on the deals being made in the Convention and the efforts of Dundee to keep the Duke of Gordon in possession of the Castle in the face of the Duke of Hamilton's efforts to evict him.

A slightly expanded version would have six or eight players and two umpires. This would model the rabble rousing outside the Convention as well as all the bits the smaller version would cover.

The game is about trying to persuade a number of undecided members of the Convention to vote the correct way. There should be several ways to achieve this including stirring up public support; private persuasion; speeches in the convention; bribery; patronage; physical intimidation, etc.

Some aspects might use a modified form of Jim's "Lambent Meteors" rules (working over several days rather than the space of an hour or two)..

Battle of Crete : GAME by Daniel Shaw

Daniel has offered to put on a megagame of the Invasion of Crete for the Sunday after the Murphy Mania event in Delft. The challenges for this game are of course that the Axis historically win! so what do the Allies do armed with hindsight other than sit on the airfields. The command structure and the differing national interests - this is a British, New Zealand, Australian, Greek alliance – lead to the Allies having a tough time leveraging their superiority in numbers. The threat of landings from the sea of course has to be countered at all times because the commanders did not believe that Cunningham could sink every ship in the invasion fleet. Morale is another factor that has to be nursed given that the allied troops are shell shocked from evacuating the Greek mainland.

For the Germans the battle was a close run thing.

Many people have written after battle reports of other wargames tackling the same subject. Some have been successful while others were regarded as abject failures.

At the Games weekend the intention is to try out the battle mechanics. At Murphy Mania, the additional aspects of command, logistics and politics will be added.

Habsburg Ascendant : GAME by Brian Cameron

Re-running the King for Bohemia, Thirty Years War megagame to try out some changes to the game system which centres around trying to give religious the importance that it obviously should have but rather lacked last time. The session will be on the basis of one player per country.

Consulting Detective : GAME by Brian Cameron and Dave Boundy

Sherlock Holmes is busy on another case elsewhere - it is down to you to help out Dr Watson. This is a commercially available game being run to look for ideas for possible future role playing games - ie. role playing megagames.

Interesting Times : GAME by Brian Cameron and Dave Boundy

The game is set in the turbulent period of China in the 1920s. Each turn will represent one year. Play will start in 1922. We want to test the underlying model for this planned megagame by modifying a commercially available Warlords game.

Fantasy Siege: GAME by Jim Wallman

This is a tryout of some simple siege assault rules I've been working on for the forthcoming 'Siege of Yendor' megagame. The aim is that they are fast play, easy to pick up and allow for epic depiction of 'storming the walls' of a fantasy fortified city. Each assault is played out on a stylised plan of a section of city wall, so the more participants, the more sections of wall I can represent.

London Blitz! : GAME by Jim Wallman



Developed out of the design session at the October conference - this is a low level operational game about firefighting during the London Blitz in 1940/41.

The basic premise is that the player(s) represent fire officers trying to combat fires and deal with emergencies in the critical period of the first London Blitz of September 1940 to May 1941. It is a 'tactical skirmish' game - with individual models representing individual vehicles, and stands of figures representing

small groups of fire fighters and emergency workers. It is a fascinating technical struggle against an ever-growing problem - making best use of scarce water resources, laying the right hosepipe runs and keeping the fire from spreading or re-igniting.

Oh yes -and being bombed while you do it!

This Happy Breed : GAME by Jim Wallman

Inspired by Trevor and Andrew's recent fantasy megagame this is a sub-game about dynastic growth and breeding in a fantasy world. The idea is to breed a race of Heroes. Each 'Hero' is represented by a 'bloodline' - this is so that we don't have to separately represent male and female lines (though that could just as easily be done using this system to develop full family trees). The game uses basic genetic principles. However, as in the 'real' world players are unable to accurately identify the genetic makeup of their offspring. However they can infer characteristics.

In many cases, sending heroes on quests or to war will allow you to test their genetic strength. This is probably the origin of the fairytale cliché of the King setting a heroic task for suitors to his daughter's hand - he is testing their strength, willpower and intelligence to see if they will sire a good bloodline. Of course that rather assumes the King's daughter is genetically worthwhile too. So, can you breed a master-race?

Iraq (the Present) : OFFSIDE REPORT by Mukul Patel

I was looking forward to this game/session by Steve Challice. I had just recently read a book called Fiasco, about some of the mistakes concerning USA military and civilian involvement in Iraq. It was a very critical book, but also very interesting. It was not about the practices, motivations and drama of the local Iraqi's.

Steve's test/session was set in the Iraq of 2005ish, an area of place and time that I am not familiar with, despite all TV, radio and newspaper reports. But by this time insurgents are present and vigorous. We only played the area and around Bagdad, with the other areas of influence (like the Kurds, Iranians, Suadis, Contractors and so on) abstracted by a mechanism or just Steve gave us a steer.

Players were given the roles of various flavours of Sunni and Shia Milita forces and USA military. I was a bit surprised that USA civilian side was not represented. These elements of the occupation authorities, local army and police seemed to me be an important thing in the picture Iraq that Steve might be putting before us, but I didn't know what angle on Iraq interested Steve, so I said naught.

Steve wanted to test out a sequence of action and mechanisms for the military technical side of what he hopes will become a much bigger game. We tested this side of his game. After a few turns we were working out methods of doing damage to each other, our different agendas. The system was producing very bloody results. This needs some more work, but is very doable.

Discussion moved on to the wider part of Steve's game. I had been a bit bothered about the test games emphasis on what seemed to me to be large scale military clashes, death and destruction. The test game neglected the civilian side of the war. The test game also didn't seem to have methods off questioning whether the USA was either winning or by their actions making worse/stoking the counter insurgency war. I wasn't sure whether the various Sunni and Shia players were gaining influence with the Iraqi population. I wasn't even sure in what kind of war, if any, the local players were involved. (Okay, what was happening in Iraq at the time was pretty difficult, complicated stuff.) Eventually I realised what was bothering me. I wanted to know what was it about Iraq that Steve really wanted to show in his game, or as I put it what "Sang to his Heart" about Iraq.

Steve gave the answer, the interaction between the locals, like the Kurds, Sunni's, Shia's, or even the Clerics and the Militia leaders. This got a warm response from the audience, and the discussion moved constructively onto various methods of representing that myriad of different agendas and environments.

So what did I get out of Steves game and subsequent chat? I still would like to see a game about the recent events of Iraq and Steve still wants to create a game that spotlights on some of those recent events and forces.

I enjoyed the test game and chat, thank you Steve.

American War of Independence' ONSIDE REPORT by John Rutherford

A light-hearted silly game for the Christmas meeting: Basically two teams taking turns to set up targets of stacked coins and then trying to knock them down by rolling marbles across a table. There is no real connection to the AWI, of course, unless one could claim that missiles are spherical in both cases, [!] but I was considering using this at some stage as a fun 'battle/conflict' model for a larger political game.

Gameplay: on reflection, the rules are a little too harsh to the Tory team, and if it's felt important to give better balance, if running this again I would recommend giving them a few more advantages, and removing the Turn A penalty. On the other hand, did I ever guarantee the game would be 'fair'? Real life usually isn't.

The table we used was a seven by three feet pine, and using the uncovered grain of the wood was an extra challenge; I would recommend doing this, though if a cloth is used it would need to be shiny and slippery such as a plastic tablecloth.

The coins I used are Hungarian one-forint pieces, tiny and light coins much smaller than anything currently available in sterling. They are not far off the old decimal half-penny; or try US cents or Euro centimes. You are unlikely to get satisfying results if using larger coins unless you also upgrade your missiles to e.g. steel ball-bearings. NB If using steel balls, don't play this game on Aunt Agatha's best mahogany...

The 'launcher' I used is a wooden corner-shelf, shape is a quarter circle radius 11 inches, with a wide slot in the straight edges down which the marble would run. This proved quite an interesting tool, as when the curved edge was in contact with the table, as well as aiming it, the shooter had to decide what angle to the table the groove should be. Too acute and the marble would not stay cleanly in the groove, then bang in the table and lose energy; too obtuse and the marble would run slower, then arc in the air and lose direction. Getting it exactly right required a little practice.

The obstacles: the 'big boxes' I used are plastic boxes used for 'matchbox' sized toy cars, and if not available I suggest that matchboxes would do it. I was intending the box to be knocked say 2 to 3 inches when hit cleanly. I suggest you experiment with what you have.

If anyone wants to try this game at home and would like to borrow any of the kit I used, please let me know. The rules are reproduced below:

AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE Rules by

Draft#1Dec. 06. This game is a civil conflict and must be played with due decorum. The game lasts for twelve turns or until one side concedes or is defeated. If the TORY side wins, America remains part of the British Empire.

RESOURCES. A large table. One end is called CANADA the other end AMERICA. The line dividing must not be crossed except by 'cannon fire' BALLS.



'GUINEA' COINS [e.g. 1 forint pieces] representing resources/population/cash. These coins may be placed on the table ONLY in stacks of ten, and the stack must be in contact with the table surface.

SOLDIERS [plastic toys] representing military force. Each soldier may be placed ONLY on top of a stack of ten coins.

BALLS [marbles] representing the use of military or political attack, from battle to propaganda efforts.

BRICKS [8-point lego] representing basic defensive measures. May be placed anywhere on the table and need not be in contact with the table surface

BOXES [clear plastic boxes] representing improved defensive measures.

****Once placed on the table, coins, soldiers, bricks and boxes may not be moved or touched by members of the team except as described below. [Except if knocked accidentally, when its position may be restored]****

BALL-LAUNCHER [a piece of grooved wood] by which a BALL is launched. It must be in contact with the table when the launching occurs, and no further than 50cm from that team's table-end.

There is a limited number of each resource, and when all are 'in play' there are no more to be had.

PLAYERS The players are divided into two equal teams: the TORIES and the PATRIOTS. Any odd player goes to the Tories. The Patriots play at the 'America' end of the table. ****In WARFARE, no player may fire more than one BALL more than any other member of the team. ****

INITIAL SETUP. Tory team place in Canada 40 coins in four piles of ten. Two of the piles have a soldier on top.

Patriot team place 30 coins in three piles of ten. Two of the piles have a soldier on top.

****No pile of coins may be closer than 15cm away from another pile, and must not be closer than 15cm from any table edge.****

TURN SEQUENCE

Each turn is 5 minutes. Patriot Team play first. Each turn is made up of a number of phases:

1. Each player is given a 'salary' of five 'guinea' coins.

2. Umpire and Team work out the number of extra 'guineas' the team may spend. This is based on the results of WARFARE and POLITICAL ACTIONS in the previous turn. Objects may then be 'bought' on the following table.

A SOLDIER costs ten guineas.

A BRICK costs ten guineas.

A BOX costs fifty guineas.

3. Coins may then be placed on the table. They must ONLY be in stacks of ten.

4. Soldiers, bricks and boxes may then be placed according to the rules above. The team is awarded a number of BALLS; the same as the number of that team's soldiers in play [on top of coin-stacks].

5. The Tory team then goes through the sequence 1 – 4.

6. WARFARE. The Patriot team may then choose to fire some or all of its BALLS, using the BALL-LAUNCHER. Nothing is to be touched on the table until the Patriots declare their attack is over. If a Tory coin-stack is toppled [i.e. if ANY of its coins are knocked off the stack] then ALL of the coins in that stack are forfeit to the Patriot team and are handed over by the Umpire. If the soldier is dislodged but the coin-stack is intact, he is returned to his post. ****BRICKS AND BOXES are NOT to be moved by hand!! And if knocked to the floor, may not be returned to the table.****

7. The Tory team may then carry out its WARFARE. Note that the number of BALLS is not reduced by enemy action until next turn.

8. POLITICAL ACTIONS Each team may take one Political Action per turn. ****Each may be taken only once per game, AND MUST BE TAKEN IN THE ORDER A TO D. Actions must be by consensus: the Umpire must be satisfied that ALL team members agree before a Political Action takes effect.****

A. PATRIOTS: NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION refusal to pay British taxes and duties: +3 BRICKS, +1 BOX

B. PATRIOTS: KING GEORGE IS A TYRANT and is an enemy of true American liberty +20 GUINEAS

C. PATRIOTS: ASK FOR FRENCH HELP thank you Lafayette +15 BALLS, +20 GUINEAS

D. PATRIOTS: CONTINENTAL CONGRESS Independence is the only way now: +2 BOXES, increase 'player salary' to 10 guineas/turn.

A. TORIES: FAIR TAXATION we agree to accept a reduction in income: LOSE 10 GUINEAS

B. TORIES: HURRAH FOR KING GEORGE extra resources from London: +30 GUINEAS

C. TORIES: RECRUIT FUGITIVE BLACK SLAVES things are getting serious: +10 BALLS

D. TORIES: AMERICAN MPs AT WESTMINSTER no more important concession can be made and it will weaken the Patriots: Tory team may remove up to five BRICKS and two BOXES from the America side of the table. Increase 'player salary' to 10 guineas/turn.

9. Any other special actions: time for players to discuss plans, negotiate etc.

