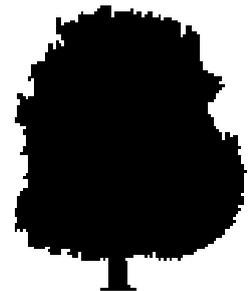


# *Military Muddling*



Volume 18 Issue 1

Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group Newsletter

November 2010

## *Editorial*

First off must be a welcome to the readership from your new editor – closely followed by tremendous thanks to Arthur Harman for all his sterling efforts over the last several years.

Next must now come the equally traditional apologies for late appearance of this issue. I had prepared stuff at the beginning of November (as originally promised), but it was stuck on my office desktop and I was not there, and then global warming went into reverse gear....

This isn't actually my first go at the job, as those with long memories (and strong stomachs) will tell you. Of course, the technology has come on a bit since I typed, cut and pasted paragraphs by hand, or tried to use the CLWG Youth Centre Gestetner machine (the product was crap but the fumes....). At least these issues will, like my previous efforts, not be worth the paper they're printed on, if only because you're gonna get it as a PDF?!

At least I'm way too experienced to close with those old pleas for articles. Nah, I'll just say if YOU don't send me stuff, I'll just have to do my own thing, thus proving that the pun is mightier than the sword (but only from more than 6ft away). And do please send your suggestions for how the cttee could do this better, or should do more of that – I can do with a laugh. Frankly, if you want things changed that much, stand for a post and just get on with it....

Anyways, this bumper printer-killer edition of the Andre Hadley Review (incorporating MilMud), has a variety of articles from various points in 2010. I hope you agree with me, however, that the subjects and many of the comments are challenging, timeless and worthy of further consideration. Or you can use them for the budgie cage.

Welcome.....

**Contributions for Military Muddling**

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

## Incorporating Military Doctrine into Games

### Aim

This is an attempt to create a system that reflects the effect of military doctrine. It assumes low-technology medieval warfare with the upper limits being plate mail, the catapult, the crossbow and the stone fortress.

Eventually I hope to create systems for other periods/levels of military technology as well.

The important issue is to tailor these bonuses to the combat resolution system of the game used. It will have less impact when a single die roll is used to decide a whole battle, but some of the areas could still be used – for example Active and Offensive tactics would give a small bonus in attack only, and a penalty in defence. The tactics should not completely change the course of a battle but should affect it, especially if the doctrine is adhered to.

### Assumptions

There are several fundamental assumptions in this system:

- 1) Doctrine typically takes a long time to change, all other things being equal
- 2) Defeat allows quicker change of doctrine
- 3) Victory tends to reinforce or exaggerate doctrine
- 4) Doctrine is divided into five main areas:
  - I. **Troop** (which troop type(s) are given primacy, if any)
  - II. **Initiative** (whether active or reactive)
  - III. **Stance** (whether defensive or offensive)
  - IV. **Formation** (which formation(s) are given primacy, if any)
  - V. **Mode** (whether fire or shock is the key method of dispatching or breaking the enemy)
- 5) Each Doctrinal area will typically have five settings:
  - i. Very cautious/defensive/passive
  - ii. Cautious/defensive/passive
  - iii. Normal
  - iv. Aggressive/active
  - v. Very aggressive/active

## Tactical or Doctrinal Areas

Obviously the exact meanings of the different settings of each tactical area will differ by period and army, but they are broadly:

### Troop<sup>1</sup>

- All infantry
- Mostly infantry
- Combined
- Mostly cavalry
- All cavalry

### Initiative

- Totally Reactive
- Mostly Reactive
- Neutral
- Active
- Very Active

### Stance

- Totally Defensive
- Mostly Defensive
- Flexible
- Mostly Offensive
- All out Attack

### Formation<sup>2</sup>

- Conservative (lines of battle, for example)
- Mostly Conservative
- Mixed
- Mostly Bold
- Bold (columns of attack, for example)

### Mode

- Fire
- Mostly Fire
- Bow and Sword
- Mostly Shock
- Shock

The effects of each tactical area can be summarised as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> This does not mean the composition of the army, but rather the tactical primacy being given to one troop type above another. A good example of this would be most medieval European armies, which were chiefly made up of infantry but the tactical lead and main role was awarded to the cavalry, until years of defeats at the hands of Swiss, English and Flemish footsoldiers brought about a better use of 'combined arms'.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the easiest way to sum this up is to use the French and English armies in the Napoleonic wars, as the available details of medieval formations are often sketchy. The English would use mostly Conservative formations (together with Reactive and Fire heavy tactics) whereas the French would use Bold formations (together with Active, Offensive and Shock heavy tactics) in comparison. Of course, Fire will have become ascendant over shock by this time and the French tactics would be less reliant on shock than earlier armies, even those with archers etc.

**Troop**

This will give a morale bonus to the troop type emphasised, in relation to the extremity of the preference. At the extreme levels a morale penalty could be applied to the 'non-primacy' units. Preferences should also dictate movement by the army – a suggestion would be that at least one 'primacy' unit should be moved before one 'non-primacy', or even two before every one. Another way of doing this would be that the units in 'primacy' must be nearer the enemy, or must be the first to attack.

**Initiative**

The chief outcome of this doctrine should be that the army with the higher 'Active' setting should move first. At the extremes, you could give a movement bonus to those possessing 'Active' doctrines and penalties to those with 'Reactive'. To counter this, those with 'Reactive' might be allowed an extra move at the end of the turn after resolution.

**Stance**

This should give a morale bonus when attacking or defending as appropriate, and possibly a combat bonus at the extremities.

**Formation**

As above, this should give morale and potentially combat bonuses when in the preferred formations.

**Mode**

This is a bit harder to represent – perhaps combat bonuses or extra damage when using the preferred method. At the extremities you could ban all missile fire or close combat, but this would make those armies very vulnerable. I suppose you could ban initiating close combat or missile fire as appropriate.<sup>3</sup> Penalties when using the other mode might also be appropriate.

**Sample armies**

Here are some sample armies from the period:

Late Eleventh Century Crusaders

- Troop v) Knights
- Initiative iv) Active
- Stance iv) Offensive
- Formation iii) Lines of battle with cavalry
- Mode iv) Cavalry charge

Fifth century Huns

- Troop v) Horse Archers
- Initiative iv) Active
- Stance v) Offensive
- Formation iv) Cavalry bands
- Mode iii) Shoot and close

Eighth century Saxons

- Troop i) Infantry
- Initiative iv) Active

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<sup>3</sup> I can't think of any all-missile armies – one possibility would be a Sindar Elf army from Tolkien, or a guerrilla army in difficult terrain. It should be possible to develop this as a tactic, though.

Stance iv) Offensive  
 Formation v) Screaming hordes  
 Mode v) Charge

Thirteenth century Scots  
 Troop ii) Infantry  
 Initiative ii) Reactive  
 Stance ii) Defensive  
 Formation i) Schiltron  
 Mode iv) Close

Ninth century Vikings  
 Troop i) Infantry  
 Initiative iv) Active  
 Stance iv) Offensive  
 Formation ii) Shieldwall  
 Mode v) Close

### **Strategy and the long-term**

This 'system', while applicable to one-off battles or short campaigns, is especially useful when running a longer campaign or if a game spans several years of game-time. In these situations the players and the umpire can work together to bring about realistic doctrinal changes that can allow armies and nations to alter their performance and learn from their past mistakes.

The aim of the players should be to manipulate their own doctrine to maximise their chances in battle depending on terrain, their strategic objectives, and the forces available to them and the enemy. For example, a weak nation which is planning to defend difficult terrain might want a Reactive, Fire-based Defensive strategy. Players can also learn from battles that certain doctrines are undesirable and want to change them. However, to represent the difficulties of doctrinal change and the effect of inertia, doctrine cannot simply be changed at will.

My suggestion is that each nation, team or army is told how often it can adjust doctrine at the start of the game – 1 step per turn, 2 steps from different areas per turn, 1 step per year, 1 step per 3 years etc. This allows the umpire to allow for differences between states and nations in their use of doctrine. The umpire may also create other settings or ban certain existing settings to certain teams or nations. For example, some nations may not have access to horses and hence will be restricted to Troop i) or ii); Greek Heroic armies may never be reactive or over-use missiles in battle, therefore they cannot have Initiative i) or ii) or Fire i).

In addition to this yearly or once-per-turn change, a change may be made every time that nation or team loses a battle (skirmishes or small battles may be excluded from this). I believe that this will mean that victorious nations or teams find it harder to adapt their doctrine – success breeds inflexibility. In some situations continuous victory may lead to a deepening of existing preferences. For example, a thirteenth century French army wins a string of battles using Troop iv). Due to the social hierarchies inherent in its system, coupled with the military success of its knights, its Doctrine is changed to Troop v).

Technological change may also lead to Doctrinal change, but this ought to depend on the society and the method by which such change is introduced. For example the invention of gunpowder ought to increase the reliance on Fire (Mode i) or ii)), but conservative societies, especially those using Troop v),

will be slower on the uptake. Certain doctrines in some periods ought to only become available when technology changes.

Umpires will have to use common sense here – if victory or defeat was transparently due to one factor then this ought to be represented in the ensuing changes. You could have a points system which built up to change in each area – each failed cavalry charge gives  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a point of movement downwards within the Troop area, for example. Players may be able to influence the speed of doctrinal change by training, the use of academies and investment during peacetime.<sup>4</sup> They may also be able to learn doctrine from their allies. Complete changes of government ought to allow doctrinal change but this ought to be in line with the political basis of the party or group that has come to power (see below).

## **Political Links to doctrine**

### **Military Aristocracy**

Strongly prefers higher Troop setting (provided horses are available)

Strongly prefers higher Stance setting

Prefers higher Initiative setting

### **Commercial Aristocracy**

Prefers middle settings in most areas

### **Democratic/Socialist/Peasantry**

Strongly prefers lower Troop setting

Prefers lower Initiative setting

Prefers lower Formation setting

### **'Heroic' Aristocracy**

Strongly prefers higher Mode setting

Strongly prefers higher Stance setting

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<sup>4</sup> Exactly how this can be done will be affected by the context.

## Doctrine from Danish domination to Domesday

Further to my recent article on incorporating doctrine into games, I thought it would be both interesting and helpful (for me, at least) to see if I could apply some of the ideas I discussed to a specific period. This would hopefully show the uses and weaknesses of my theories, as well as being a useful test to see if it is worth me taking the whole area of work any further.

I had a couple of periods in mind for this, the closest contender being Fifth Century BC Greeks and Persians (I've been working my way through the Greek historians recently), but thought I'd look at this with a really practical outlook and try to apply some of the lessons of my doctrine discussion to my ongoing work on one of my games. I thought the best choice would be my eleventh century 'Come one and Eorl' game. The relevant period and area for this discussion will be **land armies in Britain, 1040-1080**.

To recap, the five areas of doctrine I discussed are:

### **Troop, Initiative, Stance, Mode and Formation**

Some of these will be more relevant to specific periods than others. In this period Troop, Stance and Mode will probably be the most crucial areas, but not without exception.

### **The Eleventh Century**

Most armies in Western Europe in this period relied on heavily armed and often armoured infantry to do the bulk of the fighting. Old English (Saxon) and invading Viking armies would use horses to get to the battlefield, but would dismount and fight in close-packed formations on foot, typically in a shield-wall. All armies would have some form of missile troops but these would be rare and usually not decisive.<sup>5</sup>

If we look at the three main battles of the 1066 campaign, we can see that despite the limited scope of the forces available (mainly slow-moving infantry), all three battles seem to have exhibited some inventive tactical decision making and also the use of the age old favourite 'cunning plans'. It is also interesting that the battles all seemed to pose different problems for the armies and leaders involved, and some drastic clashes of doctrine seem to have been exhibited.

Below are some sample armies – remember that these can be seen as relative positions and hence the differences between armies can be highlighted. This means there may not be absolute consistency across periods, though, as to what Mode 1) means, for example.

#### **Saxon**

Troop 2 (a number of the troops will have possessed horses for transport, although not for use in battle – you could still have a Troop bias in favour of the elite *huscarl* units, though)

Initiative 3

Stance 3

Mode 2 (some javelins and throwing axes and even bows, but not given primacy)

Formation 1 (shield-wall is the default)

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<sup>5</sup> Although of course aristocratic-commissioned accounts of battles would probably tend to downplay the effect of missile fire in order to give more praise to the individual, aristocratic leaders, as well as to the form of warfare that they favoured.

**Saxon – Ralph the Staller's reforms<sup>6</sup>**

Troop 4 (Ralph, the nephew of Edward the Confessor, attempted to introduce continental cavalry tactics to his earldom on the Welsh border – they failed drastically against the Welsh)

Initiative 3

Stance 4

Mode 2

Formation 2

**Norman**

Troop 3 (the Normans seemed to be able to use 'combined arms' much more effectively than most of their opponents)

Initiative 3

Stance 3

Mode 3 (again, effective use of archery to support infantry)

Formation 3

**Norwegian (could do for Danish at a pinch)**

Troop 2

Initiative 4

Stance 2

Mode 2

Formation 1 (it's that shield wall again)

**Welsh**

Troop 2

Initiative 1

Stance 2

Mode 4

Formation 2

**Scots**

Troop 2

Initiative 3

Stance 3

Mode 3

Formation 2

**Irish sea**

Troop 2

Initiative 3

Stance 3

Mode 3

Formation 2

Given the changes that some people (including Ralph the Staller and possibly also Edward the Confessor himself) were attempting to impose on the existing system, I thought it would be appropriate to bring in an additional measure, which is not so much doctrinal but more of a representation of training in the use of doctrine. This new measure is **Discipline**.

In game terms Discipline should be used as a measure of the likelihood of the success of a complex manoeuvre in battle. If troops lack drill and discipline then it may fail, alternatively it may succeed, giving one side an advantage. Discipline is the product of three factors:

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<sup>6</sup> Ralph's attempted reforms are an excellent example of the costs of change in a slow-moving society. His troops had clearly not mastered the new cavalry tactics when he attacked the invading Welsh army near Hereford: 'And they (the Welsh leader 'Griffin' and Earl Ælfgar) gathered a great force with the Irishmen and the Welsh: and Earl Ralph collected a great army against them at the town of Hereford; where they met; but ere there was a spear thrown the English people fled, **because they were on horses**. The enemy then made a great slaughter there -- about four hundred or five hundred men; they on the other side none.' (ASC 1054)

1. Stability of doctrine;
2. Effective leadership;
3. Drill

Discipline can be increased by 1 every 5 years doctrine stays stable. For every change above 1 step (in total) per year, discipline falls by one. Discipline limits will be placed on troops depending on their circumstances – i.e. the ‘professional’ warrior class may be able to attain discipline 6, but peasants serving part-time only up to 2 or 3. Extra drill may be able to change this but this would probably result in a lower crop yield as peasants are distracted from their work. Drill would also cost *geld* or money.

Discipline, unlike the other doctrinal measures, can vary across the army. For example *huscarles* will naturally have higher discipline than *ceorls*. This could even be taken so far as to assign different discipline factors for individual land or area troops. For example, Wessex’s *fyrð* could be more disciplined than the mightiest of Viking berserkers, or the local troops up the road in Mercia. This might be too complicated for the simple version of the game, but it would offer some interesting variations etc for a more complex version.

My suggestion is that Discipline is ranked on a 1-6 scale. In order to perform a complex manoeuvre, the unit/army must roll under its Difficulty rating or fail to complete the task. Different dice could be used for different manoeuvres or a modifier could be applied to the dice roll. As can be seen, troops with a Discipline rating of 1 would automatically fail such a roll. It might be possible to gain bonuses to such rolls through specific forward planning, superb leadership or terrain advantages.

Additionally, and I need to think more about this, Discipline can also be used as a general measure of morale and even susceptibility to bribery.

### Examples

#### *FEIGNED FLIGHT*

Duke Guillaume of Normandy wants his troops to perform a feigned flight manoeuvre. If successful it will deprive his Saxon foes of their terrain and formation advantages in defence, at least until they can recover. If the manoeuvre fails then any troops failing will flee the battlefield. This is a big risk Guillaume is taking but his troops have practiced this before (+1) and his personal leadership is excellent (+2).

The manoeuvre is rated difficulty D8 by the umpire and Guillaume’s troops are rated as follows: Norman cavalry 6, Norman infantry 4, Norman archers 3. Guillaume rolls a 6, which, with modifiers (total +3) means that his infantry and cavalry will succeed. Sadly, his archers are chased off the battlefield before they can rally. Guillaume may now attack the rest of the Saxon force which will no longer enjoy the terrain or formation benefits.

#### *FORCED MARCH*

King Harold wishes to make a forced march on his Norwegian foes’ camp. If this succeeds he will be able to fight half the enemy isolated, and without their armour, yielding benefits in terms of numbers and also in combat rolls. Harold’s men are already tired (-1) but his leadership and reputation will help substantially (+2). If he fails then his troops will be more tired and may well be split up themselves.

The manoeuvre is rated D6 difficulty, and Harold’s troops are rated as follows: Saxon *huscarles* 6, Saxon *fyrð* 3, Mercian *fyrð* 2. Harold rolls a 3 (modifier total is +1) so the *huscarles* and the Saxon *fyrð* make it. Harold must now choose if he wishes to attack with the Mercians left behind. Either way his troops are now exhausted and may suffer penalties in combat or for movement. However, he has caught Hardrada’s vanguard alone and without armour, should he wish to attack.

Other tactics used – I'll be discussing some of these in some more detail in yet another rant:  
 DIVIDE THE ENEMY (seemingly used at Fulford Gate by Harald Hardrada - success)  
 LIGHTNING RAID (used to catch the enemy off guard but to attack property or individuals rather than troops – seemingly used by the Godwinsons in their invasion of Wales - ?)<sup>7</sup>  
 HOLD GROUND (a defensive, delaying tactic used by Harold at Hastings - failure)  
 CAVALRY CHARGE (tried by Ralph the Staller at Hereford – failure)

### Effects of the above discussion

I will be working in some of these assumptions to my current work on 'Come one and Eorl'. The effects of the above should be that armies will *tend* to follow doctrine as it yields benefits. It should be possible to act against doctrine, but this should be limiting and also less advantageous. Bonuses and penalties in combat should be relative, so for example a *Saxon vs. Norman* confrontation would see:

Troop 2 vs. 3 – the Normans could expect to have effective cavalry, whereas the Saxons will not. Should the Saxons try to use cavalry these will suffer considerable penalties. It might be possible to give the Normans a morale penalty should all their cavalry die, for example.

Initiative 3 vs. 3 – moves should be made simultaneously or in a random order

Stance 3 vs. 3 – both sides equally capable in defence and attack

Mode 2 vs. 3 – the Normans could expect to have effective archer units separate from the main body of infantry whereas the Saxons' missile effect would be built into their main units and be less effective

Formation 1 vs. 3 – this could best be expressed by giving the Normans a bonus when attacking and the Saxons a bonus defending. This may cancel itself out but should encourage both sides to stick to what they do best. It might be ruled that the Saxons get the bonus as they have specialised further in this area, but there ought to be some form of corresponding penalty if so, perhaps to movement rather than another modifier to combat itself.

In terms of the tactics used above, I might use cards to give the players choices – perhaps 1 at random per point of leadership. Some tactics might require certain doctrinal values to perform, and can be tested against discipline as well. This means that players will have different options open to them.

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<sup>7</sup> They captured a lot of property but missed capturing Gruffudd, who would have been their real target. This is the same man mentioned in the footnote above as 'Griffin'. He was a critical figure before his betrayal by his own followers in 1063 after Harold and Tostig successfully invaded.

## BOOK REVIEW TIME (or space-filler, the final frontier)

*WARGAMING ON A BUDGET: Gaming Constrained by Money or Space*

By Iain Dickie; Published by Pen & Sword [[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk)], 2010, £14.99

Reviewed by Arthur Harman

Wargaming can become quite an expensive hobby, if one succumbs to the temptation to purchase all the figures, scenery and books that take one's fancy – just look at the advertisements in this copy of *Battlegames!* At this time of recession, when many wargamers, including myself, face uncertainty regarding their finances and future employment prospects, this softback book appears a most timely addition to the literature of the hobby. In its pages, Iain Dickie, former editor of *Miniature Wargames*, offers much common-sense, practical advice, based on many years experience, that will enable both experienced wargamers and novices to pursue their hobby relatively cheaply.

Chapters explain how to construct a wargame table or a temporary playing surface and cases for transportation or storage of one's armies, from inexpensive or salvaged materials; how to make terrain and buildings; how to cast metal figures or raise armies of card or paper, and how to build simple, but effective, miniature ships and aeroplanes. The text contains appropriate black and white explanatory diagrams, and colour photographs of work in progress and some finished examples are bound into the centre of the book.

I did wonder, however, whether the first two chapters offering instruction in basic DIY carpentry techniques and explaining in detail how to build a wargame table, were the most appropriate way to begin the book, whilst a description of various types of economical wargame – such as skirmishes, animal hunts or chariot racing - was left until the very final chapter! This last chapter was, for me, by far the most stimulating part of the book, and the most likely to inspire a newcomer to take up the hobby. Surely one decides what kind of wargame one wishes to play first, next selects, purchases or makes the appropriate figures, terrain and scenery and then finds or builds a suitable surface upon which to play?

An epilogue, headed *Information*, at the end of the last chapter, is mis-named, being solely about how to find opponents or a local wargame club. There is no bibliography of wargame or military history books; no list of helpful websites, such as *The Miniatures Page* (TMP) or *Plastic Soldier Review*, which seems strange now that many wargamers – and most youngsters! - turn first to the internet, rather than visit a library, for information, nor an index.

This book contains much good, if hardly new, advice, written in a clear, entertaining style. It could, however, have been so much more inspiring had a more imaginative and innovative approach to the theme been adopted. It will not, I think, replace the 'classic' introductions to wargaming now being reprinted by John Curry's *History of Wargaming Project*.

## # War On Rommel's Supply Lines

- **Publisher:** *Stackpole Books, U.S. (14 May 2008)*
- **ISBN-10:** 0811734587
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0811734585

Although rather more dry-sounding than lots of other volumes (mainly with German tanks on the cover), the story which unfolds is both exciting and vital to an understanding of the bigger picture of WW2 in general and the Med in particular. It puts many other 'operational' aspects into context, with offensives being launched prematurely (mainly by the Allies, in part to relieve Malta); or postponed (Rommel lost not just fuel but as many tanks to the Royal Navy and air forces).

The Royal Naval campaign (one of only two successful submarine campaigns in history, the other being the US in the Pacific) and the Desert Air Force are well-known. But I was especially impressed in its detailed treatment of all the combatants including the long-suffering and important Italian contribution (and how close they came to succeeding [despite, rather than because of, their senior commanders]); and the strangely overlooked contribution of the US Air Force even in their own histories, in part because the 'independent Air Force lobby' was better served by playing-up the strategic bombing of Germany.

## # Defeat In Detail – Edward J Erikson

- **Publisher:** *Greenwood Press (28 Feb 2003)*
- **ISBN-10:** 0275978885
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0275978884

Erikson's study examines the specific reasons for the Ottoman defeat by studying the operations of the Ottoman Army from October 1912 through July 1913, and by providing a comprehensive explanation of its doctrines and planning procedures. This book is written at an operational level that details every campaign at the level of the army corps. More than 30 maps, numerous orders of battle, and actual Ottoman Army operations orders illustrate how the Turks planned and fought their battles. Of particular note is the inclusion of the only detailed history in English of the Ottoman X Corps' Sarkoy amphibious invasion.

Also included are definitive appendix about Ottoman military aviation and a summary of the Turks' efforts to incorporate the lessons learned from the war into their military structure in 1914. The Ottoman Empire fought the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 against the joint forces of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia - and was decisively defeated. The Ottoman Army is frequently depicted as a mob of poorly clad, faceless Turks inept in their attempts to fight a modern war. Yet by 1912, the Ottoman Army, which was constructed on the German model, was in many ways more advanced than certain European armies.

# **Alanbrooke War Diaries** (try the remaindered twin paperback editions "Turn of the Tide" 1939/42, and "Triumph in the West", 1943/46)

*"Running a war seems to consist in making plans and then ensuring that all those destined to carry it out don't quarrel with each other instead of the enemy." - Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke*

The diaries are Alanbrooke's daily record of events, addressed to his beloved wife Benita, during the time that he was British II Corps commander in France, then head of (England's) Southern Command, then Commander-in-Chief of Home Forces, and finally Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) from December 1941.

It isn't until AB becomes CIGS (about half way through book #1), when his perspective on the war becomes global and he interacts on a daily basis with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his generals, and attends periodic conferences with Roosevelt and Stalin and their military chiefs, that AB's nightly jottings become interesting in an historical and personal sense. It's then you realize the truth behind AB's observation that heads this review.

AB, rightly or wrongly, is evidently considered to be one of the best war strategists available to the western Allies. His opinions of the strategic ability of Churchill and such military commanders as U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower, U.S. General George Marshall, U.S. Admiral Ernest King, and Louis Mountbatten (Supreme Commander, Southeast Asia) are therefore very interesting – and positively scathing. Indeed, AB doesn't consistently say nice things about anybody except Field Marshal John Dill (his mentor and predecessor as CIGS), Joseph Stalin, and (briefly) U.S. General Douglas MacArthur (whom he never actually meets between these pages). I knew King was Anglophobic, but this shows the extent that the combined Chiefs of Staff were, frankly, ignored. And I never realised that there were fewer Allied combat divisions in Italy than axis ones! The other thing which I recall is the utter obsession with shipping – not tanks, not replacements; everything boiled down to shipping.

The first post-war publication of AB's diary caused a stir on both sides of The Pond for its excoriation of Eisenhower and Churchill. Indeed, though AB admired and loved Winston as the superman without whom England would've lost the war, the latter's inconsiderate treatment of those around him and his gadfly approach to war strategy caused AB to write in frustration on 10 September 1944:

*"Never have I admired and despised a man simultaneously to the same extent."*

What comes across in the diaries is that Alanbrooke was the consummate staff officer - competent, dedicated, meticulous, organized, hard working to a fault, intelligent, honest, honourable, and persistent - upon whom Winston relied upon (without giving public credit) to haul the Empire back from the brink of defeat. Outside of his duties, however, AB was an oddly mild and unprepossessing man. His chief hobby was birdwatching; he liked to show bird films to friends who came to dine with him and Benita. Also, he seems a rather dour individual who took himself too seriously. There's no evidence in his writing of any humor, self-deprecating or otherwise.

## CLWG March 2010 meeting

### **OFFSIDE REPORT – Jon Rutherfords’ Alien Crisis Committee Game (Peter Merritt)**

Although only down to six people, JohnR did his 'first contact' UN cttee game set in the modern day. Beginning with a warning from a mad scientist who wants money and political backing, the players represent the forces of law and the rightful, established order in various leading member states of the UN Security Council (without the usual temporary 'make-weights' who didn't get invited). I played the ex-Soviet Union, Brian the USA, Jim the UK, Mukal France(!) and DaveB China...!

I won't go into too much detail (in case he does it again), but I think even he was slightly taken aback at the sheer devious/callous/underhand responses - although with such a cttee, god knows why?! Play involved being posed various policy-setting problems over an extended period, and how much co-operation there would be. The general consensus this time was to (a) have a scapegoat among the scientists (difficult for me as many of the ex-Soviet ones had undergone 'traumatic interviews' after some earlier failures of mutual trust); (b) to ensure the survival of our dominance even if in a reduced slave hierarchy; and (c) to fight to the last Chinaman.....

I'm even more crap at cttee games than military ones, but I found this a real fun game. All I can say is try it – and "Welcome masters and all hail the new world order", as they said on a wonderful SF take-off of The Simpsons.....

### **OFFSIDE REPORT – Operational Napoleonic System (Slater-Cameron-Wallman Inc) – “Eastern Front © 1809 – same enemy, fewer tanks...”**

This was my first go at the new operational Napoleonic system which has been under discussion for some time now. Although running exactly the same scenario and starting positions (the beginning of what became the Leipzig campaign, as per the recent megagame), the game developed in a \*completely\* different way from last time - which is probably one of the best definitions of 'why we do it'?!

Jon was the Tsar with forces in the south, whilst Mukal was the Prussians in the centre as that happy-go-lucky liberal Francophile, General Blucher! The northern forces of each side were minor and unplayed as irrelevant to the start of the campaign. Dave B and I were cast as French, with the former generously accepting the crown as Napoleon when I chickened-out! Our starting positions were 60% under 'Big N' (6x corps, including the Guard?) moving rapidly up from the SW, whilst 40% (4x Corps + cavalry and 'odds & sods') under yours truly covered the centre, probed generally Eastward - and tried not to die while waiting for orders...

As far as I can make out, instead of being ultra-aggressive this time the allies pulled back to the major river line of the (Elbe?). This was quite reasonably designed to try and frustrate Napoleon who needed a 'quick win' to intimidate Austria. Unfortunately, whilst the Prussians easily blocked my moves in the centre/north, in the south there were more crossing points which led to a swift French re-concentration as I sent two corps to 'Big N'. This led to a

forcing of the river line which seemed to me a bit like Sedan 1940, after which the badly outnumbered Russians, now caught in the open by superior numbers on an expanding front, were very roughly handled and the entire river defence position in danger of being rolled-up from the south.

The Prussians had held the river line quite solidly, but eventually (in response to pleas from the south) mounted a costly three-corps cross-river assault against one of my covering corps. This worked (locally at least), but they had failed to notice that I'd found a minor undefended crossing point to the north – and now moved a corps to overrun their LOS and crossing behind them! With the Dave B now running rampant in Southern Germany and the Prussians about to 'form square' on a strategic scale, the game was halted.

I have to say that now, having played the system from a position of responsibility, I \*really, really\* like the Napoleonic 'feel' of operations it gave, both in options and 'tempo'. And what was more, not only was DaveB a great commander, he was also a pleasure to work with – uncannily so at times, as more than once our preparations, suggestions or orders for future ops 'crossed in the post' only to find that the other one was already doing it, as when (for example) the two-corps I sent south to force the river there had already arrived when Dave's note reached my HQ in the north, or I force-marched another corps to cover a crossing, only to find one of Dave's units already in situ (and with orders to join my command)!

True, a two-man team (CO & 'staff') might be better if playing for longer, but everyone - even Dave '8-Corps' Boundy - did not seem unduly pushed; it would just have given more time to write detailed sitreps (although we all managed some). However, two umpires easily(?) ran the entire thing, so perhaps next time I could assist with this, to give one of the designers a go?! It would then start to build up a pool of control experience which I think we're gonna need as I would love to see a 'series' coming on.....

So, all in all I am certainly happy to afford it equal status with Bernies' fabulous old (free-form) Peninsula campaign of too many years ago - and it doesn't get any better than that in my book.