Military Muddling

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Editorial

I have become Editor of *MilMud* at a time when CLWG has to face the consequences of abandoning the prudent management of its finances, as described by Andy Grainger in his thought-provoking letter in this issue. It is certainly true that lately we have tended to concentrate upon the avowed purpose of CLWG – the design and playing of wargames – and paid but scant attention to the mundane matter of the actual running of the club.

For my part, I shall endeavour to minimise the cost of the production – as I explained at the Conference - and distribution of *MilMud*, which has been a significant part of the club's expenditure. I shall endeavour to have the latest *MilMud* available for collection at each monthly meeting, thereby saving the cost of postage and envelopes, which does mean that details of forthcoming games will have to be submitted somewhat earlier. You, the readers, can play a part too. Some time ago the idea of distributing *MilMud* by email was discussed, and I think the present circumstances warrant raising the subject again. Bill Leeson's *Kriegsspiel* group has distributed its newsletter, KN, in this way successfully for several years now, so there would appear to be no reason why CLWG should not follow suit, provided that members without access to the internet [are there any?] are still sent paper copies.

If you would be content to receive future issues of *MilMud* by email, please let me know as soon as possible; by doing so, you will be helping to support your club in a simple, but effective way.

I have mentioned Bill Leeson's *Kriegsspiel* group because it has much in common with CLWG, being for the most part a relatively small group of people who have become friends through their shared interest in a particular genre of wargaming, and enjoy meeting fairly regularly to play games. Like CLWG it has a website [give address] and a Yahoo discussion group. Unlike CLWG, however, it has no officers other than the KN Editor, Martin James, no constitution, no bank account or other financial arrangements, never hires venues for games, meeting instead at members' homes [mostly Bill's or mine], and has operated happily in this manner for years!

I believe the *Kriegsspiel* group's experience suggests that holding meetings in members' homes is not so difficult as the AGM discussion and Andy's comments suggest. Games are held approximately every two months, either on a Saturday or Sunday, and details of forthcoming games are published in the newsletter, posted on the Yahoo discussion group and on the website. The game designer may also email regular players to offer them a particular role or choice of roles. Anyone intending to attend the game is reminded to confirm with the game designer, and with the host, by email or telephone, so that the number attending is known in advance [this is especially necessary when playing at Bill's cottage, where space is quite limited]. CLWG has the same means of communication available, so adopting a similar procedure should not be too difficult.

You will observe some changes to the layout of *MilMud*: the demands of looking after two small children over half term, together with preparation for a school inspection in two weeks' time, has left me little time to compose this issue, so I have simply published everything received by the previously advertised deadline, without fiddling about with columns and illustrations – none were sent in, anyway! The sacred trees, however, remain unscathed…

Arthur Harman

Venues

Jim Wallman's Office

The Wells	Press the button for 'One Plus One Partnership' for entry.
7-15 Rosebery Avenue	Nearest train station: Farringdon
London EC1R 4SP	Parking restricted before 13:00 Saturday; free Sunday
Telephone: 020 7841 3666	

Bedford Park Pub on Streatham High Road opposite Streatham Station.

It opens at 12:00 and we will be in the upstairs room.

John Rutherford's House

125 Gleneagle Road	Nearest train stations: Streatham or Streatham Common
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.

Arthur Harman's House

115 Kenley Road	Nearest train station: Wimbledon
Merton Park	Nearest Underground station: Morden [Northern Line]
Wimbledon	Nearest bus stop: Morden
Telephone: 020 8540 5212	

Letters to the Editor

Dear All,

It was great to be at a Chestnut Conference after a couple of years' absence. The Business meeting, especially, a great laugh.   It was just like one of those Paris Commune Games of 1870 which I had tried to design but gave up because they were too crazy and, anyway, I don't generally do humour.

I found I was a member of a club which:
- had an income at 25% of outgoings
- has a membership that has declined by 50% in one year
- posts *MilMud* to 35 people against a membership of 18
- has a financial cushion that will be burned up in 18 months and plans to do nothing
- then runs its annual business meeting without an agenda!

Because, after all, it doesn't matter, does it; it's only a laugh – who cares.

But don't worry. We can solve this -

We blithely say we will cut costs by running meetings at members' homes and then discover that three factors militate against this:
- Administrative difficulty
- Unacceptable behaviour thus discouraging members from making their homes available
- Increasing numbers of hits on the website thus the possibility of really complete strangers turning up at members homes is raised.

All this suggests that a more costly venue based approach is essential!

What a waste of time and effort on all our parts! We may be going down the pan (although there is no reason to do, in my view) but can we at least use a bit of Quality, Criticism and Development (ie a rational approach) in doing so.

Let us build on what we have:
1. I think we decided that we would, in fact, and after the increase in the sub, to go for a venue based approach (ie Bedford or Jim's Office) although that would not rule out use of members' homes if they were offered.
2. We will charge for attendance at Events although not monthly meetings

This will bring in some extra cash but it will not be enough without a substantial increase in members (which is unlikely). Fortunately, the financial cushion is still there in part and gives us breathing space.

I do wonder how we got into a position where we were issuing 35 *MilMuds* to a membership of only 18. I must admit that I never knew whether I was a member.

May I suggest that the following actions are taken:
1. A membership list is published and updated (as in the past).
2. Non-subscribers are given, say, a maximum of three months supply of *MilMud* and then it ceases
3. Non-subscribers are sent a reminder.
4. Venue locales (Bedford and Jim's Office) are looked at and costed.

None of this should take very long, especially in the age of e-mail. Even partial success would enable us to consider the issues properly this time next year although I would suggest that the position is reviewed, say, after 6 or 9 months.

May I emphasise that I am not criticising anyone. I think Michael Dollin felt I was attacking him personally with my *"economics of the madhouse"* description. I was not. The membership, ie us, had mandated him to squander the money so it is down to all of us.

I feel slightly guilty at writing this 150 miles away and not doing anything. But if anyone feels that I can help without incurring the significant costs in time and (as I found to my cost at the weekend) money travelling within as well as to London, then I am happy to do so.

Andy "old git" Grainger

*Editor adds: Personally, I don't think CLWG should **post** three issues of MilMud to people who may still not resubscribe – one copy and a reminder will suffice, if the people concerned have any real interest in the group. Of course, if we were to adopt distribution by email, sending out copies would cost the club nothing, so we could afford to issue several reminders. I am intrigued to learn that Andy 'never knew whether [he] was a member' – if only his colleagues in the Inland Revenue had been equally indifferent to my fee for 'Game of War'!*

Conference Reports

I am sure you will agree that Trevor Farrant deserves our thanks for organising yet another successful and stimulating Conference. We are also indebted to Jim Wallman for the use of his office, without which we could not afford to run events like this and the group – especially our more distant members - would be the poorer for it.

Impressions of an Old Git: CLWG Conference 2002 by Andy Grainger

It is about ten years since the first CLWG Conference and twenty two since the first Conference of Wargamers (COW) at Moor Park in 1980. Consequently, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that nowadays I have a sense of *déja vu* at these events. Often, we are still tackling the same issues as we did ten or twenty years ago which, I suppose, only goes to show how difficult they are.

I still find that great ideas and even fairly complete games can arise from sessions with very different styles. For example, both Rob Cooper and Arthur Harman had very clear ideas of what they wanted and both led and presented a very focussed game and discussion respectively on Wavell's Campaigns in 1940/41 and a Napoleonic battlegame. On the other hand, James Kemp ran a session with, from what I could see, zero preparation on the subject of a WW2 POW camp game. But in a second session a full-scale game was actually played.

Both John Rutherford and myself sought ideas for future megagame designs. In my case I had played not one but two trial games about ten years ago and both had worked quite well. But this time, the participants were not so well disposed! The result was a lot of discussion and a great many new ideas. It was a very useful session for me and I want to thank everyone for their contributions at the fag end of a very tiring forty eight hours. John's design, on the other hand, was for a brand new game and I think he found his session to be valuable as well.

As usual, there were also games within games. There was a try-out of a battlegame sub-system in <u>Crisis in Britannia 2</u>, the megagame about the Roman invasion of Britain. In the first version of the game we had free-kriegsspieled the battles and I was not entirely confident that a rigid rule sub-set would work. As the Military Umpire I was concerned about this! After the test, we decided to keep the rules but I was given a great deal of latitude in interpreting the results! So, I felt I had won the battle. But whether I will win this particular war on 19th October remains to be seen. Then, there was Jonathan Pickles's <u>Superheroes</u> role-play game. I always find Jonathan's games to be ingenious but that may just be because I don't know what is going on. This is a healthy state of mind to be in, of course, if one is designing wargames. Hindsight nearly always gives us a great advantage over our historical antecedents.

Whilst writing up the ideas for <u>Month in Country</u>, my Vietnam game, I found that the major criticism was that there was not enough activity for the players and/or that the results were not meaningful. This had not been so much of a problem ten years ago because the players were more familiar with the historical subject and so had lower expectations of the game; they were happier to plan and sit back, awaiting events. They were also more likely to produce ideas as to the sort of results they might expect. I think that this shows that we expect a better designed game nowadays but, equally, that game is more relevant to people with less knowledge. Most of us dart about quite often between historical ideas and game styles with the result that we do not always do the research that would enable us to develop our ideas fully. As someone might have said *"It's magnificent fun but it does not make for a finished product."* As an old git, I am starting to feel that time is running out and it is time to stop messing around and come up with some finished products!

A very enjoyable two days. Many thanks to Trevor for organising it and to Jim for letting us use his offices. I wonder what the staff said on Monday when they discovered that all the staplers were empty…

Reports on the Conference by Pete Merritt
Introduction

Before I get onto the meaty bits of offside reports, I just wanted to say how glad I was to be back with CLWG after a long period of absence (some forced, some just 'out of the habit'). In case anyone is feeling jaded with CLWG, I had forgotten just how stimulating this group is, even when discussing subjects quite outside my normal range of interests (which are pretty broad). I know that SELWG thinker Chris Steadman was also pleased and enthralled at the powerhouse of design and development which was going on.

Napoleon in India: Jon Rutherford's proposed megagame on conflict on the sub-continent in the critical years 1795-1800

This must be an incomplete report, as I arrived rather later than planned that morning (as did my new freezer…). Jon had prepared some documents outlining possible player roles, but what intrigued me most was how to create interest for the other Indian states/players which would force them to interact with each other, team-mates and the European Powers.

This was especially crucial as much of Britain's success seemed to come from not from overt military campaigns, but a combination of policies - 'wait-and-see' (only moving-in to decide the outcome of minor – often civil – wars as the states argued or disintegrated); combined with increasing degrees of 'slow annexation', whereby the target Indian Prince accepts – and even invites - trade deals and tax collectors (which enhance his revenues), perhaps even 'defence forces' (to control unruly factions or neighbours), but gradually undermines his real authority until…

In the end, such player/Princes MUST succumb (unless new 'sponsors' are found), but that need not be too bad. They may put off the 'evil day' by some 'nationalist upsurge' (to regain some independence), but this would seriously 'hack-off' the sponsor, and may get more than a nasty note by return… We agreed that the Princes game

could (like the French in 'Agincourt' games of old) be mainly based on good old reputation 'league tables', taking into account number of elephants, opulent palaces etc and *staying in charge as long as possible*, which would encourage high spending and – in the last resort – asking the sponsor (not necessarily Britain) for military help (loss of Brownie points) to put-down relatives.

When an Indian player was overthrown, killed etc, he could 'retire' with his record intact, then be recycled at some later point on the new frontier to perhaps try again. Of course, reputation could also be enhanced by the more risky route of success in battle against one's neighbours (trading the odd province, city etc), but could come unstuck by either (a) dying in battle, or (b) finding that said neighbour has just asked for 'protection'…

All-in-all, the session seemed very productive (even after I arrived!), and I for one look forward to the first try-outs and the full game later next year.

'Turbo' Tannenburg by Mukul Patel

Mukul said that he'd been trying to do justice to this fascinating subject ever since his first conference presentation some 10+ years before – also on the 'opening moves' period of 1914. This was the latest.

What he wanted was a minimum of umpire resources/workload, and to be able to reflect the superior Prussian combat power (easy), supply (umm, yeah) and C3 organisation – ahhh…..

He did away with much of the normal written or form-based order-processing replacing it with a more 'visual' system. Using cardboard counters for major units (strengths/tiredness were on a separate roster sheet), he had also come up with a set of time-sequenced 'route markers' which players would use to pre-plot march routes; forced-marching showed-up with the 'red end' of the colour sequence!

Each time/segment was colour-coded (about 3hrs per segment, as I recall), with the Russians having to plot more moves ahead of time than the Prussians (like some old aircraft games I've tried in the past; poor pilots had to plot ahead of time and became easier to predict). Units had to stop to recover from forced-marching.

The umpire (Mukul) had to move between tables and could quickly see from his overview the tracks where clashes would occur; if no collision was imminent, he'd ask for more orders to be plotted. After an explanation of his system, we then tried a few sample turns of the Tannenburg Campaign (two widely separated Russian Armies vs one German), with the following results (from my perspective):-

The good side – using pre-plotted order 'chits' certainly made the Russian army I was with think very hard (well, there has to be a first time)! Just getting a decent proportion of our troops in more-or-less the same area of Germany we regarded as a major victory (helped in some small part by the Germans going the other way and not interfering). Certainly any operational 'finesse' soon went out the dacha window as we opted for the 'meandering elephant herd' formation – quite literally the 'Russian Steamroller' so feared by pre-war German planners. At least we didn't have to rack our brains trying to create sophisticated railway loading schedules, mainly because (a) we weren't that sophisticated, and (b) there were bugger-all railways on our side of the border.

The down side – using *tiny* pre-plotted order chits which came unglued as soon as you touched them! It's fair to say that an interesting idea was let-down by extremely 'fiddly' materials – the actual unit counter was the same size as the movement markers, and almost the same colour, and the 'day/time' colours were soft pastel shades, which meant that lots of the time we got them in the wrong order. The result was that we soon lost the overall picture as various lines snaked across our map, even when we *knew* that the actual unit was at the back/start of each 'trail'. Also, we heard at the end that we were fortunate in having fewer but generally larger units – the poor German CO had numerous independent brigades etc whose tracks soon obliterated large areas of his map! With the rush to place markers, his tactical planning soon became overly simple, with smaller units (critical for recce and delaying actions historically), being virtually ignored for lack of time. For our part, it was useful to stop occasionally not only to 'rest' and close-up, but also to clear the map of march trails! Right at the end, each team (independent of the others) took to marking their units with **big** plastic counters, just so they'd stand-out more to the eye.

The other thing which I missed was the fact that, because we were plotting our own moves, the Russian HQ knew *exactly* where everyone was (and where they were going) – quite the reverse of the historical situation, as the Russians found how difficult it was to marshal and manoeuvre large forces over vast areas (let alone supply them). They 'blundered' into the Tannenburg strategic trap, just as likewise the Germans used their flexibility to create it 'on the fly' as operational opportunities arose.

Overall – I enjoyed the session; the subject is fascinating, and it is always worth listening to Mukul's ideas, even if you end-up disagreeing with their execution. During the debrief we tended towards going back to a 'over to you' type system using umpires, with more varied movement rates. One idea which got some kicking-around was for using a 'strategic target' marker for a 'group' of units. The units would then 'shuffle' towards said target marker at a pace dictated by the rules, umpires etc, and the players would only receive feedback gradually on 'current' positioning. It would take considerable command effort to *move* or reset such 'targets' (sending out orders etc), but the Germans would have more such command points, and possibly extra 'target' markers, thus simulating their flexibility. Other units could only react to local encounters (against overall movement objectives) when within a fairly close 'zone of control'. To reflect the appalling Russian security (many messages went out 'in clear'), the Germans may be given insight into unit – even 'target' - locations, with the chance of an intercept increasing whenever the Russian players, well, did something! The later could also expend 'command points' to verify actual locations, and again this could be varied by rating the HQ's.

All in all, I will certainly be interested in Mukul's next attempt; just don't leave it another ten years!

Lost Battles by Pete Merritt and Chris Steadman

Briefly, this was a very long-winded way of saying some very simple things – ah, that Civil Service training…. I attempted to outline the "SELWG Operational System" (SOS!) which Chris Steadman and I have developed for use in some WW2 Eastern Front mini-megagames at our local club. The objective was to see if we could design a system which was:-

- *flexible enough to enable players to easily implement their plans;*
- *fast enough to run a 1-2 week operation to some conclusion;*
- *'open' enough to allow non WW2 experts to play reasonably well;*
- *accurate enough that it wouldn't make us wince;*
- *and 'fun' enough that they'd come back for more!*

The system is (currently) set with player teams at Army level, slightly 'higher' than originally planned. This was because the lower their 'command level', the more period knowledge they had to acquire, and even the simple system began to spawn lots and lots of 'combat options', the building blocks of any plan – historically accurate, yes, but way too many in the end for our target 'occasional' audience of table-top gamers.

By setting the team at Army level, however, we soon found that much of the technical detail simply fell-away – we were back to 'armchair generals' grouping a likely lot of divisional-type units together and saying "OK guys, I want that city over there taken in four days; by-pass any minor blocking forces." They could even indicate much of this by the now classic big arrows on the map… Much of the detailed mechanics is by no means new – map overlays, unit order/check-box lists etc have all been done before, and by better designers than me (why steal from worse ones?). The main change is that the units are represented by BIG 'data cards', which (a) contain all the information their commander should need, and (b) are big enough not to lose under the table when some fool opens the window!

The other key idea, however, (of which I'm rather proud – especially if it works) was how to reflect
the 'operational flexibility' which went on when units from one Corps were constantly being 'cross-lent' to others; and this *without* burying the players (and, more importantly, me) in a mountain of message-passing and order-sheet cross-checking? Well, what we are proposing is that the team only has one 'fixed' player slot – the commander. Under him the remaining players will represent a 'pool' of the most active staff/command talent, which will be allocated to command/run the 'operational groups' of forces as they fulfil their mission orders. As the mission or situation changes in importance, *players* can be switched-around just the same as units. This also has the bonus that no player need ever be bored watching a stretch of unopposed river for four hours, whilst on the next table a colleague tries to run half of 'Kursk' on his own!

By attaching more player resources to the 'important stuff', it not only ensures that basic tasks (such as orders) are done on time, but that there are now sufficient resources present to do the other tasks which too often get 'squeezed-out' - reporting back to HQ, checking with neighbouring forces, even plotting the 'intelligence picture' from LU feedback; vital jobs which all have a place in the 'operational simulator'.

Finally, the 'fun' aspect was addressed by devising a simple (?) battle-board type system to resolve major combats – this would be operated by players using their board-game type units, but their progress would be measured on a coloured track (varied in length by terrain, fortifications umpire whim etc). Their 'battle management' skills (and level of commitment) would be reflected by taking or avoiding computed losses, thus affecting the movement of the 'battle progress marker'. The overall result would be then be decided by the final position of the marker on the track and in which 'zone' it resided. Of course, having units left in the 'reserve box' (i.e. uncommitted to the combat) meant the possibility of exploiting local success into major breakthroughs, or sealing-off said disasters for the defence.

Well, after a long and somewhat rambling uninterrupted presentation, I ran out of things to say and asked for observations - when you could have heard a pin drop! They weren't preparing to lynch me, however, and some good, probing questions were asked. The switching of player roles was challenged, as this has met with considerable 'customer resistance' in the past at official megagames. I'm glad to say, hoever, that in some trial run-throughs at my local clubs, the die-hard 1/72nd scale WW2-ers started the evening talking about which guns their PzIII'd have, but ended arguing about the logistic costs and force-mixes to achieve different 3-4 day plans – which will do me just fine…

Of course, whether it works is another matter – as CLWG is fielding a large Soviet team, no doubt you'll read about it in due course. My thanks to the organiser and audience for letting me whitter on, over-running my slot *just* long enough not to try a run-through!

"Super-Conflict Campaigns…" by Jonathan Pickles

I came in rather late to this session on Sunday morning, and it was some time before I realised that it was about comic-type Super-Heroes – not my sort of thing at all, usually. However, by the time I got there they'd started to consider actual 'systems' for the Super-Villains (much more my cup of tea), and I found that I could begin to contribute.

It appeared to me that the 'Super-Villains' had the same fundamental problem as the 'Napoleon In India' Princes, and the French in the old 'Agincourt' games – how do you make it interesting for players when they *know* something bigger and probably better is going to come for them eventually…? The solution which I favoured was also similar to the other situations in that they actually competed with each other in a 'status league' – nobody in the Bond Films *actually* knocks the moon out of its orbit or destroys Washington with an orbitting laser, but they *do* build big criminal organisations and carve-out a lot of hollow volcanoes, sewer systems etc as a base. It therefore seemed that what the villains had to do was:-
- *Select a "dastardly plan" (DP) to hold world to ransom*
- *Create a criminal organisation (to carry out said DP)*
- *Build a super-secret base*
- *Get cash, equipment, kidnap scientists/super weapons etc as part of DP*

The latter point was important – the DP had to be made-up of such 'components', which could only be obtained by 'deputy underlings' from your organisation – after all, Blofeld doesn't nip out himself and rob the local bank to finance the DP; he sends his faithful (and, of course, somewhat less competent but infinitely more 'disposable') minions to do it, under the control of some favoured deputy.

Now Bernie Ganley and Brian Cameron had played a strange game of secret power organisations many years ago ("The Illuminati"), and this literally used cards for the very varied units of henchmen which you assembled (laid out) in a sort of pyramid shape. The 'power' of any one group was reflected not only by the basic ability of the units, but also by the **depth** of the organisational tree underneath it. I suggested, therefore, that this would be a suitable mechanism to steal, allowing the Super Villains the options each turn to either build more bits of the organisation, or

use a bit to try and achieve one of the DP components. Very 'mechanistic', but it gave some controllable structure to an area normally run via role-playing type 'conversations' with umpires.

We had to end about there, but John seemed pleased and the Super-Villain area certainly looked like fun to try – perhaps Moriarty *didn't* die but actually had a secret base under the Reichenbach Falls…

"Napoleonic Command/Battle Simulator" by Arthur Harman

This could have been subtitled 'Simulating the Command Experience as a Battle System', but fortunately wasn't as, although accurate, it's far too much of a mouthful - so I'll just call it Arthur's Requirement!

For those who don't know, Arthur has been partly responsible for the revival of the old Prussian *Kriegsspiel* training game over the last few years, and also is part of a small, dedicated group who use it regularly to play Napoleonic battles, often as part of some mini-campaign. What Arthur required, however, was a faster means of resolving the actual engagements generated by *Kriegsspiel*-based campaigns, ideally from the point of view of the C-in-C, with detailed unit resolution being second to information-flow and command 'style'.

'Style' in this case referred to the commander's approach, either getting 'stuck-in' at the sharp end, offering more control and immediate local situational information (albeit at greater personal risk); or taking the long (range) view from some suitable grassy knoll, where you can see more but in less detail – obviously the chaps are getting stuck-in, but until someone starts to actually run away en-masse or the village which was *behind* your lines now seems to be inexplicably in front, you're not going to have much of a clue. What you would see in the latter case, however, is some opportunity (or threat) opening up, allowing you time to send messages to some sub-unit (a Corps probably, on this scale) to deal with it.

As an aid to speed and generalised information/perception radius checks, Arthur also had a stylised map grid in which the key terrain was made out of cardboard or wooden blocks, thus making it quick and easy to set-up the battlefields – competitive types might even be allowed to choose their terrain/location, to reflect some skill in choice of battle site in the first place. Depending on location, therefore, only those areas within sight of the player's current location need be updated by the umpire.

Combat systems were discussed, but Arthur was ahead of us – he had dug out some old *Kriegsspiel*-type 'quick-reference' combat charts, which combined unit factors with 'stance' and the combination of attacker and defender die rolls to produce a coded result. The good part was that, as well as normal step-loss info, each result also had a description of what had happened. If these were grouped by type, some pre-generated variations could be printed-out and handed to players as the messages from un-played subordinates. Even the charts could be varied to the commanders/armies concerned, with one biased to attack, another showing 'brittle' units in defeat etc. I hope Arthur is able to demonstrate such charts – and the entire system - before too long.

The Rearguard

Recently, lured by the prospect of a Waterloo weekend at the National Army Museum, the highlight of which was to be a wargame of the battle, William and I set off for Chelsea. Although we arrived after the game was supposed to have started, we began by joining a tour of the Waterloo Gallery and viewing of Captain William Siborne's model of the climax of the battle, before repairing to the Art Gallery, only to discover that the participants had just finished 'laying lead' and were still making their plans! An enormous terrain model was covered with massed ranks of 15mm figures for an apparently conventional face to face multi-player game, which the participants were recording on videotape in the belief that people might later wish to purchase a video of the game. The latter, incidentally, was scheduled to run for three days – longer than the battle it purported to represent! The best view was to be obtained by crouching at one end of the table and looking at the cameraman's monitor, since the long edges of the table were entirely occupied by the players. We soon got bored and went to visit other parts of the museum, but returned, over an hour later, to find that nothing of any significance appeared to have happened, and left, somewhat disappointed, shortly thereafter. I read in the current Military Modelling that NAM plans to stage similar events in future, with the same emphasis on quality terrain and figures, and is inviting wargame clubs to tender. I am very tempted to submit an 'alternative' proposal for an audience participation game, just to see what reply I receive!

Next Meeting: 14th December 2002 at John Rutherford's House