

QUEENSLAND

WARGAMER

No: 3

March 1980

QUEENSLAND WARGAMER is the journal of the University of Queensland Wargaming Society, published five times a year.

Editor: David Bugler, 21 Surrey Rd., Goodna 4300
or c/- Physics Library, University of Queensland,
St.Lucia 4067 (377-3431).

Cover and contents copyright © 1980 UQWS

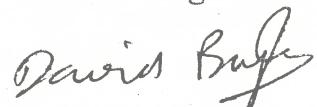
EDITORIAL

Welcome to a new year of Queensland Wargamer - and, we hope, an enjoyable year of wargaming in Queensland. Towards the end of 1979 our University-based group became aware of growing numbers of isolated wargamers throughout Queensland, and I hope our club can act as a focus to direct and increase the activities of these players. Largely as a result of QW, we are now in contact with the increasingly well-organised groups in New South Wales and Victoria, and there is a good chance that 1980 will see the rise of an East Coast association of wargamers that will benefit our hobby enormously.

These developments are largely the reasons for our club's existence, and I would like to see QW used as a vehicle for the expansion and organisation of our hobby in all its aspects. This will, of course, require our members to put some effort into QW by supplying articles and discussion papers for everyone's enjoyment and edification. If we fail to produce an interesting journal of continuing merit, not only will Queensland's wargamers lose an important avenue of contact with other players; they will also have to read "The Spanish Bride" by instalments. You have been warned.

The publication dates for this year's issues of QW are as follows. No.1, 18th February; no.2, 13th April; no.3, 8th June; no.4, 10th August; no.5, 12th October. Contributors are warned that copy should be handed to the Editor at least three weeks before publication date to ensure their placement, although last-minute comments and short pieces can be accommodated up to ten days before publication date (we hope). Start writing now, before assignment deadlines catch up with you.

David Bugler.



THE ROLES OF REFEREES AND JUDGES IN FANTASY AND FIGURINE GAMES

Noel Bugeia

The concept of a referee for wargaming first came into vogue with the advent of Tony Bath's "Hyboria". Since then many games have used some sort of overseer, who interprets the rules and makes decisions on what is and is not allowable considering the game-system in use. These games include Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), Midgard, Tunnels and Trolls, and figurine wargaming.

To discover the roles of these judges, it is first necessary to investigate what was originally intended by the concept of referees. In "Hyboria" Tony Bath was God as far as the game was concerned. The game belonged to him; he invited people to play; his decision was final. The rules as such were designed by him and were only published as a guide to the players about what could happen and the ways in which they were to interact with Tony and each other.

"Hyboria" as a game was a success mainly because of the above initial premises. The opinion of this writer is that no game of the scope and format of "Hyboria" could succeed unless these premises are followed exactly. Tony's role was that of Absolute Monarch; and perhaps he was lucky to have a group of players who would "knuckle under" and accept his rulings as fair and unbiased.

With many of these types of games, referees tend to assume the role of "game-saver"; they are scared of the game becoming untenable, and so interfere with the flow of the game. With "Hyboria" it was not possible for the game to become untenable, because of several factors. First, magic and the like were not included. Magic tends to unbalance such a game and makes armies almost useless (as it did in D&D and the old Midgard rules). This is another aspect of the referee's role in a game. Almost every referee is paranoid about his game becoming untenable. For this reason they tend to limit the power of magic items, run the monsters with limited omniscience, and fudge their die-rolls for hits and treasure determinations.

As a referee I admit that I have done all three of these things, and so do many other referees. Recently I have been running a D&D game with no fudging of any sort; I have even been completely honest with treasure rolls (most referees will not give out a tough magic item if they feel the players do not deserve it,

or it is simply too good). This fudging I now regard as outright cheating, and the referee's imagined role of game-saver should not exist. If his magic is not common to all players, the game cannot become untenable; if it does get to that stage, the players should simply start again.

Secondly - and this is a great problem with D&D and figurines - the players tend to take the game too seriously. The game is for fun, not an outlet for pent-up emotions. Many referees find themselves having to assume the role of peacemaker. In a game where there is unnecessary conflict between the players and the referee, fun goes out the window.

In figurine games the referee, as Phil Barker says in Ancient Wargaming, should "take an actively hostile attitude towards the players and exploit any ambiguities in their orders to the fullest." While this may be the case in Society of Ancients and our own UQWS competitions, it is not recommended in so-called friendly games; with the current crop of players and referees, this almost leads to blows. Instead, in friendly games the referee would be more advised to simply point out mistakes when he first reads the orders, rather than waiting until a situation arises in which the battle could be won or lost, before springing a technicality on a player.

With the bound system prevalent in current Napoleonics rules, the need for a referee is removed, as the players can do anything they like providing that it is legal under the rules. It is to be hoped that Wargames Research Group adopt such a system for the Ancients period.

Finally, Hyboria was a game with strict characterisation. Each player and non-player had a character which always performed as that character would, rather than as the player wanted. If the character was loyal, then he would stay that way; if he was a moron he would always act as a moron.

In "Hyboria" the power-block syndrome which now permeates Midgard could not exist. There were no such things as Pacts of Cooperation to be enforced by an all-powerful collection of super-beings. Players could not even form loose alliances unless their characterisations allowed it. This power-block concept is a very interesting example of something a referee should not do. That is, he/she should not interfere in any way with the running of the game. Now that last sentence is perhaps a little too broad;

Midgard is a special game in that the Game Master (GM) is not fully autocratic - as several ex-GM's will testify. The GM in Midgard was originally supposed to be only a coordinator who told players what had happened to them in their last move. Recently this idea has become clouded and the notion of an all-powerful D&D type controller has emerged. In this writer's opinion, this is not really cricket; Midgard was designed to be completely different from D&D, and what we are now playing is not Midgard. It is now a mere game of diplomacy, with the following dialogue becoming more common:

PLAYER: I want to do such and such with my so and so by attacking Joe Blogs.

GOD: You can't do that!

PLAYER: Why not?

GOD: Because I won't let you.

This problem does not occur in D&D, as the game was originally designed to be whatever the Dungeon Master (DM) wanted. His/her word was law, and heaven help you if you disagreed.

With the advent of Advanced D&D this concept has changed radically (see "From the Sorcerer's Scroll", Dragon no.26). The game system is now standard for all AD&D games, and the DM once again assumes the role of a simple coordinator.

This may be fine as far as the players are concerned, but we must not forget the poor DM, who has put hours of work into his/her creation and would like to see it run his/her way. All I can recommend to you all are the new AD&D rules, as these would seem to strike an even balance between the DM and the players.

In most of the above I have rather neglected figurines. The roles of the Ancients referee are not numerous. He should be fully conversant with the rules and be able to find any relevant rules in a very short time. He should be able to interpret the rules as they are written and not read things into them (which so many so-called referees have done in the past). Next, he should be even-tempered and must remain aloof from the game in progress, and be unbiased. He should only speak to tell a player he is making an illegal move or one counter to his orders. He should never give advice to either player, or inform a player of the possible consequences of a move he is about to make.

For any competition referee, the above requirements are imperative; they could be relaxed a little for friendly games. Any

referee who could not measure up to these requirements would not be respected by the players for very long.

I hope the above discussion will stimulate all referees to improve their performances. We must all remember that for the referee system to work, both players and referees must cooperate. The number of arguments which occur over a simple wargame effectively removes all the fun from playing; wargaming in Queensland may die an early death unless we all start to play properly, and keep games on a friendly level rather than antagonise each other whenever we play.

-oo0oo-

CLUB NOTICES (compiled by the Editor)

Next meeting - March 9th in the Union College Conference Room at 2.30 pm, and let's hope everyone turns up for once!

Secretary's address - Geoff Turk, Union College, Upland Rd., St. Lucia 4067. This is the appropriate address for all correspondence and membership enquiries.

Contact address - David Bugler, Physics Library, University of Queensland, St. Lucia 4067. Tel. 377-3431. This is the address for general information; anyone asking about the club should be given this address in the first instance. Also the place to direct enquiries about Queensland Wargamer.

Army listings - the club intends to compile a listing of all figure armies and boardgames owned or planned by members. So will UQWS members please give to Noel Bugeia or David Bugler a descriptive list of their armies - period, nationality, size in points and figures, and whether painted, unpainted or still under construction. Also please hand in a list of boardgames owned.

Rules - at the next meeting there will be a motion to set up a Rules Committee which will:

- a) discuss and publish local rule amendments to approved rule sets, for use in UQWS competitions;
- b) provide authoritative interpretations of disputed rules, and (hopefully) supervise the refereeing of competitions;
- c) discuss and report on the various rule sets available in different periods.

That's all, folks!

DRAGOONS FOR ANCIENT WARGAMERS - THE COHORS EQUITATA

David J.W. Bugler

The idea of a unit including both infantry and cavalry seems not to have occurred to republican Romans. Traditional conservatism in the army tended to keep the use of cavalry to a minimum; and until the advent of static frontiers, Roman strategic philosophy failed to consider the army as anything but an instrument of conquest.

Our first hint of a mixed unit comes from Julius Caesar ⁽¹⁾, who recruited a German unit including horse and foot after noticing their capacity for hit-and-run tactics. However, the term cohors equitata is itself not attested until the time of Vespasian ⁽²⁾ (69-79 AD), after which it continues to be found until towards the end of the third century. During the barbarian incursions of the fourth century, a reorganisation of Imperial armed forces apparently brought about the end of cohortes equitatae as separate units.

Even during the period of its known existence, the cohors equitata is attested in relatively few documents and its structure is not precisely known. The most explicit statement available ⁽³⁾ says that there were two forms, quingenaria and milliaria, on the same lines as cohorts of auxiliary infantry. The names indicate that, originally at least, these units were about 500 or 1 000 strong, though other evidence suggests that considerable variation was allowed. In general, centuria of infantry were about 60 strong in the first century, and apparently increase to 80 in the second century after the reforms of Severus (193-211). The number of centuria apparently remained stable at six for a quingenary cohort, twelve for a milliary.

All evidence agrees that a quingenary cohort contained 120 cavalrymen; the disputed point is whether they were organised into 4 turmae of 30 men or 3 turmae of 40. Literary evidence ⁽⁴⁾ suggests the former, supporting Hyginus' figures. However, archaeological evidence from excavated barracks ⁽⁵⁾ implies the latter arrangement. Whichever it was, the figures are doubled for a milliary cohort.

In general the status of cohortes equitatae was pretty low. One of the standard military punishments was militae mutatio (transfer with loss of rank), and there is an instance ⁽⁶⁾ of a decurio alae

(troop commander in a squadron of auxiliary cavalry) being demoted to the position of decurion in a cohors equitata. In other words, he retained his nominal rank but was sent to serve in a less prestigious unit. Similarly, Hadrian in 128 AD made a speech comparing these units unfavourably with "real" cavalry:

It is difficult enough for the cavalry of a cohors equitata to give satisfaction, even harder for them not to cause dissatisfaction after the manoeuvres of a cavalry unit.

... The quality of horses and arms reflects your lower pay. But you have avoided contempt by your keenness in doing with vigour what had to be done. To this you have added throwing stones with slings and combat with missiles. You have on all occasions jumped with alacrity. (7)

The latter part of this speech offers a clue to the tactical use of cohortes equitatae, for which there appears to be no direct evidence. To start with, as Caesar's experience suggests, they were cohesive tribal units forming a light striking force; by the second century AD (as the muster-rolls from Dura-Europus indicate) they were no longer recruited solely from one area. But Hadrian's address to them suggests the general function of such units: to provide small general-purpose forces away from the main area of battle, using varied and informal tactics supplemented by initiative and elan.

When the Imperial frontiers had been formally stabilised by Augustus, it became clear that the legionary heavy infantry were not ideally suited for border-guard duty. On the other hand, a small force of mixed infantry and cavalry is well adapted to the guarding and patrolling of a stretch of frontier, or policing the debatable ground between two tribes. The infantry can hold their own until help - if needed - arrives, while the cavalry perform scouting and messenger duties. A string of small camps or forts, each able to defend itself until legionary forces come up from the main base, provides both a "tripwire" effect - giving warning of enemy incursions - and also a limited form of defence in depth.

As Hadrian said, cohortes equitatae would have made a poor showing in a pitched battle. Their main function was probably to act as detached screen and scouts. Even the best legions could not - as Crassus' Parthian experience showed - advance into a vacuum; there was a need for small units to move ahead of the legion and on its flanks, using cavalry to keep the main body informed and infantry to secure the line of march. They would

certainly not show to advantage when acting with a cavalry mass, which the Roman army generally used to cover its immediate flanks, because of their lack of both numbers and training. This tactical concept is supported by evidence ⁽⁸⁾ that the cavalry of these mixed units were frequently dismounted to fight on foot; they were therefore the exact equivalent of eighteenth-century dragoons.

These facts must be taken into account by wargamers in the ancient period. To begin with, cohortes equitatae can only appear in early Imperial armies, though it would be possible for a Caesarian army to include a German mixed unit as irregulars. From the time of Augustus to about 300 AD they are Regular C or D units, cavalry and infantry being the same class but not necessarily armed with identical weapons. In general either infantry or cavalry, but probably not both, could be armed with bows, and the infantry (as Hadrian's speech implies) can also use slings. Apart from these the common weapon would most likely be javelins. Cavalry is always light; infantry may be light medium or light heavy.

Using Wargames Research Group rules (5th ed.), the organisation of a quingenary cohort works out thus: 16 or 20 auxiliary infantry LHI or LMI (Reg.C or Reg.D), 6 auxiliary horse LC (Reg.C or Reg.D). In addition, units based in African or Near Eastern provinces may have one regular medium camelry figure (the Cohors XV Palmyrenorum - a milliary unit - has between 30 and 40 dromedarii in 208 AD). The strength of milliary cohorts is twice the size. Cohortes equitatae are commanded by a praefectus if quingenary, or by a tribunus if milliary ⁽⁹⁾.

It would be unusual for a cohors equitata to appear in a full-scale battle, since their task was apparently to act independently of the main army. However, a small force of two or three legionary cohorts with auxiliaries might well expect to have one or more of these mixed units fighting alongside it. The widespread practice of vexillation, whereby small detachments from different legions would be sent to a trouble-spot, meant that a very mixed force might be assembled to deal with enemy incursions. The fort at Dura Europus, as far down the Euphrates as Rome ever got, is known to have had vexillations of at least four legions ⁽¹⁰⁾ in about 210 AD, as well as the complete auxiliary cohorts II Ulpia Equitata and XX Palmyrenorum. The cavalry and camel components of the two auxiliary units seem to have been the only mounted forces at this

remote outpost.

There are considerable numbers of inscriptions mentioning - or otherwise inferring the existence of - cohortes equitatae, from all over the Empire. The following table (11) shows the number attested in each province, and the dates (where known) within which the inscriptions occur.

Britannia	11	98 - 222
Germania Inferior	2	158 - 205
Germania Superior	8	74 - 134
Raetia	2	162 - 166
Pannonia Superior	5	60 - 154
Pannonia Inferior	11	80 - 167
Dalmatia	2	93 - 173
Moesia Superior	2	93 - early third century
Moesia Inferior	2	99 - 230
Dacia	6	110 - 205
Cappadocia	11	138 - 161
Syria	17	157 - 161
Syria Palaestina	1	139
Aegyptus	5	114 - 177
Africa	4	128 - 164
Mauretania Caesariensis	2	107 - 243
Mauretania Tingitana	1	late second century
Hispania Tarraconensis	2	163

From this table it can be seen that cohortes equitatae were active from the early Empire at least until the middle of the third century (Cohors II Breucorum Equitata in Mauretania being the latest known, 243 AD). It is highly likely that other auxiliary cohorts were in fact equitatae without having this label in the unit title, since we know that Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura Europus was a mixed unit, even though the name does not indicate this. At the other end of the time spectrum, at least 53 cohortes equitatae are believed to have been raised before 70 AD (12).

So there you have it. An interesting and little-known formation of the early Empire, which should prove to have useful application on the wargame table.

Notes.

1. De Bello Gallico vii, 65.
2. Diplomata ix, in CIL v.3 suppl.
3. Hyginus, De Munitionibus Castrorum, 26-27.
4. Welles, pp.28-31; CIL ii, 6760; E.E. vii, p.456.

5. Summarised in Webster, p.149.
6. Watson, p.124, and p.203 nn.393-4.
7. ILS 2487; a full translation is in Watson, p.161 n.12.
8. Cheesman, p.29.
9. Watson, p.25.
10. These were III Cyrenaica, IV Scythica, X Fretensis and XIV Flavia Firma. Welles et al., pp.24-26.
11. Adapted from Cheesman, pp.146-186.
12. Cheesman, pp.170-186.

List of Modern Works Consulted.

- G.L. Cheesman, The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army. Oxford 1914.
- F. Millar, The Roman Empire and its Neighbours. London 1967.
- G.R. Watson, The Roman Soldier. London 1969.
- G. Webster, The Roman Imperial Army. London 1969.
- C.B. Welles et al., The Excavations at Dura-Europus. Final Report V, part 1. New Haven 1959.

Author's note.

Since writing the above article, my attention has been drawn to E.N. Luttwak's book "The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire" (1976). While this monograph does provide a broad-ranging and detailed analysis of Roman strategic aims from the late Republic onwards, I do not consider that the first paragraph of my article should be amended - especially considering the lack of space for a detailed argument on the question.

I should also point out that Dromedary units in Imperial Roman service were not combat troops. Several mentions of camel troops occur in the ancient writers, and it is clear from these that the camels were used as heavy transport - for tools, heavy equipment and pay-chests - in provinces where the lack of roads precluded the use of carts. Interested readers are referred to R.W. Davies' article in Historia v.16 (1967) p.115. However, wargamers may still like to include the odd camel figure where appropriate, in order to disorganise enemy cavalry; this might be worth the cost in points, even though they can't fight.

ORGANISATION OF A SCIPIONIC ROMAN ARMY

J.L. Sandercock

The Roman army of the Republic probably first introduced a cohort system under Scipio, in his African campaigns against Hannibal. Prior to this the Romans had fought in the manipular formation - very hard to represent in figure form.

These new cohorts were made up of three maniples: one each of hastati, principes and triarii. The three-line system with hastati in front, principes behind these, with triarii in reserve probably still existed, so a cohort would on paper have a strength of 120 hastati, 120 principes and 60 triarii - giving, for the wargamer, a cohort of 15 figures: six each in the first and second ranks, and three in the third.

This formation unfortunately produces the unwarranted expense, for the wargamer, of having three figures of good fighting value inactive. It may have been fine for the Romans to have this reserve, fighting with six full legions and as many allies; but for the poor wargamer, having half a legion and a few allies, it is not on.

Fortunately this is only the paper strength, so it is completely reasonable to increase the number of triarii to four figures, and place them on one flank of the hastati and principes, enabling them to fight at full effect. It is also advisable to cut down the number of hastati and principes to four figures each, to retain the cohort's greatest advantage - mobility. This change produces eight figures of heavy javelinmen and four figures of spearmen. The triarii are a blessing, as they protect the javelinmen from their worst bane - medium or heavy cavalry.

Usual allies and auxilia to the legionaries are Roman heavy cavalry, Italian and Numidian light cavalry, Cretan archers, Pergamese peltasts and Numidian elephants.

The main strategy to remember about these auxiliaries is to keep the cavalry in small units, so that it may cooperate with the legionaries, without losing any versatility and manoeuvrability. The cavalry force, though of reasonable quality, is too small to be a striking force, and can easily be overwhelmed by an opponent with stronger cavalry forces - e.g. Hannibal - unless it works in close cooperation with the very tough cohorts.

The peltasts are very useful for their speed, as they can march to occupy a spot before the legionaries, and can manoeuvre to threaten the flank of an enemy pinned down by the cohorts. Also they are in open order, so can occupy woods and swamps without being disordered, and can move at full speed in them. Their spears enable them to stand off most cavalry, and their javelins enable them to skirmish - very useful all-round troops.

Another peltast type are the Spanish scutarii infantry, armed with heavy throwing weapons. Very useful against infantry armies, they suffer from an aggravated legionary problem - medium and heavy cavalry. Being irregulars, they are also hard to manoeuvre. But they are most useful against an enemy with not too much charging cavalry, and on difficult terrain.

The most awkward problem is the elephants. Being Irregular D class they tend to be panicky, but they are necessary to bolster the flagging cavalry arm. If your opponent has elephants, put only one on - and hide it from archers and melees. If he has none, but heaps of archers instead, forget them altogether; but if he has neither elephants nor hordes of archers, put all four on in one unit, on the flank where the push is to come from, and surround them with friendly units.

As I said, the cavalry should be fielded in small units: two units of eight heavy cavalry figures, plus if possible three HC figures for the general's bodyguard. Light cavalry is also thin on the ground, but very useful for skirmishing in support of the six legionary cohorts. Italian light cavalry can have two units of six figures, and Numidian allies two units of seven and eight respectively.

Allied infantry - the Cretan archers have one unit of ten men, and the Pergamese peltasts a unit of thirty. I would not field the Spanish scutarii unless you are fighting an infantry army in broken terrain (but then put on all 20 in one unit).

Any spare points can be used to add a couple more figures to each of the heavy cavalry units.

SOME THOUGHTS ON WARGAMING

David J.W. Bugler

I have seized this opportunity to discuss a few points which rarely receive calm consideration among wargamers and military enthusiasts. It is not often that we can talk about these topics without developing an acrimonious debate. First I would like to state my own prejudices, so that readers can see where I stand without getting a chance to interrupt.

Well, I consider "real wargaming", the genuine article, to mean table-top battles with accurately modelled armies of properly-painted figures. Anything else is something less than this; and by "anything else" I mean particularly board-gaming and all the fantasy games. In my book they are simply not wargaming.

Having said that, let me justify my stance. To begin with, our hobby in all its manifestations exists on two separate levels. The first and more obvious is relaxation - or as our President puts it, "the game is for fun." This is where cracks about "playing with toy soldiers" crop up, and also the level at which public acceptance is found. Far more inscrutable is the deep level of psychological release, a subject rarely mentioned but very important to the conduct of the hobby. Wargaming, like any other human activity, is a set of actions by which the individual works out inner tensions and organises a wide range of social responses.

It is here that the cause of public disapproval lies; remarks about violence, militarism, aggressive personalities and other social stigmata derive from this deep level. However, I personally believe that the working-out of tensions on the table, especially problems of conscience and guilt about aggression and personal dislike, is a far better solution than one which may cause frustration or transference to other, more sensitive actions. It should be understood by non-wargamers that we engage in our hobby not as preparation for overt full-scale violence, but in order to avoid it.

This brings me back to the first level, because to solve our problems in play is one of the classic themes of education and socialisation. There is nothing wrong in deriving simple pleasure from wargaming, even if some people indulge to the extent of childish emotionalism on occasion. If we are prepared to admit - as I think we must - that the pieces on the table are extensions of the player and represent him or her personally, then we should

accept some players' will to win at all costs; we must also understand the bloodthirsty yells of encouragement and loud cries of personal anguish as the pieces succeed or fail in the course of battle. We do, of course, prefer (especially when the uninitiated public are watching) to strive for a lower-key approach characterised by quiet grunts of pleasure or subdued groans of oppression; spectators do not enjoy animal carryings-on precisely because they do not understand, and cannot feel, that personal identification with metal or card which players are experiencing. To them it is mere spectacle, to be appreciated as such.

Now, I for one do not feel much identification with pieces of card or annotations on paper, because they themselves are so impersonal; on the other hand, though a metal figure represents twenty or fifty "real men" on the table, and is thus an abstract of reality, he is a recognisable bod with a face and hands, a character of his own. Each figure in a battalion may be recognised by his different pose or features. This explains my preference for figure gaming, because I feel the need to have recognisable individuals fighting on my behalf. Further, I consider that the degree of authenticity and skill shown in the painted figures reflects on me personally - which is why I will not field unpainted figures, and frown on those who do.

There is no skill required in producing an army of cardboard counters, or arranging a characterisation table for fantasy gaming; and while the pleasure of playing may be similar, the element of spectacle is completely missing. Boardgames or Dungeons & Dragons may elicit delightful images in the players' minds, but I feel they cannot match the display of colour or the pride in achievement which an army of painted figures presents. Figures are to some extent champions (in the mediaeval sense) of the player.

This leads me to suggest that there may be a third level or dimension of wargaming as a hobby, intermediate between the other two, characterised generally as "historical research". The drive for authenticity in the organisation, numbers and uniforms of a figurine army is deeply imbedded in wargaming; it is responsible for a large proportion of wargamers' discussions and of the articles in wargaming magazines. The broad field of military history, as amateur exercise rather than academic study, can itself prove a rewarding pursuit. When it is applied to the creation of a model army as authentic as research and skill can make it, the result is deeply satisfying. Indeed, I personally

gain as much delight from the initial research and the painting of figures as I do from fighting battles on the table.

This activity is probably the main reason why I regard fantasy and boardgaming as pale shadows of "real wargaming". By now, of course, readers should realise that figure gaming based on fantasy sources (such as Lord of the Rings) is in my book equal to other more conventional periods; the figures still have to be properly painted, and there is still scope for research - as John Gerson's article in the first issue of QW indicates. The problem with the pale shadows is that they are pale shadows - players' imaginations may well be going full blast, but the visible results are simply uninteresting; a stranger cannot admire them as he can a well-turned-out regiment of metal figures.

Before a host of outraged boardgamers come after my scalp, I must say that I think there is a place for boardgames. Most of them operate around divisional level, so the games have more of a strategic flavour than figure gaming can offer. They cover all historical periods, and most have flexible scenarios to vary the playing time from a couple of hours to several days. They are easy to operate, in that you simply open the box and lay out the pieces. And all the research has been done for you; unit strengths and compositions, historical organisation, even the terrain have all been produced for you by the game designers.

Moreover, boardgames are relatively cheap. A complete game will cost between fifteen and thirty dollars, whereas a fair-sized army of metal figures can set you back more than \$200 - and your opponent's army may have cost as much too - which is of course why plastic figures are so popular, at roughly one tenth of the cost. But cost is not an over-riding consideration. It is quite possible to acquire an army in 15mm metals for less than \$50; and apart from this, the rate of purchasing figures is largely dictated by the rate at which you can paint them, so that \$200 army may well take two or more years to complete - not a terrifying rate of expenditure.

On the other hand, fantasy games - by which I mean structured worlds like Midgard or Dungeons & Dragons - require a fair amount of time and intellectual effort to set up. They do in this way satisfy the demands of creativity. But the result is only a set of tables, a few lists of factors, and a map or two - definitely unspectacular. Indeed, very few uninvolved spectators can summon

up much interest in a fantasy game, since such games are primarily based on the psychological motivations of the players. Since an integral element of fantasy is its freedom from historical restrictions, there is no scope for historical research and no outlet for the urge to re-create a distant reality by one's own efforts.

In fact, what often seems to happen is that fantasy players are so terrified of the limitless possibilities that their creations tend to conform in remarkable detail to a known historical situation. Thus the characters in Dungeons & Dragons are generally depicted as figures from Dark Age Europe, and the naval technology of Midgard is drawn from classical Mediterranean originals. The alien beasts and monsters are largely taken from Tolkien's Middle Earth (with good reason, since his works depend greatly on early European history and mythology) or from heraldry, which presents a broad collection of beasts with known, standardised characteristics.

Therefore fantasy gaming tends to be undisciplined, but it is not a creative indiscipline. It lacks the constraints on performance which often increase enjoyment of the game. And, because it is played only on paper, a fantasy game can usually be prolonged for weeks (in the case of Midgard, for years) - until the paper is torn up; there is nothing productive or lasting about these systems. And you don't usually win or lose in a fantasy game; each player rises or falls in status on various scales, and if anything drastic happens there is a saving throw or character exchange - the player continues until it's time to go home.

Admittedly, the attitude that one must always fight for a clear-cut, triumphant victory can go to extremes. Most outbursts of temperament among wargamers occur when a potentially crushing move is thwarted, or a player's plans are undermined by rule fudging; the urge to win at all costs can produce unpleasant scenes between players. It is sometimes suggested that, as real battles produced incontrovertible results, so the wargamer should never think: "Oh, it's only a game, I'll get him next time." I think this attitude is dangerous in itself, because a wargame is only a game. There will be a next time. And though a prized unit may be removed from the table through "casualties", the figures remain in the player's hand. They are not destroyed, and the players are not physically injured.

So it is fair to say that, by and large, the many aspects of

wargaming can provide many hours of enjoyment and relaxation - which is the whole point of any hobby. And I hope the reasons for my attitudes are now clear, even if I have not converted many fantasy gamers! My ranking of fantasy lowest, then boardgames, and figure gaming at the top, is based on my assumptions that most people want a hobby with some degree of creativity, a requirement for intellectual achievement, a visible and lasting result, and an outlet for inner tensions. Add to this that with a figurine army, even if you lose the battle you have - I hope - the satisfaction of parading your beautiful troops in review afterwards; ready for "the next big one". And of course your men are always better painted than those of the miserable ham-fisted sod who accidentally beat you.

-ooOoo-

As Editor of this journal I have to remain relatively aloof from controversy; hence the above article rather than a very long editorial. UQWS was originally founded as a club for figure gamers, and as such I expect Queensland Wargamer will follow the interests and prejudices of the club's leading figures. However, I would be loth to inhibit discussion in these pages of the more abstract aspects of the hobby, especially as such discussion is rarely seen in print.

Any comments on my article may be submitted for publication, but I am most interested in receiving reasoned, article-length discussions which put forth a coherent thesis.

David J.W. Bugler

HIGHWAY TO THE REICH: DESCRIPTION AND COMMENT

Kevin Flynn

This is a description of the second edition of "Highway to the Reich" (HTTR), published by SPI and costing about \$30. Those who have the first edition of the rules may obtain replacements from SPI by sending them the cover of the said rules.

HTTR is a four-map, company/platoon level reconstruction of the disastrous Allied paratroop drop in 1944 to gain Arnhem (with a lot of mayhem). The Allied plan, devised by Montgomery, was to lay a carpet of paratroops between the front line of the British 30th Corps and Arnhem; this would create a corridor down which the 30th Corps would race, forcing an enormous outflanking of the German forces in the West. The result would be the end of the war in 1944.

To perform this task three divisions of paratroops were used: the American 82nd (All-American) and 101st (Screaming Eagles) plus the British 1st (Red Devils). These were laid over a 70-mile stretch of highway, the key to the whole operation. For reasons due to bad planning and bad luck the operation was a disastrous failure, resulting in most of the 1st Div. being wiped out for very little gain.

First examination of the game gave me great hope; not only were the maps colourful (something I consider very important in board-games), but the playing pieces - a couple of thousand - with newly arranged figures indicated something different. The map however presents the first problem, as the battle was fought over a 70-mile corridor; the maps have to be arranged end-to-end, resulting in a 6ft long problem. This overcome, the rest is all fun, as long as you have perfect recall!

The rules are extensive and filled with "little" comments (which turn out to be rules) that are hard to recall and even harder to find after you've recalled them. Cross-referencing of all the rules has not occurred, and this has resulted in a few heated arguments. The only answer to this is practice, and so for the first time in my wargaming career I took their advice and played a scenario first; then another, and yet another (there are 6 scenarios altogether, all are quite enjoyable but rely on historical events).

After trying about four scenarios I packed the game away for six months and began a recruiting drive for players. The game can be played nicely by four people; in fact I recommend four players

rather than two or three. Finding people as silly as myself is no easy task; those who enjoy monster wargames are few and far between, and though HTTR isn't a monster in size it is in complexity. However, perseverance came through in the end and we began.

Apart from those "discussions" about "little" rules, I will say now that I find HTTR the most enjoyable and realistic game I have ever played - it is without doubt my most favourite game (equal to 1776 which I like because I'm always lucky). A lot of people won't agree with this; they will say it's too slow, and hence dull - but I don't like fast games, so that's that.

The HTTR combat system is unique; it's a combination of "Bataille de la Moskowa" stacking system and an original idea. Every counter has three values:

- 1) Stacking - representing the quantity of men/guns/tanks in the unit; you can equate this partly to strength:
- 2) Effectiveness - on a scale 1-9, representing the ability of the unit to utilise its full capacity (infantry generally rate 3-4, tanks 5-9 and artillery 6-9):
- 3) Range - with most units this is 1, but other units have higher values; this is not printed unless it is greater than 1.

Casualties can be inflicted by shooting at a unit or by melee ("close assault" as they call it, and it can be a very close thing at that). Shooting will wipe out stacking points; "close assaulting" will mainly disrupt one side or both; a unit disrupted while it is already disrupted is wiped out. Shooting is slow but takes up most of the combat in this game, close assaults are rare and usually risky unless you have already shot the unit to pieces. The only oversight I can find in the rules is that you cannot use your artillery on a unit you can't "sight" (sighting rules by the way are fairly detailed and make excellent use of terrain - hill-tops actually become valuable!). This is probably just a mechanism to stop players shooting "instinctively" at certain hexes (oh, wow, did you really have your crack artillery piece in that hex I just blew up??) when most of the map is empty. Players might devise a pre-plotted artillery fire system if they wish, but I don't think it is needed.

Lastly comes integrity. Every unit on the board is marked with a code identifying it within a command structure. Companies belong to battalions, which belong to brigades which belong to divisions which belong to a Corps. Supply is judged through this chain of

command, as is communication for artillery fire. Also, and most important, units of different subordination cannot participate in combat together without loss of "effectiveness". This rigid structuring forces a player into maintaining an organised force, and he can't run pieces all over the board as he desires.

Other points of interest are stacking, which applies at all times during the game; Leaders, who can be used to ~~cancel~~ "multi-formation" attacks; and three types of unit mode - dispersed, concentrated, and travel.

HTTR is a monster game, taking many hours (days/weeks) to play - not recommended for children, and morally disastrous if you are the airborne player. It is also habit-forming, causes cancer and gives you nightmares and loss of sleep. In other words, a really fun game for the experienced player.

As a last note, I have never held to the practice of playing scenarios before the proper game; I prefer to bull up good and proper on the rules first. But with HTTR it is essential for game comprehension that you should play at least one scenario first. And I should point out that there is a correction sheet published for the second edition.

-ooOoo-

Editor's note -

We do not as a rule recommend boardgames for children under the age of 10. Melted ice-cream and jelly tend to make the counters adhere permanently to the map; and once the children have eaten all the counters not stuck to the map, they rapidly become bored. We suggest giving them a large-sized chess set instead.

THE UNIONIST - A NEW DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS CHARACTER

Kevin Flynn

	<u>EP</u>	<u>WP(D8)</u>	<u>AC</u>
1 Scab	0	1	9
2 Dole-bludger	1	2	8
3 Casual	150	1	7
4 Worker	2000	2	6
5 Member	8000	4	5
6 Shop-steward	16,000	6	4
7 Representative	32,000	8	3
8 Advocate	64,000	9	2
9 Executive	128,000	10	1
10 Branch President (Local)	256,000	11	0
11 Branch President (State)	750,000	12	-1
12 Branch President (National)	1,500,000	13	-2
13 President of the ACTU	3,000,000	15	-4

Unionists are rare characters, requiring the following minimum characteristic rolls:

Str - 10

Int - less than 14 (except for Presidents)

Wis - less than 12

Char - 14+ for maximum attainments.

The unionist is fairly weak to begin with; in fact his own kind will try to kill him if he is still 1st level and they are above. On second level they will not associate with him, and on third level will grudgingly talk to him. Once a Member, however, he attains all the rights of freedom of his class. As a Worker, the unionist must give half of all his money to the Union automatically, without gaining experience for it. After becoming a Member however, he only pays one third. This is maintained throughout his life.

Special abilities.

The Strike. A unionist of 7th level and above may use this awesome power at will. However there are political and legal repercussions every time he uses it. Once per day the unionist may call "Everybody out!"; all activity being performed at that moment within a 10" radius must stop, and may not start again until the next day.

A save throw vs. magic is allowed against this, but if a striking unionist attacks a creature he will become blacklisted, doomed to death by social starvation. The only exceptions to this

rule are the armed forces of a country, and security forces or police in states with specific anti-union laws.

Unionists may only order strikes in their own union unless they are President of the ACTU, who may call a national strike where all must stop with no save throw. National strikes lasting longer than a day will result in loss of charisma for the President (1 pt/day). There is a 1 in 6 chance of the strike call being ignored by all.

Stop-Work Meeting. All activity must stop for 10 minutes, during which the unionist and his friends may perform any non-aggressive action. Save throws are allowed but attacks will again result in blacklisting.

Pay Rise. With every treasure a unionist finds, he may take the sharing decision to "Arbitration" and try to obtain a more than fair share of the loot. A roll of 1 in 6 will mean he gets 1-10% more. If unsatisfied he may try again and take the better result. If still unsatisfied he may call a strike enabling him to have first choice of the treasure.

Gaining Experience. A unionist gains experience by money and political activity. For every strike he calls he will gain 1000EP, but for every strike that fails he will lose a level. Each time a unionist is arrested he gains a level, but each time he goes to jail he loses 1000EP.

Miscellaneous abilities.

The intelligence of a unionist must not exceed 14, except that to become President of the ACTU he must reach an Int. of 15.

The President of the ACTU has one super-power - the Arrrgh. As long as the player can say "Arrrgh" all enemies are frozen into inactivity. This may only be used once a week; save throws are allowed at -4.

Unionists may not wear armour, but can use all magic items except scrolls and wands. The President of the ACTU may use scrolls (treat as a thief). All books, tomes etcetera except those specifically designed for unionists result in the loss of a level if so much as touched; in such cases the books is destroyed.

Weapon usage: the unionist gains an extra weapon every level, with a non-expertise level of -4. Weapons include two-handed club, quarterstaff, blackjack, broken bottle, flick-knife, hobnailed boots, all swords, writ (this last is treated as a symbol of stunning).

(CONT. on p.23)

PRESIDENTIAL HARANGUE by our beloved Noel Bugeia

The main topic of the harangue will be apathy.

The club has recently experienced a rather "off" period. Now that Uni has started again we can expect things to pick up.

It is hoped that we will be able to organise a second UQWS Championship in all aspects of our hobby; this will be discussed at our next meeting.

During Orientation Week the club presented a static display in the Green Room of the Union complex. This turned out to be quite successful and several new members were gained. However, a major problem was lack of participation; only three members actively took part in the display while a further four or so contributed.

This represents roughly a 30% turnout by the club. I am afraid that this is not really good enough. Members of the executive are supposed only to organise and direct things, not to run the whole club from the grass roots up. You members are the ones who should be out helping to find new members, and to show the public what we do.

While Ken Toohey was President he suffered from the same problem. I hope that this year we can all get together and make our club what it should have been all along.

The magazine this issue is a little smaller than we had hoped. Our February issue is supposed to be a double edition, containing items that would otherwise have appeared in a December edition. This time most of the contributions came from three members - just not good enough. I hope that in the future some of our other literary genii will put pen to paper and give us some articles. David means it: the "Spanish Bride" is next!

Aside: You will have noted earlier the suggestion that the club should form a Rules Committee to discuss the usage of wargames rules, etc. Anyone who would be interested, please let me know as soon as possible.

DAS FUERER

-oo0oo-

UNIONIST (cont'd from previous page)

If a unionist attempts any action in the province of another union when a member of the other union is present, all members of both unions will refuse to work together for one week. President of the ACTU has a 1 in 3 chance of solving a demarcation dispute each week (but only one dispute per week).



