

Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

XXXVI, No. 1 January 2010



Russian troops ready for winter combat, 1942 (Life)

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Historical Miniatures Co-Coordinator

Message from CMH President Binhan Lin



Hopefully the holidays have been bountiful for our members and they are stocked up and ready for another year of gaming. A reminder that your 2010 membership dues are due at the January meeting.

The next local convention is Genghis Con in February. Mark your calendars and support the local gaming circuit. As a side note, after Genghis Con, Todd Pressley will be stepping down from his position as Historical Miniatures Co-coordinator for Denver Gamers Association (DGA), I would like to thank Todd for his hard work and support of the historical gaming hobby in the Rocky Mountain region for these many years.

We are still looking for a coordinator for West Wars 2010. If you are interested in becoming cocoordinator or volunteering to assist or run games at West Wars, please contact me.

CMH in 2010

Message from CMH Secretary Eric Elder



Thanks this month go out to David Newport, Binhan Lin and Greg Cornell. David continues to improve his ACW ruleset *Metal Men with Mini Balls*, and shares the latest update with us. He also provides design notes regarding his rules. Binhan continues his amazing newsletter writing marathon, reviewing the sword exhibit at the Littleton Historical Museum. At the December monthly meeting I forgot to bring my camera, but fortunately Greg had his camera with him to cover for me. Greg has provided all the club photos in this newsletter this month.

As mentioned by Binhan, Todd Pressley (<u>toddp1812@comcast.net</u>) is looking for a volunteer to take over his duties as Historical Miniatures Co-coordinator with DGA. DGA runs Genghis Con and Tacticon. Duties would start with the Tacticon Convention.

2010 I predict will be another great year at the club. February many of our members are running games at Genghis Con, which will be at the Red Lion Inn near Attactix this year. I have never been to this hotel, so I am curious what the convention will be like. West Wars will be in May again. Historicon will lure a number of our members again this year I am sure. Not me (yet). I thought it was going to be in Baltimore, but it looks like the HMGS-East Board shifted it to Valley Forge. Tacticon will in September. We will host Veterans Wars in November. We have a strong core group of over 40 members who I look forward to talking about military history and game with. I always have a great time checking out all the new and old games.

What will everyone be working on this year? I always have more WWII or Korean War 12mm I could paint up. I hope to finish up the French and Austrian 15mm 1859 figures I am painting up. I probably should paint up some naval figures, but I need to work up a good scenario first.

Happy New Year!

Metal Men with Minie Balls Redesign

Ruleset Designer Notes from CMH member David Newport



I have put on my Metal Men with Minie Balls game several times for the club meetings, as well as a large Shiloh battle at last year's Veteran's Wars. After running the game a large number of times, both for CMH, CHG, and for some buddies, I have seen a few things that I think can be done better. After all, I am the designer and I know exactly how I meant the game to be played, but once you turn it loose on 20 other players you start to see things you never thought of or things that appeared obvious are actually kind of hard to understand. Fortunately, one of the good things about designing your own games is that if you see something new you want to add in or fix, it is very easy to do so. This article is thus a set of designers notes for the updates, sort of a "redesigner's notes" if you like.

The rules can be found attached to this newsletter. They are terse, but you can follow along. The more ambitious can look at the original set of rules from a club newsletter over the summer.

The first thing that changed was the sequence of play. Whereas before it was a simple Move-Defensive Fire-Offensive Fire sequence, now it's Rally-Artillery-Move-Defensive Fire-Firefight-

Rout. Why the change? Does that make it more complex? The new sequence goes to the heart of what I thought I needed to change, and the rest flowed from there.

First off, the rally of disorganized and routed troops has its own phase right at the start. Previously, I allowed players to try to rally their troops during their movement, and then they could give them an additional order for a half Since units were potentially getting move. multiple orders in a phase it was a little confusing. I had a ton of questions about it, and it was sort of strange. By splitting this out to its own phase I made it less confusing, and from an umpire standpoint, easier to run. Now units can only get one order per phase. I allow a full move in the movement phase after a unit rallies, but the game is easier to run as an umpire and play as a player this way without tracking who rallied The change also necessitated a tweak where the officers did not have to be in contact with the rallying unit, but that was kind of fiddly anyhow and forced players to chase down units in trouble rather than fight the battle. players would rather be pushing their figures into battle or maneuvering for advantage, not physically chasing down some fleeing guys and

whipping them into shape.

The next change was to give artillery its own fire phase ahead of the movement phase. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, artillery should be used to prepare the enemy positions prior to your assault or preemptively break up an opponent's attack, and this way you can see the results of the fire before moving and it feels more appropriate. Now I make the artillery fire require an order from an officer. This is in keeping with using it for softening up the enemy It takes planning and player position. involvement to make artillery fire offensively. It is worth it as artillery fire in this phase gets four dice per stand, but you can imagine something

like, "Once the guns have bombarded the enemy, Colonel, you may advance your regiment."

Originally I had a rule that artillery could not unlimber and then fire in the same turn. This is not a bad thing, but players were always getting confused over whether they

could use their artillery this turn or had to wait. Now with movement after the artillery fire, there is no confusion at all. Artillery is still hard to handle on the attack, since it takes a full turn to unlimber to fire and then you have to wait for the next turn to use it, but now you know when it can fire. The sequence takes care of that for you.

I did not change the movement and orders process at all. I felt that the movement worked as desired for a fast play game. The orders system was also tested out extensively when I was originally designing the game, and the number and scope of orders did not need changing. The extra orders potentially needed to get artillery firing were balanced by not making officers move into contact with a unit to rally it.

Players will still find it easy to maneuver before they close with the enemy, but once they close into battle they will never have enough orders to go around and it becomes a matter of making the priority choices.

The combat portion of the game saw the most sequencing changes. Originally I had the usual defensive fire/offensive fire routine common to most ACW games. However, the combat system made the defense too tough. It was possible to be blown away if you approached a defending unit, not just pushed back, but totally blown away. I could make an attack work in the game, but then I knew just how to sequence my moves and fires and control the engagement range to

have a good chance of success. This approach was not very obvious to anyone else, which I found out once we started to play it extensively, and attacks were often faltering before they developed. fully Also, if the attacker could survive the defenders fire, either

due to lucky dice or good play, he then had a good chance of returning the favor and blowing the defense away. In the flip turn, the original defender would be subject to the return fire first if the attacker was still around, so the defense would often ease back just out of range. None of this seems very historical, given that many attacks were successful, the defense didn't give up ground just to avoid return fire "in the opposing turn", and the game would not devolve into inconclusive firefights which characterized many ACW actions.

I kept the basic "buckets of dice" mechanic and the range based hit numbers, and adjusted everything else. The first thing I did was split the retreats out of the combat phase. Units now



retreat out of combat (or in general) as the last phase in a turn, rather than as a combat result. This allowed several things. First off, once you decide to approach the enemy, you are going in and you take your lumps, and hopefully you can dish out some damage in return. No getting blown away as you hope the attack works. Next, it served to keep the two sides in contact, which seem both more historical and more interesting for players as they manage a steadily evolving fight rather than a series of lunges. By taking the retreat result out and reducing the number of dice rolled and tweaking the modifiers, I could make combat mutually bloodier. In the first incarnation of the game, when you got hit, you got hit hard and could possibly dissolve. It was not planned

or calculated that way, but a fairly common set of good or bad die rolls on one side or the other wreck could brigade in one smash. Now you get into combat and both sides suffer can since losses. adjusted the combat tables to bring out losses right away

rather than the first hit forcing a unit back. The final thing this sequence change did was remove some control from the players over their disorganized and routing units. Every unit in a negative morale state slinks away from the action in both players' turns according to a random die roll. It is now important to stay ahead of the retreat game, and it provides some randomness to units a player has lost full control over.

I halved the number of dice being rolled, except for the artillery in the artillery fire phase. This helped to limit the more extreme results coming out of the infantry fire combat. The artillery remains tough, but now it only shoots at full strength in its own phase in its own turn so it has less of the "death ray" effect we sometimes saw.

The modifiers were adjusted given the lesser number of dice, and in many cases I reduced their effect. In the game I only modify the number of dice rolled, but the results of the rolls are always unmodified. This makes the game somewhat easier to run and play, as once you figure out how many dice to roll, you are done calculating and you and your opponent can look for results right on the bones without adding or subtracting anything. Whereas before I was adding large numbers of dice all over the place, now I typically limit it to one or two dice per fire combat. This keeps it easier to calculate and limits the swings of fortune a bit.

As far as defensive fire went, I gave defending

units two dice per stand instead of the original four once the attacker moved into range. Obviously, this still has a good chance of getting a result, but with fewer dice flying around the damage is likely to be much less. If the defenders get disorganized result



on their fire, the attackers are then placed at a random distance from the defenders. attacking units are disorganized, they should not have full control over how close they come to the defense. The troops may hang back, or they may get fired up and close the distance much more than you intended. If they pass through the fire successfully which is now a good possibility, you have control over the range you return fire at. This is the way to get into close combat, where you have to rush all the way in and not get disorganized by the defender, which seems appropriate. There is a chance the attackers can be crushed, but now it takes more extreme die rolls. It also means you can approach the guns, as they only roll two dice per stand, not the killer four dice. This is dangerous, but not suicidal. Players always wanted to rush right into close combat before, but it never worked right as I designed in purposely to punish anyone who walked right up to point blank range as it just did not happen that frequently in the war. Now you can do it if everything works right, or you can ease up once you are in a firefight if the moment seems right, effectively seizing the moment with an opportune charge.

How about the firefights? Well, once the defensive fire is over, the firefight phase happens. In this case, all infantry units which are in range of each other fire simultaneously with two dice per stand. Units are going to be able to hurt each other, but not as badly and it is simultaneous. If the attackers were disorganized on their charge into action they will likely come off the worse, as is only appropriate, but they will get to fire back and do some damage to the defense. If units are in a firefight and get disorganized, this is not necessarily the end of it. Since a disorganized unit retreats only one d6 roll, they will likely still be in range of the enemy. Further, if both units in a firefight are disorganized, neither one of them will retreat. They get stuck in a firefight. It is possible to move in or out of the firefight by giving orders to your units. However, I have found that players might adjust range but they tend to stay in the fight to try and push the enemy around. If they can rally their own troops while disorganizing the enemy, they can push him back. If they can not rally and stay disorganized, the half movement penalty of their units tends to keep them in the fight as well. The end result is that units once in action tend to stay in action unless a player makes a conscious decision to pull back and maneuver somewhere else, or they get so badly beat up that they have to pull back. It all works out with the historical firefights reoccurring, and players now have to work with some combat every turn which keeps them involved. As a final touch, I mark units in firefight with smoke balls for the all-important eye-candy appeal, and units in a firefight can not fire defensive Fire, so the flip turn is not a deal

breaker anymore.

The final adjustment was how I started running the games. I typically like to give each player in my games a division command and make him work to use it. In the past I have also had corps commanders floating around to help their subordinate units out. This led to players having a few too many orders to play with as the corps commander could cover a lapse here or there. A corps commander backing up his division commanders is not too farfetched. However, I was also seeing players negotiate over how they would use those orders, since the corps commander was a source of goodies and not a player controlled entity with his own concerns. "Can Bragg spare an order for my artillery unit before you use him to rally your brigades?" This is certainly now how a corps commander would The last few games I have been function! leaving the higher echelon commanders off the table and it has been more interesting. Players now have to make more critical choices using the four or five orders they have with their divisional commander when their division is in action. There is no backup from the corps commander. so it puts players on the spot, makes them think, and makes the game more interesting to play.

These changes to Metal Men with Minie Balls have made it a better game. Attacking is much more workable now. The enormous swings of fortune caused by a brigade rolling 20 dice really well when the enemy got close, have been mitigated with the changes to the combat system. Artillery has its place and works better. Firefights now break out all over the map, and players are involved in managing them and this keeps them active in the game. Some of the changes reduce the brain power needed in order to play the game, which is always a good thing. I would rather focus on the action rather than keeping track of how many extra dice to roll or whether or not something happened that I have to track earlier in the turn, both as a player and as the umpire. Also, I still have the coolest name for an ACW rules set out there!

Thanks to those who have put up with my tinkering with the rules, and I hope to lure some of you who have not played the game into trying it out later this year as I am sure I will put on a few games.



December Monthly Meeting

Unit of the Month

Sponsored by Attactix



Each month CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts and compete for Unit of the Month. The owner of the winning unit receives a gift certificate from Attactix in Aurora, Colorado. We thank Attactix for its continued support.

CMH Member	Scale	Era	Unit
Eric Elder	N	Korean War	Shermans
DAVE NEWPORT	15mm	Nap.	Fr. Infantry Campaign dress
Dave Newport	15mm	Nap.	Chaseurs a Cheval
Binhan Lin	1/144	WWII	A-20 Havoc
Binhan Lin	15mm	WWII	Panzer Grenadiers
Dave Manley	28mm	WWII	Br. Paratrooper Command, Radio, HMG, Mortar
Larry Irons	28mm	WWII	German 75mm AT gun & truck
Larry Irons	28mm	WWII	German Panzershreck, HMG, Heavy Mortar

Table: Unit of the Month (WINNER)

A Double-Edged Weapon The Sword as Icon and Artifact

Museum Exhibit Review by CMH President Binhan Lin

The Higgins Armory Museum has one of the most extensive collections of arms and armor in the United States. It currently is touring a portion of its sword collection in the exhibit "A Double – Edged Weapon: The Sword as Icon and Artifact". The exhibit consists of over 100 swords and related items covering a broad historical and geographical range. One exhibit showcases the differences in technology and metallurgy by displaying a sword from the Bronze Age with one from Late Middle Ages. Although both swords weigh approximately the same amount, the bronze sword is relatively short, stubby and thick, while the knightly sword, made of steel, is long, thin and much more elegant.

The exhibit is divided into regional sections, showcasing examples of swords from Europe, Africa, India, and Asia and further divided historically with examples stretching from the Bronze Age through the 19th Century. Some interesting examples include an 18th century Katana from Japan, a "punch-sword" from India and an exotic 16th century saw-toothed "boarding-sword" from Italy.

The displays are laid out with good indirect lighting, which helps highlight features such as the metal work, or steel patterns of the blades and the items are not crowded, providing good angles of view for most of the pieces. Short descriptions of the physical attributes and materials of the items are listed as well as their historical or regional significance.

Dr. Jeffery Forgeng from the Higgins Museum gave a short presentation, which provided a general overview of the development of the Western sword from antiquity through the 20th century. It was a highly interesting lecture, but obviously due to time constraints, he was unable to delve deeply into any single topic.

I would highly recommend visiting exhibit as it provides a great opportunity to see the actual artifacts that many of us have dealt with in our historical and gaming experience.

The exhibit is on display through January 24, 2010 and admission is free to the public.

Littleton Historical Museum 6028 South Gallup Street Littleton, CO 80120-2703

http://www.littletongov.org/museum/changing.asp

December Monthly Meeting Game of the Month

Sponsored by Valhalla's Gaming Center



Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host. The winning host receives a gift certificate from Valhalla's Gaming Center in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. We thank Valhalla's Gaming Center for its support.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
Dave Newport	15mm	Metal Men with Mini	Eighth and a half Manasas
		Balls	
GREG SKELLY	25mm	Disposable Heroes	WWII Battle of the Bulge
Dan Gurule	15mm	Black Powder	Civil War – Battle of New Market
Pat Harvey	15mm	DBA	Carthaginians vs. Romans

Table 1 Game of the Month (WINNER)

CMH December Scheduled Events



This table shows what scheduled CMH events are coming up. Next months Friday Night Fights (FNF) and the monthly meeting (MM) are listed. It is recommended to schedule your game for future meetings and will appear on this page.

Date	Meeting	Location	Start Time	End Time
January 8	FNF	Baker	7:00 pm	midnight
January 10	MM	Baker	12:00 pm	5:00 pm
January 15	FNF	Valhallas	7:00 pm	midnight
January 22	FNF	Baker	7:00 pm	midnight
January 29	FNF	Valhallas	7:00 pm	midnight

Tony Fryer is putting on a 25mm ACW (Black Powder rules) game January 8. Eric Elder will be running a 12mm Korean War (Cold War Commander rules) playtest game at the monthly meeting. Also at the monthly meeting, Gary Stribling is running a 10mm WWII North Africa game.



Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado Military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when the meeting is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreation Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver, Colorado. The club also hosts gaming every Friday night, called "Friday Night Fights" (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. The first and third Friday of the month, these meetings will be held at the Baker Community Center. The second and fourth Friday of the month, the meetings will be at Valhalla's Gaming Center, 6161 W. 44th Ave., Wheatridge, Colorado.



CMH maintains ties with numerous local, regional and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers serving on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms of office are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$50.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mailed newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$50.00 Half year Adult Membership: \$25.00

(for NEW members who join after June 30)

Family Membership: \$50.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)

Student Membership: \$20.00 (16 to 22 years old)

Children: free (younger than 16 accompanied by member

CMH Newsletter

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METAL MEN with MINIE BALLS

Version 2

12/10/09

Sequence of Play

- 1. Rally phase
- 2. Artillery fire phase
- 3. Movement phase

- 4. Defensive fire phase
- 5. Firefight phase
- 6. Rout phase

Command

The Command system is based on the division commanders giving orders to their own brigades to move and rally, as well as attached artillery and any ammo trains. Corps commanders may order anyone on the table. Good officers get more points, less capable officers get fewer points. This is their points limit per turn:

Good 5 points Average 4 points Poor 3 points

Points are spent for the following actions.

Points	Action	Success?	Range of order?		
1	Move the officer	Automaticor he can move along with a unit for free.			
1	Move a unit	Automaticas long as the unit is in clear LOS and within 8".			
1	Artillery limber/unlimber/fire	lery limber/unlimber/fire Automaticas long as the unit is in clear LOS and within 8".			
1	Rally a unit	Morale check needed			

- Each unit can receive a Rally order in the rally phase and one additional order in the movement phase
- The second order in the movement phase can be an additional Rally order.
- Any unit may take a DG hit and fall backwards 2d6 inches without an order.

Morale ChecksWhen called upon to make a check, units must roll a 5+ on the following dice to pass:Elited12Veterand10Regulard8Greend6Artilleryd10

Movement	Movement Rates	Movement Rates		
- Units can move up to their movement rate.	Infantry	12"		
- They can move in any direction or combination of directions	Artillery (limbered)	16"		
provided no part of the unit exceeds the max rate.	Leader, per point	20"		
- Units which start their move within 8" of the enemy (rifle range)	Supply trains	8"		
may only move at half speed.				

- Any kind of terrain costs double movement, including moving through another unit.
- During their move units can reform, either extending their rear ranks out to the sides, recalling them back into their second rank, or forming a column. It costs **half** their movement to change formation.
- Infantry units in road column and limbered artillery may gain an extra 6" if they move solely along a road.
- Low Ammo units recover ammunition by moving to within 4" of a supply train and ending their turn there.

Artillery

- Artillery cannot move while it is unlimbered. It can change facing if an officer spends one point to order it.
- In order to change to or from limbered and unlimbered states, artillery must spend its entire turn switching.
- Artillery fires in its own separate phase. It takes an officer command point to fire in this phase.
- Artillery firing in the artillery fire phase will roll 4d8 per stand on the combat table.

Defensive Fire Phase

- In the defensive fire phase, the defenders which are not tied up in a firefight may fire on attackers that
 moved into range this turn. Execute the fire at whatever range the attacking unit is at.
- Defensive fire is performed by each stand on the defender's front line rolling two dice on the combat table.
- If the attacker is DG by the defender's fire, he is suffers the DG result and is placed d8 inches from the defender. This may actually put him closer to the defender than at the start of the phase!

Firefight Phase

- In the firefight phase all infantry units (not artillery!) which are in range of each other simultaneously fire.
- Units roll 2d6 per stand in their front line in this phase on the combat table below.
- Mark units in a firefight with smoke cotton balls to show they are in the firefight.
- If both units in a firefight (as marked by smoke) are DG, neither one will retreat in the rout phase.

Combat

The basic idea is that units which are within range fire a bucket full of dice, and the enemy takes morale checks to see what the effect of any hits is.

- Units fire to their front, in a 90 degree arc. Measure range from the center of the unit.
- If the center of the unit is out of range or out of arc, shift it by excluding stands on the end.
- Use the range from the center of the firing unit for combat purposes.
- Each stand in the front rank generates a variable number of dice to use in combat, depending on the phase.
- Infantry always roll a d6 for combat. Artillery roll a d8.
- Stands may not split fire. All of a stand's fire must be directed at one target. Units may split fire.
- Start fire on one side of the table and work across. Finish one firefight or defensive fire before moving on.
- Units must engage the target in the closest range band. If there are multiple targets, it's player's choice.
- Flank fire: if the majority of a unit that is firing is behind the flank of the target, it gets the flank bonus.
- Brigades may "support" artillery. To do this, have their stands touching. This allows the infantry
 to fight in place of the artillery if any attackers make it into range 0" close combat firefights.

Fire Table						
Artillery phase: roll 4d8/stand. Defensive fire: roll 2dice/stand. Firefight phase: infantry rolls 2d6/stand.						
Range	Range Number needed to Hit Modifiers Affect the number of dice rolled					
Close combat 0"	4+	Flank shot:	+1 die			
0-4"	5+	Target DG/R:	+1 die			
4-8"	6+	Target Limbered/Road Column: +2 dice				
8-12"	7+	Firer on a hill:	+1 die			
12-16"	8+	Firer DG:	1/2 of the dice			
		Fire to flank in close combat	-1 die			
Low Ammo: -1 die						
	y fire phases, roll one black die.	Target in woods/wall/town:	-1 die			
If you roll a ONE on that die, mark Low Ammo with a BLACK Die. Low ammo may not fire beyond 4"						

Morale (Checks								
For each	For each hit a unit takes, you must take a Morale Check. Passed checks are No Effect.								
Morale (Checks	When calle	ed upon to	make a check	, units m	ust roll a 5+	on the fo	llowing dice t	o pass:
Elite	d12	Veteran	d10	Regular	d8	Green	d6	Artillery	d10
# of Mis	sed Chec	ks	Result						
1			Unit is Disorganized (DG) . If Routed or DG lose a stand						
2			Lose a Stand						
	3 Stand is Routed. (R) If already routed lose a stand.								
4+ Each additional hit will kill a stand.									
An attached Good or Average grade officer allows you to ignore the first check. If he does this, roll a d6.									
On a 1 or 2, he is hit and is replaced by a Poor officer.									

Morale Results:

R Routed. Mark with RED die. Routed units may not fire or move at all. Recover to DG.

Disorganized. Half movement and fire. Mark with YELLOW die. Extra DG results cause stand loss. If an infantry unit is DG on a move into fire combat range by defensive fire, it stops at 1d8 inches away from the unit that it was moving towards.

Rout Phase In the Rout Phase of the turn, units marked DG and Routed will flee to the rear.

DG infantry units move 1d6 to the rear. Routed units move 2d6 to the rear.

Retreats ignore terrain penalties. If a unit would go through impassable terrain, it stops and loses a stand instead. If they run through a friendly unit, they continue retreating until they are clear of it. Routing units that contact a unit cause that unit to take a morale check, it suffers a DG hit if it fails. Retreat note: If guns must retreat, they automatically limber up and fall back.