



Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

L, No. 9

Sept 2024



Fort Mackinac



News and Views

*Message from CMH Secretary
Eric Elder*



This month we have another stellar group of submittals. Thank you, Tom, John, and Dave, for your articles. Dave Manley shares his thoughts on his visit to Fort Mackinac and another Summer of Plunder after action report. John Carter describes building up a large miniature army. Tom Dye dives into an article about wargame rules. I look forward to more trip reports, game reports, new articles, and continuations of topics.

We had good attendance to our Monthly meeting in August. We also have no shortage of good Friday Night Fight games. I'm sure people are thinking about what game to run at our Veterans Wars club convention in November.



Fort Mackinac

Trip report from CMH Treasurer

Dave Manley



While on my recent trip to Michigan to see my daughter, I took a day and drove to Mackinac City. There they have a recreation of Fort Michilimackinac, which guarded the Straits for over 150 years. It was originally erected by the French as a trading post in about 1660 and operated as a French fort until 1763 when the British took it over after the French and Indian War. They kept it until after the War of 1812. Indians also captured it in 1763 by a *rue de guerre* before the British reoccupied it after Pontiac's rebellion.

The walls are vertical logs about 15' tall. The firing steps are completely hidden and the defenders have small loop holes to fire through. The main defenses were the 4 corner blockhouses and 2 blockhouses above the entrances; all equipped with cannon and views down the length of the walls.

Inside the fort were a large number of merchants' homes, all of which had gardens and or chickens. The soldiers lived in barracks without the gardens. The buildings are all well done and there are people in period costumes walking the grounds to provide information and answer questions. There is also an active archaeological dig which continues in the fort.

A couple interesting facts include that the French colonial forces flew a plain white flag as did the French Navy until 1763. I did not know this



information, but it probably explains why the French were always surrendering. Secondly, on the map you can see the importance of this site. Most traffic heading west or going east from the west passed through here on the way to Montreal by way of Georgian Bay and the rivers heading east. Only the traffic headed to the Ohio went through Lake Erie and Detroit.



Lastly, there is a very good description of wintering in the area in the book "Northwest Passage" by Kenneth Roberts. Robert Rogers wintered here during his attempts to find the northwest passage after the French and Indian War and before the American Revolution. The book does a good job describing this area and what is now Wisconsin and Iowa.

August

Unit of the Month

Sponsored by Hobbytown Westminster



Each month, at the monthly meeting, CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts.

CMH Member	Scale	Manufacturer	Era	Unit
Scott Holder	28mm	Front Rank	AWI	Pulooki's Legin
DAVE NEWPORT	28mm	Perry	ACW	CSS & Union Cavalry
Tom Dye	28mm	Black Hussar	SYW	Prussians
Tom Dye	15mm	GFI	Fr Rev	Guillotine

Winner in **RED**



Treasure Scramble

Summer of Plunder Week 9

*AAR from CMH Member
Dave Manley*



For the last week of the campaign, we decided on a multi-player everyman for himself game. The Dutch (Dave), Native Caribbean Tribe (Larry), Brethren of the Coast (Brian) and Portuguese (Greg) all discovered the small island where the Spanish had buried the gold from a galleon that sank near the island during the 1715 Hurricane. The Spanish divers decided to bury the treasure around the island in case any of it was discovered before they could return to collect the bounty. Unfortunately for them, the secret was out and it generated a frenzy for gold!

Each crew started the same distance from the center of the island which was covered in thick palm stands interspersed by tall grass; making the entire island reasonably good cover and lines of sight obscured. Each crew also found a small treasure stash near their entry point, making the central stash critical to the player that wanted to hold the most gold at the end.

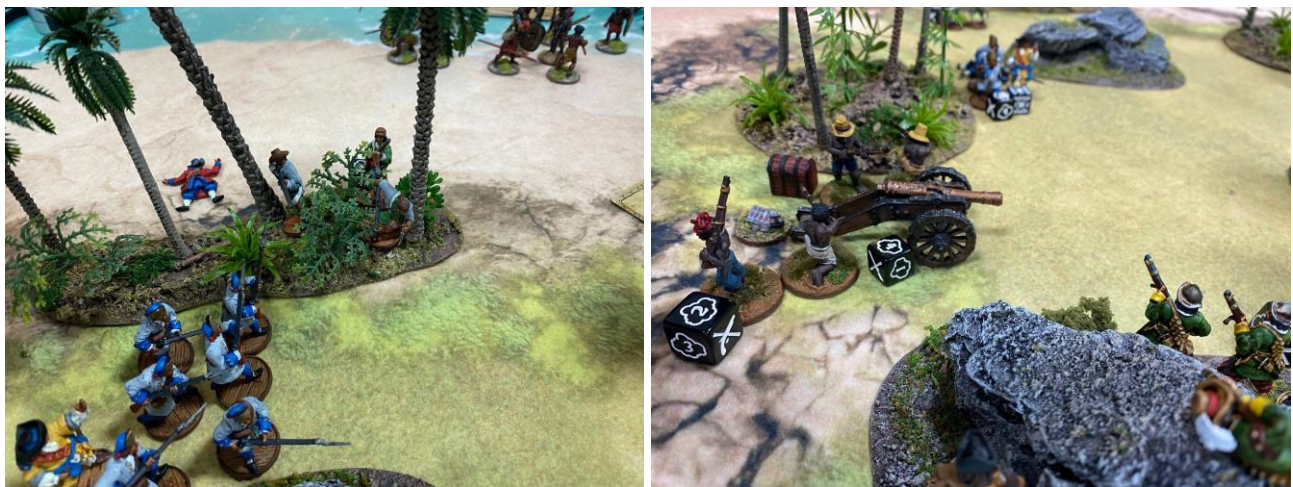
The Dutch decided to bring a medium cannon but this ultimately proved a poor choice. The Natives had two bow units and a musket king's guard; The Brethren also had two native bow units and a musket group and The Portuguese also had two bow units and a musket unit. The Natives turned out to be excellent bowmen as they killed at least 5 Dutchmen while the Brethren and Portuguese traded shots to limited effect.



The conflict started out with a “friendly fire event” which resulted in a casualty and fatigue to the Brethren and Dutch. This was immediately followed by another random event of angry locals discharging weapons into the same Dutch unit that had just suffered friendly fire. Again, a casualty and fatigue resulted and before the first turn started, the Dutch had suffered two casualties!

The Brethren somehow negotiated a truce with the Natives which resulted in a heavy rain of arrows on the Dutch and additional casualties. The Vrij Company suffered the most, but the artillerymen also took a hit. Then the Portuguese decided they did not like the cannon and took out another crewman. The gun was able to take out two natives, but was ineffective by the third turn!

The Brethren crew and Natives were both within a move of the center treasure, but the Natives decided to whittle the Dutch and Portuguese down some more. This opened the door for the Brethren to capture the central stash and run back towards their boats. This broke the truce between the two crews, but the Natives were not in position to object as they were now facing the Dutch and Portuguese. Now the question was could any crew capture the treasure of another force?



First the Natives assaulted the Dutch gun crew which was holding the Dutch gold. Their charge resulted in 5 hits so, with only two crew remaining, the Dutchmen were wiped out! Then the Portuguese decided to fire on and then charge the Natives. It took several attempts, but they eliminated the Natives holding the gold. Then the Dutch attempted to take back their gold plus the Native gold which was also lying with the cannon. They whittled down the Portuguese but then another unit came to their rescue and on the last turn of the game, the Portuguese were in control of three gold stashes to the Brethren’s two. Both the Dutch and Natives had three strike points after the fifth turn and fought on but broke on the sixth turn!

As was pointed out by the Portuguese commander, this was the fifth win of the Portuguese in a land battle with no losses; whereas they were 0-3 in naval games.

How to Build a 2000+ Miniature Army

American Revolution

Article from CMH Member

John Carter

When I joined CMH in 1967, I started playing AWI wargames with miniatures, other people's miniatures. I did not have the confidence or skills to paint human miniatures.

I became fascinated with the organization of the units, researching and documenting them, especially Loyalist units. How did that happen? Paul Jaecksch, Tom Herman and I were routinely on the British side of AWI wargames held at Dick Moore's house. He was invariably the American and after a game where Mike Kuhls, then a Captain in the Army, led us, we started studying how to win as the British. I was usually the light infantry commander. As time went on and we approached the Bi-Centennial different folks focused on different armies in the AWI. During my time at Regis College, I had noticed how some of the activities of the Sons of Liberty resembled the more extreme activities of the Anti - War protesters and it occurred to me that the Loyalists in the AWI had a case. Don't get me wrong. I'm glad we won and I'm proud to be a citizen of this country. But I could see both sides. No one was painting Loyalists soooo..

My first unit, also my favorite, was the Queens Rangers by Mini Figs. I had a hard time doing production painting and it took forever, but sloowwwly they got done. One problem was the uniqueness of this unit. It took a long time for details of organization and uniform to emerge. And then to find miniatures that covered them. The Grenadiers had a cylinder - shaped hat that was unique as did the Hussar troop. Who was going to produce figures that would only sell two or three? The three Light Dragoon troops had Tarleton Helmets and for whatever reason Mini Figs never got around to that. But I plowed ahead, even though I was never satisfied with my work.

Next was Butler's Rangers a Tory unit that worked with the Indians in Western New York, somewhat notorious for their association with a couple of massacres, but very effective. Sandy Cohn, one of the owners of Boonie Brae Hobbies painted these for me, which for some reason was unsatisfying.

A few years later I bought out a friends Minifig collection. I got 2 Regiments of Brits a battalion of Grenadiers, the 17th Light dragoons, some incomplete units for the Americans and French and some odds and sods. And there my AWI "Collection" stood. Until one day...

I should point out that when the club reorganized as a Wargaming group, C in C miniatures started producing ships in 1/2400 scale. Dan Jones showed me how to add masts in brass and I was off to the races. I began with the Japanese and Americans and went from there. Got into WWI with a British Fleet. And sorta became the Naval chair of CMH. Although people were kind enough to see me that way, there were plenty of folks who picked up on my work, did their own and it all resulted in some fine times and games. But the AWI still niggled at me.



Queen's Rangers, De Diemar's Hussars, Ferguson's Rifles

I used to do pest and weed control. Guess you could say I was a hired killer. One day Terry Shockey asked me to come by and handle his ants and spiders problem. After, over lunch, he asked what he owed me and I poo poed him saying we were friends until he said, how 'bout if he painted a regiment for me. My eyes probably popped out like in a cartoon and I said, yes please. I still had my thing for Loyalists, so we picked on DeLancey's Brigade, an outfit that did good work around New York and South Carolina. We used Musket Miniatures figures. I was getting a little tired of the gnomish look of Mini Figs. His work was so exactly what I wished I could do that I was totally thrilled. Next year his pests returned and we did Delancey's Refugees and Emerich's Chasseurs, both combined units of horse and foot. And we were off to the races.



Continental Marines in front

I got more Miny Figs and Terry painted them up to fill out the incomplete units that I mentioned earlier. And then I moved to L.A. and became a teacher. Anyone who tells you teaching is easy hasn't done it. I was teaching Eighth Grade US History in a gang ridden school in East L.A. I was trying to figure out how to engage my students. When I got to the AWI I thought I'd use my miniatures to show how the war was fought. Many teachers said the kids would steal them. But, I did it anyway and it was a hit. The kids always respected them, knowing this was something special and I never had anything go missing.



Rull's Hessian Grenadiers

But now I had a problem. My army was heavily slanted toward the British and my painting skills were still what they weren't. I knew Terry painted for hire, so I called him and asked if we could work on some Americans. He said, "Of Course!" and gave me a "Teacher's Rate." Thus began a partnership that was truly outstanding and would create something that has impressed all who have seen it.

So, which Continental units should be done first? I had always had good memories of the many games at Dick Moore's house. He had essentially worked his way through Charles Lefferts' book on Uniforms of the American Revolution. He said that this gave him a multitude of different colors and so there we began. Hazlett's Delaware, Smallwood's Maryland and two others, for a brigade. Organization was 1 figure to 20 men, so 16 figures or 2 to a company. Sometime later we did the 4 New York Regiments with their varied colors. With the Americans growing stronger, it was time to add to the British, so a brigade of them was done. We picked units in Boston at the start. And so it went.

I do not recall the exact sequence so, from here I will discuss what was done for each army.

Let's start with the Americans.

As time went on, we exhausted Lefferts and what I could recall of Dick Moore's collection, and I thought it was time to go to the Blue uniforms with red facings that the 1779 regulations specified for the Middle Colonies.

Jeff McCarron enters the picture at this point. He was working with his dad Jim, at Musket Miniatures and was and is a very creative figure designer. I wanted the 1st and 2nd South Carolina with their distinctive helmet, and he created that figure. These units had both grenadiers and lights and after Terry's wonderful work they joined the roster.

Legionary units, combining horse and foot have always intrigued me and so Armand's and Pulaski's Legions came up next. Pulaski presented a unique challenge. They had a troop of lancers. I took three standard bearers and replaced the standard with brass lances. Drilled through the hands and secured the lances. To give them points I took a ball peen hammer and mashed one end and then filed them to shape. Voila!

The Tarleton helmet was used by Lee's Legion, three troops of the Queens's Rangers and, of course, Tarleton's Legion. Jeff created that figure and over time these three units joined up.

The 2nd Rhode Island or "Black" Regiment interested me, but there were questions as to uniform. The helmet was a light infantry helmet with a cut out on one side of the face plate. I did a little filing. Many illustrations show them in an all-white uniform at Yorktown but closer research showed them in the 1779 Uniform, blue coats, white facings, normally. They were about 63% black and this was reflected in the Terry's paint job.

The Philadelphia associators were a multi battalion militia brigade that participated in the Trenton Campaign. They had a unique hat and this was addressed. More of a challenge was the flag. None of the manufacturers had one. I researched, found it on the web, made copies, worked them into a two-sided piece that could be wrapped around the staff and away we went. Marines had participated alongside the Associators so this was the occasion to do the Continental Marines. The British Marines had a battalion at Lexington so they joined the British. The Philadelphia Light Horse, rich folk who provided a troop that escorted Washington to Boston on his appointment as CIC, rounded out this project.

The frontiersmen and troops in hunting shirts had been a long-time concern. Jeff produced a variety of figures since uniform poses would be inappropriate. He also did a mounted figure. These became the North Carolina Brigade and several

other units. Terry's work, making these leather outfits look variegated and real is magnificent.

The Light Infantry units of the Continental Army are interesting and varied. Terry wanted to do Lafayette's in the Pale blue coats shown in an Almark book and they are gorgeous. Dearborn's which borrowed units from multiple outfits at Saratoga was interesting because of the variety.

I have the figures for the Continental Dragoon regiments and for the militia, but Terry's passing has arrested that. We'll have to see if I've picked up a little talent in the last forty years.

The British

I knew that the British brigaded grenadiers and light infantry into battalions d'elite so Terry painted up three of each to accompany a force of sixteen line regiments. Two regiments presented a challenge, the Guards and Fusileers. You may recall that when I bought out that collection, I got two regiments of Mini Figs British infantry. These are larger and beefier than Musket Miniatures figures so Terry repainted them as Guards. Jeff created new figures for the Fusileers with their shorter bearskin hats. They are beautiful.

The Loyalists

There were a huge variety of Loyalist units and I am fascinated by them. Several units were done up for the New York frontier including Johnson's Royal Greens. We also redid the Queen's Rangers and Butler's Rangers in Musket Miniatures figures. And, of course Tarleton's Legion and Ferguson's Rifles.

The Indians

The Indians were genuinely fun for me. Musket only had one figure, but by bending arms, varying weapons, etc. no two in the 54 I converted were the same. Mongo, with an ax and a club, seems to be off his meds and loving it.

Terry added some fun symbols to the breech cloths, Cleveland Indians, KC Chiefs, a Nike Swoosh and a happy face if you look closely.

The Germans

As most of us know the Germans were not just the Hessians and Terry and I reflected that. Rall's Hessian Brigade at Trenton was first. Followed by Jagers mounted and dismounted. The Brunswick Brigade was next as well as the Anspacher's with their Bearskin hats rather than Mithers. Here again, there is more to do and some figure mods.

The French

Terry had a bunch of unpainted French (Four regiments) and so two of the brigades at Yorktown joined the brigade of Mini-Figs. The infantry of Lauzun's Legion is complete but the Hussars and Lancers need doing.

Artillery

I've always been a bit of a nut for artillery. The first thing I ever painted was ACW artillery to go with Airfix Civil War figures. So, no surprises, I went after AWI artillery. Musket Miniatures and others provided a variety, but no 3 pounders or Grasshoppers. I resolved this by taking a plastic piece of appropriate size, modifying it, and having it cast. Worked beautifully, and of course Terry did his magic. The Grasshoppers, I've resolved by using 15mm scale cannon.

This project started in 1974, but it really didn't take off until Terry came on board. And I can't underestimate Jeff's contributions. His enthusiasm and creativity is wonderful. It has involved a lot of creativity, thought, love, partnership and serious research and the results are very pleasing. In the process strong friendships have developed. Needless to say, the loss of Terry is a serious blow. I'm lucky to have had good friends, but no one was closer than Terry. So, this article is dedicated to his memory.

August Game of the Month

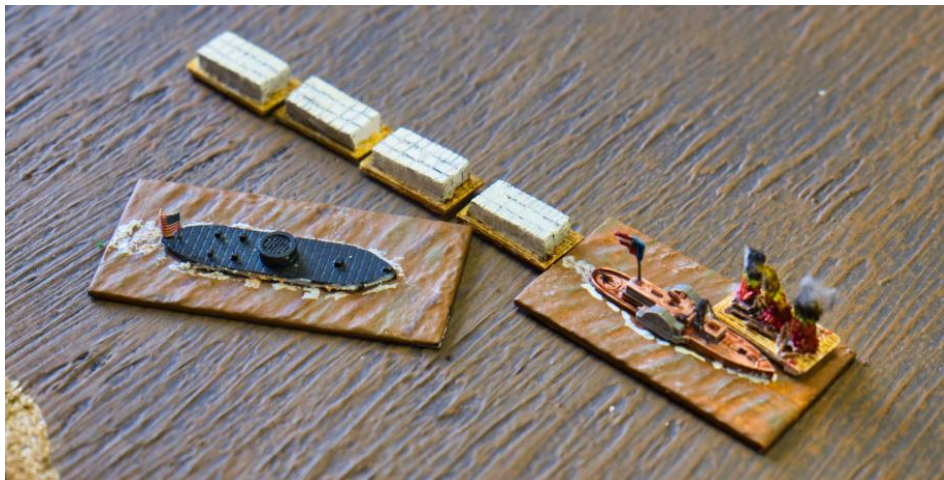
Sponsored by Hobbytown Westminster



Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
Jeff Lambert	18mm	Andy Callan	The Bleeding Ulcer – Naps
Dave Manley	28mm	Blood and Sword	Pitzer's Woods, Gettysburg
John Mumby	6mm	War is our Homeland	Playtest scenario
STEVE VAN DYKE	1:1200	Raiders & Blockaders	Union vs CSS barge convoy
John Brown	28mm	Dragon Rampart	Big Battle

Winner in **RED**



Historic Location of the Month

Guillemont, France



WWI Memorial in Guillemont

On August 31, 1916, Harry Butters, an American soldier serving in the British army during World War I, was killed by a German shell during the Battle of the Somme, while fighting to secure the town of Guillemont, France.

Harry was in the Royal Artillery. Butters and his unit were at the Somme, firing on Trones Woods, outside Guillemont, when his gun received a direct German hit during a massive barrage; he and all the members of his battery were killed.



Wargame Conventions

www.partizan.org.uk

September		
6th - 8th September	<u>Crucible</u>	Orlando, FL
15th - 17th September	<u>Southern Front</u>	Morrisville, NC
22nd September	<u>Chicago Toy Soldier Show</u>	Schaumburg, IL
26th - 29th September	<u>Hurricane</u>	Orlando, FL
27th - 28th September	<u>Barrage</u>	Havre de Grace, MD
28th - 29th September	<u>Team Yankee Southern Nationals</u>	Pensacola, FL
October		
4th - 6th October	<u>Autumn Wars</u>	Bannockburn, IL
xxx October	<u>Michigan Grand Tournament</u>	Lansing, MI
xxx October	<u>Southwest Con</u>	Tollison, AZ
xxx October	<u>Broadside</u>	Houston, TX
xxx October	<u>Border Wars</u>	Kansas City, MO
11th - 12th October	<u>Advance the Colours</u>	Springfield, OH
11th - 13th October	<u>Conquest Avalon</u>	Sacramento, CA
11th - 13th October	<u>Call to Arms</u>	Williamsburg, VA
11th - 13th October	<u>Call to Arms</u>	Independence, MO
xxx October	<u>MiniWars</u>	Buena Park, CA
xxx October	<u>Canadian Flames of War Nationals</u>	Kingston, ON, Canada
31st October - 3rd November	<u>MillenniumCon</u>	Temple, TX
November		
1st - 3rd November	<u>Carnage</u>	Killington, VT
1st - 3rd November	<u>Fall In</u>	Lancaster, PA
1st - 3rd November	<u>Rock-Con</u>	Rockford, IL
2nd November	<u>The World at War</u>	Perrysburg, OH
10th November	<u>Wars in Woodstock</u>	Woodstock, IL

Full list available here:

[Americas Wargame Calendar](#)



Linear and Non-Linear Systems

*Article by CMH Member
Tom Dye*

Prologue

For over 50 years now, historical miniature wargamers have had the same kinds of mechanics appear in almost every set of rules in one form or another. Most continue to look for new rules sets because they become disillusioned with quirky results after a while. Many continue to use them because they are either the most “accepted” local set played or they cannot find others they care to invest the time and money to learn or just force themselves to “like” them as they spent a small fortune for a hardback set that came with all those good-looking figures.

The aim of this article is to inform, discuss and present to you why most systems have problems; what can be done to improve things and leave you with some points to deeply ponder over the next few days.

Introduction

Let me start by asking some questions:

- Why are all units in a class, rated the same?
- Why do most systems track casualties and link them to morale checks?
- What is tracked in a Unit Cohesion game, how and why?
- Why do gamers seemingly insist on worrying about issues like frontages, size of units and a concept called “Command Radius”?
- Why do most rules for historicals have to be so complex?
- Why do most historical rules claim to be historical when the historical records are selectively applied, ignoring other, more important and more relevant factors?
- Does it always have to be a “game” to find fun and entertainment?

I will address each of these topics and what I say here may upset some, baffle others but I hope it turns on that “Light bulb” moment and spurs a few into rereading some research books with different “eyes” for certain things.

Preparing the Field for Discussion

Without digging into research books, I would like to establish us on a firm footing of understanding what we should easily understand. Nothing I will address here should be new to the reader. What will be new comes later as I try to show how “traditional” value sets miss the target objectives because they do not understand how the systems they design do not match the real life systems they are trying to model, and why.

What is a system? Some say that the only “system” is the Solar system. It is only when we add an adjective to the word system do we immediately begin to understand the concept. A Linear system is one that will always act the same when an input is injected into the system. Take for example a brake system in the car. It will always stop a car when the brake pedal is depressed. If it does not, then an input has been applied to the system. Cut the brake lines once or 100 times, you will get the same results, the car does not stop! This is an example of a linear system. All will act the same until an input is factored into the system. Then, the results of that factor will always produce the same results.

A Non-Linear system is one that can be infinitely variable. When the same input is injected into the system; you may not always get the same results due to an almost infinite number of variables. Once again using cars as an example. Let us look at a traffic jam. While you might always have to suffer in one while driving to or from work every day, the cause for them and who is affected can vary wildly. Is there always a white car in front of you? Did you have a disagreement with your spouse this morning? Was the cause of the accident caused by only the red car? Was it a woman driver? Would there have even been an accident if the car was silver and driven by a man? If tomorrow's traffic jam was caused by an accident, would the chance be that it was a red car involved, driven by a woman, with a white car in front of you and you had yet another altercation with your spouse? This is an example where in a non-linear system, there can be so many variables that it would be an astronomical anomaly that every time the same conditions would produce the same results, with the same people involved, at the same time, same place, same results! All due to the interactions of all these variables. What does the color of the car have to do with the accident? On the surface, nothing. It remains a variable anyway because the color could change and still result in an accident. So just because something exists in real life, there is no set formula that guarantees the same result every time with the same input in a non-linear system.

Now to tie this into the confines of a wargame. Many rules will rate units into general categories. Elite, veterans, regulars, trained, conscript, irregulars, militia, or untrained. These are categories I have experienced in rules sets. Usually, every figure or stand is rated for firing at the same value (say "5"). If you have 5 stands the unit fires at a factor of 25. If only 3 stands, 15 and with 6 stands 30. This is an example of a linear wargame system. The inject is the number of stands firing and the constant is the value of "5". Every five-stand unit will always have a fire factor of 25. Add another injection: Nationality: now you play with how this nation's line infantry will be rated. Let's say a "4". Does this make for a more "realistic" wargame because you now are imposing a lesser value for this nation's units? Some seem to think so.

In reality, units are made up of men. Each one is an individual and is NOT a clone of the other. This means that every unit is made up of a large variable because each man is different. This can be applied to the same logic that every unit will be different because each is made up of different men. So immediately, we can see that a linear value set has been chosen for a non-linear real-life situation. A very bad choice for modelling a gaming system that claims to be historical I would say. Can you name a few more such examples where in real life, a value set is non-linear, yet game rules apply a linear system to model them with? How about Morale? Firing results? Effective ranges? Quality of leaders on any given day? Movement rates? Did I miss any?

The Plot Thickens

How can a designer model a non-linear gaming mechanic? It is possible. Sticking with our morale grade classes, let us first understand what we must model.

We have already discovered that a unit in real life is a non-linear system. It is made up of men with different skills, attitudes, levels of training and experiences, levels of leadership skills, etc. So which variables seem to have the most impact on a unit's ability to function? Let us keep it simple: the training and experience of the men; the training and experience of the leadership and, most importantly, how long have these men served under these leaders? In pregame preparation, we need to determine these qualities and rate them based upon what we know and what we must derive when values cannot be determined. When all else fails, simply roll on a table for these values. Once a value for each has been arrived upon (yes, I have devised such a random value table, please see below. You roll 2D6 or 2D10 and compare under "value") we need to consider if any of the three areas should be rated more than the others due to the importance of the quality. In this instance, I have weighted the quality of how long the men have

served under these leaders as being more important than the other two. Remember that it is the job of the unit's leadership to keep the men functioning as a unit. Without that, the effectiveness of how the unit performs is based upon the individuals with greatly varying skills and attitudes being controlled as a whole. So, the unit's rating is 25% from the training and experience of the men; 25% from the training and experience of the leaders and 50% from how long these men have served under these leaders. The values assigned from the 3 areas are added together to arrive at a starting unit value for cohesion (CV). This starting CV is recorded under the base of the unit's command stand in pencil (as it probably will change as the game progresses and fatigue is accumulated).



A Battalion of Old Glory 10mm SYW Austrian Musketeers



1. The Men (Quality)			
Value	Example	Random (2D6)	% Chance
1	Little or no training	2,3	10%
2	One season of training,	4,5	19%
3	Over three seasons of training	6,7	29%
4	Seasoned Soldier "Knows what it means to be a soldier"	8,9,10	33%
5	Best Soldier of the multiple Reg converged together temporary	11	5%
6	Best Soldier in a standing unit	12	5%
2. The Leadership (Quality)			
Value	Example	Random (2D6)	% Chance
1	Ineptitude - It's no longer a question	2	5%
2	Unknown - Roll at first contact w/ enemy. If the roll is a 2, roll again and add +1, if the results is of the third roll is less then or equal to 3 treat as a one...Your rolled it!	3,4	14%
3	Same experience in leading men in Battle	5,6,7	38%
4	Experienced at leading men in Battle	8,9	24%
5	Can lead and the men trust him	10,11	14%
6	A truly talented leader	12	5%
3. The Unit history (How long have these men served under these leaders?)			
Value	Example	Random (2D6)	% Chance
1	Poor	2	5%
2	Newly Raised	3,4,5	24%
3	Average unit	6,7	29%
4	Average unit with one or two campaigns	8,9,10	24%
5	Good Unit	11	14%
6	Great unit with proud history	12	5%

Concluding Thoughts about Unit Ratings

With the above, you can see that by changing from the old linear value set that lumps individual “morale grades” into carbon copies of each unit, by type, has been replaced by a “non-linear” value set where each unit gets rated, by what this author feels, reflects a more accurate reflection of appropriate unit subjects. The training and experience of the leaders and soldiers and how long has the unit been functioning under

these officers and men (unit composition). Each of the three individual value sets examples of “non-linear”, totaled together into yet another (but useable) “non-linear” value set to arrive at how each individual units can be rated in the game. For scenarios, this ending rating can be adjusted for those local factors that might have influenced today’s scenario. Some examples could be:

- Lowered due to having to march to the battlefield (Fatigue related)
- Raised Unit(s) already at the field of battle for a long while (Fatigue related)
- Lowered due to lack of consumables (Food, water, ammo, etc) (Logistical)
- Raised because of good stocks of consumables over opponents (Logistical)
- Varied due to weather, or other environmental conditions (Fate)
- Varied due to the current condition of the will to fight (Lost last 5 battles)

Please note that each of the above is a non-linear situation and the degree of effect when modifying a unit’s value can vary greatly. Some modifiers applied due to the efforts of men, others from nature. This provides a “pallet” from which scenario designers can apply logical modifications which makes this scenario different from the last “meeting engagement.”

Studying the Fallacy of Numbers

Most game designers have bought in to the idea that the bigger the unit is, the more capability it has. This is usually reflected in figure count of the units, combat modifiers in some cases (i.e. add +1 for every 3 figures you outnumber the enemy by) how the size of a unit affects its ability to inflict damage upon an enemy unit, how the size of a unit can sustain losses within a unit and remain functioning, etc. The belief in the saying “God favors the big battalions” seems to be taken as gospel as if it came from the Bible! Some gamers believe that a rules set is flawed if it allows for a smaller unit to get the best of a larger unit. Well, this section will discuss why most rules sets have based their game mechanics upon a linear system instead of a non-linear system. While their game mechanics try to inject some of the non-linear factors that must go into a serious representation of the process they have modelled, it is applied to a linear line of thinking. In some cases, it is a case of just trying to quantify the unquantifiable. Their best-guess estimates are usually taken from tests carried out in a non-hostile environment or from some quote in a firsthand manuscript that was so out of the ordinary that over time, it has been an accepted fact and is used to set the “norm”. In many cases, such recordings were recorded as being an anomaly to the norm.

Let us look at musketry accuracy. It is useful to discover at what range small arms fire begins to create casualties. It is not so valuable to know the theoretical capabilities of a weapons system, used in the hands of the best qualified operators because the average trigger puller’s skills are far less than his. To substantiate this fact, find any records that show the amount of ammunition expended verses the casualties suffered. You do not have to have a great at statistics to quickly determine that these guys were not good shots! In some circles, military experts agree that the deadliest zone is from 0-50 yards. It has not changed for 400 years for small arms. It really does not matter that a modern M-16 can reach out to one mile when the average soldier struggles to qualify on the range for targets rated to be at 100 yards! We have to conclude that the true effect of small arms fire is not in the number of casualties it produces, it must be that the effect it has on a target unit must be in the distraction and disorder it produces within the target unit. This is a key factor in unit cohesion-based rules sets.

Unit Cohesion based rules sets track how well the unit’s leadership is doing its job, in other words, how well can the unit’s leadership keep the men focused on what they are doing which accomplishes two major things: 1) Keeping the unit functioning as a unit, and 2) Counter the effects of chaos felt by the individual rank and file. The soldier has the training and experience to fall back on in these stressful

situations and as such, will need someone calm to get them back to their tasks at hand. The mechanics of loading, firing and situational awareness must stay at the forefront of a cohesive unit. When the point is reached where this focus is lost, the unit ceases to exist as a cohesive fighting unit. This manifests itself in many ways which were discernable to the enemy. Return fire is no longer delivered in organized volleys, return fire decreases in intensity, shouts of command, swearing, pushing and shoving of leaders upon their men, lines thinning, etc. were telltale signs that a unit was in trouble! An advance ordered against a unit in such a condition would usually get them to give up their ground at the least loss of the attacking unit's cohesion and casualties. Of course, no matter how linear that may seem, it remains a non-linear function. There are so many factors that must be aligned to ensure success that no matter what risk remained of failure.

Please note that I did not mention anything regarding numbers in the paragraph above. In the typical miniature historical wargame, that defending unit may contain 12 figures, for example. At every opportunity that unit will benefit from the effects of 12 figures firing when they have those 12 figures. Not all of those would be firing. If you lose a figure, you are still firing as before, but with 1/12th less effect. This mechanic is very linear in execution. The fire of just a handful of men could be enough to disrupt the plans of the opposing side as the disorder of that fire upon the opposing force suddenly presents an unexpected problem for the leadership that now has to deal with it to regain lost cohesion over the unit. The charge does not go until enough time has lapsed for the unit to regain enough cohesion to make another attempt to force the situation. Timing has always been a challenge to leaders as to when to act. Why should ours be any different? Since the gamer is playing the part of a leader, there should be mechanics that will either reward or penalize the use of timing.

We have established that the men are not good shots. This means that entire volleys may miss. Yet, the mere fact that a unit was shot at influenced the functioning of the unit. That effect was that of distracting the men from focusing upon their task at hand. They would not perform at parade ground precision because they have been distracted from the sights, sounds, visual spectacle of seeing so many enemy troops hell-bent on killing him! The smells of battle conspired to take away fighting effectiveness from the man and taken collectively, the unit. It took steady and experienced officers and NCOs to bring these men back into the fight. How big a unit came into play when the number of remaining functioning leaders can influence when those that require their attention can be found and any number of motivating techniques of the day could be applied to get them to correct their behavior to once again "join" the unit. Since these leaders are men, they are also vulnerable to the horrors of war. It is from their experience of seeing it all before, their ability to instinctually act and somehow personally overcome the distractions in that environment is really the core element in keeping a unit "on-line" or seeing a unit melt away. Each unit has its point where it ceases to exist as a fighting unit, today. That is a linear mechanic. It must be so because it exists in nature the total loss of control and the reality that control will not be able to be restored in the time remaining for the battle. This can be prolonged (prevented from reaching this point) due to the efforts of the unit's leadership. While a firefight may last for long periods of time, not all that time is continuous fighting. There are lulls and surges. It is what a unit's leadership does that directly influences the cohesion and subsequent fighting ability of the unit. Below is just one example of an effective use of time and effort that could mean the difference of winning or losing now:

Can you remember, as a kid, playing a sports game? Baseball for example. Your team is in the field for a long time, rooting for your pitcher to strike the guys out so you can get a drink of water. When the team finally makes that third "out", you run to the water and take a drink. After that drink, you felt refreshed and ready to go another inning. Now remember when you were scared. Your mouth got dry; you might have even trembled as every muscle in your body seemed to turn to rubber? These are physiological signs that your body needs water. By ordering the men to take a drink, they will be meeting this

physiological need and begin to feel the effects of a much-needed respite from the danger. If ordered in a calm and commanding voice, the men's psychological needs are also met as here is one who remains in control and is truly setting an example for them to follow. A true leader! Contrast that with not doing that. Which unit do you think would remain in the field longer?

In most games, there is never a mechanic to account for the effects of what the unit's leadership has done to keep control of the situation. The use of morale checks is not in any way considerable as such a check. The mechanic of a morale check is a test. If passed, the unit remains in the current condition. If failed, the unit receives a negative effect. In my unit cohesion game, at the end of the unit's turn, a "snapshot" is taken of the unit's current state, then we account for the efforts of the unit's leadership on keeping the unit as a unit by dealing with the accumulated effects of all things up to this point in time from the last check. A "cohesion check" is made. What makes this different than a morale check? Well, we already know how bad the unit has suffered up to this point in time. If the cohesion check (remember, it is accounting for the efforts of the unit's leadership on dealing with the accumulated factors to the unit- how their efforts have impacted the unit up to this point) fails, nothing gets worse. It is not that efforts have not been taken, it means that the efforts may need more time to take effect or that the efforts have not worked. It does not matter why, just that at this point in the game, it confirms the real status of the unit. If the check passes, the unit's leadership has succeeded enough to be measurable and the unit's cohesion level goes up by "1". Unit capability and unit cohesion are tracked separately, and both are examples of non-linear mechanics that directly affect linear situations. It is like what a football team does on defense by stopping the ball from crossing a line and the other team scoring a touchdown. The scoring of a touchdown is linear as it will always occur in gameplay when a team passes the ball over the opposing team's goal line. How long it takes is non-linear because there are almost an infinite number of factors that come together to act on how long that will take. In this way, we credit the most important factors, taken together, in determining the "how long" a unit remains on the field before it loses all semblance of being a "unit". In my game, a unit could still be rated with a unit cohesion value of 5 for combat but get picked off the table because it lost all cohesion as a unit. This brings up the next subject, what does one need to track in a Unit Cohesion game and how does one do it?

The Cohesion Value (some prefer the term as Combat Value) is a track record of a unit's capability to function based upon events up to this point of time (CV is always considered its current CV). It is the potential for a unit to act in combat and maneuver. It is affected by fatigue created by combat and maneuvering and will always decrease as the day wears on. A unit will never be as "fresh" as when it first starts the battle.

In the next article I will explain more of this concept of tracking CV and Cohesion traits, and how simple it is without the use of written records.

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 at least one Friday night a month, called “Friday Night Fights” (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. Friday meetings will be held at a future determined location. See website for latest information.



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 \$60.00 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.

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