

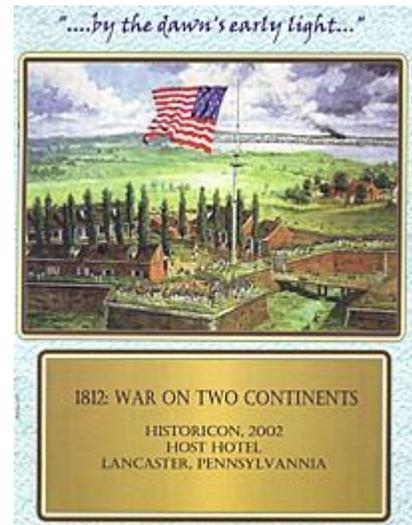
One from the MagWeb.com vault: A recap of the HMGS East Historicon 2002 convention. Note that many of the companies mentioned, MagWeb.com included, are no longer around.

Historicon 2002: Recap

by Russ Lockwood

Welcome and Introduction

Once again, the good folks at HMGS East presented a marvelous convention centered around military history and historical miniatures. Hundreds of events allowed you the opportunity to command troops from every era, from ancient Egyptians to modern Americans, and even a little bit beyond. The toughest decision was which event to enter--so many interesting and visually appealing ones. Historicon 2002 was held July 24-28, 2002, at the Lancaster Host Resort on Rte 30, just east of Lancaster, PA, and took up just about every nook and cranny of the resort center.



For those that have never been to Historicon (or the other HMGS East sponsored conventions: Cold Wars and Fall In), it's a real treat. Several thousand military history buffs and wargamers descend on the Lancaster Host Resort and spend four days participating in hundreds of battles with historical miniatures, meandering around the show looking at the various displays and wargames, attending lectures, and of course, buying miniatures, books, videos, paints, rules, on-line archive memberships, and other products in the dealer's area.

The theme this year was 1812: War on Two Continents, which in US parlance means the War of 1812 between the British and US and the other war in 1812 with the French and French allies versus Russia. Taking the lead in this period was Nigel Marsh and others using the Carnage and Glory computer-assisted rules--the same rules that will be used by a 15-person umpire team at the upcoming Borodino 2002 Napoleonic Conference (plug: a non-profit conference sponsored by JodieCon, MagWeb.com, HMGS, and Old Glory).

Registration and Tournaments

The Lancaster Host Resort divides neatly into two areas: the main hotel/ballroom/conference area holding all the wargames, lectures, and other events, and the auxiliary "Tennis Barn" (about 50 or so yards away in a separate building) holding the dealer's area.

The main area further divides into four main zones: Lampeter/Theater, Distelfink Ballroom, rooms at the end of the short hall, and rooms on the way to the Tennis Barn. OK, the "rooms" really have individual names, but since I never learned the names, and always walk through every room, I never worried about the names. There's also a fifth zone, a set of rooms behind the hotel's store, which is up a short flight of stairs behind the hotel registration desk. If you don't know they're there, you'll never find them because they're outside the usual traffic patterns. I don't deal with the children's room, but that's up and around the staircase by the pool.

As the years have rolled by and attendance increased, HMGS has steadily increased its use of square footage. I'm not quite sure how much is left--Historicon has gotten so popular, it's basically taken over all the space available, although there may be a room or two tucked away that still hasn't been filled.

Over the years, Lancaster the city and outlying areas where the LHR sits has grown considerably, with new restaurants, hotels, strip malls, shopping plazas, theaters, and other commercial buildings that create heavy traffic similar to that of suburban areas near a major city where I usually drive. Route 30 is a four lane highway with center turning lane that has turned into a traffic light-filled parking lot at prime

times...like dinner hour. If I couldn't book a room at the LHR, I'd book at the Macintosh hotel across the street and joke that I was playing *Frogger* when I went back and forth. It used to be easy, even at a dinner hour. Now, I drive, even at midnight. But don't let that scare you. Several hotels and motels are next door on the same side of the highway. Parking, which used to be tight, is now plentiful thanks to the addition of a few new lots over the years, and the expediency of parking on designated grassy areas.

Anyway, entering the LHR from the front entrance leads you up the stairs and past a couple of tables to the main hotel registration desk, and more importantly, the bar. It used to be that Historicon registration was just beyond, near the entrance of the restaurant, however, this year, registration was in a small room just to the right of the entrance stairs--this used to be a nightclub disco, changed to country bar, and then went out of business. One previous show, and I'm not sure which, it was the flea market--not a good idea because many people who want to sell and many more who want to buy couldn't cram into that relatively small area. The previous registration area was turned into a showcase wargame area. It's still a cramped space, but folks were let in a few at a time and could wait on line comfortably in the main entrance of the hotel.

Tournaments

Anyway, after exiting registration, the Lampeter/Theater zone is directly across the main entrance hall.

The Lampeter room, to the left and down the stairs, used to be the dealer's area years ago, but the number of dealers outgrew the space, and thankfully was changed to the tennis barn. Lampeter holds the various ancients tournaments: *WRG*, *DBA*, *Armati*, *Medieval Warfare*, etc. It's also the open gaming area at night and flea market during the day. The tournament tables in row upon row stretch into the rear of the room into the flea market area.

Terry Gore (seated), editor of Saga, author of Medieval Warfare, Ancients Warfare, and Renaissance Warfare rules, and now a publisher of a series of historical booklets, runs his tournament with an iron fist (inside a velvet glove)... Here, he's making a point about deployment as he sets up for a friendly game with an adoring fan. In the far background, you can see the monitors from DBA On-line peeking out.



I met Terry Gore later on in the show for a drink at the bar. We talked a little bit about his publishing efforts. He's quietly building a small publishing company. MagWeb.com will help him make it a little louder.

The UK's Society of Ancients made the pilgrimage across the pond and set up a display.

The UK's Society of Ancients display of a castle siege.

DBA On-line

One new addition to the ancient tournament scene was DBA On-line (probably run off a LAN is my guess). This consisted of linked computers on 19-inch monitors running the computerized version of DBA. It looks pretty good, and I liked the ergonomic enhancements on the screen--the reach of individual units (friendly and foes) in one color, the areas of bad terrain in a "shade" of black lines, and so on.



As a computer guy, I understand what goes on behind the scenes to make even the simplest analog things work digitally. And I peeked over the shoulder of Trey to see a demo as he explained it to a gamer participating in the DBA Online tournament. For example, to move a group of elements, you have to click on an element, then click on the group button, then click on another unit, and then click on the group button and so on. Once you formed a group, from then on you can move the group simply by picking on any one element. You can tell it's a group because there are little green Gs where the elements touch. To release an element from a group, you have to reverse the procedure.

The artwork is birds-eye view down on flat terrain. Although I wasn't able to tell exactly per se which element was which just walking up to the monitor and looking at the element, a couple of ergonomic points quickly acclimate you to the virtual environment. First, each element has the official abbreviation in a circle in the corner of the element (Ps=Psiloi, Bd=Blades, etc), and second, you can always count the number of figures per element (2 per Ps, 4 per Bd, etc). Please don't ask me about uniforms or periods--I literally did not notice because I was paying attention to the mechanics of the environment.

I sat down and talked to a couple of the DBA Online folks. They use a pay-per-game formula--please don't quote me on the rates because I didn't write them down and my memory can get a bit fuzzy after long days of sleep-deprived efforts--like 10 games for \$20 or something like that. I think it was Trey who said the "pay one price game all you want" formula doesn't work because 10% of the people eat up 90% of the resources, citing the now defunct *Air War* as an example. I also recall seeing a \$100 per year subscription rate, but I'm not sure of that either.

I am sure that they were not too pleased that HMGS was inquiring about them paying for their space as if they were a dealer's because they are selling a product. They countered that they were a tournament event and other events don't pay, so why should they--and they've already paid enough to come. My interpretation here is that they mean hotels, rentals, and other travel costs. I do not know what HMGS may have countered, but I know DBAO didn't pay table costs.

Digression

I sympathize with DBAO. I really do. I exhibited MagWeb.com at many HMGS shows such as HMGS South in Tampa, HMGS Mid South in Nashville, HMGS Great Lakes in Lincolnshire (north of Chicago), as well as non-HMGS shows across the country. The biggest expense wasn't booth costs (well, except for Origins, in which booths are 6x HMGS costs) or advertising in the program guide (except for Origins), but travel (hotel, airline, and rental car). Folks attend shows primarily for things they can't get at home, and when you're an on-line company selling on-line wares, that's something they can get at home, so to speak.

Convention and Conference sales are a small part of overall MagWeb.com sales, most of which occur when folks log onto our website, look at the 100 or so free articles, and then decide they want more and sign up on-line. Of course, you use the conventions to introduce the company and product to attendees, hand them a flyer, and give a quick demo. Then, they can go home, and at their leisure, explore the site and decide whether or not to try it.

DBAO is also pretty new--started in 2000 and claims a base of 400 customers. Granted, the Internet is more prevalent now than when MagWeb.com started in 1996, but it is going to take time to grow. And, from six years of observation, folks are a little bit leery of dot coms, and most dot coms tend to believe they'll grow faster than they really do. When most venture-capital funded or ad-supported dot coms blew up in the last couple years, MagWeb.com felt the effects even though our "venture capital funding" was our bank accounts/"sweat equity" and we charge membership fees because generic banner ads don't offer any sort of reasonable rate of return (targeted ads, well, that's a different story). We feel a little like a survivor.

I've often said "there's no short-cut to longevity." In dealing with electronic products, longevity and its resulting trust that you'll be around next week, next month, next year counts for quite a bit. I think DBA

On-line is off to a good start. As they appear in show after show, attendees will become more comfortable and start to respond. That's true of any company and product, but I believe especially true of on-line.

Flea Market: Bargains

The flea market tables used to be placed around the perimeter of the Lampeter. Now they are in a block so to speak at the rear of the room. I think that's a better idea, because you're not disturbing the tournament players as much.

Typical flea market activity during a relatively quiet time.



Thursday and Friday were relatively quiet flea market days--I guess about half the tables were in use. Saturday was pretty full. E-bay et al. may take away business from the good ol' fashioned flea market, but there's still something to say about examining painted figures yourself, or looking over books, games, terrain, or whatever. I never got over there on Sunday.

I purchased a few things--a couple magazines (probably defunct) I had never heard of, but then again, that's more business than pleasure. I didn't pick up any lead this year, which come to think of it, is somewhat of a surprise. I'm starting to feel bad already.

I did pick up The Gamers' boxed *Tunisia* game for \$20, and then some tables down, picked up another company's zip-locked *Tunisia* game for \$10. Guess it must be a trend--the WWII bug is starting to hit. I'm mostly an ancients to medieval kind of history buff, with a strong interest in Napoleonics, but I've been reading a lot of WWII lately (most of these you'll find in the MagWeb.com book reviews section), so I guess it's contagious.

Plus, I listened to a John Hill lecture about the USAF in Tunisia at the USAF Connections Conference earlier this year, and he's a pretty good speaker, so the after effects have clouded my usually non-mechanized brain. And I recently finished my year-long study of Hannibal's route from Spain to the Alps (in the MagWeb.com WarLore section) and was starting into Operation Cobra, so WWII was also on the brain. And John Fernandes' GHQ Microarmor WWII rules and Rich Hasenauer's *Battlefront* WWII rules were fresh in my mind...

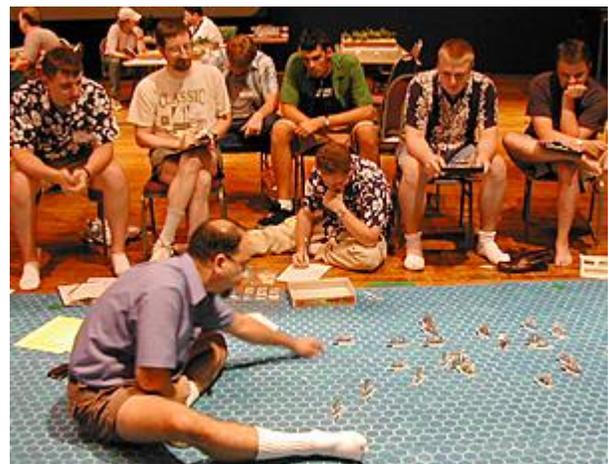
Anyway, I bought more magazines and books in my various trips through the flea market, was tempted by an army or two, and then went on my meandering through the Convention.

The Theater: Big Wargames

If, instead of turning left and going down the stairs to Lampeter, you turned right and headed up a set of stairs, you'll reach the back of the Theater. This room has tiered terraces leading down to the stage. Once, a while back, it held the flea market. Once, a long while back, it held a wedding reception (imagine the surprise of the bride whose great day was held in the middle of a "wargame" convention).

Mark Campbell running Close Action. The French and British pounded each other for several hours.

Well, this time, the Theater held a number of games,



including several monster size games. Up top was a WWII *Command Decision* action stretching 25 feet or so. Glenn Kidd deserves some kudos for this.

On stage--and somehow that's fitting--was the always entertaining Mark Campbell running his usual popular *Close Action* Napoleonic Age of Sail game, available from Clash of Arms.

Just below the stage in the orchestra pit so to speak was a 30 foot long game of two tables linked by a removable three-foot-long bridge. I have no idea what it was, but it obviously concerned an armored thrust and race for the bridge.

And in between stage and top were a number of games in full swing. It was relatively uncrowded, despite the stairs off the well-beaten path to Lampeter, we aren't yet trained to find the place. Lighting could be a bit brighter in the middle tiers.

Re-enactors: British and French

HMGS is trying to forge closer bonds with the re-enactor community. Last year, as I recall, there was a Revolutionary War unit in Lampeter, complete with cannon. This year, keeping in mind the theme, there were several.

Viva la France!

The French upstairs were part of the 3rd Cuirassier. At the time I stopped to speak with them, two re-enactors were manning the display. However, I noticed at different times during the show that several more seem to be present. Certainly, when I was back manning the booth in the dealer's area, it was quite a treat to see them strolling up and down the aisles.



What a wonderful and colorful display. And they took the time to answer questions and explain uniform bits and pieces. I saw many folks flocking round. I saw many other folks flocking round the ATM machine next to their display table.

God Save the King!

If you turned left down the stairs at the Hotel registration desk, you'll come to the Distlefink zone. Here, at the base of the stairs in the foyer, were the British. I spoke at length with one re-enactor who was a British Marine. He had a marvelous period map with all the actions in and around the Chesapeake Bay area numbered. To the right was a corresponding list of the engagements. A small encampment fit between the two stairways.

It's hard to say whether there were more British or French. Whatever the final tally, they added considerable knowledge, color, and atmosphere to the 1812 theme. I, for one, want to congratulate HMGS for bringing them in and want to encourage more of this! And, I would also like to applaud the re-enactors for taking the time to attend Historicon. I'd like to see need more synergy like this.



Distelfink Ballroom: Main Gaming

The foyer previews the wonderful number of wargames through the Ballroom area. Over the years, the always gracious and primo showman Duke Siefried who would anchor the center. I believe he was running a WWII game this year. Pete "Jodiecon" Panzeri would anchor the right, though this year, sadly, he was serving in Korea. A rotating number of folks would be on the left.

John Fernandes (left), author of GHQ's Microarmor WWII rules, and Jim Moffet of GHQ.



This year, on the right was Nigel Marsh running his *Carnage and Glory* computer-assisted rules in preparation for the Borodino 2002 Napoleonic Conference to be held in Fort Monroe, VA. I saw the table full every time I went by.

On the left tucked next to the stairs was the GM Help Desk. This is a great idea. Basically, GMs who need help lugging boxes of terrain and lead from car to table can borrow wheeled carts and such to help them. Plus, it can serve as a central contact point.

Phil Viverito, author of Classical Hack, sets up an ancients game.

The Ballroom

Here, you face a choice. To the left down a short hall is a set of named rooms. To the right is the wide open Ballroom.

The Ballroom is wide open, usually packed, and during peak Saturday afternoons can be quite noisy with background chatter. It's a wonderful place to be. There are too many wargames to recount.

The Historicon Program Guide lists events from page 39 to 104, so, whatever your interest, you'll find like-minded history buffs, armchair generals, and wargamers from all walks of life scrutinizing tables, rolling dice, and chatting among themselves regarding battles, campaigns, commanders, tactics, terrain, uniforms, and other military minutiae. The wargames range across all periods of history on land, on water, and in the air.

I took some photos, so I'll let them do most of the talking, with some additional comments dredged from my all-too over-extended memory.

Brian Leshinskie (left, seated) runs one of his Gulf War trilogy wargames. At the moment, Mark Zaslavsky (standing, white shirt) is about to unload naval gunfire on some target.

One I just missed was Fort Duquesne--they had just taken it down. Prof. Duffy clued me in to this impressive set-up--I can say that because the base terrain boards were there and the star fort covered about



three feet from bastion to bastion. Sorry, folks.

Mark Zaslavsky (left) umpires a Classical Hack game. This guy is everywhere!

Down the Hall

The same things occur in the rooms down the short end of the hall. These are smaller areas than the Ballroom, but no less exciting and eclectic of content. HAWKS, a club, usually takes much of the left hand room.

On the right, 'orrible Howard Whitehouse was running a Robbin' Hood game of some sort. I spoke to him for a bit, dropped off some MagWeb.com rulers and flyers as his players really needed these accoutrements, and learned he inserted every pun, cliché, and idiosyncrasy he could think of connected to Mr. Hood. That's Howard. Sure a lot of folks doing a lot of medieval gaming there.

Howard Whitehouse's Robbin' Hood battle. Sadly, Howard was behind me and thus, out of view. Something about Witness Protection Program...

Across the room was David Bonk, running another C&G computer-assisted wargame. He's been doing this for quite some time. As usual, his wargame is packed.

Down in another of the rooms was Larry "The Sword and the Flame" Brom running a game, though it looked to me to be Franco-Prussian. I spoke to him later, but at the time, he was running through an overview and I interrupted him only long enough to take a photo.

He and his daughter Lori had the booth two over from us, and a steady stream of folks stopped by to purchase his rules and chat.

Bonk is at rear, concentrating on the computer.

Back Out in the Hallway

Back in the Foyer, actually on the far side of the Foyer if you came down the stairs, sits the temporary snack bar.

However, that's not Mike at the end of the table...care to guess who (no "Peking" below)? It was a pleasure to meet the man behind the name I've always seen and chat a moment or two.

As usual in all conventions, food carries a slight premium due to convenience. I bought a hamburger special consisting of a hamburger, bag of chips and soda (forget super-sizing, there's only one size and it's small) for \$5, and for a change of pace, a hot dog special as above for \$4.50. The snack bar also offered a 10-foot party sub/hoagie/grinder sandwich (the name depends on the part of the country you're in) that was initially listed at \$7 for 3", but later changed to \$1.75 for 3", coffee, cookies, pizza, etc. for relatively fast food.



As a digression, there was a snack bar in the dealer's area (Tennis Barn) that offered more restricted fare. I recall hotdogs, hamburgers (though they ran out of these), and breaded chicken breast sandwiches. Also cookies, muffins, and such. The chicken was \$3.75 because I got one of these.

Napoleonic action in the "HAWKS" room. Bet the two re-enactors played British?



Coffee in the morning was \$1.50 a cup. The aforementioned small fountain soda was \$1.50 as well. All the food was OK. I missed lunch on Friday and ended up light-headed at the end of the day. Friends chide me that I am often light headed. Good friends contend I've been that way since birth.

Unknown host explains a fine point during an age of sail battle.

Anyway, as you passed said Foyer snack bar, off on the right up a few stairs is the Hopewell room where lectures are presented. As usual, I missed them all. As usual, an excellent set of experts give them. I was especially displeased to forget to go to the Meteorology and Military History lecture given by Christopher Duffy concerning the Jacobite Rebellion of '45. I spoke briefly with Professor Duffy and two of his friends upstairs.



Later, Prof. Duffy stopped by the booth and put the MagWeb.com search engine to the test to find mentions of "Jacobite." I would not even flatter myself to believe we swept him off his feet, as I believe the cliché that he's probably forgotten more about the 18th century than we'll ever be able to post in the archive, but he did point to a few links for us to pull up and nodded from time to time as he read an article here and there.

So why don't Cossacks ever get cold? This is a battle in the snow.

Alas, I was not quick enough to hand the digital camera to Tibor to take a photo of the two of us. Hey. I am a little in awe of such a fellow who has contributed so much to our understanding of history. But he is warm, gracious, and quite quick of wit.

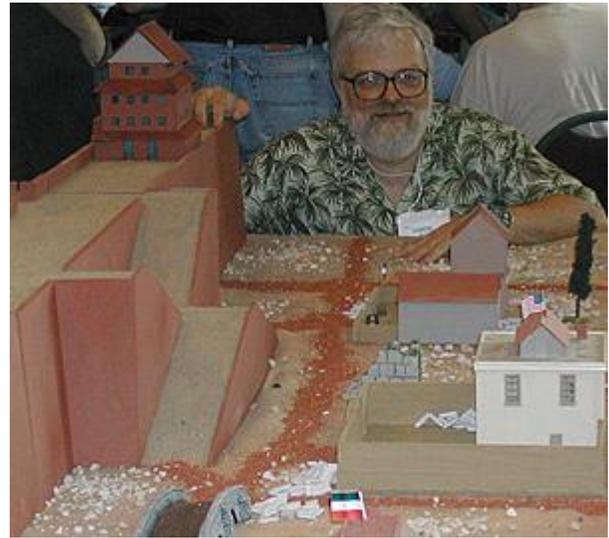


Larry Brom at right in blue provides an overview of the tactical situation.



In any case, before you turn the corner to head towards the other rooms and the dealer's area beyond, there's a single room tucked to the left. At Cold Wars 2002, this was the *Lord of the Rings* room. At Historicon, it was the something else room. What I could not say, for each time I stepped in to take a look (gawking is one of my favorite activities at Historicon), nothing was going on. I saw terrain and boxes that presumably held figures, but I must have just managed to hit the seams or breaks.

As you head for the dealer's area, there are a number of rooms at the end of the hall, as well as a small open area. The open area contained a number of games from time to time. I recall stopping in my tracks at a Great Wall of China/55 Days Peking/Siege of Legations game put on by Mike Cosentino and built by Curt Murff, known to me as Murph Turf.



That's Curt Murff getting a miniatures-eye view of the impressive set-up.

It was great to see Mike again, and a pleasure to finally meet Curt Murff. I've read his work through the years, but this is the first time I actually met the fellow.

Larger photo of display. Past the snack bar and around the corner sits the 55 Days extravaganza, hosted by Mike Cosentino, who also runs the HMGS Little Wars convention in Lincolnshire, IL (20 minutes north of Chicago).

Speaking of someone I met for the first time at the show, Sam Mustafa stopped by to say hello. OK, so I grabbed his hand and pumped it up and down. I've been reading his work for years and I find his insightful and incisive work a bit of an inspiration. Sadly, we were unable to hookup Saturday night, but it was great to meet him.



Likewise, I also had the pleasure to meet for the first time Paul Koch, whose articles and rules I've read for years. He stopped by the booth and we chatted a bit.

There was also a Renaissance (?) ship game farther back towards the Hopewell room that I stopped to see for a bit. It looked good.

On the right in one of the rooms, which I've come to think of as the *Mein Panzer* room because I always see lots of Mein Panzer games, the armor was in full swing.

"Courier" Room

At the end, just before you clear the double doors that lead to the outside patio and the steps heading to the covered walkway to the Tennis Barn, is the Courier Room. It's called something else, but the Courier games seem to always be there, and Dick Bryant was there. I chatted with him briefly, and very briefly, upstairs as his grandkids were pulling him onward somewhere. Priorities, you know!

Chris Parker, author of Day of Battle rules and editor of Knight's Round Table, attempts the Relief of Pisa.



Also in the room was Chris Parker of *Day of Battle* medieval rules. He was just finishing a session of the Siege of Pisa. We ended up in the bar for a drink and chatted a little bit about *DoB*, medievalls, and the *DoBII*, which is a quick playing introductory version.

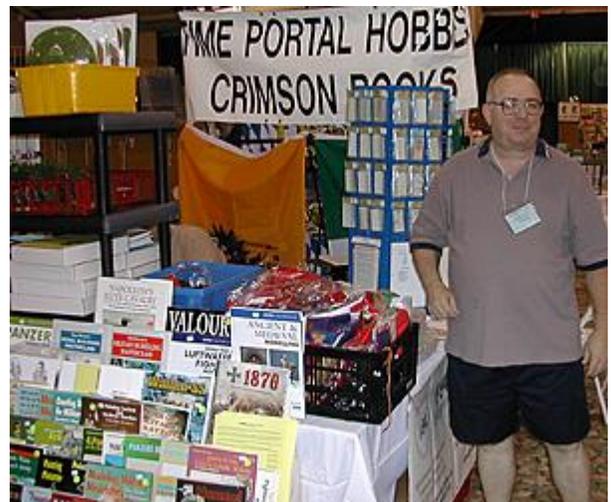
My original introduction to him was buying a set of rules called *Knighthood in the Middle Ages*, with a couple of neat ideas he subsequently developed into *Day of Battle*, and now, *DoBII*. He also was hosting a 7YW Kolin game, which is a new direction. He was using Frank Chadwick's *Volley and Bayonet* rules. He called it a change of pace. We talked a little about the film *Barry Lyndon*, which I saw for the first time a few months ago (yes, I know, I'm behind the times quite a bit). Some good, though all too few, battle scenes in there.

As an aside, Frank will be speaking at the Borodino 2002 Napoleonic Conference in September as well as pulling double shifts of running Borodino in 54mm. I chatted with him briefly during the show to remind him that he has to finalize a topic. We talked about a number of them, and he queried me about what the other speakers were doing, and said he wanted to develop one idea a little further.

Back to the wargaming. I'm not sure if it is my imagination, but the terraining is getting better and looking more like museum dioramas. Gone, or at least pretty much gone, are the days of felt and tape. Here are the more elaborate representations of battlefields throughout history. It can be a little intimidating to see what some talented fellows have created when I can barely get the felt pieces to match up. But it sure goes a long way towards visual appreciation.

Part of this, or so I believe, is the better pre-made and pre-painted terrain available from companies like Battlefield Terrain Concepts, Scenic Effects, London War Room, Miniature World Rubber Terrain, and others as well as individual gamers learning the tricks of the trade. Also, you can purchase much "raw" terrain for your own finishing. It all adds up to more aesthetic gaming and goes a long way towards putting a player in the commander's role.

Rudy Scott Nelson, owner of Time Portal Hobbies and editor of Time Portal Passages Magazine, shows off his wares.

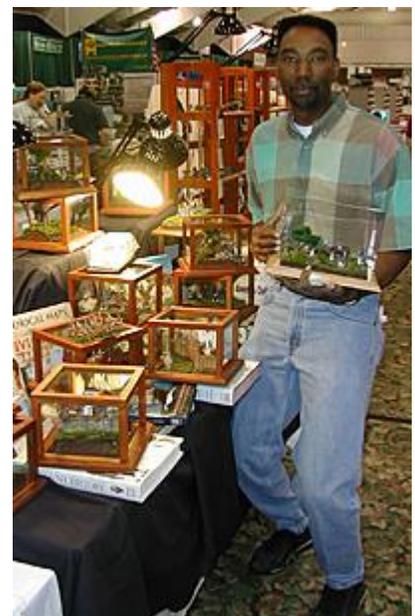


Dealer's Area: Tennis Barn

Well, there's not much to say about the dealer's area except that if a particular historical miniature or related item is not in here, it doesn't exist...and wow, does all of whatever "it" is you're looking for exist!

Thursday was an absolutely fabulous day, Friday was calm, Saturday was hectic, and Sunday was busy. My guess is that the pent-up demand from the grognards explodes on Thursday, they game or attend lectures on Friday, the "one-day" folks come in on Saturday, and the last-minute purchasers enter on Sunday. Whatever it is, MagWeb.com had its second best convention ever...hard on the heels of our third (now fourth) best show in six years: Cold Wars 2002.

Bert Floyd of Historical Miniatures Unlimited holds up his latest creations. My apologies for not capturing the quality of his painting skills. I have to remember next time to do a close up of one of his dioramas with my camera as well as with my eyes.



I'm not quite sure how to describe it, but there's an underlying buzz of optimism which is much different than shows both pre- and post-9/11

2001. I contend that the shaky economy, which started heading south in late 2000, spent most of 2001 with folks painting up what they had and finishing projects already started. You know how many figures you have waiting.

Well, I suspect they were used instead of taking on additional periods. By mid-2002, the economic slowdown remains tolerable for most folks, as if the news can't get any worse. The corporate pillagers are starting to be carted off for indictment, the layoffs have flattened out, and folks I know who were laid off have started to get new jobs. Of course, that's not in every case, and I don't intend to minimize job or other financial losses, but things seem more "up" this year than last.

Chris von Fahnestock of Outland Games shows off his painting skills.

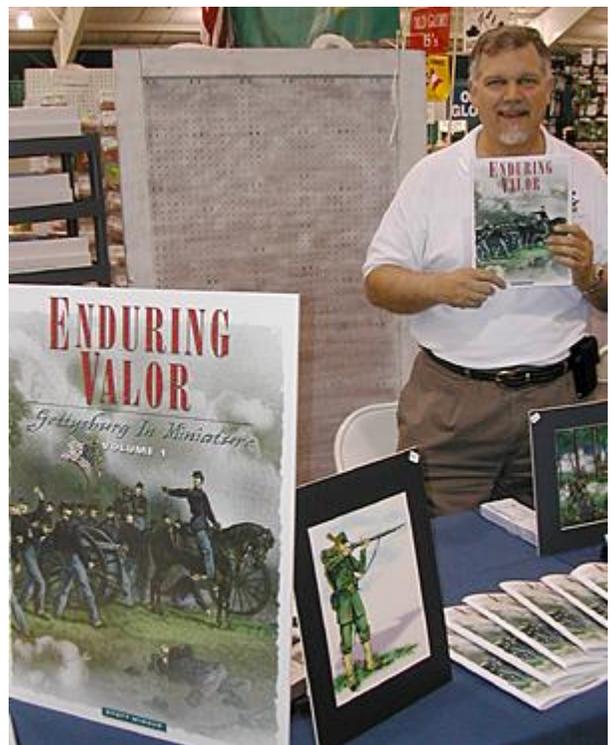


The Tennis Barn is a large square rectangular building that fits dealers in row upon row of tables. According to the program, 95 dealers attended the show, selling miniatures, books, videos, paints, bases, magazines, board games, dice, rules, terrain, on-line archive memberships, and other products.

So Many Booths. So Little Time

It is amazing. It is astounding. If you attended, you know what I mean. If you ever go, bring plenty of cash and a credit card...or two.

Ivor Janci, editor of The Zouave, holds up the first volume of his Gettysburg scenario book. Ivor runs a graphics company and is a talented artist himself--the inside is absolutely wonderful.



Wally Simon, he of the just retired *PW Review*, stopped by to drop off some back issues for the archive. I'll be seeing Wally relatively soon, as we'll be going down to a show in the Maryland area and I'm stopping by to say hello, and perhaps catch a Wally-game.

Craig Martelle, editor of *The Gauntlet*, stopped by the booth with his wife Wendy. He's settling into retirement from the Marines and is fixing up his new house. I hope this provides more time for his Russian translations.

I met Craig, the new owner of Gajo, for the first time, sitting down and chatting for a while...and of course, forgetting to pull out the camera. You know, I finally learned to put the camera in my pocket for such occasions. Now I have to learn to actually pull it out and use it more often!

Dennis Shorthouse, owner of On Military Matters bookstore, takes his first step to becoming a drag queen in a Monty Python revival.



He took over from George (who I also spoke to at the show) and is doing pretty well. He was sitting next to Tom of Tommygunner, who does a lot of 15mm WWII business. Spoke to Greg and Jim of GHQ, which was right across the aisle, and Doug of Battlefield Terrain Concepts, which was the booth next door

to us. I spoke to Annie and Pete of ATAK Miniatures, who are about a half hour from MagWeb.com -- we talked a little about getting together for a little wargaming in the months after the show.

Of course, I walked around the dealer's area as well. If you go to the Cold Wars 2002 recap, you'll see many photos of other dealer's that were also at Historicon. I apologize for not mentioning them all.

Don Featherstone

Let's start with Don Featherstone visiting the MagWeb.com booth. Last time Mr. Featherstone attended the convention, I was quick enough to take a photo of him looking at the monitor, but not quick enough to get a photo of the both of us looking at the monitor. This time, I had the presence of mind to hand the camera to Tibor...



An awe-struck Russ Lockwood on left in red MagWeb.com shirt, Don Featherstone in middle, and Steve Phenow on right.

We chatted for a bit about *Wargames Newsletter* and I showed him the on-line version of *WN* on MagWeb.com. We discussed how he goes out for dinner with the royalty payments, and the types of food he enjoys. He is warm, personable, full of anecdotes, and a delight to converse with.

The first time I "met" him was at Origins 1988 in Milwaukee. I say "met" as all I did was wander down a hall and find a witty historical presentation being given by someone with a British accent. At this point, I was only peripherally aware of miniatures--having purchased some GHQ tanks probably some 10 years previously and found none who knew or wanted to wargame with them.

Somewhere in the early 90s, I attended an HMGS convention and heard him give another humorous lecture. This time, I knew who he was and later found myself standing around and by happenstance he was near, so I introduced myself and thanked him for his presentation. It was like meeting a "rock star" I suppose (never really met a rock star)-- here's this guy who has accomplished so much, and I'm just an armchair general...probably one of hundreds who stop him at odd times throughout the show. And he was just as pleasant as can be.

After starting MagWeb.com and running a member poll of the top 100 commanders of all time, he dropped me a letter with notes and a different list for comparison and contrast. We corresponded from time to time, and during another HMGS convention in the late 90s, I heard him lecture again (does he ever run out of funny anecdotes?), we met, and he agreed to allow me to post *WN* in the archive. So now we correspond quarterly, but it is still a delight to chat a bit in person.

Best MagWeb.com Anecdote

When we exhibit, we run the site off the hard drives of the computers, which means some of the links and features you find over the Web are not available. Our resident techie, Tibor Vari, jury-rigged a search engine, but for some reason it only works on one of the laptops, and he had not arrived yet.

Along comes this fellow from Mobile, AL, who asks if we have the order of battle for the ships that fought in the ACW Battle of Mobile. Now, it strikes me as an odd request that he wouldn't have found the OOB for such a famous battle, but it also occurred to me that perhaps he was new to this whole historical miniatures thing and got inspired at the show.

Now, I know a lot about what articles are inside the archive, but without a search engine, it's like a needle in a haystack. I mean, there are over 32,000 articles. I'm not quite sure what to tell him. So, I start scrolling the main Master Magazine List screen and click on the link to *The Zouave*, which covers the ACW. As I'm explaining the above and scrolling through the list of *Zouave* issues, I randomly click on one.

Wouldn't you know it. That issue has an article on Mobile Bay, including OOB. Man, was he impressed. Man, was I astounded. Talk about fortune smiling on me. It impressed him. He took out a year on the spot, then took notes on the ships.

Now, I'm thinking it's a bar bet, and all of sudden the *Zouave* is the authority that they can point to. So I asked. It turns out that he's connected with a group tasked by the state historical commission to create a diorama of the battle for the 300th anniversary of the city. They needed to know exactly which ships participated, so that they could go buy 1/600 scale Thoroughbred Miniatures ships at the show. He happily went about his purchasing. I expect Mobile will get a great diorama.

Best (or Worst) Marketing Idea of the Show

I will not name the dealer, but if he comes forward to complain about not getting recognition, I'll certainly follow up with his name. And it's all about the advertising world's motto that "sex sells." If it was me, I'd certainly take the credit. It'll probably show up in a commercial for 3M.

He postulates that he should hire a booth bimbo who would bump and grind atop his table, wearing nothing but Post-It Notes and high heels. Every so often she would stop and he would announce that spectators had to buy some of his products or the show's over. As a bonus, when someone buys a product, the buyer gets to remove a Post-It note. The Notes have a particular value or product listed on them. The more bought, the more choices of Notes to remove...

I'm going to guess this would not violate the "Convention Regalia Policy," which prohibits the wearing of "clothing or symbols" that are display "distasteful messages." I'm sure the Post-It Notes would contain clean, wholesome language...

Steve Phenow of *Strategikon*

Steve Phenow, who lives and works in Hollywood, runs the *Armati* tournament. This year, it was a round robin affair. During the open gaming session after Thursday's dinner, he ran me and another novice, Kevin (both of us had never played before), through the rules. Kevin fielded a Byzantine army. I borrowed Steve's Seljuk Turk army. In a few moments, we got the basics down and started to deploy.

Technically, there should be a screen between us, but this was a friendly learning game, so I deployed in the open, and somewhat poorly. First, Steve corrected my deployments. *Armati* groups units together in divisions, depending on the army. I had units spread all over the place. Then, I discovered I had set up my archers behind a hill--nuthin' like blocking a field of fire.

With the majority of my army as light forces, I figured I had better do a dance and shaft the Byzantines to death. That's when I discovered that wheeling is rather restricted, so movement tends to be what your set up is. That's just about the time I discovered rolling 1s is a bad idea. I changed dice...multiple times.

I shafted. I missed. I got shafted. I died. I was down 3 units to 1 (4 and the battle would end). Units were taking hits and starting to disintegrate. Then we meleed...and then I found the magic green six-sided die. All those 1s and 2s of the previous several bounds turned into 5s and 6s. I broke a unit. I shafted another into oblivion. I ran over a bunch of light archers (which didn't count against the 4-unit defeat total, but stopped them from raining arrows at me).

I won initiative and ran away from tough guys. It was 3 to 3, I grabbed initiative and finally, excruciatingly, I rolled that magic combo to break a fourth unit. It was real close. Two of my heavy units were within 1 hit of breaking.

Kevin was pleased, too. He went on to the tournament the next day and won a couple games. He didn't win the tourney, but learned enough to hold his own against veterans.

Strategikon

Steve is also the editor of *Strategikon*, an ancients magazine. The 4th issue came out at Historicon, and like all magazines, gets better with each copy. We had a long discussion about Hannibal and the route from Spain to Italy, especially concerning the differences between Polybius and Livy, as well as various authors' interpretations. Steve reads Latin and Greek. I rely on English translations, which then leaps into Loeb's, Penguins, and other translations. OK. If you're not an ancients buff, we'd bore the hell out of you dissecting nuances. In any case, we had a great time and went out to dinner twice more, picking up other history buffs as we went along.

Restaurants and Restaurant Fires

The one rule I have at a convention is that I may eat a continental style breakfast and a fast food lunch (when I remember), but dinner has to be something more than the chains up and down Route 30. Yes, I understand that it deletes open gaming time, but dealers need an outlet outside the LHR. So, here is the MagWeb.com Restaurant Ratings for 2002.

The square in the center of Lancaster. My guess is few wargamers ever venture into the city. The square holds a monument dedicated to the ACW.

[However, with Historicon 2019 just around the corner, more gamers will venture into the city.—RL]

The Lemon Grass

The Lemon Grass, east on Rte 30, has been a favorite spot for years. This Thai restaurant serves impressive appetizers and entrees. I had the crab tulips and shrimp rolls dipped in plum sauce to start, with the "Evil Jungle Princess" for the main course (a chicken seafood mixture in outrageously excellent sauce). You end up stuffed. Pricy, about \$25-\$30 per person, as most Thai restaurants in suburbs are, but good.



We discovered an Italian restaurant and ice cream parlor on Greenfield Ave years ago, and went there enough for the owner to recognize the company logo on the shirts. Tragically, it closed, even though it had been open at Cold Wars. So there we are, standing outside. The deli next door would be great for lunch, but I wanted dinner. A family had come out, and seeing us milling around discussing where to go, suggested an Italian place on Route 23, accessible via back roads. We got to 23, but couldn't locate the place. Travelling down the highway, we spotted another Italian restaurant, Gregorios.

Gregorios

We walked in, and it is the typical hole in the wall. This is not a bad thing. Tibor and I often would go to a hole in the wall in West Paterson, even though there was a white tablecloth Italian restaurant next door. Anyway, we started to place our order and the waitress shrieked, and another one yelled in a panicky voice that the kitchen was on fire.

There's a serious moment of time stopping when you think you hear the word "fire" and start to think about exit routes. The cook went running into the kitchen, followed by another, and followed by some

muted Italian language. A moment later, everything is OK, the cook has a sheepish grin, and we're not heading for the door. It turns out someone's cigarette fell in the receipts bag and started the cash on fire.

Gregorios' sauce (and floor show) was superb, but he needs to use real veal, not processed patties. The garlic bread sticks were outstanding. Very filling and very reasonably priced at about \$10-15 a person.

The PressRoom

The last night, and after a solid day of ribbing from the aforementioned Steve Phenow about my recon and foraging skills, we set out for another restaurant. We had no idea where to go, but I figured to head into Lancaster and see what we could find. We ended up at a place off the town square called the PressRoom.

We were certainly underdressed with shorts and our logoed shirts, considering that many of the people arriving after us were in suits and dresses, but for a Saturday night, it was rather empty. They even did the old restaurant trick of sitting the six of us in the front window to show passerbys that they were a hopping place.

The food was universally excellent. Appetizers rocked. Crab stuffed shrimp melted in your mouth. Some other shrimp thing was also exceptional. Other things were around, too, but I can't quite remember what the others had. The salad was fresh and the lemon-whatever dressing was a delight.

As for the main course, I opted for a modified Black and Tan: Guinness over Yuengling (making do, you understand).

Oh wait, I forgot the food. I opted for a rack of BBQ ribs, lathered with a delectable sauce. Steve went for the steak, and it was as good as it can get. Tibor's chicken was brilliantly illuminated by a light sauce, and Susan's shrimp and scallops diablo dish was exquisite. Mark had a pedestrian hamburger. Todd ordered the seafood crepes, and found it quite good too. The only disappointment was the side dish: sweet potato (not regular potato--indeed, you can't order regular potatoes) with some honey butter and about four green beans.

The honey butter almost cracked my tooth it was so sweet, and actually proved distasteful. And the beans were boiled to within an inch of disintegration--they might have been canned for all we knew.

Service was a little slow, I suspect a little shorthandedness here, although the waitress put up with enough barbs to make up for it. For example, Tibor asked "how is the (chicken entree)?" She answered that it was good.

I couldn't help myself. "Of course she's going to say it's good. What do you expect her to say? That it was rancid and the last person who ate it was carted off in an ambulance?" We had her laughing at "rancid." He ordered the chicken.

The company was as pleasant, intellectual, and jovial as one could ask for. Two hours went by in a flash. Pricey, about \$200 for the six of us. Much of that was appetizers at \$10 a pop, entrees about \$20-\$25. Even Steve was impressed that I was able to find such a place. Now if I ever go to Hollywood, I can hold my head high.

[So ends the recap—RL]