

# Colonial Issue

September 2002



# Journal

The Official  
Newsletter of  
the Historical  
Miniatures  
Gaming  
Society  
Midwest Chapter



The Black Watch Prepares for the Onslaught.

*Photo by Mike Shay*

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The primary purpose of the HMGS-Midwest Journal is to foster the exchange of information, improve communication, among the members of the Society. The Journal seeks to accomplish it's mission by reporting Society business, publishing member comments and articles concerning the Society, and by publishing informative articles that help members to further enjoy their game experiences.

The *HMGS-Midwest Journal* is published three times annually. A *Little Wars After Action Report* is to be published each year immediately following the convention. All articles, artwork or comments relating to HMGS-Midwest, military history, historical wargaming, general gaming, painting, etc., are welcome and encouraged. Submissions can be written, typed, on 3.5" IBM, or sent via email. We encourage anyone who is online to email articles as a first choice. Please see our web page or call a Member of the Directors (BOD) for the rules governing members attending BOD meetings. Our snail mail address is:

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# From the Editor:

Well fellow gamers I hope you have had a good summer. From a personnel point of view mine was poor. I'm still unemployed and have had only one interview. So let's get me those job leads ☺ (only half joking)

From a gaming point of view we have been doing a bunch of colonial battles every Saturday evening. My friend Dave ran several games based on the French battles in Dahomey of 1898. This was a small French force assaulting a large Dahomeion army behind entrenchments. We played it half a dozen times until we had been able to balance and have the French have a chance of victory.

The main scenarios that I have been running deal with "what if" scenarios. In 1882 the Egyptians declared a republic under Arabi Pasha and refused to pay the foreign loans. Both French and England sent a squadron. The French government fell so England was the one to invade Egypt. My scenarios assume that the English government fell so France was the one that had to invade. We generally fight a scenario twice to give me a chance to correct any problems and to give complainers a chance to try the other side. I am also trying to get away from balanced meeting engagements and do something with a bit more flavor.

We began with an amphibious assault which the French won easily. This was because the imperial dreadnought (i.e. my gunboat) was a bit too powerful. We did some meeting engagements in which we tried to balance how many Egyptians are needed to stop the French. We came up with a ration of 1.5 to 1. We did a French offensive, which was a bit too weak, and an Egyptian offensive that was nicely balanced. In August we did a French defense of a supply column and the jury says we need more Egyptians.

My rules are loosely based on The Sword and the Flame. Though with all the changes I use, I believe I have mangled them beyond recognition. One of the problems I have had is with non-European gunfire. Historically it is pretty weak. They shoot a lot and hit very little, which is not sufficiently reflected in my rules.

We use a D20 system and ordinary troops with breechloaders firing at a massed target need an 8 to hit. The number can go up or down one depending on how well trained the troops are. One of the ways I make the fire less effective is by how many rounds of ammo I give them. Regular troops carry four rounds of ammo and may have pack animals for reloads. Irregular troops carry two or three rounds and will not have reloads they also have poorer arms having rifled and smoothbore guns.

So what you may have from the natives is one or two good volleys instead of a lot of weak fire. I like this but it isn't historically accurate. Also since the regulars stand around as a massed target most of the time one or two volleys can really hurt them. On the other hand as the non-European its not a lot of fun to fire and do very little damage.

The next battle is based on the British night assault at Tel El-Kebir. I haven't work out all the details yet but it should be interesting. After that we get to fight my version of the Mahdi in the Sudan. I'm loosely working out three French columns. One based off the Red Sea, one on the river and one across the desert, all of which will meet for a big Omdurman type battle outside of Khartoum. I need to come up with a suitable French general to replace Gordon. Someone who would complain about the fact that the champagne is warm because all the ice is gone and could the relief column please hurry up!

After that I am going to fight some battles based on the Cape Frontier Wars against the Xhosa. These should be interesting because the Xhosa will have a large number of poorly armed troops in broken terrain. The broken terrain will limit the French ability to deploy their firepower. This should produce some interesting sce-

narios. I have also painted up some witch doctors and dancing girls so I have to come up with some interesting rules for them.

Should the group not be bored with my colonial gaming and I get the several hundred Foundry Dark Age Africa troops painted up they may run into my version of the Zulu. I also have painted up some black Boers and want to try some battles in which the French run up against well dug in troops with good firepower. The last scenario I thinking of doing with everyone against the judge.

So does anyone else out there do Colonial gaming? If you do write me a short article about the rules and era that you like to do. Has anyone done any Campaigns? One idea I have toyed with is to make my players French Colonial governors on a fictional continent and have them try and carve off as big an area as they want while keeping the other players to the coast.

As a side note I will be running some games over Thanksgiving at the Chicagoland Gamers Conclave. Dave and I will be running a few games to see if we can get the historical section going. If interested the web site is <http://www.chicagogamecon.org>

Thanks, have a good Fall.

Matthew Hyke

HMGS Midwest Editor

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## Point of interest:

I am currently reading "War in the Desert, The Eighth Army at El Alamein" By James Lucas. It is an account of the soldiers present at that battle. I found the following item and thought our members would find it interesting.

“The Hysteria regarding discipline expressed by the higher echelons of the Army were not always shared by regimental officers. Justly renowned is the commanding officer of one British infantry battalion whose unit, having suffered severe losses, was returned to Egypt. His men relaxed in Cairo after the strain of battle, but many fell foul of the provost marshal's policemen and were 'crimed' for minor infringements of dress regulations. On the CO's table at battalion headquarters the 252s (the Army's charge sheets) piled up. Angered at the attitude of base 'wallahs' toward the fighting men of his battalion, the colonel retaliated in the only way he could and recorded on every 252, in the section reserved for 'punishment awarded', the single terse and uncompromising word: 'Beheaded'. “ — Matt

## Questions, I get questions.

What are we doing with HMGS East?

H.M.G.S. East is the largest chapter of all historical gaming chapters in the United States. It owns the copyright to the title Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS). It is willing to let other chapters use the title under certain conditions. These conditions include federal not for profit status, certain specified language in the society's bylaws, and proof of membership of over 75 members on an annual basis. As we wish to continue to use the title HMGS- Midwest, the Board of Directors has decided to meet these criteria. We already comply with a specific language in our bylaws. We need to move forward and file for federal not-for-profit status. Once this is done, we will provide a list of our membership, limited to names and ZIP codes, to HMGS East. This membership list and submission to East will have to happen on an annual basis. Then we will be able to use the title Historical Miniatures Gaming Society -- Midwest.



We are also negotiating a special agreement with HMGS East. Our chapter owns the copyright to the logo "KNIGHT". We will allow HMGS East to license the use of the KNIGHT to other chapters. They will in effective act as our registration agent. Any chapter that meets with their criteria to use the title HMGS will also be allowed to use the knight logo.

These arrangements are lengthy processes that we hope to have wrapped up by the next Little Wars.

Second, I am often asked why members cannot get an electronic copy of our membership list. While it is our policy to provide printed copies of our membership list to our membership, we've always felt that the privacy of our members is very important. We do not wish to provide electronic copies of our memberships, complete with addresses and phone numbers, in an electronic form. We don't want provide unknown individuals/companies with an easy way to solicit the our members. Therefore we only provide printed membership list to our members. Except as noted above, in which a specific representative of HMGS East would receive a copy of names and ZIP code, so that they may verify our membership, no one else or no other organization may have access to our membership lists. No exceptions will be made.

Third, HMGS- Midwest shirts:

Shortly, we will begin selling some very nice polo shirts complete with HMGS's Midwest logos to our membership. Please watch the web page for details

Fourth and finally, what have I been doing for gaming over the summer?

Most recently I played a fantastic colonial game. There were seven players. Three played British imperial forces that were stationed in Africa and four played Zulus. In this scenario, there was a British outpost surrounded by hostile Zulus. The commander of this force was ordered to hold out until relief could arrive.

We used Sword and the Flame (S&F) as our rules system. I will let you read Colin's after action report for the gory details.

I have always found the secret with S&F games is to not be afraid to attack. The game is not simultaneous. Kill your opponent before you get killed. I also enjoy the colors of the period. The uniforms are rewarding to paint, as there are many variations to each nationality's units. I am excited the Larry Brom, author of S&F will be coming to Little Wars this year.

Finally, I try and stay in touch with the membership through either e-mail or phone calls. If you ever need to speak with me, never hesitate to write or call.

Best Regards and Good Gaming,

Richard Pinelli

## Enforcer's Corner

Well, another summer has come and gone. I hope everyone was able to sneak in a few games the last few months. I personally was able to play a few along with getting a few rounds of golf in. With no newsletter due and the convention over I still had a ton of work to do this summer.



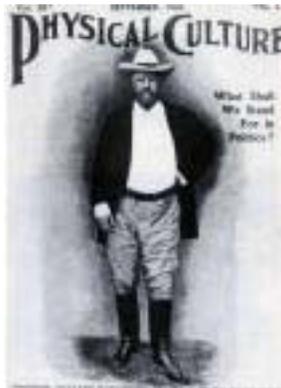
Little Wars 03' plans are in full swing. The dates are April 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Dave and I are working very hard to bring you another top-notch convention. We are going to add a full day on Friday, and pre-registration to mention a few changes. We have also brought back something for everyone a rate reduction on the hotel rate to \$79.00 a night for up to Quad occupancy. Make your reservations early because we sold out our room block for the last 3 years. Remember to ask for the HMGS/Little Wars rate. If you have any problems with the hotel just let me know.

On another note I have been asked by people what event am I working on for Little Wars? This year I will bring to the show San Juan Hill in 25mm. I have contacted the great Curt Murff to build the hills, trenches and blockhouses etc. that I need to make this battle come alive. I have already painted Teddy and the boys, Buffalo Soldiers, Gatling Guns, Colt Machine Guns, Spanish in Sun Helmets & Straw Hats, German Maxim Machine Guns with German Advisors etc. You can join Teddy and his band of Rough Riders in this famous battle, and of course the lights, flags and hats will be included in this event. I am very excited to do this project because I have had the figures for a few years now and this is a forgotten period to wargame. I was hooked on this period after watching the movie Rough Riders on TBS with Tom Berenger and Gary Busse. After the great success of 55 Days in Peking I will be using a modified version of Sword and the Flame.

Hope everyone has a great fall!

Michael S Cosentino

Executive Vice President HMGS-Midwest *The Enforcer*



## **How To Not Anger Friends... and People You Don't Even Know Yet Convention Game Scenario Design *by Mike Shay***

If you are hoping to draw people into your period of conflict, the best way to assure they will not do so is to have them introduced to it with a bad scenario.

I have been hearing a lot of complaints lately about scenarios played at conventions and thought that the membership might like a brief refresher course in scenario design and choice. Each section has a statement I have heard regarding a game followed by some advice on how to make sure they are not complaining about *your* game.

### **Why, I Never Even Got To Roll A Die in Anger!! (Rotundus non Splatum)**

*I can't believe the waste of people's time over at that table. I spent two hours pushing lead across the table while others are slugging it out. About the time I get to the action, the Judge declares a victory for the other side. I never even rolled a die.*

You need to design the scenario or historic engagement not only with historic accuracy or balanced sides in mind, but with each player at the table in mind. If you have eight seats at the table you need to consider which forces each person has access to and make sure that everyone has a chance to play a roll in victory or defeat. If a player chooses to not fight, so be it, but they should not have that choice handed to them.

### **You Got The Look, You Got The Hook...(Ludus non Beatus)**

*That game looked interesting in the program and I have been wanting to play that rules set, but when I went to the table it looked like a six year old did the terrain ...*

The look of the game is a crucial component both for enjoyment and attraction. A great looking table not only draws players to the table, it draws them into the game. A great table enhances the game in all aspects. It also reminds people why they enjoy this hobby over others.

### **The Jungle is a Big Bad Place. (Iutus Junglissumus Sum)**

*The Judge gave me a small force with firearms and the other side had primarily melee troops, but there was not a single place on the table to use the guns. It was all rough terrain and I got chewed up because the points value of the forces were balanced but the other guy was in charge range before I got to fire.*

Numeric measures of balance are crucial to a game; however, they do not make a balanced game by themselves. It is critical to take terrain and scenario conditions into account to make sure that everybody has a chance. This is NOT intended to take away from unusual scenarios, quite the contrary, but make sure that victory is attainable by all. I enjoy a good "Last Stand" game every now and then, just make sure I know that a "glorious last stand" is my victory condition.

### **I Am the Rules...(Divinus Vobiscum Masterei)**

*The Judge didn't seem to know the rules, so the whole game people were arguing with him and he was constantly stopping the game to look up rules. Annoying and boring.*

Know your rules. If you know them it will save a lot of downtime for the game and avoid a lot of problems. If you are simplifying the rules let players know that, even if you aren't going through all the rules that you are changing, let them know you are trimming rules to speed up the game. And never forget....

### **Who's the Man? (Quis Hominus ab Ominibus)**

*The whole game the players were arguing with the Judge, and he was giving in to some and not others, which only encouraged people to continue to argue with him. We spent a lot of time arguing which meant we didn't have much fun and we didn't resolve the conflict. I won't play in one of his games again.*

Never, NEVER, forget that the Judge is in control. If you are not in control of the game it means someone else is. A Judge sometimes wants to hear, and maybe give in to, a player thinking that appeasing him once will shut him up. Appeasement is ALWAYS a poor strategy. History will never forgive Chamberlain, players will not forgive you. One large problem with players is that they often feel they know the rules better than the Judge. Know your rules, and remember, Who's the Man?

### **Yes, But The Brass Plates On The 1884 Model Were Not Engraved....(Piciunius Stupidiex)**

*We only had three hours to finish the game, which the Judge was aware of, and he insisted on using every arcane rule in the game and discussing it with everybody.*

Be careful not to use all of the arcane details. If it is not enhancing the game or slows the game down think about trimming it in the interest of time and smoothness. Some people love to discuss rarely known or useless bits of trivia (author included!), but these discussions can wait until after the game. Consider the pace of the game and the time given.

### **You Mean I Skipped Peking For This!(Pekina est Ludus ab Omnibus)**

*I thought we were going to play a naval game, but it was really a series of boarding actions. The game started with the ships already grappled. I was looking forward to maneuvering around; instead I rolled melee dice all afternoon.*

Make sure that your game is accurately described. There is a real let down when a player finds out that they have skipped another game for this one, and this one is not as advertised. Players will often leave a table or play in a lazy/lackluster fashion. Make sure your game is what you say it is.

### **Wow, I Can't Believe That Happened Again! (Falo, Falare, Stipi, Bumptus)**

*The Judge had set up the game in a historically accurate fashion, but put so many restrictions on the sides that the only outcome would be the historic one. Why bother.*

Historic gaming plays a fine line. Stick as close to history as you can and achieve realism, but still have a balanced and enjoyable game. Often a Judge determines that for added realism they must restrict both or one side with onerous limitations or demands, or the game is set up in an advanced stage of the battle, both of which are likely to yield the historic result. Give players the flexibility to win or lose based on the merits of their actions (and a little luck). Nobody enjoys a predetermined outcome.

### **I Didn't Think Anyone Would Try That, So You Can't Do It. (Tacticus Delenda Est!)**

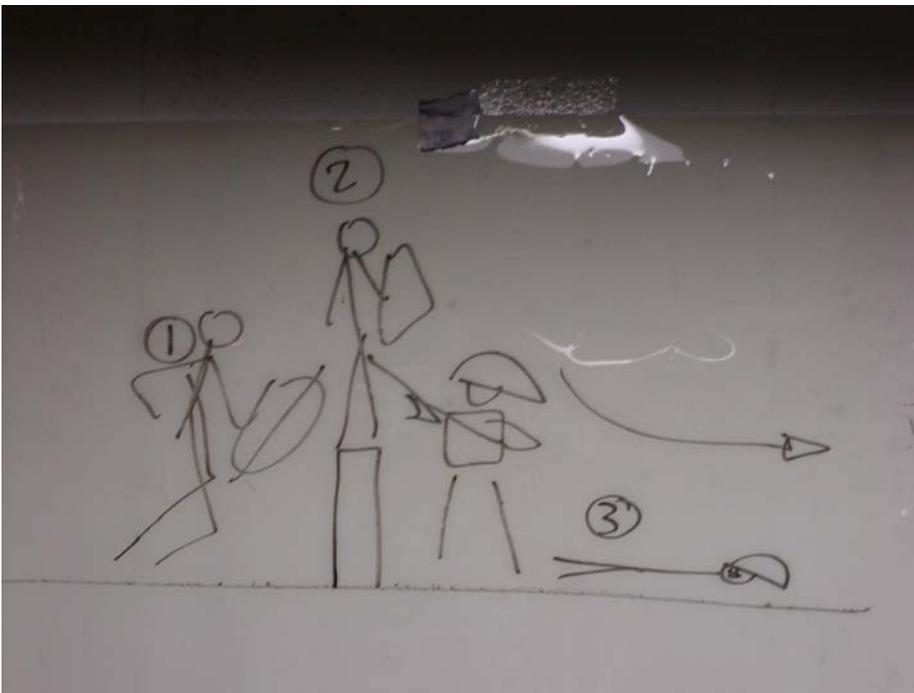
*I sat down at the table and sized up the situation. I quickly realize that my opponent is going to set still for a while, so I start maneuvering my troops to fit my preferred plan. The Judge refuses to let me change units place in the line, so I left.*

You should be ready for some players to do odd things. Sometimes to their advantage, sometimes not. Let them be creative within the confines of the rules and let them make mistakes. Just because a Judge has not considered the possibility does not mean it shouldn't happen.

### **The Solution to Most of Your Ills.**

*There is a single solution to most of the problems above. Playtest. Playtest with friends. Playtest with strangers. Playtest with kids. Playtest. You will never be let down by some playtesting.*

Judging a game can be a great experience. It takes some preparation, but has many rewards, not the least of which is meeting people interested in your time period and maybe making some new gaming friends. Good Luck and Great Judging.



**Mike Shay's hieroglyphics explaining Sword and the Flame Rules concerning obstacle movement.**

- 1. Move up to the wall.**
- 2. Move on top of the wall.**
- 3. Move over the wall.**

**(Elapse Time = 3 turns)**

**Note the nifty Sun helmets and Zulu shields.**

Check out our web page for latest HMGS-Midwest news:

<http://www.geocities.com/hmgsmidwest>

## 2002 Theme Winners Announced!

Real Life (tm) has kept our events folks quite busy following the convention. They've now tallied their on-site voting notes and come away with the following theme event winners.

As a reminder, the 2002 theme was "Warfare in the Colonies". By pure chance, both winners happened to be two great French and Indian War events: **1st Place: Curt Murff & Michael Mays; "We Want a Bigger Fort"; Featuring the huge and amazing Fort Duquesne, new surprises and game personalities provided both first-time and repeat players with different and exciting challenges. 2nd Place: Jim Harris & Phil Bock, "Battle of Bernetz Brook, 1758"; The Brits went on the offensive with a land-based and amphibious assault on Upper Lake George.** Lord Howe commanded the British spearhead against vital French positions near Fort Carillon in prelude to the Battle of Fort Ticonderoga. 15mm Normal Warfare (F&IW). Both events had excellent quality terrain and figures, the judges ran well-controlled games and the players were involved and having fun.

Congratulations Curt, Michael, Jim and Phil! We can hardly wait to see what you have planned for us next year!



**Curt Murff's  
“We Want A Bigger Fort” Game**



## Announcing HMGS-Midwest Membership Benefits

The following dealers have agreed to provide discounts to HMGS—Midwest members. There are two conditions: 1. You may be asked to provide a copy of your HMGS-Midwest Membership Card, and 2) because of associated overhead costs, dealers may not extend discount to conventions (e.g. Little Wars).



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## Zulu Battle Report for Murff's Drift

by Colin Duesing,

When our Elders said the White Devils must go, the Zulu warriors took it upon ourselves to do just that. We saw that the evil Captain Murff was going to receive more soldiers from the south (led by the vile General Roseman), we knew we had to act now with at least 200 of our bravest warriors. Many of our warriors, around eight hands, were armed with captured British rifles.

Most of us, led by Top Induna mKosintno, waited in the deep woods between the bridge and the outpost to spring upon the newly arrived troops as they crossed the bridge, or be able to storm the compound with wave after wave of fierce Zulu warriors. Warriors led by Induna mSha were clever enough to sneak into the wood cluster near the north wall of the compound the night before and would be able to advance close to the Redcoats

Unknown to us, Captain Murff was given orders by courier from the General to clear those woods prior to his arrival. Fortunately, Captain Murff failed to heed those orders. Our warriors could spring from behind unhindered!

We began the assault by charging the relief troops nearest the bridge and using the rifles along the river with our most accurate men. Several others stormed out of the central woods towards the south side of the compound.

But disaster struck early!

The charging warriors stumbled on the bridge and came up short of their intended victims and were almost completely slaughtered by the Black Watch! Then an entire group of Induna Duzeen's rifles along the river was killed to a man by the Yorkshires! And last but not least our warriors, ably commanded by Induna rPanelee, along the south wall of the compound found themselves face to face with the fiercest warriors they had ever seen, the dreaded Ghurkas!

And the warriors sneaking on the north side were soon spotted. They must have been giggling like girls on their wedding night because of how easy they were sneaking upon the Redcoats. Giggling is not part of the warrior's code!

We pressed on!

The remaining members of the group that failed to cross the bridge were able to meet a group of Sikhs. We have heard many stories of the fierce Sikh warriors. To aid in that assault, an-

other group of Zulu warriors crossed through river but losing a third of the force doing so. All but 3 Sikhs survived the ensuing battle, but the Sikh leader was among the fallen.

Another band of bravest Zulu warriors we have known charged several Bengal Lancers. Songs will be sung about them for many seasons to come. Although they were forced back, these "Bravest of the Brave" only lost 4 men during the assault AND were able to kill one Lancer PLUS effectively stalling the advance of the entire relief column.

Back in the compound, Captain Murff, as evil as he is, was still a British soldier and knew how to fight despite the overwhelming odds. He was able to position his regular Redcoats, Irish Brigade and Ghurkas into what they call a "Square." They were able to fend off wave after wave after wave of Zulu's with few casualties on their part. (Author's Note: In the background of the gaming area we had movie ZULU playing, and what was on the screen was exactly what was happening on the table.)

But if a wound is not allowed to heal, a man will bleed to death.

The Redcoats stormed the bridge only to be met by more Zulus. The Lancers were able to cross the river, at a VERY slow pace, only because the "Bravest of the Brave" were assaulted by the Zulu traitors of the Natal Native Contingent. (Author's Note: The "Bravest of the Brave" failed a moral roll against the NNC and ran from the table, but that part was deliberately left out from this account so "songs can be sung for many seasons to come.")

The 3 warriors facing the dreaded Sikhs were able to hold them off since their leaderless situation caused great confusion.

The remaining warriors with rifles were able to harass the remaining Bengal Lancers into submission.

All the warriors storming the compound were now along the north and the south and the west walls. The sheer number of Zulu warriors was able to break the evil Captain Murff's square even with the Ghurkas along the Redcoats' side.

Usuthu! The day was ours! Now, I must sing songs of our victory.



Quote of the Issue:

There are some prone Zulus, that will only hold relief column up for three turns. *Curt Murff*

**HMGs-MIDWEST Presents**

**Little Wars 2003 April 4-6, 2003**



**AMERICAN..... RUSSIAN..... ENGLISH..... SPANISH..... ETC.....**

# **CIVIL WARS**

Little Wars 2003, April 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>, will feature some of the finest games, figures and terrain tables for sure.

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## Prices:

HMGS Member \$10/day - \$15/Weekend  
Non-Member \$15.00/Day - \$30/Weekend

## HMGS-Midwest Web Page

[www.geocities.com/hmgsmidwest/index.htm](http://www.geocities.com/hmgsmidwest/index.htm)

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