

THE
DIGITAL
WARGAMER



Issue 1

Welcome to the first edition of The Digital Wargamer!

How did you find us I wonder? Was it from a friend, maybe something you spotted on Facebook or by pure chance we appeared on the first page of your google search?

For small Indie wargame developers, being discovered and building an audience can often come down to chances such as those listed above.

The aim of this magazine is to help you discover some of these developers, and perhaps broaden your knowledge on what's available to the modern digitally aware wargamer.

As such we will not only look to cover upcoming games but also talk about new releases on Vassal, Facebook groups you can join, Discord Channels with all the latest gossip and even some insider knowledge for wannabe developers.

Hopefully we will dig a little deeper into the games, with articles from the developers themselves.

With all new ventures it's important to set goals and have a realistic expectation of success.

When I launched my first game on Steam (Kursk - Battle at Prochoroka) my measurement of success was that one person purchased it and liked it. Since that first purchase, by some unknown Steam player, I have developed three further games and now work with two other developers. From small acorns grow large oak trees and so I hope will be the case with this magazine.

If one person reads this and likes it I will consider that a success and that it can only grow from there.

I hope you, the reader, enjoy this first edition and will pass on the news of its existence to others. Please let me know what you like, don't like and would like to see in future editions.

If after reading this first edition you feel you would like to contribute, either content, ideas or support then please do reach out to me - lance@digitalwargamers.com

Finally let me say thank you to the developers who took a leap of faith and contributed to this issue and to you, the reader for taking the time to download and read this magazine.

Lance



The cover image for this first edition was painted by Matthew Wallhead in oils on a three foot long board.

Check out more of Matthews work at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Matthew.Wallhead.Art.and.Design/>



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Slitherine announce K-Project

Working on a project and need some professional help? Then K-Project might be just the shot in the arm you need. Below is the information from their announcement.

What is K-Project? An organic, ongoing programme of activities to allow indie developers to show their games to a broader audience, with a direct pitch channel accessible to any dev team. “Last year, we saw more than 9,000 games debuting on Steam alone. K-Project is our way to help indie strategy games to be seen; our act of love to remember where we started and help others with the same dream,” says Marco Minoli, Marketing Director of Slitherine.

Find the K-Project page Slitherine’s new site, where developers can connect directly to Slitherine management and pitch their projects. “We expect something moving, like a vertical slice, a demo, or even a video. We are not going to look at presentations or design documents only. We want to help games already in action,” says Marco Minoli.

Slitherine is going to invest 5% of all Slitherine’s indie game earnings into K-Project, with a starting sum of \$100,000 already in the fund. This fund will be used to improve, boost, and publish the games our committee will choose in the next months.



Krim: The War in the Crimea, 1941 - 42

Krim: The War in the Crimea, 1941 - 42 is a digital conversion of a Ty Bomba game first published in Command Magazine #6. This is a first time effort by game studio BruinBear Games working with Yobowargames who have previous publishing experience.

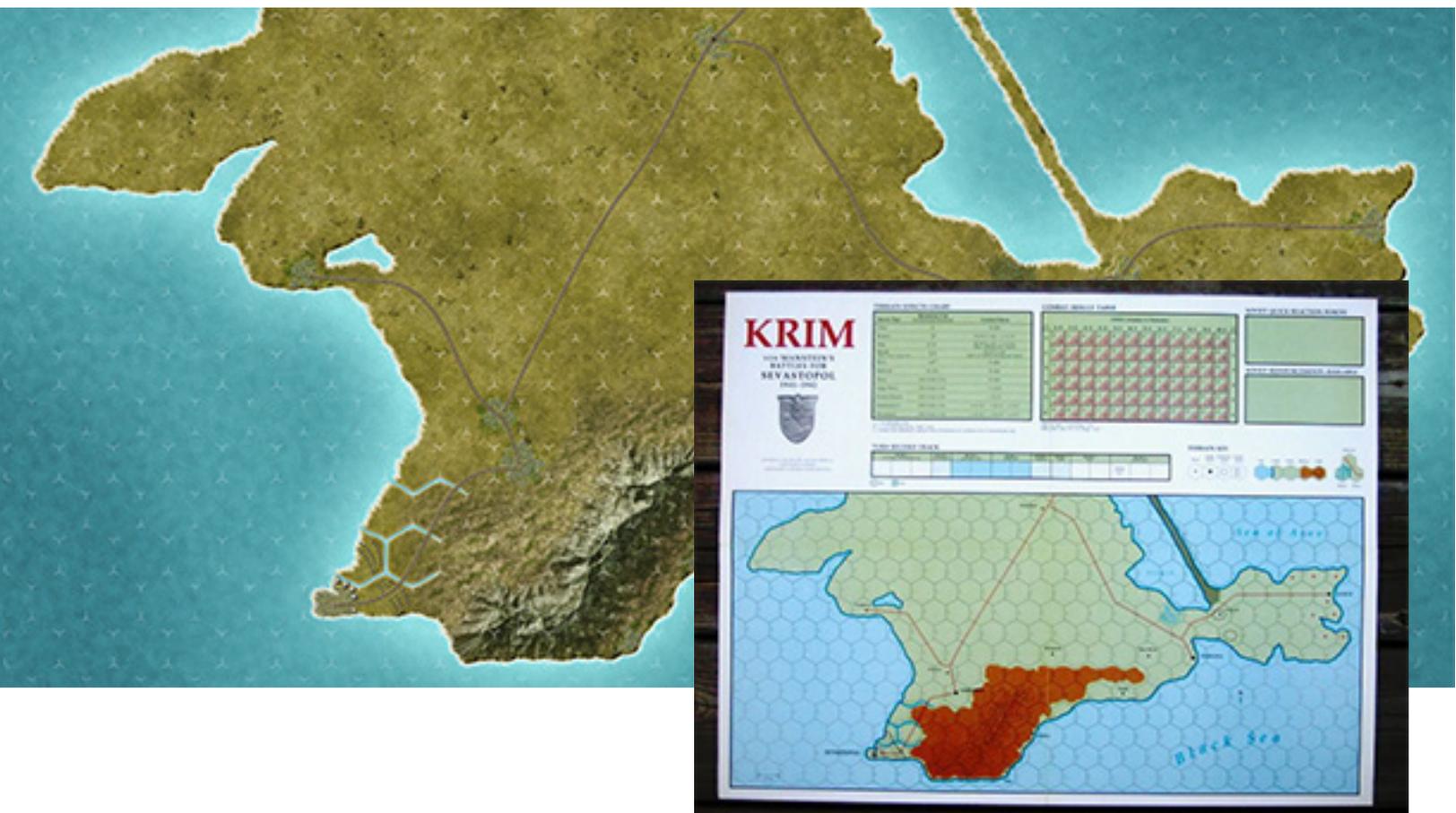
Krim: The War in the Crimea simulates the battles that took place in the Crimea from late 1941 to the summer of 1942.

Krim can be played as a single player against the Russian AI or as a two player hotseat game. Each hex on the map equals approximately 7.5 miles from side to side. The game consists of eight months, each of which contains 1, 2 or 3 Player

Development History

In April 2019 Yobowargames approached Ty Bomba, who produces a profusion of wargames for magazines, and asked if they could look at converting Krim to a computer game. After a short flurry of emails a deal was done that gave Yobowargames the rights to reproduce the game in digital format.

Next up was the task of finding an artist that could take a fairly basic map and make it look interesting for the PC market. Finding an artist that also understands the wargame market and the expectations of its audience is surprisingly important. Nothing angers a wargamer more than inaccurate information or graphics in a game,



Into the picture comes Marc Von Martial who is well known in the board wargame area having worked on games for companies such as Lock n' Load Publishing, Matrix Games, Hexasim and many others. A scan of the map was sent to Marc and he duly delivered.

With a little bit of photoshop magic mud and winter season maps are also produced.



Prior to all this happening BruinBear Games had contacted Yobowargames asking for advice and help with developing a wargame. they were working on. And so a partnership developed which led to the idea of them both working on a new game together.

The Splashscreen (featured on page 5) for Krim was painted by the artist, Craig Wilson, based in the UK. He was discovered while browsing deviantart.com looking for ideas.

Game Details

The game features three scenarios. A short “what if” scenario that introduces a player to the game. Next is a Bustard Hunt scenario that looks at the end game where by Von Manstein finally defeated the Soviets forces in the Crimea. Finally there is a campaign game that covers the full period.

When play testing the game it became apparent that having a competent AI for the Axis forces would be extremely difficult to write as the

Playing as the Axis against the AI is very challenging. In the short scenario you will be stretched to reach the objectives in time and to defeat the Soviet forces blocking you. In the other scenarios you will see the challenges that Von Manstein faced when trying to overcome the Soviet defences.

Check the out KRIM: The War in the Crimea 1941 - 42:

http://store.steampowered.com/app/1294000/Krim_The_War_in_the_Crimea_194142/

Insiders Tip

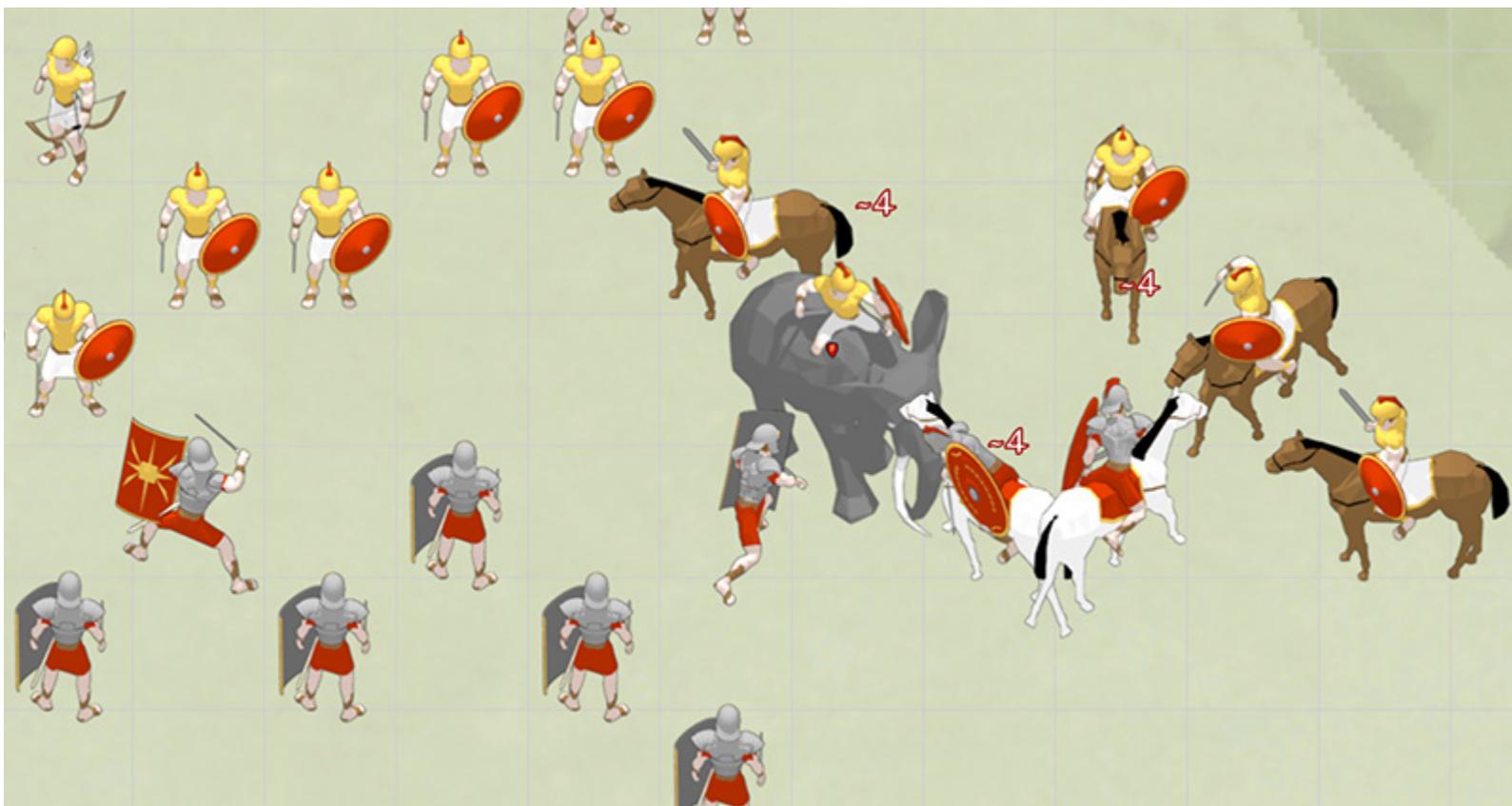
When starting out developing your first game keep it simple, and within the bounds of your skillset. For things you are not good at contract an expert.

Good hunting grounds are Facebook groups, fiverr.com or upwork.com.

Agree a fixed fee so you can control your costs and keep within your budget.

What made you choose to do squares rather the more traditional hexagon?

I love Chess game, it has a square grid based battle representation, a perfect mix of strategy complexity and simplicity of rules, these characteristics have made it attractive to players for thousands of years. The same consideration is applicable to a Stratego game that adds unit type masking. Each square grid cell has 8 directions to work with (including diagonal movement) and movement across map cells in all primary directions looks natural, it appears more suitable to single unit representation. Hexagonal grid is much better suited to melee type combat, it is better used to represent a group of single units inside the same cell.



When did you start developing wargames and why did you start?

I started developing wargames in 2007 when I was working for IBM. To become a videogame developer an advanced programming skill was needed, I became a java expert and started to develop a simple wargame like risiko (Italian version of Risk) with some grand strategy elements taken from the Total war series.

What development tools do you use?

I have a free developer soul, I love linux and all open source world. Initially I used Java language, in 2013 I started using the LibGdx open source framework that gave me the possibility to have better graphic performance and the capability to package the game for all the main platforms in a simple way. For painting sprites and background, I always use Gimp and Blender.

Observing the videogame development tool market, becoming year after year more suitable to non programmer users, I discovered the most powerful open source tool: the Godot engine. My interest is slowly moving from low level programming and technology to videogame high level design and implementation.

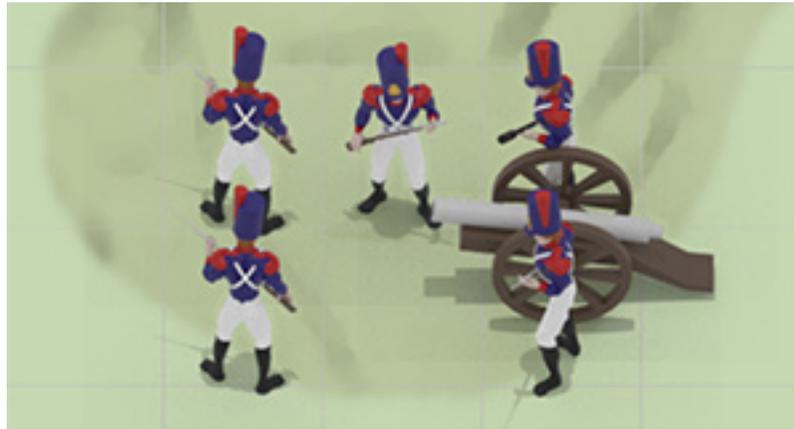
Comparing Godot with Unity, it is firstly free and I feel it does not waste my time with any complexity. It has an easy and robust 2D\3D engine with an interesting object oriented and node inheritance tree approach. You are not lost in thousand of code lines, starting many times the game to test and find problems, most of the work is focused on designing graphically the game and its mechanics, reducing to a minimum the need to write code and lengthy test cycles.

Do you do your own graphics?

Yes, I like drawing and using Gimp for 2D images. In the last 2 years I learned to use Blender, if you know how to draw your low-poly characters and objects, you can reuse your animations (based on a predefined skeleton poses). You then need only to render them as a spritesheet to load them inside Godot. I also have the possibility in future to move from a 2D game (that I found more appropriate for a wargame) to 3D in a simple way.

How long does it usually take from start to finish and publish the game?

I take an engineered approach, that is first prepare an engine and a common framework to reuse, then you very quickly create as many games as you want. So 1-2 years to prepare the engine, 3-6 months to build a game.



What is the next project you are working on?

I have just finished porting my wargame engine to Godot that was originally written in java+libgdx. I am now rewriting my 4 games (Rome, Napoleon, Crusade and WW2). Actually I have already released Res Militaria Rome and soon I will release Res Militaria Napoleon.

Check the out the Vpiros games:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/dev?id=8307251952202559973>

<https://vpiro.itch.io/>



Operation Citadel

Operation Citadel is a strategy game in the same vein as Panzer Generals featuring over 400 units and 22 countries. You will be able to play out campaigns, or a quick game against another hotseat player or the AI.

At the moment there are 2 campaigns available with a total of 61 scenarios. The campaigns are based on historical battles with each battle field around 30 * 30 hexes. Your units stay with you during the campaign so that a unit that started with the invasion of Poland could be there at the end defending Berlin.

Units earn XP and can gain ranks which will give them stat boosts. If they reach rank 5 then the unit will get a hero.



Heroes represent real people who fought during the war and that were rewarded with important medals (medal of honour, order of the red star, knight's cross of the iron cross and so on). The hero will give additional boosts to the unit, and its picture will be shown when you right click on the unit.

There is also the option of custom games with larger maps which will be less historically accurate.

There are 9 unit types : Infantry, Artillery, Antitank, Anti Air, Armoured, Fighter planes, CAS planes, heavy bomber planes and boats/submarines/other naval units. With the infantry you'll find paratroopers, engineers, mortar, MG, light infantry and cavalry.



Artillery includes everything from small field guns such as the SiG 33 to the really big Morser Karl. Assault tanks are considered as artillery, they have a range of 2 tiles. Rockets have a range of 3, and real artillery guns have a range of 4.



When playing a campaign, cities do not produce money / generate income. But this is different in the quick game mode. Every city / harbour will produce some money per turn. You can use heavy bomber to bring this production to 0 for a couple of turns.

Thus crippling your opponent, and if he does not have enough money to cover its repair / refuel / rearm expenses, will leave its units at your mercy.

The game is presently available in Early Access on Steam. Check out the link below.

Valentin is an IT Student based in Canada. Operation Citadel is being developed in Unity with development started in December 2019.

His brother, Jules, is the graphical designer for the game

Check out Operation Citadel:

https://store.steampowered.com/app/1240630/Operation_Citadel/



Time4War



Time4War is a new turn based strategy game that lets you get up close and personal with the action with full 3D environments and true line of sight.

Time4War is designed to work like a virtual table top war gaming experience only with a one kilometer table top. It takes strategy and logic to the next level by removing all chance from the game. No RNG, no luck and no dice !

The game enables complete freedom of movement so that you can view the action from any zoom and any angle much like you would playing in a games

The game pieces are laid out for a pitched battle across the game board like pieces on a chess board. The starting positions are fixed and symmetrical. No hex squares, No RNG. The game will be cross platform so that you can start a game on your PC and continue the game on any device.

We got the time to ask about the origins of the game.

What got you into developing Time4War?

The origins for the game time4war started back when I was around 10 years old when my uncle gave me a box of miniature tanks. It was quite a collection and had enough vehicles to play a tabletop wargame. I had some idea of the rules and I wanted to write a computer program that would help me with the stats and track damage etc. At the time my computer was an 8bit microcomputer, the Sinclair ZX81, which you had to load programs from cassette tape and so I wrote a simple program that helped play the game.

From that day I've always had a passion for anything WW2 and I have a keen interest on history from 1939-1945. I've also like strategy games like "Tide of Iron", "Memoir 44", "Conflict of Heroes" etc. I also have a collection of "WarHammer 40k" table top wargame models and I play a lot of chess. If you combine all of these elements you get an idea of what I'm trying to achieve with "time4war".

Why the name Time4War?

The name "Time4War" came from playing WarHammer 40K the tabletop wargame. When you start playing these kind of games you realise that you need so much time to setup the game and to play that you need to allocate at least half a day to prep and setup a game which can last multiple days. Because of this I quite often didn't.

Because of this I quite often didn't have the time to setup the table, produce the army list, review the objectives etc and that's before you even start to play. I quite often didn't have enough time for the actual war to begin! With the game "Time4War" there is no setup time, worrying about army lists and points. It's all taken care of and you just start the game and play. So the name "time4war" name is because I now had time to play the



When did you start work on Time4War?

I started out about 6 years ago in 2014 writing a 3D WarHammer 40K game which I spend quite a lot of time building. After about a year of development I had written a fully 3D tabletop wargame with unit selection and multiplayer. I then realised that I couldn't do anything with it as everything is copyright to "Games Workshop". I wanted to expand and promote so other people could play but it wasn't possible. After this I decided to do a tabletop WW2 game.

For the next few years I created various different versions of a WW2 wargame using different game engines in different languages and found various issues along the way either with the game engine or the programming language, toolchain or time to develop. Finally I decided on the Unity 3d engine and in mid 2018 started working on a new game called "time4war".

Apart from the game client I have also developed the game server which hosts all the games and have have servers for time4war website.

Do you do this full time?

All in all there is so much effort required to build such a game as a single person. In this day it's getting close to the point where it's not really possible to do such a thing. I guess the game industry is following in the footsteps of the movie industry and the number of people involved in modern games is many more than the games that used to be created in the early eighties.

I've been dedicating evenings, lunchtimes and weekends to developing the game and I'm happy after 18 months of development that I'm finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel but as I transition from development to marketing I'm realising that I have a whole new battle to face and it's one that I need to start from the basement as I have no experience whatsoever in this area.



Any final thoughts?

One thing for sure is that this game will never fade away as I'm doing it for the love of the game not for money. My ideal would be to have a small community of people playing the game on a regular basis holding tournaments and playing competitively.

Hopefully once I have a small group of players I can then start to launch to a wider audience on platforms such as Steam and then think about extending the game content and platforms.



Check the out the Time4War website:
<https://time4war.co.uk/>

The 3d rendered tanks in my game were created by Kado3d:
<https://www.cgtrader.com/3d-models?keywords=kado3d>



Until the Last Plane: The WW2 Airfield

CarloC is a solo developer working on this game in his spare time. His day job is as a .net programmer.

His inspiration for this game is War Thunder and his like for management/strategy game.

This is a first game from developer Carlo featuring pixel art. Work started in March 2019 using GameMaker Studio 2. Its a WW2 strategic management game.

The game, as described by Carlo, "is the story of brave fighters of the Second War, they are not pilots, but above all technicians who have struggled hard. Few games remember their exploits, so I wanted to create this WW2 airfield manager. You will have to manage resources, build spare parts, choose the best combat tactics. Eventually you'll be ready to send a squadron into battle.

The game features 3 playable nations: USA, USSR and Germany .

There will be three different campaigns for each nation featuring fuel and ammunition management and a spare parts crafting system.

Most of the the game play takes place on the airfield. Send a reconnaissance scout, if he finds a target then you can send out a squadron immediately. During the mission your pilots may need supplies or repairs. If they land, you must try to send them back into action as quickly as possible.



You will need to make sure you are never short of resources, your planes need fuel and ammunition. Order them just before you finish them.

You will also need to ensure you always have spare parts ready according to the types of planes on the line.

Check the out the Steam page:

https://store.steampowered.com/app/1240550/Until_the_Last_

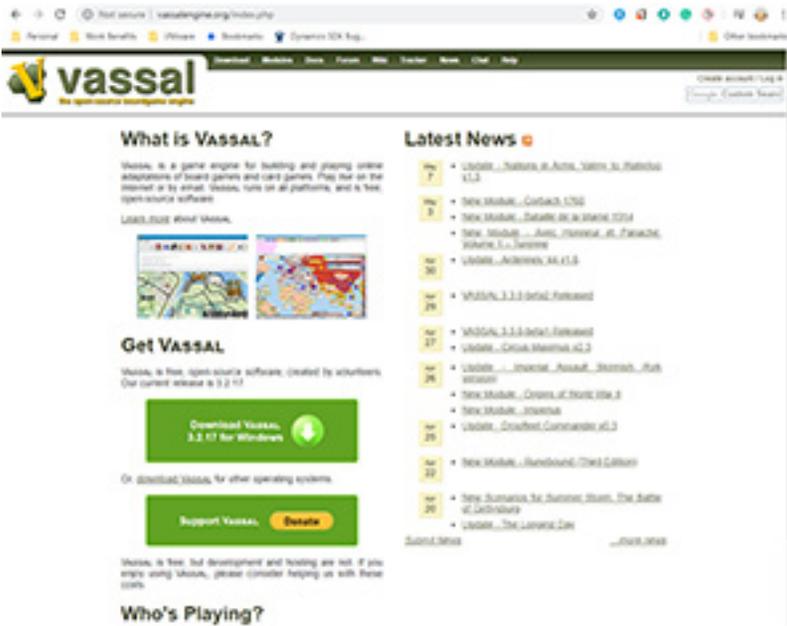


Part One: Setting up

Vassal is a game engine for building and playing online adaptations of board games and card games. Play live on the Internet or by email. Vassal runs on all platforms, and is free, open-source software.

Every wargamer should at least try Vassal once to see how far it has advanced since its conception and the quality of approved boardgames now available.

In this first part we show you how easy it is to set up and get your first game running.



STEP 1

Point your browser of choice to vassalengine.org. Click on the download link. This will take you to a new page that should automatically download the installer file.

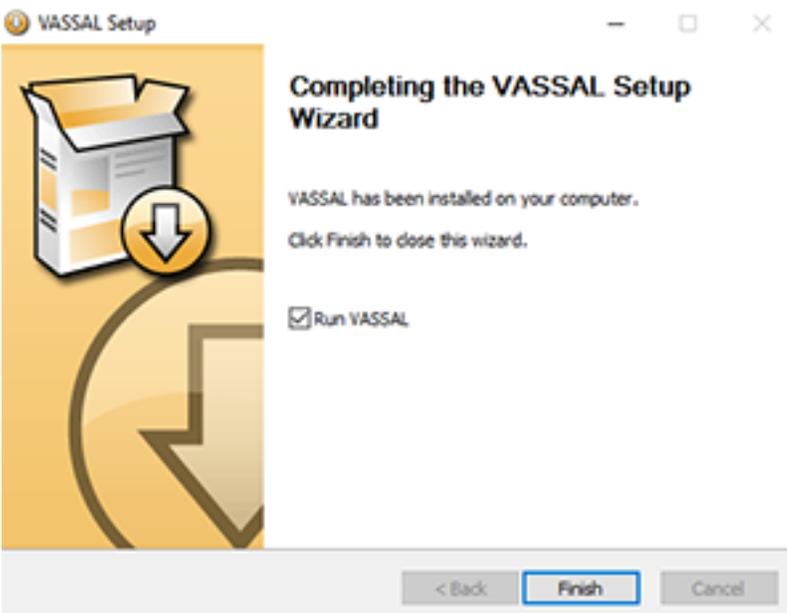
STEP 2

You remembered where the installer file was saved to right? Then double click it to start the installation and follow the instructions. Pick the Standard installation for now.



STEP 3

Click that Finish button to launch Vassal.





STEP 4

All being well you will see this screen, Either take the tour or (being wargamers who don't need manuals) jump right in...

STEP 5

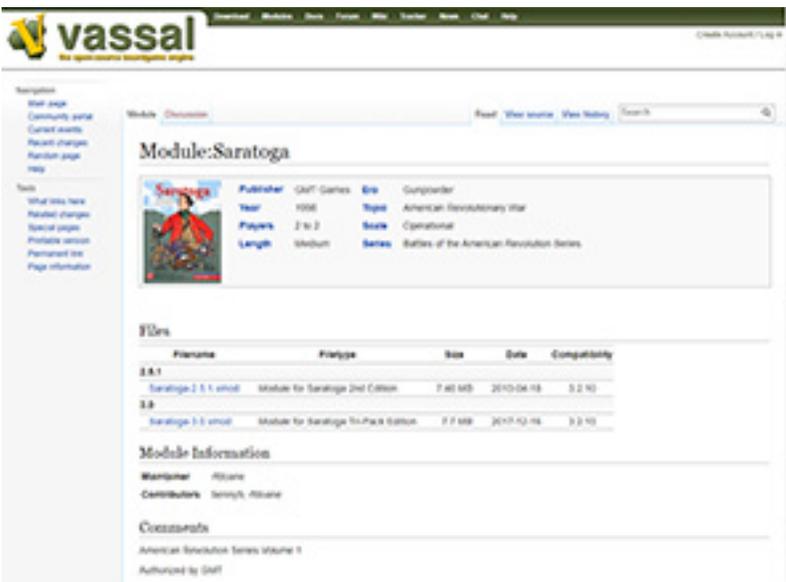
But first we need to download a game module. Point your browser to:

<http://www.vassalengine.org/wiki/Category:Modules>

and find a game you own.

STEP 6

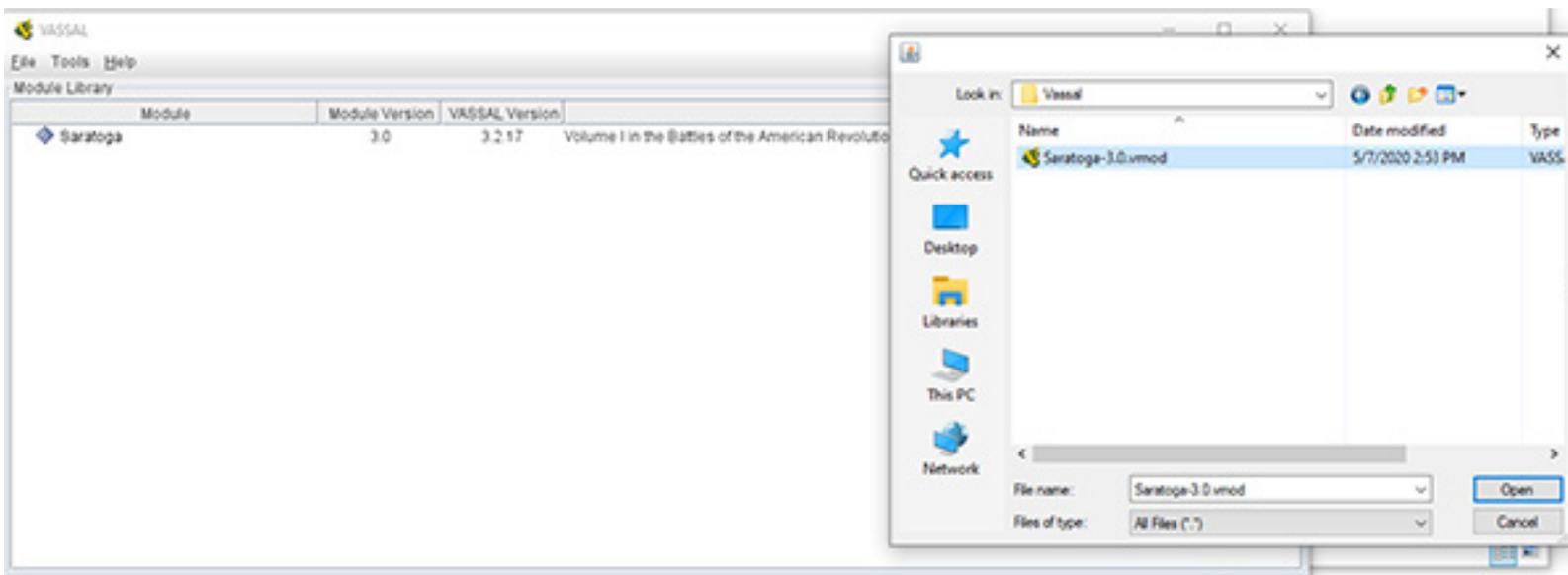
Download the latest vmod file and remember where you saved it to.



Hands On

STEP 7

Go back to Vassal, click on file and browse to the location of the file vmod file you downloaded. Click open to



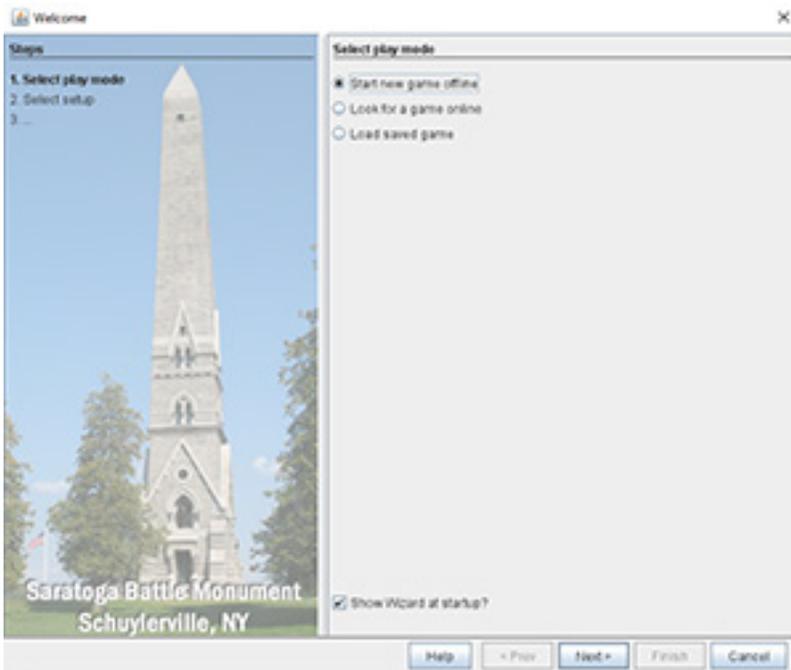
STEP 8

Double click on the module you loaded and then select new game offline.

Select your setup.

Join game as solo.

and...



STEP 9

Congratulations you are ready to play a game.



Is this legal?
Companies like GMT now support Vassal modules as it helps sell their games. However you must own a physical version of the game. Vassal itself does not enforce or understand game rules. For that you need the original game.
You will find many older games available. Copyright law still prevails on many of them. So do the right thing and make sure you own the original or confirmed the original copyright owner is happy to have their game available on Vassal.

Congratulations if you made it this far.

But what the heck to do now? Go back to the Vassal website and read the excellent online help and join the forums if you have questions.

Feeling a little lonely in these turbulent times and want to talk shop/games with like minded wargamers?

Then these are the places to be.

Facebook Groups

Computer Wargames: Tactical to Strategic -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1883329641902873/>

A friendly bunch of individuals talking about games they are playing and showing games in progress.

Wargame Artwork - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1421314084652690/>

Great place to see what wargame artists are working on. Also sometimes gives you a sneak peek into future projects.

JTS Wargame Opponent Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/JTSOppGroup/>

If you are a fan of John Tiller games and want to play a real opponent then check this group out.

Discord

Hex! - <https://discord.gg/feq38B>

A recent addition run by computer wargame enthusiast that is slowly building an audience. Also has a few lurking wargame developers so if you want to know whats coming check it out.