THE DIGITAL WARGAMER

Issue 2

Welcome to the Second Edition of The Digital Wargamer!

Welcome to the second edition of The Digital Wargamer. The first issue was a far bigger success than I could ever have imagined. All the developers got a large bump in people interested in their games and I hope this encourages other to come forward and talk about their endeavors. I also want to thank those of you that spread the word on the first edition and particularly Joe at wargamer,com who kindly mentioned this magazine on the wargamer site and gave a significant boost to downloads.

This issue I wanted to explore additional areas in the digital wargaming space and give some recognition to the YouTubers who put out great content on computer wargames. As a developer myself they are an important element in getting your game noticed and for the player they are a chance to see a game before buying. What surprised me in their responses to my questions is how hard working and dedicated they are in getting content out there.

In addition there is a great piece by the developer of Digital Blitz. I asked him to write some notes about his games and he submitted a whole article which I have reproduced verbatim. I felt it covered many of the reasons that got me into developing wargames and likely why others also start down this path.

Finally I added an article on a game of old, Desert Rats, that I played for hours as a kid. I hope it brings back some fond memories.

I am still experimenting with the right mix of content for this magazine so please do contact me if you have your own ideas or feel something is not quite working for you in the two editions so far.

On the administration side I found out that for the first few days after release the subscriber signup was not correctly configure so if you did not get an email from me advising you about this new edition please do sign up again. Read Page x on why signing up may be of benefit to you!

As always I welcome feedback, lance@digitalwargamer.com, and thank those who provided their thoughts on the first edition.

Lance

The cover image for this edition was painted by Ben Pook Wallhead in acrylic on watercolour paper.

Check out more of Ben's work at:
https://pook.artstation.com/
https://twitter.com/BPookArt
https://www.facebook.com/BPookArt/
https://www.instagram.com/bpookart/

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Until the Last Plane - KickStarter

Solo developer, Carlo, has launched his Kickstarter campaign for his game "Until the last Plane" that we featured in Issue one. The money raised will be used to commission more graphics, music and FX sounds. In addition it would allow him to support more nations than are currently in the game.

You can check it out here: https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/carlocgames/until-the-last-plane/description

Krim: The War in the Crimea 1941 - 42

BruinBearGames/Yobowargames newest game is now live in the Steam store.

You can check it out here: https://store.steampowered.com/app/1294000/Krim_The_War_in_the_Crimea_194142/

Wargamer.com review on the game can be found here: https://www.wargamer.com/reviews/krim-the-war-in-the-crimea-1941-42-review/
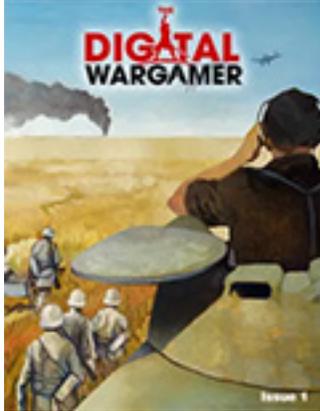
Subscribe to **The Digital Wargamer** and get free entry into the draw to win a copy of both Battle for Iwo Jima and Krim: The War in the Crimea 1941 - 42.

Battle for Iwo Jima simulates the WWII Invasion and desperate fighting for the island that took place in 1945. Take command of the US Marines, manage your tanks, infantry, and HQ communication in a day and night furious battle against the Japanese

KRIM: The War in the Crimea 1941-42 is an operational/strategic simulation of the German 11th Army's operations in the Crimean Peninsula from late October 1941 through 4 July 1942.

Visit https://digitalwargamer.com/subscribe/ and enter your email address.

BYOBattleship: Customizable arcade naval sim

BYOBattleship is a build-your-own-warship arcade naval combat simulator. Over the course of a single-player campaign, your custom supership must face off against hordes of enemy ships, planes, and submarines, along with the occasional ludicrous superweapon, such as flying battleships, railway cannons traveling on self-assembling, jet-propelled tracks, and a nigh-invincible mobile iceberg fortress. As the story progresses, new ships and components unlock for use in the ship designer, allowing your creations to keep pace with your enemies.

The setting is a loose alternate history, starting around WW2 and progressing rapidly from there in some strange directions. Mysterious villains have assaulted every nation on Earth with massive fleets of ships. The story follows a ship that narrowly escapes one such assault, joins the desperate fight for survival, and discovers the source of the assailants' power. Along the way they will engage in battles loosely inspired by historical conflicts, as well as many that were invented out of whole cloth.

Build your own battleship

The ship designer is a key part of the game. It is easy to use but still has plenty of detail and interesting tradeoffs. Most parts have only two rules restricting their placement: Do they physically fit into the space without overlapping any other parts? And do you have enough remaining displacement on your hull for the part's mass? But within that framework, you have to manage numerous tradeoffs.

Guns need clear space around them to rotate, or they won't have very wide firing arcs. Larger guns also take up space belowdecks, where your engines and boilers go. Said boilers need adequate ventilation, provided by smokestacks.
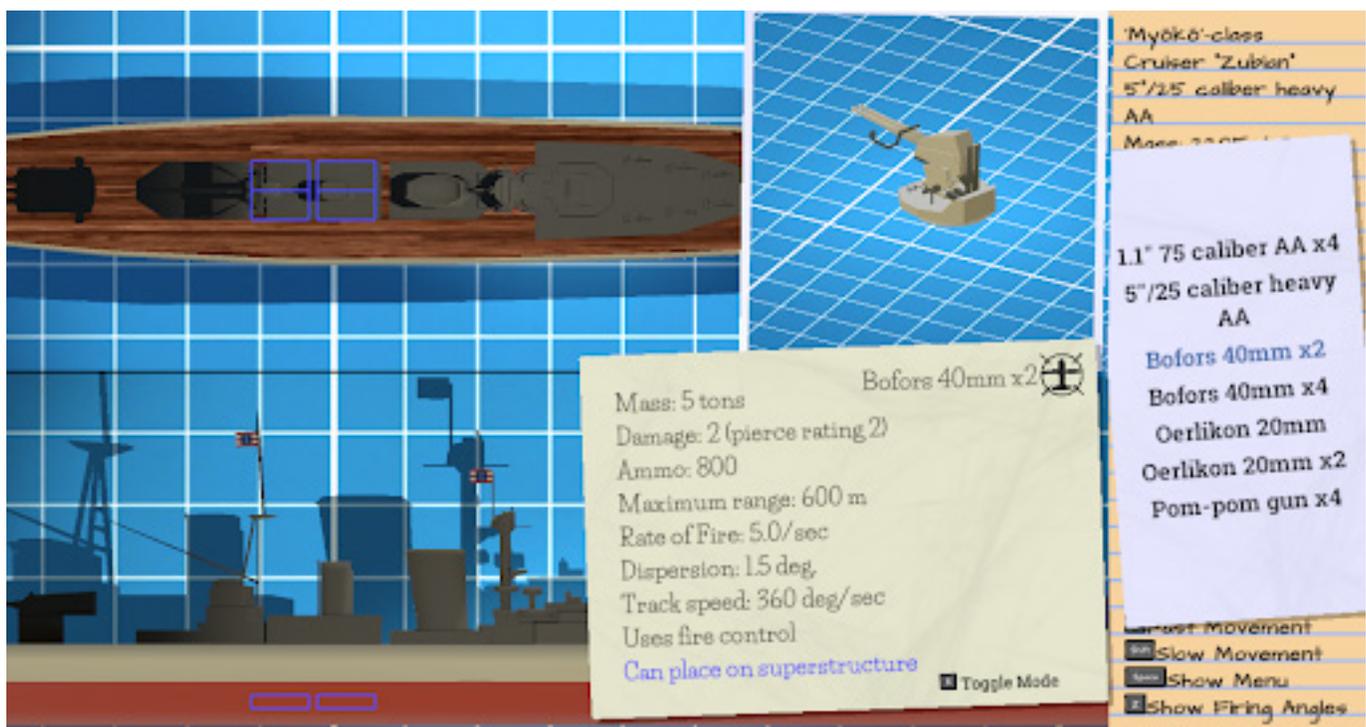
Secondary systems like radar, sonar, and autoloaders require a bridge to manage them, as well as internal volume. That volume is provided by superstructure parts, which take up plenty of deck space and mass on their own. And of course, you want to have the fastest, best-armored ship possible, while being able to rapidly dispatch surface, airborne, and submerged threats. All of this is to say that there are plenty of tradeoffs that must be considered while designing a ship, while retaining an accessible level of simplicity and clarity.

Most of the ships and parts available in the ship designer are modeled off of historical examples. The goal is that each of the US Navy, British Royal Navy, Imperial Japanese Navy, and Kriegsmarine will have at least 4 representative ships (their hulls, bridges, and other notable parts such as vent stacks and superstructure) in each category of destroyer, cruiser, and battleship. At the moment 22 ships have been completed, with roughly the same amount still to come.

Engaging the enemy

Combat is fast-paced and streamlined. Your guns will aim automatically at the current designated target, taking account of its heading and velocity, and compensating for your own ship's motion. Point-defense weapons automatically track and fire on enemy aircraft. This leaves you free to keep an eye on the rapidly-evolving environment, prioritizing your next foe and attempting to steer out of the way of heavy-hitting threats like torpedoes.

Meanwhile you need to be juggling priorities like: do you make a beeline for the ground-based airstrips so you can clear the skies, even though that means braving a cluster of enemy submarines? How can you use these islands to protect yourself from incoming fire? Which of these two fleets should you attack first, and should you try to pick them off from long range or get in close so you can use your torpedoes? Or really close so you can use this flamethrower?

And of course, then there's the superweapons, colossal war machines that defy common sense and are easily a match for your lone ship if you're unprepared. The flying battleship pictured above, with its paradropped PT boats, is just the start. If you thought I was joking about the flying rail cannon, well...

Behind the scenes

We asked TooMuchAbstraction for a little background on his development of the game.

BYOBattleship is a solo endeavour. I do all of the programming, art, and sound design. I have been working on it full-time for most of a year now. My background is in industry software development; the shift to game development has been an interesting and enjoyable change. Doing the art and writing has been a bigger challenge, but I'm confident I'm up to the task.

I rely heavily on free and open-source software. The game is written in Unity; 3D models are done in Blender, and 2D art is done with Inkscape and Glimpse. I use Git for source control and GitHub for off-site backups.

The current state of the game is "nearly feature complete, but far from content complete". By that I mean that the game is playable, there's just not much to do in it just yet. 3 missions have been written, out of a planned 30+. Many ships and parts need to be created, including implementing high-tech weapons like missiles and lasers. Some ship customization options, including custom paint schemes, are still missing. And of course, game balance has a long way to go. All that is to say that I don't know when the game will be done.

Check the pre-alpha demo:
https://toomuchabstraction.itch.io/byobattleship

If you'd like to follow development:
https://twitter.com/byobattleship

Also occasionally development livestreams at:
https://www.twitch.tv/byobattleship
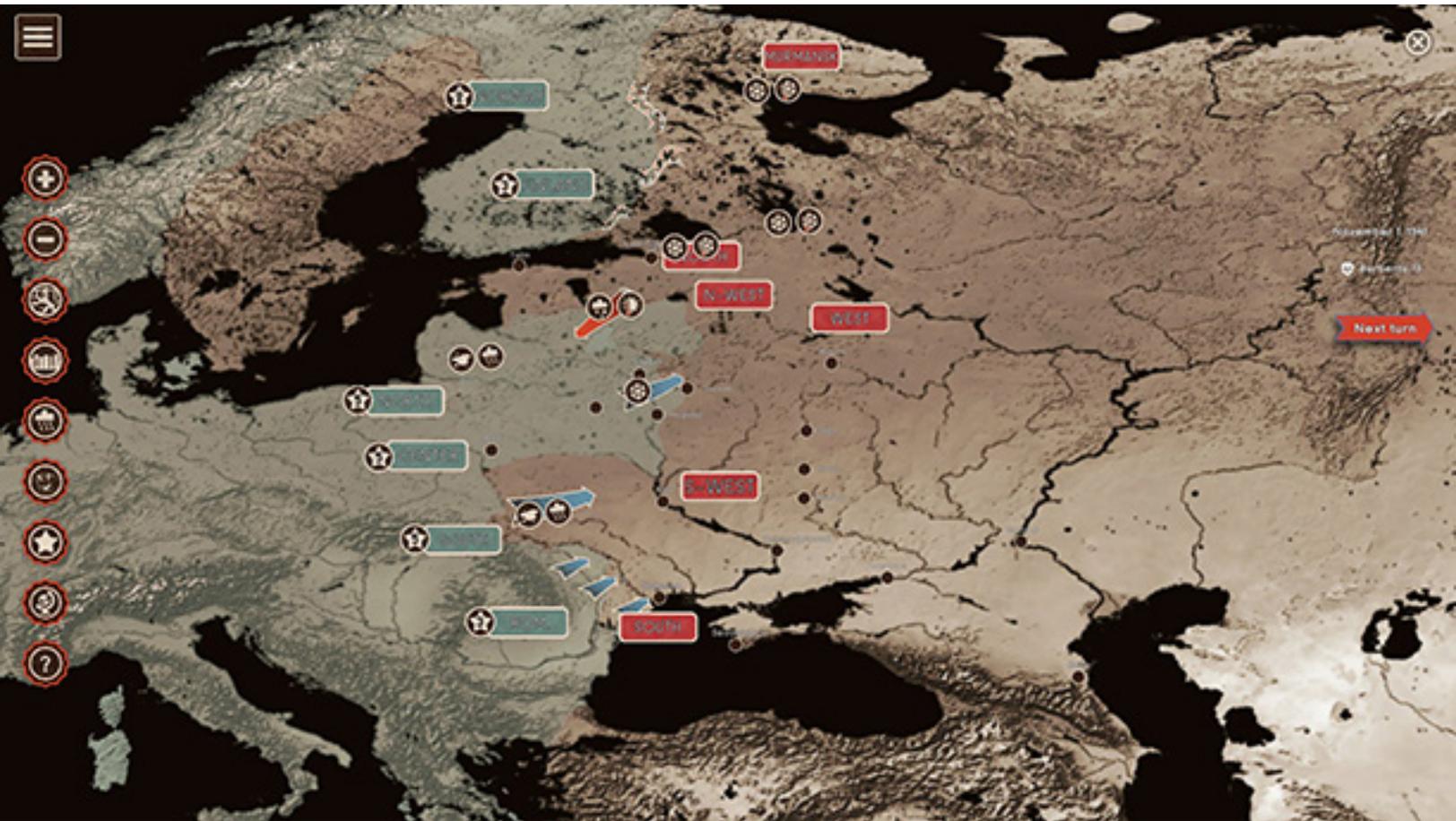
Cauldrons of War - Barbarossa

Now heres an interesting game that is in Early Access on Steam. Cauldrons of War Barbarossa is the turn-based strategic wargame covering the period from June 1941 until the Battle of Moscow. Play as the USSR or the Axis forces.

This game is played at the Army level and you need to make decisions on how each corp within the army will act for that turn.

I spoke to the developer, Maestro Cinetik, to talk a little more about the game:

I wanted something different to monster wargames that need many many hours to be played and for it to be as realistic as possible, unlike Hearts of Iron 4 for example. In addition I wanted a game where the player can really grasp what the conflict was. For example wear crimes are not hidden under the carpet. Lastly I wanted to get rid of hexagons and regions and really focus on operations at an army level.

Future plans for the game include making a series covering the entire conflict on the Eastern Front. So operations in 1942, 1943 - 45, the race to Berlin (a 3 player version).

Maestro Cinetik is an independant developer but has a great community helping him behind the scenes on translations for the game and providing accurate content.

Check out the Early Access on Steam:
https://store.steampowered.com/app/1265220/Cauldrons_of_War__Barbarossa/

Its 1985 and Bob Smith releases his Desert Rats via publishers Cases Computer Simulations. This was one of the games I played for hours as a kid and helped influence my early computer wargaming experience.

Desert Rats was the second entry in R. T. Smith's World War II trilogy, including Arnhem and Vulcan. It simulates the North Africa Campaign in 1941-42 commencing with the arrival of Rommel in Tripoli and ends with the Battle of El Alamein. The bitter campaign includes Operations Battleaxe and Crusader and the Battle of Gazala. The game is named after the men of the 7th Armoured Division who were known as the Desert Rats after adopting a 'gerbil' as their insignia.

This was his second release in a trilogy of games with the other 2 being Arnhem and Vulcan.
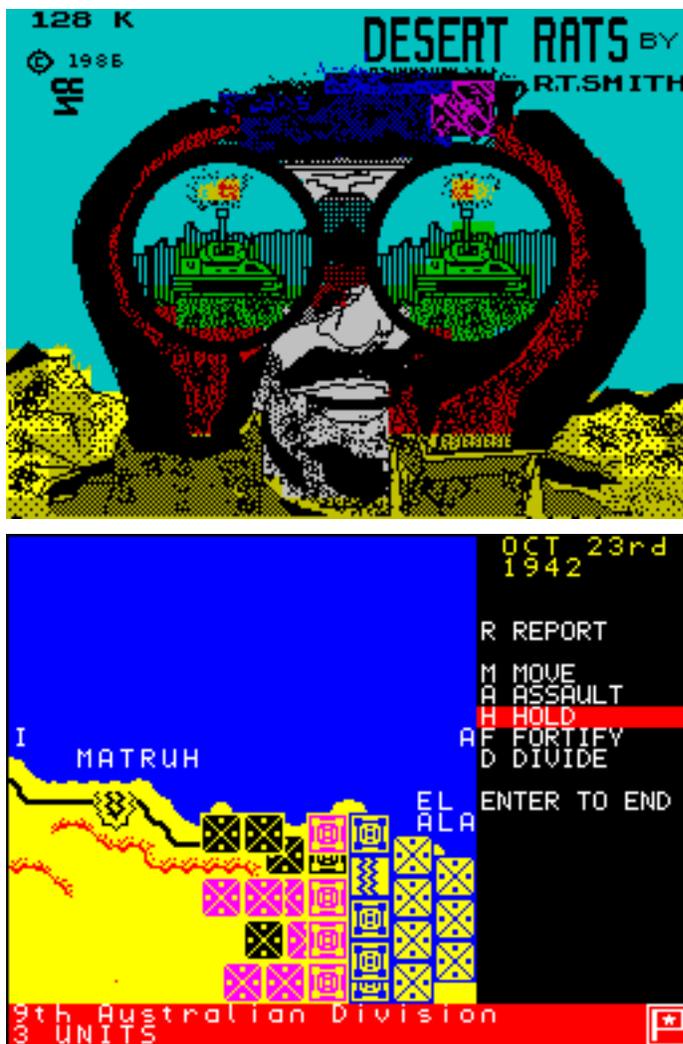
You have a choice of one or two-player games, and six scenarios. Those include Rommel's initial campaign which bottled up the Allies in Tobruk; an introductory scenario based around the first British attempt to relieve Tobruk; Operation Crusader - the major British offensive to relieve Tobruk; Gazala - Rommel's push east of Tobruk which forced the Allies back to the lines of El Alamein; and El Alamein itself, where Montgomery decisively defeated Rommel. You can play each scenario in turn, or choose a grand game encompassing the whole war in a

Bob Smith got his first computer, a Spectrum, in 1982 and released his first game called Confrontation in late 1983. his last independent game of that era was Armada 2525. Unfortunately the American publisher he was publishing through went broke shortly after launching the game, and he didn't get any money for it, and didn't have the funds to keep up developing independently.

After that he did a bit of contract work for other people, and then got lucky and got a job with Crystal Dynamics in California. After that he got another job with Alliance Semiconductor who were one of a dozen or so companies scrambling to be the top dog in the new 3D graphics chip business.

He was originally supposed to be the developer liaison person, but ended up working on one of their new chips. Sadly management decided the 3D chip market was too crowded, and closed the graphics division. Having been in the US for four years at that time and visa issues made it hard to find another job there, so he returned to the UK where he found a job with Creative Assembly where he worked on the Total War series. Since leaving Creative Assembly he has released two games independantly.

You can still play the game now! Go to the link below and click on the start button about half way down.

Relive your childhood:
https://www.myabandonware.com/game/desert-rats-the-north-africa-campaign-al/play-al
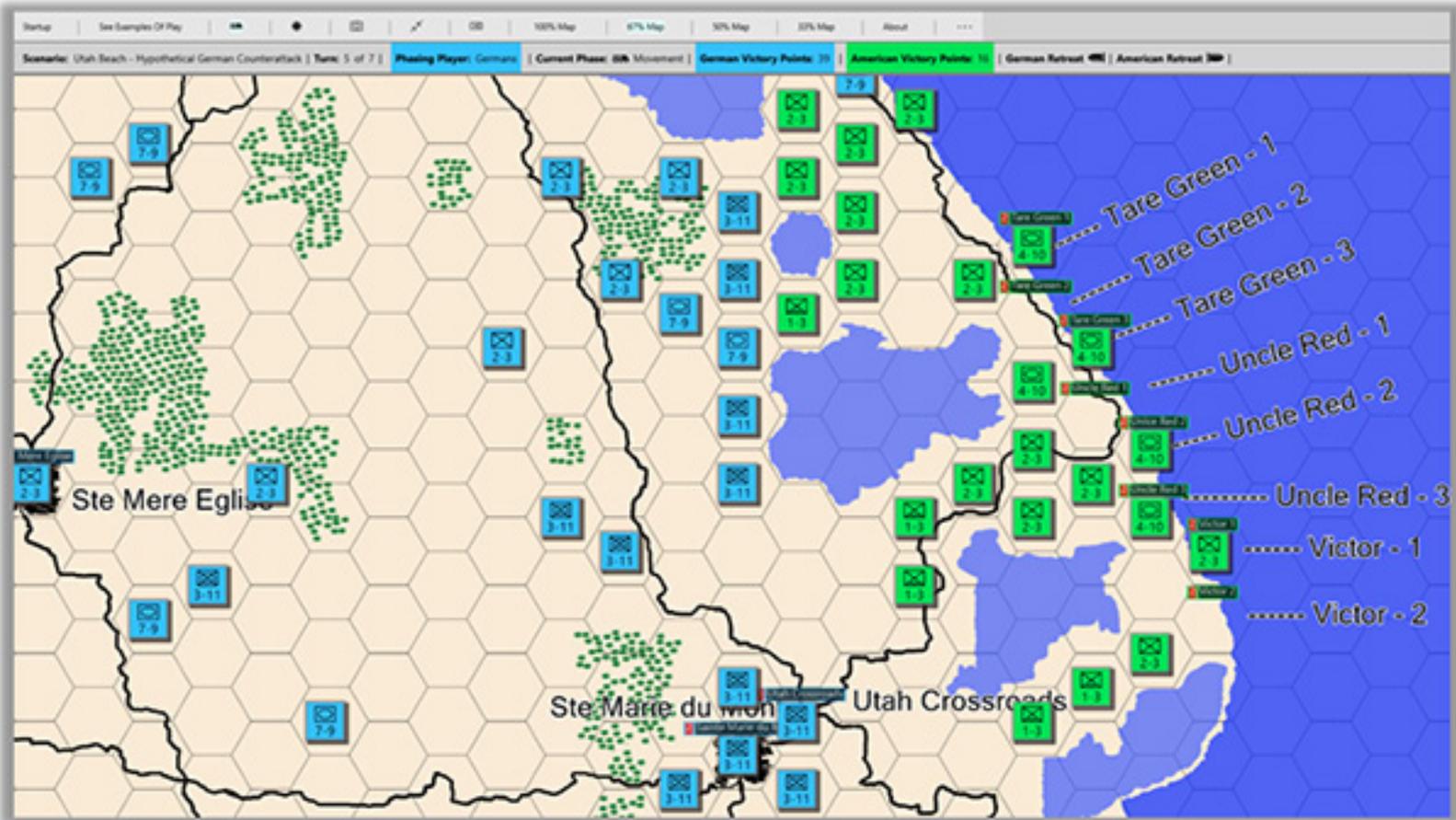
Digital Hex Blitz and Digital Blitz

Digital Blitz is a series of games. The games are made to serve as an introduction to wargaming for new users, and also provide quick, fun wargaming for veteran wargamers. There are two games in the series:

Digital Blitz

- Movement on this game is organized using a tile grid superimposed on the map.
- This game is to serve as an introduction to wargaming for new users. It is also an opportunity for veteran wargamers to enjoy a low complexity game which moves fast due to a low level of complexity and rules.

Digital Hex Blitz

- Movement on this game is organized using a hexagonal grid superimposed on the map.
- This game is meant to serve as a wargamers introduction to hex based wargaming. Also, it will have added higher complexity game rules items, which the user will be able to turn on or off.

 I grew up on war games in the 70s and enjoyed them very much. Most all the games we played were Avalon Hill. We went through a number of titles which included Tactics II, Panzer Leader, Squad Leader, Devils Den, and Little Round Top and Gettysburg, to name a few. I really enjoyed the Avalon Hill games through the 1970s and 1980s but it seemed like Avalon Hill died in the 1990s. I don't know for sure why they died. But it sure seems to me in the earlier days there were more games and systems available for introductory users then in the later days of Avalon Hill when they had more complicated titles available, including Advanced Squad Leader. I could be all wrong on that, but that's how it seemed to me. Of course, users could use the older game titles as a gateway into wargaming, but who wants to use an old system that seems out of date, when they may be more excited about working with the new introductory one?
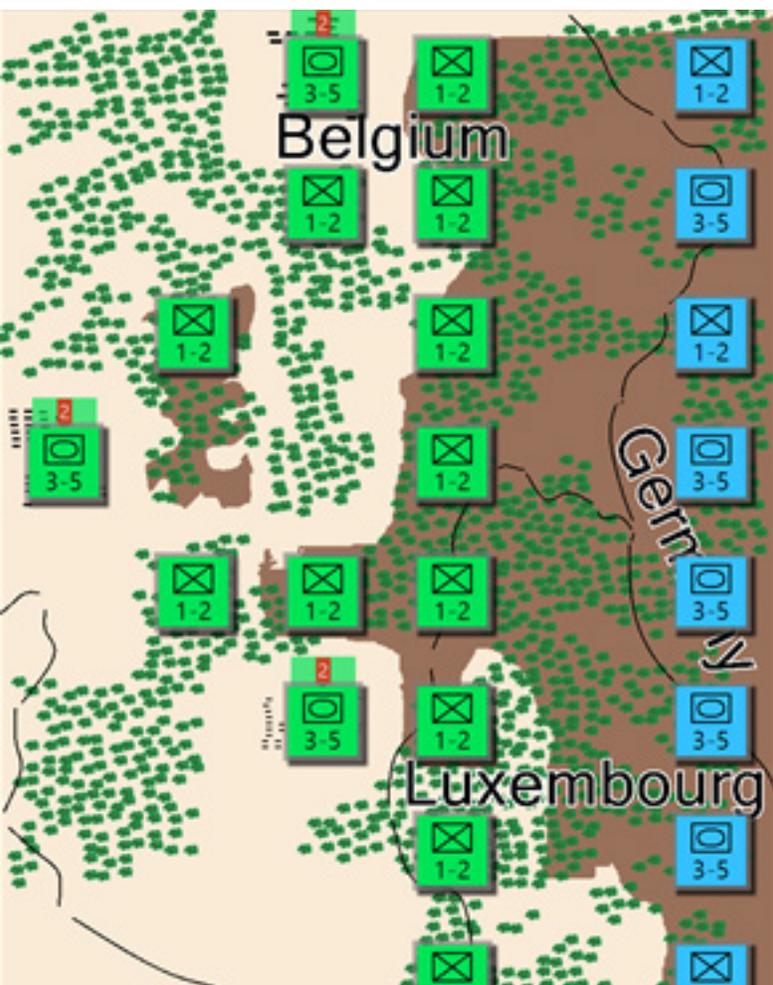
All that said, I started from the ground up building a system which would have the ability to have a level of complexity which would allow a person who had never played war games before to be able to do so with Digital Blitz. I started pseudo war gaming with Checkers, and Chess. A tile grid was of course perfectly normal for me having seen and played those. Therefore I have that in Digital Blitz. Whereas long ago when I started doing cardboard war games that had hexagonal grids, it blew my mind, it seemed really weird to get my head around. I got used to it, like everybody. But at first it was strange.

In the meantime, many veteran war wargamers could never imagine playing a war game which did not include hexagons.

I can certainly understand this. Therefore, I created Digital Hex Blitz which, of course, has hexagons.
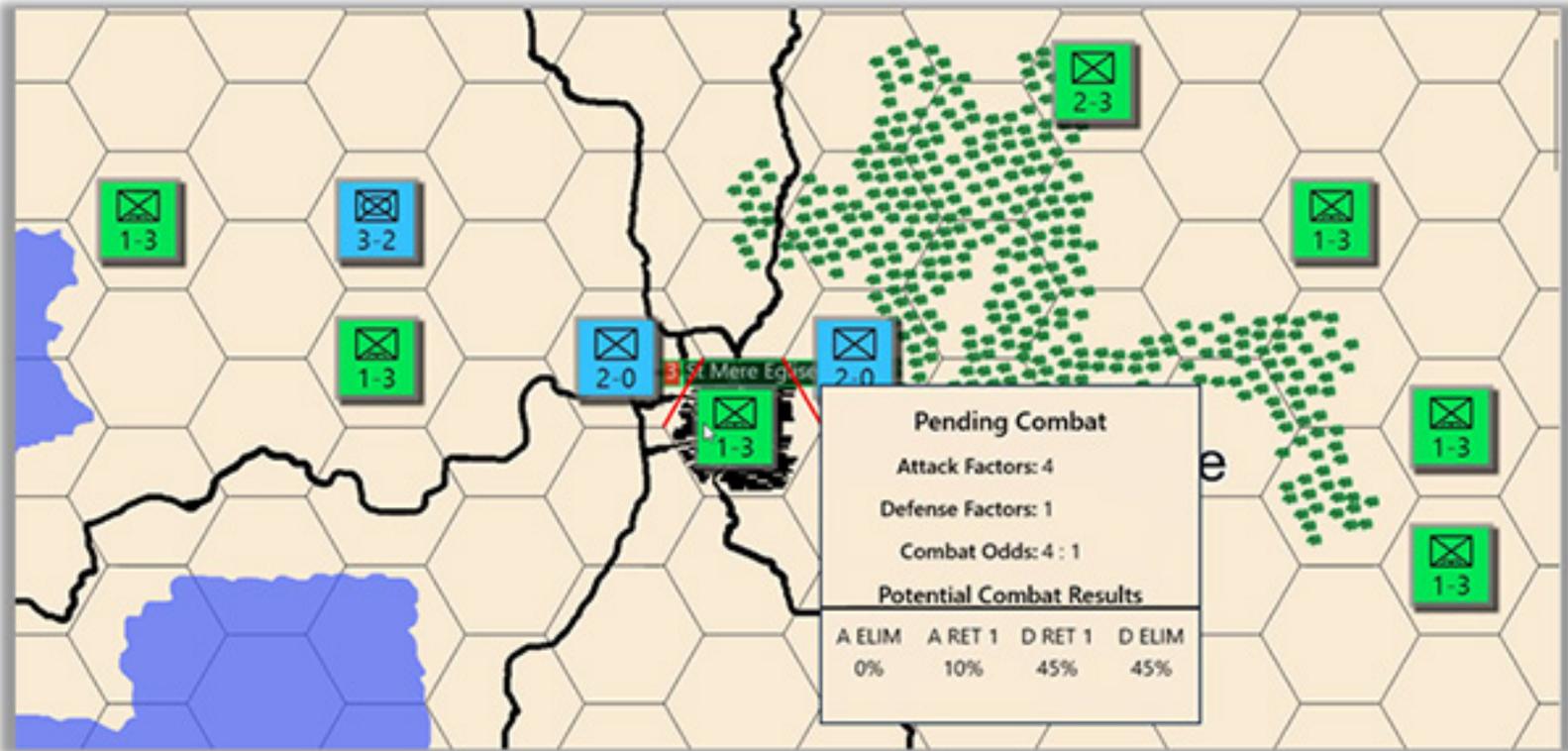
In Digital Hex Blitz, as you can see in the pictures just above, I color the hex size red in instance where there is a pending combat to be resolved at the end of the player turn.

So, given these two game titles I have an opportunity to position wargaming for the introductory level wargamer, as well as the intermediary level wargamer. The goal is to allow users to be able to get started with Digital Blitz if they had not worked with wargamers before. From there they could evolve to Digital Hex Blitz. Of course, wargamers are welcome to play either title. Most likely, though, veteran would be gravitationally drawn to Digital Hex Blitz as it has hexagons and veteran war gamers traditionally insist on hexagons, understandably.

I thought it would be neat to be able to take a screenshot along the way of playing a game, of the map and the current unit dispositions. So I have it added to both Digital Hex Blitz and Digital Blitz.
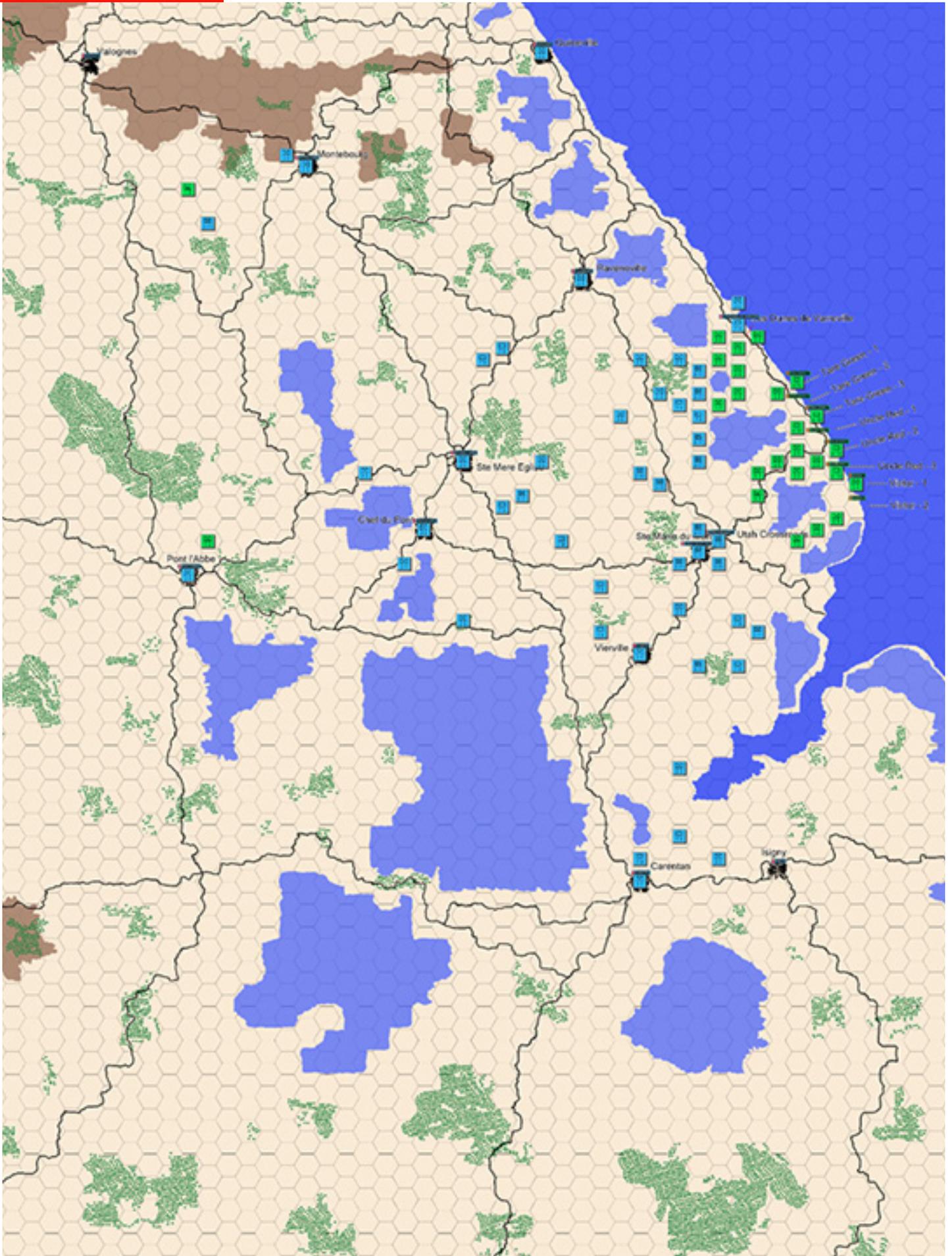
Over the years, I played some computer war games that seem inspired from cardboard war games. Some may have been a port to the computer from a cardboard war game or someone's interpretation of that. At least to me, many of these just don't work for me. The unit graphics on some are too small with what they show and it just feels like a port of a cardboard game to a computer. Of course, this would be natural because you're affectively porting a cardboard game to a computer.

In my mind I built my games from the ground up, computer first. They're heavily inspired by the legacy and gameplay of cardboard games. They are not seeking to emulate cardboard war games directly, but to have a computer first look and feel and user experience.

A long time ago, in the early 1990s, I think it was Panzer General, I played a play by email scenario with a guy in London over a few weeks, and it was great. I'd do my turn. I'd send it to him on CompuServe. He was a few hours difference in time zone but that didn't matter. He plays the game when it was good for him and sent it back to me and I would do so accordingly as well. I never met the guy but we had a lot of fun playing a Stalingrad scenario. My game also allows for play by email as well. A long time ago, I played war games with my dad and brother but as we are very far apart now we could just be a few clicks away through a play by email game system. Therefore, I built a system to allow as much as possible the ability to enjoy a war game and yet be able to play it against someone else conveniently through play by email.

One of my pet peeves in computer war games is stacking. Stacking is a pain with cardboard war games but you know you just kind of go through and move around and do it and that's that. I understand that. But on computers it just drives me nuts with the thought of having to click or trying to have a good interface to have multiple units in the same hex. To me it just feels like a fool's bargain trying to have multiple units in a hex in a computer game because it's just graphically such a pain to see. You really can't do so. So in my mind I just don't play that game. Instead I like having the game to where there is no stacking. There is one unit per hex or tile. And then to be able to emulate the larger area, or the normal amount of area that you would want to I just simply have a bigger map area. It's wonderful to be building a war game with a digital system because I don't have the cost or constraints of having to print out a map let alone for you to have it on

your table or in your home somewhere. I can make a war game map very, very large but yet make it fit within the screen. One of the first things I did within my game to be able to make this effective was to add the user ability to have a number of different zoom factors in which they could look at the map screen. I've had players report to me that they like playing this game or that game at different zoom levels, as I do as well. So that's nice. Whereas it seems many war games you have one or two different zoom levels. You can see things and it's just kind of a pain - either you're way too close and you see the units too up close and tight or you're way too far out and you see the whole world but everything gets lost in the overloading of details. So, I added zoom ability as one of the first things within my game to be able to allow the user to be able to see great expanses of the map at once or be able to zoom in and look at it all very closely.
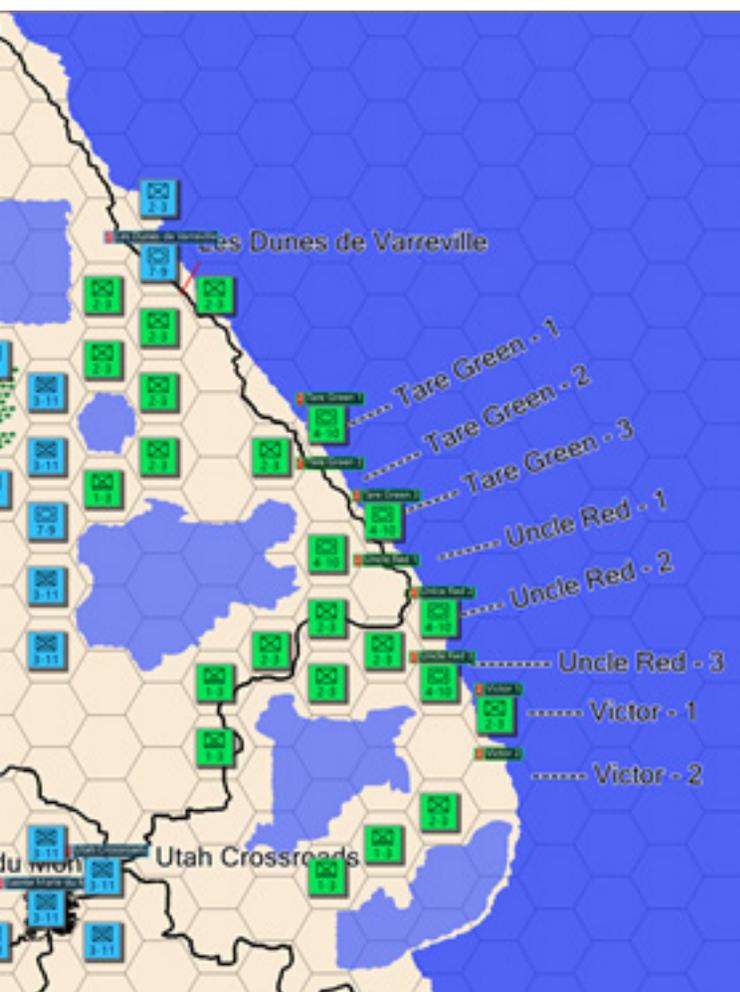
Making your own game also lets you be able to do whatever you want to do. So, for instance, I thought it would be pretty neat to do a Utah beach scenario where the Germans do a counterattack trying to push the invasion forces back into the sea. Of course this never happened, but for wargamers, more than not, that doesn't matter! So I made a map and game which emulates a fictional German counterattack of the American D-Day invasion forces in France, June, 7, 1944. In future, I looked to do other hypothetical scenarios as well as cover other historical scenarios. I've joked for some time while I've been building these programs that I am rebuilding Rome because I don't like the way some of the roads and streets are. To translate, there are some things in war games that are done that I inherently don't like, but without my own system I couldn't really do anything different, as a wargame player. So, given that I've got my own games, I can do things my own way. Hopefully the user and players enjoy it too, and if they don't that's their choice not to play as well, of course.

For instance, zone of control. I understand zone of control is very handy in a lot of games, but to me it feels like a rough artificial crutch for the wargamer to stop time and space because someone magically got next to somebody else and they can't go pass and that has to be resolved with combat, or a cessation of movement. Historically, that hasn't always been the case. Also, given the size of a hex or tile, the respective units may be too far apart to be forced into combat, unless they wanted to be so. Long story short, I don't want to have a system which artificially makes units stop just because they got next to each other. In my game and system I want to embrace the chaos, give that anxiety to the players, on both sides, and let them fight it out for better and worse. Ironically to me, this anxiety within the game system is part of the fun. You don't mind how stressful a game usually is, as long as you ultimately win. Of course, if you were to flank a force and get behind them that could be to your benefit. But perhaps the Hunter could ultimately become the Hunted in that scenario as well. All of these 3 dimensional issues and stressors I want to embrace and have in my game systems and not exercise them out. These things cause chaos and discomfort – things ironically each player is trying to do to his opponent throughout each game turn, ideally. I get it, also, zone of control can remedy the problems of I go, you go game systems, not allowing units and forces to magically outflank the other while one stay still. But at what cost to game play? Also, zone of control helps keep counter density down in a carboard game. This can keep complexity and costs down. I don't suffer from the physical realities of cardboard counters and a physical map and want to unshackle the gaming experience from this artificial game construct, I trust, for the outcome of a better game play experience.

Regarding zone of control, again, it seems to me a lot of games have too many units where opposing forces can have unbroken lines which confront each other. To me this seems quite unrealistic. To me it's virtually like you have a line of combat forces joined arm by arm in a line. This is seldom the case of course but the alignment of cardboard forces against each other and nice tidy stacks going up and down a map emulates this fallacy to me. I seek not to do that. I think open space here and there is healthy in the game as it emulates reality also while introducing more chaos and more vacuum forcing the user to take action and choose more actions and more conflicts in their thoughts versus having tidy lines and plenty of units, and is inherently much more historically accurate in the process.

Long story short, there are many things in traditional war games I enjoy very much and love, but there are some things I think fall short through being a historical representation of past fact as well as also watering down the players experience and fun.

So here, with my games, I look to not only build on the past where we've had war games and relatively easy complexity level, but also look to add new modes of combat in play and systems which have the dual mandate of being historically accurate as well as, number one, going towards a more enjoyable user play experience in the game. Because, after all, these are games, they are not predominantly historical simulations. We're looking for a good time and if we don't have it, it kind of defeats most of the purpose of it all, don't you think?
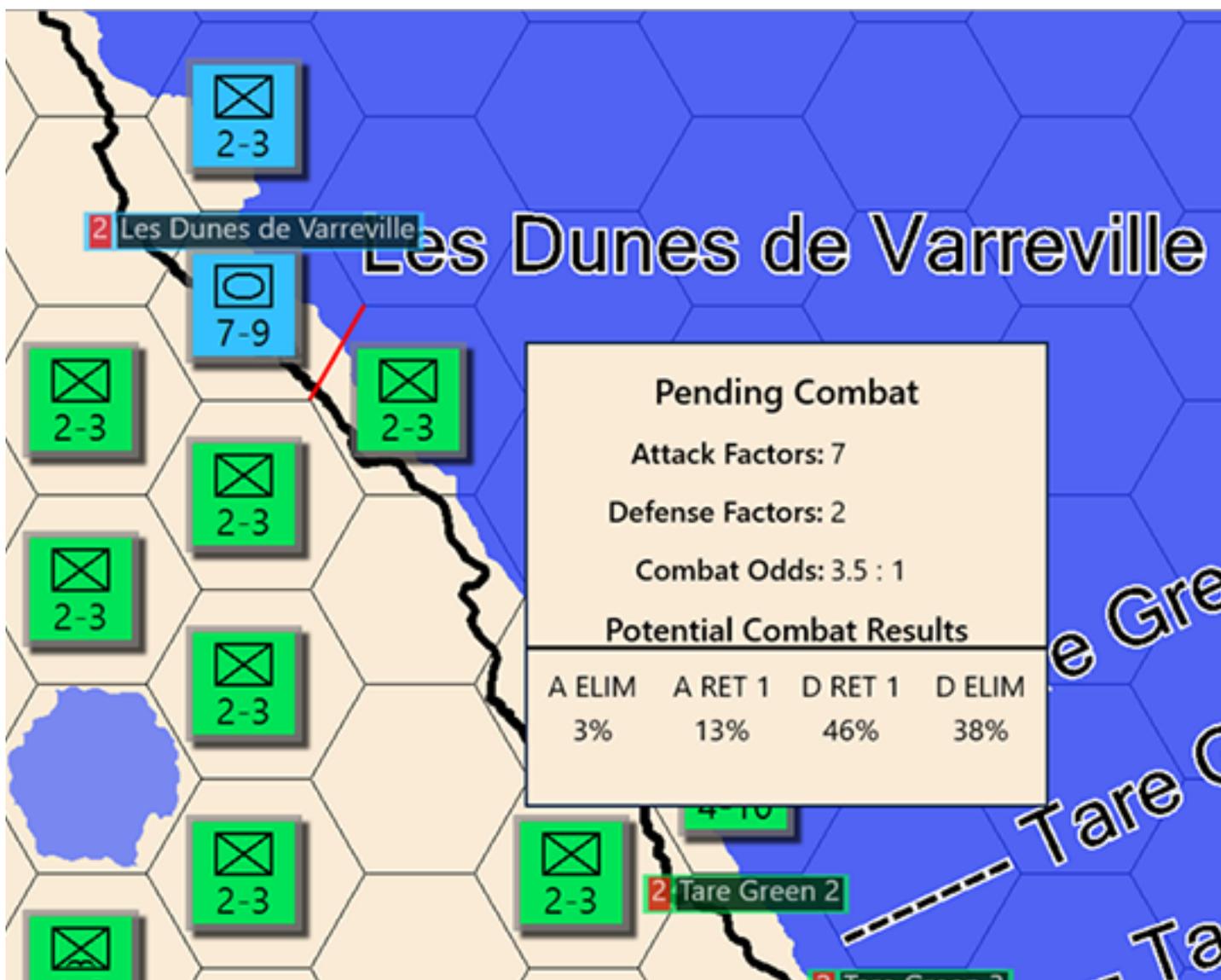
Another frustration with carboard wargames of mine was the perennial search for more combat factors to get an attack to be able to move up to the next combat odds column. In Digital Blitz and Digital Hex Blitz, that search is over. Simply put, if you have an attack of 2.5: 1 odds, you can make that attack and get your results taking into effect the odds above 2: 1 a part of your attack. The combat odds results are calculated to take into account the partial odds and the attacker get results that are incremental between the 2:1 and the 3:1 odds. And yes, if someone made a 2.6: 1 odds attack, they would get credit for that too. The outcome of this, for me, is players can play the game, then computer will give them full credit for the attack they make, and there is no need for the search for additional combat factors to move up an odds column, unless the player truly wants the combat at the higher factor. Many times, for me, it would have been nice to have the option to use those units somewhere else. Long story short, in my games, I look to use as a foundation long standing wargame traditions, but where I perceive problems or opportunities for improvement, when able, my games and I will be going there, for a superior player experience and in many of those processes, a more realistic simulation of an armored conflict situation.

Get Digital Blitz from the Microsoft Store:

https://www.microsoft.com/store/apps/9N5M9JG09H2B

Get Digital Hex Blitz from the Microsoft Store:

https://www.microsoft.com/store/apps/9PCSLQ3DTXW2

Digital Blitz YouTube Channel:

http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjUE8aensucjnNfc54jroEA

Digital Blitz Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/digitalblitzgame

Digital Blitz Website:

www.digitalblitzgame.com

One of the most important ways, as a developer, to get your game noticed is through YouTubers. This dedicated band of video makers will record playthoughs of games and give their opinion on the game play. For someone trying to decide if the game is right for them its an important tool in their decision making process.

I interviewed three YouTubers that focus mainly on wargames to find out a little bit about their background and why they do this. Their Youtube channels are Agrippa Maxentius, Grey Hunter & The Wargaming Guy

On with the questions...

How did you first get interested in wargaming?

Grey Hunter: My Dad has always loved history, so we watched a lot of war films such as Waterloo and A Bridge Too Far, and went to a lot of historical reenactments growing up. I can remember loving Silent Hunter and Pegasus bridge back on the Commodore 64 when I was a young lad. then the Close Combat games when I moved to the PC. I've always loved the grander control of things - I love nothing more than seeing the long term repercussions of your actions, something that FPS's can't give you (not that I hate FPS games, we all need to just blow something up at some point)

The Wargaming Guy: I heard about wargaming in High School, one of my teachers showed us his copy of Avalon Hill's D-Day - I'm 67 so that was a long time ago! I went out and bought it and have been playing boardgames and then transferred to computer games ever since.

Agrippa Maxentius: As a kid my parents didn't let me watch television, but they'd let me watch any movies I wanted to. At 3 I had already seen sound of music, the longest day, dirty dozen and a bunch of other war films. At about 9 my dad bought a PC and I started playing "Civil War Generals 2" I really enjoyed it. At the same time I started playing chess at 7 years old and by 9 I was third in all of Florida for my age group, so strategy in general always fascinated me.

What made you decide to set up and run a YouTube channel (and how long have you been doing it for?)

Grey Hunter: I started my YouTube channel nine years ago because I was running a day-by-day game of War in the Pacific, and people wanted to see what it look like - I was terrified, as I have a slight speech impediment, and thought no one would understand me. Then I decided to man up and start a RPG game. As time went on I started putting more and more wargames on, and that's kinda my niche. There are not many people out there willing to commit to doing something that long term - hell, maybe one day I'll do WITP day by day again in video form....

The Wargaming Guy: I discovered the Historical Gamer on YouTube and loved his stuff. So I decided to try it for myself. It took me nearly a year to figure out the technical issues but finally got it going and have been going for about 3 years now.

Agrippa Maxentius: Along with my interest in strategy games I also have a background in the performing arts, having attended Talent Unlimited high school in New York City for Drama, and performing in a number of plays as well as independent movies for Columbia University Students. I got to a point at 22 years old where I was suffering from severe anxiety and panic attack issues, something I had never really experienced before. It kept me bedridden and away from life for a couple of years. Finally I decided to merge my two interests together, I began to also do Voice Overs at the same time for many different gaming companies, particularly "Slitherine Games" and some more commercial V.O work such as Koodoo Phones, Mastercard and Coreg Heart Medicine among others. I figured my YouTube channel would be a great medium to showcase my skills.

Do you do this as a hobby or full time?

Grey Hunter: Very much a hobby. I have a full time job, work 1/4 weekends and have a 4 year old son who devours my attempts at free time. I have to get up a 4 am every day to get some quiet alone time!

The Wargaming Guy: Strictly a hobby at this time as I'm a working guy. When I'm done working I'll probably try and monetize the channel if possible.

Agrippa Maxentius: That's a strange question, because everything that I have achieved at this point in life is in direct relation to my Youtube channel. Including my previous employment for 1 and a half years at Slitherine Games as their PR Manager, and my current freelance work as Avalon Digitals Head of Marketing, as well as 80% of the voice gigs that I manage to book. You could say that my YouTube channel is a sort of impromptu resume for interested parties.

How much time do you typically spend a week on making videos?

Grey Hunter: I spend about 20 hours a week recording, then more time encoding. the latter can at least be done around other things.

The Wargaming Guy: I probably spend about 5 or 6 hours a week on it.

Agrippa Maxentius: Way too much time for the payoff I get from YouTube alone.

What equipment do you use and how do you typically go about preparing for and recording a youtube video?

Grey Hunter: I use OBS to record my video, and Aucacity and a blue snowball to record my voice - as anyone who has listened to my channel know, my audio has been the bane of my existance, but I'm getting on top of it. I have three monitors, so I have the game on by big one, audacity on another and obs on the third, but thats mainly because I'm paranoid and like to keep and eye on things. Preparation for doing a video is normally hack together a terrible CGI image of my croctapus as a title card, as its my only artistic outlet, then check the video works - this normally takes a while, as grog game programmers make lots of weird decisions in coding and UI, so getting something that looks ok on the viewers screen is hard! Then its start the programs, record the videos, then use Vegas to edit and encode them. this takes the longest, but I'm hoping a new computer coming soon will speed that up.

The Wargaming Guy: I use my laptop and a USB mic for the audio, I use OBS to record the video.

Agrippa Maxentius: I use a USB-2020 mic but am looking to upgrade to something even more advanced. I usually use bandicam for my recordings and then I edit and render using VSDC.

Is there anything developers of the games could do to make your life easier to record your videos?

Grey Hunter: Please, please please do something about your UI! I can take graphics that are twenty years out of date - that kind of thing needs big teams, but please remember some of us have computers made sooner than that, I keep running across games where you have to play in a window that probably looks great on the dev's tiny monitor, but on my 1440p main monitor I have to give myself eye strain.
People like to customise their ui, resolutions, font sizes and things like that should all be easily changed, I tend to record in 1080p, so I need to be able to scale everything to be easily visible at that point.
Have the options accessible everywhere as well, having to go to the main menu to change things is a pain, I once had to text edit a game to get the resolution to work! I nearly gave up!

The Wargaming Guy: Other than the eternal complaint about the AI, I can't think of anything.

Agrippa Maxentius: Respond to Key Requests even if the answer is in the negative. I am lucky in that I get about 80% of the keys I ask for, but nothing makes me detest a company more than totally ignoring my key request. If you can't provide a key, explain to the content creator what would get you to provide them keys for your products in the future. If its a visibility issue for a small channel under 1000 subs, be kind, for all you know that could be the next PewDiePie.

Any thoughts on trends you are seeing with wargames?

Grey Hunter: Wargames seem to be in a good place, we're moving away from the old guard who charged $100/£100 (which is not the same thing) a copy, with 5 lifetime downloads on their 90's website, after they have manually send you your CD key and home made copy protection software and towards companies that actually get that they will sell more copies at a more reasonable price, on a platform people actually use. Game wise, we're seeing a good shift towards better graphics - devs seem to be getting better at closing the gap - while graphics can be secondary to a good game, they do put a lot of people off playing something - the jump from the Civ series to something like Shadow Empire can be hard if your used to slick games, even though the wargame is a much deeper experience. Gameplay continues to improve, and were seeing more and more people hit the right balance in playability to grog.

The Wargaming Guy: I don't like the heavy emphasis on RTS, etc. I like strict wargames and that's what I hope keeps getting published even tho it's a small market.

Agrippa Maxentius: Yeah I could do an entirely different interview on this subject alone. I feel that Wargaming Companies in general tend to stick with "safe" choices such as World War 2, and the market is becoming saturated with WW2 titles. I just wish that Wargaming companies would take a chance with more controversial or unknown topics. One company doing this are my current employers Avalon Digital, who are releasing a game this week "Libertad o Muerte" which is focused on the Central and South American Wars of Independence. This is a conflict that no one else has even bothered to cover. So I just wish Wargaming companies would take more chances and not stick to the consistent WW2, WW1, ACW routine.

Any final thoughts/comments?

Grey Hunter: Not much, just I hope that wargaming continues to take off - its more demanding than just run and gun, and will never take over from the FPS giants, but if things continue to get slickers, hopefully we'll see more people realising that they can enjoy this kind of game. I certainly intend to keep on playing.

The Wargaming Guy: Nope!

Agrippa Maxentius: Stay safe during this Covid Pandemic. Understand that when starting a Youtube channel, hard work and dedication doesn't necessarily lead to success, this is a rough business. And um... subscribe to my channel

Subscribe to their channels.

Agrippa Maxentius:

https://www.youtube.com/user/AgrippaMaxentius

The Wargaming Guy:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYGrYPesAp1eiXgGRjfxnQw/

Grey Hunter:

https://www.youtube.com/user/greyhunterlp

Mini Army Tactics Medieval

Mini Army Tactics Medieval is a turn-based strategy game from developer John Caruso that he has been working on in during the COVID 19 pandemic. His goal is to create a strategy game that is casual and easy to pick up, visually appealing, with lots of variety and depth.

The game takes place in a non-fictional medieval setting on a tabletop. Strategy consists of unit counters, abilities, positioning, and cover. There are minor luck elements as well with accuracy and damage. There are 10 different unit types so far, including archers, cavalry, spearmen, knights, and swordsmen. It follows traditional medieval strategy. Archers and crossbows are great for dealing damage from afar and behind terrain. Cavalry and knights are great for fighting in the open , picking off vulnerable units, and closing the distance on archers. There are also specialized units like horse archers, which combine the mobility of cavalry with the ranged strength of archers, and priests, which focus instead on buffing allies and providing healing.

John Caruso is a mechanical & electrical technician by trade. He has a passion for game design and programming and spends his free time developing games.He started tinkering with visual basic when he was younger, and ultimately moved on to learn Unity with C#. He has been coding with Unity for about 7 years. He is currently focused on releasing several titles this year.

There is a variety of scenarios present and he is currently working on adding much more. Additionally he is also in the midst of creating a procedural generated random battle mode where the terrain and units are randomized and fair, thus providing many unique enjoyable battle experiences that are surprising as well.

Check the out the Steam page:
https://store.steampowered.com/app/1353690/Mini_Army_Tactics_Medieval/

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.

A Yobowargames Publication

Kursk
Battle for Prochorovka

KRIM:
THE WAR IN THE CRIMEA
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BATTLE FOR KORSUN

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