# Bursting the Mould
## By Jeffrey G. Chorney

As life goes on the avid wargamer has a lot to contend with these days. If you are like me, every once in awhile a new period comes along and you just have to wargame it. As one might think there are always issues or hassles with starting up a new campaign whether being time, space, scale involved, and the question how long will these interests last? One thing that I personally contend with is the flip flop wargamer syndrome. A man can be tossed to and fro from one period to another just by looking at the eye candy on the Internet or on other peoples Blogs. It's way too easy to become distracted. I believe I am not the only guy who has a bunch of unfinished project's, figures, models, etc. on the bench. It becomes a juggling act after awhile trying to get everything completed. A man or woman for that matter has to stay focused. The last thing a person wants is to become stressed out when doing a hobby. A hobby is supposed to sooth, relax, a pastime if you please.

Dr. Richard Barbuto had previously written in LW 151 - "Writing that Article for Lone Warrior" regarding certain man struggles and how the average wargamer is between 45 to 55 years of age with all the aforementioned applying to us better sort of chaps. I confess one of my personal struggles with Wargaming is what to do and not what to do? Lately the Boer War bug has bitten me hard. I was so close to purchasing a bunch of figures and also contemplated casting some 54mm flats. However, there is more than one way to war-game a battle without buying a bunch of figures. BTW, I fit into the mould described by the good Doctor. Those who frequent my Blog are well aware I am fighting Duffer's Drift campaign (Games 9-1 to 9-6) utilizing Mr. Godfrey Baileys *Hill of Doves* board game. The more I play his draft board game (not for sale yet) the more I realize a board game style of table top campaign has its merit. So as I plod away with my Isle of Le'Ger's Funny Little War 54mm campaign, various other projects, I continue to play a board game campaign as well. Why not?

Every once in a while the light bulb turns on and I have a revelation regarding fighting campaigns etc. I continue to revert to my 'less is more' philosophy. Is a Kriegsspiel approach the best way to go when trying out new periods or campaigns? I decided to investigate the '*Kriegsspiel News'* website. I was pleasantly surprised to see an avid following here with lots of good ideas. As I investigated this concept of fighting a large-scale campaign with board game style markers the idea seemed to have a lot of merit. Maps are relatively easy to acquire on the Internet or from books. I have enough skill to draw by free hand my own maps as well enough knowledge to make my own board game markers. I am even contemplating casting some custom small scale markers as well. I continue to investigate the board marker mediums and techniques. For Dreadnoughts or aircraft a flat type of marker is a real possibility. I must admit I acquire a lot of ideas and thoughts from board games. Please remember I am still a round and flat figure enthusiast but a Kriegsspiel alternative definitely has its advantage.

About 2 years ago I was heavy into Napoleonic's and in particular 20mm scale figures from Italeri. I was an avid follower of Benno's Figures forum and the gents on his website. If you are into Napoleonic's, then this particular scale and forum is for you. Lots of excellent modellers and war gamers reside here. I had this grandiose idea of building up a bunch of armies to fight the battle of Leipzig until I researched what was involved. A bad idea on my part and way too much work involved. I thought about dropping down to either 10 or 6mm scale. The more I thought about this the more discouraged I became. I even started to paint up a bunch of Risk board game figures which looked okay but still a lot of work on my part.

I read one of Chris Hahn's articles here on LW where he fought a major campaign with a flat card type of marker. Being a purist first I admit I scoffed at this approach but quickly came to my senses and realized the wisdom in his ideal. The more I thought about fighting a large campaign on a map with markers, the more it appealed to me. The last couple of months I was up to fighting Duffer's Drift games 9-1 to 9-6 utilizing Godfrey Bailey's rules for Hill of Doves. It seemed the old board gamer that was in me had came to the forefront. I could quickly set up and fight a campaign. All I needed was some markers, a map, a scenario, and I was away at playing a game. Lot's of quick fun and no stress worrying about figures, painting, basing, etc.

Through some Internet research I latched onto a few electronic books and large PDF articles available on the web regarding the subject of Kriegsspiel. I figured if I was going to do this right I needed to learn the game and the system. I was temporarily distracted by the Two Fat Lardies rules and almost purchased them. However this is my hobby and I am in no rush. There are also a bunch of maps available for a small fee from these gents as well on their website.



As I continued with building up my Funny Little Wars 54mm collection of figures this Kriegsspiel idea continued to build momentum to my thinking process and ideal. Maybe I could have the best of both worlds? I could fight large scale campaigns on a map with markers and then fight out independent skirmishes on my 2' X 4' battle board? Another light bulb came on. I remembered when I played a bunch of WW2 battles with Two Hour Wargames rules. Skirmishing with these rules was a bunch of fun. I had a blast playing an Arnhem 44 scenario with 20mm Italeri figures on a home made map. I was really close to bursting the mould.

For a few days in-between writing this article and modelling in the man cave the creative juices started to dry up and guilt took over as I looked at unfinished projects on the work bench. One dreary day I had a professional meeting at our local library. After the meeting I thought I would peruse the bookshelves looking for a book on pre-WW1 Dreadnoughts. Whilst looking I stumbled upon a book entitled *The New Weapons of the World Encyclopaedia* by the Diagram Group. My prayers were answered. This book had all of the particular graphics I wanted regarding weapons and machinery for map markers et al. Funny how things evolve and change quickly. This book just fell into my lap unexpectedly. Now I had a game plan to employ and some excellent examples from the encyclopaedia by the Diagram Group to utilize.

Its one thing to have an idea, it's another to get it to pen and paper. I have some basic computer skills however I still draw on others expertise when it comes to computers and graphics. A quick e-mail to Godfrey Bailey about making markers helped me establish some parameters. His advice:

H of D Counters & Markers by Godfrey Bailey
- Designed them on PC.
- Printed them on coloured paper.
- Glued sheets to thin card using white (water-based) glue.
- Sprayed counter sheet with acrylic mat varnish.
- Scored the borders with a modeling knife and ruler.
- Separated them with a modeling knife.

Important: Leave to dry thoroughly after white glue and also varnish.

**Another Ideal - Polemos verses Kriegsspiel**

Polemos was played on a cloth that was marked with a 44 square x 22 square grid; with each square representing an area of 400 yards x 400 yards (i.e. the cloth represented an area of countryside that was 10 miles x 5 miles). As the cloth was designed to be used on a dining table, it must be assumed that each square must have been approximately 2" x 2", thus giving a table-scale of 1:7200-scale.



The playing cloth has two roads marked on it, and it is along these roads that units enter the battlefield. There are rules governing the number and types of units that can enter along each road each turn.

The playing pieces represent regiments of infantry, cavalry, and artillery (although it also states that artillery 'regiments' represent batteries of six guns) as well as one that is called 'The Staff'. Destroying or capturing the latter is one of the objectives of the game. With the exception of artillery – which occupies two squares – each regiment is mounted on a movement tray that fills a square. The rules have an interesting mechanism by which the strength of regiments is concealed from one's opponent. Each game turn represents 15 minutes of real time, and it states in the rules that players should have a restricted amount of time – ten minutes – in which to move their regiments. The rules suggest that the time should be measured using a pair of sand-glasses.

Regiments move at pre-set movement rates:

- Infantry: 3 squares
- Cavalry: 6 squares
- Artillery: 6 squares
- Staff: 5 squares

This represents how far each type of regiment would move in 15 minutes. There are rules that govern movement in different tactical formations.

The basic combat rules – John Curry's published version when released will cover in full – are essentially quite simple, with standard numbers of casualties being caused by each type of regiment at a given range, depending upon the tactical situation. There are specific rules for cavalry, artillery and staff and these are mainly concerned with charging and firing.

In January 1977, the French Situationist Guy Debord founded the Society for Strategic and Historical Games. The Society had an immediate goal: to produce the "Kriegsspiel," a "game of war" that Debord had already designed in his head years before. Inspired by the military theory of Carl von Clausewitz and the European campaigns of Napoleon, Debord's game is a chess-variant played by two opposing players on a game board of 500 squares arranged in rows of 20 by 25 squares.

The board is divided into a northern territory and a southern territory, each with a single mountain range of nine squares, a mountain pass, two arsenals, and three fortresses. Each player has a communication network that must be maintained and protected. The network is powered by the player's two immobile arsenals, which radiate lines of communication vertically, horizontally, and at 45º diagonals. Each player also has two mobile relay units, which reflect any line of communication aimed at them. Friendly units must remain connected to the network, else risk being captured. Lines of communication can be severed by the enemy and thus are crucial to strategy. The object of the game is to destroy the opponent, either by eliminating all its forces, or by destroying its two arsenals.
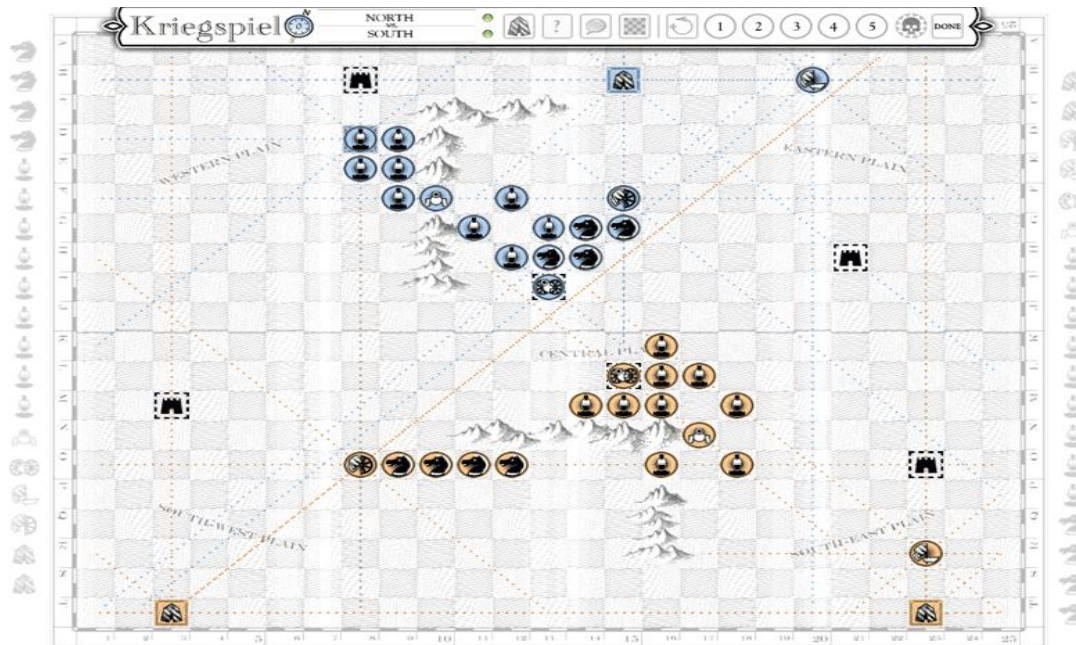
## Regarding Maps and Markers

Fellow blogger Mr. David Crook had posted a few articles on his site regarding a wooden block army. He also utilizes a hex system when war-gaming with his block armies' et al.  It is apparent he was up to the same sort of thinking process as me regarding starting up new periods.  Here is an example of his thought process and undertaking: The blocks themselves began life as the pieces for the game Jenga.  To be specific, they were actually from a version of Jenga that used plain blocks rather than those with the word Jenga embossed on them.  Originally I used the blocks as they are and whilst they worked with the Hexon really well I preferred to use a smaller version for increased flexibility.  This involved getting the entire collection I owned (roughly 12 sets!) cut in half - which incidentally doubled the quantity available!  With the blocks ready to use the next step was to make the labels.  I used MS Paint to 'draw' the designs and went for the standard military map symbols for infantry and cavalry; a stylised cannon for the artillery and a command label based on the design used in David Chandler's Campaigns of Napoleon.  I have sets of blocks in six colours: red, blue, green, grey, brown and olive and for the last three colours will produce labels for vehicles and 20th century infantry weapons - MGs, mortars etc.  I also plan to extend the concept to cover warships for naval actions.

Above is one of David's Civil War campaigns fought with his Hexon system and block armies. His approach was one up on mine as he took his idea to a different level with the Hexon system as a virtual battle field instead of a map. I opted out to download a PDF file of some Kriegspiel markers from the paper panzer web site and massaged them to use on one of my home made maps to fight the battle of Leipzig as an example to see how things would play out. I also toyed with a flat figure style of marker similar to what is seen on the Kriegspiel website depicting Friegur and the Debord chess-variant game.

Above and below are pictures of some ideals by yours truly which will help the avid war gamer fight large scale battles without having to spend a lot of time and money buying, painting, and basing figures.
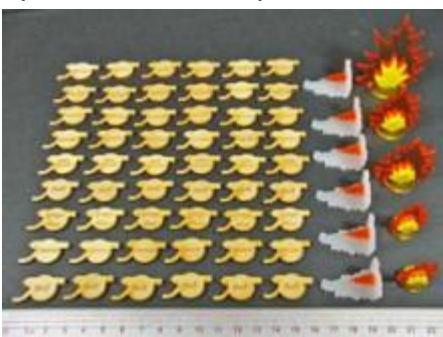

Chess board markers


Board game markers


Paper figures based


Risk figures painted up





2 examples of WW1 Ship markers




Age of Sale Markers

**Conclusion**

Kriegsspiel or Polemos as a solo war-game is achievable. All you need to do is figure out an historical period and battle you would like to fight whether real or fictitious. Obtain the correct topographical map of the battle area if possible otherwise make yourself a close replica whether on the Internet, a drop cloth, or hand drawn. Write orders for the army that will initiate the attack including objectives and time frame. Be realistic here. Write a second set of orders for the defending army. Take into account:

- Time of year and is drought or flooding an issue?
- Type of terrain
- Supplies – medical as well as food and rations
- Weather conditions
- Ammunition and its availability
- Will you require reinforcements?
- Will there be a siege in play?
- Troop morale
- Fodder for horse

Think of all the logistics involved in sustaining a battle campaign whether attacking or defending. Set realistic victory conditions. Utilize event cards as game changers. Think of ways to communicate orders with use of messengers, couriers, heliograph, telegraph, pigeons, spies, signal flags, and cavalry scouts. The possibilities are endless. Both of these games take your war-gaming to the next level by removing the artificial parameters of the table top allowing the combatant to recognize the historical counterparts of a campaign whether strategically, tactical, political, or otherwise off and on the battle field.

All of us war-gamers will grow old. The hand eye coordination will start to diminish with age and our painting skills will decline. We can donate all the figures and chattels we have built over the years used for war-gaming to: family, friends, local library, or a society. Kriegsspiel or Polemos will become an old friend and a mobile war-game no matter where you end up in life.

**Notes:**

http://79.170.44.85/kriegsspiel.inuk.co/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

http://79.170.44.85/kriegsspiel.inuk.co/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=192&Itemid=94

http://soloboardgames.weebly.com/

http://wargamingmiscellany.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Polemos

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax5ibZmqOyI

http://www.paperpanzer.co.uk/Kriegsspiel/Kriegsspiel.htm

http://awargamingodyssey.blogspot.ca/

http://www.boardgamegeek.com/

http://www.wtj.com/games/battlefleet_1900/docu_rules.htm

http://www.litko.net/products/Age-of-Sail-Combat-Set.html

http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8535895896345351267#editor/target=post;postID=2289545135562176924