

## Writing that Article for Lone Warrior

By your Editor

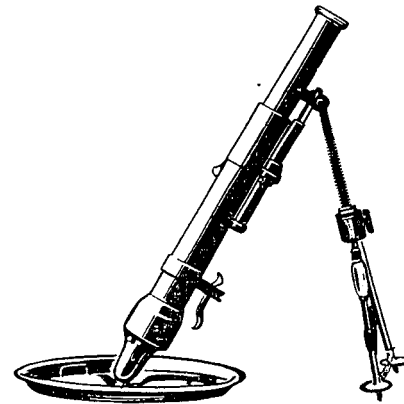
I'm not going to start this article by hiding the truth. The truth is: you readers want ever more solo wargaming material. If your notes to me reflect the general desires of our readership, then you'd be happy for more pages. You find much (but not all) of the material pertinent, entertaining, stimulating, and informative. The note I received just yesterday said "Yours is the only wargaming magazine I read anymore." What a compliment to our writers!

Well, Lone Warrior is a niche publication which depends upon its readers for content. And, as you know, we average forty pages of material every issue and sometimes that is a struggle. I've been known to flesh out Lone Warrior with some material that is not specifically solo-oriented but might appeal to a wider wargaming audience. I don't like doing that, but sometimes I'm forced to. It is important to me that every reader gets more than his money's worth. I want loyal readers who value Lone Warrior and who believe it is a bargain.

So, I'm writing this article to encourage those of you who maybe haven't contributed an article or even a letter to the editor, to do so. Also, I hope to provide some information that will make that task a little easier.

There are two rules about writing on any subject. First, write about what you know and like. Second, remember to tailor your writing to your audience. Fortunately, both rules are easily applied to you, the potential contributors to Lone Warrior. The first is easily accomplished. Write about that aspect of soloing that most interests you. Some kinds of topics:

- Researching a new period
- Looking into a new rule set
- Devising your own rules
- Choosing figures
- Commenting on a new computer or board game
- Telling us what you think about the solo potential of a new book or movie
- Providing a scenario for your favorite period
- How you set up your battle or campaign
- A narrative description of a battle or engagement

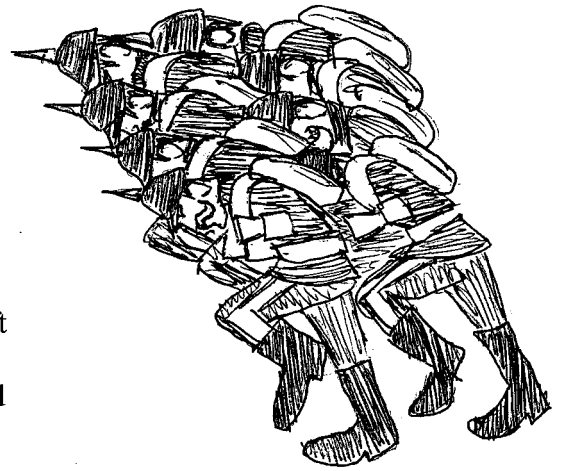


The second rule applies to your audience. From ten years as your editor on the North American continent, let me share with you what I think I know about the average reader of Lone Warrior. He is a he (no surprise there). He has more metal and plastic figures than he could ever possibly paint in one lifetime (again, no surprise). He's around 45-55 years old, has been wargaming since youth, and is a little more intellectual than the average wargamer. He wants to be informed and enthused. He is prepared to enter a new period if he is sufficiently excited about it. He sees the latest war-related movies and reads more history than the average male his age. He wants to hear from people just like himself, to learn what their projects are. He really doesn't care about grammar or sentence structure, as long as the thought is clear. He subscribes to other wargaming magazines and enjoys photos of painted figures on gorgeous terrain. He attends conventions from time to time but his focus is that game on the table in his basement or spare room. He wishes his table was bigger and that he could keep it up permanently (no double entendre intended). He wishes he had a display

cabinet so that he could view all his figures at once. His wife is understanding and glad that wargaming keeps him off the street. She also wishes he didn't have so many books and so many boxes full of lead and plastic. Tell, me. Any of that sound familiar?

So, now I hope I have demonstrated that each of you readers is a potential writer. You know one or more wargaming subjects pretty well, and your audience looks a lot like you. Now, how does one go about writing that article? First, choose a specific topic that interests you. Then, write down a couple ideas about that topic that you want to cover. Sort these ideas into a sequence that makes sense. Figure out what graphics (charts and maps) you think your readers would like to see to better illustrate your idea. Then, armed with this rudimentary outline, start banging away on the keyboard or writing with pen or pencil. Sketch out graphics. Ensure that all pertinent information is included without being too "busy." Take this first draft of material and set it aside for at least 24 hours. Then, later, read what you wrote and see if you are clear and complete. Write a second draft and ask someone else to read for clarity. Does that person understand everything? If not, clarify your sentences to address any issues of misunderstanding. Then, redraw your graphics and send all of this to me, your friendly editor. You can mail them to me or send them by email.

### Final Charge



### When All Weapons Fail

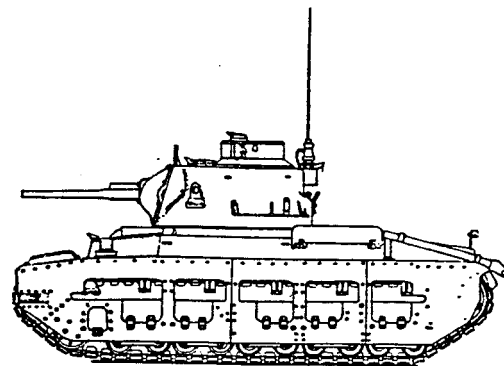
Jon Leughlin

What do I do? Well, I'll correct any obvious grammatical errors. I may re-make your graphics so that they fit the page. When the time comes, I'll lay out the article in the magazine and select additional graphics to dress up the text. Let's go over your part, using an example or two.

Let's say, you just saw Lord of the Rings, Return of the King. It prompted you to open this up as a new period and you painted up some figures and drew up some rules. I'm guessing that you did not create the massive battles but you did fight out a smaller engagement. You want to share your enthusiasm and this exciting game with other soloists. What should you write about?

Your readers will want to see your order of battle: what units did you use, how many figures, any special capabilities. They will want to know the background: how did this battle come about? What were the victory conditions? (How do you know when you have won?) If you "automated" one side, what mechanism did you use to do that? How did you come up with the terrain? What were the dispositions of the forces at the beginning of the battle? How did the battle unfold? What were key events and decisive points? Can you illustrate these with a map? When it was all over, what did you think about the game? Would you play it again? What would you change?

Let's say you are fighting a campaign. You would cover many of the topics above but presumably there would be a series of battles rather than just one. Consider writing a series of articles. The first would be how you set up the campaign. Subsequent articles would be narrative descriptors of each battle and the activity between battles. Use Kenn Hart's Chariot Sagas as a model. I think many of our readers would like to run a campaign for themselves but it is too easy to get lost in the details or to be unable to come up with a satisfactory set of rules. Anything you can add that addresses these issues will be welcomed.



How do you handle the “solo” aspect of the battle or campaign? Do you fight both sides or do you automate one side and command the other? Either is fine. But, how did you do it?



What is your perspective in relating the battle activity? Perspective is the point of view of the author - you. Are you the “wargamer?” “Then I sent in a cavalry assault against the right of the Egyptian line.” Or are you writing from the perspective of the commander? “Parmenon. Take your cavalry and attack right there – at the Egyptian archers! Don’t come back if you are not victorious!” Or are you the narrator? “Next, the Carthaginian cavalry delivered an unsuccessful attack upon the right of the Egyptian line. The cavalry commander, Parmenon, humiliated by this defeat, committed ritual suicide rather than return to his lines.” It is okay to shift perspective throughout the report but make it clear to your readers that you are doing so.

Let’s say that you are writing about rules that you use. Too often I’ve seen rules explained so casually that I can’t recreate them for myself. Too many unanswered questions. Give your readers plenty of detail. It is usually a good idea to sketch out a flow chart so your readers can mentally map out what you are explaining in your narrative. Also, give a complete example or two of how you apply the rules. Use specific die rolls. “For example, you roll a 2. You can modify the die roll plus 1 for “leader present” and plus 1 for “well trained.” This results in a modified roll of 4. Now go to table Three. The result is “withdraw one move, remain facing enemy”.” Finally, anticipate questions that your readers might have in interpreting the rules and provide answers. If you can do all of this, you may even discover a weak point or two in your rule set that you can now correct.

Letters for the Forum are always a good place to start. First, let me say that I don’t like to publish any letter that was not intended by the writer to be published. Please note “for the Readers Forum” or some such words so that I know you intended the letter for publication. Just let your readers know what project you are doing and how it is going. I get my best inspiration from learning what other soloists are doing. Just this week I read a battle report that had me ready to jump in to a new period. I was looking up figures and scales and uniform colors until I could finally look dispassionately at the boxes of unpainted metal in my office and tell myself – “I’m not going to start a new period until I’ve painted these. I’m not going to start a new period until I’ve painted these. I’m not going to start a new period until I’ve painted these.” You get the picture.

How about deadlines? Frankly, I’ll accept material 24/7. But I’ve heard from several contributors that deadlines help them along. So, here they are. If you get material in to me by these dates, you can expect to see it 4-5 weeks later when your Lone Warrior arrives in the mail or 8 – 10 weeks later on Magweb: March 15, June 15, September 15, December 15.

So, what is the bottom line of all this? If you are still reading this article, then you are very likely capable of writing a publishable piece. Follow the guidelines and suggestions above and you will produce something of value to your wargaming brethren. I’m guessing that once you get published and see your name in print, you won’t want to stop there. And if you really get caught up in the writing experience, then we can talk about becoming a regular contributor with the perks that that includes. So, my solo wargaming friend, what are you waiting for?