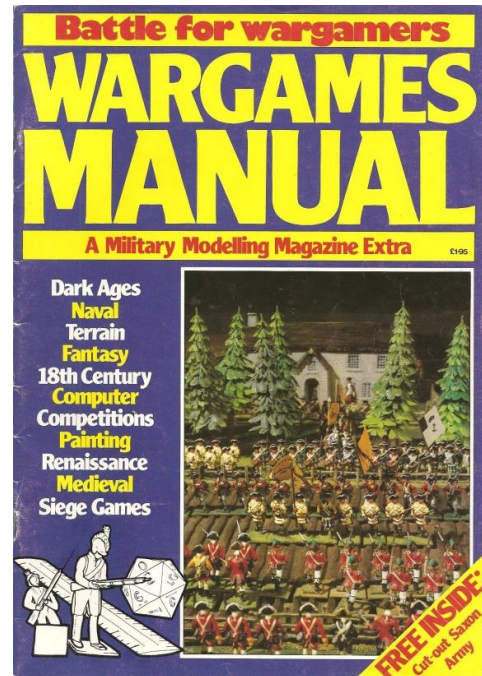


Review by Jonathan Aird

It was in the years of desolation ó the only mainstream wargaming magazine had shut up shop, folded its tents and merged unhappily with *Military Modelling*. *Battle* was no more. So, imagine my surprise one chilly Christmas morning to wake up and find the familiar heavy stocking on the end of the bed. Poking out of the top was the anticipated roll of seasonal comics and one other thing ó a magazine? No! The title declared it to be the *Battle for wargamers Wargames Manual*. And so this young man was lost to his family for the next 24 hours -- except for a break to consume the traditional feast, and, no doubt watch the latest Bond film to hit the small screen!

Hopefully, the foregoing has made clear my own personal nostalgia for the softback, oversized wargames manual. Even looked at now, with as much impartiality as I can muster, it remains an excellent read. It was written by the flower of the wargaming fraternity ó Charles S. Grant, Stuart Asquith, the incomparable C.F. Wesenraft, Tony Bath, George Gush, our very own John Bennett, David Chandler, Terry Wise, Ian Greenwood, Paddy Griffiths and many others. Each author had been given two or three pages to explain, and enthuse over, a particular aspect of wargaming. The extensive list of topics covered can be seen from the contents page. Every article ó or short chapter, if you prefer ó was worth reading (although I remain unconvinced to this day by òCompetition Wargamingö). C.F. Wesenraft, for example, provided a whole system for refighting the really big Napoleonic



Battle for wargames GAMES

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COMPILED BY STUART A. ASQUITH

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battles based on a figure ratio of 1:330. This is written in his customary engaging style. John Bennett's piece on Solo Wargaming fits in a wealth of ideas in just a couple of pages. Jeff Bayton provided a well-reasoned set of medieval rules which provide for a fast and fun game whilst retaining an air of believability. George Gush was keen to get us all playing the renaissance period, Paddy Griffiths thought we should be gaming more sieges, and Brian Carrick tried his very best to convince everyone that games with 54mm figures played across the sweeping expanse of the back garden was the way ahead. There truly was something for everyone. All the articles were profusely illustrated with black and white photographs and line drawings and to top it all the centre pages were a full colour ready to play Saxon army drawn from the range of cardboard flat figures produced at the time by Standard Games.



Solo Wargaming – and the SWA – get a good mention

Rereading the manual for this short review, I was reminded that I had (at the time) had the intention of producing an army to the lists devised by Stephen Brown in his article 'The Warriors of Atlantis.' This took the little ancient writing about fabled Atlantis and, by a series of well-reasoned arguments, developed a probable army description. It was a wonderful mix of fantasy and historical to provide an unusual army that it included chariots

and elephants and plenty of spear-armed heavy infantry backed up by a range of missile troops means it would also be a very flexible army as well. As I look at my spare plastic figures from various other ancient period armies, it seems to me that now might be a very good time to resurrect that old idea either for WRG Ancients or DBA (or both!).

Copies of the Wargames Manual turn up regularly on Ebay and are usually priced at only a few pounds (around \$5), representing a very sound investment at that price.