

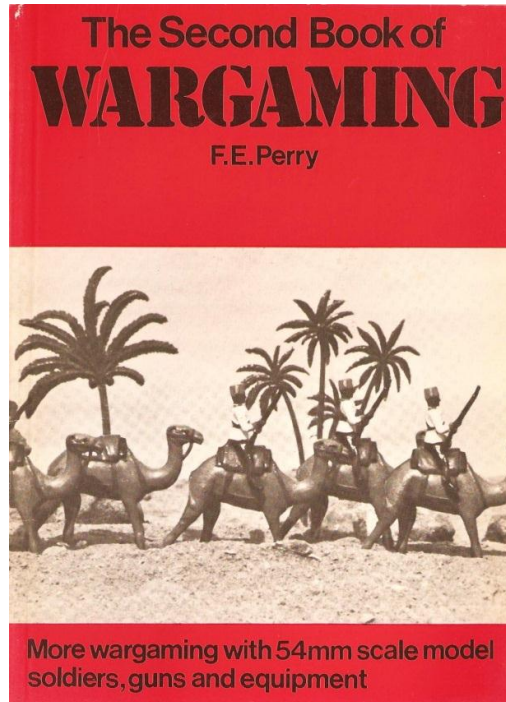
'The Second Book of Wargaming'

By F.E. Perry

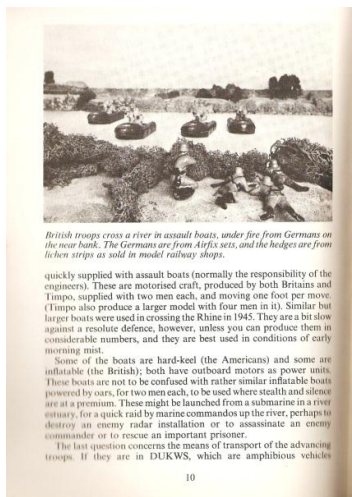
Review by Jonathan Aird

I never did buy 'The First book of Wargaming,' so this book -- which effectively is the "advanced rules" to add to those in Mr. Perry's first book -- must have been remarkably cheap in order to tempt me to purchase it! It is perhaps the strangest wargaming book I own, and certainly the only one to discuss the usefulness of shower and toilet doll house bathroom furniture. Yes, we are in the strange world of 54mm wargaming! I am certainly not going to disparage the large-scale wargamer -- wargaming is after all a strange enough hobby already without getting all superior about the approach that others might take to it -- indeed the use of 54mm figures can produce some stunning looking games, as well as the wonderfully colourful spectacle of the toy soldier style setups. However, it is undeniable (if on no better evidence than this very book) that the approach to wargaming of 54mm players can be a little ... eccentric.

This 1978 book ran against all the precedents of the time -- by the late 1970, wargaming was getting on a professional footing -- many figure companies had sprung up (several still existing to this day), and there were eager scribes producing reams of material for the Wargame Society magazines or the newly wargames orientated *Battle* magazine. The Solo Wargamers Association was already two years old! We were all grown up, digging into obscure tomes of academe for more and better research material and the "bad old ways" of Donald Featherstone were looked back on by many as a necessary evil, but really no longer the ideal way of going about things. And amongst this maelstrom of new thinking and creativity MAP decided



to publish two books that were the oldest of Old School (and there wasn't even an Old School branch of the hobby as yet!). 'The Second Book of Wargaming' claimed to be for younger gamers, or those who prefer 54mm figures. As described, the style of the basic game involved the classic shooting of matchsticks to knock down your opponents figures, something which I'm sure we can all agree is intrinsically alluring! However, for more complicated games it is necessary to consider other aspects --



British troops cross a river in assault boats, under fire from Germans on the near bank. The Germans are from Airfix sets, and the hedges are from fichen strips as sold in model railway shops.

quickly supplied with assault boats (normally the responsibility of the engineers). These are motorised craft, produced by both Britains and Timpco, supplied with two men each, and moving one foot per move. (Timpco also produce a larger model with four men in it). Similar but larger boats were used in crossing the Rhine in 1945. They are a bit slow against a resolute defence, however, unless you can produce them in considerable numbers, and they are best used in conditions of early morning mist.

Some of the boats are hard-keel (the Americans) and some are inflatable (the British); both have outboard motors as power units. These boats are not to be confused with rather similar inflatable boats powered by oars, for two men each, to be used where stealth and silence are at a premium. These might be launched from a submarine in a river estuary, for a quick raid by marine commandos up the river, perhaps to destroy an enemy radar installation or to assassinate an enemy commander or to rescue an important prisoner.

The last question concerns the means of transport of the advancing troops. If they are in DUKWS, which are amphibious vehicles

travelling on land as well as on water, they need hardly check their advance at the river. (These vehicles travel four feet empty on the road, two feet full, half these rates in the water). Some excellent plastic range including an amphibious having two traversing machine guns produced amphibians at one time, the last-named having a space inside for a driver, escort and two gunners. Lone Star and Marx also had plenty of space to put men in. The Lone Star models were a bit on the small side, but each had a high-angle gun mounted on the rear. Unfortunately some of the models mentioned are now out of production, but new ones appear from time to time. Tamiya produce a complete with two American soldiers. This was made by Ford in thousands during the Second World War. Some were supplied under Lend-Lease to the Russians, who used them to spearhead their advance across the Dnieper, and kept them until they entered Berlin.

General Purpose Amphibian -- better known as the Amphibious Jeep -- of World War 2 fame. This is from a Tamiya plastic kit, complete with American soldiers.



such as river crossings, gas warfare (you'll be wanting to save the bulbs from your soda syphons to

represent the canisters!), support services (a miscellany of rule additions covering everything from military bands to tank recovery vehicles and the use of Scaletrix camera crews to represent members of the press!).

Once one has mastered the complications, then they can all be put into service to support a campaign game -- and there is a sprightly chapter detailing an island invasion. It is this chapter that fully reveals one purpose of the larger scale wargaming -- it is to create detailed narratives that can be illustrated by suitably posed dioramas of figures from disparate manufacturers (and time periods!) for -- and this is really important -- the amusement of the players. It's detailed, there are lots of rules, but the purpose of the game is fun with a capital F! The resulting games are likely to resemble Biggles crossed with The Famous Five, rather than some deep investigation of strategy and tactics.

This is an amusing book to read through, and there are a couple of useful ideas -- such as the chapter on gas warfare. On the whole though, it is unlikely to be a purchase that is going to be reached for too often -- unless it succeeds in tempting the reader into this branch of wargaming. This book is long out of print, with second-hand copies starting around £10 on Amazon UK (which also has the "First Book" for around £35, which suggests that either there is something of a "cult following," or the sellers are very optimistic).

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