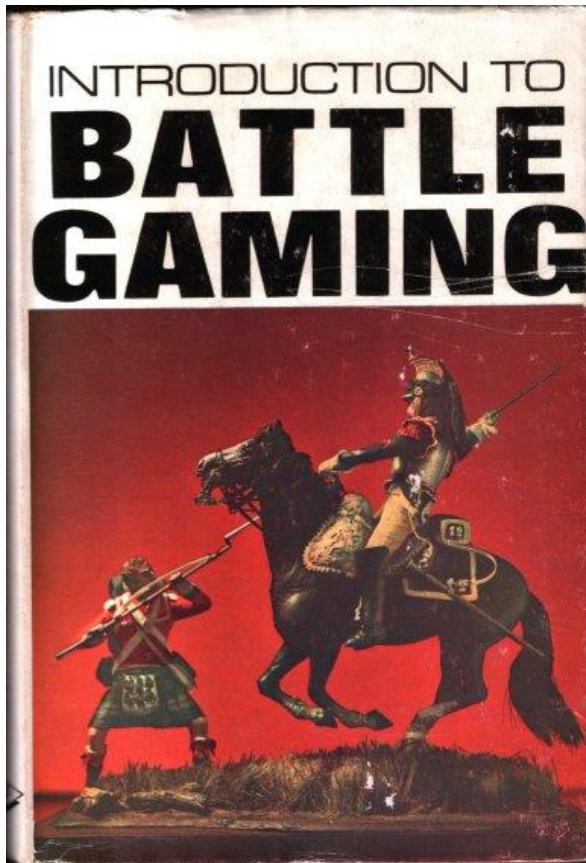


‘Introduction to Battle Gaming’

By Terence Wise

Review by Paul Le Long

I like Terence Wise as an author, he’s written some excellent books; I’m not so keen on this one though. I’m sure that if you grew up in the 1960s you will undoubtedly find a lot of material in this book that will send you back on a fantastic trip down memory lane to 1969.



So what do we have? Chapter 1 is “The Origins of Battle Gaming” which is a short history of wargaming – kriegspiel, Wells and so on. Then in “Choosing Your Era” we have a discussion of various periods with a focus on Ancients, Horse and Musket and World War II. These periods are illustrated with examples: the battle of Arbela (Gaugamela), Agincourt, Murfreesboro (ACW), and Fondouk (WWII). This is all followed by a section on miniatures – Airfix, flats, Minifigs and others.

Chapter 3 “Basic Battlefield Layout” and the following chapter “Adding Realism to Your Layout” concentrate on constructing terrain of all types and even on building a wargames table. This is followed by “Organising Your Army” which describes the organisation of various types of armies throughout history; there are

organisation tables, notes on formations and tactics, and a bit of advice on rules.

Then we have three chapters of rules for Ancient, Horse and Musket and World War II respectively. These are good chapters, probably the best in the book; the rules are simple and are rounded out with short turn-by-turn descriptions of wargames played using these rules. The rules are very “old school” which has a certain appeal for many and the descriptions of games are charming.

Then we have a chapter on boardgames followed by “Some Ideas for Advanced Players” which talks about campaigns, trains, boats, obstacles (like mines),

supply, movement and a few “advanced” rules. Then there is a chapter on casting your own figures and another on painting and miscellaneous equipment.

While I’m sure this book was of value when it was written in 1969, there really is very little here for the modern reader. But the book is full of photographs – old figures, games, layouts, terrain and so on – a real nostalgia trip. And I think that this is the real value of the book now. Interested readers should note that John Curry’s History of Wargaming Project has issued a revised copy – but since I don’t have a copy, I can’t tell you what it’s like.

Details:

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Below is the cover of the John Curry re-publication.

