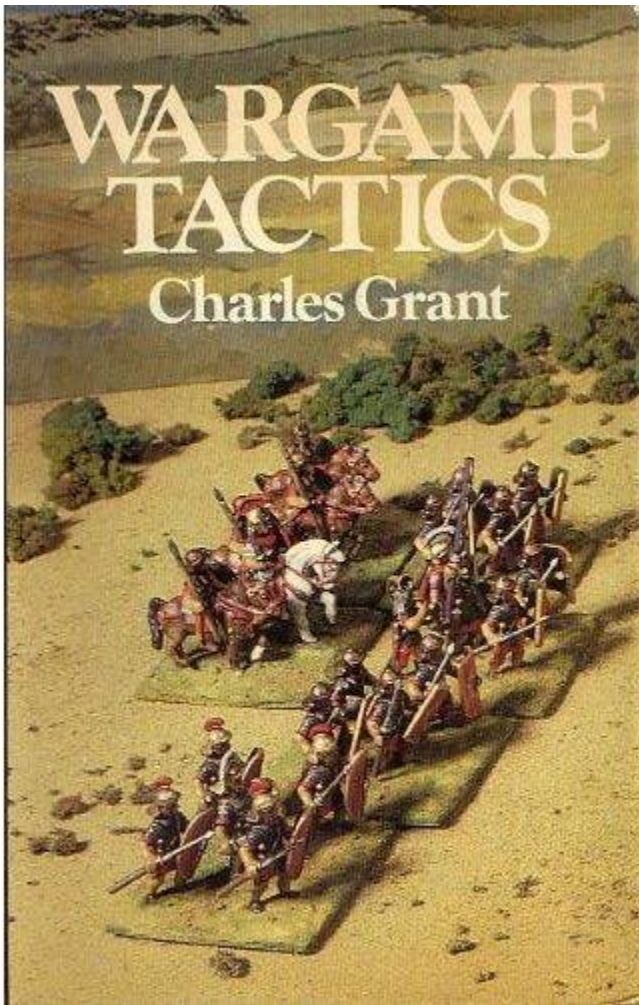


# 'Wargame Tactics' By Charles Grant

## Review by Paul Le Long

This is quite similar to Charles Grant's 'Ancient War Game' written in 1974 ('Wargames Tactics' came out in 1979). In the 'Ancient War Game,' the author discussed a period or army then illustrated his points with a fictional wargame scenario. He does the same again here but covers a much wider time period, everything from Assyria to the American Civil War.



The set-up is simple. First we have a chapter discussing warfare in a particular period, then we get a chapter with a wargame scenario for that period. Each scenario is fully described, with army lists, maps and a narrative description of how the wargame played out. As I said in my review of the 'Ancient War Game,' this is a nice way to present the analysis of a particular period or army and in a way that is of direct relevance and interest to wargamers.

So what do we have? We start with an introduction which discusses the history of warfare in broad terms, followed by a chapter on scale ó mainly terrain ó and how many figures make up a wargames unit. Then there is a chapter on wargames rules with advice on which ones to use.

The book really gets going with a chapter looking at warfare from ancient Assyria to classical Greece.

The scenario that follows this is an all-Greek affair with a hoplite army pitted against a Greek enemy heavy on light troops. Then we move on to 'The Emergence of Rome' which is followed by a Romans vs. Germans battle. The next chapter, 'East from Byzantium,' is all about ó well, Byzantium ó and Persia and the steppes. The battle chapter pits Byzantines against Sassanids. (Check out the Miscellaneous page on the LW blog for Chris Hahn's refight of this battle).

We move on to 'The Early Middle Ages,' illustrated by a skirmish battle. Then we have the 'Age of Gunpowder,' illustrated with a battle set in the English Civil War. This is followed by a chapter on 18th century warfare and a battle between Austrians and Prussians. Napoleonic warfare inevitably follows, with a Franco-Prussian battle. We finish off with the American Civil War.

This is all comfortably 'old-school' in terms of analysis: the ancient period is covered in a series of chapters and battles covering Greece, Rome and Byzantium. These are all conventional 'big' battles. The Middle Ages and 'Pike and Shot' periods feel a bit out of place, perhaps because the author illustrates them with smaller battle scenarios. Then we move inexorably to the 'Horse and Musket' era with the inevitable focus on Frederick the Great and Napoleon, finished off with the American Civil War. In all of these scenarios, we move back to the big battle format. The author rounds off the book with a chapter entitled 'The Choice of Period' which is a general conclusion covering the history of warfare.

This is a well-written book, full of information, albeit a bit old fashioned now. The analytical chapters are fairly short, so there is not a great deal of information presented here. Nevertheless, the wargame scenario chapters are really entertaining and do serve to illustrate the author's arguments. This is a good approach. So, the book is a bit dated, not particularly solo-friendly and no one reading this review is likely to learn very much. Nevertheless, I would still recommend the book as it has charm, is well-written, and the battle narratives are very entertaining. And as Chris Hahn has demonstrated, the battles have replay value.

Details:

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