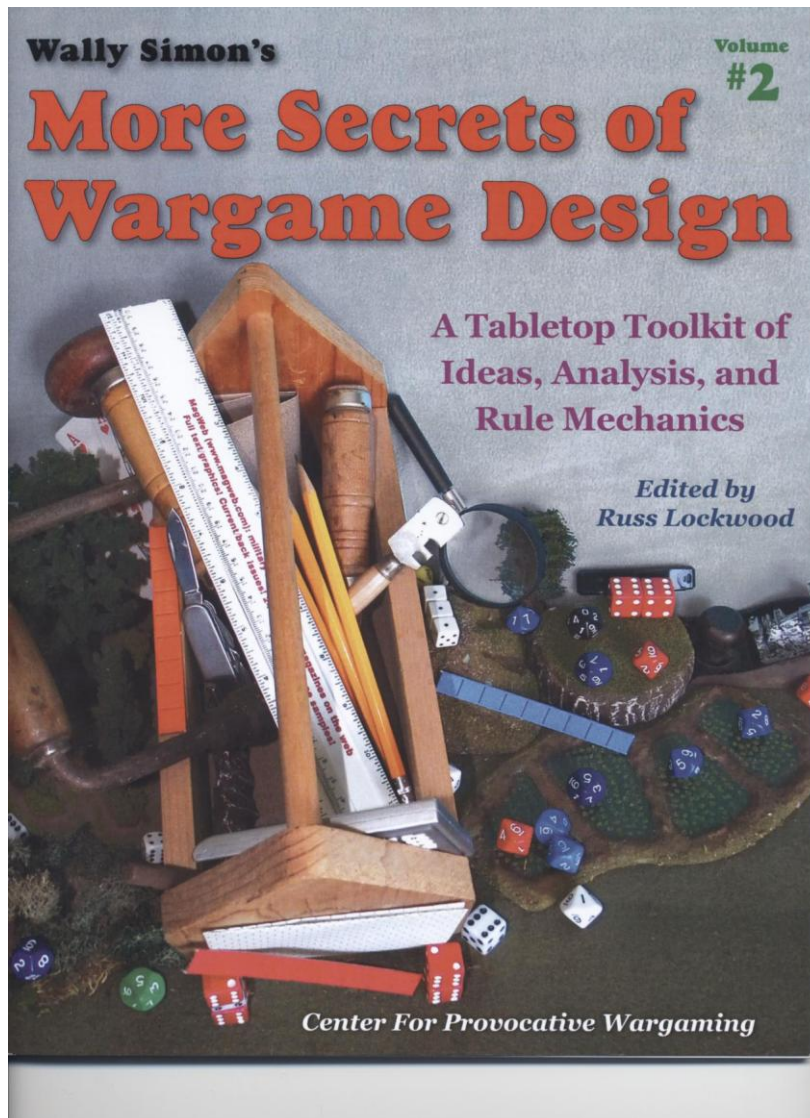


# Wally Simon's More Secrets of Wargame Design

## Edited by Russ Lockwood

### Review by Rich Barbuto

This is volume #2 of Russ Lockwood's valuable efforts to bring the best of Wally Simon to a new audience. Wally was a longtime contributor to our hobby through *Potomac Wargamers Review*. He was one of wargaming's creative minds, who shared his many, many innovations on rules mechanics with his readers. Some of his ideas would be judged as 'out there,' flaunting conventional rules and our understanding of the dynamics of combat. Yet, all his essays are food for serious thought.



In any discussion, Simon's goal appears to be playability, yet he clearly recognizes that even simple rules and procedures need to result in a battle that would credibly correspond in result to the period being simulated. His opening chapter is titled, "Movement Procedures in Wargaming." Simon argues the merits of longer move distances, 10-inch rather than "micro-inching" across the tabletop. He proposes the '70% solution': units encountering difficult terrain have a 70% chance of moving unimpeded. Failing to roll 70% or below, the unit stops in its tracks. Again, this quick and easy rule (move full distance or not at all) speeds up play and in the end replicates the dynamics of battle well enough for wargaming purposes. In this chapter Simon also discusses the variables of scale and time and how these affect sequence of action. He offers insights in simultaneous movement as well as the use of cards to govern sequence of action.

In a chapter titled "Seven Skirmishing Samurai," Simon introduces his Triangular Hit Rosters, an innovative way to judge the effects of fire and melee. Once one understands the simple mechanics - drawing a card and rolling a percentage die - the results are easily discerned and the target gets to roll a morale test. Even surviving a morale test, the target carries a

weakened strength with him into the next combat. Here Russ Lockwood adds his spin to the methodology. Each troop type has a different Hit Roster, thus differentiating between samurai, lesser warriors, and katana fodder.

In another chapter, "Napoleonic Slugfest in the Peninsula," Simon explains some of his rules within a scenario. The British are defending a number of villages, each with a different value in victory points. The French have

more troops, and also the option of making a wide flank movement off-table. In this featured wargame, the French feel the brunt of repeatedly losing the 70% solution. The flank attack never closed and those troops never saw the fight. Simon also introduces the use of cards, randomly drawn, to determine the number of battalions that may fire during their respective fire phases. The result was a battle that was determined by a balance of good generalship and the randomness of chance – pretty much how historic battles unfold.

Yet another chapter titled, “Seven Years War Over Six Towns,” offers more ideas. After the terrain was laid out, the players draw to determine the victory points for each of the six towns. The terrain was sub-divided into areas; only two stands could be in an area. Each area has its own ‘defensive value’ taken into account for both firing and melee. Then, the players decide who is attacking and who defending. Simon introduced a fairly quick way to determine casualties from artillery and musket fire rolling only one percentage die for each firing stand. His melee rules likewise were easy to calculate and, frankly, pretty bloody. His next innovation was to determine the ‘value’ of loss points. Casualties inflicted in some areas were tallied as more loss points than in other areas. As loss points accrued, whole stands were taken out of battle. The result was a fast-paced decisive battle, although one might argue that perhaps luck had a larger role than generalship.

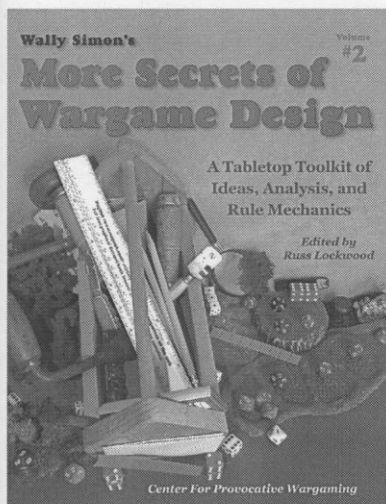
Consider that phrase, “perhaps luck had a larger role than generalship.” Isn’t this a characteristic of solo games? We want one side to be ‘automated,’ to do any of a variety of things (Does the enemy charge? Fire? Withdraw?) by chance rather than be directed by us. Many of Simon’s rules support this – chance plays a large role in game dynamics. As I read “Seven Years War Over Six Towns,” and “Napoleonic Slugfest in the Peninsula,” I was struck at how these scenarios could have been solo games.

There are 44 pages encompassing 12 chapters. Simon places his innovations in context of most periods from ancients through modern. Who will get the most from this volume? Well, if you derive satisfaction from tinkering with your own rules, this is a place to go. Each idea is worth your consideration and each has great potential to spawn more variants that can be combined in a myriad of ways. For these people (and I’m one) this is well worth the investment.

And finally, a hearty “Thank You” to Russ Lockwood for bringing these great classic ideas to our attention!

## More Secrets of Wargame Design

Volume 2 continues this series with more ideas, more analysis, more rules mechanics, and more genius for designing, troubleshooting, and modifying wargame rules -- creating a game which keeps all players continually busy and interested in the game at hand.



### Contents:

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Don't forget Volume 1:

Review of Volume 1 from Miniature Wargames #355 (page 64):

*"This contains a lot of very experienced gamer's know how. I will be reading this again and again for inspiration and purely for entertainment. If you are looking for an injection of fresh enthusiasm and something to make you see the hobby with fresh eyes, this first volume of Wally's collected writings is what you are looking for. Very Highly Recommended."*