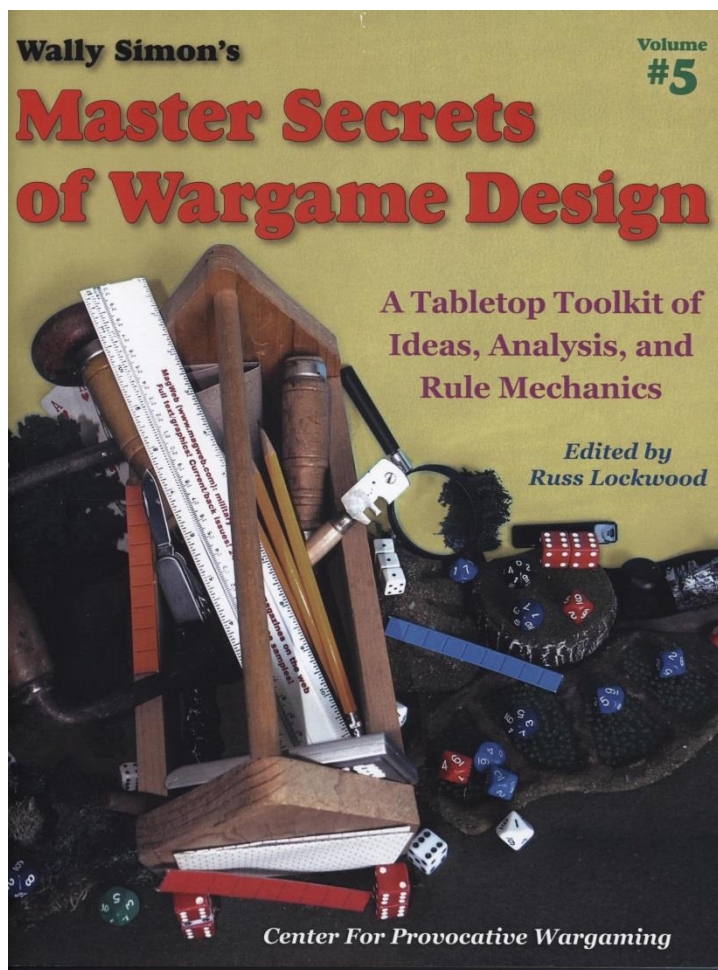


***Wally Simon's Master Secrets of Wargame Design: a Toolkit of Ideas, Analysis, and Rule Mechanics, Volume #5*, edited by Russ Lockwood**  
**Reviewed by Rich Barbuto**

I have had the pleasure of reviewing all five volumes of Russ Lockwood's collection of Wally Simon's works. If you liked the previous four, you will like this. Simon, one of the founders of HMGS, was a statistician and he brought these skills to analyze probabilities in wargaming. Volume Five is a collection of 13 articles previously published in *Potomac Wargamers Review*. Simon's articles span the historical wargaming eras from ancients through World War II, including English Civil War, American War for Independence, the American Civil War, and the Napoleonic wars. Of course, all of Simon's ideas are readily transferable to many other conflicts. So, if you are looking for new concepts to consider as you tinker with your rules, or maybe just a little inspiration for your solo wargaming, this may be what you are looking for.

The first article, "Viking Hex: Skirmish Rules on a Grid," is self-explanatory. Skirmish games often have a large dose of changing statuses. This is no different. As Simon wrote, "Records for 10 men on a side, while not overwhelming, definitely slowed play." These rules featured a unique command and control function as well as 'group morale' for two or three figures. In "Catchy Cromwell: ECW Morale and Firing" Simon modifies *Snappy Nappy* rules to create a wide variety of morale and casualty results from scored hits.

In "World War II Battle Rules: Supply, Aircraft, and Damage" Simon constructed interesting ammo resupply rules in which a unit rolled each bound to see if resupply had occurred, and if so, how many units of ammo were delivered. Aircraft can attack supply dumps and airfields. Successful attacks reduced the amount of supplies available for issue as well as the number of enemy air sorties. The amount of record-keeping did not appear too onerous, but that conclusion is up to personal interpretation of course.



Simon's Napoleonic article introduces a different concept entirely for the game playing surface. Instead of uniform hexes, Simon uses irregularly-shaped 'areas.' His ping pong table was divided by 12 areas across the table width and 20 across the length of the table – roughly 240 areas. Artillery can fire across three areas. Because the areas are irregularly shaped, fire can seem to pass around woods or villages.

Thus, the rules do not adhere to straight line-of-site. Each area holds one brigade made up of as many as five movement stands. Thus, a division of five brigades would occupy five areas.

In the centennial of the Great War, it is good to see some wargaming attention. The rules set forth in “WWI Trench Assault: Kill Dice and Casualties,” uses off-table artillery and a pre-planned barrage. As in most of Wally Simon’s rules, there is a significant bit of calculation and multiple dice rolls. The AWI game is based on a Saratoga scenario, specifically the Battle of Bemis Heights. As is typical of Simon’s articles, his rules are illustrated as the battle



progresses. As the title, “AWI Bemis Heights: A Morale Game,” suggests, morale is the driving function – not casualties, which is the more traditional game mechanism.

The editor, Russ Lockwood, is perhaps best known as the creator of Mag Web (1996-2009). *Lone Warrior* was available on that site along with 161 other wargaming and history magazines. Mag Web was a great resource and I still miss it. Russ is also the author of two rule sets: *Snappy Nappy: Simple, Subtle & Ultrafast Miniature Rules for the Napoleonic Era*, and *Hyperspace Hack: Ultrafast Spaceship Fleet Battles with Miniatures*.

Volume 5 is forty pages of thought-provoking, sometimes brain-testing material, well worth the purchase price of \$19. This volume is available from On Military Matters. See [www.onmilitarymatters.com](http://www.onmilitarymatters.com) Look under ‘Wargaming Rules’.