

Wally Simon's Campaign Secrets of Wargame Design: A Tabletop Toolkit of Ideas, Analysis, and Rule Mechanics

Edited by Russ Lockwood

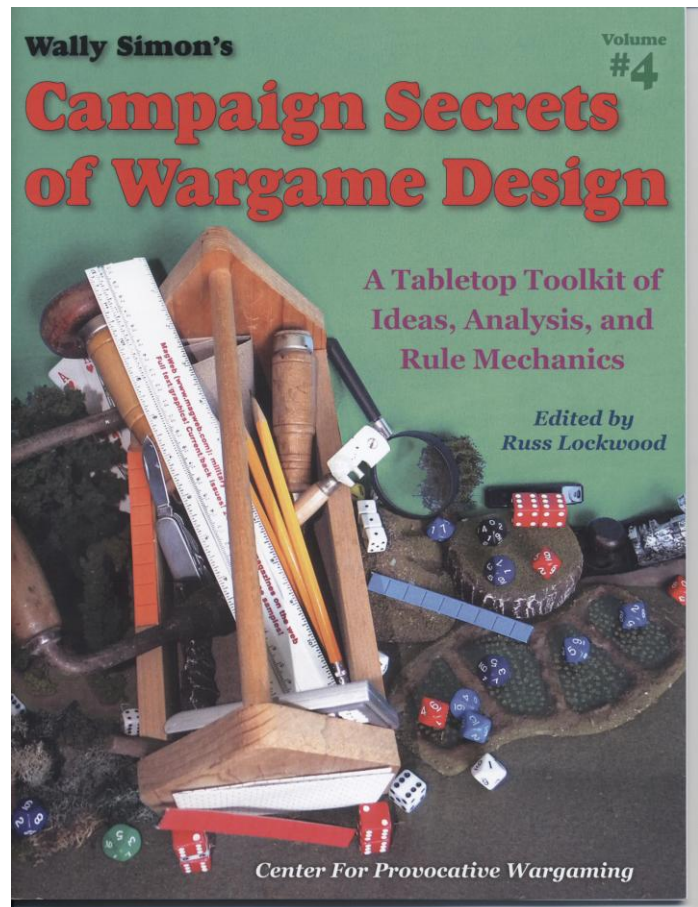
Review by Rich Barbuto

This is volume #4 of Russ Lockwood's edited re-publication of the very best articles by Wally Simon. These short essays were originally published in Potomac Wargamers Review newsletter between the 1970s and early 2000s. As advertised, the articles deal with the mechanics of running a campaign.

Near to the hearts of soloists, the first article is titled "Solo Campaign: Zulus against British." The goal is for a British patrol to traverse the playing area. Cards drive the incidents, involving sighting Zulus, running into an ambush, or an all-out attack by large numbers of warriors. The solo player commands the British patrol and responds to Zulu contact. The cards create the incidents, but the player needs to bring his own skirmish rules. This game is readily adaptable to any scenario in which there is a great probability of close combat. For example, a Roman patrol transiting a forest in Germania, or American provincial rangers patrolling the woods around Fort William Henry a la The Last of the Mohicans. One can pretty much adjust this system to any era.

The article titled "Dot wars: Armies on the Move," introduces an easy system for an army to gain or lose strength as it maneuvers against its foe. As the army traverses a province, it can find recruits or discover that its forces are being attrited. Once a province has been drained of its resources, it is marked as such, and the wily commander can seek to maneuver his enemy into the barren land.

The campaign and battle mechanics demonstrated in "Simplified Campaigning: Napoleonics and Status," can be handily modified to just about any period. The campaign is won by the first commander who wins five more battles than his opponent. Commanders bring a number of points to each battle, and tailor their division among infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Successful units can upgrade their status (rabble to militia, to regular, to elite) based upon number of battles won and a die roll.



Morale checks after each round of melee are dependent upon two factors only, unit status and casualties suffered. This generates a percentage probability of standing, settled then by a die roll. Simplicity. Simon illustrated how these various rules are applied in a short but engaging battle narrative.

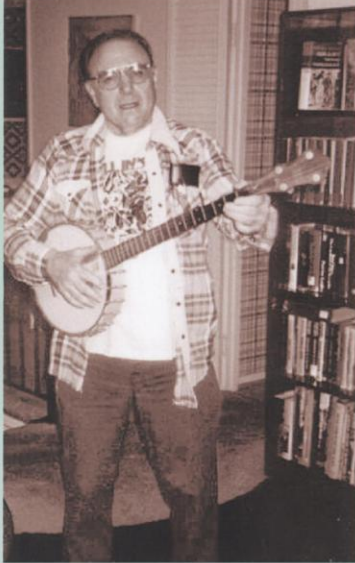
JOURNEY INTO THE SOUL OF WARGAMING . . .

For decades, Wally Simon helped shape miniatures wargaming through Potomac Wargamers Review -- his monthly photocopied newsletter that analyzed the mechanics of wargame rules. First published in the 1970s, PWR ran monthly through August 2002, delving into the nuts and bolts of how rules worked -- and how they did not. Published rules, home-grown rules, and even his own rules came under scrutiny as he created, destroyed, and tweaked rules mechanisms to try and "produce a game which keeps all players continually busy and interested in what's going on."

In Volume 4 of Wally Simon's *Secrets of Wargame Design*, we offer a dozen of his best articles about wargame campaigning ideas pulled from the pages of PWR. Stuffed full of ideas, concepts, and rules mechanics covering wargaming action across all eras, they offer provocative wit, wisdom, and imagination to help you tweak an existing set of rules or create your own rules to make a better wargame.

The Genius Within:

- Solo Campaign:**
Zulus Against British
- Dot Wars:**
Armies on the Move
- Simplified Campaigning:**
Napoleonics and Status
- Campaign Anyone?:**
British Colonial Era Ideas
- Ancients Campaign:**
Army and Command Points
- American Civil War Campaigning:**
Styles and Substances
- Zulu Uprising:**
A Mini Campaign
- England vs. Colonies:**
American War of Independence
- Lost Napoleonic Campaign:**
Planned Moves and Victory Boxes
- Rhombusia Campaign:**
Colonization and Rebellion
- Campaign Trail:**
Play By Mail Wargaming
- A Map Exercise:**
Tiered Movement



Wally Simon was one of the founders of HMGS, hosting the first meeting in his basement. A statistician by trade, he used his mathematical skills to analyze probabilities within wargame mechanics. In the photo, Wally is shown with his banjo recreating the scene from the mid 1980s when he reportedly honored the departing Atlantecon representatives with a rousing chorus of "So Long It's Been Good to Know Ya!" HMGS would be founded in 1986 and run its own conventions. Wally passed away in 2005.

A particularly intriguing scenario is depicted in "Rhombusia Campaign: Colonization and Rebellion."

Rhombusia is an island consisting of eight provinces. Each province has different resources. All Rhombusian units are militia status. In this scenario, the two players command armies of regulars. Both players invade Rhombusia and will fight the Rhombusians and each other. As you have probably surmised, if commander A confronts a force of indigenous Rhombusians, then commander B commands the Rhombusians for that battle.

Since Rhombusia is an island, each invasion consists of an opposed landing. Now, on the campaign map, players move Army Points (AP). The commanders can divide their APs into a number of sub-elements, maneuvering separately. When two forces collide, the APs are compared and a ratio is derived. For

example, if 400 APs meets 500 APs, the ratio is 4 to 5. This is scalable. The resulting battle can pit a 400 point army against a 500 point army, an 800 point army against a 1000 point army, or 4 figures skirmishing against 5. This allows the players to battle with mass armies or just individual figures.

There is much more, all interesting, something for everyone. I'm particularly glad that Russ Lockwood has brought Wally Simon's many good ideas to a larger audience. All four volumes edited and published by Russ are available On Military Matters.

www.onmilitarymatters.com

