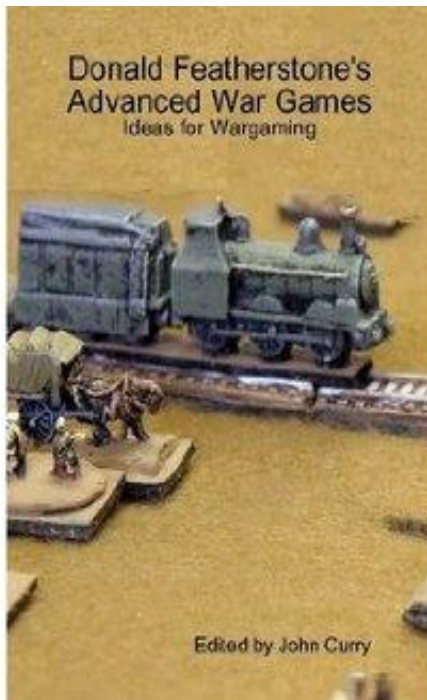


“Featherstone’s Fancy” Advanced War Games

By Jeff Chorney

Without a shadow of a doubt Don Featherstone has been a great inspiration to me as a solo wargamer. I also love to re-read his books from time for inspiration. With respect to chapter thirteen on the topic of solo war gaming advanced war games is in my opinion one of Don's best books. I have read advanced war games cover to cover twice. One thing I have found is every time I read it I glean a little more as I have a reflective style of learning. If you were to purchase one of his books with the intention to write a set of war gaming rules this would be the book to purchase.



Don lays the foundation for any avid war gamer to come up with a free hand, unfettered by the whims and ruthless ambitions of an opponent if you were to game at a club. For example, a campaign often produces minor situations which, for one reason or another, will take more than a full evening's battle at a club on those all too precious nights which will leave the opponents wondering what could have transpired if they were not rushed due to limited time. One of the reasons I do not like war gaming at clubs is I always feel like I have to rush with no time left to plan strategy and military tactics. As a solo

wargamer I have the time to venture and fill in an hour here and there, each night as I plan strategies on what two opposing generals might due with; terrain, troops, and logistics which leads to considerable gentlemanly charm.

Don quotes in his book; "It is the solo war gamer who savours the delights of almost-individual battling. Human nature being what it is, it is rare for an opponent, however enthusiastic, to have the same feeling and interest as yourself in your own carefully painted regiments." You as a modeler/gamer have a vested interest in each unit because of the work that you have put into the research, painting, basing of figures, and terrain upon which you battle. Next, you plan on the best way to fight a fictitious or historical battle down to minute detail.

Here is a brief summary from my coiled note book on what makes a mediocre solo wargamer into an excellent gamer:

- Logistics in war gaming with the use of chance/event cards, together with weather cards.
- Think about: food supply, ammunition, fodder for horse, relieving troops available, which if any force are lacking these an army loses 10% of its effectiveness during the first week without supplies, 20% the second week, and 30% the third week, and will cease to exist the following week.
- In friendly country supplies may be drawn freely from supply points, the country side, on payment by the army. Supplies are easily drawn from the plains or cultivated areas, but not from hills, forests, or deserts. Also think about the politics and if any blockades are in place whether land or naval.
- In enemy territory supplies are drawn the countryside "without" payment. Basically they are pillaged from the locals. Or they may be drawn from friendly, supply trains, wagons, etc.
- Any army may be accompanied by a supply train of enough wagons for 3 weeks.
- In addition to these, supply trains may be organized to operate between the army and supply points.
- All ships carry supplies for 2 weeks. Special supply ships may be used to carry supplies for the army in addition.
- Cities, fortresses, etc., will draw their daily needs from the surrounding countryside. Supplies may be stock-piled there for use during a siege or to supply the field armies.
- Think about the use of spies or defectors. This can take your game to a new and exciting level. Make yourself a few deck buster cards and add them to your event deck. Think about the period you are fighting and put in a few scenarios that seem logical. Inspiration can be found by watching both of the Sherlock Holmes movies or by reading a few fictitious novels based loosely on the period you are campaigning. e.g. I used a deck buster card in 'Solo at Play' which brought in extra Iroquois warriors to the theater. It was a game changer for the British which caused the Americans to be routed and defeated.
- Don't forget about communications as they were probably one of the biggest game changers in any war. Utilize observation balloons, carrier pigeons, bicycle couriers, and telegraph systems.

Jeff

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