

## Jack Scruby and his 'Letter from America' 1968

**By Rob Morgan**

I was writing a note for the 'Naval Wargames Society' newsletter recently, using the first issue of John Tuntsill's *Miniature Warfare* back in the Winter of 1968 for a source. I sat down a moment, scanned through the 25-page journal, and found an article by a 'guest writer' from the USA -- one Jack Scruby. A legendary figure in the Americas, but often elusive over here, drifting in and out of the wargames world like an influential ghost. His article, as you can read, regarded American and 'english' (sic) wargaming as being very different creatures in terms of the use of dice, what he calls the 'Morschauser system' and he was generally critical of wargames as they were this side of the pond back then!

The idea of two distinct streams of wargaming thought and style, as Mr. Scruby suggests, make for an interesting discussion point, and is well worth a moment's reading. However, the same first issue carries a full-page advert for the substantial Scruby wargaming organisation. I didn't realise that as well as *War Games Digest* of which I'd heard and very occasionally had encountered reviewed in print across here, Jack Scruby also published *Table Top Talk*, and *The Miniature Parade*. These three are probably well known to many if not most American wargamers, but I suspect very few copies ever found their way as far as the UK, and it would I think be tremendously interesting to hear more about their content, style, period inclination and general approach to the hobby. Was *The Miniature Parade* a model soldier collectors publication, as the name suggests? Jack Scruby produced *some* model ships, did naval wargames ever crop up? Did any of them produce an index? How long did they survive? (*Ed. Note: Rich Barbuto has reviewed copies of The Miniature Parade elsewhere on this Reviews page, as well as a copy of War Game Digest, which includes an interesting discussion of the early days of the hobby in the U.S.*)

The organisation takes the advertising opportunity to announce a fourth publication, destined to be around from January 1968, called *The Wargamer's Corner*, intended to 'feature interesting information about all periods í slanted for the war game player.' Was it ever published? If so, then for one company to produce four of what must have been the world's leading magazines in one narrow field seems worthy of closer examination. It hasn't happened since.