

Review of Two Hour Wargames

By Jim Rohrer

Two Hour Wargames (THW) is a system designed for the purpose of solo wargaming. As such, it is different from other rules sets because most will say 'can be played solo' but are not really designed for that purpose. The developer is justly proud of the contribution and the system has many fans. It was past due time for me to investigate.

First, I should acknowledge that despite the apparent simplicity of the system, learning it was very difficult for me. This might be because what is intuitive for some is not intuitive for me or perhaps my brain has been programmed to assume certain mechanics that are not found in THW. For whatever reason, I went back to the rules many times before I felt was able to play a simplified game. For this, I do not blame the developer.

Free rules are offered but they only whet your interest. To get into the system, you should buy one of the games here <https://www.twohourwargames.com/free.html>. I bought 5150 Star Army. The games include markers that can be cut out for those who lack suitable figures. Each game can be expanded into a campaign and there are supplements, expansions and spin-offs.

These games use individually based figures grouped into squads of six. Three squads may be grouped into a platoon. Each member of the squad can be given unique attributes and different armor. Different weapons can be used, including support weapons. Rules for vehicles, including mechs, are available but beginners can regard all these details as optional.

The 3'x3' (or larger) board is divided into nine sectors. Sectors 7-9 are at the bottom and that is where the player starts. Three Possible Enemy Forces (PEFs) are randomly located in sectors 1-6. They are marked with a chip or whatever you have available. PEFs are replaced with enemy squads if they make contact with your squad.

All the important events are determined by dice roll. Units are activated by rolling two dice, each with a number lower than the Reputation score of the unit. This idea was difficult for me to grasp.

Enemy units have a Rep of 4. Roll two dice. If both turn up less than 4, the unit is activated. If the enemy unit moves into line of sight (LOS) of your unit, roll for contact. If contact is made, start shooting and roll for a hit.



If a figure is hit, he (or she) either is killed (6), out of the fight, or knocked back to cover for a rest. A medic figure can restore someone back into the fight with a good dice roll.

Unlike other rule sets, THW assumes the target will shoot back. The turn does not end until every missed target has a chance to fire back. The original shooter can then return fire. Three mission types are developed: patrol, attack and defend. Beginners should undertake a patrol mission, so that is what I am presenting here as a play test. For the purposes of testing, I simplified shamelessly. All units were given equal armor and the same weapon (laser rifle). No melee was allowed, no vehicles and no mechs.

A patrol mission is only allowed one squad, whereas up to three enemy PEFs can pop up. The patrol can only succeed if they duck and run to the far side of the board, stay until the next turn, then run back. Long fire fights will result in failure.

The odds seem stacked against the home team, so I cheated and made all members of my squad crack shots. This allows me to roll three dice instead of two.

The first picture shows the layout at the beginning. My board is 24"x24" so movement distances were reduced accordingly. Shooting distance is not an issue. LOS is impeded in a lot of areas and where it is not impeded, the distances are short enough to allow for shooting.



The structures on the far side of the board are bunkers. I did not allow anyone to enter them, but they do provide cover since they impede line of sight.

FYI, a figure that is two inches back from the tree line is assumed to be in deep cover. Nobody can see him, and he cannot see the enemy either. There is no LOS for figures in deep cover.

The second picture is near the end of the game. It looks like my squad is home free. Only one squaddie was dead at that point. However, right after this picture was taken, the third PEF materialized, and a fresh enemy unit began shooting at us. One soldier made it out unscathed. Two were out of the fight. Three were KIA. Mission accomplished.



Overall, I greatly enjoyed this system as a superior alternative to ‘play both sides to the best of my ability’. Learning it was a challenge but worth the investment since I can build on my knowledge by moving up the level of complexity. Game mechanics replicate through other books offered by the developers.