

Society of Twentieth Century Wargamers Journal

Review by George Arnold

The *Journal* of the Society of Twentieth Century Wargamers is back in printed form and it's a welcome return. The Society, with its journal, started out in 1987, although the printed version of the journal ceased publication in 2018.

That's a respectable run for a wargaming publication, much longer than many have managed. The history of wargaming journals/magazines/newsletters is filled with lots of worthy efforts that simply ran out of steam or finances. That fate apparently caught up with the SOTCW *Journal* when declining membership and subscriptions also brought fewer contributions from members. It's a spiral that's hard to reverse.

In the years since the demise of the original journal, the society forged ahead with a website and an electronic forum. The 2021 announcement that the online presence would also be shut down due to lack of interest appeared to mean the effective end of the society.

Well, not so fast. In the meantime, several long-time society members have stepped in to take up the reins once again. The result is the re-launch of the journal in printed form. Issue No. 1 appeared in January 2022. If you are a gamer of 20th century conflicts, or even just someone with an interest in those conflicts, this new version of the journal is aimed right at you.

Let's take a look at the content of No. 1:

For starters, there is a nicely drawn cover to illustrate the lead-off article, a detailed look at a 1915 regimental-sized action during the Battle of the Somme, "Storming the Schwaben Redoubt." Four maps and a graphic of the historical action are included. There's a follow-up article on gaming the fight on a company level, with mention of suitable figures that are available.

There's more:

- An article discussing 20mm scale, a figure size that's not as clear-cut as might be assumed.
- An article on using the Cruel Seas miniature rules for small-vessel engagements, adapting the rules for World War II combat in the Adriatic, with photos of some nice boat models in action.
- A look back at Ahketon figures for WWII and the Vietnam War, originally produced in the 1980s, with some now back in production.
- Discussion of using playing cards instead of dice for skirmish gaming, along with a description of a Cross of Iron mini-campaign, with photos.
- A game scenario for a Recon unit in June 1941 Russia.
- Mechanisms for representing hidden fire.
- Background on the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland.
- Rules for World War I aerial combat by Kevin White, a reprint of an article that originally appeared in *Lone Warrior*.

- Finally, an account of how the author replayed the WWII “Island of the Damned” board game more than 35 times while on Covid lockdown.

This is all packed into a 32-page issue, with the stated intention that enough material is already in hand to provide an expanded number of pages in the future. Membership in the society (see below) not only brings a copy of the journal, but also an occasional, e-mailed PDF, *The Runner*, which provides reviews, advertisements, letters from readers and product announcements. Two PDFs of *The Runner* have already been sent out, each about 20 pages in length.

The driving force behind the resurrected SOTCW *Journal* is Mark Wheeler, a founding member of the society all those years ago. He is careful to insist, however, that he is just a “showrunner” and that the direction of the society will be determined by a Members Steering Group, with decisions made by vote of the group. The names of several in the group – all long-time society members – have already been announced. A return to a printed journal is a deliberate choice to regain the society members who have said they prefer a hard copy to a digital version.

This is an ambitious project, with what appears to be a well thought out plan for the future. Subscriptions are 20 pounds per year in the UK, 20 Euros in Europe, and 20 USD elsewhere in the world, with substantial discounts for the unemployed, seniors, and full-time educators. Other benefits to subscribers include access to discounted models and figures, and free advertising.

For more information, e-mail:

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Recommended.