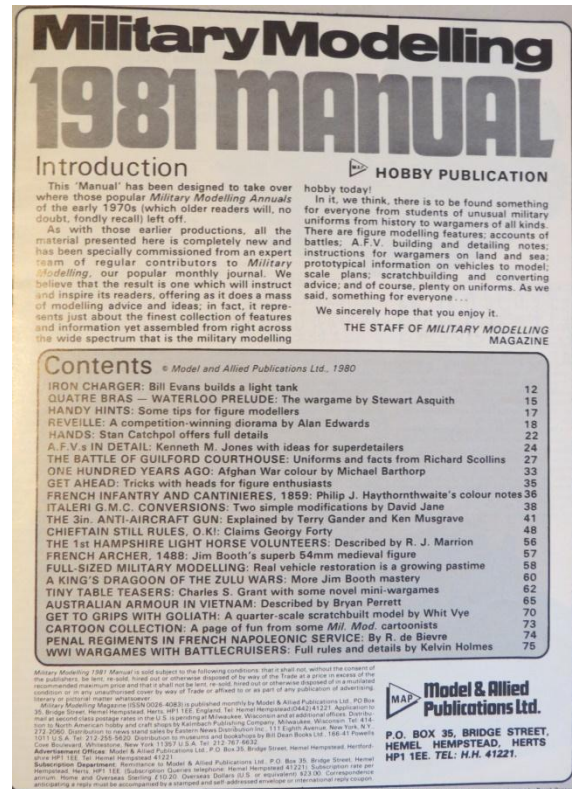
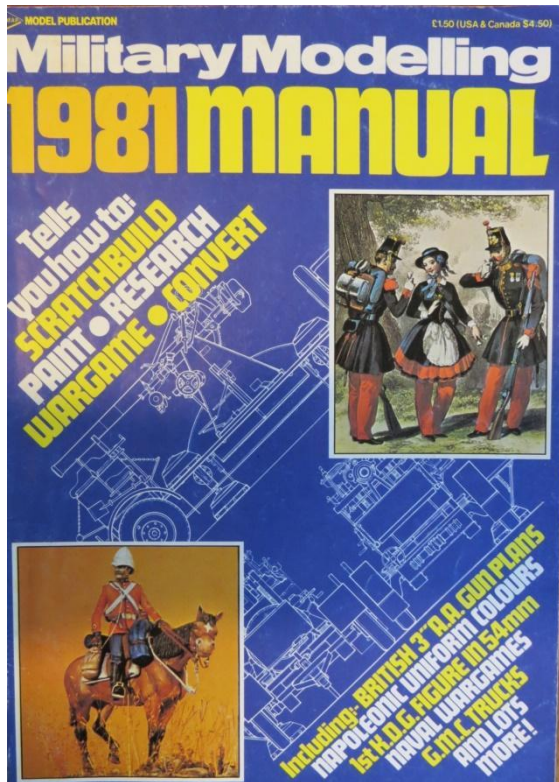


Military Modelling 1981 Manual

Model and Allied Publications, originally £1.50

Review by Jonathan Aird



By 1981 Military Modelling had incorporated *Battle for Wargamers* and was the only widely available UK magazine that had any amount of wargames content in it on a regular basis. The 1981 manual was a special issue produced around Christmas-time. Alongside articles on how to scratch build / paint / research / convert model figures, there were several articles on wargaming directly and also a number of very useful uniform painting guides. As shown by the photograph of the contents, even those articles which weren't obviously of war games applicability often offered at least some useful material for the gamer, whether it be on how to scratch build a model tank or techniques for painting figures or improving models in general.

Several articles though were of very specific wargaming use. Stuart Asquith, who would go on to edit *Practical Wargamer* in future years, offered a description of the Battle of Quatre Bras and how to walk and how to wargame it. This included photographs of the Airfix figures that he was using at the time, as well as a rather neat model of Gemioncourt farm that he had made himself using, it would appear, the Airfix Waterloo farm set, as well as two items from the trackside models range, namely the village pub and what appears to be a thatched cottage.

magazine contributor, Stuart Asquith, provides full wargaming suggestions for this famous battle.

Brief campaign background
 Since Napoleon had returned from exile in Elba and landed with a handful of men in southern France, his army had been gaining strength daily. Finally, with over 124,000 men, he moved against Brussels, hoping to defeat the Allied armies in turn before they could mass against him.
 Across Napoleon's road to Brussels and the Netherlands lay two Allied armies — those of the Duke of Wellington (the Anglo-Dutch "Army of the Low Countries") and Blücher's Prussian "Army of the Lower Rhine". The Emperor planned to hold Blücher's force whilst

Quatre Bras Waterloo Prelude

Above: a neat wargames version of Gemoncourt Farm by the author. Below: Airfix French light infantry and, bottom: cuirassiers make ideal troops.
 Photos: D. Mann

defeating Wellington and the first stage of the operation was to push the Prussians to the side lines. In order to achieve this, Napoleon decided to temporarily hold Wellington with his left flank and attack Blücher at Ligny and its environs.
 The left flank of the French army of the north was entrusted to Marshal Ney and it is this officer who led the Emperor's forces during the action at Quatre Bras.

Background to the Battle
 The village of Quatre Bras was a convenient point for the French to stop any Allied advance that might come to assist Blücher, under pressure at Ligny.
 Marshal Ney knew that Allied troops held the crossroads at Quatre Bras, but was unaware in exactly what strength. Hindsight,




Due to the size of the battle, Stuart Asquith recommended the use of a 1 to 50 ratio, which still meant having almost 400 figures a-side in order to play out the battle - no small undertaking, but more affordable using the plastic Airfix figures

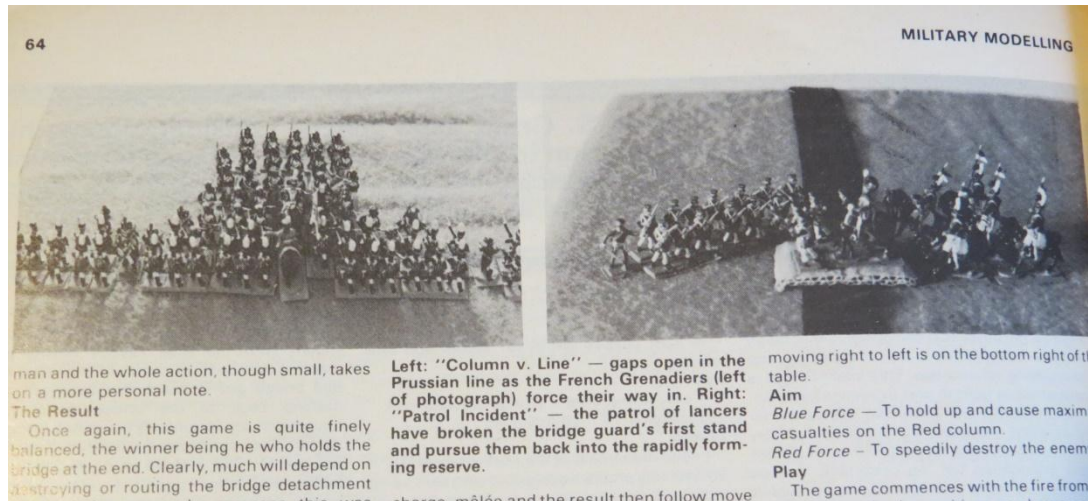
Richard Scollins gave a detailed account of the battle of Guilford Courthouse 1781, which certainly provided enough information to set up and game the battle, but was even more useful for the two pages of colour illustrations of Greene's and Wallace's armies. These each had about a dozen figures illustrated on a single page and all in that trademark Scollins-style of soldiers on campaign. No pair of white trousers would survive weeks in the field and thus Scollins' artwork shows grubby unshaven men wearing dishevelled uniforms, old and patched and heavily weathered and stained with mud or worse - very evocative.

Michael Barthorp's illustrations for uniforms of the Second Afghan War are a great contrast, being very much parade ground standard and showing a variety of Highland and Sepoy troops. It's a perfect reference for anyone wishing to represent the Empire troops of that conflict. Certainly of more interest to the modelling fraternity, the article by Philip Haythornwaite on French Infantry and Cantinieres in 1859 could also offer some inspiration for those who undertake skirmish games in this period, with the highly attractive and unusual cantinière uniforms offering a colourful addition to any game

Twentieth-century gamers were not completely neglected, as Terry Gander and Ken Musgrave together provided a useful history of, and methods of modelling in 1:76th scale, the three inch anti-aircraft gun of the British Army of the 1930s and '40s. Still modern then but now an interesting piece of history, George Forty's roundup of variants of the Chieftain tank is well illustrated in both colour and black and white photographs.

The most wargaming article of the whole manual however is surely Kelvin Homes' "Wargames with World War One Battle Cruisers" which, over a half dozen pages, provides all the information and a full set of rules required to get started in this seaborne sphere of gaming. Vying for the title of most war games useful article is C.S. Grants' "Four Tiny Table Teasers" which describe a series of games played out using a set of nested tables all of which were less than 30 inches by 30 inches square. The

full topics include: Teaser 1 Storming The Pass where cavalry tries to dislodge infantry and artillery from a hilltop, Teaser 2 The Patrol Incident where a foot patrol and a light cavalry patrol raced to take control of important crossing of the river, Teaser 3 Column Versus Line which literally plays out a column of infantry attacking a line of infantry in the Napoleonic period, whilst the final Teaser 4 Rocky Spot is a small skirmish game of light infantry against regular infantry in rough terrain where regimented firing and charges are difficult to achieve.



As a bonus the manual features on its back cover what may well be my favourite wargaming advertisement of all time. Not just because it features two models which I longed to own at the time - and if they weren't so expensive due to scarcity I would no doubt have cleared eBay of long ago - but also because it features that glorious strapline. Having stated that "*now you can recreate the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome*" it has the audacity to say "*with the accuracy that's Atlantic*".



Now, I loved the figures from Atlantic (well most of them some of the sets were truly abysmal) but even I realised that the Egyptian armies I built up using their figures were, judged honestly, wildly inaccurate, whilst the Greek armies were at best usable for fantasy figures recreating the films of Ray Harryhausen, and the Romans did not even represent a Hollywood version of Rome! Nonetheless, I would have loved to own the Colosseum model and even more so a small fleet of the galleys which would have been perfect for large naval skirmishes. Luckily these days one can fulfil that purchasing need through the offering of several companies selling laser cut MDF models, which leaves that Atlantic advert as just pure nostalgia.

The *Military Modelling 1981 Manual* was, and still is, a great read and second-hand copies can occasionally be found on Amazon or eBay with prices around £5.