



(Note — missiles detonate in the combat phase which is alternate, i.e. one side fires a ship/detonates a missile, then the other, then first again and so on. Initiative is by die roll for first shot).

This scenario further illustrates the principle of simplicity in attack being the greatest ally. I recommend approaching as Martians along the X axis as it is by far the easiest to handle. Then defeat Ares in detail methodically. Keep manoeuvre simple but subtle, not complex and confusing.

I recommend this scenario to any gamer, and strongly.

Scenario Four

An unusual scenario as the defender (the Martian) is greatly tempted to withdraw most of his forces before battle begins! Fighters should be released before any withdrawal to protect the base, which cannot be withdrawn. (The rationale behind the withdrawal should be viewed within the context of the strategic game: preservation of Martian ships, difficult to produce and de-escalation of the fight so any loss can be played down, and a victory hailed as giant-slaying heroism). The Martians *must* destroy at least 1 Ares ship if they effect a withdrawal. Ares must concentrate on the formation firing in this one, I feel.

All in all a finely balanced scenario which is good fun to play; the Martian should consider his withdrawal carefully and the loss in firepower that this would mean. One serious criticism — there are not enough fighter counters. Unused missile counters may be used as fighters, but there really should be more fighters. S.P.I. have confirmed that the limits of the countersheet are *not* limits to the OOB.

Scenario Five

Ares attack a small Martian Garrison at Juno which must fight alone until the arrival of the Relief Force. As in scenarios 1, 2 and 4 the base must be neutralised and *not* destroyed. Ares first decision upon entering the map is what to do about the Martian Garrison. The alternatives include:

- I) clobber the garrison with a combined missile and laser attack.
- II) conserve the missiles for use against the relief force by only using laser fire and formation fire.
- III) a mix of I) and II)

I prefer routine I) above. The scenario is very enjoyable but again hard work, I recommend, to make things easier for each side, that those ships which are to fire in the same formation be stacked in the same cube and to stack no other ships within that cube. This will result in stacks 3 ships high and a clearer and more efficient mind. This is a personal preference. Again, I advise the Ares and Relief Force to advance along the X axis and to fire along it, which will facilitate rangefinding. It should conserve fuel, too. Manoeuvre and initial deployment, especially of the base, are very important, as it will probably delineate where the Martian will make his stand.

By this time - I recommend playing the scenarios in order as a sort of P.I. (programmed instruction) exercise — I was beginning to work out a tactical routine with special emphasis on fire discipline. For example

- a) Preferably fire at ships; fighters do not count for V.P.'s
- b) Try to keep out of the way of missiles or shoot 'em down before they detonate.
- c) Cripple ships (destroy their burn capacity) to end the scenario in your favour and let the recovery table do the rest. This is a viable alternative to formation firing.
- d) Ares should prevent Martians from firing at attenuated ranges of 1-3 on table 10 by manoeuvre and in this scenario in particular.
- e) Martians firing on table 12 at long range place Ares at a disadvantage as missiles are out of range. Fighters lucky enough to get on table 6, even at long range, can scare Ares silly.
- f) Decide which of the CRT's to aim for, and decide which type of damage is your priority to inflict. Deploy your ships accordingly. (Basically in or out of formation; concentrated fire on 1 target or dispersed fire).

BATTLEFLEET MARS

PART 2 THE TACTICAL GAME

JOHN EVANS

The tactical game in **Battlefleet Mars** can be played separately or in conjunction with the strategic game. The map is a pair of squared grids which together combine to simulate combat in 3 dimensions. There are 2 counters for each spaceship (and each base, missile and fighter) with one of these 2 counters being placed on each grid. The grids are labelled X-Y and X-Z, each letter being a dimension (X obviously doubled), hence the grids may be mentally juxtaposed at 90° to give one a 3-D picture of what is going on.

Movement is "strictly Newtonian"—by momentum. This momentum is carried over from turn to turn and is indicated by a velocity marker placed under the counter. Velocity may be increased or decreased, "stopped" and reversed by directional acceleration which expends burn points and consumes fuel. Different ships have different burn and fuel capacities. Ships are catapults, transports and miners. Fighters and missiles may be launched from ships and bases; fighters move in a similar way to ships, missiles move slightly differently. Bases do not move. Ships and bases are deployed on the game map by one of two set routines.

Ships, bases and fighters have combat by laser fire, each type of ship having a different laser strength. Bases are strongest, then catapults, transports miners and fighters in that order. Range is determined by a "true distance table" which gives the range in cubes. Combat resolution is given by a die roll on one of 12 (!) CRT's, decided by adding laser strength of the firing ship(s) to a further but prior die roll. Destruction, damage or no effect will result, depending on the die roll on the relevant CRT, cross-indexed with range. Ships, fighters and bases fire singly unless they fire in formation. Formation will increase the chances of a hit, but ships firing in formation must be close to one another, be 3 in number and moving at the same rate in the same 3-D direction. Sounds complex but isn't. Missiles may be launched and detonate upon striking their target, frequently causing large-scale damage. Damage can be repaired during the game at a set point in the game turn and ships may under certain circumstances be withdrawn from the battle.

6 scenarios are provided, and if the tactical game is played within the strategic game many more will be generated. Scenarios can be easily created and here's how I found the 6 provided in the game:

Scenario One

Counters look good in this "shoot-out" at the O.K. Corral. It is well balanced and good for getting into the run of play. Counters saying "fired" would help, or alternatively a "fired" rosta.

Scenario Two

Introduces players to the use of missiles. As in the first scenario, manoeuvring around the base can be fun.

Scenario Three

This is my favourite scenario. A force of Martian miners and catapults, equipped with fighters for the first time, attack a system of 6 Ares bases and 2 transports. All Ares units are armed with missiles. Manoeuvre is very important as the bases are static: the Martian should attempt to take on the bases one at a time, and destroy the transports — the Ares mobile reserve — as soon as possible. Formation shooting is recommended for the Martian, and at long range, so that the Ares bases' missiles are out of range. The Martian should attempt to ensure that such formation shooting occurs on table 12, not just because it is the most deadly, but also because the statistics will simplify to recognisable parameters and hence a steady plan can be followed and success rate monitored. The 1 in 6 chance of blowing an Ares base into oblivion with 1 volley should not be passed up! But at no time should the Martian task force enter the Ares cross-fire. (Why? Because it's deadly).

Ares should guard the precious transports. Martian fighters in particular may try to hunt them down as the fighters have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Ares should always salvo missiles in multiples of two as a general rule of thumb — at least one out of each pair should then get through.

Players may agree as a sporting gesture to withdraw fighters with their laser capacity destroyed. This will reduce confusion, although it is arguable that this may weaken the Martian position against a careless Ares player.

Gripes concerning this scenario;

- I) Not nearly enough fighter counters and arguably missile counters.
- II) Damage nomenclature slack — as in other scenarios.

Scenario 6

For the enthusiast. Martians withdraw ships in this battle for Mars for a counterstroke, gaining V.P.'s but Martians must hold Mars or lose, whatever the V.P. situation. Quite a tightrope to walk. A big scenario involving hard work, but is likely to be rewarding.

I'd like to make a few further remarks on the tactical game:-

a) **Formations** — the composition of formations can be interesting to tinker with; clearly 3 catapults is a bad idea as you are bound to get on table 12, hence not utilising your die roll which is normally added to laser strength (laser strength = CRT number). Worth considering before deployment especially.

b) **Ships** — I really like the counters, especially their names; "Rock Music", "Shazan" for example. Very nice.

c) **Fighters** — More counters, please, S.P.I.

d) **Damage** — Clear up of nomenclature desirable.

e) **Scenario Victory Conditions** — the possession of an asteroid/planet criteria could be clearer. "Seriously damaged" should be explained (sec. d.)

f) **Neutralising bases** — remember to find 16.43.

g) **Withdrawal** — consider it. (No offence)

h) **Stacks** — could be big and difficult to use, but not necessarily so.

i) **"Fired" counters** — (or similar) may be desirable as it is difficult in a large action to remember which ships have shot, especially when fighters are involved.

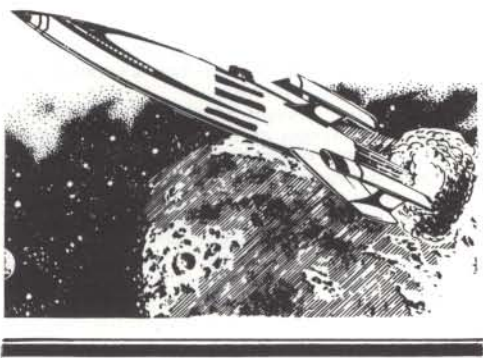
j) **Cargo capacity** — is unclear and I believe that both fighters and missiles can be carried by one ship on the ratio 1 fighter = 2 missiles. Thus, a base or catapult could carry 4 missiles or 2 fighters or 2 missiles and 1 fighter. This will only occur, however, when using the tactical game within the strategic game.

k) **Questions for S.P.I.:**

I) What is the difference between "Salvo" and "Launch" or are they two words for the same thing?

II) With reference to Case 27.17 — is a scenario over when one side has un-crippled ships and the other side un-neutralised bases? (Note, I would imagine not).

Having said all this about the Tactical and Strategic games, I feel I must say that I like Battlefleet Mars and recommend it. It is complex at first, but soon play flows easily and effortlessly. It is a subtle mix of economics, politics, space travel and combat and the overall effect is very good indeed. A bit of a gem.



BOOK REVIEW

HAMISH WILSON

Siege warfare was the poor reply to massive fortification which pre-gunpowder tacticians were forced to employ when they found their armies encamped before the massive curtain walls of their opponent. It was, I believe, Napoleon who said, "He who stays within his fortification is defeated" and it would seem that history gives him the right. History as displayed in such splendid works as Steven Runciman's "A History of the Crusades" which has been published by Penguin in their 'Kestrel' imprint. The three volumes of this scholarly and readable work cost £2.95 a piece but the price is small compared with the great value of these extremely well bound paperbacks. (If all paperbacks were this well bound the hard backs would be out of business). A total of sixteen maps, two fold out tables of genealogy and (not counting bibliographies) over twelve hundred pages of text takes the well treated reader through the enthralling story of the Crusades. The trilogy was finally completed twenty five years ago and like all good things is none the worse for it's age.

A mixture of seige and open mobile warfare was to be the pattern for a long time after the Crusades and it was not until the end of The Hundred Years War that the first palls of cannon smoke were to be seen drifting across battlefields. As well as seeing the end of the age of chivalry and the upturning of many of the ways of life in both France and England, The Hundred Years War was to bequeath us astonishing tales of valour and victories won against great odds with troops led by their own Kings. Names like Charles the Wise and The Black Prince and Battle Honours like Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt echo down the years but for all the dates and politics which fourth form history gives us what was the life like in those days and what was it that moved the leather jerkined soldiers of the day? Some part of the answers to those questions may be found in two books which deal with the period. Alan Lloyd, who will already be known to many from his work on trench warfare, has written a brief but cogent history of the period called "The Hundred Years War" which is published by Hart-Davis, McGibbon at £5.95, as part of their British at War series. Well illustrated in monochrome with pictures of old prints and photographs of ancient tombs and with upwards of half a dozen maps, this book will do very well as an introduction to a very complex and interesting period. For a more detailed, useful and, to my taste, meatier read, then look to "The Hundred Years War" (so what else can you call it?) by Desmond Seward which is published by Constable at £6.95. This is also well illustrated with plates and line drawings to support details of the text — there's a hint here of the SPI 'Modular' approach — and some two or three maps of a general sort, together with what I would prefer to call battle plans of all the significant actions. Where Mr. Lloyd provides the bones of the history, Mr. Seward gives us flesh on the bones and spices the whole with wit, insight and humour. More detailed and more fun is my verdict.

While dealing with this subject let me briefly mention a book which has some relevance and a great deal of interest. It is an account of the archeological expedition to Masada, Herod's great fortress and the site of the last stand of "The Zealots". I have always found something of interest in tales of discovery but this book is doubly interesting in that it tells of the discoveries and also of the seige itself. This richly illustrated Abacus paperback costs £3.95 and is called "Masada" with author Yigael Yadin telling a many layered story of excitement which will stay with the reader long

after the book is finished, and which is a source of valuable information on Roman siege tactics.

From the Middle East to the Far East and from 73 A.D. to 1942 and to the retreat from Burma. That's the start for Brigadier E.D. "Birdie" Smith's book "Battle for Burma" which the indefatigable Messrs Batsford have published at £8.75. This is a most useful book in that it provides a general look at a series of actions and campaigns which have been dealt with in detail in other, earlier works. Brigadier Smith has provided an excellent assessment of the conflicts and congruencies in the upper echelons of the Allied command which includes a very honest portrait of the anglophobic "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell. For all his dislike of the British it is clear from this account that this energetic American Officer was cast in a mould which senior British officers admired, especially his reaction to the defeat and retreat "We got the hell licked out of us. It was humiliating as well. We ought to have found out why it happened and return." and that's what the rest of the book is about. The process of finding out and returning which was to result ultimately in the complete and crushing defeat of the Japanese 28th and 33rd armies. Twenty three photographs and twelve clear maps support the text of a book that confirms the very high standards of the Batsford 'Battle' series of books.

Another paperback now and it's from Penguin again. You may have sat up to watch the astonishing A.J.P. Taylor's television lectures which were known collectively under the title of "The War Lords". I know that I made a noble attempt to follow the lectures but, following a lengthy day's labour, more often found myself lulled to sleep despite the great energy and attack with which Professor Taylor informed his work. You will see that I am glad that the lectures have now been published in book form for, while one may not agree with all that he has to say, there is nothing which he offers us which is not stimulating, original and offering further insights into material with which we may believe ourselves to be already familiar. The six lectures covered the five war leaders, Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, and the last looks at Japan where, Professor Taylor suggests, there was no overall war lord. As well as the text there are numerous photographs and the whole costs £1.50. A small price for what will be an interesting and valuable book.

Volume Three of "A Dictionary of Battles" by Brigadier Michael Calvert and Brigadier Peter Young has just been published by New English Library and covers the period from 1715-1815. It's an astonishing book which will be of value to any student of military history in that it covers all battles whether naval or land battles and it seeks to cover the entire world. I must confess to being unable to comment about how comprehensive the coverage of, say, China is, since I have never studied the history of that country in that kind of detail, but here we learn about "The White Lotus Rebellion" (1796-1806). Two years later William Bligh, of 'Bounty' fame, was once again involved in mutiny in "The Rum Rebellion" in Sydney, Australia. The list of astonishing and obscure odds and sods with which the book is sprinkled is extensive enough to keep any well informed browser well content with new and suitably esoteric information, and that's apart from the enormous amount of information about battles which are a bit more famous than the Rum Rebellion. The book is divided into eleven sections. The first six are essentially geographical divisions and show what was happening around the world. The next five sections deal with the American Revolution, the French Revolutionary Wars, the Peninsular War, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the last section deals with the world wide reverberations caused by the little Corsican gunner. Twenty four maps show the sites of the battles mentioned in the text and the print is large enough to avoid the worst excesses of eye strain usually associated with vast books of this sort. £11.95 will secure a copy of this very valuable, indeed essential, book for any student of the art of warfare or of military history. By the way, Volume Four has already been published and takes us from 1816-1976. The authors are working backwards and I have a great desire to take a look at volume one but that's the past that's in the future.

One of the most prolonged and bloody conflicts of the last few years has been that which involved