

Peter Pig Newsletter 005 August 2012



Hello from the Peter Pig (PP) team.

Sorry for the late date of this newsletter but we have few hands to do many tasks.

What follows are musings, information and ideas.

Hope you find it of some use.

peterpigorders@gmail.com will now get you through to Mike and Nigel in the workshop for info about your orders

Here at PP we have been working hard on the SCW range.

The intention is to get the range to about 80 packs. This will happen slowly because of parallel work on AWI and other projects.

The newer figures are a touch taller and better sculpted.

We are also taking the opportunity to extend 1 pack items into 2 pack items. Thus “Nationalist infantry” become “Nationalist infantry advancing” and “Nationalist infantry firing” etc. In addition a lot of new SCW head packs will be released so that players can convert a pack into another pack. Hats tend to be the most significant identifier.

Barricades (New PP resin items)

We have just released 2 new barricades. These were mainly designed to go with the new “Square Bashing” rules as the rules need hasty defences to be deployed. They can be used for most periods as the constituent parts are fairly generic.

One type of barricade is based around logs and earthworks such as might be constructed in the countryside. The second barricade type is more urban as it contains beds, cupboards and the like.

Each barricade is a little under 6” so that a barricade can be ended on to another barricade without exceeding the 6” size restriction used in SB on each square.



Square Bashing - Available at Colours and on-line from September 8th

At last Square Bashing (SB) version 2 is here. The first edition lasted some 15 years. You do get longevity from PP rules. SB is encapsulated in a pair of books. There is the rule book and the army book. The army book covers armies from 1900 to 1928. The 1928 was decided upon as the SCW marks major advances in tanks and aircraft technology. Of course SCW can be fought using SB.

The 55 armies supply protagonists for Cuban war, Boer war, Boxer Rebellion, Balkan war, WW1, British Revolution, RCW, Russo Japanese War, Mexican war, Rif Wars and Chaco War. Each army has it's own event chart and unit limitations.

The rules will allow players with an existing SB army to use it for the new SB. That is deliberate so as to minimise disruption in the lives of SB players.

The basic concept of SB is that the players move their units around a grid of 6" squares. The grid is on a 4 foot by 3 foot table. The enemy is usually damaged by a square assaulting one of his squares. The gridded layout means that it is easy to determine which units/squares are in support, which units are involved and what scenery is present.

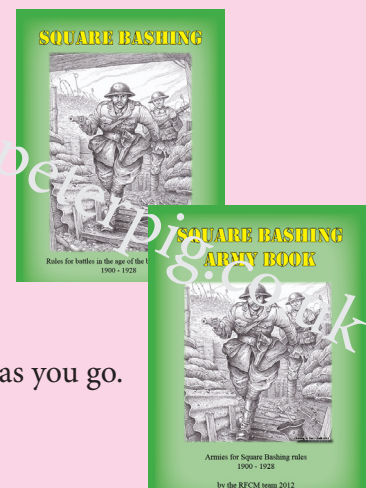
Each turn begins with a player looking at which asset he wants to use. Assets include barrages, morale functions, fighting functions and arrivals. The clever part of assets is that each asset is graded in terms of a number of D6. Thus an asset of 11 means that 11 D6 are available in order to make that asset "happen". It goes like this "I have 11D6 available for this asset. I choose to use 5 of the 11D6. When I roll the 5D6 any score of 6 will allow that asset to happen. I could have used all 11 but I think 5 should do it". The remaining 6 D6 are available in future turns for more of that asset. Only 1 asset can be attempted per turn.

SB "armies" are in fact divisional strength. A typical army would have 12 battalions, 5 MGs and 5 field guns. A basic infantry unit always starts with 4 bases and represents a battalion. Heavier artillery is all off table. The on table commander is more "giving orders" than "leading from the front".

SB is full of new and clever mechanisms to help the game move along well. This might cause a steep leaning curve for players but the effort should be worth it.

Here are some of the interesting mechanisms.

- Asset system as detailed above.
- Event charts to create random events associated with that army.
- Scenario builder event charts.
- Depletions to create attack/defence situation.
- Victory point schedule that includes army potential compensation.
- Gridded layout/assessment of support squares and barrage areas.
- Scenery generation.
- Full rules that include all aspects of the game..no need to make it up as you go.
- Opponent shooting carried out in your turn.
- Countdown system.
- Constructed for competition use.
- Includes quick start game version.
- Allows a players to turn up with an army and everything else gets done at the game start. No need to agree scenarios. This is called the "Turn up and Play" system. i.e. You agree to pay a game of square bashing, get out your army plus scenery and get to it.





Historicon

This is probably the biggest US show each year. This was our 7th Historicon, so we are veterans (?).

There have been many reviews made so I thought I would just give 10 short sentences.

- We took 15mm Patrols in the Sudan (full game not the usual gamettes of games we take to shows in the UK).
- Good lighting.
- Very noisy.
- Someone stole Martin's shirt. Someone also stole the game table before we could get set up.
- All the participants were sharp and "got it" pretty quickly.
- Bought some Conte figures from the dealer hall.
- Ran 7 full games.
- Thought attendance was a bit down on 2010 (didn't get to 2011 at Valley Forge).
- Good selection of periods and scales.
- Not many females playing.





Cass Scenic Mountain Railway, W.Virginia



Paoli



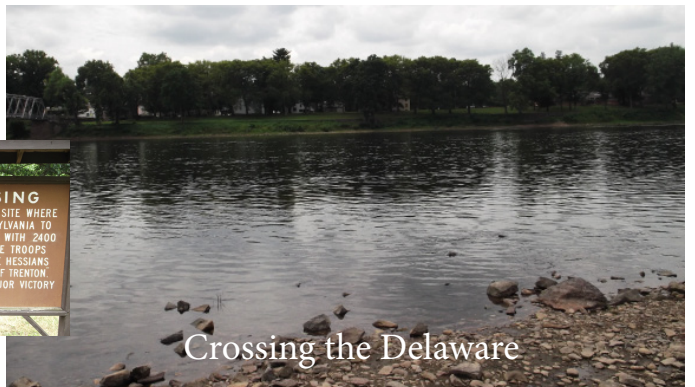
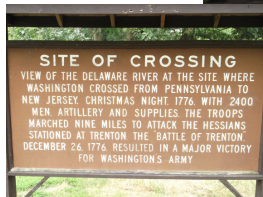
Trenton Barracks, New Jersey



Manassas Battlefield



Charlottesville



Paoli

(US commander Antony Wayne got snuck up on whilst withdrawing from the British army)

The PP team visited this battlefield. The local people we asked (4 different in three locations) about the battlefield had no idea of what it was or where it was. This included a phone call to their local head office...no one knew.... then our hero Scott appeared and said he knew exactly where it was..Well done Scott. It was half a mile away!

Paoli is the site of a small AWI battle where British units caught American units un-aware. The Americans often name it as the “Paoli Massacre” as the American units suffered from being snuck up on. The title “Massacre” was intended to arouse fierce patriotism rather than reflect the behaviour of the British. It goes along the lines of the 1914 Germans raping nuns and bayoneting babies wholesale.

The American units did put up a fight which included the use of artillery.

The battlefield is small but well enough preserved to give a good indication of how the battle progressed. It is contained within a “battlefield park”. I would recommend it over some of the other AWI battlefields which are so “built over” as to make them hard to navigate. The best AWI battlefield I have visited is King’s Mountain, as it is true to history and has a nice museum too. Guildford Courthouse is a bit in the wrong place but none the less good. Hannah’s Cowpens is another great little battlefield with good markers on the ground.

Trenton barracks

(AWI battle when Washington crossed the Delaware and surprised the Hessian garrison)

Trenton barracks is right in the middle of Trenton as in “jammed between the state buildings”. It is however a real gem. The staff are all “costumed up” and very knowledgeable. If you get there really early when it is quiet you can get a personalised tour. The restoration of the uniforms, furniture and artefacts is excellent. The battle map and talk were first rate and helped put the whole battle into context. The demonstration of pox and cures was a bit ouch! We spent about 2 hours at the location and really enjoyed it. Really recommended.

Bull Run/Manassas

(ACW battle where the rebs beat the yanks, twice)

This is the fifth time we have visited Bull Run. The Battlefield is well preserved and pretty big. The circulatory walk is good and long. There is a good museum which has recently (?) installed one of those great coloured light battle maps. These maps consist of a detailed 3D battlescape with little LEDs that light up to show the fighting and movement of units. There is a good one of these at Cold Harbour too. The parked limbers, caissons and guns are very atmospheric. The Stonewall Jackson statue always causes a wry smile as the massive and muscular frame of the great man peers into the distance atop his fearsome destrier. In all probability Jackson could have smitten the enemy in person such was his physique! Another really recommended. Do be warned that most of the locals do not know the existence or whereabouts of the battlefield. The only man that did was running the local Harley dealership.Well done that man.

Chancellorsville

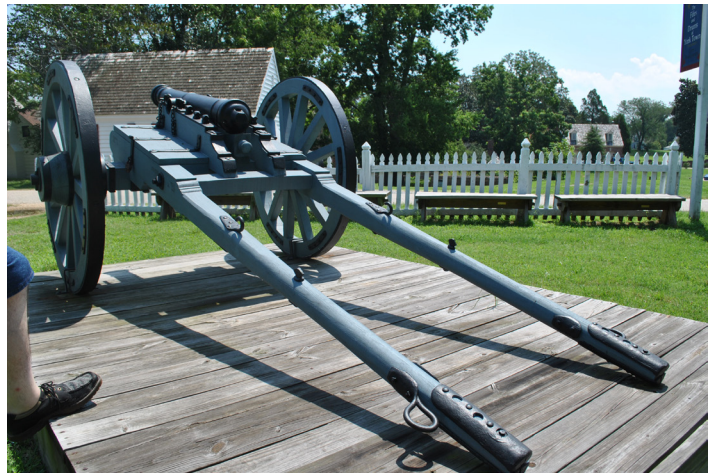
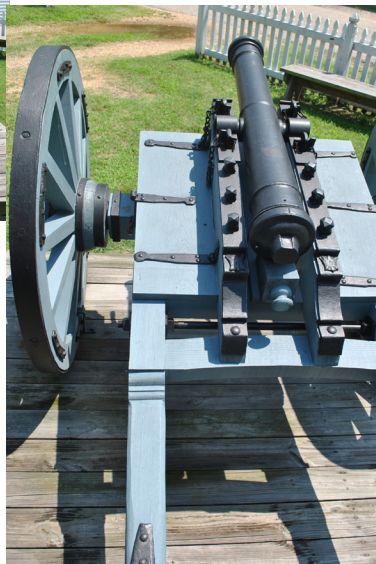
(ACW battle with a huge amount of casualties)

We stopped at Chancellorsville. The interesting fact about this battle is the Chancellorsville was a big Confederate house and associated buildings rather than a settlement or town. In addition the house was named after the owning family. As was the case in the ACW battle the local terrain was quite wooded. This was the battle at which Jackson was mortally wounded by his own pickets whilst returning from a reconnaissance. This battle field would benefit from a good battle map and visitor centre, but that is a wargamer's wish for all battlefields. We did not visit the Jackson "shrine" this time but it is interesting despite the overly serious "shrine" moniker.

Sperryville VA

(ACW cavalry skirmish)

Didn't find any Confederate cavalry in Sperryville, but the atmosphere was about right for them to appear. Enjoyed the meat sandwiches though.



Battle cloths

Cloth is cheap and available in a variety of colours. This allows players to make mats for specific games and game systems without the need to worry much about the price. Roads and rivers painted on a cloth make for more realism, albeit at the expense of flexibility.

Material

In my experience the best material is cotton based, with a good thickness. Too thin and the cloth will move around the table too easily. A heavy cloth often creases less. I have found some great acrylic cloths for Russian steppe and desert. Of course Sci-Fi players have a huge range of colours and textures to choose from. The teddy bear fur seems popular too, although I have not used it for a whole battlefield yet.

Although felt is good in terms of colour and durability it is not recommended for paint application. It is too absorbent and rough.

Roads

Painted on roads look great on a cloth. They can conform to whatever curves and junctions that are required by the game. These roads will not shift about when troops move over them.

I usually use a base colour of grey for made up (cobbled) roads or tan for rougher roads. This base layer uses thick and cheap acrylic paint. On the made up roads I would usually use a variety of greys to put on groups of cobblestones. This patch effect gives a nice impression whilst saving the time needed to paint every bit of the road.

For rougher roads, thin stripes can represent wheel tracks and ruts. Occasional clusters of lighter tan colours can represent some stones used to pave the track/road. An overall dry brush of pale tan sweeping in the direction of road travel gives a “flow”. Dry brushing is where the brush has most of the paint taken out by using the brush on some scrap paper. The small remaining amount of paint will catch bumps and lumps to give a high lighting effect. The contrast between lighter and darker shades can be quite large as the roads are to be seen in less than day light conditions.

Scenic areas

Specific areas of the cloth might be categorised as woods or marsh for example. These areas can use a dabbling of a lighter colour. Woodland can be enhanced by a “stipple” of yellow. A stipple is when a brush with coarse bristles is used. The individual bristles are so old or stiff that they each make a mini spot rather than a continuous colour. I use a big chubby “play” brush as available from a children’s paint brush shop. This looks a bit like sunlight of flower areas.

Game markings

PBI requires a grid, so that a pen can be used for this purpose. Other PP games need markings for deployment limits. As a personal habit I date and label each cloth e.g. “PBI Historicon 2003”.

Brushes

The most important brush is the 1.5 inch decorator’s brush (those black haired ones used for painting window surrounds. This brush is used for the base coats of roads and the edges of scenic areas.

Second along comes the broad sable brush. This will flow nicely over a base coat and drag and colour stripes along the scenery with continuity. I use a very expensive sable for this (1.5 cm width). It does last a long time though.

Third brush is the stippler. This is an Early Learning Centre child’s chubby brush. This is stabbed into the paint and then stabbed into the cloth.

Fourth brush is the fine liner.