

Conference of Wargamers 2026



Panther (with FG 1250 infra-red night vision gear!) at the Bundeswehr Defence Technology Study Collection, Koblenz.

Cranfield Management Development Centre

Duncan Road, Cranfield, Bedfordshire, England, MK43 0HG.
10-12 July 2026

Introduction

Another year, another COW. Once again, a lot of work by a number of people has made it possible not only to run COW but to do so at a rather lower cost that had been expected last year. I hope you will bring your customary enthusiasm to the event and help make it a success.

I look forward to seeing you at Cranfield.

Tim Gow Conference Organiser and general dogsbody

COW is brought to you by Wargame Developments and has been created by a management committee comprising (in no particular order) Tim Gow, Bob Cordery, Matthew Hartley, John Armatys, John Bassett, David Burden, John Curry, Alex Kleanthous, Stephen Aguilar-Millan, Judith Rawle, Michael D'Alessandro, Pete Sizer and Julian Fuller.

How to find Cranfield MDC & parking info

- SAT NAV - MK43 0HG
- WAZE - enter the destination 'Cranfield Management Development Centre'
- THREE WORDS – movement.coach.theory

See also the attached pdf 'How to find COW 2026.' There is a delivery bay for unloading and loading stuff near the conference centre. This is accessed through Car Park 3.

Arrival and Registration

The venue consists of a hotel building and a conference centre linked by a corridor. You can check in to your bedroom at the hotel reception and use the public rooms in the hotel from 1400 on Friday. Assume that the conference rooms will not be available until 1700. COW name badges will be available for collection in the Atrium from 1700. Please wear these throughout the weekend as a courtesy to other attendees and Cranfield Staff.

Accommodation

Bedrooms are in the hotel and have double or twin beds, are en-suite, and have tea/coffee making facilities. Check out time is 11 am. There is free access to a gym, indoor pool and sauna.

Dress

There is no code for the venue or the conference, but please don't take this as a challenge.. Some of our sessions have been known to be 'unkind to clothes' so you may wish to bring something suitable.

Smoking

Smoking is NOT allowed in the building.

Meals and Refreshments

All meals are self-service.

Meal	Where	When
Breakfast	Hotel Restaurant	7 am to 9 am
Lunch	Conference Centre	12.30 pm to 1.30 pm
Dinner	Hotel Restaurant	7 pm

Refreshments (hot beverages, biscuits, cakes, soft drinks and fruit) will be available throughout the day in the conference centre.

Bar

The hotel bar will be open for drinks to take into the meals and in the evenings. Drinks can be taken into the conference centre.

Alcohol drunk in the venue must have been purchased from the bar.

The Small Print

The notes on sessions, accommodation, facilities and food are for guidance only, and in no way form any part of a contract with the Conference Organisers, Wargame Developments or Cranfield. If belongings are left unattended in any of the public or conference rooms it is at your own risk.

Welcome and Orientation for first time attendees

This will take place in Lecture Room 16 at 1830 on Friday evening. The Conference Organiser will give an explanation of the format of the weekend. The Conference Organiser will undoubtedly forget about this so please seek him out and remind him.

Session Information

The Information Board and Timetable will be situated in the conference centre. The programme contains details of all sessions which were received before the deadline. I thank all of you who have sent me the full details required to plan the weekend. Please be respectful of other sessions in respect of location and noise levels.

Timetabling this year has been particularly challenging as large numbers of sessions have been offered, and most require two-hour time slots. I have dealt with this by allocating longer slots to a few sessions which may benefit from the extra time and by tweaking the session slot timings. It is inevitable that there will be attendees who are unable to get to all their preferred sessions due to clashes. That, sadly, is life. I am most grateful to Pete Sizer, John Armatys and John Bassett for their help in sense-checking the timetable.

The Plenary Game

Part of the role of the plenary game at COW is to encourage attendees to mingle and to afford newcomers an opportunity to mix with the ‘old lags.’

Participation in the plenary game is of course not compulsory but remains highly recommended.

Timetable Diktats

In an attempt to make the sign-up process fairer for those who can't get to COW early, attendees are asked not to sign up for more than 3 sessions before 1930 on Friday.

Presenters are requested to provide a booking-in sheet for their session. It is suggested that presenters remove these shortly before the session takes place and ensure that as far as possible all those who have pre-booked and who turn up are given priority. If a session appears to be full, it is often worth having a word with the presenter as it may be possible to accommodate you. **If you do not know the presenter, please ask around – someone will!**

If you have indicated your interest in a session, please turn up in good time. Presenters cannot be expected to delay a session on the off chance that you roll in late! **Not attending a session you have signed up for is considered very bad form.**

It is not out-with the bounds of possibility that some session times and venues will change – please check the main timetable to avoid disappointment.

Presenters are reminded that timetabled sessions have priority over impromptu or relocated sessions – a presenter timetabled to be in a room should not be encroached upon by other presenters.

Do not interrupt other presenters in the hope of finding recruits for your own session – this is not acceptable behaviour.

The slot following the Plenary Game on Friday night is traditionally the ‘short sessions slot’. It should be possible, subject to demand, to attend more than one of these short games.

Attendees must not make audio or video recordings of sessions or take photos of sessions which show people, without agreement. Some sessions may be recorded by or on behalf of the presenter. Recordings will only be made available to the public with the consent of the presenter and anyone who can be identified in the recording.

The Bring & Buy

Tables will be set up in the conference centre. Goods should be labelled clearly with details of price and vendor. In the past, honesty has been relied upon to ensure that monies end up in the correct pockets. Please remember to bring plenty of cash!

GOODS ARE LEFT AT THE OWNER’S RISK. WARGAME DEVELOPMENTS, CRANFIELD AND THE CONFERENCE ORGANISERS WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY LOSSES OR DAMAGE SUFFERED.

It is requested that vendors donate at least 10% of their takings to WD funds (it costs at least as much to unload goods at a wargames show or on a popular internet auction site). This also applies to authors and publishers selling their own books and games. Tim Gow, Bob Cordery, John Bassett and John Armatys will be pleased to accept such donations on behalf of WD.

THE WARGAME DEVELOPMENTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Wargame Developments Annual General Meeting

So far, the AGM agenda includes the following items. Please let Tim Gow [REDACTED] have any other items in writing no later than 4 July 2026.

1. Report by the Conference Organiser (Tim Gow)

The WD Governing Committee consists of the Chair and Conference Organiser (Tim Gow), the Nugget Editor (Matthew Hartley), the Membership Secretary and Treasurer (Bob Cordery) and the following co-opted members: John Armatys, Stephen Aguilar-Millan, John Bassett, David Burden, John Curry; Michael D'Alessandro, Alex Kleanthous, Judith Rawle and Pete Sizer.

2. Report by the Treasurer/Membership Secretary (Bob Cordery)

The Governing Committee has decided that WD membership fees for the year 2026/27 should be unchanged at:

Full Membership (UK & BFPO): £30.00

Full Membership (rest of world) £40.00

e-membership £20.00

3. Report by the Editor of "The NUGGET" (Matthew Hartley)

4. Report by the Editor of the Colour Supplement (Chris Ager)

5. Report by the Display Team Organisers (John Armatys, Chris Ager and John Curry). To include details of forthcoming events.

6. To adopt a new constitution

That the new constitution be adopted with effect from the end of this meeting (proposed John Bassett, seconded Bob Cordery). A copy is attached to the e-mail which included the programme.

7. The election of Officers. Nominations for Office are open at the AGM:

Option A - if the new constitution has been agreed:

The following have indicated their willingness to stand for office as Principal Officers.

Chair: Tim Gow

COW Organiser: Tim Gow

Editor: Matthew Hartley

Membership Secretary and Treasurer: Bob Cordery

General Secretary: John Armatys

Digital Co-ordinator: David Burden.

Members are invited to volunteer to be Other Officers or to serve on the Governing Committee. Current volunteer's names are shown below:

Committee Members: Stephen Aguilar-Millan, John Basset, John Curry, Michael D'Alessandro, Judith Rawle, Pete Sizer, Alex Kleanthous.

Vice Chair: John Bassett

Organiser WD Display Team (North): John Armatys

Organiser WD Display Team (South): Chris Ager

Organiser WD Display Team (West): John Curry

Colour Supplement Editor: Chris Ager

Assistant Membership Secretary and Treasurer: Stephen Aguilar-Millan

VCOW Organiser: Tim Gow

AVG Organiser: Michael D'Alessandro

Organisers of Other Events: None.

Option B - if the new constitution has not been agreed:

The names that follow have indicated their willingness to stand for office.

Conference Organiser. Proposed: Tim Gow

Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Proposed: Bob Cordery

Assistant Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Proposed: Stephen Aguilar-Millan

Editor of "The NUGGET". Proposed: Mathew Hartley

Colour Supplement Editor. Proposed: Chris Ager

Co-ordinator, WD Display Team North. Proposed: John Armatys

Co-ordinator, WD Display Team South. Proposed: Chris Ager

Co-ordinator, WD Display Team West. Proposed: John Curry

8. Any other business

SESSIONS

THE PLENARY GAME

John Bassett

XERXES' INVASION OF GREECE

75 minutes

all

It's 480 BC and the King of Kings is advancing in all his power. Your chance to drink the rivers dry, make heroic last stands, put your trust in ambiguous oracles and conspire to conquer or defend the land of the Hellenes.

Stephen Aguilar-Millan

BAFFLED BY BOARDGAMES – STEVE JACKSON'S ILLUMINATI

2 hours

any

I have owned a copy of Steve Jackson's INWO for over 20 years and I've never really understood how to play the game. We would like to run a session where the participants, hopefully with a degree of knowledge about how to play the game, teach us the gameplay. It's a bit like one of those demonstration games that we see at shows, only we would like to ask the players about the game mechanics and why they made the decisions they made. Hopefully, we can achieve a degree of knowledge transfer and the players can have a fun morning conspiring to rule the world.

John Bassett

BERLIN NOCTURNE

2 hours

5-10

Description: Berlin at the height of the Cold War: the KGB, GRU and STASI are locked in a deadly shadow battle with Western intelligence in a city of spies, traitors, plot and counter plot. And now the dark night we always feared has arrived. A role-playing game set in a hall of mirrors...

Michael Young

WORLD WAR III IN TEN MINUTES

10 minutes – will run several times

2

Derived from the 2025 plenary game, this is 5-10 minute 2 player game representing a future tactical nuclear war. Can you win the war without it escalating to a nuclear apocalypse when both players lose?

Tim Carne

CAVALRY CONSIDERATIONS

2 hours

4+

Do cavalry rules provide the players with a game that allows for the shock effect of cavalry? Do the constraints on cavalry emphasise battlefield conditions in a realistic manner?

In this session I want to workshop the options for improving the representation of cavalry in tabletop games. I have some ideas as start points but I am hoping the group can firstly help with these and secondly come up with suggestions.

John Bassett
IN TENEBRIS

90 minutes

4-8

An experimental game about Roman generals during the long, dark night before battle. Featuring wine, food, concubines, last minute planning, inspiration, dreams, omens and possibly some sleep. Players will represent generals, staff officers, interpreters of dreams, clowns and comic actors.

Tim Gow
A YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY – MONTROSE’S SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN

2 hours

4-8+

An exploration of the 1644-45 Scottish Campaign of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose. My plan is to refight his major battles using 25mm toys and 'Dominion of...' rules, illustrated by various maps, including that from the Decision Games mini-game 'A Year Of Living Dangerously', which will serve to give the individual battles more context. This session will involve a fair bit of me droning on about (other) famous Scots but will at least be let in with some toy soldiering. Additional spectators are welcome.

John Armatys and Mark Flanagan
633 SQUADRON

10 minutes – will run several times

1

WD Display Team (North)'s 10 minute solo participation game of "The greatest adventure since men fought on Earth... Or flew over it!" (from the film poster). "No squadron has ever been sent out on a more critically important mission.....".

Bob Cordery
THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC: SINKING U-BOATS: A REACTION TO THE WATU ‘MYTH’

2 hours

any

At the WD AVG in October 2024, John Curry made a presentation that challenged the currently widely held myth that the Western Approaches Training Unit (WATU) had a profound effect on the course of the Battle of the Atlantic. This set me thinking long and hard about U-boat losses and their causes, and this presentation seeks to look at all the factors that led to the winning of the Battle of the Atlantic. Hopefully there will be time to discuss the presentation and various the ways in which the Battel of the Atlantic can be wargamed.

Richard Lockwood
SAVE THE EMPEROR!

2 hours

6

A game set in Roman Britannia. The Emperor has vanished from camp in Britannia. He seeks an old comrade somewhere in the wilds — alone and unguarded.

Three dangers loom:

Briton Warbands – hostile raiders scour the countryside; The Assassin – rumour has it that a killer stalks the Emperor, identity unknown; The Emperor Himself – impulsive, reckless, resistant to protection, and perhaps a little bit camp.

Mission: Find the Emperor; Protect him from Britons and assassins alike; Bring him safely back to Roman lines.

The honour of Rome, your careers, and perhaps the Empire itself are at stake.

David Burden

BRICK BY BLOODY BRICK 2

2 hours

2-6

This is a very different game from the Brick By Bloody Brick presented at COW2024. It is now a far more tactical urban game, playing out on a square grid using modular 2D terrain tiles with a platoon of company sized force and squad or section manoeuvre units. Drones, and of course rubble, are explicitly modelled. As this forms part of my PhD I'll be asking participants to provide formal feedback.

David Burden

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE LEPERONS

2 hours

2-8

Inspired by the late night SF discussion and the interest generated by Seastrike's card mechanic at COW2025, this is a scenario for Buck Surdu's Albedo Combat Patrol custom card driven rules which give a very fast hard-SF skirmish game. Will you play Captain Scarlet and the team of Spectrum operatives, or one of the rabbits uplifted by the Mysterons and the evil Captain Black? No feedback required!

John Curry

THE FIRST FANTASY GAME

2 hours

1-6

This will recreate one of the first popular fantasy miniature wargames, the Middle Earth Rules, and will use the first fantasy figures, Mythical Earth. Orcs, Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, Hobbits, Britains Engles, Ents, Beorn etc... will fight to secure the future of Middle Earth. This will be fast paced game recreating one of those early pre Game Workshop fantasy games.

Ian Drury

TONKIN BLUES

2-3 hours

2-6

Yes, it's another 'Bungle in the Jungle' as the French army marches into what is now northern Vietnam. But this time it's the 1880s and the enemy is the mostly Chinese mercenary force, the Army of the Black Flag plus river pirates and other local funsters. The game features 28mm toys and uses Chris Peers's excellent *Death in the Dark Continent* rules with some minor modifications.

Russell King

GMT'S LABYRINTH - THE WAR ON TERROR - TEAM PLAYING, 25 YEARS ON

3 hours

up to 8

As part of the appraisal of 25 years since the War on Terror, a group playing - with no prior experience expected - of the board game LABYRINTH, designed by GMT and released to the general public in 2010. This playing reflects the original version of the game - and therefore the more immediate aftermath of 2001 - without the subsequent Arab Spring and Islamic State expansions.

The game will put players in the role of Western and opposing world leaders adapting to and managing key events and opportunities primarily through the use of event cards. These cards are, by their very nature challenging because of the material, and players need to be aware that this should be considered a BLACK session. However, we will play together in a spirit that is much easier to handle than trying to get through a playing by yourself.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labyrinth:_The_War_on_Terror,_2001_%E2%80%93_%3F

Pete Sizer

THE BLOOD ROAD

2 hours

2-6

This session will be a workshop style experience looking at aerial interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh trail during the Vietnam War. It is an attempt at gamification of a journal article on modelling smuggling networks. Players will, nominally, take the roles of the US led forces trying to stop the flow of supplies and the North Vietnamese Forces trying to maximise the quantity of supplies that gets through to South Vietnam. This game will feature 1/600th toy aircraft.

Ian Piper

HITHER SPAIN 208/9 BCE

90 minutes

2-8

How 'One Hour Wargames' is a great basis for one off 'situations'.

I propose a short talk about OHWs followed by two game scenarios based on my adaptation to deal with Masinissa's harassment of a Roman supply convoy in Hither Spain 208/9BCE.

Dick Scholefield

THE BIRDS ARE SINGING AND IT'S A WONDERFUL DAY

15 minutes per game (will run several times)

1

For those younger members who have only heard about this over a drink in the bar - here it is.

This is a stressful one-person participation game where the umpire guides you through terrain to an unknown scenario possibly involving bullets. You play the role of a lieutenant in WWII trying not to lose any of your 22 chaps. Each game takes 10 to 15 minutes and watching is as interesting as playing but not so stressful!

There are many different scenarios and we can run the game late into the night – one player after the other.

James Langham

THE BEAR WENT OVER THE BORDER: DUNN KEMPF REFOUGHT

2 hours

6-8

The US Army used Dunn Kempf as a tactical wargame to train troops ready for the Cold War going hot. Players will take the roles of platoon and company commanders on both sides simulating how it would have been played (not necessarily what would have happened!).

James Langham

RED ARMY: SOVIET WARGAME

90 minutes

5-12

Most wargames tend to be played from a western perspective regarding rules and assumptions. This game looks at the Cold War going hot from the other side of the fence. Players will plan their attack then adjudicate it using the rules as far as possible using the techniques used by Soviet umpires.

Chris Kemp

HIVE CITY

2 hours

3D modelling in a 2D world. Managing real estate in urban warfare. Teams will be invited to build models to represent urban terrain, balancing visual appeal and playability. Cardboard, masking tape, crayons, scissors and Elastoplast will be provided.

A quick play-through to test ideas is envisioned.

Chris Kemp

GALTIERI, MY PART IN HIS DOWNFALL

1 hour

any

A talk about the jollity of the Falklands campaign.

Charles Fair

THE GRIMNESS OF WAR

90 minutes

‘France had made us realise the grimness of war, but it was the Balkans that taught us to be soldiers’: Independent Operations and Open Warfare in Salonika with 60 Division December 1916 – June 1917.

any

This is a case study of the British Army’s operations in Macedonia which looks patrolling and raiding operations through the lens of Callwell’s ‘Small Wars’ paradigm. The nature of operations in this theatre were a function of the geography and its status as a backwater despite its strategic relevance. It looks at 60 Division who had spent 5 months on Vimy Ridge where it learnt and adapted before spending six months in Macedonia. This experience equipped it well for its excellent performance in the Palestine Campaign. The Division does not normally feature in consideration of divisional performance, a debate which is focused on the Western Front, but there is a strong case for arguing that it had become an elite division by 1918.

The talk is the subject of a chapter in my co-edited two volume set, *London Pride: The London Territorial Force in Peace and Warm 1908-1921* [Helion, 2025 (Vol 1) and 2026 (Vol 2)] and includes pictures from my own visits to these battlefields.

Graham Evans

WINNING A VC WITH THE 6TH

75 minutes

up to 6

On the 18th September 1918 the 54th Brigade of the 18th Division attacked Rossnoy in northern France as part of the advance to the Hindenburg Line. The 18th Division was a New Army Division that achieved elite status and incorporated the 6th Northamptonshire (Service) Battalion. The 6th won 4 of the 6 VCs awarded to the Northamptonshire Regiment throughout the War, including one at this battle. This game will use a heavily modified version of Chris Kemp's Not Quite Mechanised in an attempt to capture the all arms battle as conducted by the BEF during the 100 days. The attack on Rossnoy was carried out by the 54th Brigade who were faced by well entrenched opposition, consisting of the 1st Guard Grenadier Regiment, the "Alexander Regiment" supported by field guns and machine gun nests.

Mark Flanagan

THE EARTH PREPARED - DO WE STILL TASTE LIKE CHICKEN TO THEM?

2 hours

5-8

The year 2030. As decreed by the "Young Protocol" the Secret (so secret it never officially "happened") Missenden 2025 Extraterrestrial Threat "The Earth Prepares" Working Group's report once completed gathered layers of fine dust in the catacombs of Department 13, rumoured to be located somewhere near the small town of Lynchville Northamptonshire. It was blissfully forgotten about. Until a "bleep" in a room, dark and cold, somewhere in Alaska was confirmed by a similar bleep in a colder, darker room in Siberia. The next action was to assemble the world's finest minds who would (unpaid and hopefully sober) attempt to save the world and civilization as we know it, or mould it into something better with the aid of the extraterrestrials [See "Dangerous and Suspicious Human Activity Alerts - Appendix L" of the Missenden 2025 report]. Players (Teams) will invest in a technology tree development and produce viable defence strategies that will be tested against the Visiting Spaceship. One question remains unanswered from 2025, "Do we still taste like chicken to them?"

Ian Mitchell

LET'S ROCK!

2 hours

up to 6

Marking the 40th anniversary of the theatrical release of James Cameron's film Aliens, an opportunity to play two co-operative board game systems representing the first encounter between Colonial Marines and the Alien horde. Leading Edge's game appeared in 1989 and Gale Force 9's "Another Glorious Day in the Corps" in 2020. In both games the rules control the aliens and the players cooperate to escape the hive. Discussion of the relative merits of the game systems to follow.

Jim Roche

JIM ROCHE'S FINAL SINGALONG TOUR

1-2 hours

any

Featuring all of your favourites from the last twenty years. Including European's first taste of chocolate in 1519. Everyone's a Fruit and Nut case. It really is a must for Morris Dancers. The nuts are so nutritious, The fruit is so flirtatious, The connoisseurs of chocolate pronounce it quite delicious

Pasi Hakkarainen

BATTLE FOR TIKKAKOSKI AIRPORT - REAL-TIME TACTICS

2-3 hours

5-8

This game is based on the Battle for Hostomel Airport, reimagined as taking place in Finland in 2026. It includes a 15-minute briefing and approximately two hours of gameplay. During the first two hours of the war, the company commander, located at the command post, must build situational awareness, issue orders to platoon commanders, and manage logistics. The player roles are: company commander, deputy commander, maintenance sergeant, situation manager, and 1–3 combat messengers.

David Burden

RAPID URBAN COMBAT KRIEGSSPIEL UMPIRING SYSTEM (RUCKUS)

2 hours

2-6

RUCKUS is a 1 page set of urban rules designed to play out ~brigade level urban battles, with an umpire to help adjudicate issues not covered by the rules. It is intended to give a quick-to-play game which captures the feel of urban warfare at the grand-tactical level. As this forms part of my PhD I'll be asking participants to provide formal feedback.

Mike Elliott

SIMPLE SALAMIS

30-60 minutes (may run more than once)

4-6

A very simple set of rules for large ancient naval fleet actions. The battle of Salamis marked the turning point in the Greco-Persian Wars. Many ancient naval wargames handle individual ships. In this game each base represents twenty ships... Megalomaniacs, I mean aspiring Themistocles and Xerxes welcome...

Mike Elliott

TEAM BLACK HAT

30-60 minutes (may run more than once)

1-6

A cybersecurity after dinner game. Team – because it's cooperative. Black Hat because the team are hacking into a networked system to steal data assets. What could possibly go wrong?

Mike Elliott

ENGLISH CIVIL WAR SIEGE – TAKE 2

2 hours

up to 4

A second attempt at wargaming a siege in the English Civil War. The rules have developed considerably since the first version in 2024.

Mike Elliott

RIDING BY MOONLIGHT

2 hours

up to 4

The third in my series of “moonlight” games about raids and covert actions. This time we are in the Borders during the 16th century. Scots or English?

“The siller moon now glimmers pale;

But ere we’ve crossed fair Liddesdale,

She’ll shine as brightlie as the bale

That warns the water hastilie.”

The Border Reivers: Armstrongs, Elliots, Græmes, Stories, Burneses, and Bells; the Scotts, Kers, Maxwells, and Johnstones—whose depredations have been recorded with much fulness of detail.

Rob Hymer & Mark Flanagan

DON'T BE A PILLOCK, JUST TAKE THAT HILLOCK

75 minutes

2-5

A small tactical early WW2 (1940) minor powers scenario. A Greek Infantry Platoon assaults an Italian held strategically important hillock somewhere in Greece 1940.

Collaborative game play with players controlling the Greek Platoon against a fixed Italian defence. Warning: Contains beautifully painted 28mm figures, nice terrain and dice!

The game uses the sequence of play taken from Take That Hill (original game by Phil Sabin, with Ed Farren - British Army Fight Club's extensions) and combines it with the fire and activation mechanics from Chain of Command (Two Fat Lardies).

Yes this is an unholy rules mash, a marriage that would trouble most of the World’s religions but produces a really interesting game.

None of this "equals points, all is fair in war" based malarkey - it's 'orrible.

Ian Drury & Russell King

BAFFLED BY BOARDGAMES – SPI AIR WAR

2 hours

any

Many of us were traumatised by this David Isby game which originally appeared in 1977. Recently a group within WD has revisited the game – with help from the designer. Some after a gap of 45+ years. It’s a very clever piece of design and well worth a look – even if only to say you’ve played it! This session will introduce players to the game and run through a few turns. The crash tender is on alert at the end of Runway One...

Tom Mouat (aka Tim Price)

THE RECCE-STRIKE COMPLEX

2 hours

2-6

A tabletop hex-and-counter wargame, with some aspects of limited information. An educational game to help people understand the new (post Ukraine lessons) doctrine for Divisional warfighting - as run with Ukrainians... and taught at the Army Staff College.

Tom Mouat (aka Tim Price)

SPACE HULK!

2 hours

4-6

A tabletop area movement game, with limited information and toy soldiers. This is a game about the aftermath of a space battle, where damaged and abandoned starships lie adrift and need investigating. Can they be recovered? Are they still infested with enemy heretics or vile creatures? Humanity needs your help!

Tom Mouat (aka Tim Price)

FRIGATE ACTION!

3 hours

2-8

A tabletop naval game, with simultaneous movement, and one-player per ship.

This is a game set in the Napoleonic wars, using toy ships representing individual Frigates, simultaneous movement, and one-player per ship. This is a revised version of the game run several years ago.

Graham Evans

THE PERFECT BATTLE – ALIWAL, JANUARY 1846

2 hours

up to 6

Sir Harry Smith described this action as “The battle without a mistake”. Mind you, he was the general in command, so he may have been biased. In comparison with Gough’s “At ‘em with the bayonet” approach it was a more sophisticated action.

Using the “Taiping Era” ruleset that appeared for “Gough in China” last year, this is part of an on-going project to test them out for use to fight other conflicts in the period. Some modifications to the rules used last year to take account of the unique circumstances of the Anglo-Sikh Wars will be used, including the transfer from squares to a hex grid.

Jonathan Crowe

THE DEVIL TO PAY – BULFORD’S CAVALRY AT GETTYSBURG

2 hours

2-6

A short game (which may run twice) looking at the opening stages of the Battle of Gettysburg. Can the cavalry hold the advancing Confederates for long enough to allow the Union infantry to arrive. Brigade level, looking at rules I am working on to fight the whole battle.

Jonathan Crowe

WE’LL GO NO MORE A’VIKING. MAYBE

2 hours

2-6

It’s 911AD. Charles the Simple of France has an idea. Let’s do a deal with the Vikings to stop them raiding up the Seine. We could give them Normandy. A matrix game based around the negotiations between Charles and Rollo the leader of the Vikings. But other interests are at work.

Jim Roche

JACOBITES SIR.....THOUSANDS OF 'EM

2 hours

5-9

A refight of the Battle of Dunkeld using lots of the paper soldiers from Peter Dennis.

This battle featured a plucky band of Redcoats holding out against poorly-armed natives who had just won a major victory at Killiecrankie. A precursor of Rorkes Drift and Isandlwana, with added religious prejudice, since the Redcoats were Cameronians

John Curry

WHEN GOVERNMENTS PLAY II

2 hours

2-12

This is an example of a government funded game project. Set in a hypothetical scenario looking something like the South China Sea. Russia, China, North Korea square up to the Philippines, the USA and South Korea. 2 to 12 players. Prepared to be impressed by the cutting edge game design...

Risto Tammela

CHECK POINT ZULU

90 minutes

1-4

Is your war gaming too exciting and you cannot bear the stress of being in command of Panzer divisions and making Napoleon lose again? Try something totally different. Jump to a life of infantry squaddie who is running a check point leading to an airport. Try not to cause traffic jams which could block the nearby M-road and try not to get overrun by speeding motorists.

This game will remind you how unexciting most of military life is or makes you happy that you did not enlist. After the game you could be able to run your own check point though.

The game is designed for Finnish reservists of all ranks. Feedback from COW players will help to develop the game and war gaming as a method to train reservists in Finland and would be highly appreciated.

Chris Ager

BATTLESHIP NOVOROSSISK

75 minutes

4

A Lynchgrad mystery involving a very large Italian turncoat.

October 1955, you are despatched to Sevastopol to investigate dangerous rumours regarding the Battleship Novorossiysk the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet. Skilled investigators will you be able to reassure Moscow on this sensitive matter. Starring dedicated Soviet bureaucrats, dashing naval admirals and with the guest star Giulio Cesare a veteran Italian heavyweight (23,500 standard tons is not lightweight).

Evan D'Alessandro

OPERATION JADE EMPEROR

2 hours

3+

Xi Jinping has declared that China must seize Taiwan and throw out the splittist regime in Taipei! The planners of the Central Military Commission are called together to plan the most difficult and complicated military operation since D-Day. This is a mildly experimental planning game based on trying to make the planning of the most complex military operation the world has ever seen easily legible to those who have not spent years learning about it or modern military operations. Help plan the fall of Taiwan and achieve the Chinese Dream!

Evan D'Alessandro

OLIVER'S ARMY

2 hours

4-6

It's 1984 and WW III is about to break out! In West Germany the BAOR stands ready but 1,000 miles away another deployment of the British Army is less certain of the threat it faces in Northern Ireland. As WW III beckons, all factions in Ireland prepare to do: something? Oliver's Army is prototype wargame/workshop to attempt to begin to see what could happen on the Island of Ireland in the event of WW III. It will be loosely structured and likely combine elements of a matrix game, planning game, and muggergame as we attempt to get a better sense of what could happen and get individuals feedback, insights, and thoughts. This will hopefully result in more refined versions of the game in the future!

Michael Young

IRAN 2026

2 hours

3-10

This will be part matrix game part confrontation analysis game. It will look at the roles of the different parties involved in the present conflict in Iran. Examining in the motivations of the parties involved, and their actions. Players will take the role of the governments involved, such as Britain, the US Israel, Iran, China.

Julian Fuller

AIRSTRIKE LANDSTRIKE

1 hour

4-6

Ideas for extending Seastrike into a combined operations system. Air and ground units adding additional units to the Seastrike system allowing air and land power to attack air/land/sea targets. Two new sets of cards and the best game tokens/toys in Bedfordshire.

Antoine Bourguilleau

LE KRIEGSPIEL

1 hour

any

Antoine Bourguilleau is a historian, translator, and a Major in the French Army, deputy Head of the French Army Wargaming Bureau. He is currently working on a PhD about French Wargaming history 1870-1940. The presentation will examine the early wargaming trend in the French army during the last third of the 19th century, its adoption by the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre and the problem of adopting a German tool.

Antoine Bourguilleau
ESSAI DE JEU DE GUERRE

1 hour

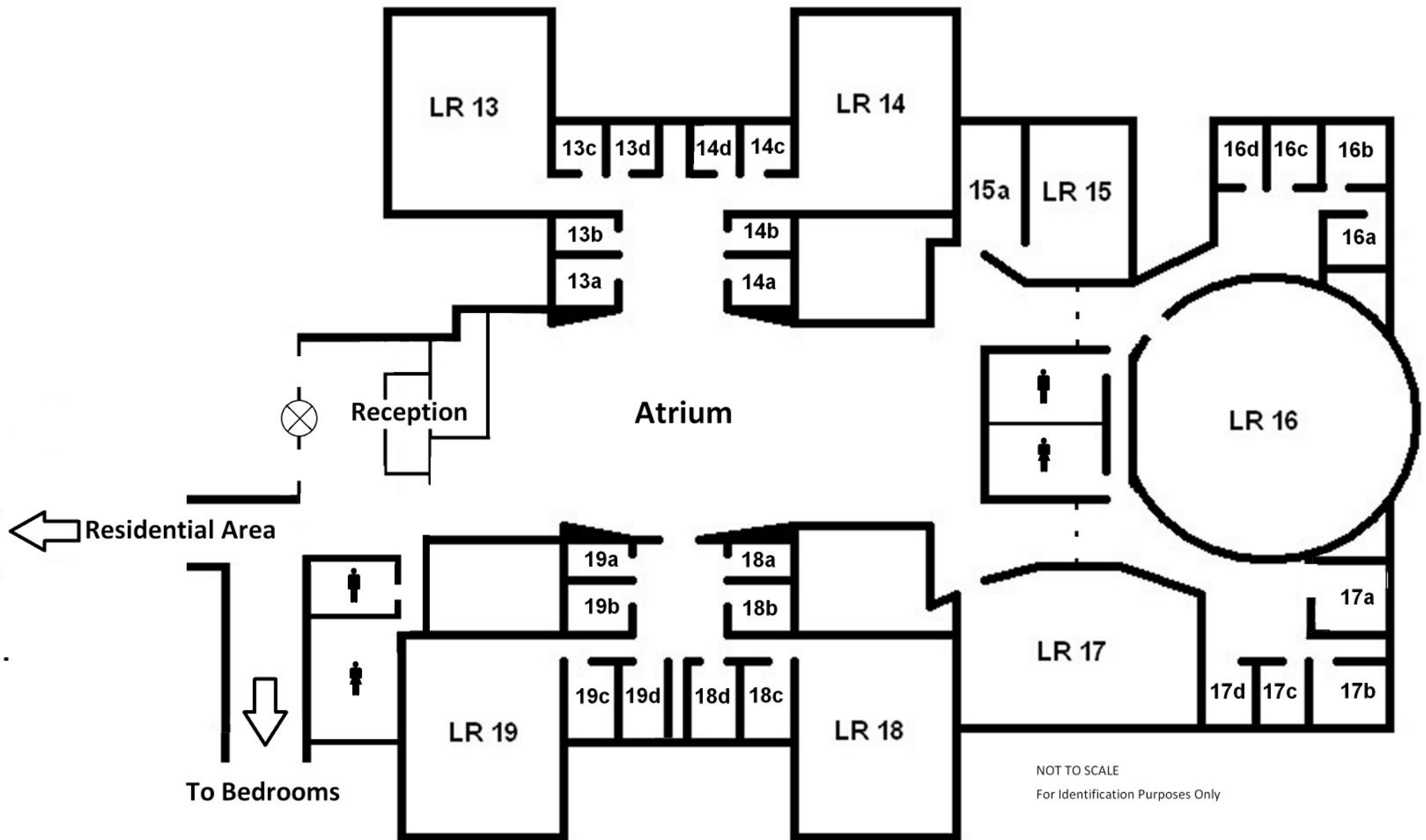
up to 4

In 1916 French journalist and military history enthusiast Pierre Lanux, designed and published a game with artillery lieutenant R. Castro about trench warfare. The game, called "Essai de jeu de guerre" is played on a square grid board

Pre-COW event

Graham Evans

Friday 10th July, the start of COW, is also the anniversary of the 1460 Battle of Northampton. Each year Northamptonshire Battlefields Society marks the anniversary with a wreath laying at the Eleanor Cross, near Delapre Abbey. The ceremony is performed by the Northampton town mayor. We gather at the Cross from 1:30pm onwards, for the Wreath Laying at 2pm. Prior to that there will be a short talk about the Eleanor Cross. Afterwards we will a walk onto the corner of the battlefield behind the Cross for an explanation of the battlefield from what is probably the best vantage point and also where various clerics watched the battle in 1460. The event is free to anyone to attend and is unticketed. It's then just a 20 minute drive to Cranfield. There's a handy pub up the road for lunch before if you need it, and tearoom at the Abbey for refreshments afterwards. Parking is available in the road near the Cross. Any COW attendee who wants to attend would be most welcome. I will be there as NBS Chair to host the event and do the battlefield explanation. We're normally done by 2:30pm.



The Timetable

COW 2026	FRIDAY		SATURDAY						SUNDAY		
LOCATION	2030-2150ish	2200-late	0900-1100	1110-1225	1400-1600	1615-1830	2000-2200	2200-late	0900-1100	1115-1220	1400-1500
LR 16	THE PLENARY GAME: Xerxes' Invasion of Greece		The Battle of the Atlantic and the WATU 'Myth'			Cavalry Considerations		Jim Roche's Final Singalong Tour	The Grimness of War	Le Kriegspiel	The WD AGM
LR 13		633 Squadron	Tonkin Blues		A Year of Living Dangerously – Montrose's Scottish Campaign	Baffled by Boardgames – SPI Air War	The Earth Prepared – do we still taste like chicken to them?	Iran 2026	Baffled by Boardgames – Steve Jackson's Illuminati	Galtieri – My Part in his Downfall	
LR 14		Team Black Hat	English Civil War Siege – Take 2	Simple Salamis	Riding by Moonlight	The Blood Road	Jacobites Sir...Thousands of 'em	Essai de Jeu de Guerre	GMT's Labyrinth – The War on Terror -team play - 25 years on		
LR 15		Captain Scarlet and the Leperons	Red Army: Soviet Wargame	Battleship Novorossiysk	Operation Jade Emperor	The Devil to pay – Bulford's cavalry at Gettysburg	Oliver's Army	Check Point Zulu	The Bear went over the border – Dunn Kempf refought		
LR 15a											
LR 17		<i>The Birds are singing and it's a wonderful day</i>	Save the Emperor!	Winning a VC with the 6th	The Perfect Battle – Aliwal, January 1846	Let's Rock!	Berlin Nocturne	In Tenebris	The Battle for Tikkakoski Airport – Real-Time Tactics		
LR 18		The Recce-Strike Complex	Brick by Bloody Brick	Airstrike Landstrike	Hither Spain 208/9 BCE	Rapid Urban Combat Kriegspiel Umpiring System	Space Hulk!		Frigate Action!		
LR 19		<i>World War 3 in Ten Minutes</i>	Hive City	Don't be a pillock, just take that hillock	When Governments Play II	The First Fantasy Game			We'll go no more a Viking. Maybe		

Titles in *italics* are 'short' games and will run several times during the time slot.