

**Military Historical Society of Australia
Victorian Branch Inc.**

Despatches



Quarterly Newsletter

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September - November 2010

Victorian Branch Inc.

Committee 2010-11

Office Holders

President: Mr George Ward, Tel: 97252916
Vice-President: Mr Rob Dalton, Tel: 98017170
Hon. Secretary: Mr Andrew J Kilsby, Tel: 95630089
Hon. Treasurer: Mr Bill Black, Tel: 97413642

Committee Members

Mr Stephen C Gray, Tel: 97495829
Mr Peter Beckett, peter@beckettcon.com.au
Ms Helen Gobbi, Tel: 0403 195 607
Mr David Howell, Tel: 0405 007 700

Despatches:

Hon. Secretary: P.O. Box 196
Chadstone Centre Post VIC 3148
Mobile: 0408 342 795
email: vicsec@mhsa.org.au

Society website: www.mhsa.org.au

Victorian Branch Inc. website: www.mhsavictoria.com

Meetings Venue

Branch Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December) at the Oakleigh RSL, Drummond Street, Oakleigh starting at 8.00 pm. Visitors most welcome.

Editorial

Welcome to the September-November 2010 edition of *Despatches*. There's lots to talk about!

Arthur Cobby Oration. The inaugural Arthur Cobby Oration was delivered in a thoughtful and well-researched address by Air Marshal Barry Gration, AO, AFC (Rtd) – our Society Patron – on 24th June. It was a great night with nearly 100 people in attendance, including the RSL Victoria president Major-General David McLachlan, AO (Rtd). A large number of the extended Cobby family headed by Mrs Alison Steinberg and Mr David Cobby, local College history students, other invited guests as well as MHSA and affiliated association members made it a real community event.

The combination of support by the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL to the event and the co-located venue of the Mechanics Institute Hall proved to be a winner. Aviation books about WWI, including Cobby's '*High Adventure*' were on sale and there was a great display of Cobby memorabilia.

Thanks to everyone who lent a hand to set up and manage the affair; the Patron later wrote to congratulate the Branch on a well-run evening. Next year is the 100 year anniversary of the RAN. So the Cobby series will continue with the commemoration of a Victorian Naval hero and the SNO of Victoria, Captain Mark Hill, has agreed in principle to deliver it. It looks like the Cobby series will establish itself as a major event.

New Victorian MHSA Vice-Patron announced. At the Cobby Oration MHSA Patron, Air Marshal Gration, announced the appointment of Major-General Peter Haddad, AO, as the Society's first Vice-Patron since Sister Vivian Bullwinkel, AO, MBE, ARRC held that role. Especially interesting is the fact that MG Haddad is the first Victorian to be appointed to the role since MG Ronald Hopkins, CBE. We congratulate Peter on his appointment and look forward to the opportunity to work with him to further strengthen our Branch.

About Major-General Haddad. MG Haddad was born in Albury and enlisted in the Army in 1967. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School

Portsea in December 1967 and was allocated to the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps. He served as a logistics officer for 38 years; he retired in January 2005. MG Haddad's service included postings in South Vietnam and the USA. His final appointment was Commander, Joint Logistics Command in Melbourne where he was responsible for supporting all Australian Defence Force operations in Timor, Bougainville, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Solomon Islands.

In 2005-2006 MG Haddad was engaged by the Commonwealth Games Corporation to conduct the planning and delivery of logistic support to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games and was appointed as the Deputy Mayor of the Commonwealth Games athlete's village. He has been engaged by the Victorian Government as a Strategic Adviser on defence industry and as the Head of the Defence and Aerospace Business Unit. In addition, he is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Management at RMIT University, and is the Chairman of the Victorian Veteran's Council.

The recent AGM. Held on 22nd July with a good attendance, it passed two resolutions – a change to the rules of the incorporated association to allow for a larger committee of up to 10; and an agreement to raise fees to \$45 from 1st July 2011. A larger committee may be required as the Branch continues to grow and the increase in fees predicts an increase being mandated from the Federal Branch – in fact, members strongly supported an increase of fees in the 2010 Branch Survey.

Changes to Committee. The AGM saw new members on the Committee and some changes to roles. Robbie Dalton retired from President to Vice-President, while veteran Committeeman George Ward stepped up (again) to be President. Steve Gray retired from Secretary and was replaced by Andrew Kilsby. Neil Smith and George Hellyer stepped down from the Committee and two new members were elected – Helen Gobbi and David Howell. Bill Black continued as Treasurer and Peter Beckett remains as Webmaster.

These changes are an entirely healthy renewal of the Committee. There is no doubt that those stepping down have done more than their fair share over many years of dedicated effort as Committeemen in a variety of roles. Those efforts are recognised and applauded. Both Neil and George

are veteran Branch members and we look forward to their continued engagement with the Branch.

The 'new committee' also reflects a good balance of experience in the Society and new skill sets to further progress the Branch. Helen Gobbi, who has long committee experience in other organisations, is especially strong on local history, writing and research. She also well understands and is connected to local government. David Howell is a successful young businessman with a close interest in the WWII history and treks on the Kokoda Track. He is keen on WWI living history and collections; is a serving Reservist and recently was appointed to The Shrine as its development officer.

The Committee will be looking for active support from members this coming year and we hope that some of you will be willing to give some time to help support Strategic Plan initiatives. Please volunteer your time if you can, and if there is something the Branch is up to which is of particular interest to you.

New Members. The Branch welcomes back Dr. Sue Johnston to the Branch as well as Allan Fabry, both returning to the Branch after absences.

26th August Speaker - Beneath Hill 60. Will Davies, author of '*Beneath Hill 60*', down from Sydney at our invitation spoke to the Branch about the film and the Aussie tunnellers. He signed his books for those lucky enough to get one. We've had some excellent speakers over the past year and this was no exception, with over 40 in attendance. By the way, if you are interested in the tunnellers, have a look also at Damien Finlayson's new book '*Crumps and Camouflets - Australian Tunnelling Companies on the Western Front*'. Plenty to absorb - and a very different experience albeit just as daunting and dangerous, to that of our Vietnam 'tunnel rats'.

Now looking ahead...

Committee Agenda. We seek more engagement with members in this coming year so if you have something you want to raise and get on the agenda for Committee meetings please do so at the monthly social meetings or directly through any Committee member.

Under incorporation, the Branch will now hold only one General meeting per year - on the same night as the AGM. For the more informal

monthly branch social meetings, you will have an opportunity to raise anything you want. But if there is something you want the Committee to discuss formally, then buttonhole a committee member or email or post in items to the Secretary for the Committee agenda.

Annual Dues. To help us close the books earlier than we have managed to do in the past, in 2011 we will call for renewals to be submitted by the meeting of June rather than the AGM. That's the Cobby Oration night, so if you can get your subs in anytime that month it would make Bill's job a much easier one.

Meeting Donations. FYI, there is no 'levy' on members attending meetings, but the Committee sure appreciates any member who makes a donation into our new 'half-shell' money point, and a gold coin or two from your guests will continue to be very welcome! Thanks to everyone who contribute and so help us cover our operating costs.

Committee Meeting Minutes. Minutes of Committee meetings are available to any member on request to the Secretary, and continue to be available at each meeting in the Minute Book.

Despatches by Mail or email. Next please note that you have an option to receive Despatches by email as a PDF file which you can print yourself if you wish - or not. If you want to continue to receive *Despatches* by mail, then do nothing; but it will help us reduce costs to be able to distribute as many as possible by email. *Please let the Secretary know.*

New Member Applications. Please note the new membership application procedures which can be found and downloaded from our website. Now aspiring members need to be proposed by a member and their application goes to Committee for approval. Subs are only asked for after that and they can be now paid online as well.

New Members and Sabretache. *Sabretache* editor Anthony Staunton has assured the Secretary that back copies of *Sabretache* are available for those who join at any time during the year, ensuring that they receive their full four copies of *Sabretache*. Anyone who did not receive back issues in the 2009-10 membership year please contact the Secretary.

CHINA WAR MEDAL 1900

This is a war medal issued for the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China. The Colony of Victoria sent a naval contingent to China to support the British campaign. This medal was awarded to a member of that force, W Slade. The edge of the medal is impressed W. SLADE, A.B. VICTORIA NAV. CONTGT.



Obverse - Crowned bust of Queen Victoria facing left. Around it in Latin is the legend VICTORIA REGINA ET IMPERATRIX [Victoria Queen and Empress].



Reverse - Depicts a war trophy with the British arms set on a shield resting against a palm. Below is the legend CHINA 1900.

Branch Activities

11th/12th September 2010 Weekend Field Trip to the historic Fort Queenscliff and its museum in King Street. Lunch will be BYO in the local area. Full program on the website or contact Bob Marmion 0408 326 321 for details - BUT HURRY to get booked in.

23rd September 2010. The ever popular Branch Quiz Night with Steve Gray as Quiz Master. Cuts to the rum ration and lashings for any complaints!

1st October - 20th December 2010. Our Oakleigh WWI 'Saluting their Service' Commemorative Exhibition and Display is on show at the Monash Federation Centre across the lawn from the RSL.

28th October 2010. Formal opening of the Exhibition and launch of our Oakleigh WWI Commemorative Book 'fallen leaves' at the Monash Federation Centre at 7PM with WWI honour guard from AGWA. New MHSA Vice-Patron MG Haddad has agreed to open the exhibition. Following the opening, the research team will present their findings at the meeting at the RSL at 8PM.

25th November 2010. Ross McMullan is scheduled to speak on his book and research into war artist Will Dyson.

9th December 2010 Christmas Dinner at the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL

12th December 2010 - Branch BBQ and displays at David Howell's abode...

27th January 2011 - Members' Own - "My Family Hero - A family member who has served" (thanks to Mark Moncrieff for the suggestion)

What's On?

Until 19th September 2010. *Australia's Muslim Cameleers of the Inland 1860's - 1930's.* Includes memorabilia from the 1915 Battle of Broken Hill. 'The Immigration Museum', 400 Flinders St Melbourne.

1st Sunday of each month. Free story telling for children at the Shrine of Remembrance Education Centre at 2 pm. Ideal for children aged 7 to 12 years and provides an interactive way for youngsters to be introduced to the ideals held so high by our Society. Bookings are essential so call 96618107.

3rd Sunday Monthly. The monthly Remembrance Services for units no longer able to make a pilgrimage to the Shrine is held in the Sanctuary of the Shrine at 2.00pm.

17th September 2010 – closing date for public submissions to The National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary, which is seeking Australia's ideas and suggestions on how to mark this important chapter in our history.

4 October 12:30pm The Shrine - Monash at Gallipoli - Monash's performance as commander of the Australian Corps in 1918 has justly earned him the accolade of Australia's greatest general. His performance as commander of the 4th Brigade on Gallipoli in 1915 is often considered mediocre at best. *Dr Peter Pedersen, AWM Senior Historian*

7 October 1:00pm The Shrine - Finding Defence Service Records - In this presentation some of the unique records held by the National Archives are examined and ways in which to access these records are discussed.

Ross Latham, National Archives of Australia (Melbourne)

15 October 12:30pm – The Shrine - Myths of Australian Military History - Where is the line between history and myth? How do misunderstandings and misconceptions become embed in our historical narratives? Craig Stockings discusses the myths surrounding some of the most significant events in Australian military history. He explores stories from the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars, through to Australian service in East Timor.

Dr Craig Stockings, ADFA

24th – 30th October 2010. Victorian History Week - our Oakleigh Exhibition is listed.

11th November – Remembrance Day

Here and There

New Records. The National Archives has received close to 1000 records of the WWI [Federal Parliamentary War Committee](#) from the Australian Parliament. The records show Committee decisions on recruitment, returned and disabled soldiers, land settlement, military convalescent homes, military camps and other matters. It is believed that these original documents have never been examined by researchers.

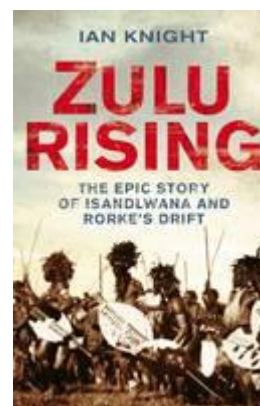
Among the Committee records was the recommendation that military camp canteens should remain dry and provide 'attractive temperance drinks'. There are also records about prohibiting the commercialisation of the word ANZAC. The National Archives plans to display some of the records this year, following examination and conservation.

Peacekeeping. Australia has had peacekeepers in the field with the United Nations continuously for over 50 years. In Indonesia in 1947, Australians were part of the very first group of UN military observers anywhere in the world, and were, in fact, the first into the field.

Six multinational operations have been commanded by Australians:

1. Lieutenant General Robert Nimmo was Chief Military Observer in Kashmir with the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, from 1950 to 1966
2. Lieutenant General John Sanderson was Force Commander with the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, 1992 to 1993
3. Brigadier David Ferguson was Force Commander with the Multinational Force and Observers (in the Sinai) from 1994 to 1997
4. Richard Butler led the UN Special Commission (in Iraq) from 1997 to 1999
5. Major General Timothy Ford was Chief of Staff with the UN Truce Supervision Organisation from 1998 to 2000
6. Major General Peter Cosgrove commanded the International Force for East Timor (Interfet) from 1999 to 2000.

Australia and the Emergency. Australia's involvement in the Emergency in Malaya began in 1950 with the arrival of RAAF aircraft and personnel in Singapore. Dakotas from 38 Squadron were deployed on cargo runs, troop movements, and paratroop and leaflet drops in Malaya, while six Lincoln bombers of No 1 Squadron provided the backbone of air operations.



NEW BOOK - ZULU RISING - the Epic Story of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift - Based on new research, including previously unpublished material, Zulu oral history and new archaeological evidence from the battlefield, this is the definitive account of a battle that has shaped the political fortunes of the Zulu people to this day.

MILITARY BOOKS by David A. Jenner

AT ALL COSTS - Captain William Ambrose CULL

Captain Cull was the Scouting Officer of the 22nd Battalion, 1st AIF at the time of his capture by the Germans in 1916. Like Siegfried Sassoon he had developed a penchant for exploring no-man's land mostly by night, but in this particular 'demonstration', by daytime exploration. He was able to confirm that the extensive barbed wire in front of his unit had not been breached.

Despite protests by himself and various unit leaders, they were ordered to attack 'at all costs': with the all too common result of being repelled with severe loss. Cull, in spite of being sleepless, insisted on attacking with his company. Much of this book then deals with the truly horrendous wounds he sustained in this fight, and their treatment by the Germans, who no doubt saved his life. He was eventually repatriated to England, which is where this book ends.

The book was, I believe, self-published, so the number of copies are probably few. As a politically incorrect book today (because of severe and possibly undeserved anti-German comments), it is not a book for schoolchildren to read. But as an account of the most harrowing mental and physical suffering of a most courageous soldier it is, in my estimation, without peer.

Captain Cull was one of the originals (with Donovan Joint et al) in suggesting the building of The Shrine Of Remembrance. To my knowledge he died in 1923, almost certainly as a result of his terrible injuries. He, to me, is another of the all too many long-forgotten heroes of this country!

Rifle Shooting in Australia - International Matches 1861-1876

Apart from a private visit to Wimbledon in 1861 by a South Australian Volunteer officer, rifle shooting in the international context came slowly to Australia, mainly because of cost and distance. One of the earliest 'international' matches occurred in 1863, even before the international telegraph system connected the colonies to the outside world. The Milang Volunteer rifle company in SA challenged the champion English Volunteer company, namely the Robin Hood Company of the Nottingham Rifles, to a rifle match. It was to be shot at a range other than at each corps's usual range and the invitation challenge was sent by letter to the [English] NRA from Milang; the reply came by letter and the results came the same way.

The match was repeated in 1864 with a Victorian Volunteer company - the Bendigo Rifles - taking on the Robin Hoods and winning.

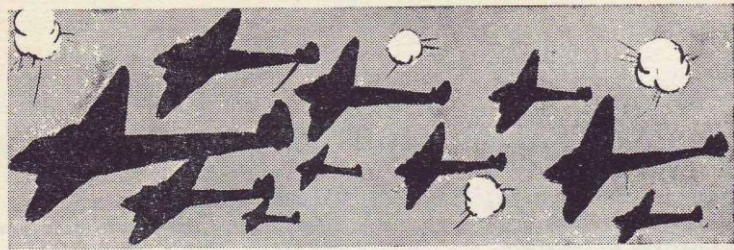
Once telegraph connected Australia and England, other simultaneous matches were fired against Volunteer units and clubs in England, with results this time sent by wire. One match, in preparation since 1878, was fired between the Yorke Peninsula No.1 Company, Rifle Volunteer Force (forerunner to the Wallaroo Rifle Club) on the 21st July 1884 against No.11 Company of the Queen's Edinburgh Rifle Volunteer Brigade. Despite the telegraph, results from Scotland came by mail arriving on the 3rd September. The Scots fired Sniders in atrocious weather, the South Australians, Martini-Henrys - and won.

More formal impetus was given to international rifle shooting in Australia in 1876 when members of a Victorian team competed individually at Wimbledon at the annual NRA matches there. The Victorians then travelled to the United States of America to combine with a New South Wales team (which had travelled directly to the United States) - to fire at the first 'Palma' match at Creedmoor in Philadelphia against a number of international teams.

From the draft manuscript *'The Riflemen - A History of the National Rifle Association of Australia 1888-1988'* by Andrew Kilsby



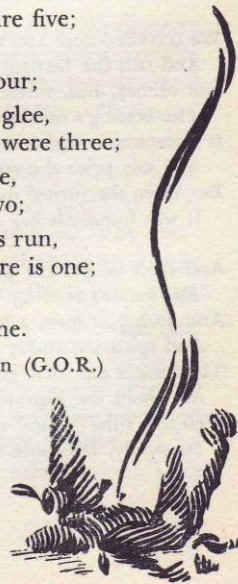
A Kriegsspiel table - see pp16-17



TEN LITTLE MITSUBISHIS

TEN little Mitsubishi's trying out their flying,
One wasn't good enough and then there were nine;
Nine little Mitsubishi's went home rather late,
One met a Cobra and then there were eight;
Eight little Mitsubishi's soaring up to heaven,
Ack-ack got a line on one and now there are seven;
Seven little Mitsubishi's trying out night tricks,
Flew into the searchlight's beam and now there are six;
Six little Mitsubishi's glad to be alive,
Ran into some Seventeens and now there are five;
Five little Mitsubishi's, engines all a-roar,
Ran into a barrage and then there were four;
Four little Mitsubishi's diving round with glee,
One fell foul of Bofors Boys and now there were three;
Three little Mitsubishi's feeling rather blue,
Forgot about the Fifty lads and that left two;
Two little Mitsubishi's thought the race was run,
One of them was quite correct and now there is one;
One little Mitsubishi decided war no fun
Committed hara-kiri and now there are none.

W. McLACHLAN, Captain (G.O.R.)



On Target: with the American and Australian Ack-Ack Brigade in New Guinea.

MODELLING & WARGAMING

Military history covers a wide range of interests which contribute to our understanding of our past. This includes the time-honoured military tradition of model making and war-gaming. To kick this off in this edition you may be interested in the following extract from *The Argus*, 30th April 1902... Japanese training ships had been visiting Australian ports regularly since the late 19th Century and with the signing of an Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902, Australia and Japan by extension became if not allies then certainly formal friends. Of course when WWI broke out Japan really did become an ally. What does this have to do with modelling and war-gaming? Read on:-

In April 1902 the Japanese training vessels *Kongo* and *Hi-Yei* visited Melbourne. After Major Parnell, acting AAG, escorted a group of Japanese Midshipmen around Victoria Barracks, he... "personally escorted a second squad of equally observant Japanese naval visitors over the Engineer's Depot on the south bank of the Yarra. The depot contains one of the finest collections of military models south of the equator, and the midshipmen saw much to interest them. They were quick to appreciate the pontoons and other military bridges, the signalling observation towers, and the recently arrived field equipment...The large model of a town being converted into a defensive position engaged their serious attention, and they closely studied the merits of rifle fire behind earthworks and a plain Australian three rail fence in connection with the problem of stopping mounted infantry.

The depot also contains a large model of a chunk of Cheshire...which has been reproduced to scale, with every topographical detail perfect, and every village, church and hotel presented with true military accuracy. Upon this miniature area of country the "war game" (Kriegsspiel) is played by opposing sides, who move mimic bodies of troops from point to point under the eyes of an umpire. A screen divides the field of battle into two parts in such a way that neither player can see his opponent's moves, and must rely only upon such reports as would be

possible to obtain under service conditions. The Japanese midshipmen had apparently seen the 'Kriegsspiel' before, though they were too polite to say so. They expressed their thanks to Major Parnell very gracefully when the tour was over."

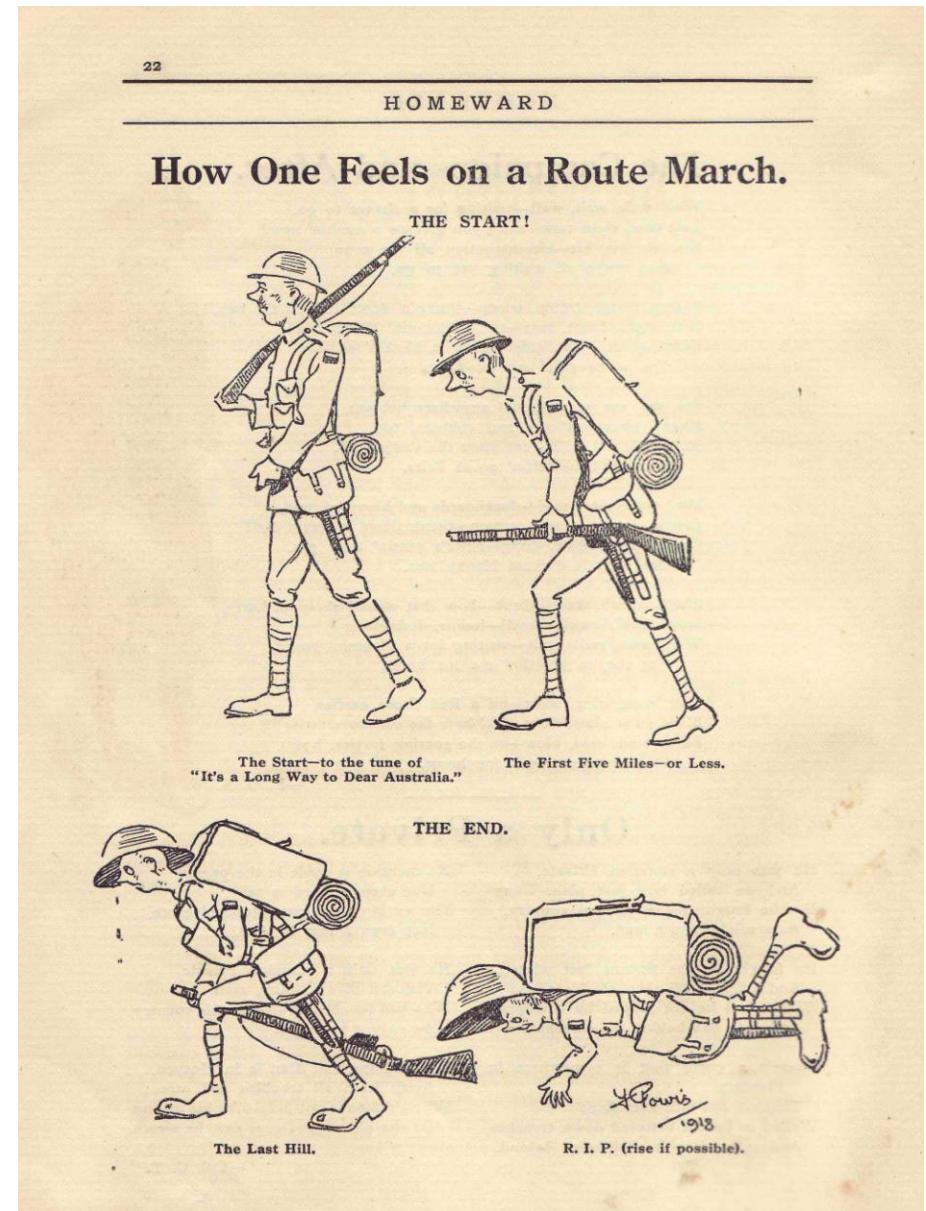
Kriegsspiel, the German word for war-game, was a system used for training officers in the Prussian army. The first set of rules was created in 1812 and named *Instructions for the Representation of Tactical Maneuvers under the Guise of a Wargame*.

This system for simulating war was initially based around a specially designed table which divided the game field into a grid system, a core element of many later war-game and role-playing systems, and included different pre-cast terrain types used in modular combinations, as well as making use of special gaming pieces and dice. The system also included the position of what he called a 'confidant', an impartial third party calculating and assessing the moves, analogous to the modern gamemaster.

The rules set, established several conventions for war-gaming such as the use of maps, color coding opposing armies as red and blue, using umpires, and uniform, complex rules for movement and combat. Map scale was 1:8000 and the time scale was 2 minutes per one turn. Blocks were used to represent units, which had different movement speeds (measured with the use of special compass)...In addition to the 'gamemaster', a total of up to 10 players could play (with two sides in the conflict). The rules assumed a hierarchy of command between the different players, and even stipulated that if different units were out of sight of each other, players were not allowed to communicate commands.

These German war-games were implemented by Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, Chief of Prussian General Staff. Moltke made several reforms to the Prussian military with the backing of Otto von Bismarck. The reforms including Kriegsspiel were the first of its kind; lending priority to education. As a result, this allowed Prussian officers to become more independent and responsible.

After its initial development, this particular style of war-gaming became very popular among the Prussian Army officer corps. After numerous successful Prussian campaigns in the late 1800's, Kriegsspiel became more widely adopted by many militaries. [From Wikipedia]



World War 1 marching:
from 'Homeward Bound' Troopship Magazine 1918