

## Across the Pond: *Medellin 1809*.

**Alea #16/ Jose A. Vargas Zuniga  
Reviewed By Randy Moorehead**

*Medellin 1809* is a Napoleonic regimental-scale treatment of the battle fought near the town during the Peninsular campaign. The Spanish forces of General Cuesta were defeated by a French army under the command of Marshal Victor, but the outcome could have been much different. My opinion is that this is one of the best magazine games, from any company, that I have played this year.

The game comes with Issue #16 of *Alea*, and includes 160 die-cut counters, a 16" by 23" full-color map, and rules translated into English. The game scale is 250 meters per hex, 30 minutes per turn, and 100 men or a single cannon per strength point, although this will vary in other games of the series. *Series?* Yes, series. The rules are broken down into series rules (*Shadow of the Eagle*) and exclusive rules (*Medellin 1809*). The series will be designed to cover most of the battles of the Spanish war against Napoleon's French in the Peninsula (what the authors refer to as the War of Independence). Issue #17 announced that the battles of Castalla, Maria, and Alcaniz would be out shortly, but Issue #18 noted that production problems had delayed their release. If I read between the lines correctly, these might actually become boxed rather than issue games.

This issue of *Alea* has several good articles (in Spanish), including one titled "The Spanish Ulcer," referring to the Peninsular War. It has a nice listing and commentary of previous Peninsular games, and would be a good reference for collectors and completists. Their production values of the magazine seem to have taken off at this point, and the overall effect is quite professional.

The physical components of the game as good as well. The 160 die-cut counters are thinner than those of previous issues (now a "regular" thickness) and much improved. The designers have discovered scanning and desktop publishing, and the graphics are better than ever. The standard unit is the infantry regiment, which has a period soldier in the center. While the icon is somewhat small, they appear to be scanned from a full color source (perhaps an Osprey book?). Artillery units have a field piece shown, and cavalry have a cavalryman shown. Leaders are represented by a national flag, with name and command value given. Disruption and step loss markers are typical, but the formation markers are really neat. A "square" is designated by a "Cuadro" marker, which shows a 3-D view of a unit in square formation. Limbered artillery and skirmishers (here called "Guerrillas") are marked by a painted figure of the appropriate type.

The map also shows signs of computer artwork. The main colors are yellowish brown, representing nicely the high desert plateau typical of west-central Spain. The towns are collections of small buildings, with typical blue rivers and streams, and individual trees for woods. To pick nits, there is a small amount of trapping behind the trees, and I really do prefer the Clash of Arms (Napoleonic) buildings. Set up the counters, and the overall effect is quite pleasing, and "looks" Napoleonic.

The rules are possibly the longest of any *Alea* issue yet. This is not to say that the system is cumbersome or overwrought. Quite the opposite; the rules should feel very natural and intuitive to gamers familiar with the Napoleonic period. The turn sequence begins with an orders phase, followed by a French player phase, then a Spanish player phase. Within each player phase, the phasing player moves, takes defensive fire, performs offensive fire, and resolves shock combat. After both player phases, a rally/reorganization phase is resolved. Victory depends on breaking the morale of enemy formations, and is checked for at the end of each turn. If this sequence sounds familiar to players, it should be. Beginning with *Terrible Swift Sword* (SPI, 1976), many games have used a similar sequence of player phasing (movement, defensive fire, offensive fire, and melee, followed by rally). I would compare the "feel" of the game to *Napoleon at Austerlitz* (*Wargamer* #17), with the orders rules borrowed and modified from *Royalists and Roundheads* (3W, 1991). Before any of you run

screaming from the room, let me say that I played *R&R* and agree that sometimes the orders rule just doesn't work. But I have also played quite a bit of the *La Bataille* system, and know that there is a need for some type of command control, lest players perform super-human feats with their cardboard chits.

Units must face a hex vertex, and exert a Zone of Control into their frontal and flank hexes. Formations include Line, Square, and Guerrilla (skirmish formation available to light infantry). Column formation is assumed when units have Maneuver orders and are five hexes away from enemy units. Artillery is either limbered or unlimbered. Fire combat for infantry (with muskets) is between adjacent units, while artillery ranges vary (heavy artillery may fire up to six hexes away). Standard line-of-sight and line-of-fire rules apply. Fire combat may inflict from 0 to 3 step losses, and units adjacent may engage in "shock" combat, which involves morale checks and step losses. Infantry may form squares, and cavalry may charge. Leaders may become casualties. Players must keep track of losses within formations, and check for demoralization of their formations. When three formations of a side are demoralized, that side loses.

The game plays very well. The French have two cavalry corps holding a broad semicircle of front, while their infantry corps struggle to pass through the town of Medellin and reach the field. The Spanish army descends on the cavalry, and must attempt to drive them as far as possible before the infantry shows up. Historically, the French were able to form up along the ridge near the center of the map, as the Spanish attack wore itself out. Marshall Victor then threw his cavalry against the Spanish flank. The Spanish cavalry fled, and Cuesta's army left in a rout. Both players have many options open to them, and many problems to deal with. The Spanish army is large, but of poor quality (especially low morale). The French army is of good quality, but smaller. None of the French infantry have orders at the beginning of the game, and getting them moving and up into the line is difficult. The Spanish player has the entire army under "attack" orders, which is fine for beginning the game, but coordinating the corps after several turns is difficult. If a Spanish corps still has "attack" orders and is confronted by a solid French line on the hilltop... *Ouch!* Yet if the Spanish player can kill off enough of the French cavalry, and catch the French infantry maneuvering into position while the cavalry rout into them, he stands a good chance of reversing history.

Players should have a rousing good time fighting a little known battle. My experience with other Peninsular games is mainly with those in the *La Bataille* series, such as *Talavera* and *Albuera*. Veteran Allied gamers will lament the lack of Wellington's rabble, as the Thin Red Line was nowhere near this action. Some players may decide that they wish to play without the Orders rule, but I would recommend against it, unless they are simply learning the system. The Orders rule adds that element of command and control that is missing from many Napoleonic games (the exception being the Gamers new Napoleonic series).

Some games use artificial rules, such as "X units may not move until Game Turn 3" or something similar. In this game, all of the French infantry around the town of Medellin are "Without orders." Marshall Victor may attempt to change this, and order them to move out (Maneuver). But to change orders, he must issue the order and roll the die. Assume that Victor is six hexes away from a corps commander who is "without orders." Six (the number of hexes) divided by three (the French command divider) yields a result of two. The French player must roll a two or more on one die for the orders to change. Commanders may not move the turn they attempt to change orders. They are also limited to this attempt once or twice per turn, depending on the overall command structure of the army, and how good they were historically. Now, rolling a two or higher should be no problem. But compare this with the Spanish command system. General Cuesta attempts to change the orders for the Duke of Albuquerque's corps, who is out on the flank. Suppose an 18 (the number of hexes between the two) divided by two (the Spanish command divider) yields a result of nine. There is no way to roll equal to or greater than a nine on one six-sided die. Cuesta must move closer to the Duke (or into his hex, which would

first round. This can certainly happen, and there are exceptions to the CRT to make it easier. A combat can involve "overwhelming odds" of 8:1 or greater. Overwhelming odds results in automatic elimination (unless the unit is in a fortress or fortified city). There is also the "Fortunes of War" exception, which states that if an attacker rolls an unmodified '12,' it is eliminated (if division or Prussian brigade), or shattered (if corps). An interesting feature of combat is that may be "continued," or go more combat rounds voluntarily if both sides agree. The attacking player can also elect to reinforce battles if certain conditions are met.

Morale is crucial to the *Blood and Iron* game system, as the CRT is heavily dependent on morale loss rather than physical losses. As I mentioned above, a unit has to take a morale check in most combat situations. A "disrupted" result is pretty standard fare— if a unit is in disrupted (flipped) state and loses another morale check, it is eliminated. Most combat losses take place this way. A corps unit does not get eliminated, but breaks down into the component level. Units are capable of self-rally, but a leader can add a modifier to the roll.

Mike Bennighof has spent 12 years on *Blood and Iron*, and in general, it shows the effort. Unfortunately, he didn't approach this game from the standpoint of a unified design. *Blood and Iron* evolved from a game on the 1866 Seven Week's War, and the 1866 scenario clearly has enjoyed the benefit of most of the playtesting and development. The 1864 scenario appears to be tacked on as an afterthought. The emphasis on the 1866 war (at the expense of other scenarios) engendered a patchwork feel to the rules on my first reading of them.

There seems to be "an exception to this" or an "optional rule that applies to that" trend that was prevalent throughout the entire rule book. An exceptional rule that generates yet another dice roll happens quite frequently with these rules. This can be good or bad, depending on your anal-retentive threshold. It didn't take away from play too seriously but did slow it down as I hunted through rules checking and double checking what conditions affect combat.

The mechanics of *Blood and Iron* were generally easy to follow except for one or two discrepancies that did not get addressed in the rule book. I was the Danes/Swedes, he played the Prussian/Austrians. My initial deployment had the bulk of my troops on the Schleswig-Holstein border with Prussian and Austrian Corps facing me. One of my Cavalry units was isolated on my left flank. Jeff, my opponent, advanced with the flower of Prussian arms into the center of my line. This cut off my hapless Danish cavalry unit, which got hit by an 4:1 attack shortly thereafter. This resulted in a morale check for both sides. The Prussians weathered the storm easily enough, but my cavalry were shattered, and the CRT stated "Unit Retreats."

Retreat. Hmm... should be in the rule book, right? Well, unless Pacific Rim is trying to instruct by the use of analogies, I couldn't find mention of retreating in either the movement, morale, or combat sections of the rulebook. The tactical situation described above leads to another problem that you may have already anticipated. The Danish cavalry unit was cut off on a peninsula. The only way to retreat would be to cross over my opponent's Zone of Control, which would initiate either another combat or the unit's destruction (in most wargame rules of this era that I have played, at least). This is not clearly defined in the Zone of Control rules, the morale rules, or the combat rules. What happens when a unit can't retreat because of enemy ZoC's? I am reliably informed that there is an errata set on the way that will address these issues. Jeff and I applied a house rule that covered the discrepancy, and the game went on smoothly from there.

To be fair, though, I really did enjoy playing *Blood and Iron*. Mr. Bennighof has captured many elements of 19th century warfare in his design. In particular, I liked the leadership, rail movement and supply aspects of this game. Troops can be moved into a battle quickly and supplied through the railroads. Rail and Supply lines can be broken and units can be affected correspondingly. I liked the leadership and command rules in particular.

Let's check the old yardstick to see if *Blood and Iron* is going to be a prominent member on the bookshelf. I've played *Blood & Iron* to death, and I find it to be a lot of fun to play. I also think that crucial elements of the historical era have been captured in this game. Is it worth the money? *Blood & Iron* goes for about \$40 at my local hobby shop, and this seems to be the going price for this wargame. I think that's a little steep for this game, but I definitely would pay \$25 or \$30 for it. Keeping that in mind, I recommend *Blood and Iron* as an interesting, albeit high-priced, wargame.

With the addition of errata covering a few major combat discrepancies, *Blood and Iron* could become one of the definitive operational level games simulating the era of 19th Century European *Realpolitik*.

## Medellin 1809 (From Page 9)

guarantee a change of orders), otherwise the Duke keeps on going. The overall effect is to show not only the superiority of individual units (higher morale) on the French side, but the superiority of their command system and leadership (at least in this theater, at this point in time, and against this opponent). The system also shows how careful commanders must be in issuing orders, and in timing them correctly. There is great potential for disaster, as well as for great opportunity. It also simulates the confusion that could reign over the Nineteenth Century battlefield, as units with incorrect orders attempt to carry them out, or simply sit out the battle.

There are only two small quibbles with the rules. Optional solutions are offered below. Consider them "unofficial," and enjoy the game.

1. There is no provision to show individual leader initiative. Allow a leader to attempt to change the orders on his own. He must not have had the commander try and fail, and the roll is made independently of any range consideration. Roll less than or equal to his command number (the number on the counter) to issue himself new orders. If a leader is a "0" there is no way to accomplish this (why do you think he is a 0?).
2. Infantry may attempt to form a square when enemy cavalry approaches (during the cavalry's movement). The non-phasing player announces the attempt when the cavalry is 2 hexes away (one intervening hex) and rolls on the morale table. On a result of 1- the square is successfully formed. A D or R result is treated as a Disrupted or Retreated, respectively. This is done in the *La Bataille* series of games, and adds uncertainty to assuming the square formation.

Where does the game, and its system, fit into the spectrum of current Napoleonic games? It is certainly not as complex as *Austerlitz* (The Gamers, 1994), or any of the *La Bataille* series (Clash of Arms). Yet it is definitely a step up from the quadrigame days of SPI. The graphics are pleasing, the system works, and it may be played in an afternoon by experienced players. It imparts a sense of what we perceive Napoleonic combat to have been, and does so without wallowing in minutia and detail for details sake. The designers have succeeded in accomplishing what they set out to do, and left us with something to enjoy as well as a game from which we can learn.

## YADKIN VALLEY GAMES

Want to save up to 20% on your game purchases, get free shipping and save on sales tax too?

EXAMPLES: *Maharaja & Guerilla* - \$44 --> Save \$11  
*Landships & Kharkhov: Ring of Fire* - \$48 --> Save \$12  
 Magic cards discounted also!!

Remember - No sales tax on out of state purchases!!

We also sell "guaranteed available" out of print and used games at very reasonable prices - if we say we have it, we have it! Call or write for more information.

YVG, Route 2, Box 854, East Bend, NC 27018  
 PH: (910) 699-3769

**Submarine (From Page 3)**

I recommend the following as source material:

Bagnasco, Erminio - **Submarines of World War Two**  
Annapolis: Naval Institute Press: 1977 (ISBN 0870219626)

Stern, Robert C. - **U-Boats in action**  
Carrollton Texas: Squadron/Signal; 1977 (ISBN 0897470540)

Stern, Robert C. - **U.S. Subs in action**  
Carrollton Texas: Squadron/Signal; 1983 (ISBN 0897470850)

Walkowiak, Thomas F. - **Fleet submarines of World War Two**  
Missoula: Pictorial Histories; 1991 (ISBN 0933126727)

...and for additional scenarios, or just a really good read, try...

Blair, Clay - **Silent Victory: the US Submarine war against Japan**  
Philadelphia: Lippincott; 1975

---

And what would an article on *Submarine* be without another scenario?  
**Action off Tarawa** - By Bret Schwarz

**1. Introduction:** On November 22, 1943, during the second afternoon of the invasion of Betio island (in the Tarawa atoll) the USS *Tennessee's* escorts made sonar contact with a prowling Japanese submarine. The escorts depth-charged the *I-35* to the surface. Along with the *Tennessee* the escorts engaged the sub in a gunnery duel. The *Frazier* finished the *I-35* off by ramming her.

**2. Order of Battle** - Japanese: *I-35* (*I-15* class submarine)  
US: *Tennessee* (*Tennessee* class BB)  
*Frazier* (*Benson* class DD)  
*Meade* (*Benson* class DD)

**3. Starting locations:** All three US ships deploy one each within eight hexes of a compass rose. The *I-35* starts within 12 hexes of one of the three remaining compass roses (chosen randomly by die roll). The deployment is then adjusted as follows: If the *I-35* is not in the sonar sweep quadrant of a DD, one escort may be repositioned so that it is. If the *I-35* is not within maximum sonar sweep range, the sub is moved towards the escorts until it is.

**4. Game length:** 20 turns, day scenario

**5. Victory conditions:** The Japanese may win by A) sinking a DD without losing the *I-35*, or B) losing the *I-35* but sinking both DD's, or C) chasing the *Tennessee* off the map without losing the *I-35*, or D) inflicting half damage or sinking the *Tennessee* - losing the *I-35* doesn't matter in this case. The US wins by sinking the *I-35* and not losing a ship. Any other result is a draw.

**6. Special rules:**

- A. The *I-35* begins the game spotted and is placed on the map at game start.
- B. The *I-35* may start the game at any depth other than 0 or 25 feet.
- C. Both escorts have professional crews, radar, and improved sonar.
- D. The *Tennessee* is treated as the *North Carolina* except its speed is 6, VP's are 48, and surface gunnery is F-34, B-68, A-34.
- E. Both escorts add one to the colored die roll for depth-charge capacity.
- F. The following changes should be made to the Japanese *I-15* class

*Across the Pond - 1:*  
**Shadow of the Eagle II:  
Alcañiz, Maria and Castalla**

**Marc Brandsma / Nicolas Pilartz**  
*Reviewed by Carl and Cole Jenkins*

*Alea* magazine in Spain introduced a new game system for Napoleonic battles with their *Medellin 1809* game which this publication favorably reviewed. They have now published three new games utilizing the same system. This special edition of *Alea* covers three of the smaller battles of what the English call the Peninsula War and the Spanish call the War of Liberation: *Alcañiz 1809*, *Maria 1809* and *Castalla 1813*. Interestingly, Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, and the Emperor make no appearances in these battles and most of the troops are hardly the elites of their respective armies.

The magazine itself demonstrates high production values throughout the issue. The cover is an attractive print of French soldiers of the Emperor Napoleon on garrison duty in front of the gate of a walled town in Spain. Chasseurs and infantry of the line are represented in a variety of the classic poses. Anyone familiar with Osprey's publications is familiar with the style. The interior of the magazine is nicely printed in Spanish with effective use of period sketches of combat actions. Also inside are several gray scale illustrations of soldiers in uniform and General, later Marshall, Suchet who commanded the French Imperial forces in all three battles. The center of the magazine contains the rules with well laid out tables for terrain effects, morale, fire and shock combat and orders. It includes a set of advanced rules for play of the full game system and a set of basic rules for faster play or to introduce someone with an interest in the period to wargaming. The copy distributed in the United States includes an English translation of the magazines articles and both sets of rules including scenario information and the games' tables.

The magazine has three of the standard Osprey three dimensional perspective terrain table projections representing each of the battles. A translation is provided in the package but most educated purchasers will be able to puzzle out the deployment diagrams and phases of the battle information with little trouble.

All three games' components are attractive and functional. We were most impressed with the artistic quality of the counters. Centered on the counters are scanned Osprey figures surrounded by unit organization information with unit strength at the bottoms of the counters.

A few notes about the English language translation and some production problems in the original game are in order. The translation in some cases summarizes rather than provides a word for word translation of the original Spanish. In most places this is more than adequate. However, in a couple of instances, the original Spanish seemed to provide additional clarification. In one case a critical restriction of infantry fire combat was left out of the English translation - infantry units can only fire through their front two hexes. The terrain effects chart should provide an example of the Spanish words found on the terrain keys with their English counterparts. No translation of the original Spanish terrain keys is provided. Unless familiar with Spanish, players will find that the game needs a good errata/clarification sheet. (*Editor - An errata sheet is now available.*)

The maps are functional elevation-shaded topological battle maps with all the terrain features necessary to represent combat of the period. While they are not the current "state of the art" in naturalistic terrain representation, they represent the upper end of quality for a magazine game. Players must be careful to check the terrain keys on each map to make sure they have correctly differentiated between trees (*bosques*) and orchards. The three maps use inconsistent terrain

## Across the Pond - 2:

### Vae Victis #2 / Austerlitz 1805

L'Histoire & Collections / Marc Brandsma & Nicolas Pilartz  
Reviewed by Carl Gruber

*Austerlitz 1805* is a small issue game that deals with just a part of the Battle of Austerlitz, the engagement on the French left near the Santon redoubt and the Olmutz Road. This is also where the bulk of the Allied and French cavalry fought.

With a few exceptions, magazine issue games, in America at least, are usually lamentable products: they are either boring and simplistic or so glitch-ridden as to be unplayable. *Austerlitz 1805* is a very simple and elegant game that manages to model so much of its era with so little fuss. Production values are quite high too. The map is attractive, player aids, especially the terrain effects chart and unit capability chart are so clearly laid-out and full of information, you can almost play the game just by reading them. The counters, although unmounted, look like they were done by Roger MacGowan. The one big obstacle to playing this little gem is that everything is in French. However, anyone with about two years of college French can read them because the terms and concepts are so familiar to anyone with wargaming experience.

The half-map has a scale of 200 meters per hex and units are infantry regiments and two cavalry regiments. All units are organized into divisions with division commanders and respective corps commanders. Each unit has a variable number of strength points (100 men per Strength Point of infantry and 200 per Strength Point of cavalry) which are not given on the counter but listed on an order of battle in the manner of Rich Berg's GBACW series or the Gamers' CWB series. In other words, casualties are marked off on a roster as they occur. The only value listed on the combat units is their morale factor. Units have two sides: line/column for infantry and normal/charge for cavalry. Leaders are rated for their command range.

The sequence of play is command phase (check units for range to their commander), rally phase, charge phase, movement and formation change, defender withdrawal phase, defensive fire, offensive fire and assault. This is an Igo-Hugo game so the same sequence is then followed by the second player.

As you would expect for a Napoleonic game, formations affect movement and combat abilities. All of these are listed on the unit capability chart. Other than column and line, infantry can also adopt mixed order (French only), square and skirmish. There are disorder and rout formations adopted by units who get the worst of a given fight.

Fire and assault values for units are listed in columns under the type of unit for the formation it has assumed and vary greatly. The same table also gives the movement allowances for units in different formations. For example, infantry in column formation has a movement allowance of four, a fire value of one, an assault value of three and a protection value of one. Fire combat is performed by comparing the firing unit's fire value to the protection value of the target to obtain a differential column on which a six-sided die is rolled and modified for terrain or cuirassier armor. Assault is likewise determined by attack and defender differential with more modifiers for charging or non-charging cavalry, flank attacks, target disorder or rout and leader presence. In both cases, results are given in various combinations of morale checks, points losses or losses with automatic disorder or rout. The juxtaposition of unit type and formation with combat, movement and defense values cleanly models capabilities and creates a streamlined means of resolving battles. I've seldom seen games as elegant as this.

*Austerlitz 1805* includes a single scenario and victory conditions

require that the opposing forces gain control of key villages on the map or exit southward to the Pratzen Heights. These victory conditions reflect one side turning the others position, respectively the French left and Austro-Russian right.

Aside from the unit formation effects discussed above, players have to sequence actions carefully. Units cannot pass through each other and there is no stacking except for guns with infantry. The battlefield is somewhat constricted too, so moving units into positions in which they can effectively support each other as a combined force is tricky. Mistimed charges can be blown to bits by artillery, and an infantry unit caught in line formation by one in attack column will get beaten up.

As simple as this game is, it manages to combine everything you expect from the Napoleonic period and does so in an eminently user-friendly format. If games like this appeared in *Strategy & Tactics* or *Command*, I'd gladly subscribe every year. True, the counters, as beautiful as they are, can be a pain to mount, but if you read French, you will be delighted by this game.

---

### Shadow of the Eagle II (From Page 4)

symbols for trees, so players must beware. Also, not every terrain type on all three maps is included in all three terrain keys. Play again required some cross referencing until we were familiar with the terrain types. We found none of these problems to be insurmountable when playing.

*Shadow of the Eagle* has chosen an interesting if not unique interface between map and unit scale for Napoleonic combat. Using 250 meters a hex for the map, a scale more typically used for games with brigade and regimental sized units, the designers used infantry battalions, artillery batteries and cavalry regiments as their baseline units. Stacking limits are a function of fire effects, shock effects and maneuver restrictions rather than artificial stacking rules. The game system rewards you for massing for shock combat and punishes mass during maneuver and fire combat.

The games mechanics resemble other standard nineteenth century game systems with several interesting innovations. The sequence of play is Command Phase, Movement Phase, Defensive Fire Combat Phase Offensive Fire Combat and Fire Combat Phase for each player. A Reorganization Phase follows the second player turn. Players familiar with the Clash of Arms' *La Bataille* or The Gamers' CWB systems will feel right at home.

The games command system is simple, quick and provides command restrictions with far less effort than The Gamers' systems for their Civil War and Napoleonic games. It is, admittedly, less realistic and doesn't require the planning and foresight The Gamers' system rewards. It is also a fair compromise for games which are designed to be played to completion in one sitting. The system uses a simple formula to obtain the probability of changing a subordinate's commands and rolls one die to obtain the result. Commands are a standard set including Attack, Defend, Maneuver and Retreat. Within the context of the entire game system, the command rules function elegantly.

The games mechanics for movement contain no exceptional surprises. Players will find however that a 250 meter hex coupled with a half an hour player turn determine rather short movement ranges, three hexes for Allied Infantry and four hexes for French Infantry except for units with maneuver orders. Maneuvering into position to attack or defend is a multiple turn process requiring considerable forethought.

The fire and shock combat systems are similar to other games of the era with a couple of exceptions. Only six steps of infantry and three artillery batteries can fire out of a hex. Artillery and infantry can combine fire only in the defensive fire phase. Artillery only engages

in ranged fire in the offensive fire phase. The mechanics favor maneuver and the offensive use of artillery since artillery can move to within two hexes of an enemy hex, unlimber and fire without receiving return fire until the enemy player turn.

Surprisingly, for games of this era, the fire combat table is bloodier than the shock combat table. Fire combat can inflict up to three step losses, and if one attacks a single hex with more than 12 factors, the player rolls again for any remainder over 12 on the table. The shock combat table inflicts a maximum of one step loss with most of its results being advances and retreats. Up to 24 steps can participate in shock combat from a single hex and 18 steps can attack across a single hex side. Fulfilling the requirements for a charge doubles the shock combat value of cavalry.

The morale rules provide the foundation of the game's play and are central to every decision the player makes. Morale effects a unit's effectiveness in fire and shock combat, its ability to maneuver through enemy Zones of Control and its ability to regain order once disorganized or routed. Disorganization halves units fire and shock combat strengths and rout renders them essentially helpless until reorganized. The player's goals in all three battles center on demoralizing the enemy force. In fact, even the geographic objectives' primary effects are on enemy morale, since they usually reflect the capture of the enemy's line of communication.

On the whole, the game system plays well, with its parts interacting to give players the same problems faced by the historical commanders. The mechanics drive attacking players to maneuver, to bring effective fire to bear to cause losses and hopefully disorganize his enemy, then to drive home his attack with shock attacks. Defense requires good use of ground to shield units from enemy fire and to negate his ability to mass strength for shock combat. The defender must then fire effectively to destroy the cohesion of the attacks the enemy does make.

Each side must leverage his strengths against the enemy's weakness and protect as best he can against his own weakness. After players learn the mechanics, the game system is one of those systems that just "feels" right. Each of the three battles in this issue present interesting and very different challenges to players on each side.

In *Alcañiz*, the French player must be careful to mass for one good assault on either of the Spanish flanks or the center. He has sufficient forces and superior morale to break the Spanish Army of Valencia in one place and then roll up the flank if all goes well. Historically, Suchet opted for a double envelopment, a maneuver for which he did not have sufficient forces to exploit success, and the battle degenerated into a stalemate until he attempted to break the Spanish center. His last bid to destroy the Spanish against the Guadalupe river was broken by Spanish artillery and he quit the field.

In one of our games, the French player masked the Spanish center and left, launching an attack against the Spanish right. The Spanish player had massed his artillery in the center and used his cavalry up in a spoiling attack against the deploying French. The French flanked, penetrated and routed the Spanish right. When the Spanish player surrendered, he was losing the race to secure the single bridge across the river. Both players agreed the Spanish should refuse the right, place some guns there in support and hold their cavalry in reserve for the crisis of the battle.

At *Maria*, Suchet's and Blake's armies face each other with each deployed on solid defensive terrain. Historically, each waited for the other to attack and break the stalemate, until Suchet received reinforcements and launched an inconclusive attack too late in the day to achieve decisive results. In our playthrough of the scenario, the French and Spanish battered each other with artillery in the center, neither side gaining a clear advantage. The Spanish attacked the French left first with his second line. The French reacted quickly and the Spanish were unlucky in fire and shock combat. The Spanish were

in the process of trying to recover their order as the French counter-attacked the Spanish left and reinforcements fell on the Spanish right.

At *Castalla*, the French player faces a much larger joint English and Spanish Allied Army under (the often relieved for cause) General Murray. Fortunately, the poor morale of most of the Allied force and Murray's dubious "qualities" as a commander more than compensate for the French inferiority in numbers. The Allies are deployed in a strong defensive position along a massive ridge line with their left anchored by the castle at Castalla and the Rio Verde. The Allies also dispose of a superiority in artillery to support their army.

Again, the French need to identify an initial portion of the Allied Army to demoralize and concentrate upon. In one game, both an attack on the center, Suchet's historical attack, and an attack on the Allied right were tried on different occasions. The attack on the center bogged down into an attrition battle, as the French found themselves constantly attacking uphill. The Allies were able to release enough units from the flanks to stabilize the situation and counterattack. The attack on the Allied right yielded a far better harvest for the French. The Allies watched helplessly while the French climbed the ridge, out of range of the Allied artillery. The French then descended on the weak morale Spanish Division holding the left, creating a truly desperate situation for the Allied player. The French were then able to demoralize and roll up a substantial part of the Allied Army.

Overall, we found these three games provide an interestingly look at some of the lesser known battles of the Spanish War of Liberation. The game system is an interesting compromise between playability and detail, giving a good "feel" for the tactics of the era. Players will find, because of the low number of units in these battles, that they can play one of these games in an evening, or at most a single day. We look forward to playing them again, as well as the next extension in this series, due out sometime in the fall of 1996.

## *Out of the Frying Pan...*

*By Rich Erwin*

Lessee...as I type this, my daughter is sleeping on my lap, face buried in my chest, finally deciding after an hour of fitful crabbiness whether she wants to sleep in her own bed, with Mom (who is also asleep), or with Dad who has just found out that three received reviews will take up almost one third of the magazine if allowed to run rampant (two are virtually rewrites of the game systems reviewed). I am finally getting a serious block of time free after many weekends (let's not even discuss the evenings) filled by either daughter duties, taking care of my wife when needed (whose illness now may or may not be chronic, but whose resolution is far from over) and a maniac work schedule which includes a major software blockpoint installation.

Just another day in the life of Rich Erwin, Editor of *Paper Wars* and continuously self-amazed masochist.

Anyway, this should give you a feel of what's been going on here, and part of an explanation as to why I haven't said much in my own voice about various doings. To explain things a little more in detail, I was able in October to finally convince a number of folks to take a crack at a direct mail campaign I had planned some time ago. That took a lot of effort, and since I wanted it done right, I did most of the heavy lifting once the cash commitments were in hand. The results have been so good that I was delayed in getting *Paper Wars* #23 out in time (which was further delayed by a mixup by the USPO Bulk Mail Center in Seattle and the disastrous storms in January), and am only now finally cleaning up the last shreds of things to do directly related to it. I learned a lot from the experience, and will try it again this year if I can afford it, but the leg work, next time, I will pay for someone else to do.

The direct mail campaign was the final straw on a tortuous set of



## Ludopress's *Bailén 1808*

Designed by *Javier Hoyos and Jose A. Vargas-Zuniga*

reviewed by **Kevin Donovan**

Within a few months of traversing Spain in order to invade Portugal, the French replaced the Spanish monarch and attempted to occupy Spain. By the spring of 1808, the Spanish were in open revolt. A Spanish field army, the Army of Andalusia, led by General Francisco Javier Castanos, began to maneuver against General Dupont's army in early-mid June. As Dupont backpedaled, each side gained substantial reinforcements. However, Dupont eventually got caught by the converging Spanish near Bailen, and tried to break out. (Depending on what sources you read, the combatants were either roughly equal in numbers, or the Spanish had a distinct numerical superiority). The initial French attack, a cavalry assault by the Prive' Brigade, cleared a Spanish hilltop position, and then repulsed a series of Spanish counterattacks. The Prive' Brigade then tried but failed to silence a defended Spanish battery. A French attack on the Spanish center eventually faltered (even with the arrival of the Prive' Brigade) in and in one instance, Swiss troops on both sides, when faced by each other, simply refused to fight. Subsequently, the Spanish attacked the unprotected left flank. The commitment of French reserves slowed the flanking maneuver, but the arrival of the worn yet well-fought Prive' dragoons stabilized that situation. Although General Vedel arrived in the rear of the main force, and had cleared several Spanish positions, the arrival of Spanish troops on the road behind Dupont convinced him to surrender.

In 1994 Spanish game company Ludopress published *Bailén 1808*, the second boxed/folio volume from the *La Sombra Del Aguila* (Shadow of the Eagle) series. The first boxed volume covered the battles of Alcaniz, Maria, and Castalla, with two other battles covered in *Alea Magazine*. *Bailén 1808* offers a small package as compared to other boxed Napoleonic games, such as the offerings from Clash of Arms Games. To begin the evaluation of physical package, the game comes packaged in a slim box/folio format. Inside, you get two rule books written in Spanish (with plenty of diagrams and play examples) along with a single rules booklet in English (six pages of rules, six pages of scenario information and specific rules and five pages of diagrams and charts) along with the map and counters.

As for the playing pieces, aspiring captains of history might be shocked to pull out a pair of half-sized countersheets. You end up with a grand total of 320 half-inch, double-sided counters. Of these, you get 126 actual combat units with the unit scales being battalions and regiments along with artillery batteries. Each infantry and cavalry unit is rendered in a small iconic pose. (The cavalry units and the French marines look particularly interesting.) While the artillery sports a single unlimbered (and uncrewed) piece. Each unit is rated for morale (using letters ranging from a high of *A* to a low of *E*) and combat strength (with each point representing one-hundred foot soldiers, cavalymen or a single cannon). Furthermore, a flag denotes a unit's parent formation, referred to as a "Superior unit", so you know which troops answer to which leader. A unit may even possess a special symbol that denotes a particular status such as horse artillery, heavy cavalry or light infantry for that period feel. Leaders

(represented by national flags) are rated for their command factor, which is their capacity to influence the troops in their formation. (Of course, army commanders can influence any unit). The reverse side of a combat unit counter indicates disorganized status. What you may also notice is that the counters lack a movement allowance, which is printed on a chart. The informational counters sport images denoting such things as artillery-limbered status, personnel losses, infantry squares and skirmisher formations. Some other interesting pieces are the unknown formation counters, which are infantry silhouettes, devoid of any pertinent combat information. This allows players to simulate the fog of war, although solitaire players probably have to jettison any rules pertaining to the fog of war. If there are any potential drawbacks to the counters, it is the relatively small size of the figures on the counters.

The game also sports a 23" x 16" map made of high-quality stock paper (reminding me of the older *La Bataille* maps) and a colorful yet muted range of colors for the terrain with variations of yellow and brown predominating. Across the battlefield, you get an interesting assortment of terrain types such as hills, forests (lots of trees here), impassable slopes (essentially ravines) and bridges that can become a critical bottleneck during the fighting. At a scale of 250 meters per hex, the map stretches from in the east past the town of Bailen and over a series of wooded hills to the Herrumblar River the west. One rather odd point is the clear terrain hexes that sport what appear to be etched lines or rows. (Tilled farmland perhaps?). Anyhow, while the map may not necessarily top the offerings from GMT Games or Clash of Arms Games, it is reasonably functional.

Lets move on to the game system. First up is the turn sequence. Each turn represents thirty minutes of real time, and is divided into essentially four phases, not counting the end of turn step wherein you advance the turn marker one space on the Turn Track.

- **Orders Phase:** A player can try to alter the previous orders of his or her leaders.
- **French Phase:** The French move, followed by Spanish defensive fire, which leads to French offensive fire and then, a shock attack.
- **Spanish/Allied Phase:** You can probably guess how this Phase progresses.
- **Reorganization Phase:** After everyone's troops have moved and fought, you get to restore the combat effectiveness of battle damaged units.

Even if you have not played any of the games in the *Shadow of the Eagle* series, the turn sequence is easy to learn.

As you can surmise from the description of the turn sequence, the armies are animated by means of issued orders. There are six kinds of orders, each of which impact the commitment of troops to a fight and movement.

- A maneuver order gives all of the units in a formation a

movement bonus, limits their stacking ability, and prohibits them from getting within five hexes of the enemy. But because units operating under a maneuver order have their combat strength halved, giving the enemy a wide berth makes sense. But many of the other orders may come as a surprise for some tactical gamers.

- For instance, units operating pursuant to an attack order must move at least three hexes toward the enemy. However, only half of the units may actually engage in combat with enemy, which seems to mean getting within shooting range.
- A harassment order is akin to an attack order except that only thirty-percent of the units so marked can engage in combat. Thus, you cannot hurl an entire formation into the fight at one time. Instead, one could argue that a commander is keeping some of his troops in reserve. Of course, for those grognards who are used to getting the maximum efforts from their cardboard minions, this is a shocker.
- With a defend order, you must designate a cluster of hexes (nine hexes across and five hexes deep) to act as a defensive sector, from which the assigned units cannot leave, but they can attack and defend normally within that area.
- As many will probably agree, a retreat order compels units to leave any and all enemy zones of control, but such forces may otherwise move freely as they wish.

Formations operating without orders are minimally effective, as they can only move toward their leaders and cannot attack.

Using an order-based system adds both a little of tension and detail. Taking a page from The Gamers' Napoleonic Brigade Series or Civil War Brigade Tactical series, *Bailén 1808* requires players to write out the order state for each sub-command, but comes nowhere close to the level of detail in the aforementioned games. To change orders, you simply count the number of hexes between a leader and the army commander and divide that number with another provided in the scenario. If you roll higher than the aforementioned number, a subordinate leader can change his orders as desired. Otherwise, the troops continue with their last orders. Note though, an attempt to change orders will immobilize the army commander for that turn. Although one solution is to put the army commander in a central position where he can be in an optimal range of as many subordinate leaders as possible, there are times where the big guy's personal attention is needed (i.e. for rallying, etc) in some remote part of the battlefield. Another interesting rule is that in some scenarios, you can get another chance to change orders in that turn should you fail. As we all know, the gods of war (a.k.a. the dice) can be cruel, so a second chance is always welcome.

Movement and combat are also influenced by factors at the unit level as shown via formation counters. For example, infantry units can attempt to deploy into an infantry square (either voluntarily or in reaction to an approaching cavalry threat) or, for light infantry units, spread out into a skirmisher formation. As in many games, a successful morale check will result in the creation of an infantry square whereas a failed roll will result in the unlucky unit being flipped to its demoralized side. Some of the larger commands have a lot of low-morale troops, and I have seen bad die rolls turn the bulk of an entire brigade into a disorganized mob ripe for the picking. Most squares, depending on the morale rating of the forming unit, can also move, albeit slowly. As for a skirmisher formation, it al-

lows a light infantry unit to spread its combat strength, with a minimum of two strength points, per hex out to four hexes. Thus, units like the Cataluna Volunteers, can create a fairly sizeable and infantry screen. Given the wooded and hilly terrain in *Bailén 1808*, I like the flexibility that light infantry provides. (As I will show later, an infantry screen is useful, but it can get into trouble real quick). As expected, artillery has two formation states: either limbered or unlimbered. Cavalry units have no formation states to worry about, so you can just throw them into the fray.

Of course, when I mention "fray", I am referring to both fire combat and shock combat. as long as the unit is within the command range of its leader, then they can enter an enemy zone of control and start a fight. Artillery and infantry, but not cavalry (that includes dragoons) can shoot at anyone within range. Of course, the grunts can only blast someone directly in front of them, and even then, with only up to six firing points worth of strength (anything in excess of six points can be used on another frontal hex). Infantry squares, which can fire half of their available points into three different hexes, are a bit different. As in numerous other tactical games, only the top infantry unit in a stack of units can fire. Artillery can blast adjacent foes with their full destructive fury, but as the range increases, bombardment strength decreases. Unlike infantry fire, up to three artillery units in a single hex can combine all of their hitting power into one punch. Speaking of punches, *Bailén 1808* enhances fire for factors like high morale (for British units with a level A, B, or C morale, or any other nationality's troops that have a level A or B morale) or certain targets like an exposed flank or infantry square. At the same time, factors such as low morale, or fire from either light artillery or skirmishers, take a penalty. The damage from fire combat is measured in strength point losses, morale checks and even automatic retreats. The kicker here is that if the top unit in a target stack gets blown away, excess step losses fall on the next unit in a stack.

Once enough firepower has been thrown around, it is time to close in and take ground. Shock combat is the usual attacker to defender odds ratio affair. As expected in a tactical Napoleonic wargame, *Bailén 1808* rewards the use of certain units, morale superiority and decisive maneuver. For instance, attacking heavy cavalry enjoy a bonus to the combat die roll, unless they are attacking an infantry square, in which case the horsemen will suffer a penalty. On the other hand, an infantry square is at a disadvantage when facing oncoming infantry. Likewise, an attacker operating pursuant to an attack order, or a defender with a defend order is a bit tougher. Finally, a flank or rear attack (or one directed at a skirmisher formation) is either doubled for attacking infantry, or tripled for attacking cavalry.

In the hellish environment of close-in fighting, this game gives cavalry its proper place as a potent combat arm, as shown historically by the valiant efforts of the small Prive' Brigade). A cavalry-only attack can become a full-blown cavalry charge, thereby doubling its strength - which explains how a well-timed cavalry charge into the blind side of an enemy force twice its size can be successful. Of course, cavalry can avoid combat with other units - cavalry and limbered artillery can evade enemy infantry, and light cavalry can escape the approach of enemy heavy cavalry. On the other hand, a cavalry unit may decide to meet an enemy cavalry attack head on with a counter-charge, assuming that it can pass a morale check. But with such efforts come great risks. For instance, when a changing cavalry unit closes in to the final hex before contact, it must pass a

morale check, or else it will abort the attack in a weakened state. Moreover, if the charging cavalry clears the target hex, there is the possibility that the horsemen will move on to attack any other enemy units within three hexes unless they pass a cavalry control check. (British cavalry are susceptible to this affliction). If there are no other enemy troops for a hot-blooded victorious cavalry unit to terrorize, then they just continue to move forward for one turn. But if the pursuing cavalry moves off the map because of such aggressiveness, then it is gone for the game. Conversely, a cavalry charge that fails to clear the target hex will compel the cavalry to retreat. Contrary to other Napoleonic games, a cavalry charge does not tire out the cavalry unit, so as long as a cavalry unit successfully charges and seizes a hex, it will continue to operate at peak efficiency.

Given all of these variables, attempting to clear an enemy position by means of cold steel has a bit of a rock-paper-scissors feel. From my experiences with this game, a combined arms approach is important to take or hold key terrain features). When the die is cast, shock combat results range from:

- The loss of a single strength point,
- A retreat accompanied by a morale check (and in this game, a morale check can lead result in either a disorganized or routed result), or...
- An exchange (both sides lose a single strength point).

Rest assured, in a stand up fight, after all of the firing and steel on steel, most of the forces involved will get roughed up one way or the other.

Accordingly, casualties do matter. Whenever the number of eliminated or disorganized troops exceeds a brigade or division's demoralization level, all forces in that command will suffer a drop in morale. Given the destructiveness of Napoleonic warfare, players must repair their battle-damaged units. Given the overall situation, such restorative efforts become a definite balancing act, especially for the French, in the face of aggressive Spanish/Allied efforts. Then again, a brigade or division can become demoralized numerous times throughout the battle. The number of demoralized brigades or divisions at the game's conclusion, along with the ownership of key terrain, determines victory. Speaking of casualties, leaders that participated in an unsuccessful attack have a one-in-six chance of being rendered *hors de combat* and replaced by an inferior leader. If a leader participates in a successful or unsuccessful defense, or gets involved in a firefight, there is no need to worry. Personally, I'd prefer that any leader's involvement in combat to pose some degree of risk. My gaming group used a house rule that whenever a leader is in a stack that retreats or suffers the loss of an entire unit due to combat, there is a one-in-six chance of becoming a casualty.

There are some optional rules, all of which deal with the fog of war. Players can elect to employ unknown factor markers to obscure the nature of some of their forces. A single unknown factor marker can represent a single unit or a stack of units, or may puff up a unit or stack to make it look like a formidably-sized force, but no phantom or fake units. Eventually, a unit will get close to be sighted through the marker. Yet whether a unknown factor marker is being used on the attack or defense, it can make for some interesting moments. Done properly, you cannot be sure that an enemy line approaching you is either a screen or an entire brigade moving up to attack.. ("Where are the French cuirassiers?"). Of course, although un-

known factor markers allow players to bluff, they are not particularly suited for solitaire gaming.

With all of these wonderful rules, you get five scenarios to test your martial mettle. The first scenario, *Vedel est Arrive!* (Vedel is Coming!) portrays Vedel's late arrival on the battlefield. Although he missed most of the party, Vedel apparently wanted his pound of Spanish flesh, and made an effort to get it. Only three turns in length, it makes a great introductory scenario, and experienced players of the system can get through this scenario in under an hour.

The second scenario, Surprise in Bailen, is a hypothetical situation in which the Spanish arrive at Bailen only to find Vedel awaiting him (i.e. set-in with a defend order). This scenario lasts either twenty-six turns or until the Spanish capture Bailen. Although Vedel troops have the undeniable advantage of solid defensive terrain, they are subject to thirst and artillery problems that diminish the range of their artillery. Throw in the variable arrival of French reinforcements (Dufour's Brigade), and things can get even more interesting for the French.

The third scenario, Surprise in Bailen II, posits a continuation of the previous scenario, which leads to a somewhat different clash at Bailen. This scenario has an altered French line of battle, set up with the knowledge of substantial enemy forces in the vicinity. The forces involved in the previous scenario have some chance to reorganize before the French make their move. Make no mistake, the onus of action is squarely on the French here, as every two French brigades that exit the map will cause an additional Spanish brigade to be considered demoralized. (This hypothetical battle was my favorite scenario.)

For those players with a free weekend, the fourth scenario offers a thirty-five turn slug fest, with four variants, plus special rules for the reluctance of Swiss troops to fight each other, along with the somewhat burdensome French convoy.

Finally, the fifth scenario, Death to the Invader!, evinces the savagery of the Peninsular War. In the final scenario, the Spanish have rejected the French offer of a truce/conditional surrender, and instead move in to annihilate the French. The French objective is simply to break out and escape with as many troops as possible. For those with a masochistic streak, play the French. Even playing the Spanish, I did not feel it was a fulfilling scenario.

There are some good points to this game. For one, I am unaware of any other game that recreates this particular battle, so it stands out from the offerings on such battles as Vittoria, Albuera and Salamanca. Furthermore, with six pages of series rules, you can absorb the rules within a short time, while retaining a healthy dose of Napoleonic flavor. (Hey, what's a Napoleonic wargame without cavalry counter-charges, skirmishers and infantry squares?). Such a small amount of rules are enhanced by the generous provision of play examples. Furthermore, the optional use of unknown factor markers adds more excitement. Of course, with a wide range of scenarios, *Bailén 1808* offers something for gamers desiring either a quick-fix or a grueling struggle.

Alas, there are also a few sticking points. Some of my fellow gamers would have preferred

a colored stripe instead of a flag to denote a superior unit, so the counters could have a movement factor instead of constantly having

(continued on page 41)



shoot. The rationale for this system is that it duplicates the uncertainty of ancient combat, the prime example being the Greek general Pyrrhus who won the battle of Ausculum in 279 BCE, only to lose the war because of the horrendous losses he suffered in "victory." The system can lead to wild changes of fortune, but that, in my opinion, is one of the pleasures of the game—for, as Yogi Berra said "it ain't over 'til it's over."

The designer has also seen to it that each side has its own "character" as defined by its benefits and drawbacks. The Romans have more cards than anyone else, and they can colonize—literally establishing Roman cities on enemy territory for the price of a strength point. On the other hand, these aren't Julius' legions, and the Romans usually are capable of fielding only two leaders who change every turn. Rome, in fact, is extremely vulnerable at the beginning of the game.

The wealthy Etruscans can bribe hostile armies, either making them retreat or allowing an Etruscan army to pass through unhindered. Unfortunately, they can only do this until too much of their territory is taken or they run out of valuable "3" activation point strategy cards. They also control the Samnites, who have a ready-made, centrally-placed natural "bunker" to build up in, but who are also within easy reach of both Rome and Greece.

The Greeks have good leaders, but they're all hired guns who would be just as happy to conquer their Greek employers as anyone else. Every turn a good Greek leader remains on the board, he extracts a heavy toll on the will of Greek cities to fight and Greek spaces to stay loyal. Keep too many Greek leaders in the field, and the Greek colonies may collapse internally just from the pace of intrigue.

Of all the forces in *Sword Of Rome*, the Gauls are my nomination for the most fun to play. They don't win by taking victory point locations like everyone else. All they're interested in is loot. They score by plundering spaces, cities, even armies that lose to them. The only problem is that the Trans-Alpine Gauls are competing with them, and only one set of Gauls can be top-dog on the Plunder Track. That, and it takes five plunder "points" to earn a victory point (the average space yields only one or two plunder "points") and so it may take awhile to build up to those victory points. But you will have fun running amok in the meantime.

*Sword Of Rome* works best as a 2 or 4 player game. In the two-player game, one player controls the Gauls and the Greeks while the other player controls the Romans and the Etruscans/Samnites; it's a little unwieldy playing two hands of cards at once, and there is some rather unnatural cooperation between the hitched teams of rivals, but at least all are getting intelligent direction. In the three-player game, the Gauls are left out and a roll on a table takes chunks out of the other players at random on the Gauls' behalf. This doesn't work nearly as well, since disaster simply falls out of the blue regardless of how well or poorly a player may be doing. Balance suffers thereby. Four players, of course, is the ideal. With every side motivated by genuine self-interest, the game really shines, although it can still take awhile to play.

[Wray: *Sword of Rome* was designed as a four-player game with rules included for two and three player games. I agree completely that the game works best with four players. However, with the creation of a cyberboard module, ACTS and Vassal support, it should be fairly easy to find players online for a four player game even if you cannot find them locally.]

*Sword of Rome* works because designer Wray Ferrell and the GMT developers have paid scrupulous attention to balance and to giving the sides a real, historically-based identity. This isn't just *Hannibal* with four players. The Romans are far from overwhelming and almost no one, least of all the Romans, will profit from attempting to blitzkrieg up and down the Italian peninsula. *Sword of Rome* rewards considered play and adept timing. Combat is not to be sought at all costs because the cost may be the game, and so even war must be conducted carefully, no matter how invulnerable a player may feel with 10 strength points roaming about the countryside stacked with a leader who has the top tactical rating of "4." As far as the development of multi-player card-driven wargames is concerned, *Sword Of Rome* is a long stride in the right direction, where the issue is always in doubt and there's rarely such a thing as an entirely lost cause. Bravo, Mr. Ferrell, we'll be waiting to see how you top this one; and while we're waiting, pass me the feather duster so I can clean off that shelf in the hall of fame.

## Bailén 1808

(continued from page 39)

to look up a movement allowance. According to one of my fellow gamers, the price of between thirty and thirty-five dollars seems high when dollar for dollar, some issues of *Strategy & Tactics* offer bigger maps and more playing pieces. As a further criticism, some of the scenarios tend to heavily favor the Spanish, but since the French army actually marched into a bad situation thanks to bad intelligence, perhaps such historicity is expected. Occasionally, given the brevity of some of the rules (i.e. line of sight) my fellow gamers and I had some questions. As for solitaire playing, it is possible with an orders-driven system, to play this game, (consider the success of the various tactical wargames from *The Gamers*), but solo play does not seem to do this game justice.

In the end, given my experience with previous games in the system, I thought *Bailén 1808* was a decent game. It offers a reasonable amount of tactical flavor, without having to delve through dozens of pages. For those of you desiring a departure from the well-known clashes in this Napoleonic theater of operations, there may be something here for you.

Next in our line of *Simulations Canada* releases:

