

ENDING WITH A SORT OF CHALLENGE

I COULD go on now and tell of battles, copiously. In the memory of the one skirmish I have given I do but taste blood. I would like to go on, to a large, thick book. It would be an agreeable task. Since I am the chief inventor and practiser (so far) of Little Wars, there has fallen to me a disproportionate share of victories. But let me not boast. For the present, I have done all that I meant to do in this matter. It is for you, dear reader, now to get a floor, a friend, some soldiers and some guns, and show by a grovelling devotion your appreciation of this noble and beautiful gift of a limitless game that I have given you.

And if I might for a moment trumpet! How much better is this amiable miniature than the Real Thing! Here is a homeopathic remedy for the imaginative strategist. Here is the premeditation, the thrill, the strain of accumulating victory or disaster--and no smashed nor sanguinary bodies, no shattered fine buildings nor devastated country sides, no petty cruelties, none of that awful universal boredom and embitterment, that tiresome delay or stoppage or embarrassment of every gracious, bold, sweet, and charming thing, that we who are old enough to remember a real modern war know to be the reality of belligerence. This world is for ample living; we want security and freedom; all of us in every country, except a few dull-witted, energetic bores, want to see

the manhood of the world at something better than apeing the little lead toys our children buy in boxes. We want fine things made for mankind--splendid cities, open ways, more knowledge and power, and more and more and more--and so I offer my game, for a particular as well as a general end; and let us put this prancing monarch and that silly scare-monger, and these excitable "patriots," and those adventurers, and all the practitioners of Welt Politik, into one vast Temple of War, with cork carpets everywhere, and plenty of little trees and little houses to knock down, and cities and fortresses, and unlimited soldiers--tons, cellars-full--and let them lead their own lives there away from us.

My game is just as good as their game, and saner by reason of its size. Here is War, done down to rational proportions, and yet out of the way of mankind, even as our fathers turned human sacrifices into the eating of little images and symbolic mouthfuls. For my own part, I am prepared. I have nearly five hundred men, more than a score of guns, and I twirl my moustache and hurl defiance eastward from my home in Essex across the narrow seas. Not only eastward. I would conclude this little discourse with one other disconcerting and exasperating sentence for the admirers and practitioners of Big War. I have never yet met in little battle any military gentleman, any captain, major, colonel, general, or eminent commander, who did not presently get into difficulties and confusions among even the elementary rules of the Battle. You have only to play at Little Wars three or four times to realise just what a blundering thing Great War must be.

Great War is at present, I am convinced, not only the most expensive game in the universe, but it is a game out of all proportion. Not only are the masses of men and material and suffering and inconvenience too monstrously big for reason, but--the available heads we have for it, are too small. That, I think, is the most pacific realisation conceivable, and Little War brings you to it as nothing else but Great War can do.

APPENDIX

LITTLE WARS AND KRIEGSPIEL

THIS little book has, I hope, been perfectly frank about its intentions. It is not a book upon Kriegspiel. It gives merely a game that may be played by two or four or six amateurish persons in an afternoon and evening with toy soldiers. But it has a very distinct relation to Kriegspiel; and since the main portion of it was written and published in a magazine, I have had quite a considerable correspondence with military people who have been interested by it, and who have shown a very friendly spirit towards it--in spite of the pacific outbreak in its concluding section. They tell me--what I already a little suspected--that Kriegspiel, as it is played by the British Army, is a very dull and unsatisfactory exercise, lacking in realism, in stir and the unexpected, obsessed by the umpire at every turn, and of very doubtful value in waking up the imagination, which should be its chief function. I am particularly indebted to Colonel Mark Sykes for advice and information in this matter. He has pointed out to me the possibility of developing Little Wars into a vivid and inspiring Kriegspiel, in which the element of the umpire would be reduced to a minimum; and it would be ungrateful to him, and a waste of an interesting opportunity, if I did not add this Appendix, pointing out how a Kriegspiel of real educational value for junior officers may be developed out of the amusing methods of Little War. If Great War is to be played at all, the better it is played the

more humanely it will be done. I see no inconsistency in deploring the practice while perfecting the method. But I am a civilian, and Kriegspiel is not my proper business. I am deeply preoccupied with a novel I am writing, and so I think the best thing I can do is just to set down here all the ideas that have cropped up in my mind, in the footsteps, so to speak, of Colonel Sykes, and leave it to the military expert, if he cares to take the matter up, to reduce my scattered suggestions to a system.

Now, first, it is manifest that in Little Wars there is no equivalent for rifle-fire, and that the effect of the gun-fire has no resemblance to the effect of shell. That may be altered very simply. Let the rules as to gun-fire be as they are now, but let a different projectile be used--a projectile that will drop down and stay where it falls. I find that one can buy in ironmongers' shops small brass screws of various sizes and weights, but all capable of being put in the muzzle of the 4'7 guns without slipping down the barrel. If, with such a screw in the muzzle, the gun is loaded and fired, the wooden bolt remains in the gun and the screw flies and drops and stays near where it falls--its range being determined by the size and weight of screw selected by the gunner. Let us assume this is a shell, and it is quite easy to make a rule that will give the effect of its explosion. Half, or, in the case of an odd number, one more than half, of the men within three inches of this shell are dead, and if there is a gun completely within the circle of three inches radius from the shell, it is destroyed. If it is not completely within the circle, it is disabled for two moves. A supply waggon is

completely destroyed if it falls wholly or partially within the radius. But if there is a wall, house, or entrenchment between any men and the shell, they are uninjured--they do not count in the reckoning of the effect of the shell.

I think one can get a practical imitation of the effect of rifle-fire by deciding that for every five infantry-men who are roughly in a line, and who do not move in any particular move, there may be one (ordinary) shot taken with a 4'7 gun. It may be fired from any convenient position behind the row of live men, so long as the shot passes roughly over the head of the middle man of the five.

Of course, while in Little Wars there are only three or four players, in any proper Kriegspiel the game will go on over a larger area--in a drill-hall or some such place--and each arm and service will be entrusted to a particular player. This permits all sorts of complicated imitations of reality that are impossible to our parlour and playroom Little Wars. We can consider transport, supply, ammunition, and the moral effect of cavalry impact, and of uphill and downhill movements. We can also bring in the spade and entrenchment, and give scope to the Royal Engineers. But before I write anything of Colonel Sykes' suggestions about these, let me say a word or two about Kriegspiel "country."

The country for Kriegspiel should be made up, I think, of heavy blocks or boxes of wood about 3 x 3 x 1/2 feet, and curved pieces (with a

rounded outline and a chord of three feet, or shaped like right-angled triangles with an incurved hypotenuse and two straight sides of 3 feet) can easily be contrived to round off corners and salient angles. These blocks can be bored to take trees, etc., exactly as the boards in Little Wars are bored, and with them a very passable model of any particular country can be built up from a contoured Ordnance map. Houses may be made very cheaply by shaping a long piece of wood into a house-like section and sawing it up. There will always be someone who will touch up and paint and stick windows on to and generally adorn and individualise such houses, which are, of course, the stabler the heavier the wood used. The rest of the country as in Little Wars.

Upon such a country a Kriegspiel could be played with rules upon the lines of the following sketch rules, which are the result of a discussion between Colonel Sykes and myself, and in which most of the new ideas are to be ascribed to Colonel Sykes. We proffer them, not as a finished set of rules, but as material for anyone who chooses to work over them, in the elaboration of what we believe will be a far more exciting and edifying Kriegspiel than any that exists at the present time. The game may be played by any number of players, according to the forces engaged and the size of the country available. Each side will be under the supreme command of a General, who will be represented by a cavalry soldier. The player who is General must stand at or behind his representative image and within six feet of it. His signalling will be supposed to be perfect, and he will communicate with his subordinates by shout, whisper, or note, as he thinks fit. I suggest he should be

considered invulnerable, but Colonel Sykes has proposed arrangements for his disablement. He would have it that if the General falls within the zone of destruction of a shell he must go out of the room for three moves (injured); and that if he is hit by rifle-fire or captured he shall quit the game, and be succeeded by his next subordinate.

Now as to the Moves.

It is suggested that:

Infantry shall move one foot.

Cavalry shall move three feet.

The above moves are increased by one half for troops in twos or fours on a road.

Royal Engineers shall move two feet.

Royal Artillery shall move two feet.

Transport and Supply shall move one foot on roads, half foot across country.

The General shall move six feet (per motor), three feet across country.

Boats shall move one foot.

In moving uphill, one contour counts as one foot; downhill, two contours count as one foot. Where there are four contours to one foot vertical the hill is impassable for wheels unless there is a road.

Infantry.

To pass a fordable river = one move.

To change from fours to two ranks = half a move.

To change from two ranks to extension = half a move.

To embark into boats = two moves for every twenty men embarked at any point.

To disembark = one move for every twenty men.

Cavalry.

To pass a fordable river = one move.

To change formation = half a move.

To mount = one move.

To dismount = one move.

Artillery.

To unlimber guns = half a move.

To limber up guns = half a move.

Rivers are impassable to guns.

NEITHER INFANTRY, CAVALRY, NOR ARTILLERY CAN FIRE AND MOVE IN ONE MOVE.

Royal Engineers.

No repairs can be commenced, no destructions can be begun, during a move in which R.E. have changed position.

Rivers impassable.

Transport and Supply.

No supplies or stores can be delivered during a move if T. and S.
have moved.
Rivers impassable.

Next as to Supply in the Field:

All troops must be kept supplied with food, ammunition, and forage. The
players must give up, every six moves, one packet of food per thirty
men; one packet of forage per six horses; one packet of ammunition per
thirty infantry which fire for six consecutive moves.

These supplies, at the time when they are given up, must be within six
feet of the infantry they belong to and eighteen feet of the cavalry.

Isolated bodies of less than thirty infantry require no supplies--a
body is isolated if it is more than twelve feet off another body. In
calculating supplies for infantry the fractions either count as thirty
if fifteen or over, or as nothing if less than fifteen. Thus forty-six
infantry require two packets of food or ammunition; forty-four infantry
require one packet of food.

N.B.--Supplies are not effective if enemy is between supplies and troops
they belong to.

Men surrounded and besieged must be victualled at the following rate:--

One packet food for every thirty men for every six moves.

One packet forage every six horses for every six moves.

In the event of supplies failing, horses may take the place of food, but not of course of forage; one horse to equal one packet.

In the event of supplies failing, the following consequences ensue:--

Infantry without ammunition cannot fire (guns are supposed to have unlimited ammunition with them).

Infantry, cavalry, R.A., and R.E. cannot move without supply--if supplies are not provided within six consecutive moves, they are out of action.

A force surrounded must surrender four moves after eating its last horse.

Now as to Destructions:

To destroy a railway bridge R.E. take two moves; to repair, R.E. take ten moves.

To destroy a railway culvert R.E. take one move; to repair R.E. take five moves. To destroy a river road bridge R.E. take one move; to repair, R.E. take five moves.

A supply depot can be destroyed by one man in two moves, no matter how large (by fire).

Four men can destroy the contents of six waggons in one move.

A contact mine can be placed on a road or in any place by two men in six moves; it will be exploded by the first pieces passing over it, and will destroy everything within six inches radius.*

Next as to Constructions:

Entrenchments can be made by infantry in four moves.* They are to be strips of wood two inches high tacked to the country, or wooden bricks two inches high. Two men may make an inch of entrenchment.

Epaulements for guns may be constructed at the rate of six men to one epaulement in four moves.*

[* Notice to be given to umpire of commencement of any work or the placing of a mine. In event of no umpire being available, a folded note must be put on the mantelpiece when entrenchment is commenced,

and opponent asked to open it when the trench is completed or the mine exploded.]

Rules as to Cavalry Charging:

No body of less than eight cavalry may charge, and they must charge in proper formation.

If cavalry charges infantry in extended order--

If the charge starts at a distance of more than two feet, the cavalry loses one man for every five infantry-men charged, and the infantry loses one man for each sabre charging.

At less than two feet and more than one foot, the cavalry loses one man for every ten charged, and the infantry two men for each sabre charging.

At less than one foot, the cavalry loses one man for every fifteen charged, and the infantry three men for each sabre charging.

If cavalry charges infantry in close order, the result is reversed.

Thus at more than two feet one infantry-man kills three cavalry-men, and fifteen cavalry-men one infantry-man.

At more than one foot one infantry-man kills two cavalry, and ten cavalry one infantry.

At less than one foot one infantry-man kills one cavalry, and five cavalry one infantry.

However, infantry that have been charged in close order are immobile for the subsequent move.

Infantry charged in extended order must on the next move retire one foot; they can be charged again.

If cavalry charges cavalry:--

If cavalry is within charging distance of the enemy's cavalry at the end of the enemy's move, it must do one of three things--dismount, charge, or retire. If it remains stationary and mounted and the enemy charges, one charging sabre will kill five stationary sabres and put fifteen others three feet to the rear.

Dismounted cavalry charged is equivalent to infantry in extended order.

If cavalry charges cavalry and the numbers are equal and the ground level, the result must be decided by the toss of a coin; the loser losing three-quarters of his men and obliged to retire, the winner losing one-quarter of his men.

If the numbers are unequal, the melee rules for Little Wars obtain if the ground is level.

If the ground slopes, the cavalry charging downhill will be multiplied according to the number of contours crossed. If it is one contour, it must be multiplied by two; two contours, multiplied by three; three contours, multiplied by four.

If cavalry retires before cavalry instead of accepting a charge, it must continue to retire so long as it is pursued--the pursuers can only be arrested by fresh cavalry or by infantry or artillery fire.

If driven off the field or into an unfordable river, the retreating body is destroyed.

If infantry find hostile cavalry within charging distance at the end of the enemy's move, and this infantry retires and yet is still within charging distance, it will receive double losses if in extended order if charged; and if in two ranks or in fours, will lose at three feet two men for each charging sabre; at two feet, three men for each charging sabre. The cavalry in these circumstances will lose nothing. The infantry will have to continue to retire until their tormentors have exterminated them or been driven off by someone else.

If cavalry charges artillery and is not dealt with by other forces, one

gun is captured with a loss to the cavalry of four men per gun for a charge at three feet, three men at two feet, and one man at one foot.

If artillery retires before cavalry when cavalry is within charging distance, it must continue to retire so long as the cavalry pursues.

The introduction of toy railway trains, moving, let us say, eight feet per move, upon toy rails, needs rules as to entraining and detraining and so forth, that will be quite easily worked out upon the model of boat embarkation here given. An engine or truck within the circle of destruction of a shell will be of course destroyed.

The toy soldiers used in this Kriegspiel should not be the large soldiers used in Little Wars. The British manufacturers who turn out these also make a smaller, cheaper type of man--the infantry about an inch high--which is better adapted to Kriegspiel purposes.

We hope, if these suggestions "catch on," to induce them to manufacture a type of soldier more exactly suited to the needs of the game, including tray carriers for troops in formation and (what is at present not attainable) dismountable cavalry that will stand.

We place this rough sketch of a Kriegspiel entirely at the disposal of any military men whose needs and opportunities enable them to work it out and make it into an exacter and more realistic game. In doing so, we

think they will find it advisable to do their utmost to make the game work itself, and to keep the need for umpire's decisions at a minimum. Whenever possible, death should be by actual gun- and rifle-fire and not by computation. Things should happen, and not be decided. We would also like to insist upon the absolute need of an official upon either side, simply to watch and measure the moves taken, and to collect and check the amounts of supply and ammunition given up. This is a game like real war, played against time, and played under circumstances of considerable excitement, and it is remarkable how elastic the measurements of quite honest and honourable men can become.

We believe that the nearer that Kriegspiel approaches to an actual small model of war, not only in its appearance but in its emotional and intellectual tests, the better it will serve its purpose of trial and education.