

MINIATURE WARGAMING AND YOU



A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS...
SOCIAL TIPS FOR ALL GAMERS...
SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE GAMING

MINIATURE WARGAMING AND YOU

v 1.02

“The only impossible journey is the one you never begin.”
Tony Robbins

Welcome to the free eBook: ‘Miniature Wargaming and You’.

If you’re new to the concept of miniature wargames or wargaming in general, let us give a brief introduction. Miniature Wargaming or Tabletop Wargaming is a hobby and a sub niche of board games with wargames at its heart. The genre includes fantasy, history, steampunk, sci-fi and many other variations. To quote Wikipedia on the [subject of wargaming](#):

“A **wargame** is a type of [strategy game](#) that simulates warfare realistically, as opposed to abstract strategy games such as [chess](#). Wargames may be [miniature figurines on a tabletop](#), [board games](#) or [video games](#). They typically use a map that depicts various battlefield terrain features such as woods, hills, fields and streams, with a grid or location system superimposed over this to regulate the movement and positions of the games' pieces, each of which represents a specific [military formation](#), such as an infantry brigade or artillery battery. Many wargames recreate specific historic battles, and can cover either whole wars, or any campaigns, battles, or lower-level engagements within them. Many simulate land combat, but there are wargames for [naval](#) and [air combat](#) as well.”



This eBook focuses particularly on ‘miniature figurines on a tabletop’ as mentioned above, which we call miniature wargaming.

Here in this guide we will examine various aspects of the hobby, some of my experiences since the start of the millennium and also notes from my years of running a wargaming club. I’ve had different kinds of players and gamers pass through my club’s doors: both newcomers and veterans alike participating at various times. I’ve made many friends and acquaintances, but also met some people that weren’t quite so likeable. That’s life though!

I’ve fought many battles and seen more take place. I’ve also visited other clubs and seen things both interesting and awkward. In this book I’ll share tactical tips, how to improve your gaming experience as well as how to win ‘beyond the battlefield’ in the wargaming social context.

In this guide, it is my hope that I can make you aware of several aspects of wargaming, either reminding or reinforcing what you know already or perhaps granting awareness in a field that you didn’t really consider before.

Sci-Fi themed Armies clash on the battlefield!
Miniatures by [Scibor Miniatures](#), [Wargame Exclusive](#) and
[Puppetswar](#), with Buildings by [Micro Art Studio](#)
and Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Miniature Wargaming is a very broad and diverse category of gaming, but also a niche when you factor board games, card games and video games along with other genres. Strictly speaking of miniature wargaming's diversity, there are skirmishes, starship/naval battles and war games that range from small clashes to expansive wars. There are models both great and small (including different size scales), themes that are fiction or factual, rule systems that are simple, complex and those that are somewhere in between. Whatever you are after in the genre, there will be something to meet your tastes; if not, then the project I've been working on may be your ticket to some great games.

The club I ran (and to a lesser extent today, still run) has a history for only playing a handful of games, but many more game systems have popped up and are progressively taking a share of the glory in the industry. I've written this guide to apply to any gaming circle or club, no matter their size or the games they play.

As we begin, it could be worthwhile to ask yourself the following: "Am I playing and enjoying the hobby as much as I could be? What do I really want out of miniature wargaming and its communities? What can I give back in return?"

It is my hope that if you are not entirely happy with the hobby, that as we proceed that you may identify the sources of frustration and turn them into positives.

After an introduction that covers the Warsurge Project, the book is then broken down into three chapters. After all, it is because of that project that this free eBook even exists!

- 1) In the first chapter, we will look at wargaming in the competitive context. This includes games and armies to play.
- 2) In the second chapter, we'll explore the social side of gaming, and how to be more popular as a player.
- 3) In the third chapter, we shall discuss wargaming art and various creative aspects of the hobby, including technology and what role it could play in the future.



Armies from [Puppetswar](#) (left) and [Wargame Exclusive](#) (right) clash on an alien hive battlefield
Contains 3D Printed Scenery purchased from eBay, a Hive Devourer by [Micro Art Studio](#) and Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

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Dwarves and Chaos ([Avatars of War](#)) engage in a fight to the death, with Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

BACKSTORY: WARSURGE PROJECT

"Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

It was an evening some years back when I asked my brother if he'd play a small round of a tabletop war game we had enjoyed for years, but hadn't played for a while. Even though we'd known and played the game for over one and a half decades, my brother became frustrated with the game's mechanics and wanted to try something different. The thought of changing what had been set in place and was considered 'infallible' caused my inner mind to scream: 'What? HERESY!'

My brother was merely suggesting a few adjustments that changed the flow of the game. We both moved and resolved our shooting at the same time then declared charges for close combat, as opposed to waiting for one player to complete every action before the next player could. Sure, there were a few kinks to iron out early on, but it felt smooth – I was pleasantly surprised. It was interesting what making a few small changes could do. We had made some house rules, even a 'mod' for the game as we knew it.

Since then, inspired by those events, we developed an entire game system that allows you to design the profiles for your soldiers using our software. This allows players to fight with and against any army imaginable! We named it 'WARSURGE'. With this game, boundaries are lifted; it is now up to the players to lay down the guidelines of who and what would fight in their tabletop battles.

I worked on the rule system, media and overseeing the project in general, while my younger brother created the formulas and first versions of the software, along with painting the miniatures our affiliates have provided. Later on, my older brother came on board, who's computer coding experience and knowledge allowed it to be turned into a phone app. We have all worked hard, learned much and produced a satisfying result.

Now, the power is in the hands of the players. A balanced, fun and well-paced game for any tabletop army is our focus. Two styles of play to accommodate skirmishers as well as those who enjoy a larger battle. There's competitive and cooperative play, including solo (single player) games. Software to design and share armies. WARSURGE is a miniature war game aimed for gamers, made by gamers.

Our goal is to have an ever-expanding game that allows players to have complete freedom for miniature gaming. With the bulk of the work done, we've been turning our thoughts to improving the game system, software, adding extra customization along with preparing new expansions and companion games.

Anyway, with the history and goals of our project covered... Onward to the free material! Let us commence!



Hoplite by [Megalith Games](#)



Halodyne Hoplite (19.37)

UNIT STATS UNIT PERKS WEAPONS

Halodyne Hoplite

| | | | |
|-----------|----|-------------|----|
| MOVE | 6 | DASH | 6 |
| DEFENCE | 3 | HP | 2 |
| ARMOUR | 4+ | AEGIS | 5+ |
| TRANSPORT | 0 | FIRE POINTS | N |
| SYMBOL | | LORE | Y |

SAVE

CHAPTER 1: WARGAMING AND YOU

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Lao Tzu

Welcome to the first Chapter! Here we'll discuss several elements such as types of games, tactics and what it means to win.

How Do You Win?

First of all, I'd like to ask you a question. What is your definition of winning? Is it:

- 1) Smashing your opponents in every aspect during a game and crushing them with overwhelming power?
- 2) The moral or technical victories from your battles?
- 3) Or is it something simpler? Like making friends and having fun? Telling a great story?

Almost everyone enjoys winning a game. There are several views as to what winning a game means, but those who have fun no matter the circumstance - victory or loss - will find themselves happier more often.

Although having fun is a win in itself, the key to seizing victory among all games is tactics.

In this chapter, we will explore the gaming side of the hobby. Here we will discuss the general overview of playing miniature war games, some tactical tips and even a few tips with regard to costs and budget.

Games, Armies, Models and How You Play

If you aren't playing Warsurge or substituting miniatures, the games you play more or less dictate the armies and miniatures you can play with. At the end of the day, if you want to play with other people it would be best to invest in the most popular games locally, or otherwise seek out and introduce gamers or friends to the game you want to play. From there, you would choose the faction or army that appeals to your aesthetic taste and/or tactical theme, then begin collecting units and putting them together.

Battles and Skirmish Games

Battles are typically games where players take a variety of squads, vehicles and characters into battle. They could have a handful of troops, or they could have countless soldiers, vehicles and other creatures. Often, players take it in turns alternating activity with their whole army. These games usually have a 'point system' to create a balanced game, where each unit has a 'point cost' to wield. Players agree to a point limit, then fill it with units.

Powerful Factions: Choosing a faction or army that is known to be very powerful could make you look bad, especially if you only chose them to win games. Generally, even with a powerful or popular faction, you can still adjust it to be balanced, powerful but not an 'overpowered' (OP) army, which we'll discuss later.

Skirmish games on the other hand focus on individual characters or small squads – they have a different feel with regard to tactics compared to battles. There's usually a handful of models fighting it out, rather than having access to a large selection of units and vehicles. The trick with these games is having a good deployment and guiding the few models you have to their objectives and attacking at the right moment. Often, brazenly exposing a skirmish character can lead to their demise if they are not intended to withstand damage. Like Battles, Skirmish games often have a point system or a value assigned to a unit, in order to create a balanced game.



Pirates dodge an iceberg ([Blood & Plunder](#) by [Firelock Games](#))
Ship by [Printable Scenery](#), Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Cost Factor: When deciding to purchase an army, review everything about it: tactics, background story, competitive strengths and weaknesses. Be sure to read some reviews, watch some videos, browse some forums or even try it out via 'proxy' (read about proxies on the next page) before you buy anything. If you find it horrible, then don't buy it. However, if the models are absolutely stunning but not tactically viable, you could perhaps use them to represent a different army. Indeed, you might decide to use miniatures from one game system and play them using rules from another. Of course, your opponents will need an explanation and need to be okay with it first. That way there's no unpleasant surprises or disagreements.

Battle vs Skirmish: Battles and skirmishes have a different feel, so try both and see what you prefer. Perhaps you'll enjoy both! Remember that when you're into a game, the Internet and forums are great places to learn tactics for specific games and factions.

Tactics

Tactics come in many forms; most games have ranged, close combat and support units among other roles. Armies that focus on one combat role or tactic will only perform well depending on how well they are used, though it also comes down to the mission, the opponent (and their tactics), the size of the playing area, terrain and luck. For example, you might have an army that focuses on destroying enemies in close combat – some games it will perform exceedingly well, but at other times, the result will be very weak (focusing on close combat can be a predictable tactic as the game unfolds). Close combat may require a few sneaky manoeuvres or shelter to pull off against say, a heavily ranged army. The ranged army might destroy them with big guns before they even get close!

In most game systems, armies are built to perform most tactical roles in some way through their selection of units. Generally, they have some specialists with unique skills or abilities that make them stand out from another race or army. The goal is to create synergy using these factors; having units support each other in a game, targeting the enemies they are most ideal at attacking, or protecting vulnerable units to make the army perform better.

In the following pages, we'll discuss some tactics and methods of play as food for thought.

Flexible Armies: During times where you face an unknown foe or are otherwise unsure what to expect, a good approach is to take a balance of units that can, in theory, handle anything thrown at them (at least to some degree). Sure, there may come times where a specialised army comes along and rips you apart, but it's good experience so that you can adjust your army to handle weaknesses.

Sometimes there are factors beyond your control – the luck of the dice, the mission's objectives, army design and other things can ultimately rob you of victory, even in a 'fair' game. The best thing to do is learn what you can from it, enjoy the experience then plan for the next mission or battle.

Proxy Units: A proxy is where a unit or character (or anything) is substituted with another. In some gaming communities it is somewhat acceptable to use models from another game system to be a proxy. Using video game terms, it's kind of like a 'reskin' or different look for a unit. Proxies could be used for aesthetics, but also a means of representing a unit that hasn't been purchased but want to test on the tabletop, especially if the unit looks similar or believable for the role. Some players use proxies to save money.

How widely accepted proxies are will vary from club to club and individual to individual, so discuss the idea with your opponent(s) beforehand. Generally, it's okay in a non-competitive environment if it looks reasonable. Read more on proxies in Chapter 2.



Common Unit Tactics and Styles of Play

| Unit Role | Explanation |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Assault</i> | These units are almost purely dedicated to butchering foes in close combat or at close range. They might pack some ranged weapons, but normally benefit from support provided by ranged units or transports. |
| <i>Ranged</i> | This type of unit fights at medium or long-range as its main focus - usually the standard for many soldiers and miniature games. Some of these units may have a few close combat weapons at hand, or be equipped with very long-range firepower. |
| <i>Leader or Hero</i> | These models are heroes or villains that lead your armies. Rarely an army by themselves, they act as a good spearhead to your attack or give morale boosts or strategic benefits to your troops. |
| <i>Heavy</i> | Units like this carry weapons that deal devastating damage, but are limited in availability or costly to use. For ranged heavy units, the goal is to shoot at a long distance or target a certain type of enemy with powerful weaponry. They are often supported by other units for protection, as they can be vulnerable to assaults or close-range fire fights. A heavy unit could also be powerful monsters or mounted elite warriors that act as line breakers with close combat, sacrificing ranged weapons for extra toughness and mobility. Artillery, battle tanks, heavy weapon troopers and monsters such as dragons often fit this role. |
| <i>Mixed</i> | These are normally versatile units, good at several jobs but not masters of a role. When a mixed unit encounters an enemy, a good tactic can be to attack them in a way where they are weak. For example, you have a unit that excels at both ranged and close quarters. You find an enemy only strong at ranged - you would then fight them in close combat where you're more likely to win. Likewise, you would shoot down an enemy that excels at close combat. |
| <i>Transport</i> | These are models who are typically faster, more mobile or well protected in order to carry slower or vulnerable units into battle or toward an objective. |
| <i>Vanguard</i> | Vanguard units are often at the front line of the fight, either attempting to breach enemy territory or form a protective line for other units. Assault units can often act as a Vanguard for armies. |
| <i>Specialist</i> | This type of unit has a specific or niche role, such as destroying a particular type of unit or having a useful skill, additional mobility or tactics. An example could be an assassin who intends to kill leaders or heroes. Another example is a monster/tank hunter squad, using powerful weapons that focus on a single, strong target (or a handful of elite units). Some units may specialise in destroying infantry on a mass scale. Whatever their role, if they focus on one job or goal, they can be considered a specialist. |
| <i>Tarpit'</i> | 'Tarpit' units are typically soldiers or creatures that are tough or stubborn, but not necessarily good at inflicting damage. The concept here is that they are cheap and 'tie up' or slow down powerful units, making them ineffective against the rest of the army. For example, you might have dozens of tiny gremlin-like critters try to drag down a large monster. This large monster might be put to better use by destroying vehicles, mighty heroes or elite infantry, but instead it's stuck killing your fodder that you're happy to 'throw away'. |

Strong and Weak Units

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Cheesy / Overpowered</i> | Cheesy or overpowered units are simply units that perform exceptionally well in a game, even more so than other units belonging to that army or faction due to their designers. They may have a role from the list above, but when used properly, they do exceedingly well. There are a number of reasons that these units may come about, but most likely it will be for the company to generate sales of the unit, or as an oversight from the game designers who may not have play tested the unit thoroughly enough. |
| <i>Broken</i> | This refers to units that have balance issues even greater than a unit that is considered overpowered. Units that are broken fall into one of two categories. In many cases, they are ridiculously overpowered, extremely strong for their role during games and are difficult to counter. In other cases, it is the opposite and are very weak or ineffective for their value and role; rarely worth taking into a game even for casual or social gamers. Some broken units are so strong they may be restricted or even banned among players. |

Common Army Tactics

Here are some common army tactics and themes. Some of these could be mixed and are formed by elements from the previous page. These 'Army Tactics' can create some particularly interesting battles when players fight using different strategies.

Searching online will yield other ideas and strategies, while some can be specific to a particular game system.



Heresy Hunter Inquisitor with Revengewing Bike – by [Wargame Exclusive](#)

Tactic Definition

Balanced

A balanced army takes a mix of different units with different roles. For example, a mix of ranged units and dedicated close quarter units, maybe a vehicle or two and a leader or mighty monster to spearhead the attack. Some fast or recon units to scout ahead for objectives may be present in a balanced army. Basically, you aren't restricting yourself to one main method of attack and prepared for a variety of foes. Mixtures of elite and cheap soldiers are common in a balanced army.

Elite

This refers to an army with low numbers but contains a high number of costly, powerful units. This can also loosely define armies consisting mostly of vehicles and/or large monsters.

Horde

The opposite of an 'elite' army, this is usually a model/miniature heavy army, where each soldier is 'cheap' and there are plenty of them. With a little support for enemies that they struggle against, a horde can be terrifying. Often models like swarms of alien creatures or zombies are associated with hordes.

Ranged

This army, no matter the number of models, focuses on attacking enemies at range. This can be effective, but can sometimes be problematic in missions that require you to capture objectives and move around. Also, if a close combat unit manages to break into their lines, it can ruin them.

Close Combat

An army that has close combat as its primary (or only) focus usually has an easy albeit predictable battle plan. It can be fun sending psychotic killing machines or a mass of minions to the front and watching them slaughter or get slaughtered – which is usually the two outcomes awaiting an army that fights like this. Close combat armies usually benefit greatly from enhanced movement, transports or some fire support for difficult targets.

'Deathstar'

A Deathstar formation is a unit or group of units that act as an 'unstoppable force' for your army, popular with overpowered or even 'broken' units. These are usually a combination of powerful units that when acting in synergy, can destroy anything thrown at them or endure a lot of damage. Generally, this tactic is a point or resource sinkhole for your army and will likely be the main offensive tactic for the entire battle. Aside from being lucky, there are a few ways you could fight against it:

- 1) Use a bunch of 'Tarpit' units that act as an 'immovable object' against it.
- 2) An opposing, stronger or rivalling Deathstar.
- 3) Long range units that can pick it apart before it crashes into or devastates your army.
- 4) Outmanoeuvre the Deathstar and seize other objectives (if applicable), or Turtle it (read below).

'Turtle'

In wargaming, this is usually where someone clumps their units (normally ranged) in a zone and sit there behind lots of cover and terrain, ready to shoot anything mercilessly. They may not necessarily leave that area (or not move far from where they began), or will move very slowly as they go along. The imagery is that they are a turtle hiding in their shell, and generally move at a slow or steady pace as the name suggests. The main problem for players using this tactic is in games where there are multiple objectives – they'll likely need to eliminate the enemy to win as they won't send troops out to get the objectives. Turtling often needs to be done in a certain way to be effective, though it is a common, bad tactic for unaware beginners (especially for those who are overly attached to their models - they need to get out there and fight, not hide up the back where nothing happens!).

Power Gaming and Overpowered or 'Cheesy'

Power Gaming is not an actual tactic as such, but is something to be aware of. A power gamer is usually someone who'll take units that are at the top 'of the meta'; considered 'strong', cheesy (very strong or overpowered) or even 'broken' (in this case, exceedingly powerful) by the standards of the game system being used. Power gamers are typically well aware of how to maximise the performance of powerful units through the game's rules. This is more of a problem for games where the rules aren't tested or developed with balance, and facing such adversaries can be difficult when playing a casual game.

There is no real counter to a power gamer, other than hitting them with units that are also considered 'strong', or still trying to have more fun than them despite the situation (which can be a challenge). Sadly, with the case of power gaming and cheesy units this often means that the game company who produces the units and the game system they belong to is the real winner. Players will buy these miniatures to have a powerful army, and their opponents will also consider purchasing 'strong units' to be competitive.

Sometimes one could proxy a few units as stronger ones to add some competitive edge. But a power gamer who is also a stickler for rules or a 'rules lawyer' (more on that in the next chapter) might not agree to that. If all these problems are not easily addressed, it might be better if you seek a different opponent!

Seek and Learn: Don't just listen to the local community or your friends when researching a faction, army or game to play. Using a search engine like Google or Bing, you can find forums and other great sources of information on the Internet.

However, the Internet is also filled with players who are not content with the game(s) they play and the tactics used. The trick is to sift through and get both sides of a story before accepting information that you come across. Someone might be upset about a game, but they could have a good reason! If the opinions are all one-sided, you will likely have your answer or consensus about a game or faction. You may also find competitive tactics online, but if your local community is fairly casual, then take it easy. You want to keep having opponents to play against after all! Only take games seriously with serious or competitive players.

Meta Gaming

Meta, in Greek origin, is a prefix to a word which originally meant 'beyond', 'among' or 'behind'. A word such as [metaphysical](#) means an entity or object that transcends (or goes beyond) the physical.

'Meta', in gaming terms, is something above all others in a game: referring to the most effective or 'top tier' with regard to power and tactics. In wargaming, the most powerful units and armies will be listed first or on top for ranking.

'Filthy Casuals': At times there may be restrictions in an official game or tournament which limits units at the top of the meta. Often, tournaments and 'the meta' don't matter as much to casual players... until they consistently encounter power gamers. They can avoid the player, or rise to the challenge!

One Army to Rule Them All:

Unless the game you play has an army that has been designed to win (and therefore make money through miniature sales), you probably won't acquire a roster or army that can comfortably beat everything. For many, it can come down to a game of rock paper scissors (sometimes also with lizard and Spock, see later in this eBook), where one army might be strong against one army, but weak against another. Then again, with a good game system, how you handle yourself in deployment and during the mission itself (with a little luck) will mostly shape the outcome of your game.

If you find that the armies you fight have unfair advantages (and it isn't just your luck!), you may want to consider the next page, which are tips on bending the rules in games that just aren't quite right... but also good for ideas on spicing up games that may work completely fine.



Improving Your Game and Campaigns

Changing or bending game rules is a questionable line of thought for some players, but it can be highly rewarding if done well. It was this path that eventually led to the development of WARSURGE.

Adjust the Rules: 'Home Brew'

Here are some ideas to consider for either fixing problems in a game system or to enhance the experience:

Weak Army – Give the army an increase to their point limit or allowance by a certain %. For example, 5% more. In a 1000pts game, that would give 50pts for free. Another viable option is to endow free bonus rules onto poor performing units. However, this shouldn't be necessary for players that only use strong or competitive units of an overall weaker army faction.

Upgrade Weak Units or Weaken Strong Units – Similar to the 'Weak Army' point before, instead players in the club agree to reduce a unit's cost to wield by an amount or give free upgrades. Generally, if a unit is unpopular then it is worth considering so that it may return to the tabletop. An alternative is to 'nerf' (weaken) the overpowered units or make them cost more to use in the game.

Simultaneous Attacking – When a player attacks, casualties who missed out on attacking are laid on their side and are removed after they get an opportunity in the next players turn. Or players can perform or apply attacks at the same time!

Alternating Actions – In games where players must complete all their actions before the next player, try breaking it up with players alternating. For example, one player moves a unit, followed by the next player till everyone is done, more like chess. This can feel very tactical and more engaging compared to one player moving or attacking with all their units before the other.

Less Randomization – Some elements that are random could be more consistent, being set to a certain number or average result by players. An example could be games that have random sprint or running distances. Perhaps offer both set and random to players.

And many more: discuss with friends and fellow gamers about ideas for house rules to enhance your games.



Campaigns: 'Fast Resolution'

Campaigns are a series of games that are connected and often have a story; where the outcome influences the next game.

Sometimes you may be part of a campaign or managing one, but for whatever reason, some of the players involved can't find the time to have a game and let the campaign proceed. In the event that a quick solution is needed for your campaign, you could have a special game of Rock/Paper/Scissors/Spock/Lizard (modified for war games).

By having this chart handy, you may feel at least some level of engagement and story or plot advancement. In addition, at least a small element of play or tactical thinking has occurred even though the battle wasn't actually fought on the tabletop.

If you are needing to use this and are also running the campaign (if you are a GM or Admin), then make a choice BEFORE your opponent does or randomize your decision – it's only fair when you're in a position of trust.

Feel free to invent your own interpretations or rename them, but this system can be very useful!

Campaign Resolution Chart

| No# | Original | Land/Planet | Sea/Space |
|-----|----------|-------------|-------------|
| 1# | Rock | Battle | Engagement |
| 2# | Paper | Siege | Bombardment |
| 3# | Scissors | Sabotage | Boarding |
| 4# | Spock* | Trap | Outflank |
| 5# | Lizard | Raid | Ambush |



Go clockwise around the diagram for numbering and get players to email or message the GM with their choice.

**Spock is a Star Trek character who somehow found his way here*

Design your Own Missions

A great idea to enhance your games can be designing your own missions. If you haven't tried it before, refer to other missions in your game, or look up classic content (previous editions) of the game for inspiration.

Make Missions Your Own: If you design your own mission, look to movies, books or video games for ideas. Make sure that it's fair for all players, and be prepared to test it yourself before you pitch it to others.

When you play games with many editions and variations, referring to classic game materials for ideas may help players relive glorious days of the past or remind them of what made gaming great for them.

You could play or adapt 'classic content' to current games rather than forcing yourself to stick strictly to current game rules or missions. You can take it a step further by reinventing new and old content: mixing up mission rules and other information from past sources to create something fresh and exciting.

You could take these ideas and scatter them as special missions in campaigns. This can help create unique, nostalgic or interesting experiences as players engage each other throughout the story.



Dwarves encounter a dreaded Plague Angel in the Mountains
Dwarves by [Avatars of War](#), Plague Angel by [Creature Caster](#), Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

CHAPTER 2: SOCIAL WARFARE

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

Aristotle

Introduction

Welcome to the second chapter of the free eBook: ‘Miniature Wargaming and You’. In this section, we’ll discuss various social aspects of the hobby, including how to make friends more easily. This is a different battlefield: the ‘social battlefield’ where you can win friends and influence enemies. Let us consider some common social attributes related to all tabletop gaming:

- 1) As gamers, we have a connection to each other but especially to our opponents. Without opponents, we would have no games to play. All games, especially tabletop wargames, are in some sense a cooperative venture even with our opponents, not just team mates.
- 2) Whether we win or lose, the experience of the game and entertainment of all participants matters most.
- 3) Game rules are created to help us guide our games, but not every single situation or instance may be covered. Inevitably, mishaps and unforeseen or ambiguous events occur that the game’s rules may not explain in detail.
- 4) When confusion or conflict outside of what is intended in gameplay occurs, it is up to us to help one another; to be considerate and sensible. When we play a game, we should strive to be examples of good sportsmanship and be fair opponents, so that all may benefit and enjoy the experience – which is our ultimate goal in games.

Social Warfare

Miniature Wargaming has a heavy social aspect, especially compared to online video games where players are largely anonymous; identities being concealed by an avatar or user name. Most miniature wargames require you to meet with a friend or fellow hobbyist and battle with miniatures, dice and cards on a game board (or sometimes a humble kitchen table), often decorated by you and your opponents. There are more solo and cooperative miniature games around nowadays, but even so, there is still a community behind each game.

How you behave during a game, and even before or after, can influence how well you make friends in the theatre of war – which should be a high priority in the hobby. After all, the players who have the most fun are the ones who keep getting asked back for more games. If a player’s army is very competitive (strong) but they are still a **lot of fun** and make you feel happy even in a loss, there’s every chance you’ll want them to come back for a rematch.

To start, we’ll cover the most unpopular behaviours in gaming and how to fix them. If you fall fully or partially into any of these categories, it might be worth taking some time to re-evaluate and improve, or if you have a social stigma to perhaps make a fresh start (maybe in another game or gaming circle) in the social sense. Assuming you aren’t exiled from a club, there’s normally an opportunity to turn over a new leaf.

Challenging the Club Host: Some years back I played with a very competitive army. Though it was strong, most people wanted to fight me as it was seen as a challenge to take me down. What kept people keen was that I tried to make it fun and would make up ridiculous stories about what was going on from the battle’s perspective; that added some extra entertainment too!



As we roll the dice, we should strive to be ‘good’ players in any situation

Must Win at All Costs? The Second Worst Player

Almost everyone enjoys winning, it's normal. However, among the most heinous of crimes that gamers make is to try and claim victory at all costs; often calling on questionable interpretations of rules, frequently using 'overpowered' units and even in some cases 'lucky' (or rigged) dice to cheat.

If a player **cheats** or plays to win too much, then many players will not wish to play a game with them. You have to ask yourself, if you won by rigged dice, did you 'really' win? The answer is no. Thankfully this is usually a rarer occurrence at tournaments, though 'rules lawyers' are more common.

Tournaments: Wanting to win in an official tournament is different to a casual game. It's a competition, and you're expected to give it your all. Being a 'good sport' is still a factor, but don't pull punches in your battle tactics!

A **rules lawyer** is someone who will argue till they turn blue about how to interpret rules in a situation, but to their credit usually have a very good knowledge of the rulebook. Rules lawyers can be a turn off for a game at times, but WAY more so when trying excessively to win or in some cases, being a 'power gamer', which leads to the next point...

Another side to 'win at all costs' are 'Power Gamers' – players who focus on learning the best ways to play, win and will favour overpowered units, discussed in Chapter 1. These players look for strong armies or methods of play to optimise their chances of victory.

Overpowered units are like 'legal steroids' – they will make an army overall stronger than the average one, and from a rules perspective, completely legit. It's not the player's fault as much as the game's designers.

Remember, many games will have a balance issue with their armies, but some more than others. If you absolutely love using these 'cheesy' units in an army and often play against casuals, at least inform your opponent(s) of your intentions so they could build an army to counter it or at least stand half a chance. Perhaps even handicap the overpowered army. Nobody likes coming to a game only to pack up within a few minutes in frustration at the mere sight of your forces. Your army might be terrifying, but you could find it terrifyingly hard to find new opponents. Power gaming is more a 'turn off' than a 'challenge to overcome' for most prospective players.

How to Fix This...

The answers are simple, though hard for some players to handle or accept:

- 1) Don't deliberately cheat – you didn't **really** win if you cheated.
- 2) Know the rules, but also relax a little. Cut some slack and have fun, give 'the benefit of the doubt' where possible.
- 3) Don't use too many 'overpowered' units – use a balanced or fun army instead and encourage others to do the same.
- 4) Treat others the way you want to be treated. Assuming you don't like abuse, everyone will be happy.
- 5) Focus on having fun with the game – that's the point of the hobby!

Defaced Dice: Unknown to me, I had second hand dice in my club that had no 'two' on any face but a couple of 'threes' instead. The original owner altered it and placed it among other dice to raise the chance of getting a 3+ without drawing attention. It was a fluke that a friend noticed; I got some paint and fixed it right away!

Avoid Cheaters: A friend of mine fought a player who used 'lucky' dice at critical moments. It was weighted to frequently roll a 6! He doesn't play with him anymore.



'That Guy' – The Worst Player of All

After doing a quick Google search, one definition of 'That Guy' is:

"The person everyone loves to hate and never wants to become."

In terms of wargaming, being 'That Guy' can just be elements from 'win at all costs' (but on an extreme level) discussed on the previous page, but can include other distasteful behaviour. When I ran the gaming club from my home, I had a number of experiences that really put me off running it as a public event. Thankfully, very few people combined these elements. The top grievances were:

- 1) Being OBSESSED with having the rules absolutely correct. A 'rules lawyer' to the extreme.
- 2) Trying to win at all costs, a sore loser or obnoxious winner. Sometimes cheating or lying as well.
- 3) Restroom problems – either messing up the toilet or other cringe-worthy occurrences.
- 4) Handling greasy or messy food then touching miniatures, or talking with a mouthful of food.
- 5) Picking up miniatures without the owner's permission and dropping/breaking them.
- 6) Potent body odour, the smell of cigarettes or bad hygiene.
- 7) Questionable miniature proxies, either by rules or choice of miniature/figure.
- 8) If playing inside a house with carpet, having dirty bare feet or being covered in sand or grass.
- 9) Saying offensive things or speaking in a way that makes people feel uncomfortable. Ranting about subjects excessively or obsessively. Coarse language might be okay in some circles, but not in others, especially with younger folk.
- 10) Arriving at inappropriate times unannounced, or committing to something and not showing up without explanation.

'That Guy' is normally a combination of the above points. If one continues down that path, then they would eventually find themselves with less invitations to gaming events, less willing opponents and eventually finding themselves just being 'tolerated' when randomly coming along to public gaming sessions.

How to Fix Being 'That Guy'

This section may sound humorous to some, but to remove the stigma of being considered 'That Guy' (or some elements of) can be a difficult and possibly slow process. One would need to look hard at themselves, as many may not realise how others perceive them. Indeed, they might be completely unaware of how uncomfortable they make others feel. Maybe you should ask yourself (or a friend) how you are perceived, especially in regard to the following:

- 1) **Relax with Rules.** If you're playing a casual game, just roll a dice to resolve ambiguous situations and review rulebooks later.
- 2) **Victory isn't everything.** Learn to play the game for game's sake and enjoy it. If you happen to win the game... well played!
- 3) **Restrooms...** Don't rush if you need to 'use the facilities'. Better to leave a clean restroom and be hygienic rather than rush.
- 4) **Eat your food then clean up.** Would you shake hands with someone who just ate greasy chicken or messy cheesy flavoured snacks? For many people, the answer would be a resounding 'no'. Be sensitive for clean obsessed people and also for 'germ freaks'. Everyone has different standards of hygiene – some very high, so try not to upset them.
- 5) **Always ask for permission** when you want to inspect someone's miniatures or handiwork, especially if they are new or a stranger. If you're feeling a little clumsy or nervous, then don't touch anything! A case of the dropsies is not good!
- 6) **Be sure that you smell nice** for other people. If in doubt, put on some extra deodorant. The psychological effects of smelling nice over bad is greater than some may think!
- 7) **If you don't own miniatures** then try to loan, borrow or use from a friend or host who trusts you. Avoid using household items and depending on the club, avoid using children's toys or action figures (unless they have been converted for gaming).
- 8) **If you're playing inside someone's house** with carpet and have dirty feet, then at least bring and wear some clean socks.
- 9) **Language** is a tough one, as each gaming club is different in regard to age and acceptable language. However, the things you talk about or the subjects you generally discuss should be kept in mind. The best thing is to be polite and not try too hard to be funny, especially if it could be rude or offensive. Try to focus on a good conversation rather than being the town jester or a comedian, at least until you know everyone better.
- 10) **Arriving unannounced can be bad**, but to arrive unannounced at inappropriate times is even worse. This isn't the same if it's a weekly occurrence or an open event of course, but planning and punctuality is paramount for success in this social aspect. If it isn't a regular event then be sure to organise games in advance, confirm with all the players then stick to it.

Problem Overload: The list of 1-10 items below are all issues that I or my club members have experienced at some level. No one ever combined all these elements but there were several people that had two or three on the list.

After having enough, I closed up for a while then restarted with people I liked to play with when I ran the club previously, or met through other places. If a new player, I would ask them to a game one-on-one before introducing them to the others. Like a hobby club interview of sorts.

Essentially, I ended up building a small group of reliable gamers then expanded over time.

Bad Proxies: A friend of mine played a game against someone who represented a tank with a dead cockroach inside a Pepsi bottle. They were not impressed, and years later we still talk about it!

No One is Perfect

Always look at yourself before getting upset, pointing the finger or complaining. Even the best of us might have traces of 'That Guy'. We should all do our best to be friendly, pleasant, likeable and have a good time in the hobby. Remember: when someone points, there are three fingers pointing back to them.

Share the Love – Be Gentle when Helping Others

There's a fine line between being helpful and a nuisance. If you are trying to help someone with social awkwardness or issues, be gentle and subtle where possible. You don't want to hurt their feelings or upset them.

General Behaviour... and we're Not Talking about Commanders

To summarise the last two sections, making new comrades-in-arms and having a good game comes down to how you behave both on the battlefield and out of it. If you are a valued and appreciated gamer (whether charismatic, shy or somewhere in between), you'll be more than welcome to most games and with no shortage of opponents.

How to Win Friends & Influence Enemies

To conclude our look at the social side of gaming, here is a simple Do and Do Not list:

| Do | Do Not |
|---|---|
| Make your armies fun to play with AND against | Play to win every single game (different for tournaments) |
| Know your rules and don't be too hard on people | Use household objects as miniatures, or bad proxies |
| Be polite and friendly | Handle other players' models without permission |
| Eat neatly & have clean hands for miniatures and dice | Mess up the restrooms |
| Smell good, make yourself presentable and socially approachable | Be 'That Guy' |

Know the Rules:

When I started miniature games, I didn't know the rules very well. The host I played against had a poor grasp too, and many 'fishy' things happened, often to the host's advantage.

Since then, I try to be enthusiastic and avoid that host's behaviour.

Finding Gaming Clubs

When you're looking for new players or a gaming club, there are a wealth of online forums dedicated to the wargaming hobby along with social media and of course 'real life' outlets such as hobby stores. Facebook in particular has many gaming groups, so that's worth a look. Even doing a Google search on your city and the game you play could yield some results when looking for a gaming club.

Another idea, ask a gaming stockist or store about any locals into the hobby. They would know something, or perhaps you could leave some contact information or a flyer at a shop to declare you're looking to meet new players. That said, you should consider meeting new people away from home - get to know new players in person in a public setting (such as the hobby shop) or mutually agreed location before inviting them to a home environment. This is more so for safety than anything - you need to establish some level of trust first. Most people are fine though, so avoid paranoia.

Alternatively, if you have the motivation and the space, you could start your own club, placing fliers or some contact information for others to reach you.



Nephew and Uncle engage on the tabletop – friends, family and clubs can make gaming better!

CHAPTER 3: THE ART OF WAR

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the creative side of the hobby, including constructing miniatures, conversions, painting, technology, photography and video. To some hobbyists and players, this is among the most fun parts of the hobby.

How deep we submerge ourselves into the hobby can vary greatly. For some, less is more, and for others there's always a new level to achieve whether on the gaming table or with artistic pursuits. There's always room for improvement, always room to grow – even if by tiny increments.

When it comes to painting, gluing, customising (including ‘kit bashing’ or ‘converting’*) miniatures, there's basically no limit to what you can do. All the time there's new techniques and concepts being created or experimented with.

**Kit Bash or Converting: This means to mix pieces from different miniature sets (or spare parts) to customise or create a model*



Painting, gluing and engaging in the hobby can be therapeutic, especially with your favourite music or a video running in the background while you work

Terrain is another aspect again, and for many players a good terrain collection can enhance the experience to no end – being just as important as the miniatures!

Some players and hobbyists make extensive use of technology, such as taking the hobby online with pictures and video. By doing this, they can share their experiences with others and maybe make a few fans or friends along the way! Technology also plays a big part in other parts of the hobby, such as 3D Printing to produce miniatures and other devices that can enhance gaming.

This chapter isn't so much to teach you specifics, but to introduce or raise your awareness of the various arts in the war gaming hobby.

Getting the most out of your Hobby

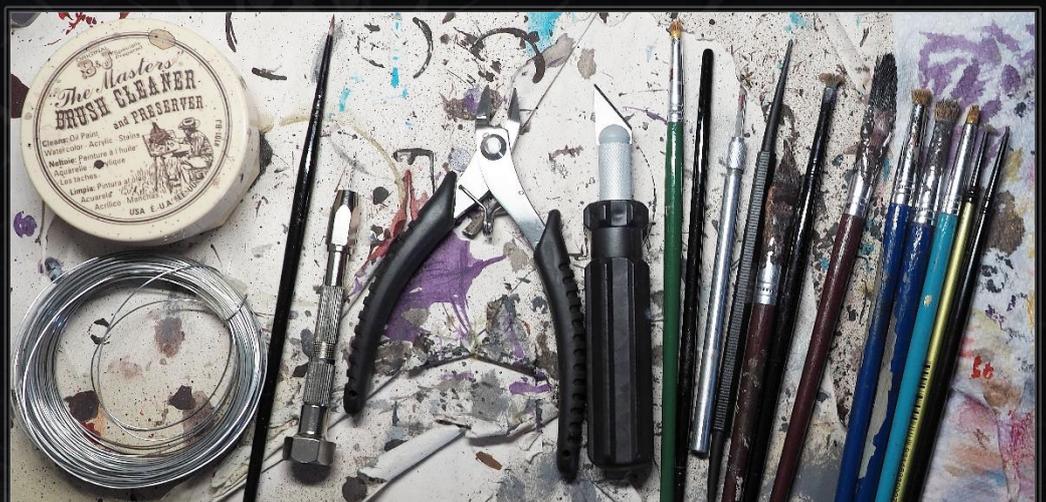
If you are into miniature wargaming, then it's more than likely that you have learned or are interested in learning how to glue your miniatures and paint them. In addition, perhaps you're looking at options for terrain or battlegrounds (or seeking players or friends who have some already).

No matter what hobby areas you are developing, the big thing is to have an open attitude for learning and considering the ideas of others. It's important to be aware of the impact of even small creative ideas, such as a painting technique or even a colour scheme (which in itself can drastically change the look of a miniature or army).

Terrain for your battlefields is a big one too, with new options popping up all the time – many of which can be purchased in a ‘ready to go’ state.

For example, there are ‘battle mats’ for sale that can cover a 6'x4' table (among other sizes), giving you a fast foundation for an epic battlefield – such as those from [Deep-Cut Studio](#).

In any case, learning, experimenting and trying new ideas are the key to developing your hobby skills!



An Assortment of Hobbyist Tools Which Includes: Brush Cleaner, Pinning Wire, Knives, Clippers and Brushes

Modelling

Modelling and assembly can be a straight forward process, yet also a very flexible and imaginative part of creating miniatures.

Whether you follow the instructions or mix parts from a variety of kits to produce something unique, there's nothing quite like the satisfaction of constructing something new.

That said, following the instructions for a miniature kit leaves little to discuss (nothing wrong with sticking to instructions of course), so let's have a little talk about 'conversions', where people mix kits and spare parts together.

When you do conversions, there's really two lines of thought. You can plan the conversion in advance, imagining the spare parts and what you'll do with it. Alternatively, you might have spare parts and a unit you want to build, mixing the pieces as you go. You may find that no one was

more surprised than you with the final result. This is particularly common with armies with strong mercenary or ramshackle styles but is by no means limited to these themes.

Another consideration with modelling is the gluing of miniatures and the substance the miniature is made of. Models typically fall in one of three categories – plastic, metal or resin. Super glue is popular (especially for plastics), but certain glues only work well with some products; you'll need the right glues for the right material. We won't go into the details here, instead ask your local hobby store, other players, or go online and do a [search](#) to find out more or read a [guide like this one](#) (click to view the link).



A (censored) Lady of Corruption by [Creature Caster](#), Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Go! Learn and gain Experience Points!

There are many [tools](#) and [techniques](#) that are handy for a hobbyist who is into miniature wargaming. From knives to glues, brushes to paints, drills to magnets: these and more are several of the tools available for an aspiring hobbyist. Another useful product is modelling putty. It's very handy for conversions or filling up gaps when gluing a miniature. Some people have even made horns, cloaks, limbs or even whole miniatures out of this product. Another technique used for models is 'pinning', where models have holes drilled into them and have a pin to help hold them together (which is done before the gluing process). Using magnets for switchable weapons or parts is another idea popular among some hobbyists.

This guide isn't big enough to explore the field of modelling, so go online, do some [research](#) and learn. Generally, the result you seek will decide what tools or techniques you need. Also, your local hobby store could give advice or suggest a few fellow hobbyists who might be keen to help. In any case, the Internet is a big resource for this, and also a source for inspiration.

Learn from Your Mistakes – and from Others!

Making mistakes is a part of the hobby - but it's how you handle them and learn as to whether you grow or not. I've heard a saying to the effect of 'blessed is the one who learns from their mistakes, but even more blessed is the one who learns from the mistakes of others'.

Study the work of others, and don't be afraid to ask a question or two. The worst case is they won't provide information, especially if it's a 'trade secret' or the special trick of a competitive hobbyist.

Learning from a Master: When I started the hobby, I had purchased a second hand army from a master painter and modeller (second place winner in a miniature painting and modelling competition). I met them in person to collect the army, driving for several hours. They gave me a few pointers about the army in terms of gameplay, but it was studying his models that was most beneficial – he was a pioneer at his craft.

By sheer fluke (or perhaps fate?), I encountered an enthusiast who had done excellent painting and some crazy conversions. Indeed, I studied many masterfully painted pieces of work and conversions before I even picked up the glue or paint brush. I learned so much from studying their work, as did my friends who had a look at his handiwork. Sure, I was still woeful to begin with, but it helped! I can highly recommend this for anyone who has the opportunity.

Learn from the best to rise above the rest! ... Or at least help you on your way!

Painting

Painting is a very diverse field in the modern age; skills and styles can vary greatly.

There are plenty of free painting [tutorials](#) online, but there are also ones that you can pay for. Although paying can produce better tutorials, this isn't always the case. Have a browse online and see what you [find](#). Many forums also have great online tutorials (that are free!) for beginners, where even experienced painters might pick up a tip, or perhaps a trick or two.

For example, check out this free guide from an online forum called DakkaDakka: [click here to view](#). Sometimes a good ol' Google search can yield the results you want too: [click here to see](#). Keep an eye out for guides, but sometimes practise is the best too.

On the right, we have an assembled model going through stages of being painted.

One procedure for painting miniatures is:

- 1) Undercoat/priming
- 2) Colours and some details
- 3) Ink/wash
- 4) Highlights/touch-ups

Flock or basing, can be applied before or after the model is painted, but this depends on what is intended for the flock. Some flocks look better painted, some better unpainted.

Several hobby companies stock books containing a lot of information on painting techniques. Talk to your local hobby store for more information, hopefully they can help too, or at least point you in the right direction.

Learn and Grow: Throughout your 'hobby career' you may find some shocking paint jobs and other things, but remember that we all started out as beginners at some point. Indeed, a rough start just means you have more room to grow!

We All Start Somewhere: In my local club, I've seen amazing, beautiful pieces and also stuff that is shocking (hey, we all start somewhere) along with those who don't bother. Whatever the case, it's best not to judge the less experienced or confident, as they likely have skills in other areas of life (and perhaps not necessarily on the hobby scene). Indeed, they might just want to play games and see the artistic side as a chore or very difficult. Many gamers don't even add flock (grass or dust) to their model bases (known as basing). Whether you face an artist or an unpainted collection, be cool about it.



[Wargame Exclusive](#) Model - Assembled



[Wargame Exclusive](#) Model - Primed/Undercoated



[Wargame Exclusive](#) Model - Painted



Squad of Possessed Cultists by [Wargame Exclusive](#) with Scenery by [Micro Art Studio](#) and Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Hired Help VS. D.I.Y and Pre-Painted Miniatures

Sometimes no matter how hard you try, the time investment for painting is too much or the necessary skills seem to develop very slowly... too slow for the results you want. Fortunately, there are some businesses that can paint your miniatures or whole armies for you. Some armies even go for sale on eBay pre-painted, although the best painted of these armies are typically very expensive; costing a lot more money than purchasing unassembled or new. The quality can vary too.

Some game systems come with pre-painted miniatures. Many pre-painted miniatures have a very simple paint job which isn't good enough for some hobbyists, but they can be given a touch up.

An alternative solution is to seek help from a good painter in your area. Are any of your friends or local community into painting? Are you willing to pay to have your army painted? Perhaps trade some other goods or service?

Inequivalent Exchange: Back in my school days, I was once 'hired' to convert and paint a vehicle for a friend, in exchange for some elite troops. Sadly, I'd say I had the rough end of the deal there (my workmanship was decent, but the second hand troops were not). That said, I did agree to the terms before commencing. Silly me.

That's a case of learning from experience right there.

Failbrush: I do know people who use an airbrush, and it's effective. Personally, I don't use one as I'm not confident enough to justify using it. I did try it at school on a canvas for a few weeks, during art class some time ago... and the results were tight competition for pre-schooler painting skills.

Airbrushing

Instead of the classic pot of paint and brush, there are some hobbyists that do airbrushing. An airbrush is a paint machine that sprays the paint onto a surface with a nozzle, using a pen-shaped handle.

Airbrushes can be challenging, but if you can learn to use it, they can produce some amazing and fast results. However, I would not recommend this for absolute beginners.



An airbrush with empty paint bottle (source: [Wikipedia](#))

Terrain

Terrain can be one of those things that many of us give very little thought toward. Sometimes it's because friends have all the boards and terrain you could ever need, alternatively it's because we're too focused on miniatures and our armies to do anything towards battlefield scenery. It can be a shame, as some players have great models but a lacklustre battlefield to field them on.

The only real 'drawback' to having outstanding terrain is that it really shows up an army that's incomplete or unpainted. Perhaps that should be looked at as motivation rather than a negative!

Purchased VS. Homemade Terrain

The premise of terrain, like many investments in life, is that it'll either cost you time or money to get terrain for your games. If you're short on money, look up ideas on the Internet and build your own. Got money and don't feel like building your own? Then go shopping!

Of course, some might argue there's nothing more satisfying than using a piece of terrain that you hand crafted yourself... I guess those who prefer zero effort terrain will argue it was good to not lift a finger for it!



Assorted Terrain purchased from Pet Stores, Aquariums and [eBay](#)

Bargain Hunter: Personally, I love a battlefield filled with glorious terrain, not just a 'make do' setup. I have invested some time making my own terrain, purchased scenery from businesses (such as those from [Warsurge affiliates](#)) as well as buying some that is already made up, painted and ready to go (I used to visit places like \$2 shops, aquariums and pet stores). There are even mats that roll out and do a lot of the work, such as those sold by [Deep-Cut Studio](#). Instant terrain surface!

Photography and Miniatures

A growing interest in miniature wargaming is photography and video, both of which are used for showing off specially made models, whole armies and battle reports.

Battle reports, also known as 'batreps', are videos or write-ups with photos about battles that took place between various armies. The details of batreps tend to vary: some focus more heavily on the dice rolls while others are briefer and focus more so on the choices made by players and the overall outcome. Some are more focused about the game system itself or the armies used.

On the other hand, some hobbyists focus on painting up their miniatures for the sole focus of taking fantastic photos. Using a lightbox and other equipment (along with a nice camera), they take amazing pictures. We'll have a look at a lightbox on the following page, but a lightbox was used for the [paint step photos on Page 19](#).



[Wargame Exclusive](#) and [Puppetswar](#) Miniatures with Olympus Camera Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Macro Focus! Get those Close-Ups!

Macro photos are basically a close up (or a very close up) photo. This is very important for taking close-up photos of models, whether to show off paint work or even take some shots of a miniature war game battle.

To get the best close up shots of miniatures, you'll need to be aware of macro photos. Macro is a setting or lens for a camera that allows you to take photos of very small things up close, such as miniatures. Smart phones usually have one lens and can have attachments, but dedicated cameras can have alternative lenses or settings for macro. Super macro is even more powerful, designed for taking photos of tiny critters like insects and water droplets (but could still be handy for miniature photography in some instances too). Some automatic cameras recognise a macro distance without being asked or needing adjustment.



Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II with Pro Lens

Cameras – Auto VS. Manual, Home vs. Pro and Smartphones

Most of the home use (domestic) cameras have automatic focuses and **cannot** be switched to manual. On the other hand, professional cameras (commercial grade) have a manual focus and often automatic too, which can be good. However, there can be some drawbacks to a professional camera.

Other than costing a lot of money, professional cameras might not be able to give you great close up photos of your small miniatures without a proper **lens**. That said, if you are into professional photography, you might find that this is no problem. Your photos will probably look great!

For the average user though, a smartphone or good automatic camera for home use will probably do the job nicely. In fact, my newer smartphone took better footage and photos than my previous home camera that was a few years old. Note that the Xone phone (pictured) is not ideal for photos.

There are free guides online for great photography with a smartphone. Do a quick Google search, such as: [click here](#).

No matter your camera or smartphone, the trick with miniature photography is to ensure it's good for close-up photos. It might take a little bit of practise, but it'll be worth it when you're snapping great pics.

Another great aspect to smartphones is the ability to add Bluetooth devices and cheap tripods. On eBay I found a Bluetooth remote to take pictures without touching my phone, keeping photos more stable.



Oukitel Xone Smartphone

Get Smart: I previously used a smartphone for most pictures and video, before acquiring a low-end pro camera. In my experience, a smart phone is excellent for video, photos and is very user friendly and accessible. It could do macro photography as well. The model of phone will largely dictate how effective it is for photography and film, as some phones focus on camera features more than others. A general rule of thumb is 'newer the phone, better the camera'. Investigate a phone online or ask a phone shop for help.

Items Photographers Might Use to Support Miniature Photography

Light Box – When taking pictures of miniatures, lightboxes are used as self-lit, controlled environments to take photos of the models inside of it. This is more often for those who are very serious about photography!

Tripod – Used for supporting and stabilising a camera. When taking close-up photos on a tabletop, using a small box to rest the camera upon can be useful too.

Green Screen – Used for digitally creating a fake backdrop such as sky or ground when draped behind miniatures. This is done with [‘chroma key’](#) on editing software.

Bluetooth Devices – A variety of devices can help, such as taking photos without touching the camera or smartphone.

Computer + Photo Editing Software – Programs such as Photoshop or Gimp (which is free) allow people to edit photos; whether touch-ups or advanced alterations. This can be very useful for miniature photography, perhaps one of the most powerful tools of all.

Dioramas

Dioramas are set pieces of one or more models with special terrain on the model’s base. They are often a focus for competitive painting and modelling, with top class pieces even winning prizes. This type of work is fairly popular especially for hobbyists who don’t enjoy playing tabletop games, but love the crafting side (though gamers still partake in this aspect too!).

Dioramas are the culmination of various skills we have discussed – there’s modelling, painting and for the case for online sharing, good photography to bring out the best of the diorama.

Videos and Battle Reports

Another aspect to the hobby we’ve lightly touched on is videos. These are mostly used for battle reports (or batreps) where players have a video recording of their games, but are also used for reviews and interviews about hobby related material too.

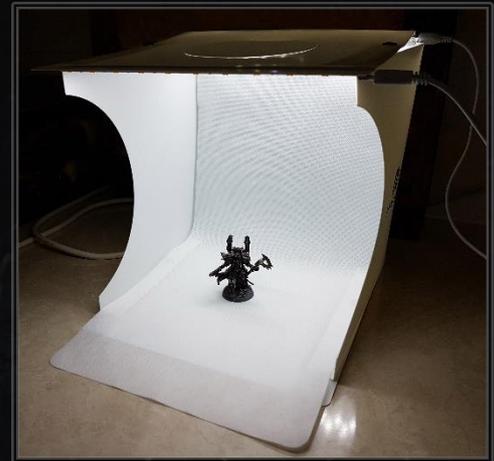
There are many reasons a player might like to watch videos of battle reports: to learn new strategies, see new armies in action, learn how a game works, for entertainment among other reasons. In fact, some players watch video battle reports because they have a lack of players in their area – so they try to satisfy their bloodlust for battle by watching others engage on the tabletop and vicariously live the experience through them.

Battle reports feature on websites, blogs and online video channels. Hobby businesses, players and many dedicated batrep channels are constantly pumping out battle reports, especially on Youtube. Try a [search](#) on Google.

Videos – Gather the Ingredients and Mix Well

Videos in the hobby can vary greatly. The quality of the video camera or smartphone, the lighting, editing skills and even the miniatures and terrain all influence the overall quality of a video, whether it’s a batrep or otherwise.

If you plan to pursue video, it’s recommended that you at least get a decent smartphone or camcorder, use an area with good lighting, have some good quality editing software and look up some free tutorials on video editing. It would also be a great idea to watch and study other videos in the hobby and take notes. There are guides and tutorials online for filming too; with a quick online search they are only a [click away](#).



USB Powered Light Box with [Wargame Exclusive Model](#)



Oukitel Xone Smartphone with Tripod and Gorillapod (Flexible Tripod)



A Cyclops from [Godslayer \(Megalith Games\)](#) vs. Pirates from [Blood & Plunder \(Firelock Games\)](#) Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

Hobbyist vs. Pro

If you're really good in one or more of the artistic fields of the hobby, working in the industry is a possibility, or you could even start your own business. The miniature wargaming market also has illustrators, writers and concept artists working in it, so there is a wide variety of professional opportunity.

Remember that wargaming is a bit of a niche market, so true dedication, flexibility to move to a new city or sheer brilliance can net you a position in the industry. After all, there are new miniatures and game systems popping up all the time, and the Internet is bringing the world closer together, allowing for long distance employment or contracts.

It's understandable if seeking a career in miniature wargaming is daunting, as the average 'serious' hobbyist's skill and knowledge is increasing, and there are numerous artists, writers and other professionals out there. It is arguable that many hobbyists have skills that rival or surpass professionals of the past, making it even more challenging. The bar is ever rising, and professionals are in tight competition with each other. However, having good friends in the industry can be handy if you're looking at getting into the business, as they can teach you a few things, perhaps even put a good word in or 'vouch for you' with regard to employment.

Keep Your Flare: If your hobby becomes your work, will that cause you to lose your energy, flare or passion? A question worth asking if you are seriously considering miniature wargaming (or an aspect of it) as a career. If in doubt, maybe consider it as a part time job or side project till you net some good money or become employed by a business in the industry. Thankfully, with the continual development of the Internet and online ventures, more possibilities arise all the time.



Soldiers Patrol the Desert - Miniatures by [Puppetswar](#), Gaming Mat by [Deep-Cut Studio](#)

When Have I Done Enough?

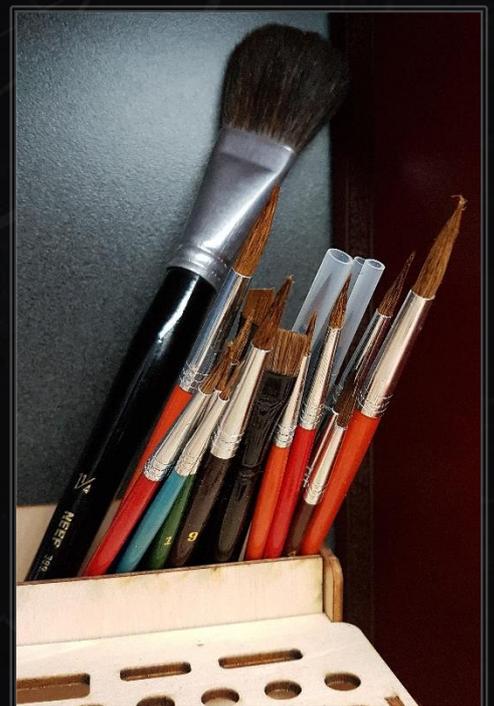
The real question here is: are you satisfied with your work or product? In some sense, it really comes down to when you are content with your project (or the hobby itself). For some, just gluing miniatures is sufficient, while for others it's having a high perfect piece of art. It really comes down to the individual – so without being 'too' obsessive, find your happy place with your projects. Dive only as deep into the hobby as you feel comfortable.

Should I 'Skill Up' or 'Just Make Do' With My Projects?

You may find that you aren't happy with where you are at in terms of artistic skill, but as mentioned earlier, there's always room to grow. If you still want to improve, keep researching and practising your skills. If your friends have superior workmanship on their miniatures, do not be disheartened, but try to 'lift your game' – even ask them for advice or criticism if your pride isn't at stake. If that's a problem, look up tutorials and videos and get more practise in! That said, many people are good sports and won't complain at miniature wargames even if your work could use some improvement; it really comes down to the intention of your paint work (ready for battle, or looking like a work of art).

As discussed earlier, remember there's also the option of getting pre-painted miniatures or painting services to save you effort. Help from other hobbyists can work too, and it may even be possible to meet halfway - you could glue and do basic colours, then let a friend touch them up (or finish them).

At the end of the day, with whatever you do, it comes down to what makes you happy.



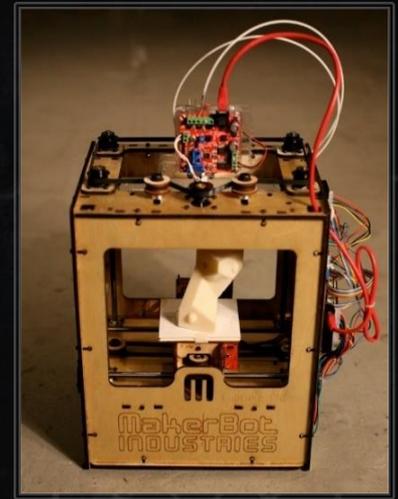
3D Printing

As new advances in technology become more readily available, the miniature industry changes. Today, there is a lot of competition as new, smaller businesses and even individual hobbyists produce miniatures and set up shop.

In the wargaming hobby, 3D Printers are machines that can turn 3D designs on a computer into a physical object. In terms of wargaming and the hobby, products such as soldiers and terrain can be designed on a computer then manifested as plastic, resin, metal and other materials.

Should I get a 3D Printer?

A 3D Printer can be a good idea and a worthwhile investment, but it depends on your skillset, technological mastery, free time and budget. Definitely yes if you would love to produce your own miniatures; whether you purchased digital designs online or wish to create your own custom miniatures and terrain (and you have the skill and patience with 3D design software on the computer). However, if you are content with what is already available to purchase on the market, or you don't want much in terms of custom miniatures, it probably isn't worth pursuing (at least for now). At this time, 3D Printers that can reliably and effectively produce miniatures are not super cheap (but are still reasonably affordable). Cheaper 3D Printers will not yield the results you need for fine details in miniatures – this is because you need a low micron (a tiny increment of measurement) count on a 3D Printer to print fine details. Thankfully, the price of 3D Printers are gradually dropping and becoming more common, so one day they may become an item for every household.



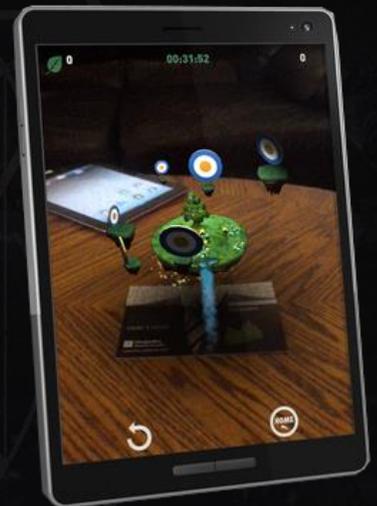
MakerBot 3D Printer (source: [Wikipedia](#))

Augmented Reality

Technology takes another step forward to the benefit of gaming, creating a hybrid of sorts between wargaming and video games. Augmented Reality (AR) is the bringing of digital objects 'to the real world', and can be interreacted with in some manner with the user via a device. AR is usually used with a smartphone camera or glasses/headsets.

Reality Check: Augmented Reality's merging of digital and reality, although interesting, is not without its limitations at this time. Some AR games may be viewed as a form of wargaming, but it is not miniature wargaming – it is essentially playing a video game. You do not paint your own models or choose your own army, you are instead bound to the rules and automated system of a video game, much like any video game. It certainly has its charms, but for the time being it won't replace RTS (real time strategy) video games on computers and consoles, and it will likely be many years before it becomes sufficient to satisfy most wargamers for the tabletop. Holograms might achieve this... one day.

There are war games popping up (and in development) that use AR to bring a digital battlefield into the 'real world'. Any table or surface can essentially become a battlefield (like miniature wargaming) but is played with digital characters and scenery (like a video game), seen through a phone or headset.



An AR Mobile Game (source: [Wikipedia](#))

The Future of Miniature Wargaming?

An interesting future lies ahead with miniature wargaming. More options are popping up all the time for miniatures and games. One might have thought that video games would topple miniature wargaming, but the hobby is still here. There's nothing quite like a game where you tactically engage an opponent in person, and have artistically customised soldiers that you assembled at your command.

3D Printers will likely reshape the industry as they become more common, but it isn't just companies and businesses using them. Now it is possible for almost everyone to 3D print designs for terrain and miniatures that were purchased or designed themselves.

Augmented Reality offers a new dynamic, somewhere between video games and miniature wargaming. It could be used as an easy transition for gamers to cross from one type of gaming platform to the other. At this time, it is not a substitute for miniature wargaming but perhaps down the track, it could be. This will more likely happen when such ideas become holographic technology instead.

Power in the Palm of Your Hand: Speaking of technology and miniature wargaming, there's also Warsurge: technology with classic tabletop gaming at its heart. There is a massive and diverse range of miniatures at present; so many models and game systems available, yet relatively few of them can be used together in the one place (and that isn't even factoring in companies that only sell miniatures). Even harder to find is a game system that lets you customise your forces as you see fit, which is delivered in Warsurge.

Final Thoughts...

We've now reached the end of the eBook. So, what do we say about it all? How do we summarise it?

Miniature Wargaming... and... You

Ultimately, at the end of the day, the goal is to enjoy the hobby. Whether you win or lose, the best place to be is finding happiness in the games you play along with the crafting, painting and completion of your miniatures (and terrain!).

More importantly, make friends and expand your mind with new opportunities that arise in the hobby. Play a game, try a campaign, make a diorama, do something different. Have fun – that is what the hobby is about!

Thank You!

Thank you for reading this eBook, I hope you found some enjoyment, gained a gem of knowledge, a new perspective or a piece of wisdom from the content herein. This book is not to be sold; it's for free for everyone.

If you want to discuss further about this material or any projects (including Warsurge), feel free to email me at:

richard@warsurge.com

Best wishes, and may the dice ever favour you!

The 'Warsurge Project'

WARBURGE lets you completely customise your army, using profile software that calculates the value of each model, including weapons, armour and special abilities. In addition, the game mechanics create a balanced competitive environment for all players.

In an age where games are not always invented for fair play but rather profit, this project aims to usher a new opportunity for gamers, where power is given to the players.

If you have any questions about the project or want to chat, email me at richard@warsurge.com or check out our website at:

www.warsurge.com

All the best,

Richard Hollingsworth

Co-founder of the Warsurge Project

