

GygaxTM MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL

Headly days, early days. Issue number two. It's such a small number, and such a big one at the same time. Any magic-user can tell you, going up a level's not such a big deal once you've been around for a while—it's the trip from level one to level two that's the *real* test. Our pilot issue came out earlier this year, and it's been gratifying to have received such a positive response from gamers young and old alike. In that time, we've learned a lot about what you want from a gaming magazine and what it takes to bring it to you. We'll continue to be a part of the community, listening to gamers online and in person, to deliver a magazine that's both useful and entertaining for gamers of all stripes, from strategists to skirmishers to storytellers.

We've got an embarrassment of riches in this second issue of *Gygax* magazine, featuring a wonderful mixture of old-school and new-school designers and authors covering a wide variety of games and topics. Take some time to read an article about a game you've never played before, and see if it inspires you to give it a go, or maybe to bring some fresh ideas into your favorite go-to games.

Our special attraction this issue is a first look at the upcoming campaign world of Okkorim by Luke Gygax. A few lucky players have had a chance to go on The Search for Darwah's Temple, Luke's limited-run tourney module set in the Blighted Lands of Okkorim. In the coming months, we will be publishing a full standalone campaign world from Luke, and this is your chance to be among the first to adventure in that desert land. We've included a special treat in the fold-out section with maps by the founder of Dwarven Forge, Stefan Pokorny.

The adventures don't stop there with this issue either. Players of *The One Ring* can seek glory and fame in the gripping storytelling of The Hare and the Hill Giant, set a few years after the Battle of Five Armies; and *Dragon World* gamers will find challenges and reward in the Lost Wonders of Caelmarath.

If head-to-head battles get your blood flowing, give *Samurai Battles* a try with Tim Kask, or let Bryan Pope show you winning strategies for *Mage Wars*.

Readers interested in the stories behind the adventure gaming hobby are in for a double dose of new knowledge as well, as Ernie Gygax takes you through the events that led Gary Gygax to go from the sand table to the dungeon, and Jon Peterson expounds a mysterious manuscript that may or may not be the earliest version of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

For the polyhedral aficionados like myself who like nothing so much as a good crunchy table of combat resolutions or percentile outcomes, Len Lakofka delivers, with a well-thought-out set of possibilities for the character near death. Are you *sure* you have time to hide that scroll before you lose consciousness?

And not least of all, I'd like to give a hearty welcome to one of my favorite comic artists, Aaron Williams. His creations, including *Nodwick*, *PS238*, and his daily comic *Full Frontal Nerdity*, are well-known staples in the gaming world, and it's an honor to have exclusive *Full Frontal Nerdity* installments in a format that's a new twist on this perennial favorite. Together with Rich Burlew's *Order of the Stick*, we're truly blessed to have exclusive comics on our back pages from such luminaries.

Someday we'll hopefully be looking at issues of *Gygax* magazine with big 'ol numbers on the cover, trying to remember what it was like to go from a little number like one to a little number like two. I hope that no matter how long we get to bring you this magazine, it will always be just as thrilling and rewarding to go up that one digit and put another issue of gaming content out to the community. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to bring this to you.

Jayson Elliot
Editor-in-Chief



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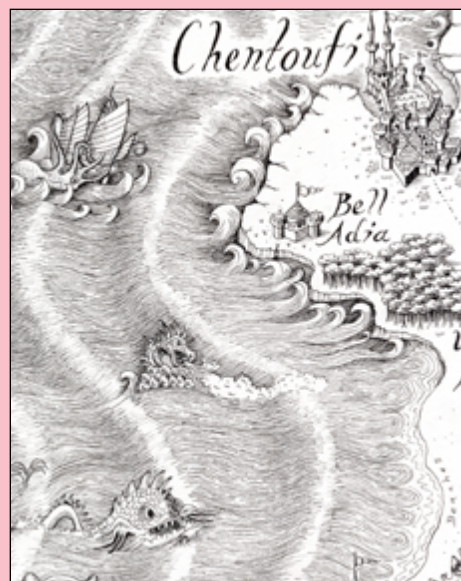
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Offense		Defense	
CMB:	+2	CMD:	14
Initiative:	+2	Armour Class:	13
Base Attack:	+1	Saves	
Melee Attack:	+2	Fortitude:	+3
Range Attack:	+3	Reflex:	+3
# of Attacks:	1	Will:	+7

Armour	
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Detail of the land of Okkorim—see p. 40

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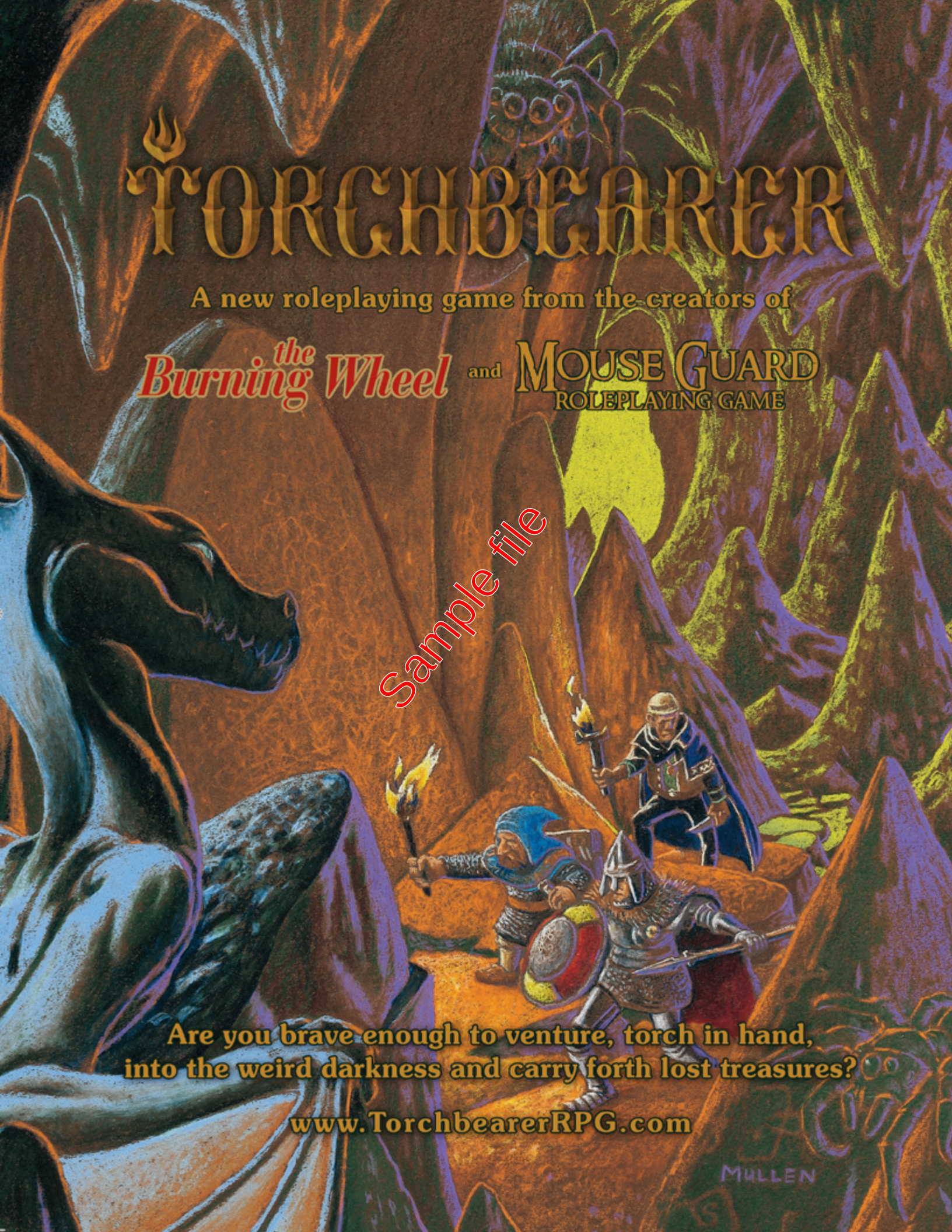
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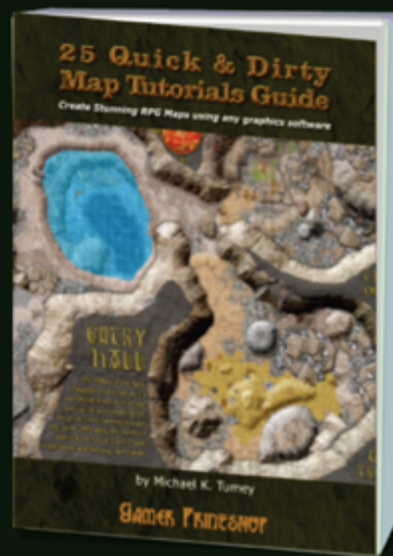
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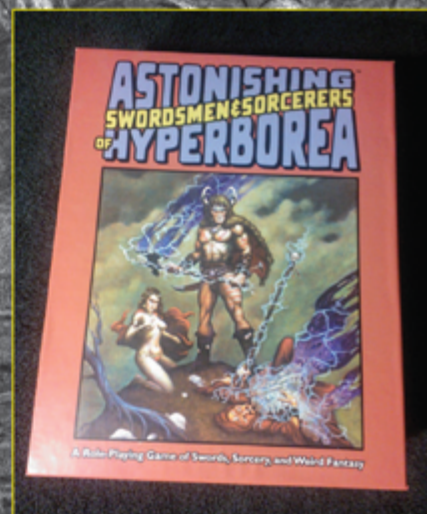
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What has been produced so far?

While the Gamemaster's and Player's Setting Guides will be available in Oct/Nov 2013 as soft cover printed books following a successful Kickstarter last year, we already have an introductory trilogy of modules, called **The Curse of the Golden Spear**, 3 one-shot modules, a complete mapped adventure site, 3 Kaidan racial supplements, 2 class/faction guides, a haunts supplement, and more releases coming soon. So there's plenty of material available that can allow your players to start "Ghost Story" campaigning in the cursed realm of Kaidan.

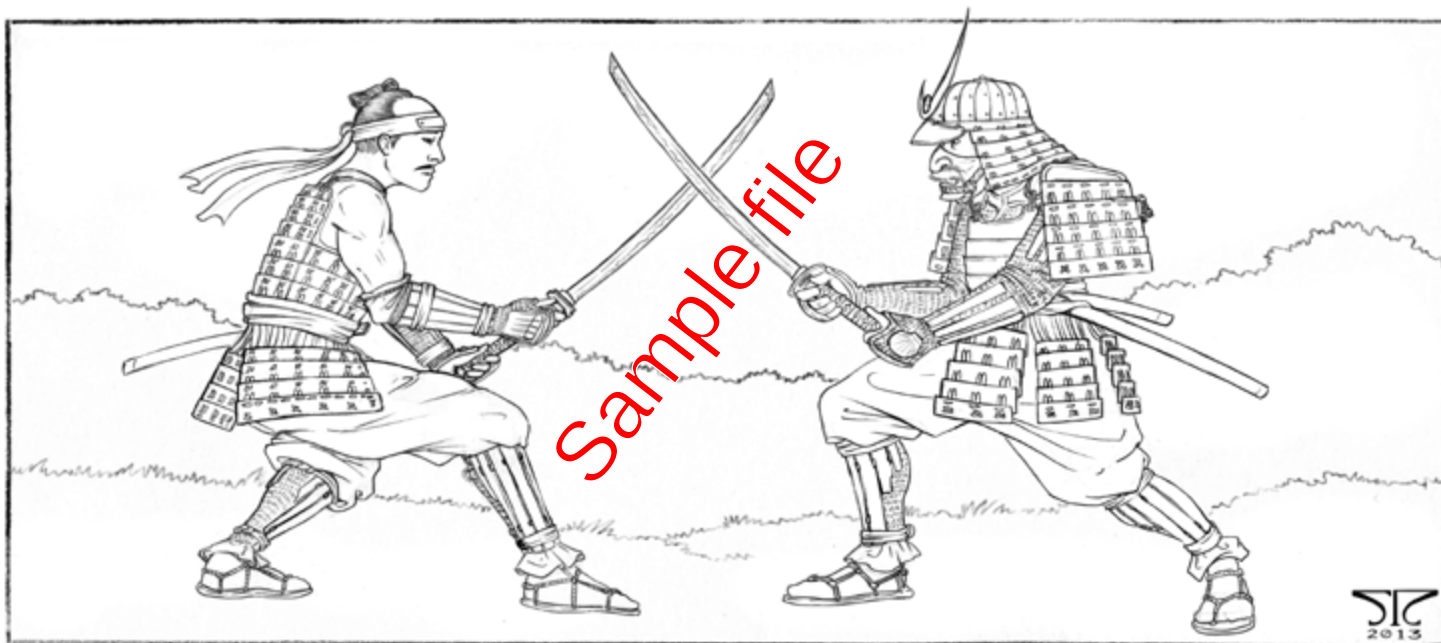
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Tactics in *Samurai Battles*

by Tim Kask



In a game like *Samurai Battles* that has a randomizing factor like *Dragon Cards*, there are no hard and fast rules for success. In playing the game for this article, we did learn a few good lessons that I am glad to pass along.

My two most important pieces of advice would be: always, always, always have a path of retreat open; and, kill the shooters.

If you are not able to retreat the number of hexes called for by combat results, for every hex you cannot retreat, you lose a figure. You might ask why I stress this so; one of the scenarios has a unit that is in a blocked position at the onset of the battle. When we played it, my wily opponent attacked the crowded wing of my army and punished the blocked unit quite harshly; he nearly got one of his five banners on the first turn!

On the other hand, as the attacker, try to sequence your various attacks with the oppo-

nent's retreat in mind. If you can force him to overload one of his sectors, you can paralyze a portion of his forces if he happens to not have any orders for that sector. You may, in another instance, be able to block a subsequent target's retreat with units already retreated that turn.

This game can be quite fluid, the sides ebbing and flowing across the board; with nowhere to retreat to, the turn ends, usually with sanguine results. In one of our early games, I was able to partially drive in parts of both of my opponent's wings, thus clogging up the center. It was brutal for him as he had no good Center Command cards; his army congealed in the center.

Banners are nearly as good as kills in regard to die-roll results. In this game, you are not really "killing" the unit; you take an enemy banner when the unit ceases to function cohesively. You, as the commanding daimyo, lose

battles when your troops lose their faith in your abilities to lead and command (represented by H&F tokens, or lack thereof). In *Samurai Battles*, you are not there to *kill* the enemy so much as you are there to *render the opposing army unable to continue*. This is a somewhat odd tenet to embrace for some wargamers; in the real thing the objective is to render the opposing forces incapable of opposing you and to occupy the ground you consider to be vital (or want).

It is imperative to try to keep a worst-case-scenario supply of H&F tokens. This is not possible at the onset of the game as most scenarios call for starting with five or six tokens. Two bad retreat results could wipe those out in a single turn. While the *Dragon Cards* are fun, I recommend that you forego picking them at the end of the turn and instead take the two H&F token option for at least a couple of turns, depending upon what is happening in those

Samurai Battles — evolution of a dual game

by Richard Borg

Samurai Battles premiered almost a year ago at the Origins game convention, in 2012. Since that date, the game has been flying under the radar of most gamers. Yet *Samurai Battles* has gained a small following of very loyal fans. I believe many of these fans have actually come from the group of players who were already familiar with one or more of the other games that use the *Commands & Colors* system: *Battle Cry*, *Memoir '44*, *Commands & Colors Ancients*, *Commands & Colors Napoleonic*, and *BattleLore*.

Personally, I always thought the historical samurai period was interesting and I had even collected a bunch of miniature figures, thinking one day I would perhaps have the time and opportunity to work on a game with samurai warriors. It was at the New York Toy Fair in February 2011 that it all started to come together.

I stopped by the Alliance booth and was talking with Michael Webb about games. Mike asked if I had seen Zvezda's new game, *World War II: Barbarossa 1941*, by Konstantin Krivenko. I had not seen the game, but I did know of Zvezda and had a number of packs of their very fine plastic 1:72 scale samurai miniatures. Mike introduced me to Konstantin, who was at the Alliance booth, showcasing his WWII game and we talked awhile about games. Returning home, I took a serious look at the Zvezda catalog and it all came together!

Zvezda was planning to release an entire new line of samurai figures, and I contacted Konstantin at Zvezda. After a few emails, we were well on our way. Konstantin had already been thinking about doing another *Art of Tactic* game, and when I suggested doing a *Com-*

mands & Colors
samurai game
using the new
Zvezda

samurai figures, it seemed logical that his *Art of Tactic* and my *Commands & Colors* could in fact become one game project: *Samurai Battles – Art of Tactic* rules by Konstantin Krivenko and *Samurai Battles – Commands & Colors* rules by Richard Borg. Both rule sets would utilize the same battlefield map game board, a set of terrain tiles and the samurai miniature figures. Both rule sets, however, would feature a number of additional game components.

As I stated earlier, *Samurai Battles* seems to be flying under the radar of most gamers, yet those that have had the opportunity to play have found that its core game really does have a lot to offer. As for the *Commands & Colors* version, there are ample units in the core game to field two very competitive samurai armies. The battles, included in the scenario booklets, focus on the historical deployment of forces and the important terrain features in scale with the game system, while the Dragon Cards add an element of suspense and surprise that can bend the rules and instantly change the course of a battle. Finally, because of the length of time covered and the historical transition in warfare during this period, the possible expansion kits and additional battle scenarios for the samurai game are almost endless.

Yes, there have been a few hiccups as Zvezda gains experience and the company blends its knowledge as a manufacturer of fine scale models with the hobby game business. overall, I truly that players are a real treat, Zvezda

Yet, feel in for the *Samurai Battles* game, with two sets of rules in one game box, is sure to provide players with an entertaining, unique, and challenging gaming experience.

opening turns.

The firearms, primitive though they were by European standards of the era, were a game-changer (no pun intended) when introduced into feudal Japan by the Dutch and Portuguese. Any time you get an opportunity to attack the opponent's musketeers, take it. Their increased range and lethality can be a decisive factor in coordinating an attack. They can stop an attack in its tracks or blow open a hole to be exploited. Kill them whenever you can. If they're yours, keep them on the battlefield as long as you can; if they're his, waste 'em. Thankfully, none of the scenarios published at the time I write this calls for more than two

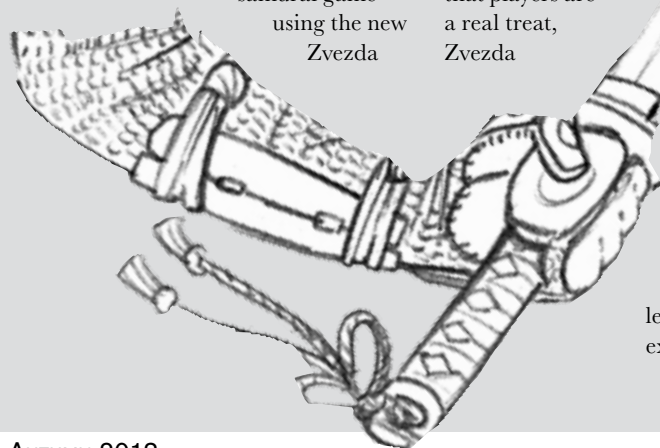
will
new

such units to a side. That most certainly change as scenarios are released that are modeled on later, or larger, battles.

The utilization of your leaders can have a profound effect on tactics. How successful you are against the other side's leaders can easily determine the outcome of an otherwise close battle. First, if a leader is killed, the opponent gets to pick, at random, one of the Command cards from the owner of the dead leader's hand. This can seriously hamper your activities and severely impact your ability to fight. Second, you are denied the benefits that leader can impart to your units, and finally, each Leader carries a banner worth the same as a unit banner in terms of victory.

A curious wrinkle in the rules can be successfully used if you expect to be on the receiving end of a big attack. A leaderless unit, forced to retreat by combat results, must immediately stop if it enters a hex with an unattached leader. The unit joins the leader and may then ignore any further retreat called for that turn; they can stop a rout if used judiciously. As a result of command-radius rules, the mounted Leaders become invaluable. Detaching Leaders to a "second rank" can bolster the line.

When a unit is forced to retreat, H&F tokens are surrendered in accordance with the retreat; if the unit has a Leader attached



it loses an additional H&F token for every hex of the retreat. If you can force a Samurai unit with a Leader to retreat, it would cost a staggering three H&F tokens per hex.

There is another tactical consideration that is philosophically difficult for some to embrace; leader suicide, or seppuku. The loss of a leader can be very serious; the banner loss is bad enough, but the reduction in Command Cards held can be devastating. Rather than

risk being killed (captured) and suffering the loss of a banner, a lone leader can commit suicide. The banner is not awarded to the opponent, the Command Card is lost, but the selfless deed earns his side five H&F. While it might seem awfully cold-blooded and cynical, it could happen that a given leader's sacrificial act could conceivably enable his side to survive the battle, or perhaps even win it. On the other side of this seppuku equation is the fact that

the opponent of the self-immolating leader gets a free Dragon Card.

Use your Dragon Cards to maximum effect; one of them could turn the tide of a battle. There is no nobility in defeat if defeated whilst failing to play Dragon cards.

(That's like dying in an role-playing game with healing or curing potions undrunk.) ■



The evolution from wargaming to role-playing

by Ernest Gary Gygax Jr.

My upbringing, as well as my very existence, are proof of the unimpeded power of the imagination of one E. Gary Gygax. As Gary's first born son, I literally cut one of my first teeth on a Panzer division, on an early Avalon Hill board game. By the age of seven, I had my first command of Roman ancients, and later that year was playing WWII miniatures using *Tractics*. Around the same time, Dad and Don Kaye put together a huge table in our basement at 330 Center Street. This was to become our infamous Sand Table where wargaming reigned. Soon my play style became well established and I was nicknamed Ernie the Barbarian, for any follower who would dare to flee battle I would personally cut down and destroy!

Soon simple wargaming wasn't enough and we began to make road trips to Rockford, IL. There we met Jeff Perren who had created a wargaming set of rules called *Chainmail*. To his final day Jeff Perren considered fantasy to be a four-letter word, as he was a historical perfectionist. Yet, without Jeff agreeing to my father's addition of the Fantasy Supplement to his product *Chainmail*, *D&D* or any game even close to the original product would not have been born.

At some point in the very early '70s a play-by-mail associate and fellow wargamer, Dave Arneson, came down to Lake Geneva from the Twin Cities. He had a hot new idea to share. This concept took *Chainmail* and put it into a dungeon. Like the sand table wargaming events, it was led by a judge, but the actions in the game were up to the players. For the first time, the objectives were not imposed by a game scenario, but chosen by the participants themselves.

I remember that in the first adventure, Rob and Terry Kuntz, Gary and myself were all given the task of trying to figure out what to equip our heroes with. Dave taught us the errors of a couple of our choices. A donkey

proved to be slow, loud, and hard to control. The choice of using hundreds of feet of rope to trail behind us instead of mapping was aggressively proven to be in error when a grey pudding, the father of the *D&D* black pudding, pulled the rope from our hands (as one would suck up spaghetti. When we were outside leaving Blackmoor proper, he let an alarm or just a wandering monster, a balrog flew after us with very ill intent. Our situation looked grim! Terry took out a magic arrow, our only magic weapon (the balrog needed magic weapons to harm it), and rolled his two six-sided dice—box cars, natural 12—just what was needed by a hero to send the balrog to his flaming demise.

After this adventure David and my father shared much correspondence, and the concept of *D&D*, the original brown box set, was germinated. Almost every night afterward, Dad would close the shoe repair, shut himself up in his den, and type away on his typewriter. Sadly for most of the kids and his wife, this would last generally until 3 a.m. I was welcomed in the work space as long as I would read quietly. Often, he would bounce ideas off of me, or play-test some of his most recent inventions. How I loved those closed-door moments when Dad would spin around and ask for my input or help for setting up play-test sessions. The first play-test session included my sister Elise, Rob, and myself. Though Elise dropped out, Terry, as well as other assorted gamers from the Lake Geneva and Northern Illinois areas, would later join in.

Sitting in the den with my father I always wanted to keep on gaming . . . I was addicted! At first, I would spend this gratis extra time obtaining men-at-arms and a grand total of seven henchmen. I would get in several games a week, most of which only involved myself and my cronies, or Rob, as he was becoming almost family. Unfortunately, other groups could only meet every couple of weeks due to people's schedules. This began to really cause a

gap of power and levels between Rob and me, and all the other players involved in the campaign. My father responded to this by declaring that all player actions took time in the game, so we could not be present everywhere at once. This would actually allow others a chance to play after some main character's time was up. We responded by playing some of our own lackeys, which allowed Gary to play-test areas of the dungeon which would have not been a challenge for our main characters, but also allowed those same lackeys to become nearly as powerful as the other characters of the campaign.

By this time Tenser, 12th level magic-user, had upwards of a million gold pieces. My dad decided that high-level characters needed to spend their fortune on something. He suggested we build castles. I built mine for 300,000 g.p. and stocked it with my two red dragons, as well as a black pudding and a skeleton. I would go on to spend tens of thousands more to pay and equip hundreds of human soldiers and 40 heavy boat-riding lancers. When Tenser acquired the Magic User's Crown artifact, he ceased to be neutral and had to choose between Good and Evil. This change in alignment (Tenser obviously chose Good) caused me to lose some of my forces, like the hundreds of plate-mailed orc troops I enlisted and the two dragons mentioned previously. As for henchmen, a mage and an elf left Tenser to work for Rob's character, and yet another elf also left to work in Terry's character's employ. Later, Rob's character's own change of alignment towards Evil would cause the very same elf to flee for his life. This is how my father was carefully working to even out the playing field and keep our interest for the campaign high at all times.

This overriding goal of keeping the campaign interesting was also true for our main characters when they were not adventuring in the dungeon. When I had my male red dragon,