Foreword

I must start with an enormous thank you to Henry Hyde. This is not just a thank you for putting these first 12 Battlegames Teasers together in a Battlegames Special but for being the catalyst behind the reappearance of Teasers. When Henry was setting up Battlegames, he contacted me to see if I would contribute. The answer was clearly “yes”, but what to write? The obvious thing to send in was a scenario... and so, after an absence of 25 years, Table Top Teasers reappeared in a wargames magazine. My scenarios had appeared elsewhere, both in books and in Practical Wargamer, but not as Teasers. I have been delighted with the enthusiasm with which they have been greeted and the feedback from those who have tried them out.

With the prospect of a Special, I wanted to provide a bit more than just the previously published Teasers and so you will find some additional material here.

I thought that readers might be interested in how the Teasers all began. For that reason, I have included the very first Teaser, "Bridge Demolition", and the account published in Battle for Wargamers in February and March 1978. It provides what I hope readers will find is a very enjoyable and challenging Teaser. Perhaps more to the point, however, is that in the introduction, it also explains the logic behind the Teasers. I have left the maps as they were originally produced and included reworked examples of some of the artwork.

There is also a piece entitled “Historical Battles or Scenarios?” Although I have written previously on similar subjects, this examines why wargamers refight historical battles and their use as scenarios. To conclude this part, I have also included a brand new Teaser based on an historical action. This makes 14 Teasers in all in this Special Edition.

Henry also invited a number of well-known wargamers to have a go at refighting the Teasers and sending in their own reports. This provides additional interest and entertainment, and it is gratifying to see how successfully the Teasers translate into periods other than the horse-and-musket era.

The Teaser machine moves on and I find our esteemed Editor pressing me on a regular basis for the next one. In addition, there are other publications in the pipeline which will provide more Teasers in the future, so I look forward to hearing how you have fared. Happy Gaming.

Charles Grant

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Henry Hyde
How it all began

Reproduced from Battle for Wargamers, February/March 1978

by Brigadier (Ret’d) C.S. Grant OBE

C. S. Grant with the first in an exciting new series of wargame scenarios and their solutions.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

The sources of inspiration for wargames are numerous. However, if one may be permitted to generalise, it is possible to divide wargames into four categories. The first is the simple conflict type of game which involves two sides, each with the object of defeating the other by inflicting more casualties on one's opponent than one receives oneself. Such a game can be conducted in a variety of ways. Terrain can be selected impartially or by each player selecting and placing a number of terrain elements alternately on the table. An example of this procedure would be as follows: “Each player has agreed to select three items of terrain. Player ‘A’ wins the throw to start and selects a small wood which he places in the top right corner. Player ‘B’ in his turn places a small hill in the centre, ‘A’ a village and so on. (The result is shown in diagram 1). The two players then throw the dice to see on which side of the table they will arrive. What may have appeared to be a favourable terrain from where one stood placing items on the table may often seem less advantageous when viewed from another angle, in particular the one from which one’s army is to arrive. The terrain selected, there are a number of ways in which one can select the contending armies. The easiest method is, of course, to produce two identical sides, but this has obvious limitations. Other methods are aimed at producing differing sides without achieving an undesirable imbalance.

One’s selection must, of course, be limited by the figures, units and numbers one has available. One simple way to produce two armies is to give units of a standard size a value in points, for example:

- Light infantry regiment (3 officers and 24 men) 2 points
- Line infantry regiment (5 officers and 48 men) 3 points
- Heavy cavalry regiment (4 officers and 24 men) 4 points
- Artillery battery (2 guns) 2 points

Each general may select an army of say, 15 points, the size of the army depending on the playing time and space available. This may produce two armies such as:

**General ‘A’**
- 2 regiments of light infantry at 2 points each = 4 points
- 3 regiments of line infantry at 3 points each = 9 points
- 1 battery of artillery at 2 points each = 2 points
Total = 15 points

**General ‘B’**
- 1 heavy cavalry regiment at 4 points = 4 points
- 2 light cavalry regiments at 3 points each = 6 points
- 1 light infantry regiment at 2 points = 2 points
- 1 line infantry regiment at 3 points = 3 points
Total = 15 points

Thus two armies are arrived at with a degree of balance (depending on the sanity of the generals’ choice) but with scope for individuals to exercise their character, consider the opponent’s character and make allowances for the terrain.

A more complex method of choosing the armies, but one of particular value in Ancient wargaming where there is a profusion of classes of soldiers, arms and weapons, is for each type of figure to be given an appropriate points value. One may then select units of differing sizes and types.

The outcome of these deliberations and preparations is invariably a first-rate wargame.

The second of our sources of wargaming is found in re-fighting famous battles. This is a most enjoyable and rewarding process where a particular battle is researched, the terrain is reproduced on the table and the armies scaled down accordingly. Dispositions relate to the opening of the battle and moves then commence. One can either follow the plans of the warring generals, or attempt in one’s humble way, with the benefit of hindsight, to do better. Whether the battle is Thermopylae, Agincourt, Fontenoy, Austerlitz or Gettysburg, there is tremendous
enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from re-fighting actual battles, not to mention the occasional surprise.

The third category of wargame is the action which is derived from running wargame campaigns. Such actions may range from small scout actions and skirmishes to full-scale battles. Whatever their nature, they have one thing in common — they are part of a long-term plan and pose other factors and considerations than the short-term destruction of the enemy. The engagements may be for long-term strategic benefits, protection of lines of communication, delaying actions, preludes to larger battles, deceptions or a hundred other situations. They may require minimal losses to be sustained, towns or bridges to be kept intact or involve other factors which will influence one’s actions and plans. All these and many other considerations add a new, exciting and realistic element to wargaming.

The process of campaigning, while immensely rewarding may, however, be a long one, requiring frequent contact with one’s opponent and a degree of paperwork. To provide some of the elements of the campaign situations, without the continuity and length of time required, there is a fourth type of wargame. This may, at the risk of labelling, be called ‘situation’ wargaming. It is with this type of wargame that this and other articles of this nature will be concerned. ‘Situation’ wargames are those which present both sides in a particular scenario with given forces and aims. In this way, many of those additional elements present in campaign encounters may be reproduced to add more versatility and realism to the encounter/confrontation wargame.

When I first considered writing on wargame situations, the consideration of a title was by no means the least of my problems. For example, “Tactical Problems for Wargamers” is pretentious to say the least, and suggests that there is a specific problem which has a specific answer, whereas this may not be the case. Furthermore, I am reminded of the maxim that “tactics is the opinion of the senior officer present,” and would therefore not presume to attempt ‘answers’ to such problems. Moreover, some of the scenarios are not problems but merely ‘stage settings’ for a battle, and so the term “problem” is therefore misleading. After much consideration, it is hoped that “Table Top Teasers” as a title embodies some of the enjoyment as well as head-scratching which they are intended to provide.

Finally, these situations are designed for others to try, and it is hoped that someone will put pen to paper and produce an account of their experiences with a “Teaser” for this magazine.

TEASER ONE: THE BRIDGE DEMOLITION

PERIOD

“Horse and Musket” though no doubt it could be adapted to modern wargaming and, with a little more “difficulty” to ancient periods.

TERRAIN

As shown in the map. The river is impassable except by means of the bridge (diagram 2).

FORCES

Red Army
- 2 regiments of heavy cavalry
- 3 regiments of line infantry
- 1 regiment of light infantry
- 2 batteries of artillery
- 1 troop of engineers

Blue Army
- 1 regiment of light cavalry
- 2 regiments of heavy cavalry
- 6 regiments of line infantry
- 2 regiments of light infantry
- 2 batteries of artillery

GENERAL SITUATION

Blue forces have broken through thirty miles to the north. Red is re-organising to counter attack in two days, but has been caught off balance. In order to give himself time to prepare he has to delay Blue. In this particular sector the bridge at X must be destroyed before it falls into Blue’s hands. Last night a rear guard with engineer support from the Red forces arrived at the bridge and are to prepare and demolish it today. Blue has been advancing through the night pushing at best speed to take the bridge.

OPENING NARRATIVE

At first light all Red forces are as shown on the map. Blue forces on the table consist of one regiment of light cavalry in four squadron groups for scouting purposes. The first move of work on the bridge will be move one.

BLUE FORCE’S AIM

To take the bridge intact.

RED FORCE’S AIM

To destroy the bridge before Blue takes it.

SPECIAL FACTORS

Blue’s forces have marched through the night on two main roads arriving on the table at A and B. However, their order of arrival and the route each unit arrives from is somewhat enveloped in the fog of war and the confusion of the night march. To this end, cards should be prepared and placed in envelopes as follows:

- Card 1 – two infantry regiments
- Card 2 – two infantry regiments
- Card 3 – two infantry regiments
- Card 4 – one battery of artillery
- Card 5 – one battery of artillery
- Card 6 – one regiment of light infantry
- Card 7 – one regiment of heavy cavalry
- Card 8 – one regiment of heavy cavalry

KEY

- Infantry
- Cavalry
- Gun
- Skirmisher

Diagram 2

TEASER 1

Sample PDF
At the start of move one, Blue throws one die for each card in turn. ‘Odds’ the force on the card in the envelope arrives at A, ‘evens’ the force arrives at B. He then throws a further die to show which playing period the troops concerned arrive on, for example for a throw of 5, the envelope is opened and troops concerned move onto the table at move 5 from either A or B as designated.

The envelopes with the marked cards are plain, so neither Red nor Blue knows what they contain. Blue marks the result of the die throws on each envelope, i.e. period 3, position B. The game may now unfold.

**Special rules**

The time taken to prepare the bridge for demolition is obviously critical. The game will have no purpose if it is too easy for either Red or Blue to achieve their aim. The factor will depend on the rules used, but as a guide it is suggested that the time taken to prepare the bridge should be twice as many periods of time as a line infantry regiment of Blue would take to reach it unopposed.

There should be uninterrupted move periods for the engineers working on the bridge. If they have to abandon work because of enemy activity or casualties in a specific period, then that period will not count towards the preparation of the demolition.

For those whose appetite for excitement is still undiminished one can add a further factor. Once the demolition is complete, Red throws one dice for the effect on the bridge. A scale may be devised along the following lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bridge is destroyed at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bridge is destroyed at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bridge is destroyed at the end of next move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bridge is destroyed in two moves time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rewiring is required - two clear moves of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Faulty work - three clear moves of work required for rewiring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

While Red’s aim is clearly to destroy the bridge before the enemy seize it, the better general will attempt to bring as many of his troops to safety on the south side as possible before the bridge blows up.

---

**War Diary of General Chambray, 25th August, the year of our Lord 1747**

“I was woken rudely from my bed at first light this morning by an excited young Lieutenant from the guard who informed me that enemy light cavalry patrols had been seen on the high ground north of our position. This was to be expected. I could already hear the sounds of our engineers working on the bridge preparing for demolition and knew that all was in hand. I therefore took a hearty breakfast of... An hour later I left my room in ‘Elector’s Head’ which I had made my Headquarters and went forth to survey defences. In accordance with my orders troops had deployed at first light from night positions. This entailed putting a battery of guns and my third infantry regiment on the north side as possible before the bridge blows up.”
side of the river and pushing our heavy cavalry up the main north/south road to spring upon my unsuspecting and tired enemy arriving from that direction (A). The enemy were, however, tardy in their arrival and work was well under way on the bridge before any contact was reported. I had been informed by Colonel Trench, my Colonel of Engineers, that given uninterrupted work the bridge would be ready for demolition at 2 o’clock that afternoon (period 15).

“At just before 7 o’clock in the morning (period 3) a brigade of enemy infantry appeared on the West road. Our worthy Fusiliers de Lorraine (C) gave them a timely welcome, sniping at their officers and dropping men from their ranks. One of these regiments, Raczinsky’s (6) I think, lost its colours and its colonel and at one stage fell back in some disarray before that wily goat, Von Tarlenheim, intervened. At this stage a heavy cavalry regiment, Holenzollern’s (2), appeared from the north and were soundly met by our glorious Allemand (A) who fought them to standstill before falling back. As they withdrew, the splendid Gendarmerie du Roi (B) launched themselves at the hapless enemy cavalry, quickly routing them and falling upon an infantry brigade (9 and 10) who they found in some confusion. At this stage I was all for going to join in and had to be restrained by my aide. This action of our cavalry caused severe delay to the enemy progress from the North and gave him a setback from which he never really recovered.

“Meanwhile the enemy were deploying in strength from the West. It reached my ears that they were led by the Regiment Fynske (5), a staunch unit which I would prefer on my side than against me. They were pushing our Fusiliers out of the wood, allowing the light cavalry to fall upon them with many a barbaric yell. Behind Fynske came two batteries of guns, a further three regiments of infantry, a Jäger battalion and a regiment of heavy cavalry. As our Fusiliers fell back, firing all the while, our guns on the south side opened up with canister, carving through the formed masses of enemy infantry. By 10 o’clock, all seemed to be going well. The heat from the gunfire caused me some discomfort and I returned to the ‘Elector’s Head’.

“At 11 o’clock (period 10) I stood on the bridge surveying the scene: work progressed well. However, the enemy brigade in the North was now moving down the road with some determination. In the West, the wood had fallen to the enemy. His infantry were even now pressing round from both sides.

“Several of his guns were in action. I now withdrew our cavalry across the river to the South and moved the Royal Vaisseaux Infantry (E) on to the South bank supporting our half battery and the engineers’ progress.

“These warm, sticky days are unbearably uncomfortable and it seemed appropriate that at this stage I should adjourn to the ‘Elector’s Head’ if only to change my uniform, and while there enjoy some small repast. I returned to the bridge just after the hour of 1 and found the enemy pressing us closely.

The Fynske Regiment had pushed through the wood and had reformed in line while Raczinsky was coming round the wood to the North. Two columns of infantry were pressing round the South side of the wood and the two columns from the North were moving even closer to the edge of the town. Our position was, to say the least, uncomfortable. Our guns were creating havoc among the massed infantry, but they
continued to press forward. We were defending staunchly and stood well the charge of enemy lancers who came on through heavy musketry and canister with great élan, shouting and screaming before being rebuffed with heavy losses by the Royal Vaisseaux and Champagne infantry.

“However, we were about to suffer a very strong attack and my eye turned again to the bridge. I could expect it to be ready for demolition at any minute, but I perceived that a large proportion of our forces would be lost to the enemy if it were to be blown now. I therefore resolved to save as many as possible and began to thin out the ranks of Champagne and Royal la Marine. The latter, as I sent my order, were engaged with the enemy brigade who had arrived from the North. Our cavalry struggled amid guns and infantry to cross the bridge and the press forced me to withdraw some distance, where I was accosted by dirty and sweating engineer officer who rushed to assure me that the bridge was ready. It was at this stage that the hereditary coolness of the Chambrays asserted itself and I undertook to delay the blowing of the bridge for thirty minutes to permit more of our men to move to safety across the bridge. During this time we were blessed with a stroke of good fortune. The tremendous casualties wrought on the Fynske and the Leibgarde Grenadiere caused them to falter when they were within minutes of forcing us off the bridge. It was, however, from North-East that I felt the greatest concern as the enemy were now locked in hand-to-hand fighting with the rear guard of Royal la Marine on the edge of the town (Period 16).

“As half of our northern battery scrambled to safety across the bridge a battalion of infantry on the North side with half a battery of artillery. However, this was a surprisingly small price to pay for such a strategically important victory. The enemy, realising the game was up, withdrew throughout the afternoon leaving me to settle down to a fine meal in the 'Elector's Head' while waiting for fresh orders from the Grand Duke.”

**Postscript**

This game was played to test the mechanics of the Teaser and to ensure that the instructions and scenario were clear, and that it would provide an interesting game. The end result however, proved to be much more exciting than either of us had anticipated. To quote my opponent, “a real cliff-hanger”. The result was in the balance until the last period (eighteen to be exact) when the bridge was blown. I sincerely hope those of you who undertake the Teaser will have as much pleasure and excitement as we did.
Teaser 1

Pontoon, a river crossing scenario

by Brigadier (Ret’d) C.S. Grant OBE

**Introduction**

Despite having fought and written several scenarios for river crossings, it is a subject of which I never tire. It remains a military operation that has many fascinating aspects and which lends itself extremely well to a wargame scenario. The one described in this article was fought some years ago and is but one variation on the theme. Before addressing the scenario itself, I hope it will be helpful if I spend a little time discussing pontoon operations.

The nature of a pontoon bridge, being a floating bridge using a series of boats upon which the roadway, usually made of planks, is laid to span the river, is well understood. That said, it is worth finding out a bit more about it and, as with other engineering topics, investigation of primary sources can prove most enlightening, and it just so happens that I have found a little military manual, the *Manual of Field Engineering*, published in 1911, quite valuable. Let me quote from it on the subject of floating bridges and their construction:

**Floating Bridges**

“In selecting a site for a floating bridge, a spot should be chosen where good holding ground for anchors is available. Material may by economised by making use of islands.

Each pier must have enough available buoyancy to support the heaviest load that can be brought on to one bay of the bridge. No extra allowance of buoyancy needs to be made if the load is live.

The length of each pier should be at least twice the breadth of the roadway for the sake of steadiness, and with the same object they may be connected together at their ends by tie balks and diagonally stiffened with lashings.

The waterway between the piers should never be less, and should if possible be more, than the width of these piers. Piers may be made from specially constructed pontoons, boats, casks, timber rafts, or inflated skins or the methods described in Sec 80 (improvised methods).

A bridge can be put into position in the following ways: by “Booming out”, i.e. when the head of the bridge already constructed is continually pushed

The new map below has been produced based on Charles’ original table size of 7’ x 5’.
out into the stream, fresh material being added at the tail. This method cannot be used with steep banks and deep water close inshore.

2. By "Forming up", i.e. when material is continually added to the head of the bridge, the tail being stationary. This method is uninfluenced by the nature of the banks, no men being required to work in the water. Its only drawback is the distance the roadway materials have to be carried.

3. By "Rafting", i.e. when the bridge is put together in different portions, or rafts, along the shore, each raft consisting of two or more piers, and these rafts are successfully warped, rowed or towed into their proper positions in the bridge. This method has the advantage that a large number of men can be employed simultaneously, and, if secrecy is the object, the various portions can be constructed at some distance from the eventual site of the bridge, and a favourable opportunity seized for its construction.

4. By "Swinging", i.e. when the entire bridge is constructed along the shore and then swung across with the stream. A long bridge can be constructed by a combination of two or more of the above methods.

If a bridge has to remain down for some time, arrangements may have to be made for the passage of river traffic. This can be done by having two or more rafts, at the centre of the bridge, arranged for “forming cut” or the two halves of the bridge may be swung to afford the requisite passage.

Arrangements must always be made up stream for the protection of a bridge from damage by floating substances either by a boat patrol or by posting men at each pier to pole off such floating objects into the fair way.

If heavy siege artillery has to be passed over a broad river, it will generally be most economical of material to construct the bridge of only sufficient strength for the ordinary traffic, and to warp the guns across on specially constructed rafts.”

Preliminaries

Having considered the technicalities of constructing a pontoon bridge, let me turn my attention to the scenario. Broadly speaking, there are two options. The first is to start with a map-based mini campaign. This will provide the player who is attempting a crossing with a wide range of sites and an element of surprise. The main feature of the map will of course be the river to be crossed. The map might, in general terms, provide a stretch of river perhaps ten times that which would fit onto one wargame table. The preliminary map moves would allow one side to scout the river bank while the other would feint here and there before finally selecting an appropriate site and starting the bridging operation. Once begun, the action moves to the wargame table and troops from both sides converge on the action using map moves. For those who want to know more, a more detailed description of this option can be found in *Scenarios for all Ages* (see bibliography and apologies for the plug) under the title of “A Major River Crossing”.

The second option is to go for a straightforward table-based game. On this occasion this was my choice. I decided that I would start with the bridging site already determined and introduce the troops trying to oppose the crossing on the far bank at random.

However, before any of this, I needed a river! The pontoon I intended to use required something over and above my normal river terrain. I had decided to base the scenario on a pontoon with four boats and five roadway sections, giving me a span of between 12 and 15 inches. With this in mind, I had to build a new river. I decided that I wanted a river that would cross the short side of my table. That would make it five feet long. I wanted to