

HISTORICON 2010 AT VALLEY FORGE CONVENTION CENTER

July 8-11, 2010

“Pike and Shotte” - Seventeenth Century Warfare, 1600-99

This year’s HISTORICON was more HISTORICON than ever. Typically HISTORICON has been the largest and best Historical Miniature Gaming Event in the Western Hemisphere if not the known Universe. That has been substantially true since the first HMGS HISTORICON held in July of 1984. However, this year more than ever, and especially compared to the last few years, the problem was not overcrowding. In fact, while for various reasons attendance was slightly reduced, there was nearly a 30% increase in available space. For the enthusiastic HISTORICON Convention Committee (HCC) this was to be treated as less a problem than an opportunity.



Egyptian Army Ready For The Battle of Kadesh

In solving the opportunity, the HCC had several spontaneous assets. For example, at 75 years of age, much of it spent on both the business and personal sides of the hobby, “Uncle” Duke Seifried decided to have a grand finale. He has presented spectacular gaming arrangements for everything from Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to the Lord of the Rings Trilogy, usually dominating the gaming events of the convention. This time he has thrown most of his remaining exhibits into the display. I counted a total of 35 “Uncle Duke” events. They include repetitive scenarios of Babylon I (Ancient Mesopotamia), Siege (Medieval Castle), Liberty or Death (AWI), Sudan (the Mahdi and all that), Giza (Ancient Egypt-Battle of Kadesh), Tomahawk (F&I War), Jolly Roger (Pirates with optical illusion for sea), Khyber Pass (Northwest Frontier), Zulu (1879 and all that), Barbarians (Romans ambushed by Germans), Azteca (Evicting the Conquistadores from Mexico City), Hannibal (the Carthaginian not the cannibal). These “Dukapalusa” games recycled over 13 magnificently arranged game tables and an area for the amazingly constructed pirate game in which ships and islands are on stands of the same height giving an illusion of a darkened sea.

Friday night at the Awards ceremony “Uncle Duke” made his farewell speech in Lincolnesque garb and patterned on the Gettysburg Address. However, he let slip that while offering the props and toys downstairs for sale, he was actually working on an Alamo project. Try as he will, he doesn’t seem to have kicked the habit.



Uncle Duke Setting Up His Vikings Wednesday Night

Beyond that, the “WAR COLLEGE” expanded from 22 “special guests” at our best attended convention (2008) to 44, allowing for one cancellation and one omission. While topics were heavily oriented towards the theme (Pike and Shotte) including a seminar on “From Pike to Bayonet”, subjects from ancient to WWII and beyond were covered. There was something for most interests, at least of those able to tear themselves away from the great games, shopping, and camaraderie elsewhere.

Included were Angus Konstam, who was Guest of Honor at an HMGS SOUTH convention years ago while Manager of Mel Fisher’s Museum, and Barry Hilton, author of UNDER THE LILLY BANNER among other things, whose fascinating comparison of HISTORICON 05 with the BRITCONs was reported in the REBEL YELL years ago. He ran at least two scenarios of THE BATTLE OF ALMAROZ Spain 1809, and two of the BOYNE (both of which drew my oldest grandson.)



Barry Hilton's Napoleonics

Also on hand was Bob Moon who ran an upgraded BRADDOCK DOWN (ECW), a scenario I had lost handily to Frank Frey at RAPIER a couple of years ago. It drew enough of a crowd that I had trouble closing in with my camera.



Bob Moon's Braddock Down



“Orrible ‘Oward Whitehouse With Uncle Duke’s German/Roman Ambush



Thursday Afternoon PANZERKORPS SCW Game

I got started by setting up the Spanish Civil War Brihuega scenario. Manny Granillo of Hoplite Research, Panzerkorps and all has been planning to run this for some time. But it never quite seemed to work out. This time the figures (we use the same basing and level of representation) and the Game Master got together. The Republicans won, and he exclaimed as I was setting up for my rerun

using VIVA EL CRISTO REY! that it couldn't have been won except for the Red Air Force (termed "El Glorioso by the Republicans.) That was pretty much the assessment at the time. After his Thursday afternoon game I ran the same scenario Thursday night. The Republicans lost-maybe my air rules need strengthening.



Movil De Choque Brigade Storms Fascist Positions



Turkenkrieg Game From Wally's Basement (the original, not the new flea market.)

Things were building up Thursday night. And after setting up my Friday morning game in the HAWKS room (part of a lower level ballroom in the Radisson) I got some sleep. Next day things were picking up rapidly. After the morning games, including my 20mm flats, the Flames of War Tournament, a prime reason for outgrowing the HOST, began at one in the afternoon.



Wally's Basement-The New Flea Market



Barry Hilton's Battle of the Boyne Day 1



Wall to Wall Gaming-Pulp Fiction in Foreground



Uncle Duke's Pirates in Action

I spoke to John Matthews, who heads operations for the FOW Empire in most of the western world, and he told me that there were over 90 players lined up for the Nationals and probably more for the Open Tournament operated by I-95 Gamers. From around noon Friday the FOW gaming was almost continuous through Sunday with the awards given out by 1:30 Sunday afternoon.



Flames of War Begins to Pick up Steam Friday Afternoon



Cossack Charge with T-34 85 Support-FOW Open Tournament

In all there were over 600 listed games. And many of the best of them were repeated more than once during the convention.



Barry Hilton's Boyne

Most gamers were enthusiastic about the new venue. And the VFCC seems to want HMGS back. Although many of us didn't realize it at the time they had actually scouted the HOST and environs and offered selected meal specials at competitive prices.



Todd Kerschner's Napoleonics-With 1/72nd Plastics