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## The Art of Wargaming

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per salvo, to demonstrate basic tactical principles of concentration of one's own forces and division of the enemy's. However, although an early advocate of quantitative thinking and expression, Fiske had no illusions regarding the accuracy of numbers when expressing subtle concepts.

One should savor this book; there is much to absorb and contemplate in each section before moving on to the next. Perhaps little has changed in the operational art of naval forces since the early twentieth century, but we are indebted to Fiske for his clear and timeless exposition of the basics.

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Perla, Peter P. *The Art of Wargaming*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1990. 364pp. \$29.95

Bravo Zulu, Peter Perla! Well done! This book would deserve the time-honored naval expression even if it only provided the principles of wargaming it contains. That it contains far more will make this a definitive work on wargaming for years to come. *The Art of Wargaming* carefully explains the nature of the game and how to use it. Authoritative, comprehensive, and readable, there are portions that are a "must" read for a broad range of military officers, civilians in the field of national security, and wargaming hobbyists.

Perla has managed to combine a complete history of professional wargaming and a detailed review of the

growth and current status of hobbyist wargaming, with a thorough discussion of where and how wargaming fits into the larger setting; the techniques essential to exploring all aspects of warfare. Perla is convinced that wargaming is an important tool for the professional, but he is concerned that it may be poised on the brink of diminished stature and popularity—an up-and-down cycle that has long plagued wargaming.

Perla is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is an experienced naval operations research analyst. He is also an avid wargaming hobbyist whose interests and experience in this area are, if anything, even more impressive than his professional credentials. Perla provides the reader with a better understanding of how powerful a tool wargaming can be, if properly used, for educating military and civilian decision makers, and examining a broad range of military and political issues.

"Wargaming and the Naval War College," (Chapter Two) should be required reading for every senior officer in the U.S. Navy. With care and accuracy Perla has demythologized the role of wargaming at the Naval War College and its importance in the history of the U.S. Navy. He gives credit to McCarty Little for inventing the art of *naval* wargaming during his thirty years at the Naval War College. Frank McHugh is also recognized for his important contributions.

Of particular value is Perla's discussion of the wargaming conducted between the World Wars at the Naval

## 120 Naval War College Review

War College. He notes that of more than three hundred wargames played during the interwar years, 130 emphasized campaign-level or strategic play. The discussions and critiques of the players and staff of these 130 games resulted in a growing appreciation of the strategic realities that later surfaced in the war in the Pacific. These games "forced the navy to divest itself of several former 'reality-assumptions.'" Perla emphasizes this point with Admiral Nimitz's famous statement that nothing that happened in the war was a surprise except the kamikazes.

On the other hand, Perla castigates the tactical gaming of the interwar years for a failure of perspective. Dominated by a gaming "tool," the Fire Effects System, the pseudo-realism of the charts and tables lulled a generation of future naval commanders into a false image of combat that left them unprepared for the tactical reality of the Solomons and other later actions. Perla documents the navy's quixotic search after World War II for the ideal "machine" to assist in playing "realistic" war games. The Naval Electronic Warfare Simulator (NEWS) of the 1950s was followed by the Warfare Analysis and Research System (WARS). Naval War College President Admiral Stansfield Turner believed students should "see on a screen how their sonar beam went out."

The push for "pseudo-realism" resulted in the investment of tens of millions of dollars in the 1970s and 1980s for the Naval Warfare Gaming System (NWGS), which promised so much but delivered so

little. Its expensive follow-on system, the Enhanced Naval Warfare Gaming System (ENWGS), was only a minimal improvement. As the major sponsor of war college student games for six years, this reviewer agrees with Perla's assessment and conclusions. Countless faculty, staff, and student players have rediscovered the truism succinctly stated by Frank McHugh. The heart of the Naval War College gaming system, he wrote, as both an educational device and as a tool to help explore new ideas, is the one "in which the *human decision makers*, and not the machine, play the dominant roles."

Perla's exhaustive discussion of hobbyist game development may strike some as a curious addition. However, Perla is convinced that professional wargamers can benefit from the ideas of the many talented hobbyist wargamers.

Part II of the book is a handbook for wargame designers, developers, users, potential users, and defense analysts. Whether one reads the second half of the book thoroughly, or only refers to applicable sections for ideas or suggestions, no better reference is likely to be found. Every staff and faculty member involved in wargaming at the Naval War College should have a copy as a ready reference, and selected sections should be required reading for prospective student players. Players in the fleet and in the field should also recognize its value.

Wargames raise important questions for which only through careful and rigorous mathematical analysis,

and military operations and exercises, can answers be sought. I hope that those who are involved in professional wargaming will remember Perla's thoughts, "never allowing the tools to dominate the process of recognizing the ultimately central importance of the human being as both player and warrior."

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Sapolsky, Harvey M. *Science and the Navy: The History of the Office of Naval Research*. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990. 142pp. \$24.95

Administrative histories tend to be tedious, but *Science and the Navy* is an exception. Indeed, how to gain maximum benefit from science for the navy is a challenge in this era of declining resources, and Sapolsky's insights may allow the current and future navy leadership to avoid past pitfalls. One such hazard is personal animus between civilian scientists and the military; we learn here that bad feeling excluded the navy from the Manhattan Project, even though the Naval Research Laboratory had begun exploring nuclear fission as a potential submarine power source in 1939.

*Science and the Navy* illustrates a number of ways of managing navy-supported science, and points out some of the benefits, problems, and political factors historically associated with each. The objectivity

of scientific advice to the navy is also addressed, especially in connection with the history of the Naval Research Advisory committee (NRAC) since 1946. The complex relationships among navy and other military research activities and with scientific and academic communities outside the defense department are discussed in a manner that should enlighten many naval officers.

The way in which the executive branch, Congress, and the secretary of defense work to accomplish programmatic objectives is emphasized in mid-career education of naval officers; unfortunately, similar attention is not given to the research and development (R&D) community, even though this is the source of the equipment that defines effective operational options. As a result, many naval officers enter the decision-making process with little understanding of the complexities of R&D, no knowledge of its historical evolution, and few insights about what has proven effective in the past.

The navy can not afford many mistakes if it is to fulfill its national security purposes, while U.S. defense funds are shrinking, in the coming multipolar and technologically sophisticated world. *Science and the Navy* has much to offer navy leadership, and also to mid-career officers who would like to make the best possible contribution to the navy when they reach senior command. All within the R&D community, both