

BATTLE

Part XI—Armoured Action

by Charles Grant

THE FIRST "active service" we take part in, will of necessity be a fairly simple sort of thing, involving only a few armoured fighting vehicles on each side—a straightforward sort of terrain (you can see what it is like from the diagrams and photographs). The idea is to provide a first illustration of how we go about the business of fighting on the battlegame table. The latter, by the way, for the purposes in mind, is not enormous, and measures 7 ft. by 4½ ft. (or half the size of that which we shall use later on). The ground will be seen to be pretty flat, *figure 1* (the small hills are reckoned to be steep and unclimbable) and its main features are a river, crossed by two bridges, 'A' and 'B', a few small woods, some walls and a couple of ruined cottages. Then there are the roads, of course, which, it goes without saying, are very important. The tactical scheme is similarly without complication—'RED', coming from the east, and 'BLACK' from the west, each has orders to advance and secure the river crossings, the background being that the task forces involved are advanced guards of much larger armies.

As to what we shall actually engage, then, 'RED' has four Russian T.34 tanks—equipped with the 85 mm. gun—while 'BLACK' has four German Mark IV tanks—the variant with the 'long' 75 mm. gun—and two heavy armoured cars, armed with 50 mm. guns.

Just to recapitulate, the technical data relevant to all these is assembled for ease of reference in the Table (Note that the speeds of the Mark IV are additional to what was given in Part III of "Battle"). I include it as much for my own benefit as the reader's—it is designed to save a lot of checking through former articles—as, at the time of writing, the action has indeed yet to be fought. I don't know how it is going to go any more than anyone else. Before we start, though, a quick word about the sequence of events. In a 'game move' each player moves his pieces—tanks, etc.—the distance allowed by the rules (or less, of course), and at the end of the 'moving' his guns will fire, again if he desires, and naturally, only if he has a target within range. Damage is assessed, and that is the end of the 'game move', which consists of a combination of movement and fire. In the present case, we assume that the contending forces are just off the table, and will appear thereon on the first move.

Having thrown dice to establish visibility, and happily having found that it is maximum—that is to say, 30 in. and 45 in. for unaided and aided respectively—we can proceed to dispense with the former, all vehicle commanders doubtless being well supplied with binoculars and so on.

With the task forces ready to come on to the table by their various roads and being in column with, say, a couple of inches between each vehicle, the first in line will be able to make its maximum move from the edge of the table, the others following up as appropriate. So, off we go.

Coming from the west, BLACK, of course, headed his column with the two fast armoured cars, and with an eye to what he considered his own advantage, sent them along the left hand fork—the North Road—while his Mark IV tanks remained in column on the South Road, moving their full 12 in. RED, on the other hand, decided to deploy forthwith, his leading tank sticking to the road, but moving only 6 in., to allow the others to come up as far as possible into a line-abreast formation, two on the right and one on the left of the leader. Nothing was as yet in visibility, but we are getting warm!

On the second game move, BLACK's cars did another 24 in. move along the North Road, while his tanks trundled on in column, the head of which came up to the nearer of the two ruined cottages. RED's No. 3 tank accelerated, doing its full 15 in. road move and outdistancing the others, who were limited to the 8 in. cross country move. With all these moves completed, the situation was as shown in *figure 2*. First to note enemy activity were the armoured cars, but their radio message to their tanks was unnecessary, as the leading Mark IV had already seen the RED force, and vice versa, (they were just inside the 45 in. visibility). Both sides opened fire, this being a simultaneous operation, naturally, and this is still the second move we are working on, of course.

Let us take RED first, then. The range of the leading armoured car from T.34/No. 3 is just within the 20 in.-30 in. section—so to score a hit requires a throw of 8 or more with two dice. RED throws, gets only 5—no hit. T.34/No. 2 fires at the same target—range this time 30 in.-45 in.—9 is required for a hit, and 10 is thrown! A hit, a palpable hit, no less. The Tank Stick (see its description in Part X) shows the strike angle of 'minus 1', reducing RED's Strike Value from 6 to 5. He throws 9, which with the 5 makes 14, and as the armoured car's Defence Value is only 12, it is therefore well and truly 'kaput' and out of action. First blood to Red!

(NOTE—I have said 'out of action' deliberately, because later on we shall see that this can be a matter of degree, or even time, the time being that occupied by the crew in getting the vehicle back into service, if, of course, this is possible).

Now for BLACK's armoured car; the nearest T.34

REFERENCE TABLE

| Vehicle | Speed | | Gun | Maximum Range | Strike Value | | | | Defence Value |
|--------------|-------|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|
| | Road | X-country | | | 0"-10" | 10"-20" | 20"-30" | 30"-45" | |
| T.34/85 | 15" | 8" | 85 mm. | 60" | 11 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Mk. IV | 12" | 6" | 75 mm. (long) | 45" | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 14 |
| Armoured Car | 24" | 6" | 50 mm. | 30" | 5 | 4 | 3 | — | 12 |

BATTLE

Part XII—INFANTRY WEAPONS

by
Charles Grant

AFTER OUR little excursion into the realm of armoured warfare, we return, as I indicated at the end of Part XI of "Battle", to the footslogging infantryman, without whom, in spite of the incredible sophistication of the weapons of even the period we are concerned with, neither battle nor campaign can be successfully waged.

Way back, in Part IV of "Battle" to be exact, we made a preliminary examination of the weapons of the footsoldier and an attempt was made to divorce them from the unreality with which various entertainment media have invested them—the 'bringing down of a rapidly moving target at several hundred yards range with a pistol' sort of thing. We also took the first step to giving effect to these weapons in our game by listing the maximum effective range of those we proposed to use, taking an average for each main type of weapon, while appreciating that the same sort of weapon in different armies had probably slightly different characteristics and capabilities. Once we have devised a system for assessing the amount of damage these weapons can do as an average, the player can work out the finer details of the different types, if he wants his game to have more refinements than is proper to consider in this context—that of getting off the ground with the elements of the game.

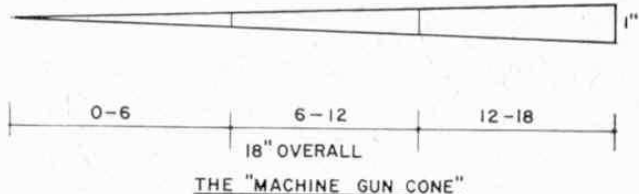
Right then, we begin, not unreasonably I think, with what is even today the mainstay of the infantryman, to wit, his rifle. As with any sort of armament, the greater the distance that his target is from the rifleman, the less—obviously—will be the likelihood of that target being hit, and at the maximum range of the rifle, which we established as being 9 in. (or 300 yards in 'the real thing') the average infantryman is only going to have a pretty slim chance of hitting anything other than a "sitting duck". Pace out, if you like, 300 yards, remembering that your pace is at most 30 in., and listen to your own sounds of surprise when you see just how tiny is the human figure at that distance. The closer you are, naturally, the greater the chances of getting a hit, so, as for artillery armour-piercing fire, we shall subdivide rifle range into three—

0 in.-3 in., 3 in.-6 in., and 6 in.-9 in., labelling them close, medium and extreme range respectively.

We shall not give our requirements for a hit at these ranges right away as a second factor has to be discussed. Remember that we are dealing with infantrymen who are lurking about and dodging here and there to confuse the opposition, and doubtless being properly trained, are making the maximum use of ground irregularities, buildings, bushes and so on, all of which can be described as 'cover'. This is quite certainly a vital consideration and one which must have a very appreciable effect on the result of rifle fire or indeed of any other infantry weapon. It is going to be a great deal easier to hit an enemy who is standing up in the open with his whole body in full view than the one who is almost totally concealed in a fox-hole or who is crouching behind a wall. Not only does that fraction which is visible present a very small target but much of his anatomy is pretty well 100 per cent safe behind the wall, or whatever he might be using as cover. On the other hand he might be hidden by bushes, a hedge or a fence, although this, while affording a high degree of concealment which makes him a pretty difficult target, does not provide the protection the wall did. This quite simply is the distinction between the two types of cover we have to allow for in drawing up rules for the effectiveness of rifle fire, and for the other weapons we shall be considering later. 'Hard' cover provides not only concealment but protection, 'soft' cover only the former.

| Table One (Effect of rifle fire) | Dice throws causing casualties | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | In the open | Soft cover | Hard cover |
| Range in inches | | | |
| 0-3 | 4, 5, 6 | 5, 6 | 6 |
| 3-6 | 5, 6 | 6 | — |
| 6-9 | 6 | — | — |

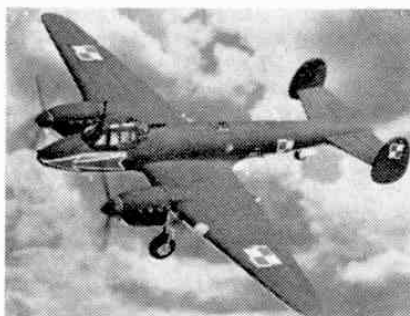
So, for our rules for rifle fire, we must make allowance for the vagaries of the bullet the further it travels, as well as for the effect of both types of cover. In "Battle" we adopt the simplest possible system to assess the effect of infantry firing at infantry. We take each individual soldier firing and throw one dice to determine whether he has hit the enemy infantryman at whom he has fired, the single throw determining both hit and result. This is done, as with an armoured fight, when the 'moving' part of the 'game move' has been completed, the range being taken as it stands at the end of the move. One dice throw is made to represent the amount of fire the rifleman is capable of during this time. No one, after all, is going to waste valuable ammunition by wildly letting off a whole fusillade 'into the blue'—a single, aimed shot is obviously far more likely to produce a satisfactory result. So, in brief, when RED rifleman 'A' fires at BLACK rifleman 'B', whether or not he hits him is determined by comparing the result of the dice throw with the appropriate effect as shown in Table One, this being based on the known probabilities of the results of rifle fire at the various ranges given, and at the same time having regard to the presence or absence of 'hard' or 'soft' cover. Table One gives just this, and the reader will see that effectiveness decreases until the point where, at a range of 6 in.-9 in., it is so extremely unlikely that a man behind any cover would be hit by rifle fire that we can ignore it completely. After all, just think how small the target would be



An Airfix Amphibious Aircraft

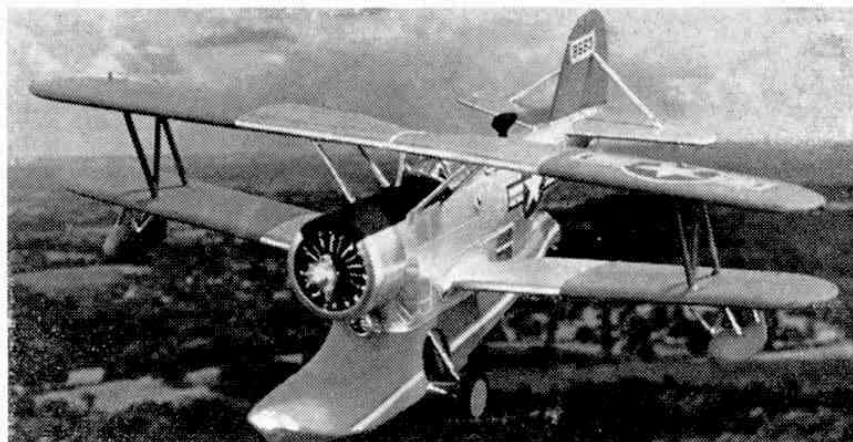
Another introduction to the Airfix Aircraft Series is the Grumman J2F6, known as the "Duck." This, a single-engined biplane, float-plane, first flew in 1955 and subsequently did service on air-sea rescue operations, photo-reconnaissance, target towing and as a light transport. It was also based on U.S. aircraft carriers, and was so fitted with an arrestor hook and catapult points. Usually the Duck was unarmed, but on some occasions a flexibly mounted 0.30 in. machine gun was fitted in the rear cockpit and up to 650 lbs of bombs carried.

The kit contains enough parts to assemble a number of variations; these are of course the unarmed, aircraft carrier and armed versions. The extra parts included are a machine gun and mounting, bomb racks, bombs and an arrestor hook. The wheeled landing gear can be assembled in either the lowered or retracted position. Transfer and painting instructions for the J2F6 in service during and after the 1939-45 War are included, plus full assembly instructions.



Felt Tip Pen from Eagle

Everyone at one time or another has used a felt tip pen, and we know that after some time the tip gets flattened



making it difficult to write with. Eagle's new felt tip marker called Koh-i-Dry has been specially designed with an extra strong tip to withstand this rough and constant use.

The Koh-i-Dry marker is available in 6 vivid and permanent colours—black, blue, red, yellow, green and brown—which will mark on virtually any surface in either thick or thin lines. The capillary ink-feed action enables the marker to be used at any angle without the ink in the nib drying up—even when writing upside down!

The colour coded cap, when removed from the tip, fits tightly into the base, and when replaced for a short period reactivates the marker.

We have used this marker extensively both in the office and at home and find it most satisfactory. The Editor finds it specially useful for writing numbers on wings of model aeroplanes, as it gives a solid line, and dries quickly. We think it is very reasonable priced at 3/3d.

The Airfix Russian Pe-2

The Vladimir Petlyakov-designed Pe-2 low altitude dive-bomber, which played an important role during the 1939-45 war on the Eastern Front, has become the subject of the latest addition to the Airfix Series 2 range of 1:72 aircraft kits.

The Pe-2, which first went into active service in 1941, has two M-105 R engines, each developing 1,100 h.p. giving the aircraft a top speed of 335 m.p.h. and a range of over 1,000 miles. Its armament consisted of a single 7.62 mm. machine gun fixed in the nose, and two 12.7 mm. machine guns, are mounted in the rear cockpit, and the other under the fuselage. The aircraft also carries an inboard bomb load of 2,200 lbs plus bomb racks beneath the wings.

The Airfix Pe-2 costing 3s. 8d., has 90 numbered parts. Included with the painting and assembly instructions are transfers for both the satellite air forces and the war-time Red Air Forces.

Above right: The Airfix Grumman J2F6, known as the "Duck." Kit contains parts for a number of variations. Above: The Airfix Russian Pe-2, the full size version of which has a top speed of 335 m.p.h. Right: The Eagle Koh-i-Dry felt tip pen.



COIN COLLECTING

Continued from page 181

and current issues of other nations, that can be blended into a representative collection to form a picture of ways of life different from our own, yet not all that much different.

The story of Australia can be re-told with a few well chosen pieces even if we must, because of their scarcity, leave out the Holey Dollar and the Dump, which came into use following the Proclamation of 1813, whereby the Spanish Dollar, then freely circulating in the New Continent, was to be transformed into two coins (5/- and 1/3d.) by stamping out the centre.

So it is with many different nations: each has its own story—reflected so vividly in the coinage. Czechoslovakia (a brief outline of the coinage has appeared in an earlier 'Cartwheel'). Finland, France, Germany, Russia: representative types can be obtained for very little outlay and there is much to look for. Apart from regular issues some countries have World

War II invasion issues; types reflecting the movement of national boundaries or the presence of occupying forces, all history in metal discs.

Egypt is yet another country that possesses a colourful past. Fingering an easily acquired Five Piastres Piece of Farouk one can wander in imagination to the days of the Pharaohs, the birth of the Sphinx, the building of the pyramids, and back to the days when ring money was a form of national currency: "A golden ear-ring of half a shekel" "Two bracelets . . . of ten shekels weight of Gold".

To recapture the romance of the story of Hadrian's Wall we need pay only a modest sum for a reasonable example of that Emperor's coinage, not perhaps the British issues, but we have an era. It can be the same throughout the Roman period. Perhaps with the possible exception of Token types, the Roman issues reflect more easily than any other the events of their time.

Through the libraries there are many facilities for research and this is half the pleasure of collecting, whatever the coin, whatever the condition.

There's a lot more to coins than money.