

THE ART OF SIEGE

- Four Independent Full-sized Games Tracing the Development of Siege Warfare Through the Ages
- Gunpowder and Pre-gunpowder mechanics, Logistics, Morale, Unit Differentiation, Leadership, and Much More
- Extensive Historical Notes, Developer's Notes, & Designer's Notes

Chance separates Tyre and Acre by only a few kilometers, but over fifteen hundred years passed between the great sieges which assure their places on the map for as long as military history is studied. The games which portray these sieges do share some common ground — both feature systems which simulate a period of siege warfare dominated by the wall and the parapet, the castle and the tower. Before the advent of gunpowder and the cannon rendered it obsolete, stone reigned supreme. Each game is played on a hexgrid map portraying the primary and secondary walls, the towers, and the other important defensive terrain of the respective cities of Tyre and Acre. But the differences in the conduct of the sieges historically has resulted in two games of marked contrast.

Tyre is basically a naval game. The mechanics portray combat between Trireme, Quinquereme, and Bireme, as both sides strive to ram and melee their way to the control of the Mediterranean Sea surrounding the island city. Catapults on Tyrian soil exchange volleys with Macedonian ships laden with battering rams, catapults, and men whose aim is to destroy the wall protecting the city and land on Tyre.

Acre is an operational-level portrayal of the land combat that was involved in the siege of 1191. Catapults and siege towers are important here, too, but so are ladder assaults, tunneling, and countermining. (There are even rules for subterranean combat between opposing engineers armed with daggers and shovels!) Bombardment of the walls with the objective of creating a breach — a breach too big to be repaired by the desperate night-time efforts of the defenders, that is — is a crucial prerequisite to an assault.

Although *Tyre* and *Acre* are two entirely different games, they do share common mechanics for the resolution of missile fire and land combat (used for the climactic battles in *Tyre*, if fortune shines on the Macedonians). Both games share common terminology and several rules, so gamers familiar with one can move easily to the other. But for two cousins, the contrasts which distinguish *Tyre*, the game of ancient amphibious assault, and *Acre*, the "siege within a siege," are stark. Both games will be welcome additions to the library of any gamer interested in either the period or in unique and tautly balanced military situations of any period.

The Siege of Tyre, 332 B.C.

Two years after succeeding his assassinated father, Philip of Macedon, as *de facto* king of Greece, Alexander launched his war of revenge against the powerful Persian Empire.

To defeat Persia decisively virtually without a navy, Alexander faced the prospect of wresting control of the Mediterranean from his enemy, who possessed the largest collection of fleets of the era. And so, Alexander undertook a campaign to capture nearly every Eastern Mediterranean port. Moving from north to south along the shore, Alexander systematically conquered Gordium, Tarsus, Aradus, Byblus, and Sidon. Town after town opened its gates to him, to be rewarded with amnesty and generous terms, and Alexander seemed more and more irresistible — until he reached Tyre. Tyre was an island city, nearly a kilometer from the mainland. Surrounded by a wall which rose to height of almost 50 meters on the landward side, and supported by a powerful fleet, the Tyrians seemed safe in rejecting Alexander's demand to open the city and allow him to sacrifice to the Tyrian god Melkarth. But Tyre was the last major Persian-affiliated port, and Alexander was left with no alternative but to win the city by force. And so began a seven-month siege which is among the most spectacular in history.

The Siege of Tyre recreates the desperation and whimsy of this famous siege. As Alexander, one Player directs the construction of the great mole over which the huge Siege Towers are rolled "across the sea" to challenge the walls of Tyre. He attempts to sweep the dominant Tyrian fleet from the sea with a motley collection of ships gathered from among the former Persian-allied cities that switched allegiance to Alexander. As the Tyrian, the other Player strives to defeat the besieging navies piecemeal and disrupt the construction of the mole and deployment of the Siege Towers. Primarily a naval game, *Tyre* also includes mechanics which simulate the land combat which can develop if Alexander's amphibious assault against the walls comes off. *Tyre* includes a 22" by 34" mapsheet, 200 backprinted four-color counters, and a 16-page rules booklet.

The Siege of Acre, 1191 A.D.

The disaster at Hattin in 1187, at which the great Sultan Saladin had annihilated an entire Crusader army, had seemingly signified the doom of the 100-year effort by the Christians to establish a dominion in the Holy Land. With Jerusalem back in the clutches of the infidel and nearly all of Palestine lost, only a few port cities and mountain castles remained momentarily afloat above the surging Islamic tide. But the success of the Jihad was greeted in Europe not with resignation but with rage. For the first time, the sovereigns of the great nations of Christendom themselves were spurred into direct action. King Richard *Coeur*

de Lion (Lionheart) of England and King Philippe Augustus II of France prepared to personally lead armies on the Third Crusade. In Palestine, the vanquished King Guy, ransomed from Saladin, gathered the remaining men at arms into one last army. Reinforced with advance contingents from Europe, he marched to the key port city of Acre. With Acre as a staging base, a Crusader army could march on Jerusalem. Here in August of 1189, unable to assault the city's walls effectively, the Crusaders laid siege. During the winter, they dug a large trench — the Outerwork — across the base of the peninsula to protect themselves against attacks from a relieving army. On and on dragged the siege, through 1190 and into 1191. Then, in April, Phillippe finally arrived, and in June, King Richard with his army, and powerful siege engines. As they massed, Saladin arrived at the head of the entire Moslem army freshly gathered to relieve Acre. The crusaders were at the peak of their power, and Acre had to be taken before Saladin could break the siege.

Acre covers the climactic month of this classic Medieval siege. In addition to rules covering the mechanics of siege warfare, *Acre* illustrates the colorful — and often crucial — differentiations in unit types that fought in the open field at Acre. Spearmen, swordsmen, bowmen, crossbowmen, mounted knights, horse archers, naphtha grenadiers — all have distinct strengths and weaknesses. Special rules cover leadership, morale, formations, Moslem feigned withdrawal tactics, Crusader zeal, and even camp followers. *Acre* includes 200 back-printed counters, a 22" by 34" mapsheet, and a 16-page rules booklet.

Two basic design assumptions of the *Lille* and *Sevastopol* Gunpowder siege games are as follows: first, within the time scale that is the most reasonable for the games, it is possible for units to move anywhere on the map during each Game-Turn. Second, in the historical time period concerned, artillery had become so powerful that if an opposing combat unit was within its range and not in a defensive trench, its chance of survival would be inversely proportional to the time it remained exposed. Therefore, since all movement occurred within the trenches, or within the bastions, friendly combat units can move anywhere on the map within the trench parallels and saps or between the bastions. Both games are played on reproductions of engraved period maps. All fortifications are faithfully represented exactly to scale and, as on the fully topographical maps, terrain has not been gerrymandered to conform to an arbitrary hexgrid. The maps have color differentiations for elevation, making both line of sight and rangefinding easy and accurate.

The games feature special double-sized counters to represent the actual saps and parallels, with which the players build their own siegework systems. Decisions as to which trenches should be built in the face of a limited construction capacity, and as to which bastions should be repaired at the risk of exposing valuable units to deadly artillery fire, are key to victory. Rules are included for mortar and siege gun mass batteries, ammunition supply, and special anti-personnel field guns which can be fired against an assault. Also represented in the game are two of the greatest engineers of history. For the French, Vauban, whose stonefaced geometric walls were so strong that the artillery of the day would bounce off if not perfectly aimed. And for the Russians, Todleben, who in the face of the improved artillery of his age, devised an ingenious system of "negative siegeworks" (earthen mounds and trenches offering little or no target) which held off the Allied forces in the Crimean War for almost a year.

The *Lille* and *Sevastopol* game system is eminently playable, and the games are both well-balanced, with assaults being launched and thrown back into the final turns.

The Siege of Lille, 1708

August 12, 1708. Prince Eugen of Savoy and his force of 35,000 Austrian-Anglo-Dutch Allies begin the investment and encirclement of the capital of French Flanders — Lille. Within the city the octogenarian and "Hero of the siege of Namur," Marshal Boufflers, waits with his elite 16,000-man garrison as the first reports come in — his patrols are having more and more difficulty getting back into the city.

On the Allied side, protecting Prince Eugen's besieging force from the French relief efforts, is the Duke of Marlborough with his 75,000-man Army. For the French, Marshal Bouffler's garrison is protected by one man and his efforts. In fact, the defenders' greatest faith must be placed in this man who has been dead for a year — Sebastien le Prestre Vauban, designer of the fortifications of Lille. Vauban was the acknowledged genius of siege warfare during his own lifetime. With no expense being spared by Louis XIV, a ten year program of construction of the defenses of Lille had been personally overseen by Vauban. Defended by Vauban's interconnecting network of Ravelins, Crownworks, Hornworks, Lunettes, and Demi-Lunettes, the garrison's spirits were high.

The game of *Lille* simulates the siege of a Vauban Fortress at the point in history where the science of siege warfare was at its peak. The siege was costly for the Allies. Through the use of protected trenches to move the siege artillery forward, the fortifications were breached in places after heavy bombardment. Sixteen thousand men of the original besieging force were lost attempting to force breaches in the walls.

The game is played on a reproduction of a period topographical map with double sized

counters placed end to end to represent the building of the trenches and parallels surrounding Lille. Individual engineer officers, who oversaw the construction of trenches, mining, and gun emplacements so crucial to the game, are represented. Rules cover the use of Artillery by shell size, ranging of artillery for optimum ranges, the use of miners, attempts by the French army to relieve the siege, and Victory conditions based on casualties incurred relative to the time it takes to reduce the city. To the student of history as well as the competitive gamer, *Lille* offers the best of both playability and historicity without sacrificing one for the other. *Lille* includes a 22" by 34" mapsheet, 400 four-color counters, and a 16-page rules booklet.

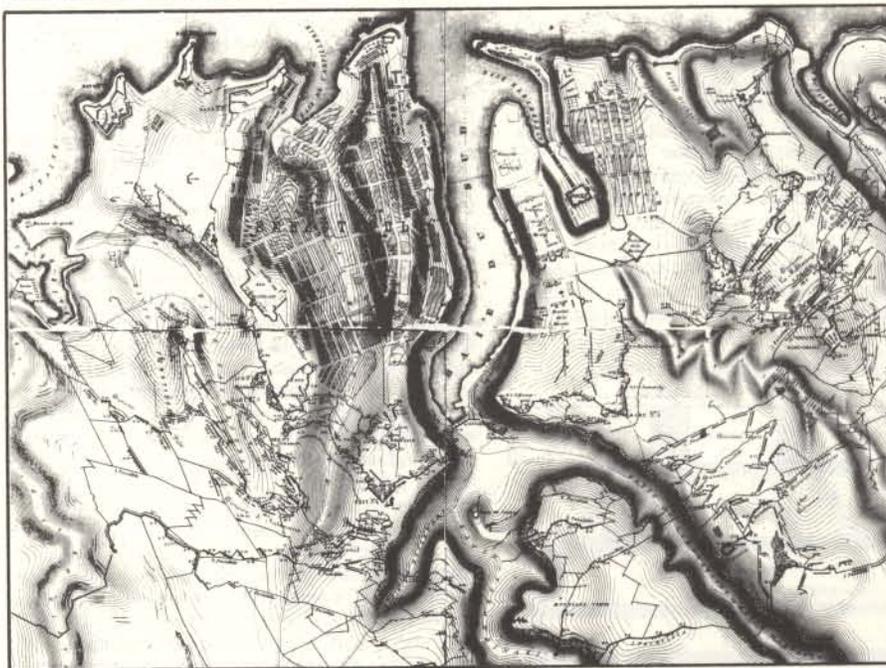
The Siege of Sevastopol, 1854-5

In late September of 1854, the invading British and French armies, fresh from the Allied victory over the Russian field army at Alma, took up positions outside the city of Sevastopol. Despite its importance as a Russian naval base and its status as the chief defensive fortress in the Crimea, the only force in position to oppose an immediate Allied assault was a demoralized garrison composed mostly of Marines and naval ratings with a land combat training level that even by Russian standards was sub-par. Nevertheless, the Allied generals, fearful of the casualties that might result from an immediate assault, temporised, and then elected the "approved method" of siege

— theoretically slow and meticulous, but economical. This was a mistake.

Sevastopol is a simulation of siege warfare in the gun-powder era. The game starts in October, 1854 — when the chance for an easy Allied victory had passed — and utilizing bi-weekly Game-Turns, carries the players through the entire 11-month siege. Most of the movement in the game is "strategic" — each Game-Turn, the Allied Player deploys his forces virtually anywhere in his siegeworks (trench) system while the Russian Player allocates his troops to particular bastions or reserve areas. Fire combat is resolved using a Rangefinder, as is the "tactical" movement utilized in the conduct of assaults against particular bastions. Hence, there are no hexes on the map. Both players have to make due with severely limited resources. The Allied Player has adequate troops, but only a small Engineer capacity, and he must carefully plan ahead so as not to waste construction efforts on a parallel that will prove useless. He is also extremely short of artillery ammunition. The Russian Player has the Black Sea Fleet armory full of shells and cannon and a highly-gearred team of engineers to repair his earthenworks — but in the besieged port, the Russians are in the unusual position of being short of men. All in all, the game demonstrates graphically the military facts of life that determined the dynamics of siege warfare in this period. The Player who fails to appreciate the devastating power of ranged fire against troops in the open field and compensate will lose badly. *Sevastopol* includes a 22" by 34" map, 400 counters, and a 16-page rules booklet.

The Game-maps for Sevastopol and Lille are both reproductions of engraved period maps. The game mechanics of each of these simulations have been designed to accommodate these precision topographical renderings for the ultimate in realism and historicity. Pictured below is the game-map for Sevastopol (reduced from original).



**The Art of Siege will sell as a double-box package for \$25. Available 15 July 1978.
Each individual Game will sell for \$9. Available 15 August 1978.**