

GAJOGRAD 2020

Bolt Action Event after-action report and impressions.



Community is an essential aspect to the human experience, and what that community rallies around, for better or worse, tends to define it. For Bolt Action fans near Salt Lake City, Utah, it is definitely for the better. The last few years has seen the number of players of the game slowly increase, and what started as a few friends rolling dice in their garages or basements has grown into a thriving community. The epicenter of this growth is located at Gajo Games in Sandy, Utah. Gajo Games, its owner Craig, and the employees of the store have been supporting historical wargaming of every era and every sort, from intricately recreated historical missions to

A British Cromwell tank advances towards the objective and the Italian units guarding it.

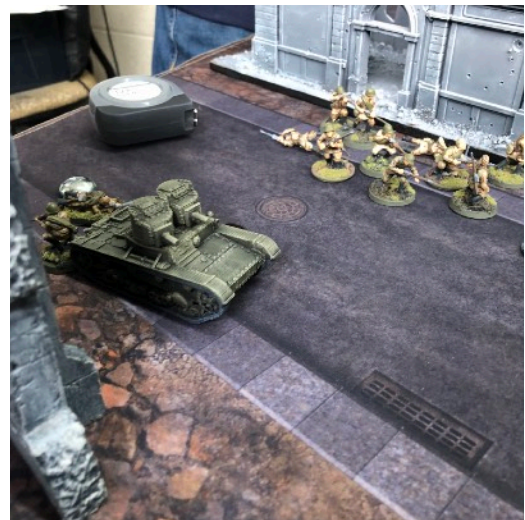
tournaments and events open to the masses.

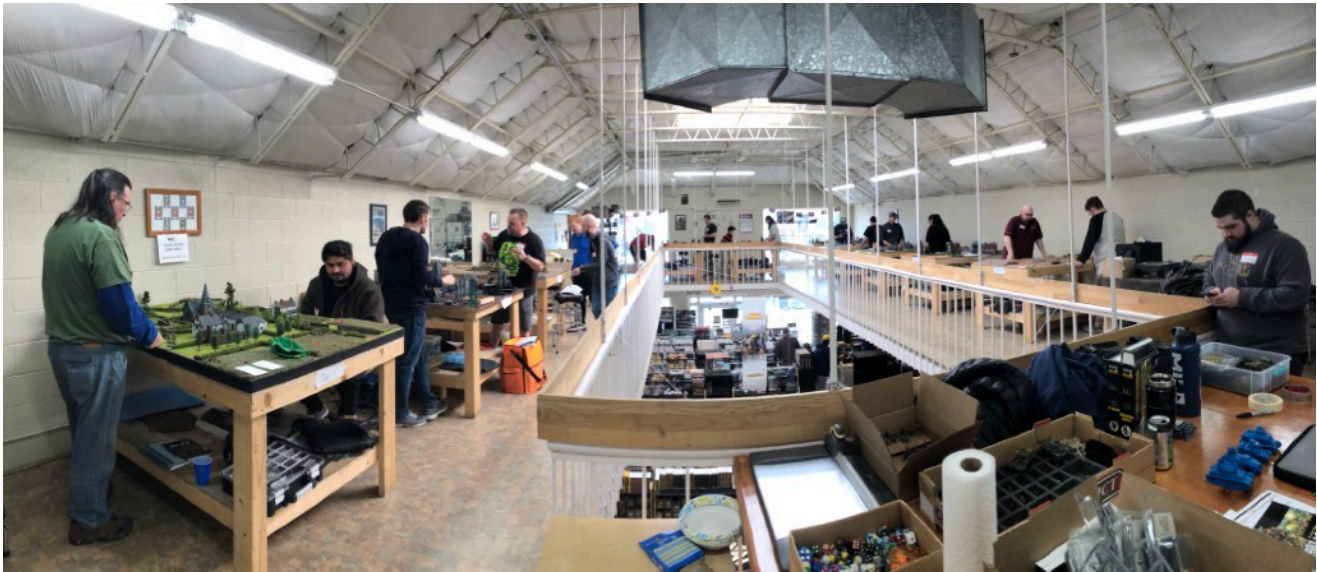
Bolt Action players near Salt Lake City have met up at Gajo Games for years for open gaming and detailed scenario play, but the Bolt Action tournament held there on January 18th was the first of its kind for the store, and possibly the greater Salt Lake area. What came to be known as Gajograd 2020 was an Axis vs Allies event, where both team and individual scores were tracked. The awards most sought after were Best Axis and Best Allied General, who would have first pick of prizes, followed by Best Painted and Best Sportsmanship, but the rest of the prizes would be picked by how the remaining players ranked, starting with the winning team. This format not only pushed individual performance, but also encouraged team camaraderie. Players were also given five secondary objectives on cards, which they would choose from for each scenario for extra points. Since this was the first Bolt Action tournament hosted in Salt Lake, it was expected to be pretty small. So when 18 players showed up early on that Saturday morning, everyone was pleasantly surprised.

Gajograd was imagined to be a great city somewhere in eastern Europe, and both the Axis and Allies were racing to capture it and its resources. To represent this race, Scenario One was a take on Key Positions, where all three objectives were on the center line of the table, and both players would be speeding towards the middle. This first game would see the only successful double or nothing secondary objective completed all day. Though it was an axis player who accomplished this, it was not enough to help his team win the first scenario. Six of the nine games resulted in Allied victories, which provided plenty of breathing room between themselves and their axis opponents.



Prize support from Warlord Games and 3D printed trophy tanks courtesy of Doug.





Eighteen players on nine tables in the upper balcony at Gajo Games

With the Allies in control of Gajograd, the Axis forces launched a counter attack to try and force their opponents off their new possession. Scenario two placed every Allied player on the defensive side of an Envelopment scenario. The Axis attackers were given an automatic preparatory

bombardment, designed to help even out the team scores and create a more closely contested third game. Even with this advantage, the Axis actually fared worse than they did during the first scenario. The Allies managed to claim seven victories compared to the two Axis victories. Highlights for this round included an Allied Comet tank FUBAR'ing off the table, and a match up between British SAS and Soviets (who played on the axis side to balance teams), locked in a stalemate until the last dice of the last turn.



Axis spirits were still high heading into game three. The scenario was a version of Sectors that was modified by the Juggernaut Bolt Action group in the UK. This take on sectors creates a bubble extending 12" from the center of the table. Units inside this bubble do not score any points, eliminating the cheesiness of units camping in the middle corner of their sector and rushing into the opponent's sector on the last turn. Axis players did their best in this round, winning four out of nine, but they fell short of the Allies once again. One American player managed to call an airstrike on himself, costing him the game. On another table, the allied player chose the secondary objective, "win an assault against your opponent's





lieutenant,” while the axis player decided to keep his lieutenant out of the game to accomplish his secondary, “leave an order dice in reserves off the table the entire game,” a perfect coincidence that had all players laughing.

At the conclusion of a long day, the Allies remained soundly in the lead, 339 points over the Axis’ 258. Four players managed to win all of their games, and since there was no distinction between major and minor results, it was secondary objectives that determined individual rankings. Despite their team losing, two axis players, one Soviet and one

German, tied for overall best score at 51 points, each completing two secondary objectives. The Allies were led by an SAS force, who won all his games and managed one secondary objective. Best painted and Best Sportsmanship awards were voted on by the players, which went out to two different US platoons.

If there was only one thing all in attendance would agree on, it would be that the atmosphere of the event was second to none. Though players were doing their best to win games, there were many instances of opponents allowing each other to correct their orders if rules were not known or understood. Hearty laughter and good willed conversation could be heard coming from every table. Award recipients walked toward the prize table to cheers and applause, and new friendships were made. It is perhaps the best aspect of our hobby; the human spirit bringing us together, though we are just playing games with little metal and plastic toy soldiers. With smiles on everybody’s faces, it is safe to say that the Bolt Action community in Salt Lake City will continue to grow, and the fictional city of Gajograd will no doubt be fought over again in 2021! ~~



This event would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of Craig, Chris and employees of Gajo Games, who hosted the event, set up terrain, and donated prizes. Special thanks goes out to Warlord Games Demo Team member Mat, who helped with organization and prize support, Doug for printing and donating four very clean 3D printed tanks as event trophies, Cory for making the drive from Wyoming with his gaming group and for helping players with rules questions, and Max for bringing me loaded cheese fries to get me through the day - Jordan



Tim and Doug, Overall Winners



Cory, Best Sportsmanship



Dan, Best Painted



