Blitzkrieg Commander, Cold War Commander and Future War Commander review –
by Craig Pearson

Produced by Specialist Military Publishing, each of these rule sets are based on the
same games system and have many universal rules and elements, therefore it seemed
appropriate to review them all at the same time. The Blitzkrieg Commander rules
cover the period 1936-1945 whereas Cold War Commander encompasses forces
between 1946-1990.

The books themselves are nicely produced. They contain a small section of rules at
the beginning of the book with full colour images spread throughout, followed by a
detailed army list section at the end. As these rules are designed to be played using
any company's models and on any scale, it's particularly helpful of the producer to
provide a list of suggested manufacturers in the books to get new players started.

The game as a whole has a very simple format based around the 'command phase'
system. For anyone who has played Warmaster in the past this concept will be very
familiar. Each player takes control of a battle group which is commanded by different
HQ units, who then make command rolls to issue orders to the units under their
influence. This process is repeated until a command roll is failed, which can result in
units being issued multiple orders each turn. The 'command phase' system allows the
game to simulate the 'fog of war' effect very well and represents communications,
troop and commander quality, whether good or bad. The only minor downside to this
system is that games can occasionally last far longer than expected if players makes
multiple command rolls each turn.

It is clear that a lot of time has been spent writing the army lists, particularly with
Blitzkrieg and Cold War Commander, with well researched and detailed lists that let
the gamer play forces from different nations, time periods and theatres of war.
Although very detailed, they're also very simple to understand, with standard special
rules applying to all army lists. The rule sets also introduce different tactical doctrines
to army lists, adding restrictions on certain units and determining the way a force
plays. This allows armies to follow history accurately and almost completely removes
power-gaming.

The other main feature of these games is the focus on combined arms combat. The
rules and army lists allow players to make use of infantry, armour, artillery and close
air support each turn to achieve their objectives. HQ units allow infantry and armour
to be issued orders, whereas Air Controllers and Artillery Observers guide bombers
and off-table artillery respectively. This allows a player to suppress enemy units with
devastating artillery fire before armour or infantry assault a defended position.

This is a highly recommended rule set for anyone interested in 20th Century gaming,
no matter what scale you prefer. Future War Commander also provides an opportunity
for gamers to use Epic 40,000 models using a different and well thought out game
system.