



Surprised Stare Games newsletter #2 - January 2023

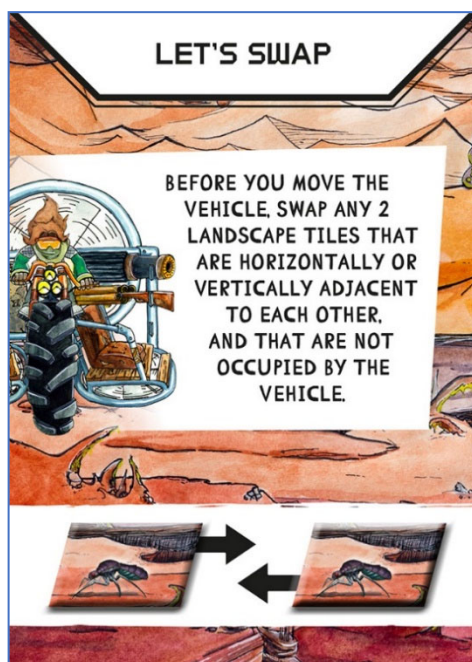
Happy New Year (belatedly)! Welcome to the second of our occasional [Surprised Stare Games](#) newsletters, in which I will keep you up-to-date with SSG's activities. January has been a bit of a topsy-turvy month, coloured significantly by me (that is, Alan) having COVID in November/December, so having to run to catch up in January, and also we're expecting some house renovation at SSG Mansions, which will require Charlie and I to move out for a few weeks – joy 😞. Nevertheless, things are moving along.

SSG GAMES IN DEVELOPMENT

Last Bug Standing in the Circle of Doom!

We've been making good progress with our little 2-player game designed by [Bez Shahriari](#). I've been playtesting in various groups, including with our regular Ely playtesters (group run by Brett Gilbert), and with a couple of other fellow designers who happened to be visiting. This has resulted in some further development to make the game smoother and to increase its playability (draft rules are published via our website). Fortunately, no radical re-think has been necessary, and there's no impact on the artwork (by [Akha Hulzebos](#), see below for another piece of sample artwork).

I had intended to run a crowd-funding campaign for this game, but as **3 Sanchos** is our priority for crowd-funding this year, and SSG cannot run 2 campaigns concurrently, we've decided to bring out **Last Bug Standing** later in the year straight to normal retail. Incidentally, we still can't decide whether, in casual conversation, to shorten the name to "Last Bug Standing" or "Circle of Doom"; it's a tough one.



This is a sample illustration of a card (not final) from **Last Bug Standing in the Circle of Doom!**

This card (one of 11 in the game) illustrates our Vehicle and its driver, as well as a bit of the Alien Landscape (Landscape tiles that the Vehicle drives over), plus also a hint of one of our 4 Bug-Eyed Monsters (BEMs). These latter weird creatures are the targets for the Gunner who we featured in the last newsletter.

We are currently at the prototype stage and will be releasing more information as and when it emerges. It's due for publication in 2023. If you'd like to help with playtesting, please take a look at our convention schedule below.

For more information, go to:

<https://www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk/last-bug-standing>

Three Sanchos

We now have a potential strapline for the front of the English version's box: "A Game of Conflict in the Time of El Cid for 1 to 3 players". But if anyone else has a great idea for a strapline, do let me know.

As a reminder: [3 Sanchos](#) is the fourth of our Pocket Campaigns series. It's in the same style as Cousins' War and Ming Voyages, and is set in 11th century Spain at the time of El Cid, when King Sancho Ramirez of Aragon, King Sancho IV of Navarre, and King Sancho II of Castile were warring over the legacy of the earlier rulers of almost all of Christian Spain. The game is for 1 to 3 players, each of whom represents one of the Kings. They are competing to win by capturing the castles and towers that control the regions. Like our other Pocket Campaigns games, 3 Sanchos is illustrated by Klemens Franz.

[David J Mortimer](#) and I have now gone through the final rules with another fine toothed comb (we have lots of those), as has my external rules review expert, Ralph Anderson (thanks, Ralph). So we're pretty convinced we have a good set of rules. Playtesting will continue, of course (see our convention schedule below if you'd like to help). Our target is to launch a Gamefound campaign around the end of April – it's still a little bit vague because our financial planning is subject to negotiation of US shipping rates with a new US partner.

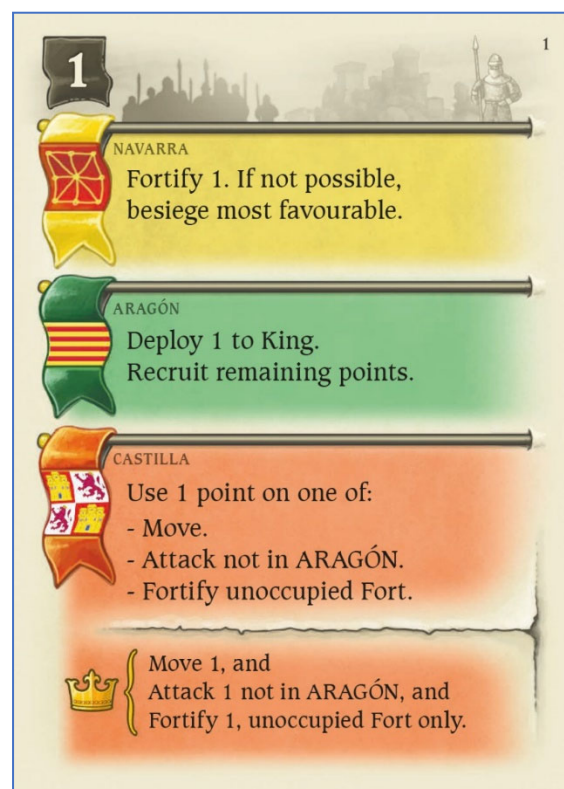
Here is a sample 3 Sanchos' card.

One of the players is the commander for the round. They play a card from their hand and each player takes a turn in accordance with the instructions on their Action on card. Except that the commander ignores their Action, and must use the CPs in the top left. These range from 1 to 3, and the commander can take any action type or types, so has more flexibility about what to do, and can opt to play at the start or the end or between the other players' turns. The bottom bit with the crown is for Solo play.

[3 Sanchos](#) is currently at the prototype stage, and our plan is to publish it in 2023 via a Gamefound campaign, alongside our German partner, [Frosted Games](#), and our Spanish partner, [2 Tomatoes Games](#).

For more information, go to:

<https://www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk/the-three-sanchos>



OTHER NEWS

Kingmaker

Kingmaker is in production at Gibsons, so we're just patiently waiting...

For more information about Kingmaker, see: <https://www.surprisedstaregames.co.uk/kingmaker>.

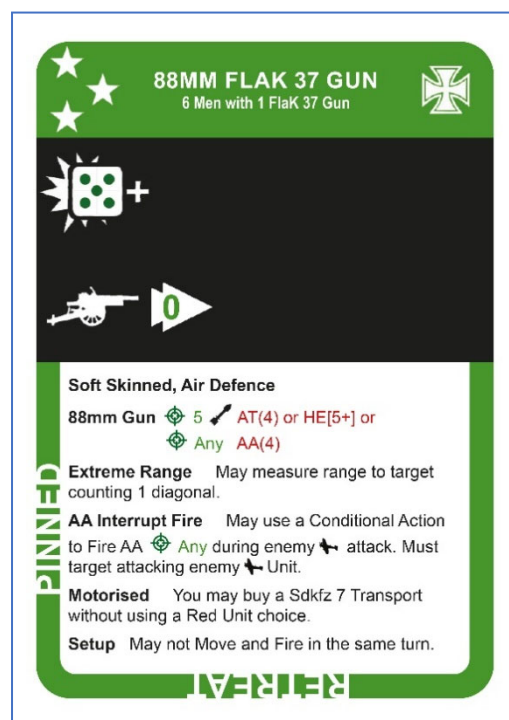
Airfix Battles: D-Day Compendium

Just a reminder:

Alongside my friend [Nick Fallon](#), I've been designing the new *D-Day Compendium* addition to our [Airfix Battles, The Introductory Wargame](#), published by **Modiphius Entertainment**. Playtesting continues with our playtest group on Facebook, and we've added some more scenarios. If you'd like to playtest, please let me know by Facebook or in reply to this newsletter.

As I seem to be doing cards in this newsletter, here's a sample card from the new Units; just a playtest version:

Airfix Battles is available from [Modiphius Entertainment](#).



WHERE WILL WE BE IN 2023?

We've not decided on all the conventions we'll be at in 2023, but things are shaping up. I will be playtesting at [Airecon](#) in March, and we will have a stand at [UK Games Expo](#) in June, and [Essen Spiel](#) in October, amongst others. We will also be at [FBG Con](#) in Letchworth on 18 February, [BayCon](#) in Exeter on the weekend after Easter, Conference of Wargamers in July, and expect to be at GridCon in November.

I'm hoping that *Last Bug Standing* and *3 Sanchos* will be available at Spiel, but this is not guaranteed. We will update you in future newsletters.

SSG'S GAMES THAT YOU CAN BUY NOW

Our current games-in-the-shops-or-online are, as follows. You should be able to get them from all good games shops, both bricks-and-mortar in the UK and online, and we're currently seeking to expand our coverage in North America. In cases of difficulty, don't hesitate to get in touch with me (see below).

Pocket Campaigns series

[Cousins' War](#), by David J Mortimer

[Ming Voyages](#), by David J Mortimer and Alan Paull

[March of Progress](#), by Alan Paull



Our Other Games

[Lux Aeterna](#), by Tony Boydell

[Mission Command: Normandy](#) (Reference Manual), by Alan Paull and Peter Connew (available via [Wargame Vault](#), or [Lulu](#))

Playing Mission Command: Normandy, by Alan Paull and Peter Connew (available via [Wargame Vault](#), or [Lulu](#))

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