Creating a campaign game of the Teutoburg Forest Disaster in 9AD,

The Ancient Warfare series launched its latest game – Roman Civil Wars in December 2011 but did not include a scenario for this famous event. So, I looked to create a campaign of multiple scenarios to represent the Varus Disaster.

Historical background –
This campaign is to cover the destruction of the three Legions that were the Roman army of Germania Inferior; the XVII, XVIII and XIX Legions. Varus, overall commander was defeated by Arminius and a loose coalition of German tribes in September of 9 AD. Although later Roman expeditions in to German territory recaptured the lost Legionary eagles, the slaughter of Varus and his Legions led to the abandonment of any plans to make Germania Magna in to a province and saw the establishment of the Rhine as a fortified border between the Roman world and the German tribes.

The Ancient Warfare series covers Greek, Hellenistic and early Roman warfare at a tactical level and is especially suited to small to medium sized battles and hence appropriate for a series of battles linked using the campaign feature in the game.

Research
When creating a scenario or campaign for the Ancient Warfare games, I normally conduct some basic research in to the game and ensure my battle is recognisable in history. Not essential to create a fun battle with this game but preferable if others are going to play your creation. My principal sources of reference were the SOA Slingshot magazine number 267, the Osprey book 'Teutoburg Forest 9AD' Campaign series number 228 and the internet.
After approximately 2 hours of reading, I had the outline of my campaign. I would first create a large map covering all historical activities on the last day of the battle. Using the excellent Osprey book maps as a reference and scaled from the grids overlaying those maps, the area of interest is roughly 3.2 Km long by 2 Km wide with the track followed by the Roman forces generally running an East – West course. This map will be used for an independent big battle but also cut in to sections for the three scenarios in the campaign. The large map will therefore be 160 hexes long by 100 hexes wide (1 hex = 20m) with the Roman forces coming from right to left. Given the speed of the Legionary units (3 hexes per turn) the large battle will need to be 50 turns long to give the Romans chance to escape to the West. The game is based on one turn being equivalent to 15 minutes of real time. 50 turns is therefore equal to 12.5 hours that can be all in daylight. Although the battle was fought over 3 days, little combat occurred at night and only the daylight hours are worth considering so the 12.5 hours of conflict is relatively representative of the combat period endured by the legionaries over the 3 days.

The 3 campaign scenarios would cover –
1 – The 2nd day of battle – Varus still in command. Most of the baggage train is burnt or destroyed by the Romans before leaving the night camp on the morning of 10th September. Tired from the German hit and run tactics of the previous day and cold from the incessant rain and wind, the legionaries carry on through the forest tracks fighting off

numerous ambushes. This battle focuses on the centre of the army where Varus, his bodyguard and cavalry are located.

2 – Morning of the 3rd day of the battle – Varus and some of the high command committed suicide the previous evening and now command is transferred to Lucius Eggius (XVII Legion) and Caeonius (XVIII Legion). Surviving elements of the XIX Legion are spread between the two battle groups. Eggius encounters the German ramparts and launches an attack to neutralise this threat on his flank whilst waiting for the XVIII Legion to catch up.

3 – Afternoon of the 3rd day - The XVIII Legion is now destroyed and stragglers reach Eggius giving him the desperate news. Eggius has little choice now other than to break out to the West and reach the safety of the Rhine before his command is surrounded and destroyed.

Battle Map Creation

Having obtained a detailed map from the Osprey book, little creativity is required and I can set to work immediately on the map. This map will cover the final night camp at Felsenfeld, bottom right of the map, the impassable moor (peat, boggy ground represented by swamp) in the North and the Kalkreiser Berg (part of the Teutoburg Forest) in the South with the winding track following the tree-covered hillside. The map editor used here is not yet available to the public but a huge number of created maps are supplied with the game and free expansion packs. Any map from any game in the Ancient Warfare series will run on any game in the series. Placing troops on any of the predefined maps is achieved through the Scenario editor and this does come with the game; so players can create an endless supply of new scenarios.
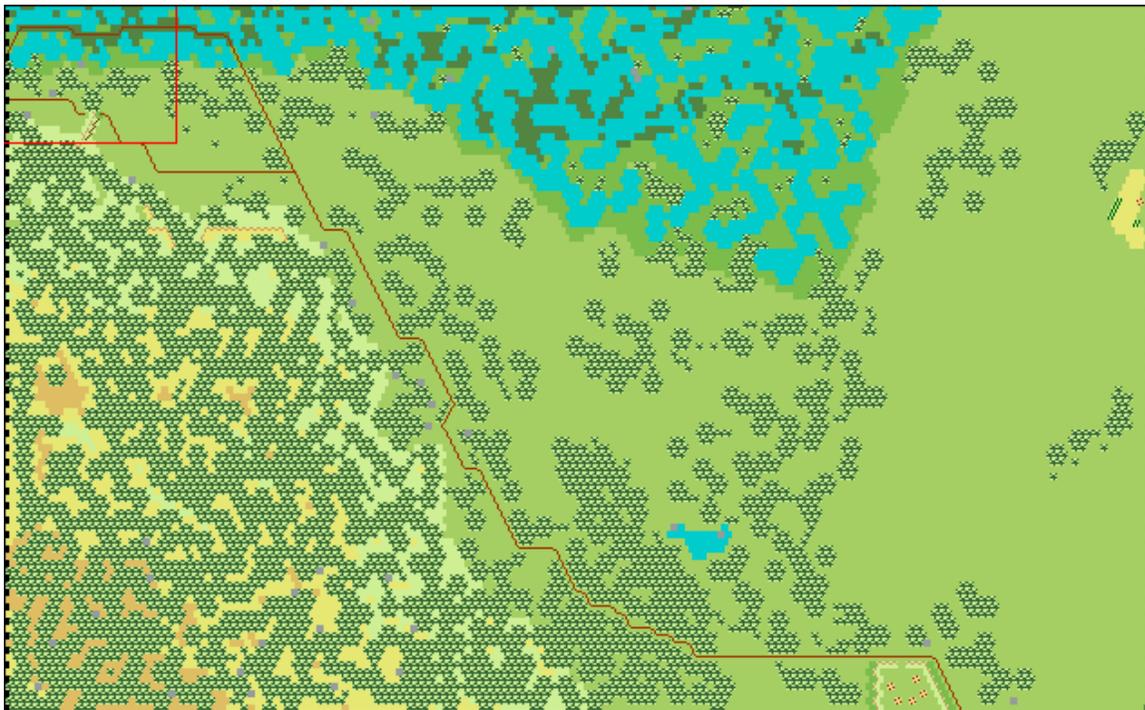
The individual battles representing the campaign are taken by cutting the main map in to sections:

1 – Scenario 1 (2nd day of the battle) is taken from the centre section of the map and used to represent an early passage of the Roman forces.

2 – Scenario 2 (Morning of the 3rd day of the battle) shows the German palisade on the hill

3 – Scenario 3 (Afternoon of the 3rd day) slightly larger map from scenario 2 to encompass the other German tribes closing in and the possible escape route for the Romans.

Placement of the Troops

The campaign feature in the Ancient Warfare series operates on a core force for the player's side with possible replacements based on success or failure in the previous scenario. So it will be with the Teutoburg Forest campaign. Replacements in scenario 2 would be elements of the XIX Legion assigned to Leggius for the final march and replacements for scenario 3 will be the remains of Legio XVIII catching up to Leggius in the afternoon.

Campaign Scenarios are played against the computer AI so we only want sufficient forces to provide a scenario that can be completed in one evening. Roughly this equates to a Roman strength of 3000 points per scenario.

For the big single battle where players can put their wits against each other on PBEM or hot seat, the game can be much larger and a Roman strength of 15,000 points is appropriate.

For the first scenario in a campaign the player's forces are placed on the map by the game designer, replacements in succeeding scenarios in the same campaign can only be sourced from the dead units of the previous battles in the campaign. This means the designer must ensure the first scenario has all the relevant troop types available to the player to achieve a success in the following battles of the campaign.

For scenario 1 the Roman forces will be represented by experienced Legionaries with a small number of veteran Legionaries for Varus' bodyguard, experienced light and medium cavalry under Numonius Vala (second in command), mules carrying ballistae and civilians. The German tribal forces will principally be light infantry with javelins, slings and warriors with sword, axe and shield. A few light and medium cavalry to supplement but not a major part of the army. The details are given in the table at the end of this article.
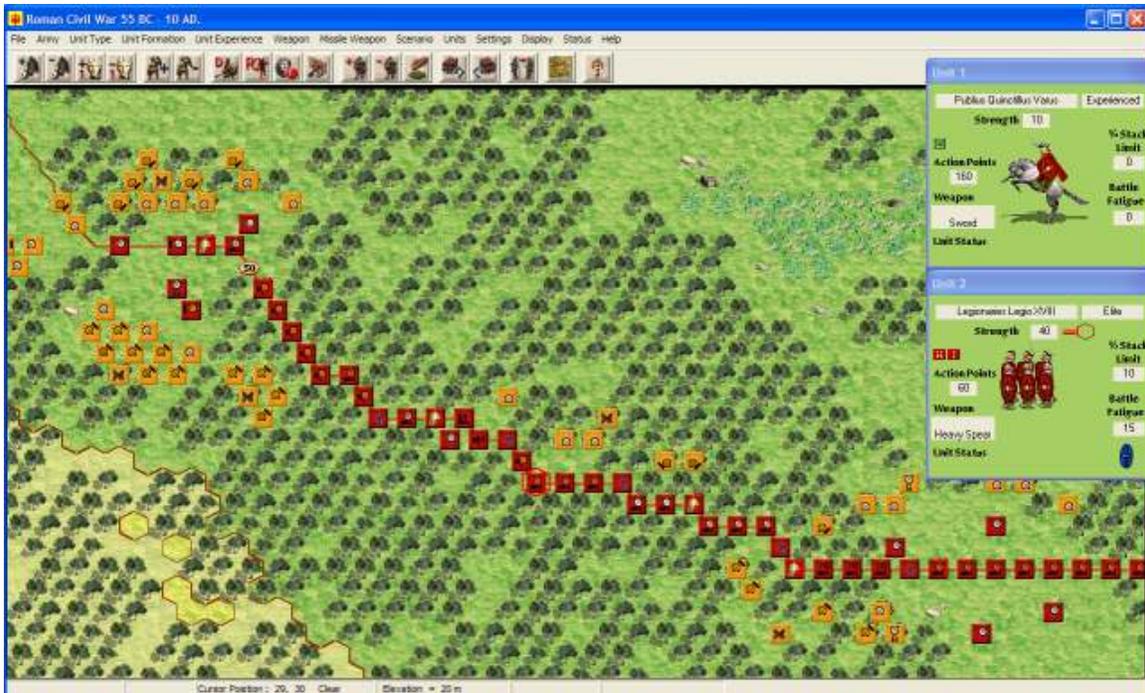
For scenario 2 and 3 the Romans no longer need cavalry support. All other forces are typically the same in type, just the strength and fatigue change in favour of the Germans.
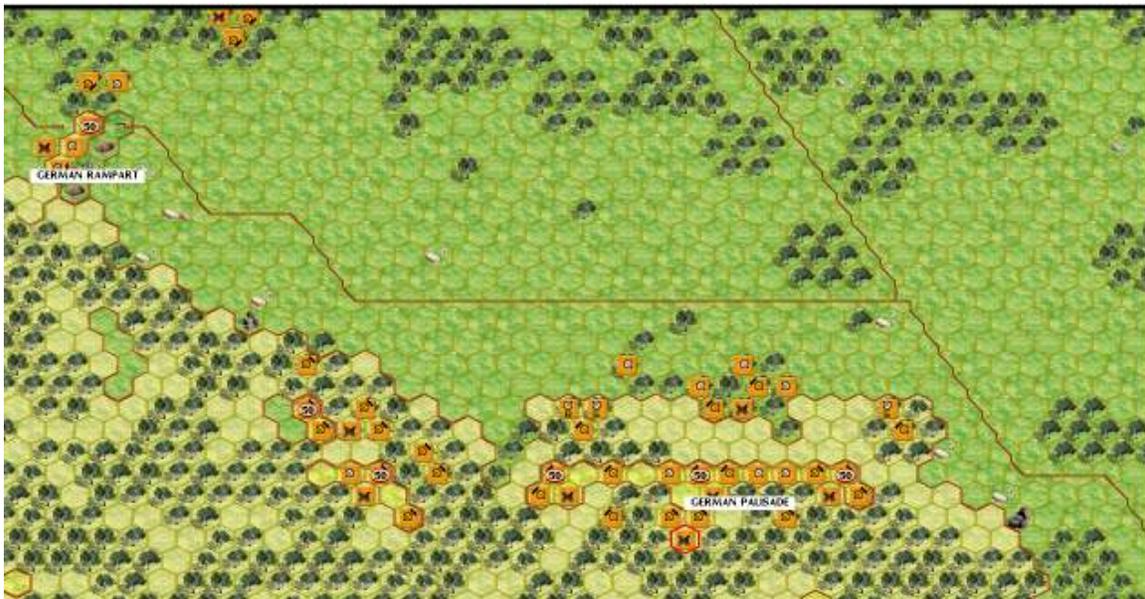
The map above shows the German positions (in scenario 2) run by the computer AI but the player has the choice from a set up zone (along the track, open area) where to put his Roman units. The set up zone is shown in the same map below and is created by the designer of the campaign. This is my choice but the game editor options allow you to create your own set up zone, position and number of enemy troops (in this case German warriors).
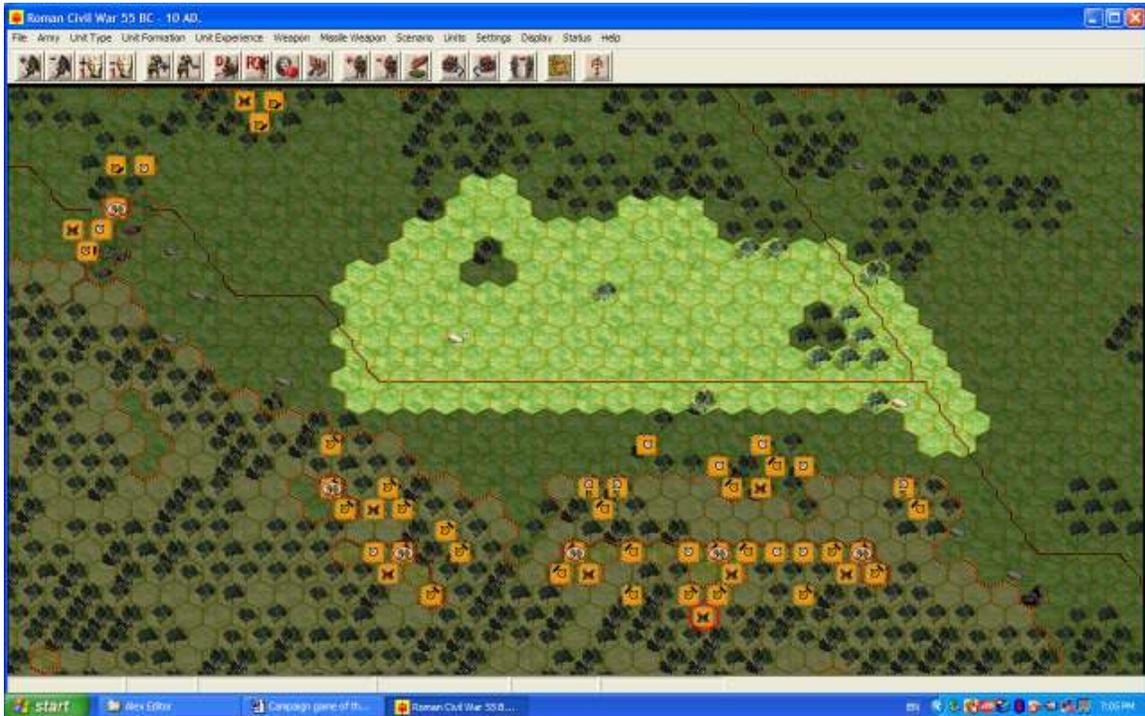
For each scenario, an Intelligence Brief is supplied to the Roman player, providing guidance on battle tactics.

These battles will be part of an expansion pack as a free download on the HPS site for the Roman Civil Wars game. I hope you enjoy playing them as much as I enjoyed creating them.

Scenario 1 – 2nd day of the battle (scaled down to complete the battle within 2 hours)

Forces	Troop Type	Strength	Weapon	Fatigue level
Roman	Legionary HI	430	Pilum and sword, shielded	Ranges over 15 - 25
	Legionary LHI	810	Sword and axe	Ranges over 15 - 25
	Auxiliary Light Infantry	560	Javelins, slings, bow	Ranges over 0 - 15
	Light Cavalry	160	Sword, javelins	15
	Medium Cavalry	130	Thrusting Spear	25
	Bolt throwing engines	10	1 cubit bolt	20
	Thracian peltasts	150	Spear, javelins	25
	Pioneers (MI)	183	Pilum and sword, shielded	20
	Commanders / bodyguard	92		0
	Total	**2525**		

Forces	Troop Type	Strength	Weapon	Fatigue level
German	Tribal warriors (infantry warband)	2160	Sword, axe and shield	0
	MI warband	200	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LHI warband	450	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LI skirmishers	1120	Javelins, bow, slings	0
	Commanders / bodyguard	100		0
	Light Cavalry	40	Sword, javelins	0
	Medium Cavalry	120	Sword, javelins	0
	Total	**4190**		

Scenario 2 – Morning of the 3rd day

Forces	Troop Type	Strength	Weapon	Fatigue level
Roman	Determined by events in scenario 1	Determined by events in scenario 1		
German	Tribal warriors (infantry warband)	2160	Sword, axe and shield	0
	MI warband	200	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LHI warband	540	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LI skirmishers	520	Javelins, bow, slings	0
	Commanders / bodyguard	100		0
	Light Cavalry	0	Sword, javelins	0
	Medium Cavalry	0	Sword, javelins	0
	Total	**3520**		

Scenario 3 – Afternoon of the 3rd day

Forces	Troop Type	Strength	Weapon	Fatigue level
Roman	Determined by events in scenario 2	Determined by events in scenario 2		
German	Tribal warriors (infantry warband)	2160	Sword, axe and shield	0
	MI warband	200	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LHI warband	360	Sword, axe and shield	0
	LI skirmishers	1320	Javelins, bow, slings	0
	Commanders / bodyguard	100		0
	Light Cavalry	160	Sword, javelins	0
	Medium Cavalry	300	Sword, javelins	0
	Total	**4600**		
		But a large number are fixed		