

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title	What are the unique challenges in trying to wargame modern operations in an increasingly urbanised world and can they be better addressed?
Date Produced:	28 Feb 2025
Strand:	Strand 2 – Wargame Players

Invitation to Take Part

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether or not you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if anything is not clear or if you would like more information, my contact details are at the end. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

An Invitation

My name is David Burden and I am conducting my PhD at Bath Spa University under Dr John Curry. I would like to invite you to participate in the research for my PhD as a wargame player in other that I can observe the play of the selected wargame(s) and gather your feedback on the game and what it represents as understanding the *play* of wargames (rather than just the theory) is vital to the project. Participation in the research is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection (~ 1 June 2027). If you consider that there may be a potential conflict of interest please let me know or just decline to respond.

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of the research is to understand how well existing wargames model modern urban conflict, what unique challenges this environment presents to both warfare and the wargaming approach, and how wargames could be developed that better model urban conflict in order that future military operations can be better informed, and hopefully save lives. Urban wargames have challenges in representation not faced by more traditional wargames, such as the impact of the 3D built environment, the increased opportunity for covert movement, the frustration of conventional surveillance technology, and the presence of a human population dependent on the urban infrastructure.

As part of the project I am developing and evaluating new urban wargames to explore the gaps which I have identified in representation. The intent is to iteratively develop and assess the games with a variety of stakeholders in order to better understand how to wargame urban conflict.

There is a wiki to support my PhD which continues background material and work produced so far at: <http://taunoyen.com/wiki/doku.php?id=phd>.

Who is Doing this Research?

This research is being undertaken by myself, David Burden, as part of a self-funded PhD at Bath Spa University. I spent 10 years in the British Army, have been a hobby wargamer for over 50 years and have been involved with professional wargaming for about 3 years.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I am primarily identifying participants through existing wargaming communities and clubs that I belong to or have links to, military organisations, academic institutions and wargaming conferences and conventions. I am seeking a mix of players from hobby, professional and military backgrounds in order to gain different perspectives on the playing of wargames, and I believe that you could contribute to this as a player.

What form will my participation take?

You will be participating as a player in one or more wargames – in-person or on-line, and over one or more sessions. These may be existing commercial, professional or unpublished wargames, or new games and game prototypes that I have created as part of my PhD. There may be a pre-play survey in order to capture your gaming and military background, and/or awareness of the particular battle, campaign, technologies or procedures being wargamed. You will then be invited to play the game, which may be a solo game or a multi-player game. During play I will try and keep any intervention to a minimum (beyond acting as an umpire to help with the flow of the game) but may record the discussion around the game for later transcription and analysis. At the end of the game there will be an instant after-action-review to understand your thoughts on the game, and there may be an additional survey to also gain further insights into the game. Games may last anything from 20 minutes to 4-6 hours, and you will be advised of the anticipated duration prior to the session. I may ask follow-up questions by email or phone at a later date if there are some specific questions I would like to explore further.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you are interested in participating then please contact me by email. I can then answer any questions you have by email (or a short conversation if required) and confirm your willingness to participate. I would then send you (as a participant) a consent form before the wargaming session, which would need to be agreed to, signed and returned to me before the wargaming session could commence – this may be by email or through an on-line form. I would aim to give you at least 5 working days to return this prior to the wargaming session so as to give you the opportunity to make an informed decision (but see below). On receipt of the consent form I will contact you by email to arrange a mutually convenient date and time for the wargaming session.

Note: Some games will be run at conferences and conventions where people just turn up and play. If this is one of those then I will give you this PIS to read and the Participant Consent Form to sign immediately before the game. If at any time during or after the game you have had the opportunity to reflect and decide not to participate or which to have your participation withdrawn then please let me know immediately and your withdrawal will be managed as described herein.

What are the discomforts and risks?

You should experience minimal discomfort or embarrassment when playing and discussing the wargame. However, if you have direct or indirect personal experience of conflict, particularly urban conflict, and particularly if you have suffered from any form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result, then there may be a chance that the play or discussions may trigger discomfort.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you feel that you may be at risk of some discomfort due to PTSD or other factors then please consider these when deciding whether to participate or not. If you do decide to participate then it may be useful for you to warn me of any relevant past experiences so that I can be aware of them and guide the game and conversation accordingly, but that it completely up to you. If during the wargame or discussion you feel yourself becoming uncomfortable then please stop the game/discussion and we can decide how best to proceed. I will endeavour to monitor your mood, manner, tone and non-verbal cues during the game/discussion and if I feel that you are becoming stressed or uncomfortable I will stop the game/discussion. I will also have contact details for organisations which offer PTSD support available should you need them. Above all you have the right to discontinue your participation in the game/discussion at any time for whatever reason and I respect your right to do that, no questions asked.

What are the benefits?

The potential benefits of this research to you (as a participant) could be gaining further insight urban conflict and wargaming. As this research is part of my PhD, the benefits to me (the researcher) are significant as it will help me in answering my research question and gaining my PhD. The benefits of this research to the wider community could be potentially significant, as urban conflict is becoming a major feature of modern conflict, and with the increasing urbanisation of the planet is likely to grow, and we need to better understand urban conflict if we are to execute it effectively whilst also minimising civilian harm.

How will my privacy be managed?

As a player I will seek to anonymise all data at close to source as possible. You may be given a Participant ID (PID) prior to the engagement, and this PID may be different for each wargaming session you participant in. If you are asked to fill out any paper or on-line survey prior to or after a game then please only identify yourself with your PID, not your name. For each wargame I will create a list of real names and PIDs assigned, but this list will only be kept as a paper copy and will be locked securely in a safe that only I have access to. Any transcripts or notes will have real names replaced with PIDs as soon after the event as possible, and the original, identifiable, versions deleted or overwritten. The majority of gameplay data will be analysed on a group or aggregated basis, but if reference needs to be made to use as an individual player then this will be by use of your PID alone. The data collected will only be used for the purposes for which it has been collected.

You will be actively protected from deceit, harm and coercion and will be participating on a voluntary basis, ensuring consent is informed and by informing you that you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without negative consequence. You will be reminded that you may stop the game/discussion, or recording of the game/discussion, at any time. You would also be invited to offer feedback on the wargame/discussion process.

Should there be a necessity to pay a transcriber, a confidentiality agreement would first need to be signed by the transcriber. Where possible the game/discussion process will take place in a private space that would protect the confidentiality of the participants, but this may not be possible in conference/convention games. The raw information that is documented either physically or electronically will be kept secure either in a locked cupboard or a password protected computer or the University's dedicated secure data repository. Once anonymised, selected information as well as general conclusions from your participation and others will be transferred to my working environment on Dropbox whose privacy policy is at <https://www.dropbox.com/privacy> and is covered for GDPR purposes by the UK-US Data Bridge.

Can I withdraw from this research?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time with no consequences to you. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or, allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. Note that your withdrawal will not disallow me from continuing to analyse the wargame(s) you were playing as part of a group, I will just not include any specific comments made by you.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are not likely to be any direct costs. However, the wargames will require the use of your time, which may be anywhere from 20 minutes to 6 hours – you will be advised before each gaming session.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have one month to consider this invitation, after which time I will send one follow-up email or phone call should I not have heard back from you. After that I will assume that you do not wish to participate. As noted above this will not be possible for Conference/Event games.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, as you have kindly provided me with input and data for my research, I would provide a summary of findings for your information by emailing you at the conclusion of the PhD. Ongoing findings and the final thesis will also be published on my wiki at <http://taunoyen.com/wiki/doku.php?id=phd> which you are welcome to visit at any time.

What do I do if I have concerns or a complaint about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Research Support Office at researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference (it is also available on the wiki for Conference/Event participants). You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

My Contact Details:	Eur. Ing. David Burden david.burden21@bathspa.ac.uk +44 (0)7811 266199
My Supervisor's Contact Details:	Dr. John Curry j.curry@bathspa.ac.uk +44 (0)1225 876151