



Larry Irons, president of Lincoln's Historical Simulation Club, recreates battles with miniature soldiers.

## Lincoln history simulation club tries to outdo Napoleon, others

History is plagued by what-if's. What if Caesar hadn't crossed the Rubicon? What if Napoleon had defeated Wellington at Waterloo? And what if Lee had won at Gettysburg?

Nobody knows what would have happened. But some people try to envision twisted fate. One such group, Lincoln's Historical Simulation Club, tampers with the judgments of history.

"We like to put ourselves in the actual period," president Larry Irons said. "It's a lot of fun to see if we were in Napoleon's place if we could do any better."

The UNL geology major said the club combats repertoire ranged from ancient battles to futuristic warfare.

"World War II with the tanks and infantry land battles is the most popular," he said.

Irons, who has been recreating battles for 10 years, said the Napoleonic battles and fantasy combats based on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* characters rank next in popularity.

Irons said the club members buy instruction pamphlets from Maryland, Pennsylvania and English publishing companies to study their battle period.

"Within these rules, we can simulate what really happened," he said.

The game is complicated, Irons added, by 20-sided dice. The dice account for unpredictable aspects of warfare.

"Things like morale, weather or casualties which can turn the tide of battle can't be gauged," he said. "So we leave them up to the dice."

Irons pointed out scale-model Viking ships which he carved from balsa wood. The battalions of soldiers, which he handpainted, were sent in a kit.

Irons said the club has about 36 members. Another Nebraska chapter is located in Omaha. The two groups often meet together to stage mock battles.

What happens in these conflicts?

"Once we made a hypothetical situation where the Russians got angry at the West in 1950 and attacked West Germany," Irons said. "The Americans stopped the attack and saved West Germany."

In other mock battles, Rommel beat Montgomery and almost captured Algeria during World War II and the English beat the Duke of Normandy in 1066 and curbed the French invasion.

Although game materials can be purchased in a kit, Irons said he enjoys creating his own scenarios.

"We try to be as realistic as possible," Irons said.

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