

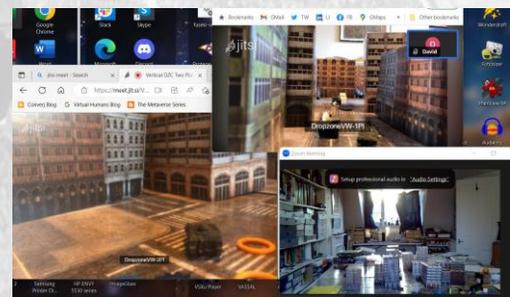
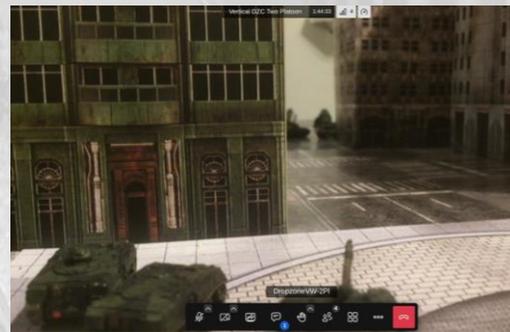
The Vertical Urban Wargame

The Vertical Urban Wargame (VUW) was inspired by a (misremembered) comment of veteran wargame designer Paddy Griffith that most of the wargames we play are horizontal – we are looking down at a flat map or tabletop, whereas they should be vertical – looking along at the tall trees and buildings in the view of the soldier on the ground.

VUW was created for the Wargame Development group's Virtual Conference of Wargamers in Feb 2023. Since the conference is run purely on-line it was a good excuse to try the idea out.

Each player is in command of a recce vehicle, tank, or platoon group. However, the only view they have is that from a smartphone placed at AFV height on the tabletop height (see bottom of second photo, and other photos for the suitable grainy image they get). Over a voice net (which like the video is provided by a consumer video conferencing service such as Jitsi or Zoom) they tell the umpire where they want to move, and the umpire moves the model and smartphone accordingly. If they see a potential target they can ask to fire and the umpire rolls the dice and determines any hits. A company commander has only the voice net and has to co-ordinate the activities of their sub-units to achieve the mission goal.

The enemy was under umpire control but conceivably this could be played as an oppositional game with enough phones and bandwidth. Although the rules were ostensibly developed from the Dropzone Commander hobby game (who also crucially make the pre-printed card buildings – only £70 for all in the photos), in practice the game was played in a fairly free-kriegspiel style to keep up the tempo and to let players focus on challenges of urban navigation, situational awareness, target identification and command and control. For added complications the streets also had civilians who could easily be mistaken for enemy troops in the less than ideal conditions!



Players: 1-6

Game Time: ~1-2 hours

Availability: By request

Complexity: Very Low

Umpire: Essential

Mode: Co-op & Competitive

| Section | Platoon | Company | Battalion | Brigade | Division | Corps+ |
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The Vertical Urban Wargame was designed by David Burden, who is currently completing a PhD on Urban Wargaming at Bath Spa University. © 2024 David Burden

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