

## 1812: Rise of the Machines After Action Review

played 04 FEB 12 at the Williamsburg Muster

[www.odms-club.com](http://www.odms-club.com)



At the height of the Luddite Rebellion, all of Britian was feeling the economic pressure of wars on the Continent and in the Americas. Industrialization was gaining a foothold as a force for growth but also displacing traditional work and jobs.

Mirroring (or reacting to) the other pressures of the times, groups of artisans rallied under the name of their mythic leader, Nedd Ludd, and began a series of raids against the factories. By 1812, these raids had escalated to include both hired agents-provocateurs on the Luddite side, and regular British Army protection forces on the side of the industrialists.

Conflicts ended up being a random mix of skilled fighters and random unskilled people caught up in the fury and/or fear on both sides.

Ruleset: Quick Intermediate Level Skirmish (QILS)

[www.inlgames.com/free.htm](http://www.inlgames.com/free.htm)

So, we were able to run seven two-player pickup games (not counting demos/tutorials) in the space of four hours. The games took about an hour +/- 15 minutes. It took about fifteen minutes to walk players through the background and the rules. In general, the QILS rules were pretty easy for players to grok and concern over the rules disappeared while the players discussed strategy, tactics, and debated the historical issues of the game.

There's a detailed tutorial on the figure selection and the terrain making at [www.inlgames.com/rotm.htm](http://www.inlgames.com/rotm.htm). The victory conditions were set to be one point per loom, either surviving the raid, or destroyed, depending on which side the player had. Since the looms were two part pieces, requiring both to be destroyed, there was an intermediate state or partially destroyed where neither side got points.



Overall, the games came out 4 in favor of the Luddites and 3 in favor of the Factories.

One game ended in an odd balance of “victory” for the factory workers (no British Army help in that one). The factory workers blocked access to the looms with a “wall of flesh”. The factory side had a decent number of females (who have the highest defense capability), so making a stand like that seemed to be a reasonable strategy. The Luddites had Agents Provocateur who, in theory, could have stood back and picked the factory workers off with guns. In practice the defensive power of the women (who were blocking the line of fire to others) rendered the ranged attack ineffective. A lot of blood was spilled by both sides, ending up with only one factory worker surviving from the entire encounter. The strategic positioning, however, kept all the looms safe. Both players acknowledged the irony of calling that a victory. A very nice representation of the “who were the good guys, again?” aspect of the historical background.



In another notable game, the factory was only defended by a small contingent of British Army, but was attacked by close combat armed Luddites, this time without women. This should have been a no contest where superior technology and training would allow the Army to mow down the incoming terrorists. The Dice Gods, however, did not smile on the regulars defending the factory. The defenders followed a solid strategy of drawing the Luddites into a remote corner

of the factory with only two looms to smash, then falling back and shooting. For some

reason, they could not get a solid hit. Soon the soldiers were swarmed, and overcome. Once they were out of the picture, the rest of the looms fell to the Luddites without contest.

These two aside, the rest of the games mostly focused on the attempt by the defenders to limit the destruction of the attackers to an acceptable loss. When the Luddites spread out, they tended to do better. The best strategy for the factory tended to be picking which looms would be essential to defend early on, and allowing other to fall. Only in one victory did the Luddites win with only two (of seven) looms destroyed, but four of the remaining ones partially destroyed (leaving the factorymen with only one victory point).

The combat stats were arranged to make the “average” attack on a person succeed (kill or incapacitate) about 1/3 of the time. British Army regulars had better odds. Women had better chances of survival. This meant there would be a decent degree of mixing it up and give and take instead of a contest of maneuver for the all-powerful first strike. All of the games but one went back and forth at least once in terms of body count. Most of them, several times. Requiring several hits to take a figure out also gave lots of opportunities for the Luddites to maneuver, and lots of opportunities for the factory workers to reposition and head them off.

The defenders ended up much better in terms of total body count. But this game wasn't about body count and attrition, it was about destroying and protecting the critical assets. In three of the Luddite victories, all the Luddites were killed, but not before destroying enough looms to give them a win.

All in all the players seemed to enjoy the games, especially the interplay between the attrition of the conflict and the overall progress (or lack thereof) toward victory. The mechanics of the game melted into the background fairly quickly. A few of the players did a good job of getting into character and became rather creative in hurling epithets at each other.

