



## CEO's Welcome by Steve Shirley

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Field Notes. This issue hits the press at a moment when global affairs are testing assumptions and demanding clear-eyed analysis. From the trenches of Eastern Europe to the corridors of Whitehall, decision-makers face an unprecedented set of challenges. Yet amidst the uncertainty, there are reasons for cautious optimism with opportunities for adaptation and co-operation that, with sound decision support, can be harnessed for good.

The war in Ukraine is raging and is Europe's most devastating conflict since the Second World War, its tremors felt far beyond the front lines. This war has reshaped alliances and partnerships, accelerated the adoption of innovative military technologies and forcing major powers to rethink defence priorities. We have seen NATO and other Western allies unite in support of Ukraine, demonstrating resolve and solidarity. The United Kingdom, for its part, has been steadfast in its commitments which acts as a reminder of Britain's enduring role in European security. The shared resolve of Ukraine's closest allies offers hope that unity can ultimately lead to a just resolution and more robust continent driven security architecture.

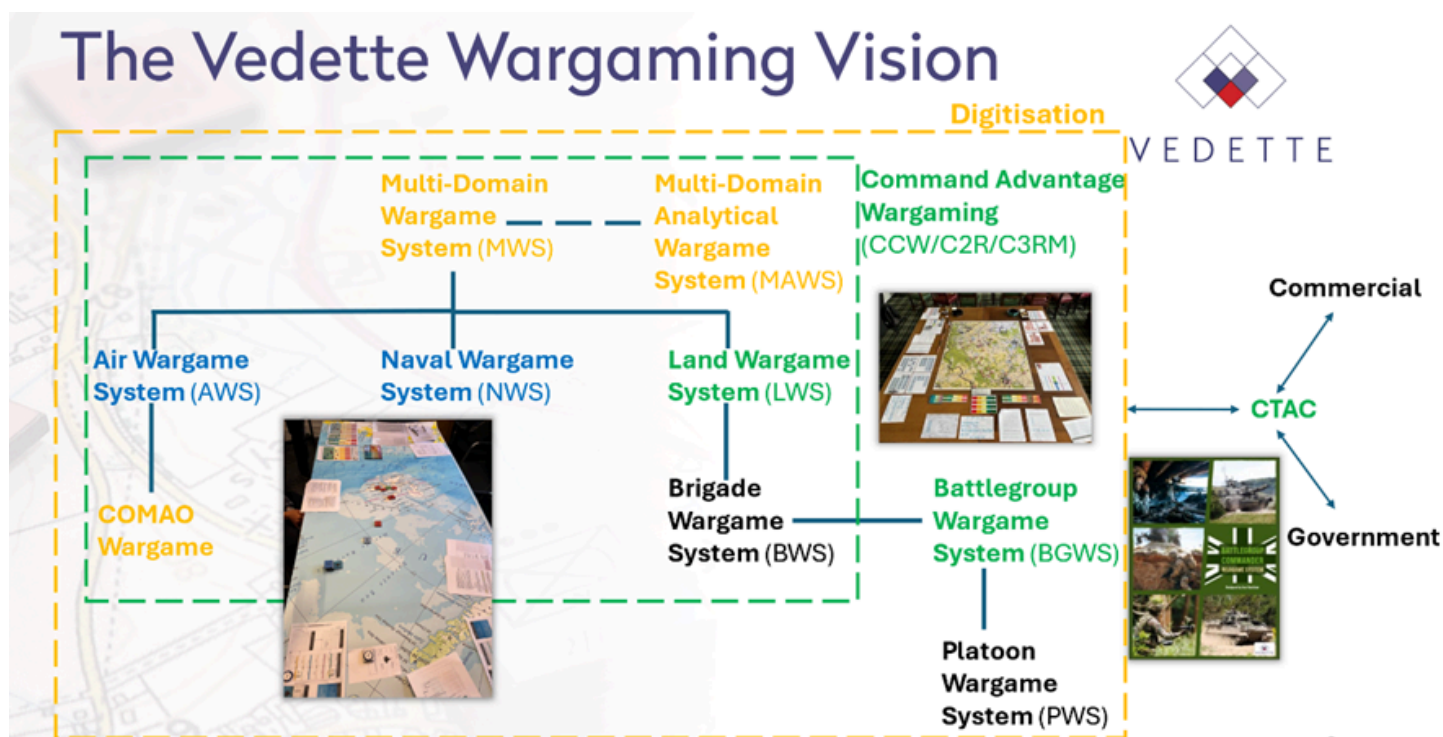
Meanwhile, the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in defence is transforming how we approach security and warfare. AI has become a critical enabler for modern armed forces, changing the character of war, with early applications seen on today's battlefields (not least in Ukraine itself). The UK's Ministry of Defence has recognised this potential and is launching initiatives to accelerate responsible AI adoption across defence. From enhancing intelligence analysis to improving logistic efficiency, these technologies offer a future in which the UK armed forces can act with greater precision and insight. If harnessed ethically and effectively, AI will be a force multiplier that helps outpace evolving threats.

**BETTER DECISIONS, BETTER OUTCOMES**

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One common thread stands out, the need for lucid, informed decision-making at the highest levels. In an era of complexity, having the right insights at the right time can make the difference between seizing an opportunity and steering into danger. This is where Vedette's niche decision support proves its value. As a specialist consultancy we strive to provide the nuanced analysis and forward-looking perspective that busy senior leaders in government and commercial sectors require. Our mission is to help Senior Leaders navigate uncertainty with confidence so that they can act decisively and with clarity of purpose.

## Operations Update by Ivor Gardiner



The colour coding indicates the following rough levels of development:

- Black – just commenced or about to be commenced
- Amber – 50%+ developed and tested
- Blue – 75% developed and tested
- Green – fully developed and tested and being used extensively with ongoing refinement

The green wraparound refers to the series of Command Advantage wargames that Vedette has been designing and delivering for over three years. We have even developed a dedicated support tool – the C3RM Tool, which stands for Critical Command, Control and Relationship Mapping. This applies to all of the higher-level wargames that sit above the purely tactical and which help to identify factors relating to opportunities for Counter Command Warfare, C2 Resilience, and shaping the understanding of the priority relationships to establish and resource. All of our systems are undergoing rapid digitisation to ensure accessibility via digital platforms.

Vedette's vision is a "system of systems", in which each component can be nested within the others shown connected. At the top sits the Multi-Domain Wargaming System (MWS), along with its associated Multi-Domain Analytical Wargame System (MAWS), which enables detailed analysis of logistics and medical requirements through the Vedette End-to-End Logistics Calculator and Medical Calculator. For more than two years, MWS has been used to conduct wargames for the Army's General Staff Centre, with all newly promoted one- and two-star officers participating in exercises focused on either the Ukrainian counter-offensive of summer 2023 or, more recently, the UK 3rd Division during the Warfighter exercise. We are now in the final stages of refining the Air and Naval elements of the system, which can also operate independently to examine purely Air or Maritime operations. This system of systems enables us to be extremely agile and rapidly adapt the most appropriate system to any customer requirements - whether warfighting, peace keeping or operating in the existing state of complex and constant competition.



## BGWS Developments by James Blair

Vedette continues to advance its wargaming solutions in response to the evolving educational and training requirements of the British Army. Key initiatives underway include:

1

### Deployment of T3 Packages

Train-the-Trainer packages are being rolled out to units to support their implementation of the game into their training programmes. The aim is to teach a Brigade Headquarters to use BGWS. Once trained, they will be able facilitate the rollout and utilisation of the system within their subordinate units.

2

### Expansion of Scenarios

Additional scenarios are under development, including a historically themed Falklands scenario to demonstrate the significance of Troop Quality over simple numerical superiority of force ratios.

3

### Development of a Platoon-Level Wargame System

We are developing a Platoon Wargame System using the core mechanics of BGWS, but focused at a lower tactical level, zooming into the detail of sections and fire-teams. This will be used at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) and is also being demonstrated to both the Infantry Battle School and NCO Academy.

4

### Integration of Cap-Badge-Specific Capabilities

As units use BGWS, their feedback is helping shape new optional rules that reflect a wider range of cap-badge capabilities. One example is a logistics planning variant of BGWS that's now in development.



## BGWS Launch Event by Hannah Kuperman

The Battlegroup Wargame System (BGWS) officially launched July 24th, 2025 with a competitive event hosted at the Land Warfare Centre (LWC) in Warminster. Delivered by the Operational Research Branch in collaboration with Vedette Consulting Ltd and QinetiQ, the event marked the first Army-wide introduction to the system. This launch event was built as an introductory event to BGWS, designed to be fun, challenging, and above all, accessible.

Around 30 two-person teams, with ranks ranging from LCpl to Lt Col, took part in the launch. The competition format required teams to plan and execute operations in line with OSW in the form of a scenario instruction, designed to test command decision-making, coordination, and tactical reasoning. Over the course of the day, teams went head-to-head, alternating between Red and Blue forces, with the highest scoring players winning a prize.

BGWS enables participants to engage in realistic scenarios involving the planning, command, and execution of military operations at the battlegroup level. This wargame system is ideal for organisations aiming to enhance decision-making, tactical proficiency, and critical thinking within a controlled, simulation-based environment.

# Crisis and Management Response

## by Hannah Kuperman

Wargaming and scenario-based exercises have long supported military planning, but their value in civilian crisis preparedness is increasingly recognised. Across emergency services, local authorities, and event security, these tools can strengthen planning, coordination, and decision-making under pressure.

This shift is being accelerated by forthcoming legislation such as Martyn's Law. Those responsible for public spaces and live events are now considering not just how to comply, but how to ensure their teams are genuinely ready to respond.

Vedette has deep experience in designing and delivering exercises that prepare teams for exactly these challenges:



### Testing Plans in Practice

Through structured exercises and facilitated discussion, teams can explore how crisis and emergency plans hold up under pressure, with focus on identifying assumptions, friction points, and gaps in coordination.



### Strengthening Organisational Readiness

Support includes the development and refinement of crisis response arrangements, including clarity around roles, escalation routes, and decision-making responsibilities.



### Training Through Realistic Simulation

Immersive, scenario-based sessions provide individuals and teams with opportunities to rehearse responses, build shared understanding, and reflect on performance in a safe yet challenging environment.



### Supporting Preparation for Martyn's Law

Work in this area focuses on assessing current readiness, understanding likely obligations, and exploring what an effective and coordinated response would look like in the context of public protection through a range of table-top exercises.

Preparedness is about people knowing what to do, who to do it with, and how to make decisions in uncertainty. That is where wargaming adds its value and where Vedette continues to support organisations preparing for the unexpected.

# Strategic Overview by Dr Ziya Meral

It is difficult to believe we are in September already, after several months of major global developments showing no signs of slowing down.

## Wars without Ends

President Donald Trump promised he tried to get 'some territory back' for Ukraine as he met with President Putin. As talks between the United States and Russia continue, President Zelenskyy claims that Moscow is positioning its troops for a new offensive. Indeed, the latest negotiations are highly unlikely to bring a rapid end to the war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, a recent survey by Gallup stated that 69% of Ukrainians now favour ending the war with Russia through negotiations. Support for fighting until victory has continued to decline, dropping to 24% from nearly 80% in 2022. However, 68% of Ukrainians polled also believe it is unlikely that active fighting will end within the next year. Survey results indicate that Ukrainians are now less hopeful for quick accession into the EU and NATO.

The war's attrition is not only affecting the willingness of key global actors to continue supporting Ukraine, but is also taking a toll on Ukrainian society itself. This serves as a reminder of the timeless lessons history teaches us about how wars unfold and where advancements in technology fit into that picture. New technologies do not eliminate the



centrality of human will, beliefs, and values that persist amid destruction. A recent CNN piece outlined the five potential ways the Russia-Ukraine war could end. One could add a sixth: that the war does not end at all, but instead enters a cycle of 'freeze' and periodic direct clashes without a clear winner.

## Pairing of Old and New Technologies

The Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology published a significant briefing on "emerging technologies and their effect on cyber security". The study has implications beyond cybersecurity, contributing to wider discussions on both the positive and negative risks that arise when emerging technologies. This includes pairing Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Quantum Computing with already available technology. For example, what happens when Internet of Things (IoT) exposes poorly managed or outdated assets to manipulation by highly advance AI

inputs? This creates alarming vulnerabilities in the protection of critical systems and our daily lives, expanding the domain of hybrid warfare far beyond the traditional understanding of cyber security.



Estonian authorities, for example, reported that Russian jamming of satellite navigation systems has caused more than €500,000 worth of damage in the last three months alone. This impacts not just military and critical infrastructure, but also a broader economic and social footprint, including farming equipment and civilian shipping. While new technologies enhance our ability to detect and respond to threats, they also introduce entirely

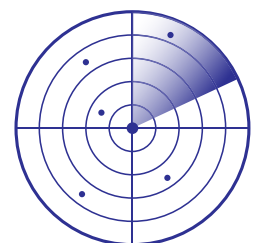
new risks and vulnerabilities that must be rigorously stress tested and accounted for in scenario planning.

### Strategic Foresight

One could argue that there are no true 'black swan' events, contrary to the popular metaphor. We are capable of conceptualising and anticipating potential developments, whether likely or unlikely, and regardless of impact scales. The challenge in today's operational context is less about 'information' but more about 'wisdom' – knowing what to do with what we know, and how to prepare for various outcomes. Sarah Bressan authored an insightful briefing for the NATO Defence College exploring whether NATO is adequately up to the task when it comes to its strategic foresight practices. It makes a particularly important point: we are still falling behind in structurally incorporating foresight analysis into decision making in a systematic way. This includes learning from scenarios and analyses that were successful, breaking down organisational silos, and regularly reassessing our assumptions to prevent status quo bias.

### On Our Radar Screens

- India – US relations: The Trump Administration's announcement of potential tariffs on India due to its oil trade with Russia highlights the complex relationships between foreign policy, geopolitics, domestic policy and global economy. India remains hopeful that the threat of 50% tariff will not materialise and that trade talks with the US will end positively. China stands to gain if India is subjected to severe US tariffs, both in its bilateral relations with the country and by reducing the risk of losing Western manufacturers looking to shift productions from China to India.



- Interview with David Lemmy : [This Guardian interview](#) with the Foreign Secretary on his first 12 months in office offers valuable insights, particularly regarding leadership during a time of global chaos.
- LLM Geolocation: Have large language models (LLMs) from OpenAI, Google, or Mistral made progress in geolocation analysis? The open-source research group [Bellingcat recently released](#) results from 500 geolocation tests, showing significant improvements in LLMs' ability to geolocate images.
- Iran – Israel escalation: One of the most critical developments this summer has been the US and Israel strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and Iran's missile attack on a US military base and on Israel. While public analysis remains inconclusive about whether the strikes significantly weakened Iran's capabilities, there are growing concerns about a new wave of strikes, counter strikes, and direct confrontations. [A recent article](#) by an Iran analyst argues that both Israel and Iran may view a renewed conflict as a strategic necessity, and could act soon with new strikes on each other.



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