

# A Practical Guide for Women in Wargaming

*Simple tools for being heard, respected, and effective in professional wargaming.*

## Introduction

Women have always belonged in professional wargaming since the early days of anti-submarine wargames in WATU during WW2. Wargaming depends on diverse perspectives, critical challenge, and clear communication, but if voices are marginalised decision-making suffers.

Many women report similar experiences: being talked over, ignored, dismissed, or assumed to be ignorant. Others encounter jargon or unexplained acronyms that exclude them.

This guide offers simple tools to help ensure your contribution is heard and respected. It is not about confrontation; when we lose cognitive diversity and start thinking like everyone else - trying to “be more of a man than the men” - we lose the value that diverse perspectives bring to decision-making.

## Speak early and be succinct

Contribute early in discussions rather than waiting for the perfect moment. Early contributions will help establish your presence and make it easier to participate throughout the session. State your main point clearly and briefly.

If you feel nervous, express your conclusion first, then provide supporting detail when needed. Short, structured contributions are easier for groups to absorb and harder to dismiss or interrupt.

## Handle interruptions immediately

When someone interrupts you, address it calmly and directly. Raise your hand and say clearly: “*Hang on — I wasn't finished,*” then complete your point briefly. Allowing interruptions to pass unchallenged make them more likely to reoccur.

Actively support contributions by other women in the conversation. If someone else is interrupted, support them by saying, “*Wait - I'd like to hear*

*them finish,*” or “*Sorry, I didn't quite catch what you were saying.*” Positively reinforce statements or questions. Refer back to earlier contributions and highlight the person who made them: “*I'd like to build on the great point that Verity made earlier...*” This helps build professional respect and signals that contributions should not be dismissed.

## Question and clarify - especially jargon

Clear explanations benefit everyone, including those who are unsure but reluctant to ask. Requesting clarity is not a weakness. It strengthens the discussion by ensuring shared understanding and preventing hidden assumptions from driving decisions.

Wargaming often involves technical language, specialised concepts, and acronyms. Do not hesitate to ask for clarification: “*You used several acronyms/abbreviations - can you explain?*” or “*What assumptions are we making here?*”

## Stay active in the discussion

Contribute regularly rather than only at key moments. Reinforce positive behaviour: “*Thank you, that's clear,*” and constructively challenge poor behaviour: “*I'd like to hear the person you just interrupted.*”

Diverse perspectives are essential to effective wargaming - active participation ensures they are represented.

## Use confident body language

How you present yourself affects how your contributions are received. Confident body language supports confident communication.

- Make steady eye contact.
- Sit or stand upright.
- Speak clearly at a measured pace.
- Don't apologise for contributing.

Calm, steady delivery signals that your contribution is deliberate and considered.

### **Disagree professionally and confidently**

Wargaming relies on testing ideas and assumptions. You can say: *“I don’t agree, give me evidence that supports that?”* or *“Simply repeating the argument won’t change my view without clear reasons.”* Focus on evidence and outcomes rather than personalities.

Remember that persistence from others does not require you to concede. Professional disagreement strengthens analysis.

### **Stand your ground. Don’t assume you know less than other people, but remain professional**

If a statement is made contrary to your understanding, call it out instead of assuming your lack of knowledge. Don’t let imposter syndrome silence you.

You are entitled to hold your position while remaining constructive. If a decision is made that you disagree with, say: *“I don’t agree, but I accept the decision and will support it.”* If you are responsible for the decision, say clearly *“Thank you, but the decision is mine and I have to take responsibility.”*

Clear ownership of decisions is particularly important in wargaming environments where roles and authority must be understood.

### **Expect respect — and model it**

Call out “mansplaining”, rolling of eyes, sexist comments or impatient muttering. Say:

- *“That’s not helpful, let’s keep it relevant.”*
- *“Can you repeat that for everyone?”*
- *“Is that what you really meant to say?”*
- *“Should I quote that in the final report?”*

Make your expectations clear: if people are straying away from the purpose or disrupting, explain that you expected specific insights / behaviour / attitude. It is quite normal to say something is below expectations when it happens.

Be direct, calm, and respectful. Give the same consideration you expect from other, but if there is a particular issue, you can recognize it and say: *“I’m going to deal with that further.”* You can then choose to escalate. You do not owe this person an explanation or schooling, they can get it later from their superiors.

Consistency matters more than perfection and confidence grows through practice. Actions, such as speaking up, asking questions, and reinforcing good behaviour will gradually change individual attitudes and group dynamics.

### **Facilitator tips**

- Establish a clear speaking order and ground rules. This will also help neurodiverse contributors understand the parameters of the conversation.
- Encourage explanation of jargon and assumptions.
- Actively invite contributions from quieter participants.
- Intervene when interruptions occur.
- Model respectful challenge and evidence-based discussion.

### **Further reading**

Women in Wargaming Network:

[https://professionalwargaming.co.uk/20250815\\_Barriers\\_To\\_Wargaming\\_O.pdf](https://professionalwargaming.co.uk/20250815_Barriers_To_Wargaming_O.pdf)

The Derby House Principles:

<https://professionalwargaming.co.uk/EDI.html>

Connections UK Wargaming Conference:

<https://www.professionalwargaming.co.uk>

### **Remember**

You belong here. Your perspective matters. Clear, confident participation is part of professional practice in wargaming, exercises, and meetings.

Although this guide focuses on women’s experiences, these tools are relevant to anyone who has experienced being ignored, interrupted, dismissed, or excluded in professional discussions, for any reason.