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## Books I've Read

Solomons Air War: Volume 4 Jan-Feb 1943

German Logistics 1939-1945: C. Illus. Spec.

Gulf War 1990-91: Campaign 424

Marshal Pilsudski and Wars for Polish Freedom

General George Washington: Spymaster Agent 711

FW 190 Jabo Units in West: Combat Aircraft 160

Renaissance Monarchs at War: Pavia 1525

Douglas DC-8: Legends of Flight

Brandywine Campaign 1777: American Revolution

Okinawa 1945: Air Campaign 59

The Early Anglo-Saxon Kings

AfrikaKorps at War 1941-1943: C. Illus. Spec.

Soldiers Civilians Transport Provisions: ECW

Heinkel HE 219 Units: Combat Aircraft 159

Siege of Kazan 1552: Campaign 426

U-Boat vs RN Capital Ship 1939-45: Duel 150

US/Allied Special Forces Afghanistan: Elite 264

Seleucid Armies 312-63 BC: Men At Arms 567

Italian Adriatic Fleet 1915-18: Fleet 15

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Soviet Tanks at Stalingrad 1942-43: NV 345

Byzantine Soldier vs Seljuk Warrior: Combat 84

John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs

Defiance at Losheimergraben: 394 IR Dec. 1944

The Gulf Theater 1813-15: War of 1812

Fallschirmjager Attack on Italian Army HQ 1943

A Bad Day I Fear: Langemarck Aug 16 1917

Captive Scorpion: LRDG M. Holland's Nine Escapes

French Infantry During 7YW: V2 Part 2 RtoR 152

Panther Tank: Eastern Front 1944 TankCraft 46



*The commanders examine the battle (l to r): Union Jay, Dave, and Chris; Confederate Marc and Rich; GM Mike.*

## **ACW Battle of Inh: F&F Regimental**

*by Russ Lockwood*

You have to give Umpire Mike credit -- he always tries to add a new dimension into his tabletop scenarios. It may not go as envisioned, but we all appreciate his efforts.

In the case of the famous Battle of Inh, the Confederates were out to raid, if not capture, a Union supply base during the winter. Now, I'll give you a bit of a hint about his custom-made battlefield terrain. It's a famous American Revolution battlefield: Trenton 1776.

*The pre-game wagon park, with RR at lower left.*

To his immense credit, Mike is preparing a HMGS Next Generation game for kids about the American Revolution Battle of Trenton. Since he had just put the finishing touches on his map, he figured, why not use it for the famous Battle of Inh.

Wait -- all you ACW buffs never heard of Inh?

Nor should you have: Inh stands for "It Never Happened."

A 'roll of the die' (a wargamer's version of 'tip of the hat') for his creative use of acronyms.

Or, for purists, you can look at it as an ACW variation of the Battle of Trenton, but with defensive earthworks and Hessians ready and waiting.

*My temporary cavalry arrive at the end of Turn 2. The Union boys scrambled to man the vacant earthworks on their half of the turn.*



## Tabletop Scenario

Each unit is a regiment, for Mike used the *Fire & Fury: Regimental (F&FR)* rules. We had never used these, but at first glance, they worked rather similar to the *Fire & Fury: Brigade* rules that we have used, but for grognards, both are nothing like the original 1980s *Fire & Fury*.

*F&FR* uses a ground scale of 1 inch equals 25 yards, a time scale of 1 turn equals 10–15 minutes, and a unit scale of one stand equals 40 men.

With the exception of our host Dave, who was Union because he helped set up the game and knew all its defensive secrets, random die rolls found Chris and Jay as fellow Yankees and Marc, Rich, and me as Rebels.

I had three regiments and two artillery batteries, which seems like the same force everyone had. So, figure a brigade each.

Union Chris also had the use of two river batteries -- mounted on swivels so they can pivot and fire in any direction. The Union had a significant number of and variety of wagons -- nice paint job. I don't think my photo does them justice.

## CSA Cavalry

I also controlled one unit of CSA cavalry, which I could use for two turns. On the third turn, it would turn about and ran away -- needed for another scouting mission no doubt.

Now, I got control of this unit by the virtue of not particularly paying attention to Mike's description of forces. Marc and Rich heard Mike's explanation and said it was too complicated. Next thing I know, I'm in control of the cavalry. Only I heard Mike and Rich mention it's a "ghost" regiment.

"Ghost?" I asked. "Can it be shot at?"

"Certainly," Mike answered.

"So, it's real?"

"Not exactly."

"Huh? Do I get to charge with it?"

"No. It needs to start exiting on turn 3."

"Well, all-righty."

If I had paid more attention, I would have seen that its entry point was the farthest away you can get from the Union camp. I also wasn't sure whether or not it was a real unit or a ghost "unit" that built in some uncertainty for the Union.



*I turn my cavalry around at the start of Turn 3. Notice all the Union infantry? Marc and Rich march their rebels at top right corner. My rebel infantry arrive at top left corner.*

The exit turn 3 was fine, for my brigade did not enter until turn 3.

## The Advance

Us Rebs came in on the roads farthest from the Union camp, providing ample time for the Yanks to wake up and man the earthworks. Marc and Rich had marched columns down almost parallel roads -- the two roads came to an intersection, but those two elite commanders understood one or both of them had to head off cross country.

My cavalry hoofed it down the road at the double quick.

In *F&FR*, you roll a d10 for your units to move. I'm not a fan of rolling for movement, for it takes time to run through the die modifiers and see if you get to move and what type of move: tardy (half move), normal (full move), or double quick (about a 50% bonus move). And you always have the odd roll that prevents a unit from doing something it had already done multiple times. I also figure that there's enough randomness with firing, melee, and morale rolls that you don't need to spend time with movement. I will point out that I am in the distinct minority about rolling a die for movement.

Anyway, my cavalry rolled double-quick twice, so I was able to march 72 inches to within about six inches of the earthworks. This caused a bit of consternation in the Union ranks and they rapidly manned the earthworks facing the cavalry to prevent me from tearing through the camp and getting into the wagons and tents. They even fired at me and took out a stand.

*Turn 4. As Union Chris watches, Umpire Mike measures my Rebels to see how if I have to go into Extended Line formation. CSA Marc tries to deploy without a traffic jam with Rich (off photo).*

Not that I thought I was the trigger -- the actual trigger was Marc's and Rich's brigades marching toward the town behind my cavalry. On Turn 3, I reversed direction and on Turn 4 the cavalry headed back to where it came from, dodging the converging lines of Rich's infantry.



### The Attack Starts

My infantry brigade entered Turn 3 from the side of the table closest to the town. Union Dave and Chris had a discussion about whether my right-most regiment would go around the Mill Pond or stop at the Mill Pond. Dave won the first round as I not only had to stop at the impassable Mill Pond, but Chris won the second round a couple turns later when I charged around the Mill Pond.

*Chris' troops repulse my attack on Turn 5. Note the Extended Line formation of my unit at bottom right corner. My not-so-crack unit is in upper left corner.*



Chris sneakily put a sharpshooter in a building that I advanced "through." Umpire Mike said the buildings were for decoration. I swept aside the sharpshooters -- captured or dead, I said.

Meanwhile, a Union railroad train arrived and disgorged a regiment on the railroad tracks while another Union regiment marched up the road to reinforce the garrison.

I gotta say, us Rebs were rather skeptical that we could break into the town.

### The Sharpshooter Controversy

Union Chris also put two sharpshooter stands in buildings on the approach road to the town. Marc's leaders moved within two inches (50 yards). For some reason, Mike allowed the positioning, but not the shot. Sorry, Mike. I'm with Chris on this: the sharpshooters should have had a shot at the CSA leaders. I don't know the sharpshooter rules, but I did know there was a Leader Loss chart on the quick reference sheet.

### The Extended Line Controversy

As part of the scenario rules, all units within the earthworks and town must form "extended line" -- a formation of a single stand depth -- instead of line -- a formation of two stands depth. This represented having to navigate between buildings.

The problem came when an attack in line hit the earthworks -- which formation must the attackers adopt? Line as they came in or extended line?

This proved to be a continuing bugaboo as the attack hit the earthworks and town, for all of a sudden stands shifted left and right, way out of proportion to the actual assault.

*Now, that's more like it. I chase away the outer defenders. Chris' unit "panics" back into the wagon park. I even get a flank attack (bottom right). Meanwhile, Marc and Rich tag-team the Union earthworks.*



It became even worse when I changed formation by the Mill Pond and charged Dave's depleted unit. Mike rolled a die with a 50% chance of forming field column -- which he made and I did. But now it was inside the "ExLn" zone, so does the unit change formation again?

It was all a muddle. I saw him scribbling notes.

Obviously, no scenario rule survives contact with gamers.

## **The Attack Continues**

I traded fire with the Union regiments that were not behind earthworks until I depleted them enough to charge. Around the Mill pond, I sent Dave's crack Union regiment packing, down to "Spent" in the vernacular of the rules. I was in the town.

Chris proved a much more difficult opponent. His "Trained" unit, behind earthworks and a stream, depleted to "Worn," repulsed my "Crack" troops with loss. I was not in the town. So much for Crack troops.

In this case, Chris outrolled me with an "8" to my "4" (higher is better) negating my advantages, but losing a stand on his own -- pushing him down to "Spent."

In the next charge, my Crack lads charged again, this time with a bigger benefit and proved victorious as the rolls went in my favor. Chris' Trained regiment fled to the wagon park in a mob.

My victorious unit charged a new Union Dave unit in the flank. I expected an easy victory. What I got was a Yankee roll of "10" (the highest), from supporting fire as I charged which disordered me and cost me a stand, and then another Dave roll of "10" in the melee, which repulsed me. It was his finest hour.

In the meantime, my Crack troops charged Dave's limbered Union artillery battery. More Dave's "10s" saved his battery, which fled to the rear.

As you can imagine, 10s right a lot of wrongs.

## **The Main Attack**

Marc and Rich hit the earthworks on the other side of town. Marc managed to rout an infantry regiment, but in yet another amazing set of Union die rolls, Chris' lone battery repulsed a full regiment -- shot up and disordered as it was in the advance. But still...

Rich bounced against Jay, who also rolled a 10 when firing at the oncoming Rebels.

Didn't I just mention "10s" right a lot of wrongs?

Fortunately for us Rebs, Chris also rolled a pair of "1s" for his movement/morale roll and two units fled to the rear in "Panic."

I should mention "1s" cause a lot of wrongs.

That opened the way for the Rebs to continue sweeping into the town. I don't think anyone was more surprised than us Rebels. It all looked so daunting at first.

## End Game

And that was the end of the game as the game closed in on four hours: About 45 minutes for planning and three and a quarter for the seven turns.

That us rabble of Rebels broke the earthworks barrier came as a surprise, but to be a wee bit fair, Mike had set it up that the Yankees had more units than the Rebels, but poorer quality. It turned out to be a lot closer than expected, and I'm not convinced the new Union troops wouldn't stalemate the Rebel troops. Of course, a lot fewer Yankee rolls of "10" would change the course of the defense.

In retrospect, the extended line trouble of formations would be eased if the formations could be kept the same and just treated as extended line -- only the front stands fire and the modifiers are ignored in the town because the extended part of the formation would be negated by the massed troops in the streets. That would have been easier to understand and workable, but then again, I have the benefit of hindsight.

In any case, it was good to once again bring out the 15mm ACW troops for a big battle. Thanks Mike for putting together another scenario with a twist, to Dave for hosting, and to the gamers for some sighs and a lot of laughter.

## Experimentation: Town Fight

by Rich

Mike's games always look great.

My two cents (if it's worth that much) is that *F&F* rules as well as most other games we play like *Shako*) are designed for open field battles rather than sieges or city fights. As such, they work well for the open field battles, but not so well as siege battles. The tweaks we end up making to the rules to fit the scenario don't usually work as well as we would like. Perhaps there are other siege-related games out there but I am not aware of any.

That said, I will play whatever you decide to use. Experimentation was fun.

Thank you and Dave for yesterday's game. I enjoyed the night.

## Intention: And Execution

by Umpire Mike

*The umpire gets the last word.--RL*

Thanks Rich. I don't disagree with anything you are saying. Our hobby is a house with many rooms, each offering its unique approach, none of them are wrong. My track record is not one of "playing it safe," and my hope is that I can eventually produce something that is different, enjoyable, flowing, and without producing too many doodles and brief notes on facets that need more work. I'm alert to the fact that I do enjoy the journey, often more than the destination.

*The river battery.*

As to Friday night's game, I ultimately decided to use the victory conditions suggested in the rules and its "asset points." One point for each of the 20 wagons, three points for each red chips, of which there were 20, and 10 points for the railroad train. A total of 90 pts. Whichever side that had 50 points or more at the end of game would gain one victory condition of three. I also stressed to both teams that the river battery was critical (15 pts).



To the Union (Dave saw me place all the red chips), I pointed out the all the army corps' critical supplies in the four warehouses (total 24 pts) adjacent to the shore battery, the three chips (9 pts) in the Division HQ (the big building with the closed wagon, the command tent, and the divisional leader stand adjacent to it), the one chip under each of the four officer tents (at the end of each of rows of tents). That's a total of 60 pts. It was 20 pts for the wagons in Jay's section.

*Close-up of the wagon park.*

After considerable expense of gray matter, if the asset or red chip was within the footprint of either of the two sides, it was theirs. Dave could have sent the train away -- but he didn't and he didn't ask -- and at the end of turn 7, I felt pretty confident that the rebels would sweep the town clean of Union troops over the last three turns of the game.

An interesting aspect of the game that you were not privy to, was the placement of the 40" of hasty works. I told the Union players which two sides of the tables the confederates could come in from and handed them the tray with the hasty works and told them that it was for them to place on the table.

Dave, whose command was off table, promptly grabbed two pieces and put them way out on the point adjacent to the shore battery. Chris disagreed and suggested that would unlikely be the weakest spot to be concerned about, all while Jay was using most of the remaining hasty works to protect his section of the town arguing that the Confederates would likely down along his side of the table and sweep in behind.

*Earthwork in the ACW. Web image.*

Essentially all of Chris's section, where the two roads entered the town, was left bare. Chris was standing at the end of the table, looked at me and pointed to the "Trenton 1776" in the lower left corner of the battle map. I nodded and acknowledged I made the battle map for a future Battle of Trenton game I'm putting on for kids in the Hunterdon County Main Library.

Chris then asked me that if he was in command of this section of the town should he not decide how to place the hasty works there? I answered that I thought that would be how it should be. He grabbed the pieces Dave had put down and asked Jay for some of the hasty works at the far end of the line Jay had placed to provide a solid line. At that point, I suspect Jay was less swayed by his own initial thinking. Kudus to Chris.





*The commanders at the Battle of Stonne (l to r): German Dan, French Nick, German Marc, and Umpire/French Jake.*

## **Stonne 1940: Command Decision**

by Russ Lockwood

To a young platoon commander, Lt. von Lockwood, the task seemed easy enough. Advance through the forest, grab the hill, and then sweep the flank of the French at Stonne. As he well knew, no plan survives contact with the enemy.

*At start. Marc's Germans start at lower right corner. My troops entered at the road in upper right corner. French were on the ridge at left and the town of Stonne and entered at the road and hill in the upper middle. The forest between Stonne and my entry road is impassable to vehicles.*



Marc hosted a *Command Decision* game one Friday night with the scenario of Stonne. Each inch equals 50m and each stand is a platoon.

The French, played by Jake and Nick, started with a dug-in battalion at Stonne and an adjacent hill, with another battalion dug in on a nearby ridge. A third battalion was in support in the woods beyond.

The Germans, me, Marc, and Dan, were given an infantry battalion each plus a few supporting units. I had a towed anti-tank company with 37mm pop-guns as well as a 75mm infantry gun platoon and a PanzerJager platoon. Dan would get a panzer company. We had sufficient artillery and would get even more after a half-dozen turns when a pair of artillery forward observers arrived as reinforcements. We needed to grab three of the four objectives: the town and three hills.

## The Advance

It started so well. I advanced my three companies into the forest and sent the AT company and PzJr down the road towards Stonne. Vehicles could not go in the forest, so my options were quite limited. Worse, the road approaches the town via a sunken hairpin turn and no doubt the French had AT guns covering the road as it straightened up into the town. It would take me a few turns to clear the forest and grab the hill.

*Beginning and Turn 4. The French occupy the hill (bottom right corner) as I infiltrate the forest.*



Meanwhile, Marc advanced across the fields and ran into ... nothing. The French troops deployed in entrenchments were "dummy" units as as soon as Marc's troops came within spotting range, the French were taken off the table.

Dan had a delayed entry, but came in behind Marc.

## The Defense

On the other side of the forest, before I could intervene, a French battalion under Jacques marched onto the battlefield and seized the vacant hill. Then, he pushed into the forest against my right flank. Worse, when I struggled to the edge of the forest, his battalion commander was in place, ready to call artillery against my most valuable heavy weapons platoons. He even had mortar and HMG platoons ready to pour direct fire onto my landsers.

Here, I kept making the same blunder -- the hill had no top, crest, or edge, so all French units could fire into the forest no matter where they were on the hill. Even the mortar on the far side of the hill could fire directly onto any platoon of mine poking its nose at the forest edge.

About this time, French Char B and Somua tanks showed up. My troops were soon in a crossfire. With the AT guns unable to go through the forest and two companies of tanks roaming freely, my whole advance disintegrated into chaos.

Indeed, I put a withdraw order on my still intact and now outnumbered right-most infantry company. Jacques put a full charge. I then proceeded to lose the initiative roll. You guessed it -- the charge went before my withdraw. One platoon was overwhelmed and the other was immobilized, but survived. The command platoon and one other escaped -- von Lockwood lived to fight another day.

## The Road Well Traveled

My AT company, 75mm infantry gun, and PzJr platoon drove down the road at full speed. The 75mm gun I set up with a view to the town. My engineering battalion inched through the forest opposite Stonne. Just like the infantry, as soon as the engineers got to the edge of the woods, a storm of artillery, MG, and small arms fire raked them into chaos and oblivion. Even the 75mm gun crew was KIA'd.

*My AT road column behind engineers in the forest.*



I managed for one lucky battalion commander to survive long enough to put a 210mm arty barrage on one section of the town. It was ineffective at killing anything, but at least put some suppression on a pair of defending platoons.

At least the PzJr managed to wreck a French armored car platoon.

## On the Left

Marc's Germans attacked up the ridge and got close, but initial French fire was devastating.

*Marc's close assault on the ridge.*

His landsers held on and eventually managed to even out the odds and chase the French from the ridge and defeat the counterattack by the remnants. He used artillery to good effect to barrage the French battalion in the woods beyond.

Dan brought his German battalion right behind Marc's troops. I was a bit surprised by this, expecting him to veer to the right to help take Stonne. He moved a company of infantry and a company of tanks in that direction, but artillery did them in at the wood line.

He did swing another company into a direct assault on the town and defeated the French defenders. It was the highlight of the German advance on Stonne.

*Jake's French flank me in the forest and my attack upon the hill is decimated. Not seen off top of photo: French tanks.*

## End Game

And that was it after three hours of real time for about seven or eight game turns. The Germans would need to bring in more troops from different directions outflank the position. Thanks, Marc for hosting and a good game by all.



*End game.*

# Double-Edged Blitz: *Battle of Britain*

by Russ Lockwood

Renaud cracked the shrink-wrap on *Battle of Britain*, a Richard Borg-designed game of the 1940 air battle over Britain. This is not a remake of Lou Zocchi's game *Battle of Britain* from the 1970s, but BGG says it's a remake of the 1990 TSR game *RAF: Battle of Britain*. By random draw, I became the Germans and Renaud the Brits.

I had seven groups, each represented by one plastic bomber figure (variety of HE-111, JU-88, and DO-17), with six in France and one in Norway. The plastic was pretty soft -- many of my bombers had warped wings. I was wondering where my fighters were...

The Brits sport 11 fighter figures (groups) scattered across the UK, but only five combat markers -- either dogfight or interception.

Radar stations surround the UK and beams cover every entry space (rectangle "hexes" in brick pattern) to the UK. German bombers must halt movement when entering a hex with a functioning radar beam. That gives the British player the chance to put down a combat marker. If so, and a Brit fighter figure is within three hexes, combat occurs there. If not, the bomber figure continues moving its full five hexes.

## Cards and Combat

These plastic figures are markers -- the real group strength lies in a stack of cards assigned each group. Each card represents a fighter (Brit), or, a fighter or bomber (German) with the number of aerial combat dice tossed and the numbers of hits taken. Bombers also have the number of bombing dice tossed if they survive the fighter and AA attacks.

*Renaud holds the box at the start of the game. Germans are white planes. British are green planes.*

These card decks are shuffled and six cards pulled to make a hand. In a dogfight, one card at a time is played. Each player tosses a number of dice equal to the aerial combat number.

For the Brits, each six-sided die contains three blank sides, two German crosses, and one RAF roundel. For the Germans, each six-sided die contains three blank sides, two RAF roundels, and one cross.

Tally up the crosses and roundels and apply the appropriate damage to the card. If the damage equals or exceeds the card value, a German card is shot down and removed from the game with 1 VP per German card to the Brits. If a Brit is shot down, the card goes in the damaged pile and may be recycled back into play with a die roll. Otherwise, it remains out of play -- at the end of the game, the German gets 1 VP per damaged Brit card.

Each surviving card is allowed two dogfights. In case of ties and not enough damage, the German card is returned to the home airbase and the Brit card is placed in the damaged pile.

Interception is three Brit cards vs three randomly drawn German cards. Roll all the dice on the cards and compare.

If any German bomber cards remain and the plastic figure is over the target, the German player rolls the bombing dice, with roundels scoring hits and crosses generating AA dice for the Brits.

So, it is simple combat. It's a set of good, clever, interlocking mechanics.



## Target Priority

Here's the not so clever part: German targets are selected randomly from one deck of targeting cards. That's right -- the German player does not pick the targets. Randomness does.

Hey, "Meyer," this is no way to run a campaign.

The game is only four turns long. Any functioning radar beams will stop a German bomber, so there will be limited bombing action in the last turn assuming the Brits go all out and put five dogfight / interception markers out.

As cities generate Brit repair points to return damaged Brit fighters and repair radar stations, the German player really wants to pound all the nearest cities first to gain their own VPs and reduce repair points as quick as possible.

Each German group has three aviation gas markers. Each move of up to five spaces costs a marker. Whether or not you roll for dice for running out of fuel on the way back depends on how many markers remain.

The gas marker is fairly good mechanic given that pretty much everything the German does with cards is random.

## Stopgap Mechanics

While the bombers move up to five spaces on the first move, on the second turn, the German bombers can expend two gas markers and move 10 hexes. Why? Because there's only four turns in a game.

Better, or maybe worse, after a bombing run, the German bomber figure automatically returns home -- no combat, no AA, just immediate return. Why? Because there's only four turns in a game.

*Spitfires intercept German bombers. The gray rays on the map extending into the English Channel are radar rays. One radar tower is destroyed (orange marker), but repairable.*



## Adler Tag

I launched all figures at the random targets. There is a slight bit of bluffing on the German part about which bomber figure first triggers radar beams.

Renaud experimented with a mix of Dogfight and Interception markers. Two of my groups got through since only five of these markers exist per turn. The other five suffered losses small and large -- interceptions are one big die roll toss for losses. Dogfights are gradual losses.

In one case, I shot myself down. That's right. Renaud missed on his dice rolls and I rolled a pair of crosses. I'm sure the Spitfire pilots claimed the victories, but my bf110 pilots know better.

After four turns, the game was close: 47 to 43 VPs for the British win.

*Verdammt! I shot myself down! The 3 on the card is the number of dice I roll. The 2 indicates the number of hits to destroy. Crosses on the dice indicate hits on my own plane. Notice the figures' warped wings.*

## Thoughts

With all the random card draws for targeting and aircraft to fight in Interceptions, I felt I had little control over the game.



The only time I selected anything was the cards for a dogfight -- assuming I had the right type of cards from the initial random draw. Maybe a little bluffing as to the order of the entry into radar beams.

It's almost a solitaire game. Move the German bombers directly across the Channel to stop on a radar beam, British human player decides on Dogfight or Interception. Resolve combat.

Then you flip over all target cards and assign a target to the nearest bomber. Keep moving the two bombers that were not stopped by combat. Resolve any combat or bombing.

For an even more challenging game, you need additional bomber markers. GHQ or other 1/285th (6mm) figures come to mind. You can probably get away with Pico 3mm figures if your fingers are small or nimble enough. You'd need target cards that say "dummy" to assign to a figure. Maybe two each to the Luftflottes that start in France -- that would make it 11 figures each. Or maybe two "dummy" and two "decoy" -- one card only and if it survives, it returns home immediately.

In any case, it's always great to crack shrink-wrap and put a new game on the table. This one was easy to learn, so I don't think we did too much incorrectly. Thanks, Renaud.

## ***Star Wars RUSE: Han the Hero***

*by Russ Lockwood*

Renaud set up a nifty looking *Star Wars* scenario using his latest version of his *RUSE* rules. Each trooper gets a d6 except 3d6 for heroes -- in my case as a rebel, Han Solo. I had a squad of Wookies, two squads of rebels, and Han Solo. Renaud fielded an Imperial commander named Sid Vicious (Boooo! Hissss! Unless you're a music fan), a squad of Scouts and a squad of Storm Troopers.

*Han, Wookies, and one of the Rebel squads before deployment upon the battlefield.*

In all, I had 20 d6s and Renaud 15, so the rebels had a slight edge in numbers, but...the Storm Troopers had armor, which theoretically could help save them from being hit, and since they rolled fewer dice and the fewest dice of one number goes first, they usually get the drop on the rebels. Since this is sequential, hits take effect immediately, so losses early in the turn count immediately and prevent you from using figures later in the turn. It's a nice balancing act.



### **Scenario**

Four crates dotted the battlefield, control of three of which won the game. In addition, when a side's remaining dice equaled less than 50%, a morale roll determined whether or not the side would retreat.

Both of us scattered our troops across our respective sides. Line of sight determined if a target could be shot at or not. Of course, both of us managed to place a few figures where they could not initially shoot, but that's where the movement dice (rolls of 4s, 5s, and 6s) came into effect.

*One of my deployed squads. Note the Imperial troopers at upper left corner and upper right corner. The green beads indicate Overwatch.*



The Imperial Scouts start the game effectively hidden. They have the "Furtive" trait that means a rebel must be within 12 inches to spot, or, the Scout must fire within 24 inches to be spotted. Sure enough, Renaud put his Scout sniper in the middle of the battlefield on top of a twisted platform. I did not like that at all. The sniper dominated the middle of the battlefield, including all four crate locations. For the moment, he stayed hidden while I put a couple rebels on Overwatch.

Plus his name was Snively (Boooo! Hissss! Unless you're a cartoon fan).

Elmer, a Storm Trooper with the rocket launcher, said, "Shhhhh! Be very, very quiet. I'm huntin' wookies!" and loosed a staccato laugh. He paused, sighted, and fired at a wookiee and missed. His neighboring Storm Trooper fired a blaster and hit, dropping the hairy lad. His next shot was dead on.

I moved another wookiee over to pick up the bowcaster laser rifle, but he was dropped, too. Then a wookiee advanced to grab a crate full of wookiee cookies, but was dropped. Then the Squad leader was dropped. Only one wookiee was left who advanced and fired his laser pistol. By playing wookiee hookie and not moving, he lived.



## Elsewhere

I had two rebels on Overwatch looking at that central platform holding the sniper. If he fired, two shots would ring out, but on the first turn, the Scout sniper held fire. I guess he was waiting for Han Solo to make an appearance. I kept Han well hidden and out of the line of fire.

On the left, we both advanced and so began a bloodbath of criss-crossing laser fire. One after another, we lost troops. One of Scouts, who had climbed to a high perch, was hit and tumbled through the air with a scream. It was a fine cinematic death.

On the second turn, a squad leader advanced in the middle and got within a foot of the sniper, fired, and missed. A supporting Scout ran up and scored a double head shot (rolled two 6s on his attack dice while I rolled two 1s on my defense dice).

That's about the time the sniper shot and my two Overwatch lads laid fire on him. He didn't die a cinematic death, but the sniper rifle fell over the edge to the ground below.

I must say that Renaud was rolling hot (lots of 6s) on defense dice early and even managed to have three Storm Troopers get wounded and shocked, but survive thanks to the armor. But pendulums swing like pendulums do and all of a sudden, the hot dice turned mortal.

## Han the Hero

It was about this time I realized that Han, as a hero, had 3d6 to use. This meant that he could take three actions in a row if he had 6s. Since all the Imperial troops had fired, Han raced forward past a crate, shot down a Storm Trooper and then used his last move and shoot action to gun down a second Trooper.

*Han shot first! And second! Two Storm Troopers KIA'd. The red die up top indicates that particular trooper had taken two hits (of his three).*



This sent us looking at losses. I had 11 of 20 dice left, so was safe. Renaud had only 7 of his original 15. Being under 50%, he rolled for morale and failed with a 1. The surviving troops pulled back, handing Han and the rebels a victory.

The system worked smoothly, although the sticking point for new players might be the number of defense dice allocated. I followed along well enough, but every once in a while forgot to add one or subtract one. The number of attack dice is easy. The calculations for difference of attack die roll and weapon penetration versus defense die roll and armor value (separate for kinetic and energy weapons) takes a moment to learn.

A nice quick game. Thanks, Renaud.

## Omen: Card Game

by Russ Lockwood

We had time, so we played the card game of *Omen*. We played this before, so after a bit of a rules recap, we dealt out the cards and started.

Last game, it was Renaud by a point. This time, I was able to complete a few tasks (called Feats) as well as pick up VPs by winning battles.

The key moment was when one of those VP city tiles had an option to force the opponent to discard two cards and two gold coins. How about that...Renaud just happened to have two cards and two gold coins. Basically, I was able to get a couple free turns and in short games like this one, that proved to be the difference. I won 19-14.

Still a good game, although that card seems a bit too powerful in stripping the opponent of resources. Most other cards we played would force a 1 card discard or steal 1 gold. Nice quick card game.



End of Turn 2. Gray is asphalt, yellow sand, blue is glass, brown is dirt/mud, and the red triangle tiles are unknown hazards – some beneficial. Notice the helicopters trying to stop the lead yellow car. I'm in the red truck and in second place

## Thunder Road: Vendetta Race

by Russ Lockwood

This time, Renaud had four of us over -- me, Phil, Peter, and Craig -- to play a *Mad Max*-style road race game called *Thunder Road: Vendetta*.

The "track" was straight, but filled with all sorts of unknown hazards (tiles to flip over) and known hazards (mud, glass slides, and rocks. Each space was a stylized hex and all vehicles pointed in one direction and one direction only.

By random selection, Phil, Peter, and Craig drew car teams -- three cars (small, medium, and large) -- while I drew the Tandem Truck team (cab and two trailers) and Renaud drew the five-motorcycle team.

*We're not mad, just crazy (l to r): Phil, Peter, Craig, and Renaud).*



All vehicles were armed with the same weaponry that fired into the three forward spaces. Each car also had a random special attribute called an "Upgrade" that provided some benefit.

The cars also had special drivers in the expansion set instead of the generic ones provided in the basic game. These provided more benefits.

In addition, each time had an attack helicopter that could be called in to target an enemy. Oddly, the helicopter had to face in the same direction as the vehicles. Vehicles that ended up in the same space as the helicopter were also attacked.

## Modifications

Renaud, having played this before, included a couple house rules. In the original game, one hit kills a car. In his game, you need two hits to make a car inoperable (and still repairable) and three hits to destroy the vehicle. Motorcycles are inoperable (and still repairable) with one hit and two hits destroys the vehicle.

*And we're off! End of Turn 1.*



The Tandem Truck takes six hits to destroy, but any hit on the cab or the trailers subtracts one from the Movement Point (MP) value. In addition, the hits are placed on the cab or particular trailer depending on the firer's position, which destroys that particular system (like a missile launcher, "big red button," etc).

All players roll 4d6 and places one d6 on a specific car to activate the vehicle and the MPs used. The d6s are slightly altered between cars, motorcycles, and the Tandem Truck.

For example, my Tandem Truck dice had one side with a 3, three sides with a 2, and two sides with a 1. Using Renaud's house rule, using a 1 for the Tandem Truck when it is damaged meant the Tandem Truck didn't move: i.e. 1 MP - 1 MP for any damage = 0 MPs. The die still activated a system if available.

Certain systems required a certain number on a die. For example, my Tandem Truck needed 3s to repair a system.

*Obviously, Speed Racer's Mammoth racer was the inspiration. Image from web.*

## The Race

And away we went, rolling our d6s and trying to avoid (or not) hazards and other vehicles. Whenever you hit another vehicle, you rolled a big red die to determine which vehicle gets bumped and a big purple die to determine bumping direction. As you can imagine, when the vehicles are bunched, chain reactions can result.

Better yet, the track is filled with hidden obstacles (face down tiles). When vehicles ran over these, they were flipped over and implemented. Some were no effect, but others were mines, ramps, pits, and other hazards. Each track section also contained a random special attribute. The three we faced were rain turned mud spaces into full



stops, ice turned glass spaces from one slip to two slips, and wind prevented helicopters from operating in that section.

*I made a last-ditch effort to win...*

So we jockeyed for position, with a too narrow road providing ample opportunities for attacks. It was cool that gaps would appear that would be zoomed through, only to glom back up.

We played until the first player was eliminated. This was Craig, who had survived some, but not all, attacks on his green cars. At the time, I was one space ahead, but we decided to play until the first vehicle exited the current last track section.

This was a four-way race. Peter zipped ahead of Renaud, who was trapped. Phil zipped past me as I suffered from damage and a number of 1 rolls.

Finally, I had one chance to take out Phil with the dice I rolled. I switched two lanes and moved three spaces -- just enough to put Phil into range of my forward missiles. I fired and lo and behold, hit and set him on fire. This triggered a roll of the special big Fire die.

The big die bounced and landed on a 3 ahead! Oh no! I just pushed Phil's car to the space just before the edge of the track section!

He could have blown up, but he rolled the 1 in 6 chance of moving ahead 3 spaces -- and no hazards in his way.

*A better shot of the same end result of my firepower – the die roll pushed Phil's car way ahead. Doh!*

*Photo by Renaud.*

## Music, Anyone?

Renaud played the *Fury Road* soundtrack, which became almost mute at one point. It was my turn to move, so I called on the speaker to play a little trucking music: *Eastbound and Down*. That's more fitting music for a truck!

*Web says The Snowman drove a 1974 Kenworth W900A. Image from web.*

When Renaud's turn came around, he called on AC/DC and *Thunder Struck*.

When that finished, I could have called for *Thunder Road*, but that's really not about trucks, so, I called for *Space Truckin'*. And later I called for *Around The World With the Rubber Duck*.

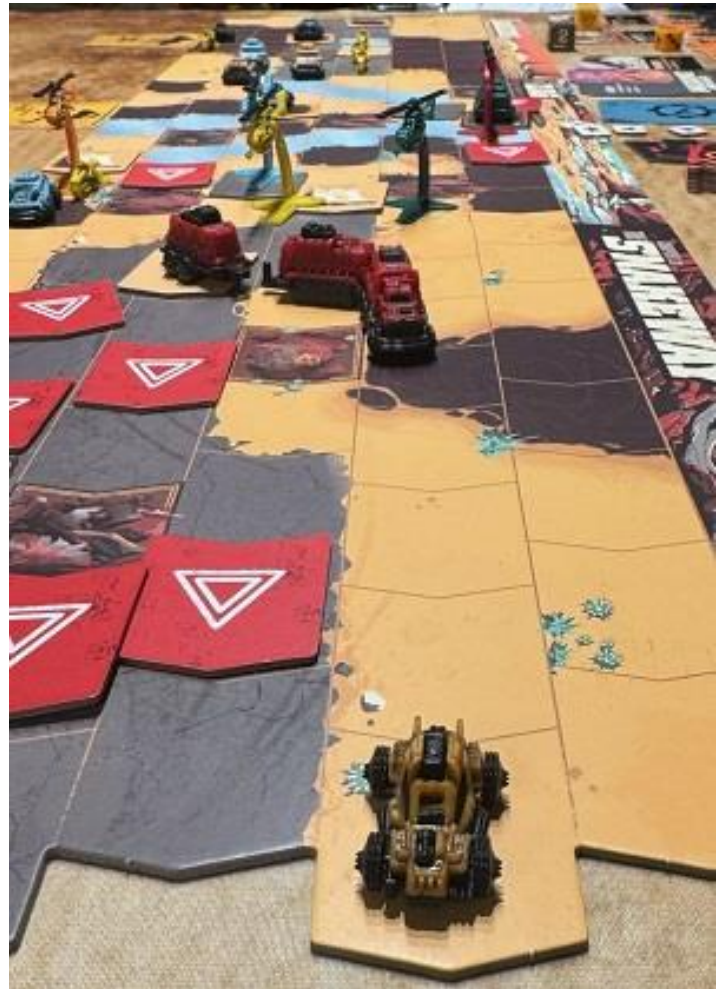
Never heard of it? You need to go back to the 1970s. You can find it on YouTube. Hey, don't complain to me about it. It was a song of the times.

Technically, I committed a faux pas because I should have played *Convoy* first, for *Around The World With the Rubber Duck* was the sequel. I played them in the reverse order.

And that's about the limit of my truck-based song knowledge. I'm sure there are plenty more.

I turned to Renaud and said, "Now you're going to get plenty of adverts for country songs and trucks." His groan was music to my ears.

Good gaming all around. Thanks for hosting, Renaud.





*Mid Turn 2: The Japanese prepare to strike.*

## **Pacific 1940 II: Axis & Allies**

*by Russ Lockwood*

Once again, I set up *Axis & Allies Pacific 1940* game, but this time, with three players: me, Renaud, and Dan. Given my sheer ineptitude as the Japanese last time, Dan took the Japanese and by random draw, Renaud again had the UK/ANZAC and I had the US/China.

*Renaud (left) receives IP notes from Dan. The game does NOT include paper IP currency – I scavenged ‘em from other games.*

### **Aggressive Japan**

From the start, Dan launched an aggressive offensive against the Chinese as he positioned forces against the



British. The first two turns saw China pressed back and back. Breaking the Burma Road was priority one on Turn 1, which I took back, but on Turn 2, that was the last I saw of the middle of the road.

On Turn 3, the Japanese struck China, British Shan and Burma, and the Philippines. All attacks were successful, including multiple landings supported by carrier and long-range aircraft.

My Chinese launched one big attack, which succeeded in the middle of the country -- the idea was to survive the next Japanese turn and pull units away from British SE Asia. That worked, to the detriment of the Chinese forces.

The British took back Burma and were most aggressive in moving up troops, leaving India a bit bare. The ANZAC forces advanced into New Guinea, taking both halves, but too weak to take on the strong southern IJN.

The Americans built -- too weak to do much but continue to reinforce Pearl Harbor. I built aircraft and carriers and shuttled troops to Hawaii.

Turn 4 saw the Japanese do an end around and invade India. It was quite the near-run thing -- all the Japanese aircraft were shot down and all Japanese troops except one single tank were lost. However, that was just enough to destroy all the British troops and capture the place.

*Turn 4 Japanese invasion of India and mopping up of China.*



The Brits immediately counter-attacked and retook India, but Renaud forgot that tanks can move two spaces and left Burma empty.

The Chinese were near obliterated, with only a single area left -- and that only because of mutual destruction of all defending and attacking troops.

The US headed west and took the Marianas, but it was a weak task force -- one aircraft carrier with two planes, one battleship, two cruisers, and three destroyers. And a transport. The Second Fleet grew at Pearl.

## Production

The Japanese were generating just about the same number of IPs as the US. ANZAC was getting 15 and the Brits, with the recapture of India, around 5. That's about two aircraft a turn in the Allies favor.

One key is the placement of minor factories. Dan built one in China on turn 1 -- saving him a turn of transport from Japan, not to mention the juggling of transport ships. That's something I had not thought of in the previous game and it's a smart move.

As the US player, I went looking to place a minor factory, but guess what? You need a spot worth 2 IPs or more and the only place on the board within initial striking range and protection ability is Alaska. No help, there. The alternative is the Philippines. That would be a gutsy play to bulk it up, or, it may trigger a Japanese invasion on Turn 2, which will likely capture the factory but gain the US a 30 IP bonus early. Interesting option, eh?

So, like WWII, all the US units come from the West Coast. Unlike WWII, Japan does not operate on a shoestring, so to speak. Japanese shipbuilding turned out transports, aircraft, and tanks with wild abandon. The tanks start in China, the ships and aircraft in Japan. Like I said, smart game play on Dan's part.

## Turn 5

The Japanese took back India for keeps, swept the islands on the west side of the map, and took out China. As Dan quipped, "That was my Ichi-Go." Ichi-Go was a 1944 Japanese offensive in China that cleared about a third of the country. As a game turn is slugged at six months and the game starts in the last half of 1940, in our game, Dan's Ichi-Go happened in the second half of 1942.

ANZAC launched an island grab to the west and I took out a few destroyers as well as taking back the Philippines. The Second fleet was forming on the West Coast.

## Turn 6

The Japanese destroyed the ANZAC ships and retook the islands, not to mention obliterating the US fleet and retaking the Philippines. They were now making 74 IPs per turn, almost equal to the US' 60 IPs and ANZAC's 15 IPs.

*End of Turn 5. It's a Japanese sweep of SE Asia.*

At about this time, Renaud looked at the board and said it was time to concede. I agreed. Barring some fantastic lucky die rolls for the Allies, ANZAC would be swallowed up in a couple turns. The Japanese was well on its way to a Third fleet of carriers and planes.

The game took about 3.5 or so hours.

Thanks for making a dreary, damp, rainy day rather warm on the tabletop.



## Japanese Tale of Victory: A&A Pacific 1940

*By Daniel*

Russ recently cracked open *Axis & Allies Pacific 1940 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* and offered to host a Thursday game at his place with Renaud, which sounded fine to me. I have the *1<sup>st</sup> Edition* and re-acquainted myself with it since it's been more than 10 years since I've played it. Two days before the game I downloaded the *2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* rules and starting set-up to see if there were any significant changes between the *1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions* – and just as I discovered with *1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition A&A Europe*, “Yes” there were: It seems that the additional air units Germany enjoys in *2<sup>nd</sup> Edition A&A Europe* were at the expense of the Japanese. Japan's air force is still impressive, but I welcome the reduction/re-adjustment from *1<sup>st</sup> Edition*.

I saw some new molds for some pieces, which I welcomed.

Russ had me play Japan. Russ played USA and China. Renaud played UK and ANZAC. The player sequence is: Japan, China (USA), UK, ANZAC (UK), and US.

## Opening Analysis

We went over a number of rules and discussed possible Japanese opening strategies. It took some time to decide on how to escalate the existing war against China and when to declare war on the US and UK. Japan starts the game at war with China ONLY. The UK/ANZAC *may* declare war against Japan on any turn. The US cannot declare war until step 6 of Turn 3 (which means they cannot move to attack until Turn 4). While Japan is *not at war with US*, it gains a 10 IPC bonus (*and* the US does *not* get their additional 30 wartime IPC bonus) and that was a big influencing factor on my opening moves.

I debated between building a naval base or a minor factory to promote the war in Asia and at the last moment I went with the minor factory. I did not regret that decision as it provided the ground troops I needed to conquer China and indirectly India. Two transports were also built on Turn 1 to ferry troops south.

My “master plan” is to take out China first, then Calcutta. Shanghai and Tokyo are already controlled by Japan at the start and Hong Kong can be easily captured when Japan decides to go to war with the UK. I need 6 victory cities to win and this will hopefully get me five by the time I capture Calcutta. There are only two other cities left after that and I suspect the Australian one will be easier to capture than San Diego.

## Turn 1

Turn 1 moves were aggressive, transferring ships and troops from Manchuria and Japan to Southeast Asia. One transport ended up sharing the sea zone with the UK's battleship, offering the equivalent of a poison pawn to the UK to tempt them to declare war on Japan. Why the temptation? The US doesn't enter the war if UK/ANZAC declares war on Japan, but if Japan declares war on UK/ANZAC, the US is then allowed to enter the war. I was willing to mix it up with the UK as early as Turn 2, but wanted to avoid bringing the US in early. Renaud declined the opportunity.

Japan dives into China with overwhelming force, but there is not much to attack across the 4 provinces Japan can reach. The Burma Road is cut, giving China and the UK something to think about. China counterattacks to re-open it, but does not build any artillery that is only allowed if the Burma Road is open.

The UK/ANZAC use transports to occupy Dutch territories for the IPCs and quality for some bonus IPCs for holding certain territories. Those moves could also be seen as tempting to Japan as many of these ships were within reach of my southern fleet, but I keep to my opening strategy and pass on declaring war against UK/ANZAC on Turn 2. The US builds a modest force to add to its significant starting navy. (I'm curious how a "Pearl Harbor" attack could be duplicated as the starting fleet in Hawaii is not that significant compared to what is off the US coast.)

I build a carrier and three tanks in Asia and keep attacking China, recapturing the Burma Road (and holding onto it for the rest of the game). More troops are ferried to southeast Asia and some transports head back to Japan to get more. China is now starting to get pressured as more territories are captured and the force that reclaimed the Burma Road is eliminated. UK/ANZAC continue to occupy Dutch territories, adding to their IPCs. The US adds more navy, transports and troops – but no Heavy Bombers at all.

Japan builds another carrier on Turn 3 and more tanks in Asia, which start to make their presence felt. China is getting squeezed to the hinterlands, but still has a sizeable infantry force. Japanese infantry is starting to suffer from the combats and in one combat I had to lose a Fighter to ensure capture of a province. The UK/ANZAC continue their occupation of Dutch territories, which I find risky on Renaud's part since it should be expected I'll declare war on Turn 4. The US declares war on step 6 of Turn 3.

## All At War

Now the "Dogs of War" are let loose on Turn 4. The UK fleet is attacked and eliminated anywhere it exists in Indonesia and some Dutch territories occupied by the UK are now occupied by Japan. Kwangtung (Hong Kong) is captured. The Shan State (curiously unoccupied) is captured by a "blitz move" into Malaya along with an amphibious assault capturing Malaya. China is pushed into one last province and is forced to counterattack to capture one back, but I'm concerned how few Japanese ground troops remain versus the remaining Chinese.

Japan's smaller second fleet supervises the invasion of the Philippines with carrier support and attacks a lone US sub off the Marianas with a Destroyer and planes. The UK moves its army of India into Burma to reinforce the troops there, but does not attack Yunnan. The US moves its fleet to the Caroline Islands from Hawaii with a new fleet being built off the US coast. Japan maintains a significant army and air force in the homelands with a "picket" fleet in the Sea of Japan to stymie a possible US invasion from Hawaii while its 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet operates near the Philippines.

## Turn 5

Japan pushes its armies to the limit on Turn 5. Both Chinese forces are attacked and the number of pieces on both sides are very similar, so some bad rolls could really turn this final push into a disaster. Japan sees success in eliminating all the Chinese, but lost four planes to accomplish this. In another equally bold move, Japan gathers its southern fleet and what transports can make it to amphibious assault India, recognizing that the UK builds in India are nine infantry and two planes, but all the AAA guns that used to be in India had moved into Burma – so here we go with another battle of roughly equal total numbers of pieces.

The shore bombardment helps, scoring two casualties and Japan narrowly captures India, losing another four planes in the process. Those Japanese transports that can't make it to India are used to capture some more of the Dutch territories from the UK. The UK surrenders its IPCs to Japan, but easily recaptures India with its Burma force – but the damage is done as Japan has plenty of troops nearby to repeat its attack on Turn 6.

An Australian transport is picked off by a carrier plane. The ANZAC have a respectable force at New Guinea with three planes, infantry and a small fleet. The US fleet at the Caroline Islands attack to recapture the Philippines and eliminate the two Japanese destroyer pickets to try and put some pressure while Japan is focused on Southeast Asia.

## Turn 6

Turn 6 shows how far Japan has realized its goals. The main Japanese fleet in Southeast Asia gathers its troops to attack India by land and sea. The fight is just as brutal as before and Japan loses four more planes, but Calcutta is captured and the UK is eliminated from the war. Enough of the Dutch colonies are captured by Japan to earn bonus IPCs. The US fleet that recaptured the Philippines is eliminated by Japan's 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet, along with the US ships that attacked the Japanese destroyers. The significantly reduced Japanese army in Asia starts migrating to the coasts. The on-board Japanese fleet looks larger than the US fleet and Japan's IPC income is up to 72, which seems enough to keep pace with the US and ANZAC. Russ and Renaud are willing to concede defeat after a good four-hour battle.

Some "rookie mistakes" allowed Japan to reach its goals a bit sooner than expected, such as moving all the AAA guns out of India into Burma to allow Japan to make the bold attack that it did on Turn 5, but this was still an exciting game that could go either way. Japan has a lot of options to consider from the very start and must figure out a strategy to pursue and follow it up with the correct Turn 1 and Turn 2 builds to support it.

## Triple A: Computerized Axis & Allies

by Russ Lockwood

One of the AAR readers noticed my multiple recaps of a variety of *Axis & Allies* (A&A) games and suggested I try Triple A -- a computerized version. The price was right, free, and it had a number of versions to download.

I downloaded Global 1940, Europe 1940, Pacific 1940, and Middle Earth. Middle Earth? Yes, Middle Earth -- no WWII icons, just trolls, orcs, elves, humans, and so on.

*A close-up of Japan in the Pacific 1940 version.*

Anyway, I started the games and discovered a few quirks, but in general, it will serve as a good tool to do A&A games, most likely as a live event.



## The Pros and Cons

Nice map and icons, rules that can be altered, maps and units can also be altered, and it follows the production, movement, combat, non-combat, and unit placement rules of the game.

*Part of the Europe 1940 map at start. Notice BeNeLux is already German occupied.*

The AI is OK, but does some odd things, depending on the settings. I used Easy AI for starters and played the Axis, since the beginning of a game is a race to demolish the Allies.

For example, the AI often moves unescorted US transport ships directly over a U-boat. In the 1940 game, transport ships do not fire (a change from the original), but the AI does not recognize this as such and grinds through round after round until the sub sinks the ships.

AI attacks sometimes are silly: one French infantry unit is not going to dent an area full of Axis troops. But sometimes they are smart counter-attacks: it seemed to specialize in building a pack of 50-75 units and hitting anything that crossed a national border.



For example, although the Atlantic Ocean became a German and Italian lake, by the time the Germans and Italians finished off the USSR, the USA was pretty impregnable. It took many turns of pounding to bring down the USA.

Sometimes I wonder about the die rolls. Many is the time where I lost all 50 attacking units when the computer lost a dozen or less. Heckuva great die rolling, that. When it happens multiple times, you begin to wonder.

I then played with the AI settings. Easy AI is rather dumb, so I switched the Allies to Hard AI. Complete opposite. France fell, but Italians in Africa demolished. SeaLion repulsed twice. US immediately landed in Africa. The USSR attacked on Turn 4 with an optimal mix of forces that rolled over me.

*Hard AI at work. D-Day started in Normandy but rolled up the Germans to take Western Germany. The Italians retook Paris.*



Well, that was humbling. I pared the AI back, with Easy AI for the Western Allies and Hard AI for the USSR. That provided an entertaining game of back and forth for a while, but the one-two punch of German and Italian production versus USSR production and some Axis units siphoned off to keep the US in its hemisphere proved a winning strategy. I sometimes ended the game after the fall of the USSR and sometimes went all the way to the end of conquering North and South America -- the latter taking about 25 or so turns.

One aspect that kept foiling me was clicking on the wrong small box to end a phase. There is an "undo" function within a phase, but once you click to the next phase, you can only go back with a convoluted history save and restart.

This is primarily annoying during the build phase, when you really need to pay attention to production. For that, you have to "x" click the production screen to have a look around and see what's needed where. Then, you click back to the production screen and select the units to produce.

## Difficulty Levels

Hard AI will do a number on you. Easy AI will give you many a pass. Fast AI is in the middle and meant to process turns quicker, and hence, give the computer less time to calculate everything.

I've played with various levels and found that an entertaining game is Easy AI for all but one country, which gets a Hard AI. I typically make errors, and since you can't easily go back to a previous phase, Easy AI will compensate for such ineptitude.

## Multiplayer

I have not yet played a multiplayer game with live opponents, but maybe in the future. The game has a PBM, or PBeM, setting, so presumably, you can save a turn and e-mail it along. That might be best because A&A games can be rather long because only one player goes at a time. A three-player board game can be adjudicated in about three to four hours, but an eight-player Global game (US, UK, USSR, ANZAC, France/China, Germany, Italy, and Japan) can take a dozen hours.

FYI: I created a manual simultaneous "A&A-like" PBeM game where everyone submitted their turn and I adjudicated conflicts (two forces attacking each other across the border) using a point system to determine which fought on which side of the line. To be kind, it didn't work. Steve's A&A PBeM game during the pandemic was more or less traditional and worked a lot better.

As for the Middle Earth game, I played Gondor and the computer controlled the rest. I suppose I did OK for a first time, but to be clear, the AI computer fought itself better than I did.

## Download

You can download Triple A here:  
<https://triplea-game.org/download/>

# Partisans and Patrol: Double-Blind Scenario

by Ned

An AAR reader was looking through his files and found this recap of a WWII Eastern Front scenario with HO-scale (20mm) Airfix figures from the 1970s -- but it can certainly serve as a skirmish scenario with today's rules. -- RL

As the driver turns off the halftrack's engine, the SS assault squad jumps down from the vehicle and deploys on each side of the road. "Give me that flamethrower!" barks Sgt. Cleo. "I'm going to burn down that building!"

With a hint of resignation, the halftrack driver asks, "But shouldn't we at least check out the buildings and take a look around first? There might not even be any partisans in the town."

Thirty-five minutes later, with the German dead and wounded loaded on the halftrack and most of the town in flames, the SS Lieutenant tells the driver to start up his engine again.

The moral of this story? Don't give a flamethrower to a player unless you expect him (or her) to use it! However, I'm getting ahead of myself...

## Small Unit Tactical Action

We used the 1971 rules set called *Small Unit Tactical Combat (SUTC)* by Michael F. Korn. I set up the scenario based on a game I played demonstrated by the rules author years ago.

SUTC provides the referee with 18 charts which are used to calculate combat activity, observation, small arms fire, psychological reactions, and other close combat events. The players are kept "blind" and separated from each other.

Each SUTC turn represents 30 seconds, with the rules stating a game shouldn't be scheduled for over 60 turns. Opposing sides may be unequal, and players usually know little, if anything of the opponents' positions or strength. The game is designed for squad-level or smaller-size actions. As an exercise in player paranoia, it can't be beat.

Each player takes a turn coming to the referee's sand-table and the referee tells the player what his figure can see or hear, depending on the placement of the figure in relation to other figures. Friendly figures are given orders by the player, but are under referee control. After each player has been at the table with the referee, the referee carries out the turn with no players present, and all figures on the table at the same time.

Should a player's figure be killed or seriously wounded, that player LOSES the game, no matter how successful his mission may have been.

## The Scenario

After losing five sentries to Soviet partisans, the SS captured one partisan, who mentioned a nearby town as a base. Despite being ordered to move in an hour, feeling at the loss of the sentries ran so hot, the SS commander sent a lieutenant with a squad to make a recon of the town.

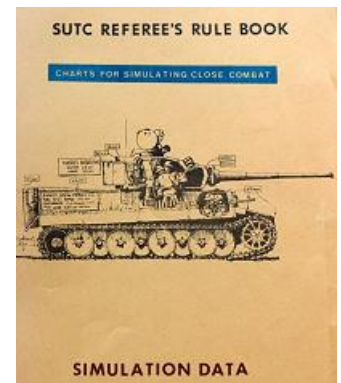
The game was played on a 4-foot by 8-foot sand table, but the map shows only a 4'x 6' area, and even then most action was in the 4-foot by 3-foot area comprising the town.

The German side was played by Paul (Lt. Nichols with pistol and binoculars) and Cleo (Sgt with the flamethrower). Troops included a radioman, LMG team, two SMG men, and five soldiers with Mausers, one of whom was equipped and trained as a sniper. They arrived in the town aboard an armored half-track preceded by a small command car.

For the Soviets, played by Richard ("Comrade Richard") and Samuel ("Mikhail"), no partisans started in the town. The unit was atop the large hill in the forest. They had just received an order from their leader to move to a new area to keep up with the Soviet Army's movements.

Upon seeing Germans approaching the town, though, some partisan were left behind with orders to inflict losses on the Germans, or, at least disrupt whatever the Germans were doing. If, in addition, they could recruit any new partisans, so much the better, but they must leave no later than 30 minutes (60 turns) later.

In addition, a three-man HMG crew would be left on top of the hill to lend supporting fire and three partisans each armed with PPD SMGs and three grenades. Mikhail was crossing the bridge as the Germans entered the town, while Comrade Richard and the third partisan (a native of this town called Popov) crossed the river in a boat.



## Terrain

In SUTC, each centimeter represents one meter, so each foot of table distance represents about 30 meters. The rules recommend using spaces of no more than 200 x 200 meters, but our group often uses larger areas to give nervous players more trees to stoke fears of enemy soldiers and avoid any "edge-of-the-board" problems.

Even so, once contact is established, the action usually takes place in a relatively small area. The terrain was hilly and the town itself was laid out on several levels. The highest ground in the town was at the NW corner. From that point, along the paved road, the ground stayed level until past Building A, where the road then sloped down to the bridge over the river.

Buildings E, F, and G were also on the high ground, which extended along the West edge of the area, then along the South side of the table until it took a large drop at the river.

The church and tavern were in a valley, and could be reached by a steep descent over the hillside from the NW or West sides of town, or by following the curved descent of the dirt road, passing by building H and Building I.

Buildings D and J were on the relatively low ground along the river. The riverbank fell away rather sharply to the unfordable current below. The East bank climbed quickly upwards, from which a large hill took root. This wooded height's summit was about 100 meters from the center of the town and was the highest point on the table.

Unknown to both sides, the civilians in the town were favoring neither side at the game's outset. If the Germans didn't bother the townspeople, they wouldn't bother the Germans. However, if abused or provoked by either side, they had a limited capacity to defend themselves.

From this point on, the narrative will refer to numbers and points on the map. The sequence of events is roughly sequential, but, at times, many things were happening at the same time on different parts of the battlefield.

*The scenario map with numbered events is at the end of his recap.--RL*

## The Attack

1. Germans arrive in a car and halftrack, halt, and deploy. After an initial argument about tactics, the German team splits into three groups. The German sniper is directed to post himself in the top window of E, to fire on any target he can get a good shot at. The radioman sets up below him at the door of E.

The Lieutenant convinced Sergeant Cleo not to shoot civilian on sight until the town was scouted, or until the squad was fired upon. Alas, the sergeant insisted that he be allowed to burn down at least one building in memory of his dead comrades. Sgt. Cleo proceeds to the door of Building F, carrying the flamethrower and accompanied by a submachinegunner and two riflemen.

Lt. Nuckols posts his LMG crew in the bushes on the north side of E. With the remaining submachinegunner and two riflemen, he moves into A and begins checking buildings for civilians.

2. Mikhail, after crossing the bridge, hears an engine and possibly a tracked vehicle from up the road. He leaves the road and moves up the slope to the east side of C.

3. Comrade Richard and the native Popov run their boat ashore and decide to move to the bushes between I and J to try to observe the Germans and their intent.

4. Mikhail, looking around the corner from C, sees the two vehicles as well as the lieutenant's group moving house-to-house. He puts a burst of fire into the German lead car, which catches fire. The Germans hit the dirt.

5. Comrade Richard and Popov stop and listen.

6. The Soviet HMG sets up on the hill.

7. Lt. Nuckols, under fire, figures the gloves are off, and gives the orders to shoot anything that moves. When the shots stop, his men find someone in A. They fire, killing an old man and his wife. "Probably helping the partisans!"

8. Sgt. Cleo hears the submachine gun fire just before entering F. He kicks in the door, and he and his men spray the interior with flame and bullets. Screams are heard within.

9. After squeezing off his burst, Mikhail ducks back behind the building, runs back down to the riverbank, and passes under the bridge.
10. Cleo now moves to A. Convinced that he was right all along and that the town is probably a nest of partisans and partisan supporters, he feels the only way to get rid of them is to put as many buildings to the torch as possible.
11. Comrade Richard and Popov cross the road and head to the Inn, which Popov knows well. They find the innkeeper cowering under a table. Richard tells the innkeeper that the Germans are attacking and that the partisans need help to drive off the enemy. The innkeeper like most of the other remaining civilians in the town, heard the Soviet submachinegun fire first and don't yet know if this is just an engagement between the armies or an actual attack against the town. Even Richard's attempt at political and patriotic harangues fall on deaf ears.
12. The Soviet HMG opens fire up on the paved road near B and E, but its shots are high.
13. The German LMG finally catches sight of the HMG, and fires, suppressing the HMG. Throughout the game the HMG fired sporadically, never hitting anything, while the LMG tried to stop it. By the end of the game, all three Soviet gunners had been wounded by the German fire and the gun put out of action.
14. Lt. Nuckols leads his men into C, firing as they go. A man is found inside, killed by the German fire.
15. Cleo gathers his men by the side of the road.
16. Cleo leads his section down the exposed slope to the west wall of the church.
17. Mikhail has decided to move up along the south side of D, between the building and the small hillock, to look around the corner and observe the Germans.
18. Lt. Nuckols checks out C. He orders one rifleman to run to the west door, to be followed thereafter by the second rifleman, while Nuckols and the SMG gunner cover them.
19. At this moment, Mikhail takes a half step past the corner of the building. Nuckols himself sees this move and fires his pistol, but misses. Mikhail drops to one knee as he sees a German rifleman running at him not more than five meters away. Mikhail fires his submachinegun, killing the German instantly. A second pistol shot hits the dirt Mikhail's feet and he straightens up and dives back behind cover.
20. Nuckols tells his men to throw grenades at the corner of D, while he runs out of the building, back up the paved road, heading for his radioman to call in mortar support.
21. Mikhail runs back along the side of Building D, then turns right and climbs up on the small hillock, diving into some large bushes for cover.
22. A German trooper steps out and throws a grenade at the point where the Soviet partisan was last seen, but throws the grenade further than he intended and overthrows the target.
23. The potato masher lands on the small hillock, just a few meter from Mikhail's hidden position. The explosion sends fragments into the bushes, just missing Mikhail, who wriggles into the dirt further and decides to observe without moving, hoping to escape German detection.
24. Comrade Richard and Popov, giving up on civilian help, move through the Inn to its back yard, intending to take a position in the steeple of the nearby church.
25. Covered by the submachinegunner and two riflemen, Sgt. Cleo moves and sticks the flamethrower nozzle through a stained glass window and starts to flame the church interior.  
Just as Cleo opens fire, the two Soviets stumble through the bushes less than 10 meters away. The first to react is the SS trooper with his MP 38 submachinegun. He fires and hits Popov in the fingers, foot, and leg. Popov spins and dives back into the bushes.

Comrade Richard is next to fire. His shots kill the SMG gunner and seriously wounds one of the riflemen in the stomach. The remaining Mauser man fires and hits Richard in the calf, then jumps back as the partisans crawl back through the yard to the Inn. Richard is also burned on one foot as Cleo flamed the bushes just as the Soviets crawled out the other side.

26. The two wounded Soviets move through the Inn towards a door on the west side as Cleo shoots fuel onto the roof of the structure.

27. Sgt. Cleo orders the remaining rifleman to forget the wounded and to grab the submachine gun and to follow him to the east side of the Inn. There, the sergeant sprays flame into the Inn.

28. In building J, a Soviet veteran of WWI sees Cleo flaming the Inn. He goes down to his cellar to get his old rifle. Simultaneously, another old vet in H is digging up his old gun from under the floorboards.

29. With the inn being engulfed in flames behind him, Richard orders the other partisan through the door to a tree just outside, intending to follow. Popov's move is spotted by the German sniper in E. As Richard pokes his head out, the sniper sends a bullet past his ear. He slams shut the door, limps to a window on the south wall and starts to climb out of the burning building.

30. Sgt. Cleo, with the new SMG behind him covering his back-tank, comes around the building and sees the partisan climbing out the window. He orders the submachinegunner to fire, but he doesn't. In SUTC, soldiers have a die roll made each turn to see if they are active and able to take action. The odds increase if under officer supervision and decrease if acting as an individual. In this case, the SMG gunner failed to make his roll.

31: Richard has dropped from the window and sees Cleo, who quickly gives a short burst of flame as Richard fires. Both miss, but the psychological results of the firing cause the German submachinegunner to dive and hide back around the corner of the inn, while Comrade Richard drops his weapon, terrified by the flamethrower, and huddles under the window. Cleo slowly walks forward and presses the trigger.

32. Lt. Nuckols, back with his radioman, has contacted his company and is told they can give him two rounds in two minutes. This is an average mission in the SUTC probability system for German mortars. Nuckols calls for the first shell on building D. It goes long and lands harmlessly in the river beyond. He corrects the range by radio, calling for a drop of 10 meters. The second shell lands 20 meters short and about 5 meters to the right of the first shell's fall. The explosion is in the bushes on top of the hillock, almost on top of Mikhail's head -- he never knew what hit him. Nuckols stays on the radio until the game ends, continuing to drop mortar shells around D and the nearby bridge.

33. As Sgt. Cleo stands by the inn, yelling at his submachine gunner, the old Soviet veteran takes a shot at him, but misses. The SS man turns, tells his companion to cover him and moves at J. The German trooper fails to fire, but fortunately for Cleo, who seems to have a charmed life, the Soviet misses again, while Cleo sprays the building, setting it and the old Soviet soldier on fire.

34. Finally joined by the SMG, Cleo moves to I and sets it afire.

35. Wounded and with a burning building at his back, Popov realizes that he can't stay there under his tree. Seeing building I go up in flames, he figures the German flamethrower is just advancing up the dirt road firing at everything in sight. He decides to crawl to the side of the road when the flamethrower passes and fire at the German at H, hoping the German sniper has lost sight of him. The sniper had indeed lost sight of Popov, but had not forgotten him.

36. Sgt. Cleo, having been shot at from behind by the veteran in J, decides the action is getting too hot! He still intends to burn down every building he can, but wants to do it quickly before more shots can come at him. With his SMG gunner at his heels, he runs as fast as his burden will allow to building H.

37. As the Germans ran towards H, the Soviet inside puts his rifle out the window and fires. The bullet barely misses Cleo, but hit the SMG gunner in the hand. He drops his gun and falls down. Cleo fires his flamethrower into the window. Popov, from the side of the road behind Cleo fires. The bullets tore into the flamethrower's pack and it explodes.

38. Popov's shots enable him to again be spotted by the German sniper, who puts a bullet into the back of Popov's head. The game is over.

## Game Over

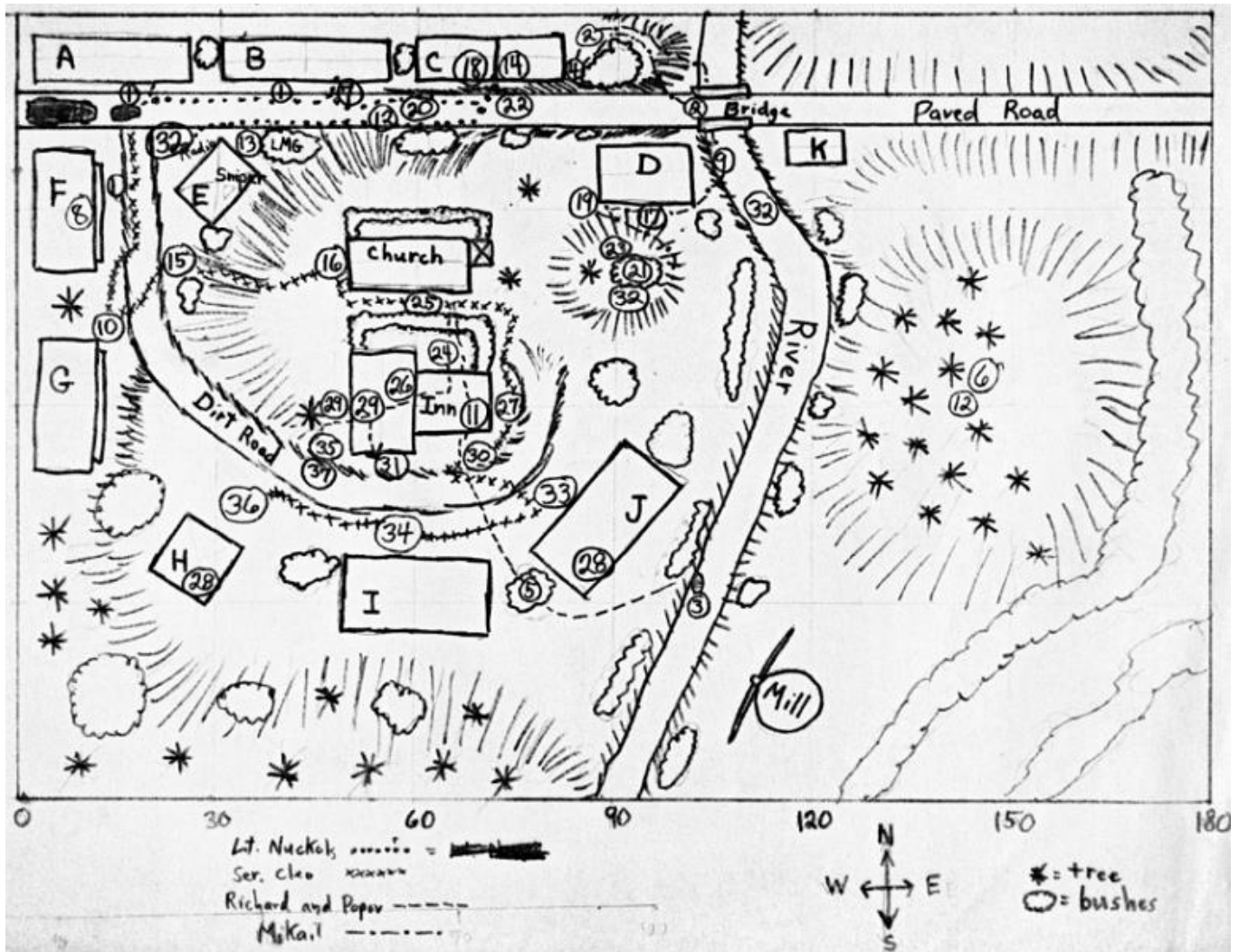
The German squad of 12 men suffered three men killed and two badly wounded -- one was burned when Cleo's tank exploded. The Soviets lost all three partisans, had three HMG men wounded and took about 15 civilian casualties.

In game time, it was about 30 minutes of action. In real time, the game took just over two hours.

The lesson: Hell hath no fury like someone with a flamethrower.

*For those interested in SUTC, John Curry Productions has reprinted it with a couple other early rule sets. I don't know if it retains its difficult to read all-caps text or has been retyped into usual upper and lower case. As you might surmise from the above recap, SUTC charts are incredibly detailed and require significant effort from the umpire to make the double-blind system work -- although the players don't need to know the rules to play. Thanks to Ned for sharing this bit of wargame history. -- RL*

## The Skirmish Map



## A Lil' Bootlegging: Speakeasy City

by Russ Lockwood

Wally the Wheelman ran a finger over the front fender. "That's a nice large truck you got there."

"Top of the line 1926 Ford," Russ the Racketeer replied. "That's why I hired you to drive it."

"Yes you did," Wally said, calculating costs. "Pity if something happened to it."

"Whaddaya mean?"

"Tires might get flat. Can't move the moonshine with four flat tires," Wally explained. "Brakes might fail, especially if I'm being tailed. A crash would total the truck and lose the cargo of kegs."

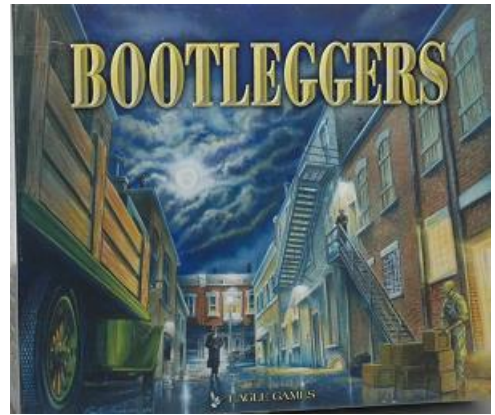
Russ was wise to shakedowns. "How much?"

"Two Gs a trip."

"Talk about highway robbery," Russ mumbled. "Two Gs a trip it is -- if it remains two Gs a trip."

"How's that?"

Russ the Racketeer shrugged. "Pity if a sidewalk was so slippery to cause two broken kneecaps."



### Bootleggin' It

The shrink-wrap had been cracked on the board game *Bootleggers* two decades ago, but I wanted to try it again, so I called a couple mobsters at the last minute. Renaud Le Roi and Dennis 'Shotgun Shorthose' arrived and we started to carve up the bootlegging business.

*Renaud Le Roi and Shotgun Shorthose ponder the rule about Influence. Black trucks, brown crates, and colored influence markers make this a tactile game.*



Each of us started with 10G of cash, a small truck, one influence marker (plastic figure) and a dozen Muscle cards, each with a number and a dollar amount. Each player selects one per turn secretly, then all are flipped over at once. Highest numbered card plays first -- after paying the amount on the card and the driver of your truck or trucks.

The board contains truck cards, with top one flipped up at the start of a turn to reveal a small, medium, or large truck, and action cards, a number equal to the number of players are flipped over at the start of a turn. The action cards provide benefits of one sort or another: gain an influence or two, stop an opponent's truck from making a delivery, cop raids a speakeasy, increase moonshine production, and so on. The trick is that the current player can take only one of the action or truck cards.

*Interacting for a piece of the action. Image from web.*

Players place influence on a speakeasy to try and control sales. Roll for production (wooden cubes), place in trucks, and head to the loading



dock of one of the speakeasies, preferably one that you control. There's a lot of interaction here: you can negotiate for anything. More crates than you have truck space? Rent a truck from another player. Threaten to play a card unless a few Gs slide across the table? Blackmail is legal. Pay a player to pop an Influence marker somewhere else? Acceptable.

Know what else is legal? Breaking your agreement. "Thanks for the cash. I'm playing the card anyway." Perfectly legal. You might be a pariah for the rest of the game, or be nicknamed "Johnny Two-Face."

*Well, I was at the top of the world... Image from web.*



## Game

Shotgun Shorthose struck early by grabbing the first influence marker and making the initial speakeasy his own. He got a bonus and cut of all crates sold.

Influence is key. To control a speakeasy, including being able to sell your moonshine crates first and having veto power on buying anyone else's moonshine, you need enough influence markers to equal or exceed all the rest combined. A majority position allows you to sell your moonshine crates first. A minority position sells in turn order. No influence is last and almost never gets paid.

Renaud Le Roi held a "Hit" card (so to speak) that allowed him to destroy one truck's worth of cargo...and held it over our heads, too. I had picked up the "Waste 'Em" (so to speak) than canceled a card. I had no fear of gettin' hit.

I had bought a large truck that could hold nine crates as well as my original small truck that held four more. I had also bought a card that pumped up my production to 3d6 crates. That large production brought in the feds sniffin' around. They nailed my production for one turn. The mechanic is that if you roll a "5" on any die, the cops shut down your family still. If you have a Secret still (obtained via a card), that production is untouched. But the shutdown cost me.

The second speakeasy opened a few turns later. Here, I was able to eventually gain control by paying a whopping 10Gs for Renaud Le Roi to place his influence marker in a different speakeasy. His marker would have driven my influence below the 50% threshold for control.

Alas, Shotgun Shorthose jumped out to a big cash lead and got to the \$100,000 win at the end of Turn 8. Renaud Le Roi was at 72 Gs and I was back at 54Gs.

## Thoughts

The first player who gains influence in the speakeasy has a big advantage. Indeed, in a three-player game, the other two players should gang up to stymie cash flow.

Much of this is the luck of the shuffle of the Action cards, which determines the benefits available, and the draw of the Muscle cards, each with its own unique number. Of course, you only learn this after you play the first game.

*End game. Colored influence markers.*



Befitting a euro game, there's no real violence in a game about the mob. No carload of muscle with tommy guns puts on a hit. The Action cards offer neutral commentary about intercepting and eliminating a truck load of moonshine crates.

The trucks are nice, but they are all the same size – a number (4, 6, 9) is stamped on the cab. Well, it was published in 2004 (reprinted 2012), so I suspect production costs for larger truck beds were a factor. It sure didn't feel like a large truck...

*Bootleggers* has potential, but you really need a fourth or fifth player (or even a sixth) to really get the interaction going. Yet, it was good to unearth an old game to try again. Thanks Dennis and Renaud.



*Tanks fer makin' memories: Gamers push panzers at Rye.*

## HMGS Next Gen: Back On Track

by John Spiess

### WWII In Rye: NY

After a few cancelled events due to the snow, it was great to get back on track in Rye, NY. I was joined by Yuhan Kim, who is currently at NYU Law School and took the train out to meet me in Rye. A lot of you might remember Yuhan from the games we ran at Yale, and a painting session at John Mannings. Yuhan -- Thanks for helping out.

*John, er, the tall one at right, finally in a photo.*

Today's game was for 4th and 5th graders. We played a WWII *Bolt Action* game of Germans versus Russians. I was very fortunate to borrow all the tanks from Derek Gilman. Thanks again Derek. The kids took great care of everything.

I really didn't have to make too many simplifications. Bolt Action is a fast simple system (at least if you are just using tanks), and everyone picked it right up. In hindsight, I didn't realize how tough the Russians could be. By the end of the game eight of the 12 German tanks were knocked out. The Russians lost three tanks and had a further four damaged.

Rye is another library that is considering doing a parent/child event. So I'll see if I can get something like that set up in the next few months.

### Stalingrad in Darien: CT

We played another Battle of Stalingrad game at the Darien library today. Once again, we used the Bolt Action rules. I made some simple quick reference guides with index cards and kept 2 on each side of the table. This way, by turn 3, I was basically a spectator. I was also impressed when they all wanted to "huddle up" to make some plans before the game started. I included a photo of that below.

Anyone who has played Bolt Action knows you need 3 good die rolls in a row to do something to a tank (hit, penetrate, damage). Even though there were no German Tigers at Stalingrad, I gave the German side one Tiger just for fun. So what was the Russian plan....shoot everything at the Tiger until it was knocked out. Worked pretty well since the Tiger went up in flames on turn 2.



The Russians did well at first, but then probably got a little too cocky and started advancing everyone. On the other hand, the German players used the strategy of just sitting and shooting. “Why move if you have a target?” I’m pretty sure one German player on the flank never moved the whole game. He picked a spot where he could see almost anything.

By the end of the game, the Russians lost 14 of 20 tanks while the Germans only lost 8 of 20. Since these are middle school kids, they haven’t studied WWII yet, but some of them really knew a lot about tanks. I did a double take when one kid walked in and said, “Cool, I want the STuGs!”



### **Guilford Courthouse: CT**

I ran the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in New Canaan. We had a full house for this one, but it worked out really well since the Continentals were deployed in three lines, so everyone commanded at least three units. One interesting item: When I gave the usual historical summary at the end of the game, I asked how many kids had actually heard about this battle. Five kids raised their hands. They were all home-schooled. The kids from Saxe Middle School haven’t gotten there yet. Maybe the lesson plans are in a different order these days.



### **Battle of Stalingrad: NY**

I ran the Battle of Stalingrad in Rye. This time, it was for the older middle and high school kids. At this point, I don’t even have to simplify the rules. They understand and are playing Bolt Action with all the nuts and bolts.



### **St. Mere Eglise Counter-Attack: NY**

Our St. Mere Eglise German counter-attack scenario was based on the day after D-Day. The Larchmont, NY, library advertised the game for both adults and kids, so we had nine players total -- all kids (one left early).

I tried to talk a few parents into playing, but no luck. I think the issue was that some adults came late and saw all the kids through the rooms window and maybe didn’t want to play with them.

One pretty cool item is that Alistair (light blue shirt) brought a 28mm German tank and a few troops that he assembled and painted, so I let him use them in the game. He was very excited by that.

Maybe we will have more adults for the 1952 Korean War Battle of Bunker Hill game next month. And yes, there was a battle of Bunker Hill in the Korean War.



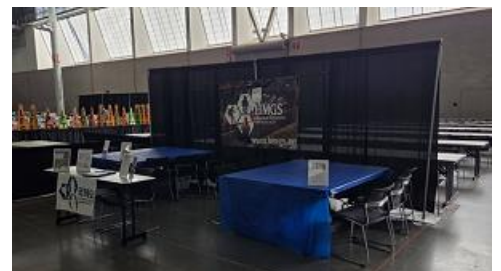
### **Stamford Bridge: CT**

I ran the Battle of Stamford Bridge at the Weston library, whose director asked for monthly events for the next year.

### **HMGS Outreach: PAX East**

*by Russ Lockwood*

HMGS Outreach secured complimentary booth and tables to showcase miniatures games at PAX East in Boston, MA. The show brings together 100,000 gamers, mostly of the streaming and computer habit kind. While larger companies have dropped out of the exhibitor list, roughly 280 will be at PAX East -- especially independent game companies. Recaps of games at the show in the next AAR.



# NEWS

## New HMGS Outreach Director: Cliff Brunken

By Russ Lockwood

In an effort to open up a number of HMGS roles to its general membership, Dave Allnutt resigned as Outreach Director for HMGS and will be succeeded by Cliff Brunken. Allnutt will remain on the board and will serve as the liaison to the outreach committee.

## McHale's Navy: *Cruel Seas* Scenario

By Russ Lockwood

This recap by Phil posted a photo of Lieutenant Commander Quinton McHale (Ernest Borgnine) up top. Of course I'm going to read it.

The rule set was *Cruel Seas* and you can't have a McH scenario without a special Executive Officer Ensign Charles Parker (Tim Conway) rule. It went down to the last die roll and the last hull point.

Here's the link:

<https://philonworldwartwo.blogspot.com/2026/03/raid-on-torokina-island.html>



## CSW Expo 2026: July 10-18, 2026

by Russ Lockwood

Consimworld (CSW) announces the 25th annual CSW Expo to be held July 10-18, 2026 at the Tempe Mission Palms hotel. CSW anticipates 250 enthusiasts, game designers, and game publishers. Includes monster gaming, exhibitor showcase, flea market tables, special events, seminars, breakfast briefings, playtesting, door prizes, open gaming, and more. Doors open on Friday, July 11 at 8 PM (for early setup).

A single-day pass can be purchased at the door for \$30. The early bird registration (good through March 31, 2026) is \$120 for the full week and \$75 for a three-day pass.

## Stampin' Decals: Video

By Russ Lockwood

I don't know if this works as well as the four-minute video shows, or what kind of mess this entails considering you need 100% acetone, but Goblin Hobbies is offering a new paint stamping system that replaces decals. Obviously, the demo video is very polished.

*Starter set components from tutorial video.*



The idea is that you paint some sort of raised image -- the company offers 10 different cards -- most are sci-fi and fantasy, one ancients, and a couple heraldry -- each with about 60 or so designs.

You paint the image you want, use a card to even out the paint, and pick up the paint with a special silicon stamper. Then you stamp your model and the paint transfers from the silicon to the model surface. Clean the card with acetone and use clear tape to clean the silicon stamper. Well, it looks easy, anyway.

My gaming buddy Rich ordered one, so I'll hear how it works and presumably see some of his stamps. I'll let you know. Starter Kit is \$50 plus shipping. I ordered one as a gift, so maybe I can get double info for next month.

Link to video: <https://goblinhobbies.com/pages/tutorials>

## Minden Games: Wargames Trio

By Russ Lockwood

Minden Games released two updated editions of its existing wargames and one new wargame.

*U-Boat Captain 1939-1942 2nd Edition*: Solitaire game now includes new 1942 tables to reflect the changing nature of sea warfare, a new U-Boat Type (IA), more counters and markers, historical Commander Cards (#1-8), in a 7x10-inch color format, and 52 pages. \$23.95. PDF version: \$16.00. Plus shipping.

*Viking Fury 2nd Edition*: Strategic level solitaire game covering the initial Viking expansion into western Europe in the late 8th-early 9th century. The player controls the Viking side and attempts to acquire treasure for his home location, while potentially planting new settlements across the sea. Each game turn represents a variable amount of actual time. The object of the game is to bring as much treasure back home to Scandinavia (and establish settlements over the sea) within a set number of Expeditions. Includes 40-page 8.5x11-inch color book containing standard rules, optional rules, over 100 game counters (allowing up to three people to play, in addition to solo), several game maps, Pencil-Mode game maps, several scenarios, historical commentary, all necessary game tables. A special Introductory Game is also provided, a simple alternative to the regular game that will be appealing to younger gamers, and those not familiar with strategy boardgames. \$23.95. PDF version: \$15.00. Plus shipping.

*U-Boat Captain Twilight 1943-1945*: Takes the game system through to the end of WWII, providing game tables and rules that reflect Allied superiority during this time. Also, electroboats are included (Types XXI and XXIII), as well as the long range IXD-2, patrols to the Indian Ocean, other late-war types, historical Commander Cards (#9-18), and many new optional advanced rules. In a 7x10-inch color format, and 48 pages. Mates with the 1939-1942 game so you can simulate the entire war. \$23.95. PDF version: \$16.00. Plus shipping.

Info: [https://minder\\_games.homestead.com/index.html](https://minder_games.homestead.com/index.html)



## Washington's Rally: Battle of Monmouth

By Russ Lockwood

Historian Gary Ecelbarger presented a talk about how General George Washington turned the tide of battle at Monmouth on June 28, 1778 to the Washington Crossing American Revolution Round Table on March 9, 2026. The 1857 painting, the Battle of Monmouth 1778, is by artist Emanuel G. Leutze.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxQIVvXlmdU>



## ATO Postcard Battles: Package

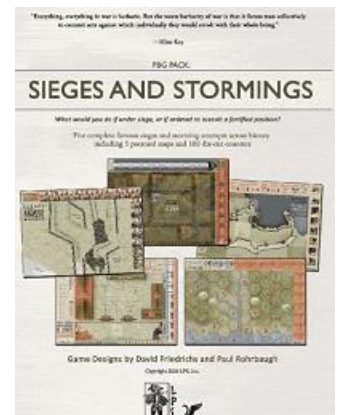
By Russ Lockwood

*Against the Odds* magazine has released *The Sieges and Stormings Pocket Battle Games (PBG) Pack* that includes 5 postcard-size playing maps, 100 full color 1/2" die-cut counters, One-page rules for each individual game, and a deck of playing cards. In a ziplock bag.

Each game: Complexity - Low; How challenging are they solitaire? - Average; and Playing time - Up to 1 hour for the individual games.

The Pack costs \$21.95 (includes US shipping) or \$39.95 (includes international shipping).

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=1207>



## Compleat Strategist King of Prussia Store to Close on April 25, 2026

By Russ Lockwood

The Compleat Strategist store in King of Prussia, PA, will close on April 25, 2026, according to the company's website. Rumors are that the last store, in New York City, will close, but the company stated "The NYC store still taking shape, we are unable to give you concrete information about if and when the store will be closing. While waiting for a clearance sale may seem like the strategic move, we hope you'll continue to shop at The Compleat Strategist until you receive word regarding official plans to close our headquarters."

Um... "if and when?" Sounds like a closing to me, but I've no more info.

From the website: "The Compleat Strategist opened its doors in 1975. We were here for the birth of *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Warhammer*, *Magic: The Gathering*, and virtually every modern tabletop game played today. We have shared the growth of the hobby with creators, publishers, distributors, and players. We were here with our fellow New Yorkers through 9/11 and through COVID-19, and our customers have supported us through the upheaval in our industry from the advent of online shopping to the more recent turmoil in international trade and shipping. We have had the privilege of serving not only the tri-state area's amazing gamers, but also customers from around the world, and we have always remained a family owned business."

I very occasionally shopped at the NYC store when I went into the city in the 1980s and 1990s, but not since then. Location, location, location is still the rule, I suppose.



## November 1941 German Supply Map With Petrol Stations

Thanks to the *Europa IO Group* for pointing me to a Reddit link.

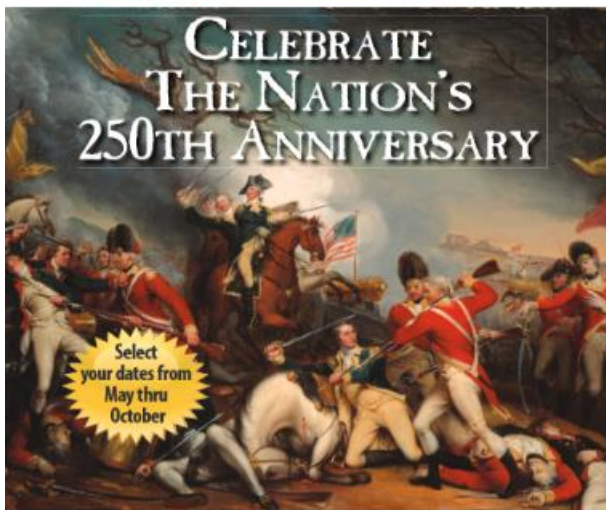


# Princeton Battlefield Society: 2026 Events

By Russ Lockwood

In the spirit of full disclosure, I am a trustee of the Princeton Battlefield Society, which announced events to help explain the 1777 Battle of Princeton. They are also fundraisers to help restore the battlefield and the original Clarke house, which still stands on the site. Some of the projects being undertaken, some with partners such as the American Battlefield Trust, include restoring the Memorial site, including the medallion in the middle that honors unknown British and American soldiers who were buried in a mass grave after the battle, restoration of an Apple orchard present at the battle, restoration of the road used by troops to enter the battlefield, ongoing repairs to the Clarke house, re-enactment, and a few smaller projects. The long-term project is to fundraise for a full Visitor's Center.

Visit the PBS website for more info: <https://pbs1777.org/>



Experience the American Revolution at the Princeton Battlefield State Park

Explore the Ten Crucial Days of 1776-77, the Battle of Princeton, and the people involved.

**Sundays, May to October**

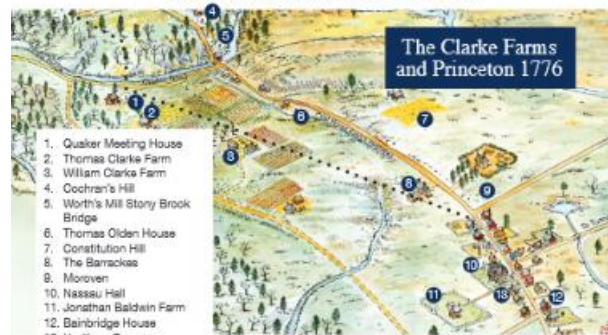
- Guided Tour of the Thomas Clarke House
- Battlefield Talks and Demonstrations
  - Walking Tours
- Musket & Flintlock Programs



(See dates for programs on back)

**You must register at [www.pbs1777.org](http://www.pbs1777.org)**  
**Adults - \$10**  
**Walking Tour - \$20 per adult**  
**Children under 13 - Free**  
**Active Military - Free**  
*(Not recommended for children under 8 years)*

May 17	Presentation <i>Princeton: A Battle and A Community</i>
May 24	The Battle of Princeton
June 7	Presentation <i>Battle of Princeton: Why here?</i>
June 14	"Black Powder, White Smoke" <i>Care &amp; Feeding of Revolutionary War Flintlocks and The Battle of Princeton</i>
June 21	"In Their Footsteps" <i>Walking Tour of the Entire Battlefield</i>
July 12	The Battle of Princeton
July 26	The Battle of Princeton
Aug 2	The Battle of Princeton
Aug 16	The Battle of Princeton
Sep 6	"Black Powder, White Smoke" <i>Care &amp; Feeding of Revolutionary War Flintlocks and The Battle of Princeton</i>
Sep 13	"In Their Footsteps" <i>Walking Tour of the Entire Battlefield</i>
Sep 27	The Battle of Princeton
Oct 11	Presentation <i>Who Experienced the Battle of Princeton?</i>
Oct 18	"In Their Footsteps" <i>Walking Tour of the Entire Battlefield</i>



The dotted line overlay represents the general path of modern Mercer Street



Princeton Battlefield Society  
 P. O. Box 7645  
 Princeton, New Jersey 08543  
 More information at  
[www.pbs1777.org](http://www.pbs1777.org)

## Books I've Read

### Correction

In the review of *Broken Eagles, Vol. II*, I pointed out a typo: Napoleon's birthday on August 10. His birthday is August 15. However, in the category of learn something new every day, the author responded:

"The reference to celebrating N's birthday on 10 August is correct. In 1813, His imperial Emperor-ness moved the celebration up by five days because he knew hostilities were about to begin and wanted the army to have a few days of repose after all the celebrations, thus the shift from the 15th to the 10th of August...

...explained in vol. I and there is a brief mention of the 'advance' in celebration on p. 61 in V II."

Alas, the keyword here was "celebrating" -- and thus my typo, not his, so I hope this sets the record straight. There's always something new about history.

### Additional Info

In my review of *Barbarossa Victims: Camera On 35*, I wrote: "Note that "Iliushin" is spelled with an i and "Ilyushin" with a y. This seems like a typo to me, but I don't know enough about Russian spelling for specific aircraft to definitely pick one."

Fortunately, AAR reader James offered some feedback.

"The "yu" and the "iu" are both correct; the Cyrillic letter that looks like a IO -- ? -- sounds like "you" in English when spoken. But the author & editor should choose one way or the other and stick to it."

Thanks, James.

### Book Reviews

**Solomons Air War: Volume 4.** by Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman. Softcover (6.9x9.8 inches). 184 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Operation Ke: The Evacuation of Guadalcanal January-February 1943*

No other author has covered the WWII Pacific air war like Claringbould. He has consistently combined research from US, Australian, and Japanese sources with evocative illustrations and a knack for turning logbook entries and official reports into interesting reading.

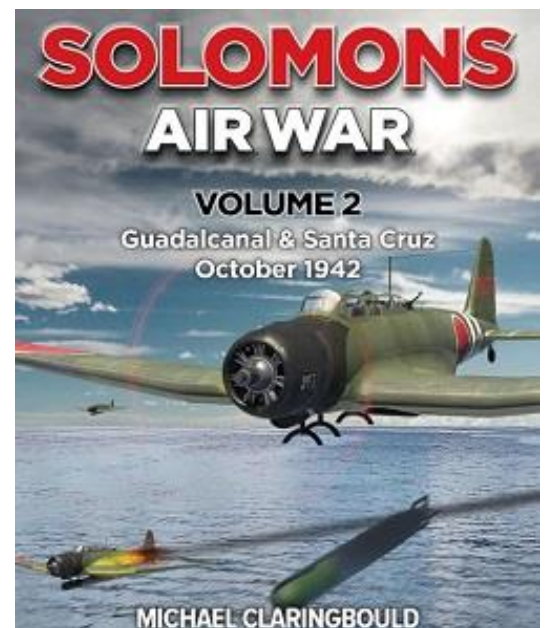
*Volume 4* covering the first two months of 1943 is another tour-de-force of the above, detailing what has to be every mission, every encounter, and every loss from both sides. Better yet, he and his researchers comb both archives to confirm air losses and ground and ship damage and losses. You can add in weather descriptions to account for some of those losses.

What is surprising about all this is that during the period covered by all four volumes, from August 1942 to February 1943, the Allies lost 638 aircraft to the Japanese 612 (p176). It is far from the perception that the Allies swept the Japanese from the air. What is true is that the US replacement system for aircraft, pilots, and aircrew was establishing a superiority that would dominate in the years to come.

The book contains 41 black and white photos, once color photo, four color maps, 16 color action illustrations, and 13 color camouflage profiles.

Another triumph.

Enjoyed it.



**German Logistics 1939-1945.** by Simon Forty and Richard Charlton Taylor. Hardback (8.2x10.3 inches). 192 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated Special*

What a great topic!

While German logistics often get blamed for failures, you have to give the process credit for supplying all those troops across Europe throughout much of the war. The organizational detail needed to coordinate industry, transportation, and distribution was mostly effective given the distances, weather, and gradual loss of air superiority.

The quick version of industry to Army to Corps to Division is shown in diagrams, but the text reveals explanations of distances and delivery concerns. A railhead to an Army supply drop should be not more than 60 miles (p76). In the West, a Division supply drop was from 10 to 50 miles behind the front. In the USSR, the vast distances often meant distances of 100 miles (p72).

Cargo trucks could travel at 30 kilometers per hour (about 18mph) during daylight and half that at night. A day's truck and trailer transport, including loading and unloading, averaged about 300km (186 miles). Animal-drawn wagons could travel 12 to 15 miles per day (p80). Adjust for weather and terrain and presumably aerial attacks.

A number of charts relate march speeds and distances. For example, troops can march 3mph over long distances while tanks drive 12mph. In a day, an infantry regiment requires 6,234 yards of road space and will generally average 10-15 miles per day without motor transport and double that with motor transport (p110-111).

As for Allied air attacks, Production head Speer estimated German industrial production loss of 20% to 30%. And on and on the statistics go.

One possible typo about reorganization: "At the end of January 1944, all units were deleted" (p70) but immediately notes units had new registration numbers "by January 29, 1945." That 1944 may be 1945, otherwise all units were without new numbers for a year, which seems odd.

The book contains 215 black and white photos, eight color photos, four black and white illustrations, three black and white maps, four color maps, and 10 color diagrams. I didn't count the tables and charts.

This book is so full of details, tables, and charts, anyone interested in how the Germans supplied all their troops across Europe will be enthralled with its numbers and explanations.

Enjoyed it.

**Gulf War 1990-91: Campaign 424.** by Steven J. Zaloga. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *Saddam's Iraq Faces Operation Desert Storm*

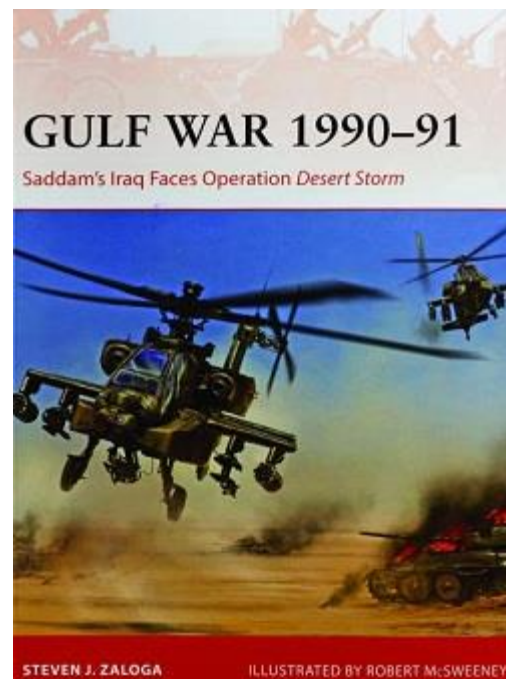
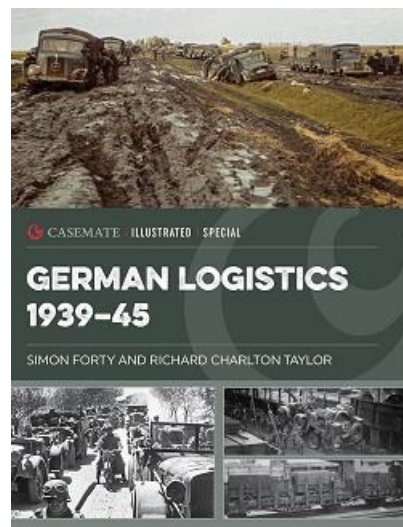
The well-honed Campaign format offers an overview of the Coalition build-up and attack to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi forces. Per usual, you get the chronology, OOB down to division and some brigades (but not including a variety of small contingents), tech specs of major tanks and equipment, commander profiles, plans, and overview of the "100-hour war."

Kudos for the concise paragraph of all the mistakes Saddam made (p32) as well as descriptions of the rain that turned wadis and sabkhas into "muddy sandflats" (p67).

Interesting that a US armored division had a frontage of 15km and a depth of 45km (p68) -- think of that the next time you field a modern US armored division on the table.

The "Highway of Death" was caused by a panicked, unplanned retreat from Kuwait City on the highway to Basra. Iraqis hot-wired every vehicle they could get their hands on and piled in the loot. An estimated 1,400-2,000 military and civilian vehicles were destroyed in the Coalition air attacks (p72).

The booklet contains 70 color photos, seven color maps, and three color two-page action illustrations. Enjoyed it.



**Marshal Pilsudski and Wars for Polish Freedom.** by Evan McGilvray.  
Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 267 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Poland's Conflicts with Ukraine, Lithuania, & Soviet Russia*

In this biography, Jozef Pilsudski spent most of his life battling for Polish independence, mostly against the Russians and later Soviets, but also including Ukraine and Lithuania. He seems blessed with a talent for playing all sides against each other, leaving him and his forces to maneuver towards independence.

Pre-WWI, he took 20,000 British pounds from the UK to spy on the Russians. During WWI, he joined the Austro-Hungarians and Germans to beat the Russians and then slipped between the three to carve out something resembling Poland before fighting against the Ukrainians and Lithuanians to settle the border.

Yet his biggest success came against the Soviets in 1920 with a massive offensive into the USSR, followed by being overwhelmed by numbers that drove him and his army back to Warsaw. That saw a large counter-attack that defeated the Soviets and finally convinced the Communists to settle a border.

Obviously, he did not do this all by himself. Yet, I'm not sure which time period is more fascinating. When he used the British money to buy weapons for a failed coup, or when he robbed a Russian train of the Tsar's payroll that he used to bankroll an army (of sorts) and start the Polish independence movement rolling.

The description of the Polish-Soviet war offers insight and analysis of his thinking process, actions, and results. The swirl of battle lacks one key ingredient: maps. I know where Warsaw and Danzig are located, but all those attacks and counter-attacks in towns north of Warsaw mean absolutely nothing to me. The more detailed the recap, the more books need maps to help us befuddled readers understand time and distance. Otherwise, like this, it's all just a bunch of names.

Another nit: mentioning historians in the text is distracting because, in my ignorance, I don't know 99% of them. Just summarize their work, make your point, and leave a footnote.

A few typos: "25April" (p80) needs a space; "equal of everything expect Cossack" (p89) should read "except Cossack"; two periods at end of a sentence (p162); "unfortunate ." (p185) needs the space in front of the period deleted; and "for both side" (p189) could use an "s."

One suggestion is to italicize the non-Polish units. I sometimes became confused which division in the maelstrom of maneuver was on which side. Sometimes it was clear, sometimes not. And when they are fighting over the same town, I had to backtrack in the text.

The book contains 16 black and white photos...and no maps.

This is a fine bio about a fellow I had not heard of, but who is basically the George Washington of Poland. For his talents and faults, he helped create an independent Polish country. It's an interesting tale.

Enjoyed it.

**General George Washington: Spymaster Agent 711.** by Norman Ridley.  
Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 186 pages. 2025.

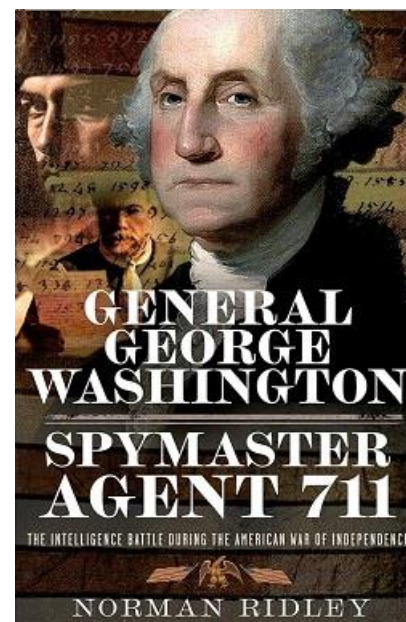
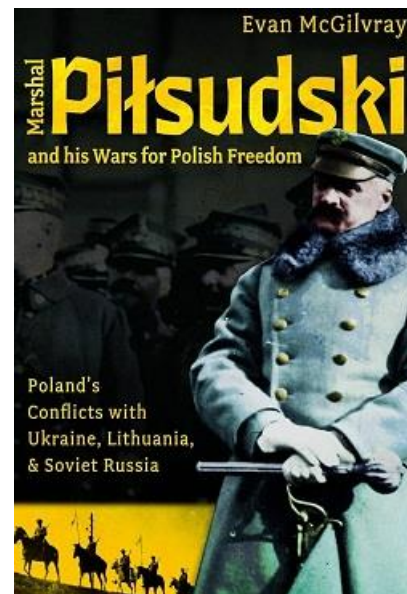
Subtitle: *The Intelligence Battle During the American War of Independence*

Give Washington credit for creating an intelligence network that evolved from reasonably inept to generally competent. I hesitate to say spy, although a considerable portion of this book concerns civilians and officers infiltrating British units and passing info to Washington. Yet his sources also included the usual military scouting parties.

One thing Washington did was not stint on the spending of coins and paper pounds to the spies. Some accused him of being profligate in his intel expenditures, but he asserted information about British intentions were necessary for a small army to counter-act a larger one.

You'll get plenty of tales of clever ruses and dead drops -- something to include in any Nations & Cannon RPG game. And it's not just Americans spying on the British, but also British spies gather info on the Americans.

Of note to me was a fellow by the name of Jared Lockwood (p91), who was part of an armed whaleboat crew that traveled from Connecticut to Long Island, NY, to gather information about the British in New York City. Nothing more is mentioned of Jared, who is not a



direct ancestor, but I suspect related to me. My direct ancestor, David Lockwood, stated in his pension records that after serving three years in a CT artillery battery, he enlisted in the CT Navy to be a gunner on a whaleboat on the Long Island Sound. Alas for David, according to his pension application, he was shot in the thigh, captured, and spent a few months in a prison hulk before the war ended and he was released. He was lucky. Many prisoners died in those British hulks.

A couple non-fatal typos: "to Franc" (p122) needs an "e" and "against the British ever since had taken Charleston" (p150) seems to need to read "ever since they" to make more sense.

One typo that is a somewhat fatal one: "Ann Bates, Loyalist spy, learned of an American plan to raid Long Island. Clinton sent reinforcements to Rhode Island." (p130). I'm not sure which "Island" this refers to.

The book contains nine black and white photos, four black and white illustrations, and two black and white maps.

Washington was a fan of intel. This book explains how spying aided the American fight for independence. Enjoyed it.

**FW 190 Jabo Units in the West: Combat Aircraft 160.** by Malcom V. Lowe. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

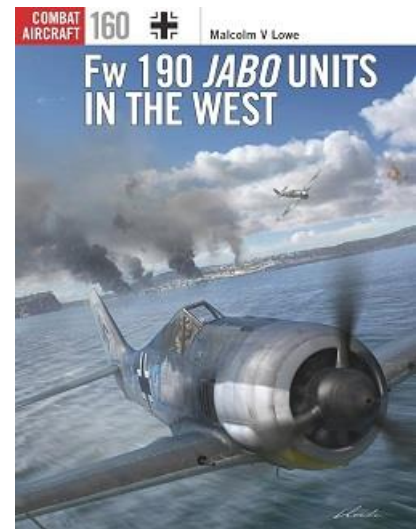
Jabo was short for a fighter bomber, usually armed with a single bomb. What started as a German anti-shipping campaign in the English Channel morphed into nuisance attacks on small British towns. The damage, while personal to those on the ground, did little to alter the war but was a way for Germany to respond to British bombing. The coming of The Typhoon, D-Day, and suppression of the Luftwaffe made all such attacks limited at best.

Lots of first-person accounts culled from records pepper the text. Although most of these attacks were bomb and scoot, you can pull out tabletop aerial scenarios between German Jabos with a loose fighter escort going after a ship and the RAF interceptors.

One typo: "first Jabo attack off the year" (p32) is probably "of."

The booklet contains 49 black and white photos, three color photos, one black and white illustration, and 22 color camouflage profiles of specific aircraft. The latter is always a delight for the modeler.

Enjoyed it.



**Renaissance Monarchs at War: Battle of Pavia 1525.** by Glenn Richardson. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 244 pages. 2025.

French King Francis I and Holy Roman Empire Emperor Charles V battled for control of Italy, especially Northern Italy and the strategic city of Milan. This history starts further back than 1525 as Francis staked a claim to the Kingdom of Naples in Southern Italy.

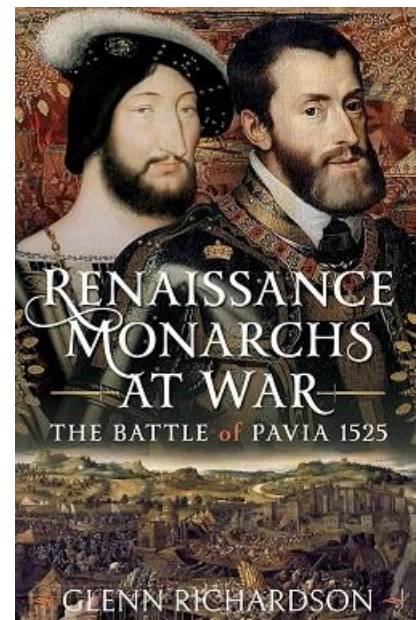
A rather interesting synopsis of royal intrigues, especially the intertwining of families and the interventions of various popes, leads off Francis' expedition to the south of Italy. A truly tangled web of diplomacy, claims, counter-claims, invasions, and counter-invasions receive ample explanation.

Francis' artillery train proved to be the early deciding factor. It blasted open fortresses and cities so effectively, after the first few conquests and pillaging, many surrendered without firing a shot. When combined with pike and cavalry, it was equally effective on the battlefield. Naples soon fell.

Charles, who was in charge of roughly Germany, Netherlands, and Spain, also invaded Italy and so began the early 1500s Italian wars that also included Henry VIII of England. The Ottomans and the Austrians also influence the course of events, via allegiances and military threats, that eventually led to the 1525 Battle of Pavia.

The various battles, including Pavia, receive nice overviews and examinations of the consequences. Pavia gets a trio of maps that should allow you to set up scenario terrain. The biggest problem is that the maps have no scale -- how could include a map without a scale is beyond me.

Incidentally, GM Martyn Kelly offered the definitive miniatures scenario of Pavia at Historicon 2025. You can supplement the maps by finding photos or videos of his magnificent creation that won the Best of Show award.



One typo: "August1521" (p63) needs a space.

The book contains six black and white photos, 25 black and white illustrations, and three black and white maps. The dynastic struggles of the early 1500s can be difficult to follow, but this book does a good job of providing an overview.

Enjoyed it.

**Douglas DC-8: Legends of Flight.** by Wolfgang Borgmann. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 144 pages. 2026.

This heavily-illustrated book of everything DC-8 covers the initial design and development through its purchase by a host of airlines.

Ironically, this popular aircraft was late to the jet party, for the head of Douglas, Donald Wills Douglas, Sr., was in no hurry to upgrade his successful line of propeller-driven planes to jet-powered models. Only when he saw sales of rivals did he turn his design staff loose to enter the jet age. The main problem was engine noise and a few other technical troubles, but these were eventually fixed.

Of note, in 1956, the company built a full-scale fuselage to undergo full testing because the jet age put additional stresses on aircraft, which caused metal fatigue -- sometimes with fatal crashes. The company used titanium crack stoppers in construction and simulated 113,000 flights before the first crack, around a window, occurred and the stoppers did their job. Think about that. Today's computer modeling is supposed to simulate that, but even the F-35 suffered from fatigue and had to be upgraded. Nothing like building an actual item to test an actual item.

I never experienced the "golden age" of flying in the 1950s and 1960s. Back then, a commission set ticket prices, so the airlines competed on service and amenities. Now it's herd class, sardine service, and allegedly cheap air fares -- I suppose you get what you pay for, but airlines get grumpy passengers what they service for. Last pleasant flight I had was in the 1990s on a now defunct airline called Midwest Express from Newark NJ to Milwaukee, WI, for GenCon. Wide seating, ample knee room, and non-harried flight staff. Oh well. No idea what the plane type was but not a DC-8.

The book contains 40 black and white photos, 139 color photos, and three black and white illustrations. The airlines run the gamut from Africa Safari Airways to United Airlines, so the modeler can pick the livery. Philanthropic airlines are also covered as are overviews of competitors like the Boeing 707 and Vickers VC 10.

You may not place a DC-8 on a wargame table very often, but it was interesting to take a look back on one early jet passenger aircraft.

Enjoyed it.

**The Brandywine Campaign 1777: The Revolutionary War.** by Michael C. Harris. Softcover (6.75x9.4 inches). 128 pages. 2026.

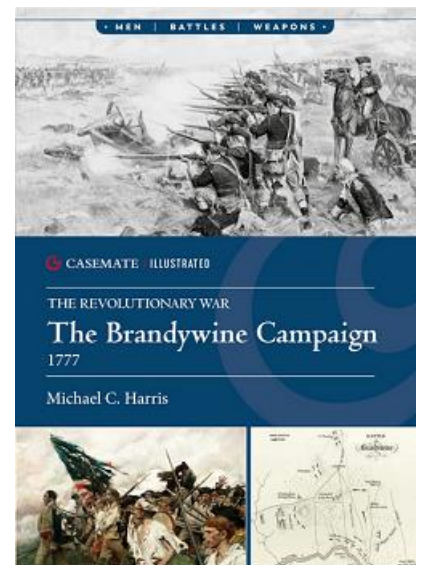
Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

As we've come to expect from the *Casemate Illustrated* series, this new volume continues the excellent mix of text and illustrations. This campaign starts with General George Washington hedging his bets on the destination of the sailing British/Hessian Army. That turned out to be Head of Elk, MD, and a northward march to Philadelphia. Washington moved to intercept and made his stand at Brandywine Creek.

The volume includes the usual timeline, discussion of weaponry and equipment, and an overview of the planning and maneuvers that led to the battle as well as the combat itself. Short bios of key generals and leaders pepper the text.

The booklet contains 79 color photos, mostly re-enactors and modern shots of battlefield locations, 21 black and white illustrations, 15 color illustrations, and 10 color maps (modern and period). The modern map of the battlefield area (p57) shows key roads, fords, elevations, and towns of a roughly seven-mile by 10-mile area. The main battle site in the hills and at the ford would measure four miles by six miles -- a nice fit on a 4x6-foot table at a scale of 150 yards to the inch.

What it lacks is an OOB with numbers -- you'll have to ferret the info from the text. For example, a British regiment had a theoretical paper strength of 811 soldiers, but "every regiment was understrength." (p16) For the Continentals, Gen. Greene's division had 2,500 men, Wayne's division 2,000 men, and Sullivan's 1,800 men (p58), but



Armstrong's militia division did not include a number (p60) and Stephen's division of 2,100 men would be mentioned later (p82). Which regiment or unit belonged to which division requires even closer reading. Wargamers always want nicely formatted OOBs and numbers.

I'd also prefer a larger font for my grognard eyes. A few less re-enactor photos might do the trick. However, the battle and the campaign are well told and this is a fine addition to the series. Enjoyed it.

**Okinawa 1945: Air Campaign 59.** by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *The Royal Navy's Biggest Carrier Campaign*

The US Navy gets the lion's share of histories about the invasion of Okinawa and the battle against kamikazes. Yet, the British Royal Navy played an important part in suppressing Japanese airfields on the Sakashima Islands, used as a base for kamikaze attacks. In the process, the RN also became a target for kamikaze aircraft.

Besides the technical makeup of the RN four-aircraft carrier Task Force (equal to a USN Task Group) and operations, you get an almost mission by mission account of fighter sweeps, bomber attacks, and kamikaze defense. Most RN attacks against the airfields were carried out by Corsairs, Hellcats, and Avengers while most CAP over the fleet used Seafires.

The airfields were often cratered but fixed overnight -- British bombs were not as effective as US-design bombs in creating big craters. On the other hand, British carriers used armored decks, so even when kamikazes hit, damage was minimized and the carrier was back soon in operation. The same damage on US carriers with wooden decks often required extensive repairs back at a naval base.

The booklet contains 64 black and white photos, one color photo, three black and white illustrations, one color illustration, nine color diagrams, and four color maps. I will again complain about the tiny type font -- I'm sure this gives the layout department either a chuckle or a groan.

No groans here, just a great read about the British operation during the Okinawa campaign. Enjoyed it.



**The Early Anglo-Saxon Kings.** by Tony Sullivan. Softcover (6.3x9.2 inches). 219 pages. 2025 reprint of 2023 book.

The Angles and Saxons gradually conquered Roman Britain in the 5th and 6th Century AD, although the book cover part of the 7th Century as well as invasions by the Jutes and Frisians. The analysis of the period histories is especially well integrated within broader military and political events.

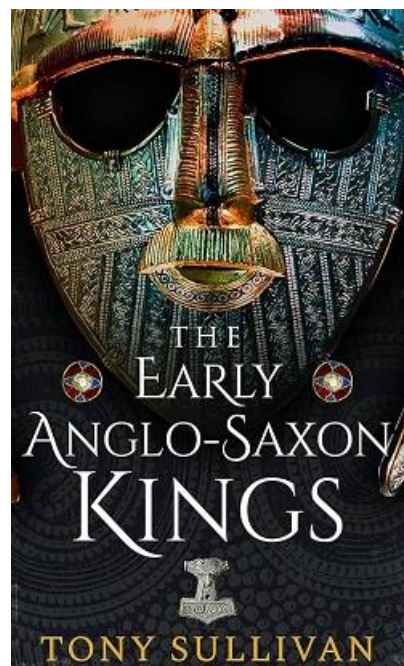
Chapter 4, Weapons and Warfare, discuss the warriors, equipment, and tactics of the time. The centrally-organized Roman armies gradually gave way to the local warband led by a chief. Of note in their histories, the Kinglne law code defined any unit of 35 warriors or more an "army" (p94). Most of them used spear and shield and while accounts may quote armies of 5,000 to 15,000 men, 5,000 to 6,000 would be an upper limit for the number of men in any force (p94).

King Arthur and his battles, especially Badon Hill, are discussed as part of the historical events. Depending on the interpretation of the various sources, that battle is recorded between the late 5th Century and early 6th century.

Of note, the most famous sword in history, Excalibur, is a named sword derived from Caliburn. Lesser known are the shield named Pridwen and spear Rhongomyant (p143). Indeed, various texts record the names of 200 swords (p100) of the period.

The book lacks an Index, a rather unconscionable omission. The text has a tab format gaffe (p82), "Ambrsosiuss" (p141) has a typo "s," and "duel kingship" (p81) is probably "dual" -- although given the considerable warfare of the period, dueling might be a possibility.

The book contains 35 black and white photos, 16 black and white maps, three black and white illustrations, and a number of helpful tables.



A new word for me: floruit. The web defines it as: the period during which a historical figure lived or worked. Learn something new every day.

It's a book dense with information, so read carefully.

Enjoyed it.

**AfrikaKorps at War 1941-1943.** by George Forty and Simon Forty. Hardback (8.2x10.3 inches). 256 pages. 2026, revised reprint of 1978 book.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated Special*

If you're going to recycle something from almost 50 years ago, this is an excellent way to do so. While I don't think I ever read the original, I am impressed with the revised reprint, which consolidated multiple volumes into one, added new material, and was edited overall for a smooth read.

Besides a recap of desert operations, this offers an informative overview of the AfrikaKorps' TO&E, uniforms, equipment, vehicles, and tactics. Kudos for the charts (p53-54 and p69) showing weapon ranges and lethality for the various tanks and AT guns. More kudos for minefield layouts (p77-78)

Rommel and his supporting officers and men receive special attention for their drive and perseverance in primitive conditions. And let's not forget a very favorable opinion of the "chivalry" (if you can call it that) between opposing sides.

A multitude of German soldier and officer excerpts populate the text, with some that go on for multiple pages. I'm more a fan of using excerpts strategically and sparingly. That they contain info is no doubt, but many over-explain the desert is hot, dry, dusty, and camouflage is a must. I will admit that I was surprised by the number of times rain is mentioned -- my guess is that rain surprised the landsers, too.

As for some interesting info: An 88mm AT gun can be set up in two and a half minutes (p72) and I often read mentions of the song Lilli Marlene (or Marleen to the Germans), but the text (p136-143) was absolutely superb in explaining the song origins and what the lyrics meant to the troops.

It wouldn't be a Casemate Illustrated Special without the extraordinary selection of imagery: 325 black and white photos, 29 color photos, 10 black and white illustrations, 25 color illustrations, four black and white maps, and 27 color maps.

Well done.

Enjoyed it.

**Soldiers and Civilians, Transport and Provisions.** by Glenn W. Price.

Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 256 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Early Modern Military Logistics and Supply Systems During the British Civil Wars 1638-1653*

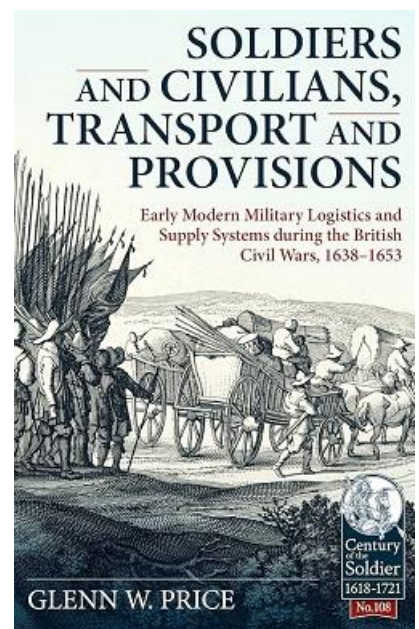
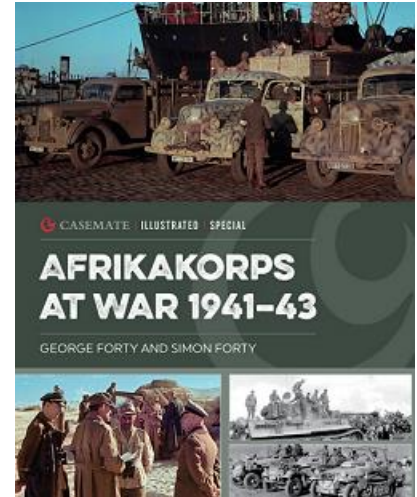
My guess, and this is only a guess, is that the subtitle was the title of the author's PhD thesis and the rhyming-ish title was a marketing decision. I may be selling the author short. Then again, I shudder when I find out a book is a repurposed PhD thesis. In this case, I was selling the author short.

While it certainly contains an academic style or prose, and far too many mentions of this historian or that researcher for a general book, the prose actually enters readable territory.

I don't mean that to be condescending, only that I've read enough repurposed PhD studies that enter unreadable territory. So, kudos to the teaming of author and editor.

That said, this book is dense with information about how English Civil War-era armies obtained and dispersed supplies in four main chapters: land transportation, water transportation, recruitment, and provisioning.

Each details what was required and how it was and was not fulfilled. For example, in land transportation, an examination of wagons versus carts versus pack horses offers considerable insight on use and selection. A packhorse was better at carrying loads over difficult terrain and faster (25 miles to 33 miles per day) than wheeled vehicles, but only carried about 240 pounds per horse, or about 0.75 ton for six horses. The two-wheeled cart equivalent was 1.25 tons and the four-wheel wagon was 2 tons, but generally needed roads and was slower (20 miles to 25 miles per day) (p35).



Water transport was good at shipping bulk goods, but limited to sea ports and larger rivers. Boats often supplied besieged towns, assuming the besieging army didn't fully interdict the river.

Infantry recruitment went from volunteers to conscription (called 'impressment'), with the latter causing resentment and a corresponding increase in desertion from lack of pay and lack of food. Cavalry recruitment was often by invitation to lesser nobility, as more funds were needed to maintain a war horse.

Provisioning appeared to be the real problem with maintaining an army in the field. Besides resentment from forcible quartering of troops, ill-fed troops often confiscated food from the local farmers -- including taking animals in situ or on the march and raiding cellars and other stored foodstuffs. The related topic of limited preparation and storage of flour for bread and the different types of "flour" for bread or porridge proved interesting.

The book contains 20 black and white period woodcuts or portions of woodcuts, four black and white maps, and one black and white photo.

I'd recommend reading through the extensive bibliography. Anyone contemplating an ECW wargame campaign will appreciate the effort that went into ferreting out data and the insight into how logistics shaped historical ECW campaigns. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

**Heinkel HE 219 Units: Combat Aircraft 159.** by Martin Streetly. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

The HE-219 started design life as a fast bomber or heavy fighter, but as that was deemed unnecessary, it was redeveloped as a purpose-built night fighter. The British night bombers started raining bombs on German cities and something other than converted twin-engine fighters was needed.

Except the head of the Luftwaffe, Milch, took a disliking to the design and did everything he could to kill the project. Yet, it persevered and the first prototype flew on Nov. 6, 1942 (p9) with the second prototype flying on Jan. 10, 1943 (p10). Despite Milch's efforts, the ninth prototype flew the first mission and shot down three British bombers on June 11-12, 1943 (p12). That helped put it in production, although technical issues required updated designs.

With up to six 20mm/30mm cannons, it had the firepower to take down four-engine bombers. Radar helped vector it into the bomber stream. It also included ejector seats for both crew members that were used with varying success.

The text doesn't make for the most scintillating read, as it's comprehensive, if repetitive. Log entries, I imagine, peppered with first-person accounts.

The booklet contains 54 black and white photos, three color photos, one black and white illustration, one color illustration, and 20 color camouflage profiles of specific aircraft. A modeler will enjoy those.

About 70 HE-219s were captured at the end of WWII. Five were sent to UK and three to US for testing. Of the eight, one HE-219 survives as a museum aircraft in the Udvar-Hazy Museum extension of the Smithsonian.

Enjoyed it.

**Siege of Kazan 1552: Campaign 426.** by Mark Galeotti. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

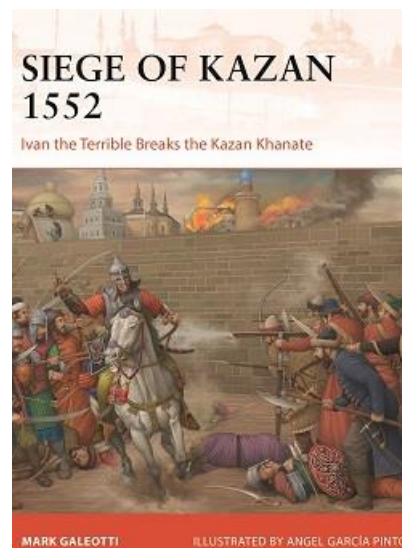
Subtitle: *Ivan the Terrible Breaks the Kazan Khanate*

The Russian early Renaissance period is pretty much a complete mystery to me -- a perfect topic for an Osprey *Campaign* volume. This certainly enlightened me.

The city of Kazan is about 500 miles east of Moscow and back then part of the territory that stretched towards Moscow and partway down the Volga River. Consider the Khanate one of the successor states to the Mongols, so battles and campaigns swirled around the neighborhood.

The first two sieges by the Russians failed, but the third proved a charm. Cannons battered and mining undermined the wooden walls. Troops swarmed in and after only a day, the city was captured by the Russians. The guerrilla war lasted years until additional Russian forces clamped that down.

The campaign didn't end at Kazan. The Russians marched down the Volga and took Astrakhan as well. Then they ran into the Ottoman Empire, but that's a



campaign for another day.

Per usual, the format includes commanders, plans, weaponry, equipment, tactics, and an overview of military operations. It's all well documented, such as the sources allow, and well told.

The booklet contains 24 black and white illustrations, 22 color illustrations, 21 color photos, five color maps, one black and white map, two 3D color maps, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

**U-Boat vs Royal Navy Capital Ship 1939-45: Duel 150.** by Mark Lardas. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2026.

Most U-boats attacked Allied cargo ships, but five major British ships were sunk by U-Boats: Aircraft Carriers *HMS Eagle*, *HMS Ark Royal*, and *HMS Courageous* and battleships *HMS Royal Oak* and *HMS Barham*. Other capital ships were damaged and others lucked out due to faulty German torpedoes.

The submarines and capital ships received full coverage of tech specs, design, development, chronology, and crew training. Then the actions heat up with U-boats stalking the British battleships, aircraft carriers, and surrounding convoys. Successes and failures get explained and tallied.

During the war, the Germans built 1,162 U-boats (p76), of which 30 were lost during training (p49). Most went into the Atlantic Ocean, but 62 drifted past Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean Sea (p75), where they were trapped by currents and heightened British Anti-Submarine Warfare capabilities.

At war's end, 397 U-boats remained, of which 222 were scuttled, 169 surrendered, seven were in Japanese waters and taken over by the Japanese, and two surrendered to Argentina (p76).

The booklet contains 52 black and white photos, one illustration, 22 color illustrations, four color maps, five color illustrations, 16 color camouflage profiles, one color two-page action illustration, and two color one-page action illustrations.

Four U-boats are on display at museums: *U-505* in Chicago, *U-995* in Kiel, *U-2540* in Bremerhaven, and *U-534* in Liverpool.

It's well-told history of a subset of the submarine warfare between Germany and Britain.

Enjoyed it.

**US and Allied Special Forces in Afghanistan 2009-21: Elite 264.** by John Parkinson. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2026.

The US sent special forces troops into Afghanistan as part of the counter-insurgency strategy and later expanded the mission to include training Afghan forces.

You'll find lots of acronyms within the text. Fortunately, a glossary (p62) is included for you to reference. The campaign to win hearts and minds, especially when it came to stabilizing the economy and ejecting Taliban control over villages, was only partially successful. As Special Forces increasingly ambushed and killed the Taliban, the Taliban shifted to attacking and influencing Afghan trainees.

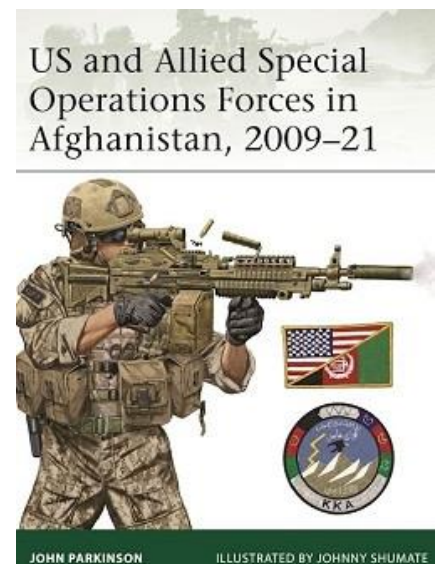
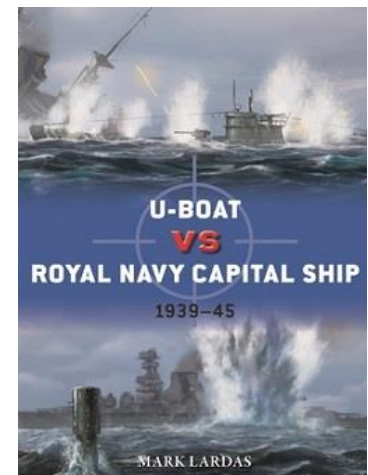
As in Vietnam, secret negotiations were held in 2018 and 2019 and also like Vietnam, an election was held for the Afghan presidency. Also like Vietnam, the US and Allies withdrew to the consternation of many Afghans. And also like Vietnam, the victorious Taliban did what it wanted once US and Allied forces left.

One typo: "the beach Taliban defenses" (p13) is likely "breach."

The booklet contains one black and white photo, 41 color photos, 20 color uniform illustrations, and 18 color insignia and lath illustrations.

Miniature painters of the ultra-modern war in Afghanistan will find much inside to use as a reference. The text explains the success and ultimate futility of special forces operations in Afghanistan.

Enjoyed it.



**Seleucid Armies 312-63 BC: Men At Arms 567.** by William Horsted. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2026.

If you need an ancients campaign to wargame, the internecine warfare among Alexander the Great's successors is a great one.

The Seleucid Empire, founded by Alex's general Seleucus and increased by his successors, ultimately stretched from Syria to Afghanistan. Unfortunately, that land also fell between the Roman Empire and the emerging Parthian Empire.

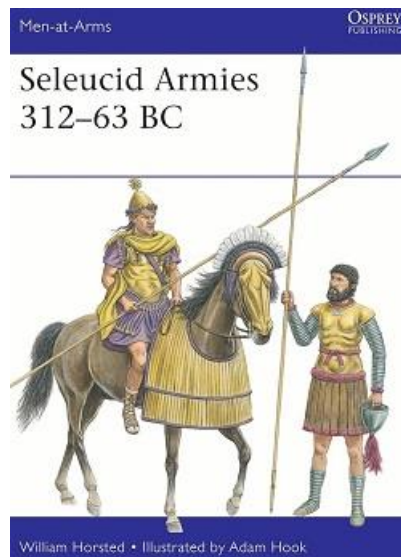
The arms, armor, and equipment of the infantry, cavalry, and elephant units receive detailed examination. Certain units, termed 'national' in the text receive extra attention.

Recruitment and training are covered, as is the all-important deployment. The phalanx was usually in the center, with elephants and cavalry on the wings, although sometimes variations were used depending on the opponent.

The booklet contains seven black and white photos, 27 color photos, five color illustrations, seven black and white illustrations, and 27 color uniform illustrations: 20 infantry, five cavalry, one elephant, and one chariot.

The troops were not so different than those in the Greek and Persian wars. The outcome depended on the Roman and Parthian opponents.

Enjoyed it.



**Italian Adriatic Fleet 1915-18: Fleet 15.** by Enrico Cernuschi. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *The Fierce Naval Battle With Austria-Hungary*

Italy and Austria-Hungary (A-H) were rivals with a variety of older ships squaring off in the Adriatic Sea. When Italy finally declared war in 1915, the two sides mostly used hit and run tactics. Submarine, bombardments, and air attacks are also included.

After an examination of command and ships, year by year highlights of combats dominate the text. The tabular format is especially helpful. Many of the engagements are ripe for tabletop scenarios.

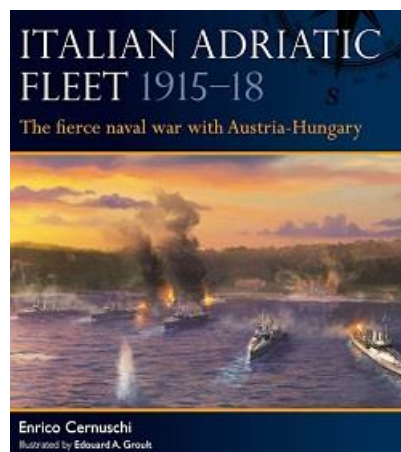
You may have heard of the *Flight of the Goeben*, but in the Adriatic, it was the Flight of the Helgoland, an A-H "scout" ship escorted by two destroyers trying to get back to port (p38).

One typo: missing period at end of sentence (p33). Also, the map (p57) grid is off when comparing distances using the squares explaining the Strait of Otranto battle (May 15, 1917).

The booklet contains 40 black and white photos, two color maps, three one-page color diagrams of battles, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Besides all the naval matters, you never know what interesting factoids pop up in an Osprey booklet. While the July 1914 assassination and subsequent war declarations are well known, who knew that in March 1914, the German Prince of Wied became King of Albania, only to be overthrown two months later after refusing to become an Italian protectorate (p10)? How did that happen? And by whom? Albania would be in the flank of Italian seapower and was vied for by both Italy and Austria-Hungary since 1860. Another Osprey booklet...

Enjoyed it.

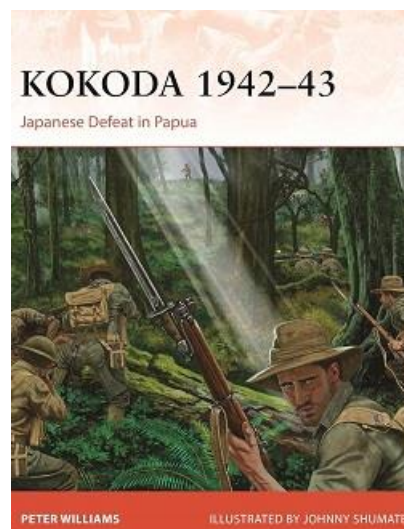


**Kokoda 1942-43: Campaign 425.** by Peter Williams. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *Japanese Defeat in Papua*

The Japanese, foiled at the landing of Milne Bay (Papua New Guinea) and rebuffed at the Battle of Coral Sea, launched an attack via an overland route to try and capture Port Moresby. The Kokoda Trail was narrow and went through jungle and over mountains, but the Japanese advanced against the Australians.

Initial success of outflanking defensive position after position ended in a halt as the Japanese Command sent reinforcements to Guadalcanal. The reinforced Australians then counter-attacked. So began a to-and-fro campaign among the mountains and jungle.



As with all volumes in the series, this one outlines a strategic background, commanders, plans, forces, and chronology. Three OOBs (Milne Bay (September 1942), Kokoda Trail July-November 1942, and Buna-Kona (November 1942-January 1943) drill down to the battalion level. Then comes an overview of the campaign, hitting the high and low points for both sides.

Logistics, terrain, and weather proved to be significant handicaps for both sides. The Japanese force, on a shoestring to begin with, withered as Guadalcanal drew off troops. Eventually, numbers and supplies outweighed fighting spirit and the Japanese were pushed back to their launching point and the Australians and US went on to capture Buna-Kona area. It's all well explained.

The booklet contains 56 black and white photos, four color photos, seven color maps, two color illustrations, one 3D map, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Years ago, I played in a *Command Decision* scenario based on the Japanese attack along the Kokoda Trail. The jungle proved as difficult to navigate on the tabletop as in history, although I managed to cut off half an Australian battalion. This booklet will give you the basics for a number of scenarios.

Enjoyed it.

**Soviet Tanks at Stalingrad 1942-43: New Vanguard 345.** by William E. Hiestand. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 48 pages. 2026.

The Soviet Army was nothing if not resilient, helped by industry and a goodly amount of Lend Lease material. While the majority of tanks were generally obsolete, woefully inadequate training, inept planning and command, and inferior logistics allowed the Germans to run up the score.

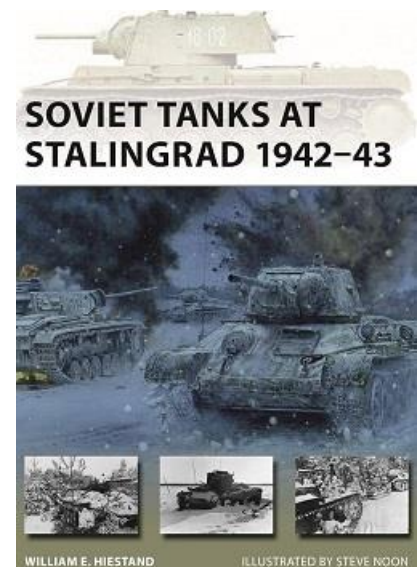
In 1942 alone, the Soviets lost over 15,000 tanks -- 6,600 T-34s, 7,200 T60/T70s, 1,200 KV 1s, and 1,750 Lend Lease US and UK tanks. The Germans lost 2,480 tanks in 1942, plus another 563 in North Africa (p43). On the other side of the ledger, the Soviets produced 24,231 tanks, of which 12,535 were T-34s and 2,426 were KV 1s. No numbers on T-60/T-70, although that production was phased out. I imagine German numbers are in a German Tanks book.

Of course, you get a lot of technical specifications that grognards already know but those new to the subject may not.

Campaign coverage starts with the Kerch peninsula and Kharkov, then transitions into Fall Blau. Operations Uranus, Little Saturn, Mars, and Winter Storm are covered in brief.

The booklet contains 40 black and white photos, 13 color camouflage profiles (11 tanks, one armored train, and one riverboat), and one color two-page action illustration.

This thin booklet is a starting point for learning about the Eastern Front. Enjoyed it.



**Byzantine Soldier Versus Seljuk Warrior: Combat 84.** by Si Sheppard. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2026.

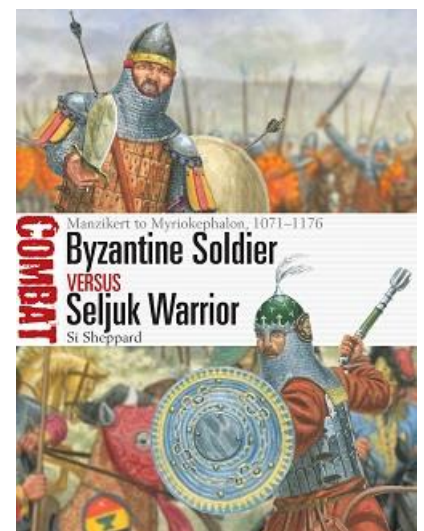
Subtitle: *Manzikert to Myriokephalon 1071-1176*

Byzantium as empire declined as far-flung provinces fell under the attack by a variety of peoples along the periphery, especially the Seljuks in modern-day Turkey.

Per usual, detailed examination of arms, armor, tactics, and command funnel into three battles. In this volume: Manzikert (Aug. 26, 1071, Philomelion (sometime in 1116), and Myriokephalon (Sep. 17, 1176). The first was a Byzantine disaster, made worse by internal quarrels by commanders with the empoeror. The second was a hollow square success for Byzantium. The last, also known as Tzibritze Pass, was a prepared ambush in the defile that cut up the Byzantines enough to turn around and fight their way back through the pass.

The battles are all summarized nicely and include a map and general OOB -- tabletop scenarios at the ready. You might need a bit more research, but the basics are there.

One typo: "withdrawing to hilltops after expanding their arrows" (p53) should be "expending."



The booklet contains three black and white photos, 60 color photos (about half of painted illustrations and half of museum pieces), five color maps, two color illustrations of a Byzantine heavy infantryman, two color illustrations of a Seljuk horse archer on foot, and three color two-page action illustration.

It's another fine volume in the series.

Enjoyed it.

**John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs.** by Ian Leslie. Hardback (7.25x9.75 inches). 444 pages. 2025.

I couldn't help humming Beatles songs while reading this book. Virtually every chapter is a deconstruction on how the interaction of Paul McCartney's and John Lennon's personalities intertwined to create what now classic rock and roll songs. It is also an evolution of the songwriting, from simple chords, lyrics, and music to more sophisticated themes and orchestration. I can't say I knew each and every song discussed, but the vast majority have been played on the radio over the years, they are quite familiar.

I'll leave the music theory to the experts, but a couple of notions stand out in my memory. McCartney and Lennon were not trained at an early age -- they just picked up a guitar and played. As McCartney was left-handed, he initially turned a guitar upside down to play, forming a somewhat mirror image when playing with John. He later restrung the strings. They were not flush with cash back in the early days.

Initially, they would work out songs and then bring them to the group to refine. Later, they used the recording studio as their song incubator, bringing fragments of music and lyrics to work on together. George and Ringo were part of the creative process as well, as was producer George Martin.

Pity I couldn't have used my connections at EMI to be a part of a Beatles album. The chairman of EMI records at the time was Sir Joseph Lockwood (p259), no doubt a distant relation who would have recognized my obvious talent and allowed me to play lead rattle on a song.

After mid-60s, they stopped organized touring. The contract called for two albums and two singles per year. They also consumed copious amount of drugs -- LSD was an early favorite.

But over it all was their abiding friendship that drove their creativity. Even when they were involved in major disagreements that ultimately caused the break-up of the band, they remained in loose touch.

The book contains 17 black and white photos and four color photos.

If you are looking for a book about how friendship stoked the creativity of two of the most talented rock and roll songwriters in history, here's an excellent examination of the music and lyrics of John and Paul.

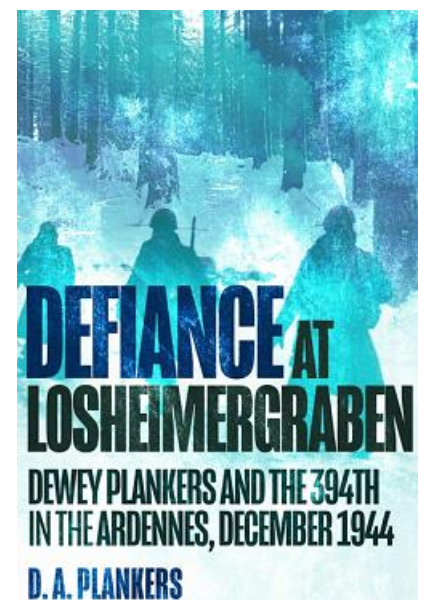
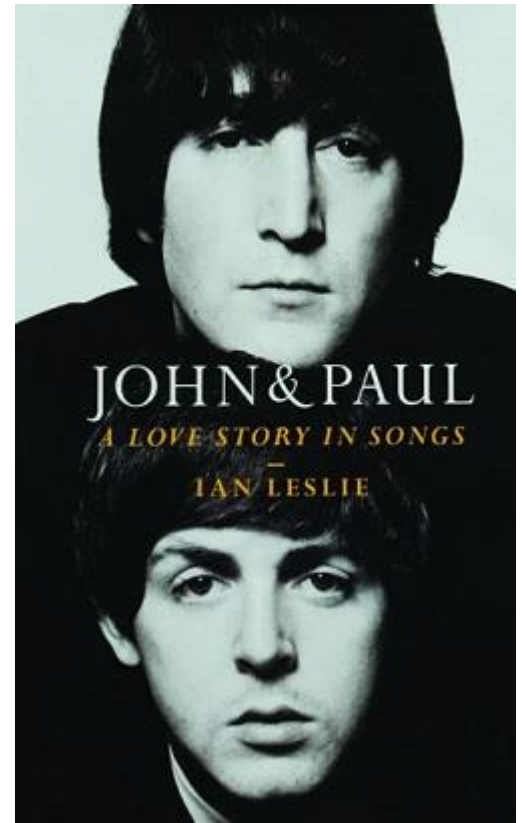
Enjoyed it.

**Defiance at Losheimergraben.** by D. A. Plankers. Hardback (6.3x9.2 inches). 205 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *Dewey Plankers and the 394th in the Ardennes, December 1944*

Losheimergraben is a crossroads town located in the better-known Losheim Gap. The 394th Infantry Regiment of the US 99th Division held a 6,500-yard frontage in the Gap, of which the 1st Battalion held 3,500 of those yards (p25). During the Battle of the Bulge, Dewey Plankers became the defacto commander of the troops, organized as well as disorganized fleeing troops, that held the crossroads for two days against two German infantry divisions and supporting tanks before being overwhelmed. About a third of the battalion made it back to American lines.

This book covers the 394th in general, platoons of the 1st battalion in greater detail, and Lt. Plankers in specific. Since remnants held the crossroads, action down to squad level offers food for thought if you play Battle of the Bulge hex wargamers. Lt. Plankers' heroic efforts to corral fleeing soldiers, keep his own men on the line, and perform active command and control over his diminishing



number of soldiers is rather inspirational. In most hex wargames, two divisions versus a single battalion is most likely D-Elim (so to grognard-speak). Small-unit holding actions were not unique to the Bulge campaign, but Lt. Plankers' efforts present the best of a can-do spirit.

Other factoids: The 99th division took a week to be loaded onto four rather crowded ships, 11 days to sail from Boston (US) to Liverpool (UK), two days to disembark and transfer, 19 days in camp, four days to get to LeHavre (France), and two days to get to Belgium to man a 19-mile long relatively quiet front to get acclimated to combat operations.

The book contains 18 black and white photos, 11 color photos, and six black and white maps.

This all makes for an excellent test of WWII wargame rules because this entire book makes for one interesting scenario. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

**The Gulf Theater 1813-15: War of 1812.** by Joseph F. Stoltz III. Softcover (6.75x9.4 inches). 128 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

Like just about all of these *Casemate Illustrated War of 1812* booklets, this is based on the US Army "blue" book -- a public domain publication that gets edited and a copious amount of additional illustrations. I call it a "blue" book because my US Army copy has a blue cloth cover.

That said, this volume delivers a fine overview of the war in and around the Gulf of Mexico. Per usual, you get a timeline, examination of weapons and equipment, short bios of commanders, and information on a couple obscure, or at least obscure to me, sieges and battles.

Two scenarios stand out: the night-time Battle of Villere Plantation and the daytime Battle of New Orleans (Chalmette). Good maps for both and the text includes good distances between salient features of the battlefields.

One thing I wish would have been added is a formatted OOB (although you get one for the British inside the text -- p47) with numerical strengths (some numbers intertwined in the text).

Oh yeah, and a larger font. Yes, I will continue to lobby for larger fonts for us grognard-eyed folks.

A possible third scenario: The Second Battle of Fort Bowyer in what-if mode had the US relief column arrived sooner before the British siege compelled the US defenders to surrender. It was only two days before official word that the Treaty of Ghent had been signed arrived at the fort.

So, the volume delivers a nice foundation with lots of illustrations populating the pages and inspiration for a couple of tabletop scenarios.

Enjoyed it.

**Hitler's Fallschirmjager's Daring Attack on the Italian Army Headquarters in 1943.** by Guido Ronconi. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 304 pages. 2025 English translation of 2023 book.

Subtitle: *One of the Last Airborne Operations by German Paratroopers in WW2.*

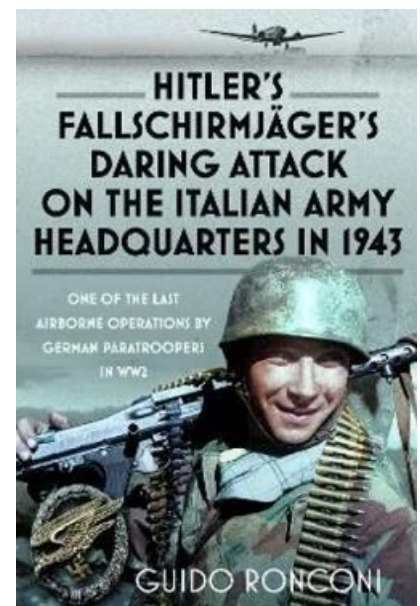
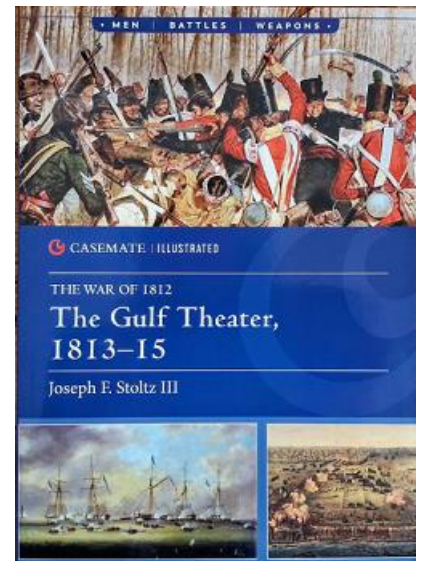
Between the long title and subtitle, I don't have to explain what the book is about.

That said, I didn't know the German 2nd Battalion, 6th Regiment 2nd Fallschirmjager Division did a paratroop on the Italian Army HQ in 1943.

The OOB analysis for both German and Italian forces, including weaponry, equipment, and other TO&E material, provides an excellent foundation for understanding how the attack was planned and carried out. The end result will surprise you, or at least it did me.

When Italy surrendered in September 1943, the Germans occupied the country up to the front line. A key objective was the HQ that controlled the Army in a little town called Monterotondo. The 2nd battalion was assigned using a paratrooper drop. Unfortunately, the Germans didn't understand that actual military command was in the hands of the Commando Supremo. Ooops.

Even worse, all the HQ generals weren't in Monterotondo, having been transferred to Rome. Double ooops.



The 2nd Battalion didn't know that and dropped near the town. So began an operation to capture the Orsini Palace with the skill and verve of the good ol' paratrooper days of 1940 and 1941.

As the operation concerned only a single battalion of a Command company, three infantry companies, and a heavy weapons company, the detail is down to squads and sometimes individual German soldiers. The Orsini Palace garrison is small and the relief force of two reduced Italian battalions is small as well.

You know what I'm going to say: This makes for a nifty scenario pitting a small experienced force with mostly small arms against a larger, less experienced force with small arms and supporting heavier weaponry.

The book contains 36 black and white photos and 10 generally useful black and white maps.

The prose may be more outlined bullet points than text, but the information within is golden. Even the end result of the operation was a surprise. This is a great little book about an obscure paratrooper operation.

Enjoyed it.

**A Bad Day I Fear.** by Michael James Nugent. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 232 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Irish Divisions at the Battle of Langemarck - 16 August 1917*

The 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division spearheaded the attack in the Langemarck area in just about the worst possible rainstorm and mud you can imagine -- made worse by the preliminary bombardment destroying all the drainage systems. The Germans had built lines of barbed-wire protected concrete "pillboxes" with machine guns to break up attacks. Concrete dugouts protected the troops needed for the counterattack.

The casualties were horrendous even before the official start of the attack. The German artillery caused a steady number of casualties per day: 850 killed between July 31 and August 15. Another 1,250 were killed during the battle of August 16 to 20 (p208). All totaled, the 16th Division lost 221 officers and 4064 other ranks from August 1 to 20, while the 36th Division lost 144 officers and 3,441 other ranks (p185-186).

The paper strength of the 26 battalions is about 1,000 men per battalion, but the Irish battalions were understrength, sometimes as low as 40% by the time they went into the attack.

Much of the book includes one or two paragraph bios of officers and other ranks killed in the battle. Many of the photos are tombstones of these men. Some of the accounts are fascinating, others somewhat of a repeat.

If you plan to set up a scenario, the 11th Inniskilling Regiment (battalion) offers a typical formation. It had a frontage of 400 yards, with two companies up front to attack and mop up and two companies behind in support to pass through and capture the next objective line. Two MG teams also advanced, with the rest of the 109th MG Brigade firing in barrage support. Each company had two platoons up and one in support (p167).

The book contains 46 black and white photos and nine black and white maps that can serve as the basis for a tabletop layout.

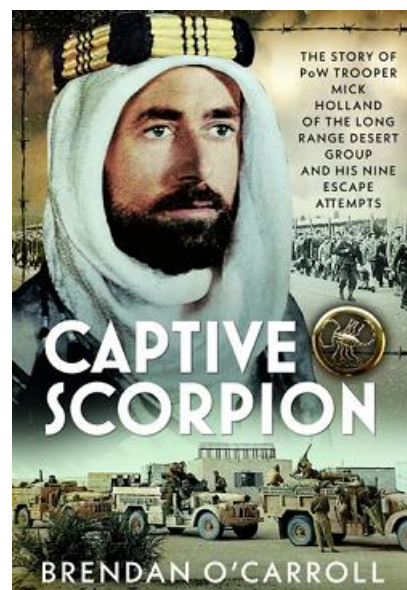
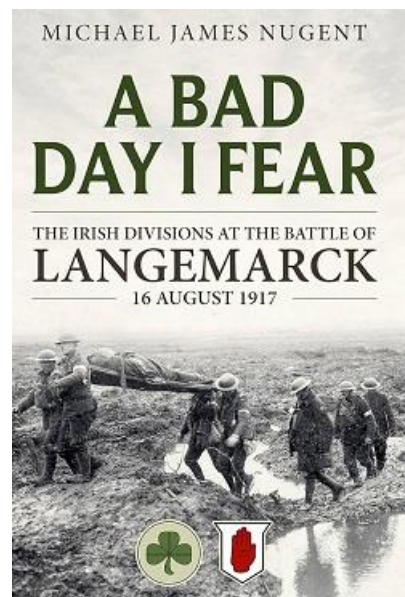
The Irish divisions did as best they could considering the terrain, weather, and German defensive system. Here's a detailed account of how the day went bad. Enjoyed it.

**Captive Scorpion.** by Brendan O'Carroll. Hardback (7.0x10.0 inches). 241 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *The Story of PoW Trooper Mick Holland of the Long Range Desert Group and His Nine Escape Attempts*

Most of the book covers Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) operations, which included Horace Thomas Richard Holland, known as Mick. He was captured after the Barce Raid and "held" as a POW for two and a half years. I put "held" in quotes because it seems he spent more time roaming around outside of POW camps than inside. He eventually ended up in Germany, until the end of the war.

Being fluent in Italian and German and sent to Italy as a POW, he was able to pass for an Italian until re-captured...again and again. He seemed to have a penchant for visiting various cities and even joined a guerrilla group against the



Germans for a while.

His autobiographical account (p172-234) forms the mainstay of his nine escape attempts. He notes extensive help from Italian farmers in evading Italian pursuits.

The book contains 229 black and white photos, nine black and white illustrations, and six black and white maps.

It's a heckuva story.

Enjoyed it.

**French Infantry During the Seven Years War 1756-1763: Reason to Regiment 152.** by Jean-Louis Vial. Softcover (7.0x9.8 inches). 119 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Volume 2: Regimental Distinctions and Colours*

Subtitle: *Part 2: French Regiments No. 75 to No. 105 and Foreign*

*Regiments*

Each regiment receives a short history of a few paragraphs followed by uniforms and colors section. It discusses the official regulations versus the period illustrations, including changes over time, slight differences with other regiments, and the colonel's colors. Most also note that the drummers wore the Royal livery - - presumably covered in a previous volume.

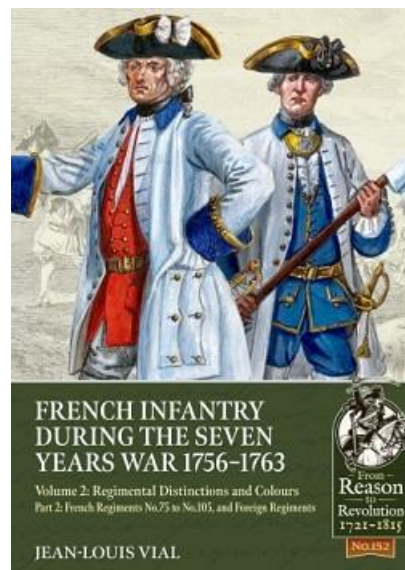
The illustrations, often two regiments per page, usually showcase one or two color coat profiles, sometimes a color front coat illustration, and the regimental flag. Sometimes, changes by year are shown, other times, only a flag or only a coat is shown.

Not every regiment is included. Of the No. 75 to No. 105, only 20 regiments are covered. There are no illustrations of information for regiments 90-95, 98, 99, and 101-103.

Of the foreign regiments, covered are 12 Swiss and Grisonian, 14 German, eight Irish and Swedish, two Italian, two Liegeoise, and two militia regiments.

If you are looking for a reference for 7YW French infantry uniforms, *Volume 2* will be a big help. *Volume 1* would be a good idea, too.

Enjoyed it.



**Panther Medium Tank: TankCraft 46.** by Dennis Oliver. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 64 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *German Army, Waffen-SS and Luftwaffe Units*

Subtitle: *Eastern Front 1944*

I always enjoy the *TankCraft* volumes, which include a nice historical overview, OOB info, and of course, marvelous color camouflage illustrations, and magnificent color photos of plastic models crafted by experts.

Combat operations, OOBs, production, design changes, and close-up photos of tanks bring the history out. For those who wish to paint up models or miniatures, referencing the color camouflage tank profiles provides a number of choices.

The color photos of the models showcases the talents of what can be done with a plastic model and a paintbrush. The same color schemes apply to plastic or metal miniatures, too.

One non-fatal typo: "Models," (p42) in a headline should have the comma deleted. One possibly fatal typo: "1/25 scale" (caption p43) is more than likely 1/35 scale since all other references are 1/35.

The booklet contains 64 historical black and white photos, one black and white map, five black and white illustrations, three black and white visual OOBs, 24 color tank profiles, 16 color insignias, 62 color photos of 1/35 scale tank models, 13 color model box art illustrations, and three other color photos. Contact information for model companies are included as well.

It's a visual treat. Another well-done volume.

Enjoyed it.

