

Historicon 2026: Another Success

Tabletop Deception: *Snappy Nappy* 1808

Triple Threat: A Trio of EuroGames

Robin Hood: Welcome to Sherwood

More Age of Sail: Hexes

Brooding With Bugs: Invasion

New Wave War of the Worlds: UK Invasion

Aeon's End: The New Age

HMGS Next Generation: Heating Up

NEWS: Games, Minis, Conventions, and more

Books I've Read

The Battle of Leuctra: 371 BC

Under The Red Banner: 43rd Gds Tank WWII

French Tanks and the Great War

Seeking the Saxon Shore: Forts

The War To End All Wars: NJ's Role WWI

The Panzer Archives: Volume 1

Scottish Rebellion Against Robert Bruce

Partisans & Guerrillas WWII: Images War

Time Trials (sci-fi novel)

T-72 Main Battle Tank



Historicon Highlights...





Just getting started: Thursday at 3:20pm in the Commonwealth ballroom.

Historicon 2026: Another Success

by Russ Lockwood

Historicon 2026 rolled into the Lancaster Convention Center Wednesday, July 15 through Sunday, July 19. Close to 1,000 events were in the PEL, including War College lectures, Hobby University painting classes, SPI Alive room, and a wide variety of tournaments. Of course, the dealer hall was in full vigor and the openings of the flea market times featured a crush of eager gamers.

The QRS code delivered up the badge in no time. If you pre-registered, you received a 34-page scenario magazine courtesy of Little Wars TV. It contained a half dozen scenarios, including Fort Mercer by celebrated GM Tom Uhl. You also received three 25mm American Revolution figures, a base, and a fantastic flag.

Dealer Area

First stop was the dealer area, saying hello to vendors and just walking the aisles to get a sense of it all. I picked up some items, probably to go along with last Historicon's purchases that I have yet to do anything with, but Historicon is nothing if not inspiration and dreaming.

Dealer Area overview.

Then I went on a walkabout. Technically, I was on a walkabout after I dropped my bags off in the room. No matter. Plenty of eye candy all over the convention. In absolutely no particular order...



Walkabout Thursday

I took some overview shots of the various ballrooms at various times: Commonwealth at 3:20pm, Heritage at 3:30pm, SPI Alive at 3:41pm, and the Flea Market.

Heritage Room 3:30pm

I know gamers love close-ups of games and figures, but these overview shots off a sense of the scale of the HMGS convention. I guess I should shoot video so you get a sense of the laughter and joy...

*SPI Alive room 3:41pm.
Kudos to Russ Gifford for making the drive all the way from Nebraska to run this event.*

American Civil War

The first game I saw was a spectacular 54mm/60mm American Civil War battle being set up. The Confederates seem to be advancing against a Union line at a split-rail fence. The puffs of smoke were a nice touch.



Bolt Action Tournament stretches into the distance.

Bolt Action Tournament

The well-attended tournament for *Bolt Action* stretched into the distance.



Grogg eyes appreciate large-sized ACW figures.



Carnage and Glory area with a game ready to go.

Carnage and Glory

I'm not sure of the symbolism, but the multiple *Carnage and Glory* games were played in the renovated "basement." It's not really a basement, but it is the lowest level you can reach via escalator. C&G always seems to have the longest tables....

Open Gaming and Game Library

The other part of the "basement" held open gaming and the Game Library. Often packed, which is a good sign. I was amused a bit by a game of *Stratego* as well as a gamer with two young lads playing *Mousetrap*.

The open gaming area with the Game Library.



Battle of Concord

I hadn't planned on doing more than a looksee in one of the conference rooms, but I found this American Revolution game on the Battle of Concord so fascinating, I stayed to watch through the end of it. The rules were *Light Bobs*, a card-driven system with plenty of shuffling suspense, tactical thinking, and cheering and jeering of die rolls.

GM Mark, center with checked shirt, composed such a close-run scenario, I stayed until the end.

The Americans were trying to force their way over a bridge and the British were trying to stop them. However, the bridge is only so wide, so the Americans have to go over in column. The



British received them in line. Some American units provided long-range fire from across the stream in an effort to disrupt the British.

Americans charge across the bridge – hand-crafted model by a teenage GM Mark held up well.

Additional British units raced towards the bridge to prop up the increasingly peppered defenders. Not that the Americans had an easy time, for several times morale sagged and columns retreated back across the bridge.

The British seemed to just avoid disaster, rallying with only part of their units remaining while new units were fed in as best as could be done. Likewise, the Americans would rally the fleeing attackers just enough to get a little bit further across the bridge until finally the Americans crossed and formed into line. Now the lastest, toughest, and freshest of the British reserves, the grenadiers, finally appeared, formed line, and saved the remnants of the British force just as the deck of cards and time ran out.

British Grenadiers march towards the bridge as fast as they can. Gray chips are disorders.

Every once in a while, a scenario brings out the best in timing and tactics. This was one of those intriguing games. Well done, GM Mark.

Rah! Rah! Ra!

I must be a sucker for sandstone, for this Egyptian tunnel complex drew me in like a tomb raider to treasure. I have no idea what this was about, but open sarcophagi, wandering mummies, snake sculptures, lots of nooks and crannies with amphora, chests, and other bric-a-brac make for entertaining possibilities.

What diabolical dangers lurk in the corridors of an Egyptian tunnel complex?

Fort Mercer

Another Tom Uhl presentation, this one of the Hessian attack on Fort Mercer during the American Revolution. Considering his efforts that made him HMGS Game Master of the Year 2025, it's not surprising that his scenario is the featured scenario in the Little Wars Scenario magazine. Then again, it used LWTV's *Live Free or Die* rules.





*Above: Western gunfight in the lobby.
Right: Fort Mercer*



Saddle Up, Pardner

The Hotel Lobby, although rather dark in terms of gaming, had a number of games going all weekend. This one was a Western -- obviously the gunfight was held in the morning judging by the shadows on the tabletop.

Reach for the Sky!

GM Tom sports the latest in cowboy chic while running a Pulp Alley Western.

*Right: Didn't I see Tom star in the movie Urban Cowboy?
Below: Peter (center in green shirt) GMs Marston Moor.*



Marston Moor

A big gaming table held the big ECW battle. It's a good thing GM Peter's head is studying the situation while answering a question, but I'm not sure he would have appreciated a bottle of water on his terrain. Alas, the culprit is out of frame on the right.

At least it wasn't the near catastrophe the late John F. told me about -- and I shall try to keep this a family friendly anecdote. John had just finished setting up his game when some...gamer...sat down and plopped his paper plate

of overloaded chili dogs right on John's terrain. Said...gamer...picked up a dog and John is watching the beginning of a chili avalanche slide off the end of the dog and about to plop on his terrain.

At which point, John's finesse with language stopped the avalanche and assured the...gamer...what would happen to that chili dog if any bit of it plopped onto his terrain. Then he suggested the...gamer...move his...self...to a table without terrain.

A little awareness, folks, of food and drink goes a long way.

Lotsa tanks and armored vehicles plus helicopters.

Modern Team Yankee

I'm not sure if this was the *Team Yankee* tournament or not, but plenty of hub-to-hub miniatures dominated the battlefield.

PQ-17 Convoy

It's a little hard to see, but WWII convoy PQ-17 is sailing across the tabletop.

PQ-17 sails on serenely...for now.

Al Nofi: SPI Room

SPI alum Al Nofi spun some stories about SPI in between War College lectures. One off-hue anecdote:

Nofi noted that Red Simonson designed the counters for SPI games, including the militia and professional spearmen counters for one game. Nofi drew the two counters and asked, "What's the difference between militia Spearman and pro Spearman?"

Someone piped up, "The little circles."

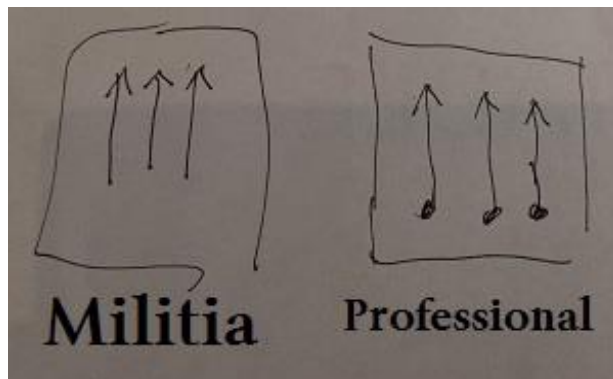
"Correct," Nofi said. "Simonson declared that professional spearmen have balls."

Lotsa hexes for this Squad Leader game.

Squad Leader Miniatures

I count 27 vertical hexes by 18 hexes wide on the board. A few more hexes are off the bottom of the photo, so call it 30x18, or, 540 hexes. That's a lot of hexes.

I don't know if this is an actual *Squad Leader* board or section



of a board, or, just a representation of a board and presumably using the rules.

If you squint, you can see infantry around some buildings and in the forest hexes. I am guessing they are 6mm, or maybe 3mm?

Struggle to the Rhine

That's a big playtest map for this area-game on Operation Market Garden. Figures are glued to the counters. They ran this all weekend, with the Allies struggling to get to the Rhine.

On a sad note, the game will have a more typical mortal-sized map instead of this lovely oversized one. I stopped by from time to time to see how the advance progressed.

Beginnings of the convention-long game. Arnhem is far, far away.

The Battle of Trenton

Run multiple times during the convention along with the Battle of Princeton, the Battle of Trenton was suitably snow-clad in 25mm scale with all the buildings.

Right: Nice Trenton set up, Jim!

Below: Triumph makes triumphant return.



Triumph

The *Triumph* gang was out in force, per usual, running games and tournaments.

Wagram 1809

French press the attack against the Austrians across nicely done terrain boards. Lotsa troops!

Wagram spreads out over the tabletop.

What an Umpire

Mike the GM ran two *What a Tanker!* games as part of the Next Generation contribution, only the next generation seemed to have an awful lot of gray hair for middle and high school kids.

He noted, "Great feedback from both games. One teenager I had out of the 16 players came back after Saturday's game and told me that my game was the best of all the games he had played since he got to the convention Thursday evening."

Note that Mike created icons on stickers to make the d6s into a set of icon dice instead of pip dice -- that helped quite a bit with recognizing what you had when you rolled.

Right: GM Mike (center) instructs a panzer commander.

Below: Gaming buddy Dave. Table is set up. Where's the horde?



Flea Market

An extremely popular HMGS tradition for sellers and buyers! *Below: The horde charged in!*





Above: Commonwealth ballroom at noon on Friday. Below: Heritage ballroom at 12:56pm on Friday.



Walkabout Friday

Again, I took some overview shots of the various ballrooms at various times: Commonwealth at 12 noon and 9:12pm, Heritage at 12:56pm, 4:36pm, and 9:56pm, SPI Alive at 3:46pm,

Black Powder

I don't know the name of the battle, but I did like the paint job on these British troops in a game of *Black Powder*.

An impressive Black Powder unit.



Napoleon to Ghent

I'm not sure of the rules used in this 6mm or so Napoleonic game, but I did notice the sand hourglasses on the table. So I asked what they were used for.

"Ah," GM Richard said. "It's an anti-dithering device."

"What's an anti-dithering device?" I asked.

"I bring that out when players are not moving fast enough. Turn it over and they get that much time to complete their moves."

Whaddaya know. I kinda like that idea.



GM Richard (red shirt) threatens slow-playing gamers with his anti-dithering device.

Omaha Beach

My photo of the 6mm landing at Omaha Beach is only part of the full tabletop. The camouflage on the troops really blends into the circular base. Nice job on the ships and terrain hexes, too. The use of what I believe is sand painted white behind the landing craft is a neat effect to mimic churn.

The circular bases hold troops.



Rorke's Drift

Ooooh! Eye candy supreme. What a building and diorama. Excellent figures. The only thing I would change is use printed labels of the British troops names for neatness. Show stopper.





The struggle for Arnhem continues...

Struggle to the Rhine

Yep. I stopped back to see how the battle went. I took a pic of the struggle for Arnhem. The bridges were still intact, but the Germans were closing in. 15mm figures on extra-large counters. I'm not sure about the vehicles: maybe 3mm? Axis and Allies? 3D printed?

Welcome to Gotham

Chaos runs through Gotham City. Can the Caped Crusaders bring law and order to the Joker's mayhem?

Not for Commissioner Gordon. He was killed while I watched. Where were you, O'Hara?

It must be the suburbs, for I see no skyscrapers. Is stately Wayne Manor nearby?

No, I don't have any idea either, but the National Guard is advancing from the bottom of the photo and the Dynamic Duo are somewhere in the distance.





The SPI Alive room at 3:46pm on Friday, with 34 gamers.

Wreck of the B S M Pandora

Two dazed gamers look up from reading the rules to this SPI game. Neither had played it before, so kudos for trying a new game.

I watched for a little bit as they adjusted counters on what I believe is a schematic of the spaceship.

Note the magnifying glass -- 2020s grognard eyes meet 1970s printing.

Marc (left) played *The Creature That Ate Sheboygan* on Wednesday evening with a dad and his sons before playing *Delta Vee*. Thursday was a game of *Stargate*, then *Titan Strike*, and then *Wreck of the B S M Pandora*. Also, elsewhere, he played in a home brew rule set *Star Blazers* starship battle with a scenario modeled on Taffy 3 / Battle of Samar.



Battle of Princeton

As noted, this was a companion game to Battle of Trenton.

Of note, I believe inspiration for the battlefield came from an *American Heritage* coffee table-sized book that showed Trenton and Princeton on a full spread.

The 1777 battle of Princeton on the tabletop.



Flames of War Tournament

Tucked in the back of the Commonwealth ballroom was the *Flames of War* Tournament. I watched for a bit and chatted with another gaming buddy who was in the tournament.

It was dark in that corner. A ballroom was never supposed to be well lit, but even with extra portable lighting bouncing off the walls and ceiling, it was a tad dim.

Flames of War: 1940 French versus Germans.

Chain of Command 2: Tournament

I hope you are sitting down, for I actually participated in a tournament at a convention: The *Chain of Command 2* Tournament at Historicon.

The given German platoon in the center with my support teams on the perimeter. 15mm troops.

I'm not a tournament player. If you've read my recaps in the AARs, I play for fun. Sure, I want to win like any other gamer, but to me, wargaming is a journey, not an end result.

So as I was wandering about, I ran into Mitch, who was running the *Chain of Command 2* Tournament. Only the times were royally screwed up in the PEL: The First Round was indeed on Friday at 1:00pm. However, the Second and Third Rounds were listed as 9:47pm to 3:12am with no location listed. As a result only one player signed up.

As Mitch explained all this, I said, "I'll play so the other gamer has someone to game with. I like the system, although I haven't played for a while and don't remember all the rules, but it'll come back."

Er, famous last words, but at least Mitch had two players. Then a third came up, so I said I would bow out so the two who wanted to game could game. Then a fourth player showed up, so I was back in.

The Jump-off points. My fourth one was off photo to left in the woods.

Anyway, I played Ken and the other two gamers played on the next table. Ken had Americans, I was given the Germans, we picked our support teams, and away we rolled.

OK. I was a bit rusty on the rules and my tactical acumen wasn't exactly the greatest. I brought out a squad and had them in the woods to protect the flank. Ken didn't bring out anyone. Why? Because he didn't get his roll. That should have been a clue that he knew what he was doing.



I brought out another squad with one team in cover and the other in the open. Spoiler alert: Not the brightest idea.

My squad in cover at left and in open. My HMG team is in the woods. Top middle: The US sniper, BAR, and squad in the center. The US HMG team in the woods in upper right corner.



Ken got his roll and out came a sniper team that fortunately missed my officer. Well, that seemed rather rude. Then out came a BAR team and squad that hammered at my troops in the open. Ken rolled and hit me six times: I rolled five saves. Out came a US HMG team on my right to hammer away at my troops in the open. I made all but one save again. Shocking.

My turn and I shot at his troops in cover: 9 hits out of 10 rolls. He did a bit above average in saves, only his NCO was wounded. Down went his Force Morale. I will say that nailing his sniper and routing his team gave me a wee bit of satisfaction.

So it went, shot for shot, me rolling well and Ken rolling average to poorly. However, I noticed a pattern: he concentrated his fire on my troops in the open. I scattered my shots among all his troops. Still, I rolled well enough, and he rolled poorly enough for leader casualties, to drop his Force Morale from 9 to 5. Mine remained at 10.

Alas, his strategy finally paid off and that squad in the middle, part in cover and what was left out in the open, finally balked and routed, my NCO wounded as well. My Force Morale dropped to 6.

So I copied his strategy and concentrated my fire on his central squad. I fired with my left flank squad. I peppered it with my right flank squad. I hammered it with my HMG team. And as it was tottering, I brought out my flamethrower team.

Flamethrowers ignore terrain and double the Shock results. I hosed his troops well, his saves were average, and what remained of that squad and senior officer routed away and dropped his Force Morale to concession. I shook his hand after a good game.

Flamethrower team activated on a roll of 1 and fried the opposing US GIs.

I can't say I played a bright game. Some of the lessons from last year came back to me during play. Ken obviously was the better player. I asked him what I should have done differently and he noted my exposed squad should have been pulled back into the woods for better cover. Otherwise, I did the expected and took advantage of most cover.

However, the dice smiled upon me. And they weren't done with me yet.

Remember, this was a four-person tournament. There was a winner on the other table. Mitch asked me if I was going to stick around for the Second Round. I declined -- fun as this game was, I had more walkabout to do.

The other winner also declined the Second Round. Mitch was in a bit of a dilemma. He declared a die roll off: 1d6, high roll takes all. I rolled a 4, the other gamer rolled a 2, and just like that, I was declared the winner of this abbreviated tournament.



What Did I Win?

As winner, I receive private jet transportation to and from Historicon 2027, limo rides to and from the Lancaster airport, Marriott penthouse suite for my convention stay, all meals, a personal valet to lay out my T-shirt for the day, Super-Ultra-Elite VIP Badge, and every new product release brought out by every company in the dealer hall.

What's that?

Sorry. I dozed off. I was having this great dream...

Actually, I'm told my name gets engraved on a plaque for the trophy cup, immediately diminishing its value.

Saturday Walkabout



Top: Commonwealth ballroom at 9:31am on Saturday. Below: Commonwealth ballroom at 12:16pm.



Again, I took some overview shots of the various ballrooms at various times: Commonwealth at 9:31am, 12:16pm, and 8:19pm, Heritage at 8:23pm, SPI Alive at 3:46pm.

Campo Bella: Sicily 1943

It's not a Historicon without a *Command Decision* game. This one was set in Sicily and run by Daniel and Jake. I was pleasantly surprised to see JT in the game with his son Adam, and so caught up on recent doings.

A lot of why I enjoy Historicon is meeting friends and acquaintances that I see from show to show. It's a big convention, but wander around enough and you find 'em. Pull up a chair, watch a game for a bit and chat when the other side's moving.

GM Daniel (fedora) adjusts initial deployment while GM Jake wonders how that will affect the game. JT (camo cap) and son Adam are rarin' to go and start the advance.



I was pleased to once again see my long ago gaming buddy Ed at the show along with Mark -- both of whom I gamed with in college and post college days before career paths took us separate places as such things do. We went out to dinner on Friday night (missed the HMGS meeting!) and while parked in the lot, called up the fourth horseman of the gaming apocalypse, Tibor, across the country and FaceTimed for a half an hour. 'Twas a pleasant evening before I got back and resumed walking and talking.

Carnage and Glory

More *Carnage and Glory* action in the basement reigned during Saturday. Always a nice looking game and usually filled, too.

Hey, hey. The C&G gang's all here.

Parker Bulge Remake

Back in the SPI Room, two gamers played a prototype of Danny Parker's remake of his Battle of the Bulge game with SPI maps. Then again, the only wargame DP does is Bulge.

I say "Nothin' new like history." Apparently, Parker dug up new information and will incorporate it into the game. He's also including morale values in the combat mechanics like *Bitter Woods*.

I have one of his Bulge games and also his book and the OOBs are not the same. I expect an updated OOB in his updated game.

Playtesting Danny Parker's updated Bulge rules.



Escape The Hindenburg

If this sounds familiar, then you've read last month's AAR, when Mark made the trip to my house and put on a playtest game of *36 Seconds* -- the time it took for the airship to burn to a crisp.

Mark ran *Escape The Hindenburg* twice at the show. I hung around a little bit. The 9:00am game was a bit rough, but the afternoon game saw far more animated gamers.

I will say that this hallway to the side of the ballroom was a little dark.



How dark was it?

It was so dark, rays of light were absorbed by the table.

It was so dark, it could serve as inspiration to the John Cafferty & The Beaver Brown Band song *On the Dark Side*.

36 Seconds: Escape the Hindenburg

It was so dark, things that go bump in the night were afraid to come near the table.

It was so dark, even Darth Vader wanted to go to the light.

Extra lighting nearby helped a little, but not much.

Some entries in the painting competition.

Painting Competition

I took a couple photos of some of the entries. The spot needed better lighting. It was dark.

I happened to be there when they were judging and both judges were using the flashlight function on their cellphones.

Some incredibly talented painters and modelers had entries. I hope the HMGS social media team took better photos than me -- although at least you'll get an idea.

More entries. Tinkerbell in a lightbulb was the most creative.

Steampunk Yorktown

At least I think it's Yorktown. It's the only battle I can think of that had French controlling the





Steampunk Yorktown.

water and Americans sieging British lines.
I applaud the creativity!



Struggle to the Rhine

It's the September 22 turn in the game and the Allies are starting to run out of momentum. German counter-attacks are taking a toll as fighting around Arnhem is being forced into pockets.

Kudos to the group for running this game all convention.

Still struggling after three days. Note the progress on Saturday versus the previous days.

Warrior Tournament

I just missed the handshake between victor Fred (green shirt) and vanquished (blue shirt) as their *Warrior* game ended. That's good sportsmanship in my book.

Fred noted that he won that game 5-1 against the Khmer with 16 elephants, but lost the second round 2-1 against Byzantines that had pages of special rules that make them very tough. He said he won the third and last game 5-1 against a Crusader army with many knights -- routed nine units out of 18. He got sloppy chasing a mass of IrrA/Irr D Pilgrims and lost a Heavy Cavalry and a LongBow unit. As they routed, another of the same unit made a counter and intervened, thereby causing nearby a Light Infantry and Light Medium Infantry units to Shake.

The winner of the tournament won all three games 5 to something.





GM John (right) explains the rules. My German comrade in the middle of three American players.

Sniper: SPI

Speaking of gamers I hadn't seen in a while, I ran into John, who mentioned he was running a *Sniper* game in the SPI Room. He invited me to join and I did. I had never played *Sniper*, but John explained the rules to us all.

My truck (right bottom corner) piled with people turns the corner and is shot by the US jeep crew (left upper corner) and is reduced to half move. Meanwhile, the staff car is panicked and driven into the side of a building and one officer killed.



By random roll, I was a German with another gamer while three others were American. It was Paris and we Germans were trying to drive out with VIP civilians in a truck and a case of something in a staff car. Cleverly, I took all the Riflemen and Civilians in the truck. My fellow German took the two officers with their pistols, the case, the bodyguards with submachine guns, and the staff car.

The Americans had two jeeps, one with a MG and each crewed by four GIs. A separate group was already on foot in the buildings. Lots of rubble and obstacles were scattered about.

Sniper makes you pre-plot your one action per turn. It could be move, fire, ready a grenade, go on overwatch, etc. All orders are revealed simultaneously and then performed. Shots can do anything from miss to kill.

Troops and civilians bail out of the truck to trade shots.



Panic seemed to be a rather popular result of a random die roll. You just can't count on anyone for anything. A d6 roll on a chart slugged to Panic Level (the Germans start at 3) provides three numbers. Any hex with a matching last number and with a person in the hex, immediately becomes Panicked. Whatever they were going to do is out the window and most usually ended up in a Prone position. At the end of a turn, the Panic markers are removed, but the Panic roll is done at the beginning of every turn.

Locked and loaded, I drove the truck out into the cross street. Well, I had no other choice. I could go either left towards the Americans or right away from the Americans. I chose right.

Sure enough, the Jeep MG was on overwatch and opened up. Miraculously, it missed. A rifleman in the jeep opened up. He missed, too. One last rifleman fired and hit a tire. The truck, originally 15 hex speed, was now down to half speed, or eight hexes. I should point out that people on foot moved 10 hexes in the clear. My idea of racing down the street and turning a corner to get out of the line of fire needed some adjustment.

The 20-hex speed staff car followed, but my slow truck was jamming the street. American fire hit the driver, who performed a random move (d6 direction and 2d6 movement). It ended up braking and driving towards the Americans.

That did allow my truck to painfully chug around the corner, but the faster second US jeep was driving around to a different cross street to cut off the truck. The Americans on foot infiltrated into more buildings.

Here it got a little crazy. The staff car was shot up and randomly drove into a building. The two officers were killed and the SMG troops spilled onto the street.

The two jeeps cut off my truck, so I tried to drive over a rubble pile. No such luck, so I jumped everyone off the truck and sent one landser to deal with the American in the window. He was successful in killing the Ami, but the jeeps cut him down.

Americans close in for the kill after already killing two German riflemen (blank gray counters). With little hope of escaping (top of photo) and casualties mounting, I surrendered. With both officers in the staff car dead, the remaining German troops also surrendered (off photo).

That's when the driver of Jeep number two couldn't stop being Panicked and drove in random directions and hit buildings -- including trying to run over a fellow GI who had gone prone behind the jeep. Lucky prone GI survived with only a scare.

In the meantime, shootouts between my riflemen and an ever-growing number of Amis increased losses on both sides. The Civilians scrambled into the rubble, but a couple GIs moved to cut them off.

With fewer and fewer intact troops and time reached, I made the only decision I could and surrendered to the Americans.

We all had a great, rollicking time. While the Panic roll caused untold problems, our group's reactions as gamers and as troopers in the city proved entertaining and often hilarious. GM John kept the game running smoothly.

Lancaster Convention Center

Good marks for the venue itself. The air conditioning never faltered. Great lighting in the dealer/tournament/flea market and the basement areas. Not so much in the ballrooms. The conference rooms were well lit.

I never got to the lectures. I had planned on it, but usually blew past the time in good conversations or game gawking.

Food at the con was acceptable. I only ate lunch as I went out to dinner all three days: South Market food court walking and buddies drove to restaurants 15 or so minutes from the distant garage.



Parking

Parking is another story. I'm hearing chatter about woes trying to get in the adjacent garage.

I stayed in the Marriott and ran into a problem. When I arrived at noon on Thursday, the lot was full. I parked about a block or so away in the Steinman Parking Garage. Marriott told me they couldn't validate my ticket because it was a private garage. The HMGS desk handed me a voucher and said it was good for said parking garage.

Not as such. The vouchers only apparently worked at city-owned garages, not the private one. The Steinman vouchers were actually for \$10 off the cost of parking.

The \$36 wasn't bad for parking Thursday noon to Sunday morning, but I certainly could have thought of better uses for the cost. No one to complain to, either -- all automated. The more companies automate things, the worse the service, especially if something goes awry.

Another gamer told me his story of woe: Venue is great, parking is not so great. Arrived Thursday morning about 10:15am. Had to park a few blocks away. He didn't mind that the deck attached to the convention center was purportedly full, it was more the way he was informed.

He pulled up to the entrance, attendant asks are you staying at the Marriott. No, he replied, but he was attending the convention and the packet of information supplied indicates he could park there as a pre-registered convention attendee. He witnessed two cars departing in the adjacent lane while holding this conversation with the attendant. He is again informed he must go elsewhere to park -- over his polite objections. The attendant inquires again if he is a Marriott guest.

Now it becomes apparent that not all parking spaces are available to convention attendees, that there is a limit. He found the nearby parking deck without a problem, a few blocks walk to the convention center. Glad he brought his new knee brace. If he was running a game, would have been nearly impossible to unload. The elevator in the garage being out, requiring volunteers and relays of carts.

He had the same trouble Friday morning at 0830. Arrived earlier Saturday and Sunday, about 0745, and was able to park at the deck attached to the convention center.

Wow. He saw an attendant. All I saw were cones blocking the ramp. A few others complained about the walk. At least it wasn't raining most times.

So ended another marvelous Historicon. I expect HMGS will release attendance figures, etc. in the upcoming months.

Upcoming: Fall In

Next convention up for HMGS is Fall In in November at the Wyndham (ex-Lancaster Host).

Theme: Special Operations in History



The graphic features a hexagonal collage on the left with three images: a soldier in a trench, a soldier in a field, and a soldier in a trench. Above the collage is a red 'TOYS FOR TOTS' logo. To the right is the HMGS logo, which consists of three stylized figures in a hexagon and the text 'HMGS HISTORICAL MINIATURES GAMING SOCIETY'. Below the collage and logo is the text 'FALL IN!® 2026' in large blue letters, followed by 'November 6-8, 2026' in smaller blue letters. At the bottom, a dark blue banner contains the text 'Special Operations in History' on the left and '#FALLIN2026' on the right. The background of the graphic is white with blue and grey hexagonal patterns.

WYNDHAM RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTER, LANCASTER, PA

Special Operations in History

#FALLIN2026



Start (l to r): Russians Chris, Larry, and Phil. "French" Marc, an obscured Dave, Tom, Sam, and Mike. Russian Rich and Jay.

Tabletop Deception: *Snappy Nappy* 1808

by Russ Lockwood

The "problem" with a group of guys who have been historical gaming for decades is that once you mention a battle, or in *Snappy Nappy's* case, a campaign, WHOOSH! The historical aspects get loaded into Brain-RAM. It's one thing to line up and have a straight-up 28mm bash on a 6 foot by 10 foot table, but it's another to get to 15mm maneuvering.

Inspired by a recent Napoleonic book, I set up a historical game based on a Russian attack against the French. However, while it was the Russians attacking, it was not the French defending. While the map was accurate in the sense of major roads and towns, the names were all changed to something Russianistic. Likewise, commanders' names were not the historical ones. Take that, Brain-RAM boys!

To set the scene, in late winter, the Russians caught the "French" napping in winter quarters.

The Umpire's Dilemma: French

Historically, the Russians generally started on the eastern side of the big river. The "French" started on the western side, but generally scattered. During the historic Russian advance, some "French" units rallied quickly, others did not, and some that did rally spent more time running away than standing to fight -- regardless of terrain.

How do you get that sense of a Napoleonic blitzkrieg that would push the Russians west while possibly leaving "French" troops behind?

I thought about having an OOB with automatic entry, but that didn't seem to offer up the chaos of the situation. So, I opted for partial fog of war: colored cubes representing "French" troops.

Four of the "French" players had control over colored cubes: red, yellow, blue, and green. Each cube needed to be activated via a morale roll, then they could move the cube without needing "out of command radius" die rolls. If two cubes met, a "French" unit would appear at that spot, where it would then become subject to command radius (18 inches for the French). The cubes did not shoot, but would melee as a single stand plus any defensive terrain.

Morale grades ranged from veteran (6+ on a d10 to activate) to militia (9+ on a d10 to activate). The lower the morale, the more cubes on the table. At the beginning of their Movement Phase, they rolled morale to activate cubes.

The fifth "French" player didn't have cubes, but had to roll to activate his units -- these were the amphibious attack units that came in as reinforcements starting on Turn 2. He could land them at Ramov as they activated or hold off and land them all at once.

I should also note that each "French" player also had a number of units that were already activated.

After explaining the cubes -- and that took longer than I anticipated, I sent the "French" players away and brought the Russian players back to the table.

The Umpire's Dilemma: Russians

On the Russian side, I needed to get the players moving west. It must be in their interest to go quickly and not dawdle. And you know the first thing they would ask about are the cubes -- of which I told them nothing about the coloring, but did note that if they hit a cube and meleed it, all they needed was to win the melee in order to eliminate the cube. Furthermore, they could keep on moving. If they lost, well their move was over and they would either have to fire at it or melee it again.

All their units were activated at the start. This was a surprise attack, so the Russians got their own special rules.

Four players got a free Turn 1 and they got road movement without having to be in road march formation. They got a pontoon bridge to cross the river where few "French" were located. Some players started on or across the river.

The fifth player was an amphibious assault that could come in within 24 inches of a captured coastal village that protected a "harbor."

On Turn 2, the Russians automatically would win initiative. In essence, they got two turns in a row. On Turn 3, the usual roll for initiative to go first took effect.

Each village on the table was worth 1 Victory Point, but four of the villages along the coast were worth 2 VPs and Krisgrad was worth 4 VPs. The total came out to 25 VPs.

I set up the troops on the table and didn't allow them to change the placement. In my experience, the umpire should set up the troops and that's it -- players will fiddle away for hours looking for perfection. Better to move your way out of a bad umpire deployment.

Terrain

The coast ran along the south and west sides of the table. No entry by any troops except those amphibious ones that land on the table. Woods were woods and one ridgeline was up near Krisgrad. The river was impassable except at bridges and the pontoon bridge. The tabletop terrain and the map were pretty close, but not GPS accurate. Hey, it's a Napoleonic-era map.

Troop Quality

The Russians and the French had pretty much the exact same number of units and quality.

Turn 3: Russians pour over the border into Finland.

The Russian Advance

Larry rolled along the southern coastal road through Lovisov (empty) and overran Helsifov. Jay started in contact with a green cube (militia) outside St. Michael and had no problem eliminating it, but instead of going forward and heading west young man, he split his force in two to go after other green cubes in the woods. He lost time policing his rear areas.

Chris advanced over the pontoon bridge in the middle and headed west. Few enemy troops were in the vicinity. Rich almost immediately engaged the enemy at Kupiov.

As the Russians mostly rolled westward, the French tried to rally the cubes while pulling together some sort of idea for defense using the starting activated units.



Up in the north, Russian Rich ran into a defending French Mike, who was having little luck activating his green (militia) cubes. But his best veteran troops held the village while his other troops maneuvered to set up a defense. It was a bit piecemeal and losses occurred, but through guile and genius (and an orange die that seemed to roll high when Mike needed it), he held the Russians in check.

Mike defends the village. Where's the orange die? Photo by Mike.



In the center, Russian Chris advanced cross country into an area devoid of defenders. Indeed, after Mike painstakingly managed to activate two green cubes and for a unit into road march, Chris' Cossacks hit it in the flank and demolished the militia. Then, inexplicably, he turned back.

It may be because French Tom had finally managed to get his corps in gear and block further westward movement. Indeed, once he got his artillery unlimbered, he was able to fire at the flanks of Russian units.

French Dave had just enough luck to start his amphibious operation and stream troops onto the board -- marching hard to support French Marc on the south coast.

Marc was setting up a line when Russian Phil performed his own amphibious landing -- although not behind as I expected, but somewhat in front and to the flank.

French C-in-C Sam marched hard and helped Mike repulse Russian Rich. The north was solidly defended.

Tom reaches to maneuver his troops to shore up the center.



Wobbling Lines

Phil's amphibious assault into a crowded spot required a bit of umpire tap dancing about his deployment. I allowed waves to come ashore, but it was tight.

Phil managed to take the village from Marc and then won the coveted initiative for a double turn. Thus, he had the last move of the previous turn (took village) and then the first move of the next turn.

In *Snappy Nappy*, a unit can charge out of a village in any direction. And Phil did -- into Marc's unit's flank. Marc objected that troops couldn't change facing and charge (as *Snappy Nappy* prohibits). I see it as the victor can reset his facing at the end of melee, so his next move would be a change of formation (minus 1/3 movement) and move/charge. Phil also moved in a supporting unit to keep the town.

Mike (left) is pleased with his defense while Rich considers an attack. Sam's troops (bottom) are marching hard to aid Mike.

But it was not to be. On the French move, Marc and Dave double teamed an assault from two sides to toss Phil out of the village. Now they had the possible double turn if they could win initiative.



Russian Jay was working his way towards the coast when the game ended after our three-hour time.

We counted up the villages and the French eked out a 13-12 defensive victory with the successful retaking of Marc's village.

The Real Historical Situation

This *Snappy Nappy* Campaign-in-a-Day scenario was inspired by the book *The Kingdom Torn Apart (Reason to Revolution No. 161)* by Eirik Hornborg. I guess it was more Campaign-in-an-Evening, so I had to make a number of alterations: In part to accommodate the OOB and also to keep this as a one-table game. Again, I was worried that one of these gaming buddies of mine would recognize the historical situation and load that into Brain-RAM.

First off, the "French" were actually Finns and Swedes. Russia invaded the Swedish province of Finland in 1808 at the tail end of winter. The Finnish border troops were taken by surprise, although some provided just enough staying power to allow the Swedes to mobilize. Even then, the Russians advanced relatively quickly, sieging the fortresses that I called "harbors."

In table terms, the Russians swept along the south coast and up the western coast of Finland as winter turned to spring and summer. Naval maneuvers favored the Russians early, but switched to a Swedish advantage, which also allowed small-scale Swedish amphibious operations to try and interdict Russian supply.

Russia had the more experienced troops -- they had last fought the French in 1807, but their morale was shaky. The Swedish/Finnish troops had higher morale, but less experience. Both sides would stand or flee at times. In effect, it was anyone's campaign in terms of troop quality. I gave both sides roughly equal forces.

Keeping with the *Snappy* deception, I called all commands corps and all units brigades. In reality, the Russians attacked with three divisions versus scattered battalions and the odd regiment and so-called brigade. The Russians suffered supply line/line of communications problems throughout as isolated Finnish and Swedish units intercepted convoys. Yet it was just enough to finally stalemate the overall Russian offensive. In September 1808, an armistice -- The Truce of Lohtea -- was signed as Russian troops sat on the border with Sweden proper.

Yet Sweden's financial situation was in shambles, King Gustav IV became so unstable he came close to declaring war on its ally Britain, and Gustav was deposed. That was the signal for a renewed Russian offensive in March 1809 that penetrated into Sweden. The Swedes sued for peace and signed away Finland.

Thoughts

In historical terms, Russian offensive would have swept over the tabletop battlefield and headed north. In game terms, I made the campaign center on the initial Russian offensive and Swedish/Finnish counter-attacks.

Umpire Russ (right) will soon be tap dancing on the positioning of a Russian amphibious assault. Photo by Mike.

The gamers understood how the cubes worked after the first couple turns. No gamer likes to be confronted with unknown cubes, especially when I had to make a snap decision and allow a full 12-inch move upon activation regardless of terrain.

A switch in initiative created the "double move" into and through a village, including charging out of it in any direction, also proved a tough sell. I thought about that a lot, especially with the e-mail exchange suggesting tactical solutions to an operational concern. Here, I think, the terrain played a part because the buildings representing a village were full 15mm scale stone buildings portraying a location of substance. I always use 6mm thatched huts for villages so that they appear relatively inconsequential to 15mm troops. That said, I will have to think about keeping a charge out of a village in any direction a formation change while providing a more restrictive charge out of towns or larger.



The "double turn" was the key here. If initiative had not switched, no problem -- Marc would have adjusted. With the switch, Phil got two moves/melees in a row. That mechanic, as well as the roll morale until you pass or rout, is why *Snappy Nappy* doesn't stagnate into two lines pounding away turn after turn with little movement.

As far as a game story goes, the defenders were surprised by the amphibious operation, lost the village and surrounding unit, but rallied and used reserves to retake the village.

This was the first time I had used an amphibious assault in a *Snappy Nappy* game. I expected it to come on a vacant stretch of coastline. Silly umpire. Expectations never survive contact with gamers.

Dave's landing was in an isolated spot. No problem -- worked like a reinforcement (and a timely one, too). Phil's invasion in the face of Marc's deployment landed on an empty stretch, but in an otherwise crowded neighborhood. Umpire tap dancing required. Have to think about amphibious operations some more, not that there were many large scale WWII D-Day or Tarawa-style assaults in Napoleonic times.

The use of going the long side of the table towards the short side resulted in a gamer traffic jam in the middle on the one side. I had an idea that would happen, but it still took me by surprise.

Thanks to Dave for laying out an impressive table and to our Russian and "French" commanders for gaming out a campaign we all seemed to be unaware of. As Dave noted, the game generated more back and forth e-mail than any other in recent memory. Here are some of them.

The well-attended game (l to r): Larry, Chris, Dave, Marc, Phil, Umpire Russ, Tom, Rich, Jay, and Sam. Photo by Mike.



Russian North

by Rich

Thank you Russ and Dave for the game yesterday. Dave's table was again at his high standard. Russ' scenario made it an interesting and fun evening. It has been awhile since I last played *Snappy Nappy*. It was good to revisit the rules again. Plus there was the additional bonus of playing a command that included the late Mike Meusz's Russian figs. Mike was a fine painter and a great guy.

I had to face the dreaded Danish mercenary general, Mike "I will not retreat" Hansen. He proved again to be more of a stone wall than a speed bump.

Whether intentional or not, I found the fact that the map did not completely match the actual game table to be a clever twist. I guess that early 19th century maps of the middle of nowhere were not near the accuracy of Google maps today.

Thanks again to all for the entertaining evening,

Mike was indeed the Rock of Kupiov! -- RL

Rock of Kupiov Recap

by Mike

Thank you Dave for setting up the game and Russ for running it.

Snappy Nappy is unlike my usual favorite wargaming rules, more like a boardgame with miniatures....but it is growing on me. It certainly allows for maneuvering and speedy movements and therefore also for the use of reserve units that are rarely practical in our usual tabletop games. Not that reserves were a planned feature in Friday's game. At least on the French side.

As Jay and I discussed after the game, the "cubes" were a rather clever game mechanic -- but that was with the benefit of hindsight. As I tried to activate them in the game, with very limited success, I suffered some frustrations to put it mildly.

I loved the scenario! As I did the inaccurate, whether intentional or not, intel provided.

As to an after action report, I don't have much to offer, but my supreme commander, in his infinite wisdom, had assigned me the most outlying command in a small village. I had nine units, of which six were junk. Four of those were

spread everywhere out in nowhere (*cubes* -- *RL*). I never saw them, but I was informed they died quickly, and per military logic, well.

I quartered myself with my fine battalion of hardened veterans in the village and posted my hussars and my artillery in the immediate vicinity. In pursuit of our entitled comfort, I had a unit of conscripts keep the fireplaces well stoked, dig latrines, and empty our porta-potties. They died too, promptly, when assigned to do a bit of combat with some Russians, which outnumbered them by quite a bit. They should have done better. I doubt they were French conscripts.

I also had a group of militia foraging our supplies and providing intel on enemy activities in the surrounding area. We were not supposed to play soldiers mid-winter, but the dastardly Russians love winters. Still.

Anyway, when it was all over, we were still garrisoning the village -- with dead Russians everywhere outside. Oh, yes, I almost forgot, my hussars died gloriously. The few Russians we kept alive are now on porta-potty duty.

As to the "cubes" and how they worked, I confess I was confused, which was well helped by the Russian players explaining how those rules worked. I thought it was strange they would know insofar they had no cubes to activate, but you might have given them what I was reading too. The write-up did say off-road was only six inches of move, and not 12 inches, but that was verbally overridden.

PS: I was rather pleased with the performance of my orange D10. I wonder how it kept rolling some 8s, lots of 9s, and a few 10s. I don't know how to promote a die, but this one deserves it.

The historical Finnish village name was Kuopio. I know, the odds of one of you guys knowing the names of Finnish towns might be small, but if the deception of Russian vs French was to be maintained, so the map had to have Russian-ish sounding towns. Thus, Kuopio became the wargame objective of Kupiov. The only town on the table with the actual historical name was St. Michael.

As for the cubes being a clever game mechanic, thanks. It took longer to explain than I thought. And I did have to make a spot adaptation with cube movement being 12 inches in any direction. We didn't start pushing lead until 8:30. So, about 2.5 hours of actual play for eight turns.

Yes, verbally overridden when I realized cubes needed to get out of the way. Two stands of seasoned (4+4) Bold (+1) = 9 to Militia (2) in woods (+3) = 5. Not a single cube ever repulsed an attack (although one attack only won by 1). Historically, some of those militia attacked in the woods did give the Russians a bloody nose and then the Finns ran away and ambushed the Russians again -- although numbers initially allowed the Russians to push past the border guard Finns (Militia) until the Swedes formed up. -- RL

Cubism

by Rich

We Russians were only instructed in how to destroy the cubes.

True. I told them how an attack would occur and ran them through one combat, but not what the cubes did other than be "detachments." -- RL

Russian Garrisons

by Jay

I must concur with Mike as I very much enjoyed the change of pace to a strategic/grand tactical format as well as the subtlety of the scenario.

As far as my game play was concerned. I felt it necessary to detach my infantry into the woods on my initial moves so as to clear rear areas and protect ungarrisoned villages. Regrouping my forces so slowed my advance that my forces arrived in the main theater one turn too late for us to seize the initiative. I believe that my force encompassing cavalry for a flank attack in the south and heavy and horse artillery along with a full complement of infantry in the center would have been decisive in the long run although in the shorter term we had no answer for the French cavalry that was about to be set lose in our rear.

Hard to believe that the Russians didn't have enough manpower to garrison rear areas without first crushing the French main armies. Thanks again.

It's a hard campaign to simulate the Russian numbers and in general better experience (1806-1807 was the previous year, so the Russian Army was in many ways "veteran" versus the generally untested Swedes/Finn), but with abysmal

morale and fairly incompetent commanders who apparently chose the wrong terrain to defend and never got the hang of tactical outflanking through woods. Note that all Russian units weren't bad or all Russian commanders incompetent.

The border Finns were inexperienced and fled often, but there were a few really good Swedish units with competent Swedish commanders. The campaign lasted two years (1808-1809) and included a coup that toppled the Swedish king because he ran the war so badly. The new aristocratic oligarchy soon sued for peace, which cost Sweden most of the province of Finland. The game was only the initial part and the turns were rather generous in a time/space/movement aspect in an effort to get that (slow) Russian "blitzkrieg" and the assorted naval landings into the game.

I admit I didn't want to waste time and effort at forcing the Russians to garrison every village to secure their supply lines from small bands of marauding Finns. It was all subsumed into the scenario, including the placement of Mike's green cubes (militia) in initially bypassed border areas, which Jay cleaned up, albeit at the cost of a couple turns. --RL

Amusement

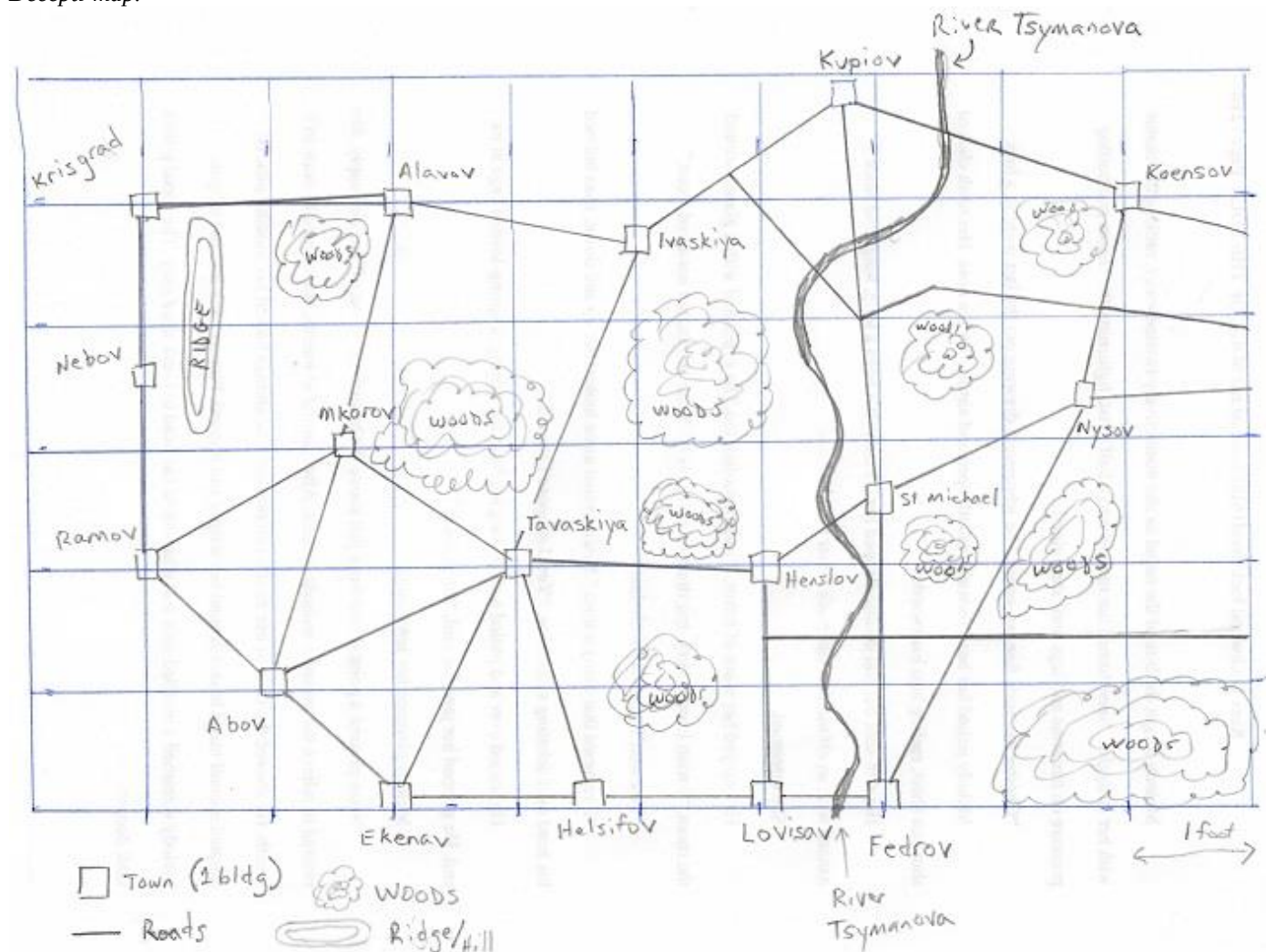
by Phil

I was amused by Russ' desire to conceal the location by making the Swedish and Finnish forces "French."

Never underestimate the history stored in gamer memory that could be uploaded into Brain-RAM. Deception: you play the Russo-Swedish 1808-1809 campaign by "instinct" instead of falling into the pattern of history. --RL

Full Disclosure: I created Snappy Nappy and the rules are sold by publisher www.onmilitarymatters.com in print and PDF versions. Print versions are also available at caliverbooks.com in the UK. --RL

Decepti-map.





Hues and Cues after the first question. (Clockwise from bottom left corner): Steve, Fred, Val, Doreen, and Susan.

Triple Threat: A Trio of EuroGames

by Russ Lockwood

Steve had me, Fred, and our wives over for a BBQ and gaming. After a delightful meal, we settled down to the first game, *Hues and Cues*.

Hues and Cues

Leave it to graphics guru Steve to find a game that's a big chart of colors. I never progressed further than the six-color color wheel, but here was a chart of around 4,500 squares on a grid with lettered rows and numbered columns.

The game is simple: One player draws a card, looks at the four color swatches, and picks one to describe with one word. Other players consider the word and place a token each on one of the 4,500 color squares. Then the player uses two words to describe the color and the other players place a second token each on a color square. You can't double up on particular squares: one token per square.

Then a 3x3-square cardboard fence is placed around the specific color square on the card (as noted by a row and column letter and number). Anyone whose token was dead center square inside this fenced area gets 3 Victory Points. Any player whose token was in one of the eight other squares gets 2 VPs. Any player whose token was in a square adjacent but outside the fence gets 1 VP. The player giving the clues gets 1 VP for every token within the fenced in area. Most points wins.

It's a lot harder than it sounds. For example, one clue given was "grape." OK, is that a green grape, purple grape, or red grape? And if so, what hue of a basic color would that be? As you can guess, the first clue generated tokens on all three major colors. I can't remember the two-word clue, but the actual color was a purple hue.

By dint of precise language, I squeaked out a 1 VP win. By dint of good company, we had a nice mix of jests and joy.

Wits & Wages

We played couples with this trivia game that seemed a bit of *The Price is Right*. A card is drawn with a question that needed a numerical answer. Each couple wrote the answer in secret and then flipped over the number. These were arranged in ascending order. Then, each couple had a \$100 chip and \$200 chip that you would place on an answer. The answer closest to the real answer without exceeding the real answer won one to three chips, depending what was bet.

Two things: First, you always got your two original chips back. It's a Eurogame -- everyone plays always. Second, a game-supplied tile was "1" -- because I imagine playtesting found that without the low-ball answer, all players whiffed by being too high.

We did a sample question: Number of crew members on the original *Star Trek USS Enterprise*. I immediately said 408. Another wrote 500 and another 200. I put all our chips on my answer, although I noted that I was only sure it was over 400, but I thought it was 408. The others scattered their chips. The answer is 430, although that sounded funny to me and the answer also noted the original show never said anything other than "over 400" (*A Piece of the Action* was the episode, I believe).

So, simple to play and we were off. I can't remember the questions after that, but as with any trivia game, some we knew and some not. Sue and I piled up the chips for the win amid wonder and wisecracks.

Flip 7: Tallying points.

Flip 7

This is a kid's game of, well, flipping cards. Each card has a value of from one to 12,

and the number on the card is also the number of those value cards in the deck. Thus, there is one single card valued a "1" while there are a dozen cards valued at "12."

The dealer flips one card per person to start. The dealer waits for the player to ask for another card, or, the player can stand on whatever they have. If a duplicate card shows up, the player busts and is out of the round and score no points. Otherwise, the cards in front tally up the points. If you get seven cards flipped in front, you get an extra 15 points. A few wild cards are in there to liven up the card counting.

I did well in the first two rounds, scoring 82 points and hanging in second place. The third round I busted on the fifth card. The fourth round I busted on the third card! The fifth round I was so far behind, I just went for it and busted. I ended up either last or next to last.

Thoughts

All three games were fast and fun, with minimal concepts to learn and maximum amusement. Thanks, Steve and Doreen, for an entertaining and laugh-filled evening.





I can't believe I let outlaw leader Renaud Hood into my castle!

Robin Hood: Welcome to Sherwood

by Russ Lockwood

Renaud brought over *Robin Hood*, an area block game in the style of Columbia Games with all the dastardly chrome of book and movies. By random roll, I was the Sheriff of Nottingham -- defender of the realm, enemy of robbers, and skilled in the arte of shuffle dancing.

Cards determine the number of areas to activate as well as any special benefit. Each block has a number of dots (combo hit points and number of dice to toss in combat), a letter and number combo to represent when the block



rolls combat dice and the number range on a d6 for a hit, and a movement rate. Event cards peppered the deck.

I don't know who did the graphics for the game, but roll up a newspaper and smack him or her upside the head for the teeny, tiny numbers on the lower left and right of the block. Then you need to smack him or her again for making Robin's numbers black on medium green. At least the Sheriff's black numbers on white were somewhat readable. I can't tell you the number of times each of us picked up a block to squint at the numbers. I know I screwed up at least once thinking the Sheriff moved 3, but it was really 2.

Each area has a limit of the number of blocks that can cross the border -- from one block for Sheriff units crossing into a forest area to three blocks crossing into a clear area on a road. Blocks arriving across different area borders fight as reinforcements in the second round of battle.

It's a well-used system over the decades, although since defenders of the same letter grade fire first and casualties are taken immediately, the defense generally gets a big boost. Some cards provide benefits to specific types of units or characters, like adding a +1 to the To Hit number, making B and C units into A rating so they fire earlier, and so on.

The characters can call out an enemy character for a duel, although we never did one.

Start

The Sheriff starts with garrisons in all the castles and most towns. Robin starts with units in Main and Minor forest camps. Will Stutely starts as a prisoner -- I placed him in Cromwell Castle.

Each monthly round gets six cards per player, with one discarded and five used.

Each player picks one card and places it face down. Both are revealed and the highest activation value goes first -- Robin decides who goes first when tied.

Maid Marian to the Rescue

From a minor camp in Sherwood Forest, the terrorist Maid Marian and a few drunken sots of a Merry Men band tried to storm Cromwell Castle with its stalwart commander Baron Simon and his heroic garrison. As Sheriff, I was not about to let a band of outlaws free my prisoner, so I moved to the Castle. In the battle, Marian was wounded but escaped and the Merry Men were punctured a bit. I took some losses, but Will wasn't going anywhere.

Maid Marian tries to free Will. Note the dots (strengths) on the blocks. You rotate the blocks to track losses. My garrison is down from three dots to one dot. But with the others, it was enough



Unfortunately, I didn't look at the Sheriff block closely enough. I thought the Sheriff could move three areas, but not so -- only two. The good news was that he whiffed his first round of die rolls and all damage was done by the garrison. So, realizing the error, we reset Marian to full strength.

A Norman carriage of gold entered the map from the west and it was supposed to exit any road area other than the one it came in on. It also had to stay on the road (oops, had to alter its move once -- man, I can only say that the Sheriff was bound by the rules of chivalry). It seemed lonely, so I added a unit of guards from Nottingham Castle to help defend it from Robin Hood and his gang of Robbing Hoodlum criminals.

Robin Storms Stamford Castle

Robin and his thugs popped out of the forest to attack Stamford Castle. My true defenders of the realm were waiting. Boiling oil, large rocks, and at least one cow smashed upon Robin's thugs' heads. The attackers fell in droves until Robin and his two gangs of decidedly un-merry men fell back with only a single strength point each.

That's when I played the Round Up card: Capture a character adjacent to one of my blocks.

Robin was in the open adjacent to my blocks in Stamford Castle. He was mine! I sent him to Newstead Castle in chains, although I noticed a gathering of Merry Men around Maid Marian at a camp near Newstead Castle. I reinforced the garrison just to be sure.

Robin imprisoned.

Executioner's Song

Oddly enough, although Robin was captured with only one hit point left, tossing him in the Newstead dungeon immediately healed him back to full 4-HP health. What's this? A Thanksgiving feast instead of thin gruel? What kind of health plsn do we provide in a dungeon? Did we replace the rack with a comfy chair and soft pillows?

Some cards possess an executioner icon on them. Every time one of them is played, one HP is subtracted from every prisoner. I was surprised that Renaud Hood played one, but it did have a big three area activation. The cards giveth and the cards taketh, m'lord.

And let us not forget Will Stutely in Cromwell Castle. He lost HPs, too. He was the first of the Hood gang to be hanged (reached zero HP). Good. One less unhanged rogue to worry about. I had him drawn and quartered with his pieces sent to the four other castles and three towns. Nobody messes with the Sheriff of Nottingham!

Still the robbers refused to mend their ways. Yet more executioner icons appeared until Robin only had one HP left.

The new turn dawned and sure enough, I had an event card with an executioner icon on it. Events play before all other cards. Bwa-ha-ha!

Game End

You bet I hanged the outlaw. Robin danced on air. I heaped indignities upon the corpse before having it drawn, quartered, and sent to hang next to the pieces of Stutely. Well, except the head. I impaled it on a pike for a day in front of Nottingham Castle. Then I sent it to King John.

So ended the plague of revolt around Sherwood Forest. A law and order job well done I assure you.

Admittedly, my victory was due to drawing the *Round Up the Usual Suspects* card (capture a character) along with learning where Robin was located. A number of executioner icons helped him on his merry way to the afterlife.

Thoughts

We had a miscue regarding characters other than the four at start. We were supposed to mix them in with the pile of random reinforcements. Alas, both of us didn't. My hearty companions Sir Guy, The Black Knight, and one other fellow never even had a chance of making it into the game. Ah well. Neither did some of the Merry Men. More glory for me the Sheriff!

Both of us mis-played cards. Funny how you realize exactly what you needed to play after the turn is over!

I was lucky in that I drew a card that allowed me to nab a character in an adjacent area. As I had just discovered Robin Hood, and my victorious defenders of Stamford Castle were adjacent to Robin Hood, so I scooped him up. The executioner icons were icing on the cake and sealed Robin's fate.

Nice game, Renaud Hood!



More Age of Sail: Hexes

by Russ Lockwood

Renaud broke out the Age of Sail minis again, this time on a hex grid. Granted, it was an outer space hex grid like some anime show, but four-inch hexes are four-inch hexes.

He had tweaked his already modified *Fleet Action* rules a bit (see the June AAR) for the hexgrid and for speedier play. One major difference was getting rid of saving rolls, although slightly better repair rolls mitigated that a bit.

Per random roll, I was the British blockading force and Renaud was the French fleet in harbor trying to break the blockade. It made even more sense because the random wind gauge proved beneficial to exiting the harbor.

I had a bit of a problem keeping my ships of the line in actual line. I planned to cut off his escape by crossing his T at the harbor mouth, but as he moved first, I soon discovered that might be a problem.

My British sail in towards the French in harbor.



Blockade Running

After some initial exchanging of shots, I had my ships in a perfect crossing of the T on his lead ship. However, in his rules, while you can fire after each maneuver, a maneuver is defined as a move forward or a move forward and a turn.

The French come out to battle.

Since he was hugging the edge of the map (presumably shoals and rocks were off map), I had to turn in the hex in front of his lead ship, putting the bow of his ship directly at my stern. Hence, at the end of the move and turn, my stern was facing his ship even though my broadside was initially facing his bow.

We thought about that a bit. If it was open ocean, then I would just sail by and rake his bow. But as it was not, and I could not sail off the edge of the map, all I could do was present stern and continue moving an extra hex -- which allowed me to turn back and get a broadside in that way. Not optimal, but that was the mechanic. My second 74 did the same thing. The rest of my squadron shot as best it could.

My British ships are positioned to cross the French T.

My second squadron pounded a bold French frigate at the back. It was a tough crew -- it made its Discipline roll not to strike. The second French frigate took lots of damage and struck (surrendered in



landlubber terms) and then, later, both the first and third French frigate struck.

The French slice through my line as I pound the frigates.

The Conga Line

Meanwhile, the French ships cut through my line, isolating those two British 74s that had their rake and one after another pounded them to splinters. One hung on and passed its Discipline roll, but the other succumbed to panic and struck.

The French sense freedom and head out to open sea.



Meanwhile, my 100-gun flagship took broadside after broadside. Sails shredded, masts toppled, cannons dismounted, and the hull started to look like Swiss cheese. My Discipline held for a while, but the accumulated damage overwhelmed repair and the ship struck.

My second squadron sailed into the harbor, but fell behind, basically undamaged. Alas, its firepower was unused after felling the trio of French frigates.

The French ships, minus the three frigates, broke the blockade and sailed away -- a crushing defeat for Her Majesty's ships!

Nice progression of the rules, Renaud. Good game.

The French inflict significant damage to the British fleet and make their getaway.



Thoughts

About the only odd mechanic was the ordering of which ships moved first. Holding the weather gauge is a good idea, but if the rearmost ships moved first, they sometimes ended up being in a Keystone Kops scatter trying not to ram friendly ships. Granted, if you had a squadron move first, all ships in the entire squadron were eligible to move and could move in any order as long as they maintained a hex to adjacent hex line. That proved difficult and occasionally created some odd maneuvers.

An alternative would be to plot movement ala *Close Action* with the lead ship moving first, fine for one ship or maybe two, but not when you command 10 ships.

The solution, after Renaud consulted some historical age of sail web sites, was to allow a line to be considered a line with an empty hex in between. That gave a one-hex leeway to avoid drastic anti-ramming movements.



At the start of *Invasion of the Brood*.

Brooding With Bugs: Invasion

by Russ Lockwood

Click, click went my mandibles. Yum, yum. Dinner time. Oh it's great to be a leader of the Brood on Earth. It's a wonder we hadn't invaded this planet before.

The Queen sent over a nice human for dinner. Called the dish Typicali con Wargameri. Aged to perfection. Not too young and stringy. Not too old and leathery. And not too skinny or pudgy. Just enough fat to sizzle and mix with the fermented brain sauce and falva beans. And a nice Chianti to wash it all down. Click, click, click.

Welcome to the Invasion

Renaud brought out the game *Invasion of the Brood*, where mind-control bugs try to conquer Earth. As we started to play, he put on some music -- the soundtrack to the movie *Independence Day*.

By random die roll, I was the bugs. I started out with nothing but some story about a moon base that slingshots larva broodmasters to Earth. In any case, I get three Mindpower Points (MPs) at the start of a turn plus 1 MP per adult broodmaster. I also get a free Mind Control token to place on any human unit that immediately put that unit under my command. Then I get to spend the MPs to move, attack, build or evolve more units, and so on.

The humans come in six main groups: US, European Union, Russia, China, India, and Japan. The US, EU, and Russia have two areas while the other three have one area each. The rest of the world is neutral: three territories each in South America and Africa, one for Canada, one for Central America, and two for Australia. Every area has one factory within: good to produce a unit (ground, air, or naval) or a specialty Orion missile.

Each main group possesses starting ground, air, and naval units, plus reinforcements. As we are a fractious race, only one of these six is activated at start. Renaud chose the US, which has the best units.

Activations

The bugs are pure expenditure of MPs. Turn a larva broodmaster into an adult broodmaster: 1 MP. Build a worker unit: 1 MP. Move a unit: 1 MP. Attack: 1 MP. Evolve a Worker into a Warrior: 1 MP. And so on.

For the human player, activation can either be a main group or a Neutral. For the latter, just move in a unit. For the former, you can convince one group per turn to join via diplomacy and gain its starting forces, but that always prohibits specialty war production and often move and battle. You can directly declare war on one of the groups, where you battle the starting forces, but can do all the phases in a turn to get at the bugs.

Southern bug strategy in action...



The specialty human war production consists of Orion missiles to fire at the Queen on the moon base. When six Orion missiles hit the Queen, she's dead and so are all us bugs. Likewise, when we capture six factories* and man them, errr, bug them, with a Worker unit, the humans collapse and the Brood reigns!

* I was told any six areas and factories will do, but a closer reading of the rules on the third game showed it was one factory from each of the six main groups.

No set number of turns -- just whichever player hits for six first wins.

Let Loose the Bugs of War

So we bugs went off to war with a fine song playing across all our minds: "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brooder."

Renaud noted the game rules needed some tweaking because the Brood player had a significant advantage. So, he dropped the free Mind Control action and all other Mind Control actions had a 50-50 chance of success.

Having never played...sure.

It didn't take long for the humans to amass enough firepower to auto-kill anything they chose to attack. The aircraft were quite powerful. As for 50-50 rolls, I made few, which didn't help. It didn't take long before I realized this game was over. The humans were winning big.

So, we reset and tried the original rules so I could get some perspective.

Egad. The first thing I realized was I would spend most MPs on Mind Control, especially US air units. These were auto-controlled by me and the humans were stymied. I was s-l-o-w-l-y building up bug bases, but the humans were being obliterated. I can see why it needed tweaking.

Renaud checking the rules for nuances.

Third Time's a Charm

So, for a third game, we agreed to try something in the middle. The free Mind Control was automatically successful, but any others were 50-50. I started out with awful rolls, but soon came back to an actual 50% success rate.

As diplomacy prevents the building of Orion missiles, Renaud concentrated on activating only the US and EU. I promptly built



broodmasters in the territories of the other main powers. He later activated Japan.

This was a far more exciting and close game. I had built five of the six broodmaster hives in five of the six main powers' territories and Renaud had built five of the six Orion missiles. By dint of moving first, I built the sixth and winning broodmaster. The rules didn't say the humans get a turn to destroy the sixth bug base. Most games require one side to hold all their objectives at the end of a turn while some say the player who fulfills victory conditions first wins.

Thoughts

Upon looking at the world map, I noticed that Greenland was part of the US territory. Canada was a neutral, so I guess we bought or stole Greenland in this alternate universe. Is this game banned in Denmark?

That's OK. The Middle East is part of India. Is this game banned in that region?

This probably should include the human back half of a turn to try and win if the bugs win in the front half of the turn. The free Mind Control and the 50-50 roll for additional Mind Controls per turn is a good balancing act.

One odd aspect: As the bug player, I spent the Mindpower Points to build a Warrior, but... when used, even if Warriors win, they are destroyed at the end of a turn -- even if they win the combat. In the combat, the Warrior bug attacks all human units in the same area. If it wins, it immediately dies. Talk about a short life span.

I didn't bother with Warriors after the first game. Sure, they performed auto-kills on the attack and saved on a base 1-4 (d6 roll), but the extra point was better used to create a larva. If attacked, it wouldn't survive (base save on a 1), but the humans can't attack everywhere.

There's a good game in there, but the rules needed that extra tweaking to make it a balanced game. Thanks, Renaud.

New Wave War of the Worlds: UK Invasion

by Russ Lockwood

Continuing the invasion theme, the game *War of the Worlds: The New Wave* posits a Martian return after being first defeated. Apparently, they fine-tuned their biohazard defense, for this game has no plagues for the Martians. Renaud also set up the Irish Sea expansion. By random chance, I was the peace-loving Martians here to bring civilization to the UK human savages.

After cracking shrinkwrap and setting up, Renaud reads out the rules.

The extra Kickstarter plastic figures are quite nice, with the Martian tripod appropriately tentaclely and the saucer appropriately saucerly. How smooth. How elegant.

The humans, degenerates that they are, are a bunch of meeples with vaguely WWI helmeted outlines. Ah, but such rude angles on their Mark IV tanks and dreadnoughts. The buildings are hollow squares that fit the square cardboard counters, but sticking the circular counters is more teetering than fitting.



Set Up and Card Play

The Martians start in Scotland with one ground dropship, one tripod, and one saucer. The humans start with 30 meeples placed in 10 areas across Britain, Scotland, and Wales.

Starting hands contain power (Martian) and coin (human) cards that are used to buy more cards as well as movement and firing cards. The dilemma here is that buying additional cards with benefits often means eliminating a card containing extra-strength power. In Renaud's case, his spending could buy beneficial buildings, armies, and navies.

The idea was for us wise and merciful Martians to eat all 30 humans while the humans had to inflict 30 points of damage on our benevolent and serene war machines.

The Spreading Martian Empire

Starting in Scotland, I played cards to move the tripod and saucer separately, then played more cards to eat the humans. Hint: the youngest and eldest humans can be a little stringy. You want the middle ones for best taste. Look for the ones with more meat on their bones, because they are nice and squishy.

Yum. Yum.

Renaud creates Hadrian's Bunker Wall across the north of Britain. My tripod and Saucer battle guerrillas and eat civilians with equal gusto. The blue bunker is my home dropship.



In any case, before you could say "Gloop-

gleep's your uncle," those clever humans set up a Hadrian's Wall of bunkers across two areas. No worries, I ate all the Scots north of this wall and used my "Carrier" card to airlift my tripod over the wall and into the heart of Britain.

Then the humans became cheeky little monkeys and laid a belt of landmines like a lethal Antonine Wall. Sheesh. What next?

In the meantime, guerrillas kept ambushing my tripod, scoring more and more hits. No matter, I trapped 'em all the same. Never mind the Catch and Release protocol -- I ate 'em. But there are a lot of 'em.

Next thing you know, the humans are being shipped to Ireland to get the Leprechaun's gold. Apparently, there's a bottomless pit of gold in Ireland, as long as no Martians are around. As if I didn't have enough to worry about.

Roll Martian Tide

The human attacks kept coming as Ireland became adorned with a barrage balloon and an AA gun. Renaud had to look up whether the AA gun could be used against the ground-based tripods. "It wouldn't be the first 88mm gun that can shoot ground and air units," he said. Good for me and bad for Renaud, the AA units were strictly AA units. A supply dump in Essex pumped out an additional coin.

I used the Carrier to hop my tripod over the bunker line and into the heart of Britain at Nottingham. Here, my counterattack absorbed hits, but I steadily whittled down Robin Hood's gang as guerrillas dashed in and out to plink away at my force. I broke the humans with a series of attacks.

Last Yummies in the UK

Two humans were sent to Ireland to secure the Leprechaun gold and get away from the mad tripod that had burned out human buildings and ate the humans.

My tripod releases poisonous fog to kill off Robin and His Merry Marauders near Nottingham. Hmmm. Killing Robin Hood twice in one month – new record for me. I soon ate the ancestors of the Beatles at Liverpool.

No worries, the humans taunted. A single meeple headed off the West Coast, got to Ireland, then headed out to sea against and sailed around the UK, remaining at sea to avoid ground punishment.

I was not in the mood to let either the Irish meeple or the At Sea meeple escape. I used the carrier to get to Ireland. I took out both the AA and the Balloon buildings.

Ultimately, Renaud and I agreed to call it a game. It would take me a couple turns to buy the second, and necessary, saucer card. I only had one saucer card. As the saucer could only shoot or move, I needed a second saucer card to be able to trap the cruise ship. Then I could go after the last cruisin' human.

Thoughts

Renaud had run up the score to 25 or 26 hits, but had expended just about all his coin cards. I didn't burn mine as quickly, tending to discard instead of eliminate cards. I discarded a lot of unused cards, but that meant I always had the option to burn cards, which I did at the end game to scoop up those last humans.

I did forget to spawn new units -- an icon in the upper left of the card proved too subtle for my memory. That likely would have saved me grief -- not to mention my starting Fortress of Pulchritude. I had one turn to defend, but my units were too far away. It would have been easier to spawn a new unit.

The game only took two hours, including reading the rules and flipping through them from time to time. Like all card-driven games, the luck of the shuffle probably will alter game play. Worth another try. Thanks for the game, Renaud.



Aeon's End: The New Age

by Daniel

I had a rare opportunity for some one-on-one gaming with Steve, whom I've known since high school chess club. Aside from a couple of *D&D* games over the past year, I haven't played a game with him in probably two to three years.

One game he wanted to introduce to me is *Aeon's End: The New Age*. *Aeon's End* was initially released in 2016 and this appears to be a stand-alone expansion that introduces an "Expedition system." Reminds me of a "legacy" format where special boxes or envelopes cannot be opened until a specific event or phase is triggered.

The theme of the game was totally unfamiliar to me. We skimmed over the background "history", but from what I could tell, this is a co-operative game where each player is a "Breach Mage" that channels magic through the use of one or more Breaches to protect the refuge of Gravehold from monsters that are out to get them and Gravehold. Although only mildly interested in the theme, I have played a number of excellent co-operative games and was curious to see how this one played out.

My "Breach Mage" was named Taqren, who has a number of abilities that support other players and Gravehold itself. For this scenario, each Mage starts with 10 hit points and Gravehold itself starts at 36 hit points. The attacking monster is Maggoth, who can generate maggots and flies that can harm Gravehold (reminding me of "The Fetid One," a major Nurgle Daemon from the *Warhammer 40K Epic* universe with minions that had similar flies, pests, and disgusting crawling things). Maggoth clocks in with 45 hit points.

My "Breach Mage" Taqren has four "Breaches" across the top, two of which are "closed". Two spells are prepared on the two "opened" Breaches. The draw deck is on the left and the discard pile is on the right, showing a "gem" card that generates mana. The "2" on Taqren represents his player number, so when the "Player 2" activation card is revealed, then Taqren can take his turn.



Activation

Activation is determined by cards, two for each Mage and the Monster – so for a two-player game the activation deck has six cards. Therefore, you don't know when you get your turn. A simple but effective variable that can keep you guessing (or gambling) whether you will get to go before the monster does. Each player starts with a five-card hand that is drawn back to five cards at the end of each turn.

When it's your turn, there are many action options that can be taken in any order. By the end of your first game, you will recognize how important that flexibility is to optimize tactics and game play. Besides your initial 10-card deck, there are nine stacks of other cards representing "gems" and "relics" (mostly for mana generating or manipulation) and spells – so there is a deck-building element to this game. A number of these cards (as well as each Mage's abilities) often grant benefits or options to your allies (or Ally in this case) and it did not take long for me to figure this out. I often prompted Steve on each action or card play that could benefit him or give him an option, such as an opportunity to discard a card to add a free charge to his Breach Mage, transfer a card to his hand, or draw a card.

When the "Nemesis" (monster) goes, a card is draw from the Nemesis deck. It could be an Attack that resolves immediately or is delayed (meaning it resolves in 1-3 turns), or a Minion with 4-17 hit points that activates its ability on each future Nemesis turn. An "unleash" keyword triggers Maggoth's ability to spawn maggots and flies. These are placed on the "nest" track and as each row gets filled, Gravehold takes damage and some 1 hit-point maggots mature to 2 hit-point flies.

It becomes a race to eliminate Maggoth before Maggoth kills off the players and/or Gravehold. As the game starts, the Mages are relatively weak. As the Mages improve their decks, their capabilities improve and some synergies can be developed that allow the Mages to complement each other or even pass each other spells as they are used. Players familiar with *Dominion* or other deck-building games can pick up on this quickly.

We played two games (same Mages and Nemesis, but changed four of the nine stacks) and were successful both times. Playing the game the first time (and it's my opinion that the first time is often the best gaming experience, as you have to rely on intuition), I didn't know what the "Nemesis" could do or how dangerous its abilities could be. Several decisions I made *not* to acquire more spells and just attack with what I could muster proved to be the right choices as we found out just how powerful the monster was.

On the left are 9 stacks of cards the Breach Mages can acquire by spending mana. On the right is the "Nemesis", Maggoth and the nest display with maggots and flies displayed. Underneath are two of Maggoth's minions. Above Maggoth is the monster's hit points remaining and with 5 hit points remaining, Maggoth is very close to being defeated.



I liked playing this game, which progressed in a reasonable time frame but still kept you thinking and weighing a finite number of options (some games overwhelm you with so many options that it leads to "analysis paralysis"). I don't plan on purchasing it, but I'll definitely play it when it's offered as an option.

Gratuitous Historicon 2026 Photos

Friday night in the Heritage ballroom at 9:56pm. More empty tables than full ones, unlike in the heyday of youth.



Saturday night in the Heritage ballroom at 8:23pm. Early to bed? Early to leave? Dunno...





Happy campers enjoy gaming some history.

HMGS Next Generation: Heating Up

by John Spiess

Summer Camp Gaming: Tarrytown

This past week, Next Gen ran a five-day gaming program as part of the Hackley School summer camp in Tarrytown, NY. This was the second year we participated and we grew by holding both morning and afternoon sessions this year, as opposed to just a morning session last year. The summer camp offers over a dozen of the regular outdoor programs such as soccer, softball, other sports, and even rock climbing.

However, they also offer a few indoor courses for those kids that don't want to be outside in the heat all day or just want to take a break from sports. During the year, being on a sports team is actually mandatory at Hackley. Among the indoor courses was computer logic and programming, chess club, and us.

American Revolution game in progress.



We ran a different game every day. We also had some help from one of Jim Stanton's teacher friends, Dave Flynn, and daughter Elizabeth, who helped out with multiple sessions during the week. On Monday, we ran our popular castle siege game, and Tuesday was our WWI Trench Wars game. Wednesday was a special science fiction robot game, where Dave Flynn actually had the kids design their own rules for the game. They had some experience with rule sets from Monday and Tuesday, so we changed it up a bit, and focused on game design for Wednesday. They broke into groups and started drafting rules for movement, shooting, and basically everything else in a miniatures game, based on what they robot models looked like. They did a great job.

On Thursday, I ran the Greek/Roman game that I plan on running at Historicon. There is a pretty funny picture below of Liana's reaction to her elephants being killed. On Friday, I finished up with the Battle of Monmouth to have a 250th Anniversary event as part of the program.

A few quick observations...

Our classroom was right next to the computer and chess club classes. We invited the chess club to come in and play in our afternoon classes. They were pretty much blown away. We had to laugh since a few of them didn't want to go back. You might say my motives were a little self-serving, since I'm hoping to entice more of these kids next year.

Final note...

The computer class was actually for elementary aged kids in the 1st through 4th grades. Really young! I walked into the class to see what was going on since I thought they were just playing computer games on their laptops. Then I saw the gigantic whiteboard with all the computer programming code that they were working on. It was insane!

The young female teacher was smiling at me since I made a joke about how I remember rotary phones. She simply said... "Don't laugh, but these parents know where the jobs are going to be."

Game designers at work and then play.

Another Summer Camp: Stamford

Jim and Elizabeth Stanton do the heavy lifting here, but I stopped in yesterday to check it out and take some photos.

They were playing the French and Indian War with a fort and figures generously donated by John Manning. We keep all the supplies at the school so the kids can play with it all year long as part of our ongoing after school program.

French and Indian battle.

One quick note: The kid in the Yankee hat next to Elizabeth is an AWI reenactor with the 5th Connecticut. We had a chuckle since that's one of the regiments that I have painted in 28mm.

This program in Stamford is run in both the Fall and Spring. This year, the town had some extra money in the budget, so they increased their summer programs. Next Gen is now a favored community partner in Stamford, so we helped out with camp.

WWI Belleau Wood: Weston

Another parent in Weston will be attending Historicon with his boys.

WWI action.

Battle of Monmouth AWI: Rye

The game was a bit hectic with 16 players. The library director decided to combine two age groups (4th and 5th elementary plus middle and high school) into one session. The game was fine, but the younger kids just don't have the attention span developed yet for a two-hour game. They were mostly concentrated on the Continental side so the battle took a big turn for the British after about an hour.

It was all good since they all seemed to know each other from school, so they were pretty much making jokes with other the whole time. Reminded me of NYWA.



NEWS

Eagles to Glory: New Napoleonic Miniature Rules

by Russ Lockwood

Eagles to Glory is a set of Napoleonic miniature wargaming rules where a single stand represents a battalion of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, or one battery of artillery. Five morale grades: Guard to Militia. A full game turn represents 20 minutes of actual time, so three turns equal 1 hour.

Three ground scales are available: 1" = 150 Yards, 1" = 100 Yards, and 1" = 75 Yards to accommodate figure sizes ranging from 2/3mm to 25/28mm.

The Command Radius table is used as an efficient method to reflect the differences in national characteristics, staffing efficiency and command control. Individual commanders are not rated based upon their historical abilities as players will bring their own strengths and foibles to the game. There is an optional leader rule.

Division Points are used when needed to prompt the division to move, cavalry charges, and when taking losses.

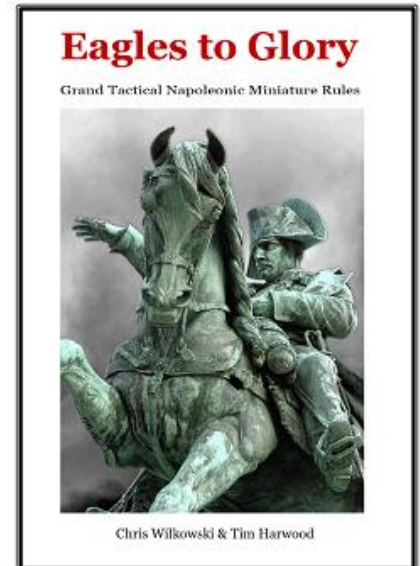
D10s are used for rolls other than combat, such as movement, and D20s are used for combat rolls

Rules are available in PDF or printed (bound or coil bound). Price: \$20 plus shipping for paper copies. Find PDF at Wargame Vault (also, scenarios are \$1 or \$2 each), Amazon Global (printed), or direct from Tim Harwood. Tim reports over 600 copies sold as of July 1.

The rules authors talk about the rules on a YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbSyU5cE0lk&t=5s>

More info: Facebook Group



Normandy Bunkers: Photos 2005

by Russ Lockwood

Chris Parker posted 25 color photos of German bunkers and other fortifications in Normandy, circa 2005. An interesting collection.

Other postings include images from various CPG games.

Gallery Page: <https://www.dayofbattlegames.com/day-of-battle-games-gallery-page/>

Battle of Tunisgrad: Upcoming Wargame

by Lou

Against the Odds magazine will be publishing Lou's wargame *Battle of Tunisia*. Here is a recap from a game at a convention in Oslo (Norway). -- RL

Tunisia is the subject of Rick Atkinson's first WWII trilogy book, *Army at Dawn*. He previously wrote *Long Gray Line*, about the Class of 1966 - my squad leaders' class, the one semester I was a plebe there at West Point -- which in Viet Nam had the highest combat KIA percentage of any class.

Playtest map and counters.



I had a great game of *Postcard Tunisia/Tunisgrad* with Erlend and his son Tor at ArCon in Oslo on June 20, 2026. I was Western Allies' 1st Army, Erlend was the Axis, and Tor -- after watching how the game was played for the first three turns -- was the later arriving British 8th Army.

After all kinds of intense back and forth for the last three turns, the final-turn last die roll was a 50% chance for the British 1st and 8th Armies to take Bizerte. Since we had already taken the other victory city, Tunis, this was the roll for the win.

I let Tor roll the die, and he won the game for the Allies.

Steve at ATO prefers NATO-style unit symbols. For my own copy, I used overhead icons (pixel-by-pixel). Notice Blade force with its US M3A1s and their four .30 cal machine guns as well as the long-hulled/low-center-of-gravity, hill-climbing Northern Irish Horse Churchills.

How the Italian 1st Army ended up on Kasserine and surviving the game (to then presumably surrender) is a long story. Luftwaffe Afrika had already been intercepted, but the only horizontal bombing Disruption from both USAAFME and Desert Air Force was on, ironically, the Tiger tanks. In the end, the British Desert Air Force close air support provided the one-column shift to get 3:1 against the others and the ultimate 50% chance for the win.

Full Disclosure: I am the Staff Developer for the game.

New Wargame: *Bohemian Rhapsody 1622*

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice Games announces *Bohemian Rhapsody: The Battles of Wimpfen and Hochst, 1622*. Both are 30 Years War battles. Wimpfen took place on May 6, 1622 when the Catholic forces of Tilly and Cordoba surprised the smaller force of George Fredrick of Baden who was trying to cross the river Neckar. Hochst took place on June 20, 1622 when the same Catholic army under Tilly and Cordoba stopped a Protestant army commanded by Christian of Brunswick.

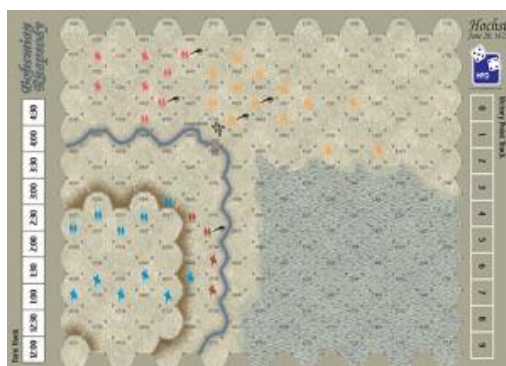
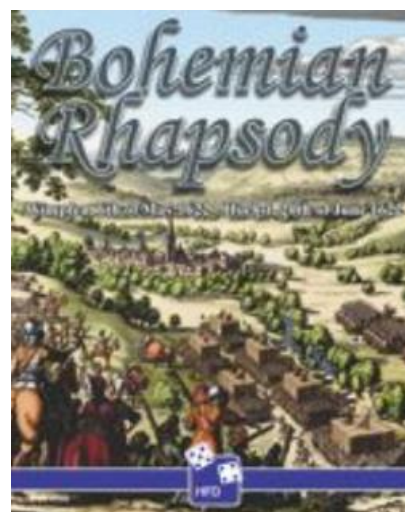
Each combat unit represents from 300 to 1000 soldiers, and it is rated, from left to right, for combat morale and movement. Each infantry strength point is around 150 men, each cavalry strength point is about 60 men. Each leader is rated for Command (indicating how many activation chits that leader has) and Movement. Each hex is about 100 meters. Each turn represents a half hour of time.

Each copy contains: Two 11x17-inch maps, One sheet of 246 single-sided, un-mounted counters, One Players Aid Sheet, and 8 pages of rules. Players need at least one six-sided die and an opaque container.

BH map and counters.

Bohemian Rhapsody is designed by Roberto Chiavini, developed by Paul Rohrbaugh, and features graphics by Bruce Yearian. The game sells for \$20.95 plus sales tax (where applicable) and shipping and handling. Mounted counters can be purchased for an additional \$8.00.

Info: <http://www.hfdgames.com/bohemia.html>



2nd Annual Frederick Gameday: Oct. 24, 2026

by Russ Lockwood

Keith Wyttenbach will gather again at the Firefighters Union Hall (Local 3666), located at 8829 Yellow Springs Road, Frederick, MD 21702, for the 2nd Annual Frederick Gameday. \$5 donation requested to give to the Union Hall.

First games can start as early as 0900 (doors to open at 0800 for setup). We'll plan to run 5-6 games at a time as room allows. You are welcome to bring your own lunch. Pizza and assorted drinks will be available for purchase.

Info: kwytten@comcast.net

US Naval Institute Press

by Russ Lockwood

One of our AAR readers noted that US Naval Institute Press had a 60% off sale over the July 4th holiday. I didn't know about it, but as Art noted, would have if I had gotten its newsletter. He noted that the next sale begins in December. So, I'll pass along that wise tip.

I took a swing by the USNI site. You can find a number of naval-oriented news and articles. For example, The aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* is shifting its homeport from Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, Wash., to Norfolk, VA, where it will be deactivated in March of 2027 and dismantled in 2030. A history of the ship followed.

From the web site: "USNI News is the independent, non-profit news service of the Naval Institute. Our mission is to provide unbiased coverage of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and international maritime affairs."

Info: <https://news.usni.org/>

Advance Notice of Solitaire Wargame: *Rome LLP*

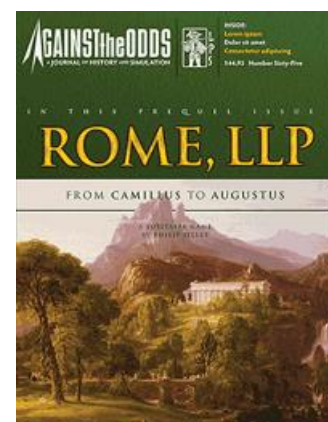
by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine issue 65 will feature *Rome, LLP*, a solitaire game of the Roman Republic by Philip Jelley. This prequel to the popular *Rome, Inc.* (ATO 53) and *Rome, II Inc.* (ATO 61) will see players growing this small city state in 400 BCE to a republic and to an empire by 27 BCE. All the famous Roman enemies are here: Brennus the Gaul, Hannibal Barca, Mithridates the Great, Spartacus, and more. The player operates behind the scenes, promoting and removing consuls, censors, governors, and tribunes (and dictators in a real emergency) as Roman legions monopolize the Mediterranean.

Includes: 22x34-inch map, 280 full color 1/2-inch die-cut counters, 12 pages of rules, and two pages of charts. Complexity is Medium, Playing time is from two to four hours per scenario, and as it is designed as a solitaire game, Solitaire play is excellent.

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=2208>

Playtest counters for Rome LLP.



Advance Notice of Upcoming Wargame: *The Road to Tokyo*

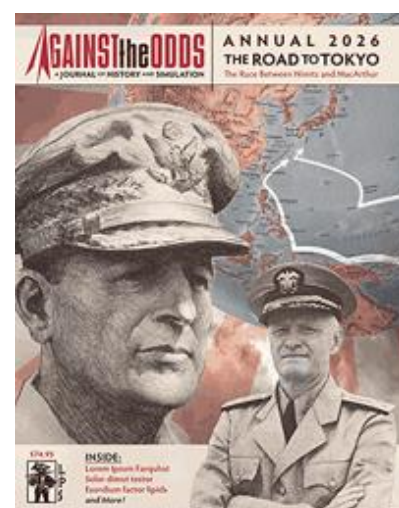
by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine's Annual 2026 special issue will feature *The Road to Tokyo*, a two-player wargame depicting the principle fronts in New Guinea and the Central Pacific for the first six months of 1944. Players assume the roles of both Nimitz and MacArthur as well as the opposing Imperial Japanese Army and Navy forces. Thus, the Nimitz player controls the USN carriers in the Central Pacific and the Imperial Japanese Army forces opposing MacArthur in New Guinea. Likewise, the MacArthur player controls the US Army air forces in New Guinea and the Imperial Japanese Navy forces opposing Nimitz in the Central Pacific. Each player controls forces on both sides and must strive to do better than his nominal ally (but secret opponent) and gain the most "Headline Points" possible -- influencing President Roosevelt's ultimate decision to take the road to Tokyo through the Philippines (MacArthur's demand) or via Formosa (Nimitz's plan). Each turn represents around two weeks.

Includes: 17x22-inch map, 176 full color 5/8-inch die-cut counters, 52 cards, 18 Event cards, 12 pages of rules, and two pages of charts. Complexity is Medium and Playing time is from four to six hours.

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=2209&category=9>

Full Disclosure: I am the Staff Developer for the game.



Zeppelin Tales: Upcoming Book

by Russ Lockwood

Avalanche Press plans to release *Zeppelin Tales*, a historical study tracing the development of the airship from the first ship built by David Schwartz in 1896, through the American flying carriers Akron and Macon of the 1930's, and on to the plans for even bigger ships to follow. Ferdinand Graf Zeppelin gave his name to the type, but many others tried their hand at lighter-than-air flight.

Learn how an airship operated, including the U.S. Navy's innovative airplane-carrying airships. Includes stories of German airships over the North Sea, and the development of German lighter-than-air flight including the rubber Parseval gasbag and Johann Schütte's beautiful but fragile wooden-framed Schütte-Lanz series. Plus we tell about the airship programs, in Britain, Russia, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary.

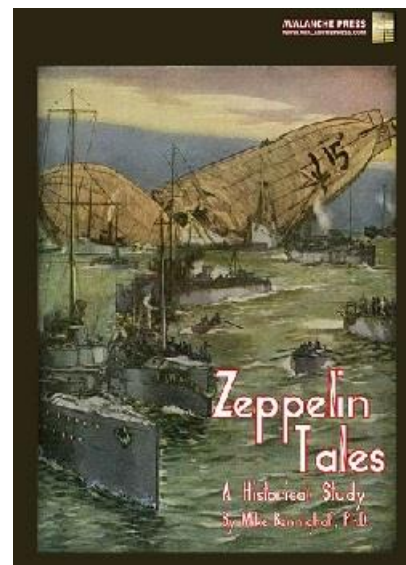
Price: \$32.99 plus shipping.

Note: This book is not yet available. You can order now and claim 20% off with the coupon code DANA.

In addition, Avalanche Press plans to release *Golden Journal No. 62: Naval Airships*, a supplement to its *Great War at Sea* wargame series. Includes 88 "deluxe-sized" counters, each of them with an airship: 52 German Navy, five German Army, nine Italian, 11 British, three U.S. Navy, one U.S. Army, one Russian, five Austro-Hungarian, and one French. Also includes histories of all 88 zeppelins plus "extra-crunchy" zeppelin rules to squeeze even more out of your floating gasbags.

Price: \$40.99 plus shipping. Book only: \$22.99 plus shipping.

Info: <https://izuye1-h6.myshopify.com/products/zeppelin>



Marvin the Martian: Ole!

by Russ Lockwood

Phil hosted a Martian Invasion of Texas game at Ottocon. Besides a chuckle of a recap and the usual game photos, you gotta love Marvin the Martian's adherence to the South of the Border theme.

Recap: <https://philsmartianfront.blogspot.com/2026/07/desperate-battle-near-san-antonio.html>

The Marvin the Martian machine obviously runs faster than any other tripod.



Gratuitous Historicon 2026 Photo

Painting Competition entries.



Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

July proved to be a busy month, so not as many book reviews as usual. Next month will be back to form-- RL

The Battle of Leuctra: 371 BC. by Jeffrey Smith. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 218 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *The Collapse of Sparta's Empire and the Rise of the Theban Hegemony*

Most references to Sparta refer to Thermopylae first, then to the Peloponnesian War second, but after Sparta defeated Athens in the latter, the city state built an empire based on military prowess and oppression. Ultimately, a slow loss of Spartiates over the decades created a dwindling number of Spartan hoplites. That in turn led conquered city states -- not to mention the slave helots -- to rebel, locking Sparta in never-ending warfare that led to Thebes and its Boeotian allies to finally amass enough troops to challenge the Spartans in open battle. It helped that two excellent Theban commanders -- Pelopidas and Epaminondas -- organized and led the army.

Before you get to the actual battle, a full history of the creation of the Spartan empire offers needed background. Some of this will be familiar, but much of this new. Of note, Sparta only kept garrisons in a few key city states, Thebes among them, and relied on military reputation, and subjugation, to keep the populace of most city states in line. New to me was that the hoplite shortage got so bad, non-Spartan citizens were allowed into the ranks and at one point, a small rebellion was not brutally crushed and the villagers slaughtered, but King Agesilaus essentially pardoned most of them. How times changed.

Anyway, as the decades passed, Spartan leaders became sloppy and many garrisons were lost in surprise uprisings. So Thebans recovered their city state, created an army, and marched out to meet the Spartan Army at Leuctra. The short version is that Epaminondas increased the depth of the phalanx, put the best troops on the left side instead the right, inserted Pelopidas' elite Sacred Band among these left troops, and used an oblique approach to allow his left to overwhelm the Spartan right. The long version you'll find in the text.

The book contains one black and white photo, two black and white illustrations, five basic black and white Leuctra battle diagrams, one basic black and white Tegyra battle diagram, two black and white maps, 14 color photos, and one color illustration.

It's well written and explains the workings of the Spartan empire and its opponents in detail using historical accounts and extrapolated analysis. The actual battle is covered in about 20 pages, but here's a rare case where the 140-page preamble provides essential information about why Leuctra was more important and had longer-lasting effects than previous anti-Spartan battles. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

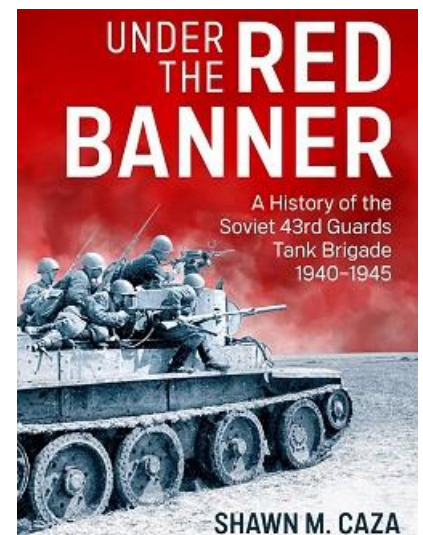
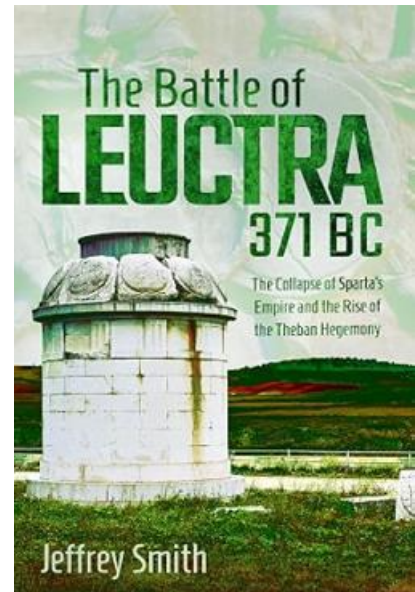
Under The Red Banner. by Shawn M. Caza. Hardback (6.8x9.9 inches). 222 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *A History of the 43rd Guards Tank Brigade 1940-1945*

As I read this, I kept thinking of the *Europa* wargame and its Soviet 2-1-8 tank brigades. I can't remember if the Guards designation added any factors or if the factors changed much when the brigade evolved from T-60/70 and T-34 regiments with a mechanized regiment to late-war IS-2 and SU-152 regiments. I do know you will be exceptionally pleased with understanding how tank brigades were created, deployed, and used as well as how they evolved over the course of the war.

The 43rd started life as the regular 145th Brigade with a mix of light tanks, medium tanks, and motorized infantry with minimal engineer and other support elements. Indeed, that minimal support often proved an impediment to successful offensive actions.

Every move of this unit, from little village to little village, is covered, as is every combat -- from the entire unit to individual tanks. Most histories leave me at a loss to know where these villages are located, but lo and behold, pieces of



period maps are reproduced for almost every march and battle. Better yet, they are mostly located on the page or the opposite page so you can actually find these villages.

This is exactly the treatment I applaud. Sure, some of the maps are better reproduced than others and you have to squint to pick out terrain details, but a magnifying glass helps you develop the map into terrain on a tabletop. Bravo!

Indeed, Caza might be a wargamer, for he includes OOB, TO&E, march rates, deployment distances, and other details for scenario building. The brigade was made up of three regiments, or battalions in US lingo: two tank (KV1s, T-60/70s, and T-34s until late war) and one motorized infantry. It'll be hard for those used to hub-to-hub models to get used to the actual attack and defense distances.

For example, a typical attack has recon and first battalion (at least three infantry companies) about 1km ahead of the main force and about 800m in depth. Behind, the main force has the T-34 battalion of three companies in line abreast formation with tank riders and at least two companies of motorized infantry -- about 600m in depth. The last force has the HQ and support troops plus one T-34 platoon. Call the whole deployment depth about 2km or so. The Brigade on the march stretched over 7km in depth (p193) in early war or 10km to 11km in depth (p366) as the war continued.

Tank reliability was horrible for KV-1s and T-34s with up to 50% breakdown rate on a 58km march, but much better for T-60s and T-70s (p216). The brigade was deployed for combat 34% of the time during the war years. The other 66% was spent in training and rebuilding. With these details and more, it seems like each T-34 and KV-1 tank should roll for a 50-50 chance of being disabled.

The unit had been eliminated a couple times during 1941 -- had so few tanks and troops left that tanks were transferred to another brigade and the surviving crews pulled back to reconstitute the brigade.

The tank brigades were subordinate to the rifle divisions, which never knew if they would be transferred or not, so division commanders tended to send in the brigade regardless of situation because they were counted only as temporary assets. As training in the early was minimal and the tactical acumen of commanders even worse, these brigades took horrendous losses. Between August 4 and October 4, 1941 the unit lost 140 tanks (including seven captured German trophy tanks and one British Valentine. The unit was constantly incorporating new tanks from the factory and transferred tanks from other brigades (p123). Note that the official full strength was eight KV-1s, 20 T-34s, and 20 T-60/T-70s (p116). Like German units, it hardly ever had its full complement.

A couple typos: "outrun be German land elements" (p74) should be "by" and on T-34" (p107) should be "one."

I admit I neglected to count the images and maps: my estimate is a couple hundred sections. I can say that there was a switch from photos of period maps to reproducing black and white illustrations of maps. Either way, lotsa maps.

Impressive unit history with the touches needed to create tabletop scenarios. You'll need German sources for the scenarios, which is easier to access than Soviet sources. As info comes mostly from Soviet records, you do have to take some descriptions and official returns with a bit of skepticism. The 145th/43rd Guards may have exaggerated a wee bit about German casualties. It is interesting to note that Soviet losses were horrendous and many sub-units fell to under 50% of official strength.

It reads well for such a detailed work. The info within is impressive. It's got maps. Excellent!

Enjoyed it.

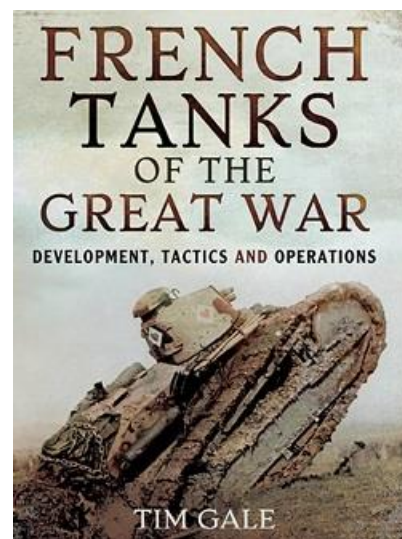
French Tanks and the Great War. by Tim Gale. Softcover (6.2x9.3 inches). 268 pages. 2026 reprint of 2016 book.

Subtitle: *Development, Tactics and Operations*

The three main tanks used by the French -- St. Chamond, Schneider, and Renault -- receive the bulk of the attention, but a few experimental tanks are included as well. Lots of tank actions are covered, although most follow the general of some break down on the way to battle, some ditch and bog down during battle, some destroyed by German artillery, and the few remaining tanks destroy lots of machine gun nests. The supporting infantry may or may not keep up, which determines when the tanks withdraw for resupply or repair. For example, during the Malmaison battle, two-thirds of tanks broke down before reaching the first trench line (p73).

In general, each battle receives a comprehensive look at the situation and goals, planning and preparation, combats that often include single tanks, and lessons learned from each battle. It's a nice, logical and effective way to learn about the evolution of French tank warfare.

Initial tank formations were 200 meters per four-tank battery, with 800m to 1,000m frontage for the four-battery groupe (p20). New to me was the conversion of some tanks to be mobile supply and repair shops and a couple converted to be wireless telegraphy tanks (p63).



Of note that during the 1917 Nivelle Offensive, Bavarian divisions deployed four battalions in the first trench line, two battalions in the second line, and three battalions in reserve which could quickly occupy the third line or provide counter-attacking forces. In between the lines were machine gun nests with interlocking fields of fire. A distance of two to three kilometers were between these lines with about a 7km overall depth per division (p20).

One possible typo: "1 CA" or "11 CA" (p118) could be two separate adjacent corps or just a typo -- not sure which.

The book contains 16 black and white photos, seven black and white illustrations, and five black and white maps. The appendices contain tech specs and a long chart of tank battles.

You'll need more map and OOB information to make a proper tabletop scenario, but for an introduction and analysis of WWI tank warfare, this is a fine examination of French operations.

Enjoyed it.

Seeking the Saxon Shore. by Max and Carole Craven. Hardback (7.0x9.8 inches). 191 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *A Guide to the Coastal Forts of Roman Britain*

This travelogue was inspired by a near-visit to a Saxon coastal fort. I say "near" because the husband and wife said they should see them all one day. In 2017, they did, and began their trip to visit the dozen forts left standing and a couple suspected of being Saxon forts.

Saxon forts defended the Romans from the invading Saxons. Most seemed to be built in the mid to late 200s AD, but changing shorelines over that last couple millennia site the remains inland in or in the sea.

Portchester on the south coast is in the best shape -- a rectangle of walls enclosing 8.5 acres of land. The walls were originally 20 feet high with a base of 12 feet six inches thick (p31). A medieval tower and church are also within. Descriptions of this and all the other forts include history, construction, later history, and driving direction to the fort without using the M-class Motorways (Interstates in the US vernacular).

Some of the forts barely still exist -- a couple piles of rock showcase what was once walls. Some don't really exist at all. The Dover fort is long gone, but the duo used a Sunday church service to get onto the grounds of Dover Castle to see the spot for free instead of paying the outrageous 20-pound per person cost. I visited Dover Castle back in the 1980s and don't recall paying more than a token entry fee.

Richborough Castle is a ruin we also visited in the same trip. I don't recall an entry fee at all. Then again, it was nothing but a field and rough rectangular ruin with a nuclear power plant nearby. FYI: Nearby is a beach near Deal where Julius Caesar landed and the town of Rye is also nearby. We liked Rye so much, we stayed an extra day.

So the trip goes northward up the eastern shore with observations about favored pubs, tricky road connections, and nice towns.

The book contains 85 color photos, one color illustration, 11 color maps, nine black and white photos, 13 black and white illustrations, and 15 black and white maps. What it does not have is an overview map of the dozen fort locations. I knew some locations due to a driving trip back in the 1980s, but other spots are just names.

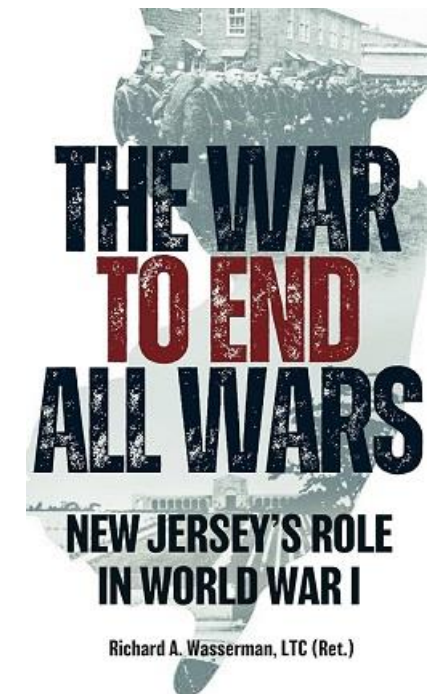
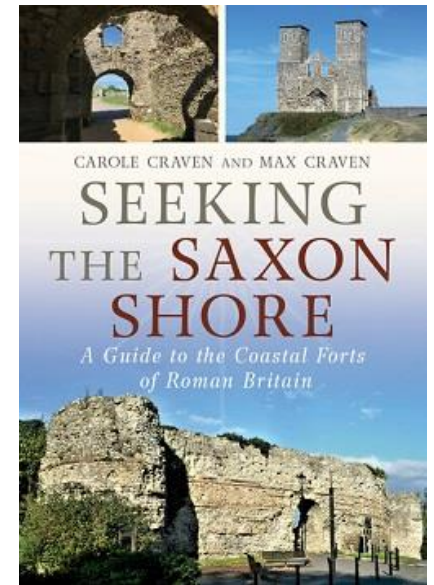
Still, a fortification history, local color, and a delightful journey make this an entertaining read. Rest assured, if I ever get back to the UK and look for a Saxon fort, I shall be on the lookout for the B2067.

Enjoyed it.

The War To End All Wars: New Jersey's Role in World War I. by Richard A. Wasserman. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 225 pages. 2026.

Being from NJ, I was rather intrigued about NJ's participation in WWI. Apparently, a lot.

NJ companies manufactured munitions and ships as well as mobilized troops to fight in the American Expeditionary Force. A couple massive explosions marred the shipping of munitions, with sabotage suspected in the Black Tom



Island explosion of 1916. Other plants also suffered small explosions. Apparently, one safety-plagued munition company's motto was "Safety is Job 2."

The book includes a section on military hospitals in NJ, contributions by women (telephone exchange operators being the most pronounced improvement over men), and battles and actions, especially the Meuse-Argonne offensive, and especially the 29th and 78th Divisions.

The chapter on monuments, markers, and other memorials here and in Europe was interesting, with one exception. An obscure fact is that the US did not officially end the war until 1921, when President Harding signed the documents at an estate in Raritan, NJ. A marker commemorates the event, and here is a gaffe: a small monument is "near the Flemington Circle" (p. xix).

Now, I have driven in, through, and around that traffic circle for 40 years, not to mention entering stores around it, and never heard of this monument. Didn't seem right, but then again, I'll be the first to admit that you can learn something new every day and there's nuthin' new like history. Unfortunately, that's all the info in the book, so I went online to track down this monument.

It's the Somerville Circle, not Flemington Circle, or about 15 miles away. Next time I'm that way, something to look for.

Other typos: "Great Britian" (p40) should be "Britain," "the78th Division" (p67) needs a space, "elope" (p97) should be "slope," and "Theodore Roosevelt" (p162) should be "Theodore."

As for the rest, the Military Park memorial in Newark was designed by Gutzon Borglum, he of Mount Rushmore fame, and includes the sculpture Wars of America, which depicts 42 workers and soldiers representing the entirety of a nation mobilized for war (p140). The Spirit of the Doughboy statue is in Belmar, Dover, Fair Haven, Frenchtown, Matawan, Perth Amboy, Roselle Park, and Secaucus. An impressive WWI monument, built in 1925, is in Montclair and depicts a WWI soldier and sailor being shielded by the hoplite-like representation of Columbia -- in front of an obelisk topped by winged victory (p142-143). I smell a road trip when the weather is cooler.

The book includes a lot of excerpts from reports, memoirs, and such, which is fine as it goes, but as I said before, excerpts should highlight something, not substitute for prose. Many of them can be summarized and retain the content, and I usually just skipped over the photocopies of lists.

The book contains 183 black and white photos, six black and white illustrations, three black and white maps, and three black and white cartoons.

All states participated in WWI, NJ among them. Hunterdon County, where I live, provided troops for the 78th Division, 311th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion (p70). Most of what happened on the home front and in the front lines is likely mirrored by the other states. But it is nice to read about my own state, and perhaps plot a road trip to see places less traveled.

Enjoyed it.

The Panzer Archives: Volume 1. by Craig Moore. Hardback (7.0x10.0 inches). 182 pages. 2026.

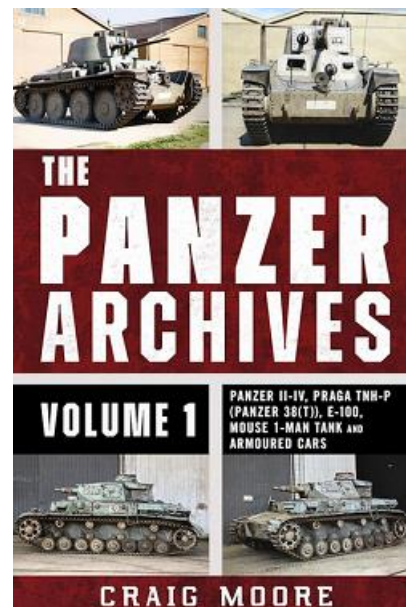
Subtitle: *Panzer II-IV, Praga TNH-P (Panzer 38(t)), E-100, Mouse 1-Man Tank and Armored Cars*

The subtitle lists most of the tanks, each with its own chapter, but doesn't include Wire-Mesh Skirting on German Tanks. The PzIII is covered under Poison Gas Bullet Attack on a Panzer III. The Armored Cars are Fiat Ansaldo Autoblindle AB 41 Italian Armored Car Trials, Wilton-Fijenood Panzerwagen Armored Car (Netherlands), and Schildkrote Panzerspahwagen Light Amphibious Turtle Armored Car. The Praga is a pre-war Czech tank the Czechoslovakians tried to sell to the British and sent a tank and a team to demonstrate its abilities.

Treadheads will love these reports by the British engineers, who dissected each of the vehicles and put them through field tests. Their evaluations examined the tech specs and the practical use. It's all listed and described in various sections like armor, suspension, interior, transmission, etc. etc. etc.

I discovered the side skirts on German tanks were not designed to stop PIATs and bazookas, but were designed to stop Soviet 14.5mm anti-tank bullets from penetrating the side armor. The mesh was just about as effective, but lighter, allowed better views, and branches could be stuck into the screen for camouflage (p84).

I've read about the 100-ton E-100 tank before, but the one-man 2.7-ton Mouse tankette was new. Only plans are printed because it was rejected by the Germans and never went into prototype format. Its twin guns in the hull stuck out



in front, which could have caused the barrels to dig into dirt if a steep enough descent into a shell crater or bottom of a hill.

Of note is that the Wilton-Fijenood Panserwagen Armored Car used foot-powered bicycle pedals to rotate the turret (p160 with interior photo p164).

The Turtle armored car generated a couple prototypes, but these uncovered a number of problems, so the Turtle was never put into production.

One typo "infront" (p74) needs a space.

The book contains 167 black and white photos and 17 black and white illustrations. The British engineers were thorough in photographing vehicles and subsystems. The E-100 was photographed in its assembly building by the US Army.

Note that this is only the first volume. It didn't say how many more will follow -- maybe that depends on sales.

I can't say I read every word of every technical report reproduced in the book, but I paid more attention to the vehicles was not or less familiar with. Although the more general reader will find the reports and commentary a bit overwhelming, technical enthusiasts will revel in the technical revelations. For that, I'll say ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.

The Scottish Rebellion Against Robert The Bruce: Exiles and Traitors. by James Turner. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 247 pages. 2026.

This book starts long before 1314 with an examination of the intricate intertwining of English and Scottish aristocracy. A plethora of this noble, son or daughter of that noble, cousin to another noble populate the first third of the book or so. After your brain can no longer remember which William or Robert was which, you sort of want to yell, "Get on with it." And yet, without the "related" background, it would be hard to understand the scheming the families put into power grabs.

And then there's Edward I's insistence on being recognized as overlord. When John Balliol was finally crowned King of Scotland (p65), Edward I had sown dissent to get him elected, which was used as leverage to be recognized as overlord. As the text notes, it was less nationhood and more family prominence and bribery. John Balliol topped Robert the Bruce and 11 other nobles to be king, but his hold on the crown was precarious.

In the politics and warfare that followed, Robert the Bruce came out on top, vanquishing the rival Comyn and Balliol families and defeating Edward I at Bannockburn in 1314. That led to Edward abandoning claims to Scotland, returning regalia, and signing a treaty. Treaties seem to be worth as much as the military force and political obedience can offer.

Enter the Disinherited, a group of Scottish and English nobles who refused to call Robert the Bruce king and had their lands confiscated. They raised an army of 1,000 bowmen and 500 men-at-arms (p156-157) to take it back with a sea invasion in 1332. And that is the last half of the book.

A couple shortcomings: no map. I'm sure William, Lord Ferrers of Groby (p148), is a famous Grobian from the famous town of Groby, but it'd be nice to see where that is. About 35 years ago, I rented a car for a two-week meandering, circular, driving trip around Scotland, so I have a notion of places like Edinburgh, Perth, Inverness, Loch Ness, Mallaig, Glenfinnan, Glasgow, Dumfries, Hadrian's Wall (OK, that's Britain), Jedburgh, St. Abb's Head, Roslyn Chapel, and back. Groby? Google Maps sez: It's near Leicester off the M1. Unless there's another one. Lots of place names are referenced, but unless you are a Scottish geography whisperer, hard to figure out where everything is.

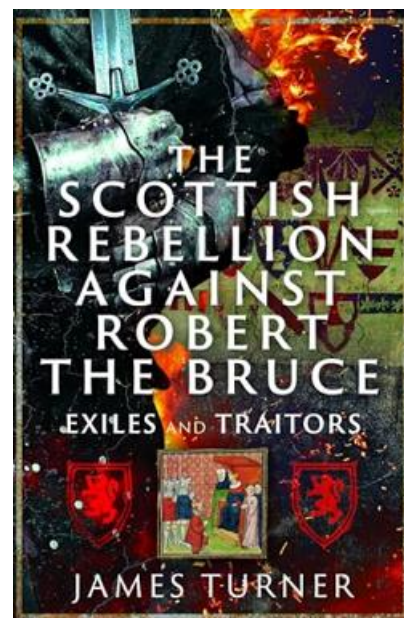
Second, a few terms needed definitions. Shrievalthy? A Sheriff is assigned to what I think is a geographical area. How about this sentence: Celtic tanistry system in which an heir was selected from the king's surviving agnatic relatives (p62). Thanages (p78)?

Some typos: "Dived between multiple heirs" (p60) is perhaps "divided" or is that another term?; "barley 1,500 men strong" (p. vi) is likely "barely"; and John was crowned King of Scotland in 1192 (p 71) but the other references are for 1292.

The book contains no maps, photos, or images.

The tangled web of family connections made my head spin until I was almost ready to toss it, but I figured there was a point to it. And there was. If you can grind your way through it, you'll find an interesting account of aristocratic greed and sense of entitlement that led to a little-known campaign. Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Partisans & Guerrillas of World War Two: Images of War. by Philip Jowett. Softcover (6.8x9.2 inches). 248 pages. 2026.

Subtitle: *Poland, Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Italy, France*

The subtitle lists the countries where the photos were taken and cover the partisan bands and some of the anti-partisan units.

The photos show a mix of well-dressed and well-equipped partisans on propaganda display to the hodge podge lodge of civilian and military clothing and assorted weaponry from then modern to museum pieces. Old, young, men, women, and children are present. For painters and modelers, you really can't have "wrong" partisans -- they used whatever they could get, including a lot of captured German weaponry.

Interesting photos: Soviet partisans operating a 76mm artillery gun (p45) and old I-15 biplane (p47). The rest showcase the mix.

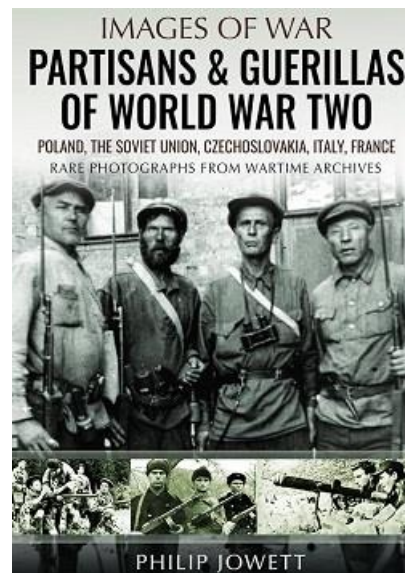
About 250,000 Soviet partisans, somewhat indifferently supported by the Red Army, were sabotaging railroads and ambushing troops by mid-1943 and were opposed by 500,000 anti-partisan troops (p78). Anti-partisan operations usually involved encircle and exterminate, including villages within the circle, although there's an errant comment that successful anti-partisan operations needed a 4:1 advantage (p78). No footnote on that. No bibliography, either. Maybe that came from Munoz -- he's written a number of books about partisans in WWII. Dunno.

Country by country, you see the partisans in various poses and in various states of readiness. I was a bit surprised to read that Italy had 85,000 partisans by late 1944 (p173) -- quite a number. Then again, if you draft people for forced labor and oppress those left, taking up arms is a logical choice.

The book contains 343 black and white photos and two black and white illustrations (posters).

If you're modeling partisans, you should probably look more at the photos of ragtag groups instead of the shiny new propaganda photos. Both are certainly valid, but only the lucky bands would be so well-dressed and equipped. Some great photos in there for your desperate bands.

Enjoyed it.



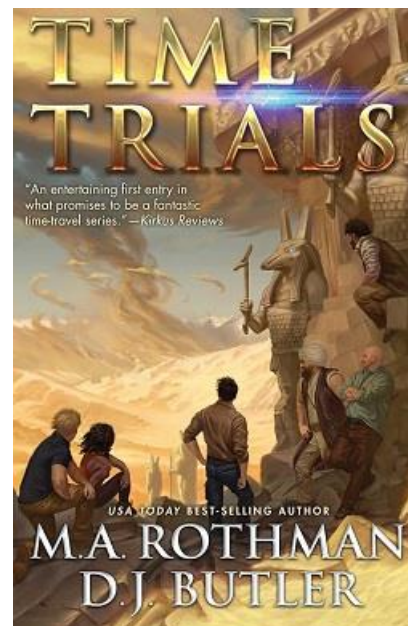
Time Trials. by M.A. Rothman and D. J. Butler. Softcover (6.1x9.2 inches). 361 pages. 2023.

I don't know how this novel was pitched, but if the authors said *Stargate* meets *Sliders*, it would be close enough. I would have said meets *Quantum Leap*, but that was one person's consciousness into a one body and this is a group of Egyptologists, one billionaire, and a couple laborers jumping through time and then trying to get home.

Instead of a circular gate, a tunnel filled with first-generation hieroglyphics pops Marty Cohen and company from Egypt to Morocco thousands of years before the pharaohs built the pyramids -- a time of Seth and other demi-gods enslaving the humans. Of course, saving the local populace from Sethians begins the building of an army to overthrow all the Sethians in the area while "Kung-Fu" Cohen battles the big 10-foot-tall demi-god the way all heroes battle the biggest brawn on the bad-guy side.

It reads quick enough, the characters are varied enough, and the plot is logical enough for a good enough summer read.

Enjoyed it.



T-72 Main Battle Tank. by James Kinnear and Stephen L. Sewell. Hardback (8.0x10.0 inches). 320 pages. 2026.

This wide-ranging profile of the T-72 tank covers design, development, and deployment of the tank and all its variations, as well as derivative versions such as engineering, bridge-laying, mine-clearing, recovery, artillery, and flamethrower versions. Chapters are dedicated to export versions, museum tanks, excerpts from manuals, photo-heavy walkaround, and combat operations.

As you might expect, specs and technical details predominate. Combat is relatively lightly done save for the Iran-Iraq War, Chechnya, and some of the Gulf War.

Of interest: In Chechnya, after horrendous losses from urban ambushes, the Soviets developed the "Fire Carousel" tactic -- first tank covers the infantry with firing 22 rounds (the limit of the auto-loader) and pulls back to be replaced with the second tank, which fires 22 rounds and pulls back. The third tank moves up and fires 22 rounds and pulls back. By this time, the first tank has completed the laborious 20-minute re-load of the auto loader and the "carousel" starts anew. Because the thick frontal armor is facing the enemy, flank shots are fewer and thus fewer losses (p184).

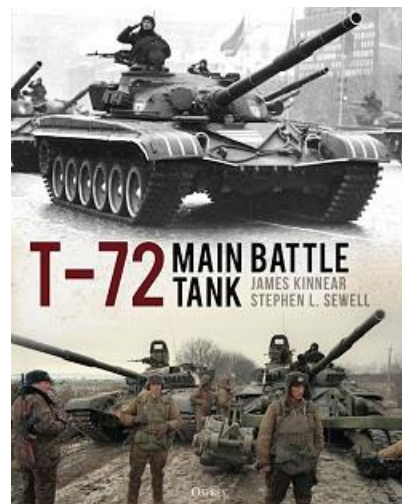
Another note: The T-90 tank of the 1990s was really an upgrade of the T-72BU version. The new designation was meant to represent a new democratic phase in Russian armor (p50).

One typo: "agreed a ceasefire" (P175) should have a "to" inserted.

The book contains 521 color photos, 92 black and white photos, 27 black and white images, and six color camouflage profiles.

I tended to skip around while reading the specs of version after version, but true T-72 treadheads will rejoice at the detail. All those color photo close-ups of various parts and systems will be of value to modelers.

Enjoyed it.



The Last Gratuitous Historicon 2026 Photo

Friday at 4:36pm in the Heritage ballroom.



See you at Fall In...