

VC Lockwood Strikes Again: 1848 *Shako*
US Marines in Iraq 2004: *RUSE Warfare*
Meeting Engagement: *Epic Space Marines*
Triumph & Tragedy: Relearning
Chevauchée: Hundred Years War *RUSE*

HMGS Next Gen:
Historical Gaming Marches On

Conundrums: Ongoing *D&D* Adventure

NEWS: Figures, wargames, tiles, and more.

Batman's License Plate:
BatCave Consequences

Epic Space Marine: *NetEpic* Version

Books I've Read

Crescent Dawn: Rise of the Ottoman Empire
Fighting for the Butcher: Jul-Aug 1918
Guam: Battle for an American Island WWII
German Troops in American Rev 2: M-A-A 543
Wars and Soldiers Louis XIV: CentSold 98
The Galacian Division: 1943-45
Nighthawk One: N. Ireland UK Helo Pilot
The Berlin Blitz: By Those Who Were There
Elizabeth of York: Birth of Tudor Dynasty
Boots on the Ground: Modern Land Warfare
Waterloo: The Truth At Last
Leyte Gulf: New History of Sea Battle
The History of Roman Legion VI Victrix
The German Navy 1939-45: Elite 260
Mechanical Failure (sci-fi novel)
Communication Failure (sci-fi novel)
Mukden 1905: Manchuria Campaign 413
Royal Navy Grand Fleet 1914-18: Fleet 10
USN PT Boat vs IJN Destroyer: Duel 141
B-26 Marauder vs Me 262: Duel 142
People's History of the Cold War
History of Military Encounters with UFOs
Roman Soldier Vs Dacian Warrior: Combat 80
The Battle of Pinkie: 1547
Second Arakan 1943-44: Campaign 407
Hurtgen Forest 1944 (1): Campaign 412



"Next, we'll play this with dice."



"Featherstone was right. 6s hit!"



"Worst Vassal wargame ever!"



Turn 4 (from left bottom corner clockwise) Brits: Sam, Michael (moving), Marc, and Troy. Sikhs Chris, Larry, Jay, and Pat. Not pictured: Sikh Phil and of course British me (taking photo).

VC Lockwood Strikes Again: 1848 *Shako II*

by Russ Lockwood

Brigadier Lockwood, holder of the VC for his brilliant exploits with cavalry in the last battle (see the 6/23/2018 AAR), looked over his small command of four cavalry units and one artillery battery. All looked in good order here on the right flank of the British army sent to smash the rebellion.

As his gaze lifted to see the enemy Sikhs, he spotted six cavalry units adjacent to a ridge brimming with Sikh infantry and cannons behind fieldworks. At least he didn't have to deal with the cannon-armed camel unit opposing the British cavalry on the other flank.

Some details from the town.

The town shielded his right, which was fortuitous in the face of superior numbers. Indeed, while the Sikh set up in a constricted front, it also meant minimal maneuvering. It was charge straight ahead.

He signaled the advance to keep up with the British infantry.



Second Sikh War 1848-1849

So we began another *Shako II* game set in the Second Sikh War. Dave set up another massive 25mm slugfest atop new terrain mats. His usual eye candy extended beyond the battlefield with a good-sized town at one end and a small outpost on the other.

We British stretched between the two. I was on the right next to the town with four cavalry units (two elite -- a 5 in *Shako II* morale/training parlance -- and two regular -- a 4) and a horse artillery battery.

The Brits (l to r): Sam, Michael, Marc, and Troy.



To my left with infantry commands (generally 4s and 5s) spotted with artillery were Sam, Michael, and Marc. At the far left was Troy with a cavalry command (4s and 5s).

The Sikhs (l to r): Larry, Chris, Pat, Phil, and Jay.

Opposing me was Phil and his six-unit Sikh cavalry command (poor – 3s). Opposite Sam, Michael, and Marc were the Sikh infantry commands (also 3s) spotted with artillery of Pat, Jay, and Larry. These were all dug in behind emplacements on the top of a ridge. Opposing Troy was Chris' Sikh cavalry command, which included camels mounting small cannons. Somewhere in there was a huge Sikh gun being hauled by an elephant. Once placed, this could not move. Jay parked this heavy gun in the center of his line.

Artillery Phase on Turn 2. Notice Phil's cavalry at the edge of town setting up his ambush position behind the rocky outcrop.

The Advance

Both sides' artillery kept up a lively fire with all the variable results a d6 could provide. Us Brits seemed to get the worst of it, for our guns were in the open and most Sikh guns were protected by earthworks.

Nonetheless, the British tide advanced in generally straight ranks across the table. It soon became a big stretch for us Brits, which meant heading around the table to the other side. When you need to maneuver, especially for the cavalry, you need room to maneuver. Plus the Sikh artillery could get many shots in as the British closed.

Right Flank Cavalry

VC Lockwood (VCL) was against the noticeably more experienced Sikh commander Phil. Worse, the Sikhs obtained and kept the initiative, allowing him to advance first. He changed his cavalry from column to line and swung one unit almost into the town and behind an outcropping of rock. Hmmm. An ambush unit for sure.

My British cavalry and the horse artillery battery.

The Brits would not be rash and kept pace with Sam's infantry. Sikh artillery sent round after round at the British cavalry, but did little damage.



Sikh Phil obviously wanted to bait the British. He sent one forlorn Sikh cavalry far in front of his lines, but within charge range of the ambush cavalry unit.

Ol' VCL calculated the distance. It seemed in range of two of his cavalry units. The odds were in his favor and he could always rally back. VCL charged the two on one.

The thundering horde crashed into the Sikh bait. In *Shako II* mechanics, two cavalry units tossed 2d6 (take the highest roll) with +2 for superior morale/training (5s vs 3s). The one Sikh tossed 1d6 with a -1 for a disorder from the horse artillery.

What could go wrong for the Brits?

Phil's die popped up a 6. Amazingly, my two dice bounced up snake-eyes! A remarkable 1 in 216 chance! The Queen might just ask for the VC back...

Preserved for posterity: The 1 in 216 chance rolls.



So Phil's $6-1 = 5$ beat my $1+2 = 3$ by two, dropping a casualty on each of my units and sending me back 18 inches in ignominious defeat. Phil elected not to press his remarkable luck and withdrew his victorious cavalry to celebrate.

Left Flank. Troy's cavalry is charged by Chris' camels and cavalry.



On The Left Flank

Although details remain sketchy, one of Troy's cavalry units was hit by the camel unit and a horse unit. Here's the results were opposite. The British cavalry sent the two Sikh units packing.

Turn 4. Prior to the cavalry melees. The British advance as skirmishers ply their annoying trade.



Troy followed up and within a short time, cleaned up the left flank and denuded the Sikh force of all its cavalry.

The Vast Middle

Here was where the battle would be won or lost. The British infantry ground forward, taking disorders and casualties from Sikh artillery fire and then Sikh musket fire.

Yet it was not all one sided. British skill of arms caused casualties, too.

Turn 5: Marc's troops deploy into line and face a ridge-full of Sikhs in earthworks.

I am not sure which commander's units reached the Sikh line first and carried the earthworks. Certainly that commander would be mentioned in Despatches.

In any case, I can say that despite Sikh fire, Sam advanced his units and put at least one over the top and held on to the foothold within Sikh lines.

From correspondent sketches, it seems Commander Marc also broke the earthworks line, in part because Troy's cavalry curled in and attacked Sikh units -- albeit without success against the squares.

Reports are confused about C-in-C Michael's attack. He seemed to be in a more back and forth scrum, with units retreating and advancing.

I cannot say more, for I had my own problems on the right flank.

British C-in-C Michael's troops reach the earthworks, but his pained expression tells more than the official account.

British Cavalry Take A Risk

After settling down my defeated cavalry into some sort of respectable state, I continued to generally keep pace with Sam's infantry. Granted, it was more of a refused flank than a supported advance, but it kept the Sikh cavalry from harassing him.

Yet that ambush Sikh unit needed to be dealt with and so I edged the cavalry just enough forward to stay out of ambush arc, but amazingly, within my charge arc.

With my two fresh cavalry units, one charged the ambushers and the other charged a different Sikh cavalry unit just in range.

This time, the fortunes of war weighed in on the British side. The ambushers fled into the town and were lost as a cohesive unit. The other Sikh unit vaporized.

That allowed the British cavalry a breakthrough charge into a third Sikh cavalry unit. That vaporized as well.

With Phil's cavalry command at 50% losses, it was time for a morale roll. Oh how he paid for that earlier 1 in 216 chance upset -- he rolled the 33% chance that caused all his cavalry to rout off table.





Undaunted, the British try, try, again...

The Final Assault

The Sikh infantry, now exposed, formed square. VCL knew it was a crap shoot and so brought up the horse artillery to pound the square and better the odds. At one point, the square was disordered and tumbled about with casualties.

A perfect opportunity...except Pat rolled well enough to remove a casualty from any unit and he chose the square. Fresh Sikh troops shuffled in. Still, it was an opportunity, but I knew better than to trust to luck. On the flip side, even stacking the odds in your favor could still result in a 1 in 216 outcome...

Right at this time, VCL selected one of his aides, Paddy Fitz, to attach to the cavalry and lead the charge into the square.

Paddy Fitz's charge into the Sikh square...

In *Shako II* mechanics, a formed square allows the infantry to fight at full value (a 3 for this Sikh unit) versus the lower value of the cavalry (a 2 in the selected unit). I would have none of that.

However, the Sikh unit suffered a -1 for disorder and the British cavalry unit gained +1 for Paddy Fitz. Now it was Sikh $3 - 1 = 2$ versus Brit $2 + 1 = 3$. It wasn't exactly a slam dunk, but a slight advantage and a positive result would unravel the end of the Sikh infantry line. Better yet, a positive result for the cavalry would overrun the broken square.

With Sam applying pressure to the front and over the earthworks, the Sikhs would be in a horrible position.



The dice bounced the British way and the square was obliterated.

Game End

And with three hours up, that was the end of the game. Two Sikh commands (both cavalry) were routed and the Sikh flanks were being turned. Quality, in this case, beat quantity for a British win.

Thanks Dave for hosting and thanks all for the game!

One Sikh square eliminated and a Sikh flank eyed... Dave should smile with his setup. We certainly did!



The massive melee at the earthworks plays out.

US Marines in Iraq 2004: *RUSE* Warfare

by Russ Lockwood

As Renaud continues his development of his *RUSE* system for small units, he set up a scenario with the US Marines escorting a CIA operative to meet with an Iraqi town leader. Renaud would be the insurgent opposition.

The Iraqi town.

A key feature of his rules is the hit resolution. When a figure is hit, it is not necessarily dead -- it is knocked over. Whenever activated, it takes an immediate 1d6 wound check. The usual check is a 50-50 proposition: 1-3 and it's eliminated and a 4-6 means it's stood up and ready for action.

The good news is that this can be varied depending on the troop type and equipment. For a Marine, that means on a 3-6, the figure is unhurt and stands up. On a 1-2, it's eliminated. For a terrorist, it stands up on a 5-6 but is eliminated on a 1-4.

You can add as many exceptions as you want. I imagine if a Scud missile dropped on a figure, that would be eliminated...unless it was a dud Scud. Hence the chance of standing up during a wound check.

The other key feature is the activation sequence. Card driven, when your card is drawn, you pick and activate a unit and move, fire, dig in, etc. When your next card is drawn, you can try and activate the same unit, but it's a 50-50 chance on a 1d6. If success, the unit has its full range of options. If fail, it's considered to have used the activation card.

Now, you can try again with that same unit, but now you have to roll 2d6 and pass the 50-50 chance on both dice. You can even try it again, but you add a third d6 die. Push your luck, anyone?

Tension builds. The carpet seller at the back door and other civilians in the street. What about those cars? IEDs? Just parked?

Gonna Die in a Small Town

It's a small town just like John Mellencamp sings about, only he'd probably been taught to fear Allah and marry a Baghdad doll instead of a LA babe. In any case, that was the mission -- get the CIA man to the town hall.

I had a Bradley IFV and two LVTP-7s already set up on the north end of town. The LVTP-7s carrying two squads, one of three fire teams and the other with only two fire teams. The third fire team was in the Bradley with the CIA man. Each team had two riflemen, a Squad Assault Weapon (SAW), and a rifleman with a 40mm grenade launcher.



I also had two anti-tank rocket teams of two Marines, a mortar team, and a HMG team. These four teams were split between the two armored personnel carriers.

The Fire Team escorts Mr. CIA Man into the courtyard and opens the door. Presumably the two men on the roof are the town officials. The right-most of the three civilians standing in front of the Bradley would soon saunter over to see what has happening.

Rules of Engagement

As this was a town full of civilians, I was under a number of rules. First off, I could only fire if fired upon. That meant no first firing at civilians. Second, a mosque was in the middle of the town. No firing at that ever. Third, no air strikes. Not even a helicopter was in the area.

This was a peaceful town and presumably the CIA agent had a briefcase full of cash to keep it that way. What could go wrong?



A Dusty Main Street

The vehicles headed southward along the main street. The town hall was on the left. We hadn't gone far when a carpet seller approached the back end of the armored personnel carrier and knocked on the door. In heavily accented English, he shouted, "A nice comfortable carpet for your vehicle. Good price. Open up and see."

The carpet seller plies his trade as the terrorists pop an ambush from a terrace. A fire team advances towards the building as vehicle MGs return fire. The blue dice represent activations used.



The sergeant inside shook his head. "He has to be the dumbest or most desperate carpet salesman ever...or a terrorist."

The Bradley almost made it to the town hall when two civilians walked into the street and stood in front of the vehicle. The Bradley driver slammed on the brakes with a curse.

Two more civilians stood at the side of the Bradley. If any carried explosives, the IFV would be in an awful mess. Fortunately, they killed time, not Marines.

A third civilian wandered over. Inquisitive bunch.

A Range Rover drove up the street towards the Bradley. Oh, this looks like trouble.

Brewing up the Bradley and LVTP-7, Renaud grabs an escalating number of dice. Uh-oh...

The rear LVTP-7 shifted to the right to provide a line of sight down the main street.



A man in civilian garb left the archway from the courtyard of the town hall and climbed into the Range Rover. It did a U-turn and drove away from the armored vehicles. No trouble at all, apparently.

"Seems clear," Mr. CIA man said. We didn't catch his name. He didn't give it.

"Not so fast," the sergeant said and turned to the driver and turret gunner. "Keep scanning." The chain gun turret balked a couple of times, but eventually rotated properly. Need to check that at the motor pool when back at the base.

"All clear, Sarge," the gunner observed. A radio check with the two armored personnel carriers confirmed no visible enemy.

A couple fire teams exited the LVTP-7s to provide rear support.

The HMG guns down the terrorists on the terrace.

Open Up and Ambush

The fire team exited first, followed by the sergeant. They formed a protective ring around the CIA man. They edged past the two onlookers on the side and headed through the archway and into the courtyard. The sergeant opened the door to the town hall.

One of the three civilians at the front of the Bradley followed the group into the courtyard. That's when he triggered the explosive vest. The blast blew the team, the sergeant, and the CIA man down. The suicide bomber didn't have many pieces left to identify.

As that was a signal, 10 insurgents appeared on the terrace of a house opposite and loosed a stream of AK-47 fire and a RPG. The RPG sailed over the LVTP-7. The rifle fire hammered a fire team caught in the open.

The gunner in the LVTP-7 swiveled and fired back, lacing the terrace with 25mm and 50-caliber rounds. Half the terrorists dropped. A fire team moved into the ruins and tried to draw a bead on the terrorists, but could only see the RPG gunner -- not enough to shoot at the group. The HMG and anti-tank team exited the vehicle.

The fire team melees the terrorists, who were only playing dead.

Armored Infantry

As the Marines wore Kevlar, they were better protected than the terrorists. Some dropped anyway, but enough stayed upright to fire back at any attackers.

From a building's roof next to the town hall, some sort of tri-pod mounted anti-tank gun appeared and pumped a shot at the Bradley. It glanced off the armor. The return fire did nothing -- obviously the turret malfunctioned again and the gunner panicked.

The next tri-pod shot brewed up the Bradley. Fortunately, its passengers had disembarked. Unfortunately, the crew was killed.

The sergeant, CIA man, and three of the four members of the fire team shook off the vest explosion, raced up the stairs, and sprayed the tripod team into oblivion.

That led to another terrorist group of 10 figures to pop up on a different roof at the south end of town. They sprayed the CIA group and hit them all.

The CIA team sergeant decided to push his luck. They miraculously got back on their feet, passed their morale test, and charged the anti-tank tripod weapon team. Two more terrorists slaughtered.



Back at the Ambush

A Marine fire team made its way out of the ruins on the side of the building. The ambush terrorists shifted to the side and opened up. The shooting was abysmal and the fire team made its way unscathed to the street-level door.

At this point, another 10 hidden terrorist popped up inside an abandoned building behind the Marines. The RPG man stood in the doorway and fired at the rear LVTP-7. He missed.

The nearby Marines wanted to return fire, but didn't see any targets, even though they could trace the smoke trail back to the abandoned building.

The terrorists abandoned the building and ran to the west side of town. The fire team, enraged, charged out into the open. Through good fortune, the team shot into the backs of the terrorists.

Their rage knew no bounds. They charged the prone terrorists. Of the 10, only two were able to get up. The other eight were all riddled, death their only outcome. The two soon joined their terrorist comrades.

At this point, the Marine HMG opened up on the original ambush terrorists on the terrace, drilling all but one. The fire team at the side door charged in and up the stairs, expecting easy marks.

Just as the other terrorist squad saw eight of 10 fail to rise up to melee, so fortune smiled upon these terrorists. All but one popped up -- obviously they were only playing dead. In the melee, all four Marines died and only took one terrorist with them.

That enraged a different Marine fire team. They fired and suppressed the terrorists, then charged into melee. A second terrorist squad was eliminated.

Did Someone Order Tanks?

Two T-62 tanks appeared from behind a sand dune in the east. One of them moved for a clear shot down an alleyway. The round slammed into the flank of the LVTP-7 and exploded, shredding the armored personnel carrier and the anti-tank team within.

Then two more appeared from behind a sand dune in the west. They remained behind the sand dune, but their presence was menacing.

That's when an M-1 Abrams showed up in the north. Oorah!

Bad day for M-1s: One destroyed and the other damaged (black and red dice).



Er, not exactly. The first shot was so far off, it must have been meant for a battle next week. The 50-50 chance to reactivate the M-1 was so far off, it definitely was for next week. In fact, that tank took up so many failed activations, the crew's first day was next week.

No worries, a second M-1 showed up. Its first shot was so far off, that must have been meant for a battle next week. The 50-50 chance to reactivate the M-1 was so far off, it definitely was for next week. In fact, that tank took up so many failed activations... Wait a second! Are they M-1 twins? Sure rolled that way.

An eastern T-62 shot at and damaged an M-1. A western T-62 shot into the rear of the second M-1 and brewed it up. The damaged M-1 finally put one shot into a T-62 and brewed it up.

The remaining Marine anti-tank team fired and hit the T-62, but the round bounced off the armor. The team ran through the town, climbed to a second-story roof and fired down on another T-62. Another hit and another ping off the armor. A return Iraqi HE round knocked all the Marines down.

Running Battle

The west side T-62s saw the victorious Marine fire team and used MG fire to hit them all. Three of the four soldiers bounced back up and ran along the west side wall to escape the MG fire.

That's when a technical (pick-up truck with MG in the bed) rounded the corner and shot. The entire fire team was hit again and plopped down in the sand.

The fire team charges the technical.

Yet, these brave lads arose again and charged the technical -- killing all its crew. The Marines ran around to the south side of town to get out of the T-62's line of sight.

Run, CIA Man, Run

The sergeant, CIA man, and last two members of the fire team traded shots with the last squad of terrorists, but little damage was being done. So, the remaining LVTP-7 decided to bring some extra firepower to the party. It didn't dare to go out the north end with the three T-62s in the area, so it drove forward.

A small car was in the way. It was either drive over it or not move at all. Over the top it was.

All I needed to do was not roll a "1."

You guessed it. A "1." A medium IED in the car exploded the underside of the LVTP-7. More smoke swirled above the town.

Called

After about three hours of action, I conceded. It was still possible for the damaged M-1 to do something, but three T-62s versus the way I was rolling for the M-1s meant sure death. Even the anti-tank missile team didn't do anything but scratch the T-62's paint. The one remaining group of terrorists would be no problem with the four fire teams and the HMG I had remaining. The mortar team remained, too, but that never hit a thing due to die roll deviations.

A good day for the Iraqi armor.



Future Attention?

Two things that might need some attention.

The first is hidden units. The rule is that if half the figures in a unit can't be seen, then the whole unit is hidden and can't be fired on. This is usually not a problem, but twice during the game, the only figure out of 10 that I "saw" fire was the RPG guy. The rest of the unit may be hidden, but the RPG guy was in sight. It may be that you can return fire, but only hit that RPG guy. Dunno.

The other question was reloading the mortar and tanks. I get that a mortar would need an activation to emplace and break out the ammo. After that, the web sez: Firing speed by mortar type: 60 mm mortar: The maximum rate of fire is 30 rounds per minute (rpm) and the sustained rate is 20 rpm (3 seconds) and 81 mm mortar: The sustained rate of fire is 15 rpm (4 seconds).

For comparison: A reload of an assault rifle is 3 seconds (dropping the clip).

Likewise, tanks. A T-62 does not have an autoloader and has about a 4 round per minute firing rate (15 seconds), sez the internet. A T-72 has an autoloader and depending on the version, the average firing rate is about 7 rounds per minute (8 seconds). The M-1 is a manual reload with an average rate of about 5 rounds per minute (12 seconds).

As far as I know, *Bolt Action* and *Chain of Command* skirmish games don't have a specific time scale per turn, although given the movement rate, my rough guesstimate is about 10 to 15 seconds per turn, assuming you consider all units performing actions simultaneously. Something like *RUSE*, which allows you to activate the same unit multiple times, is probably incalculable, but perhaps it's the same guesstimate of 10-15 seconds per turn.

Food for thought and perhaps I'm concentrating too much on trees and not the forest.

Renaud did rework the reaction fire a bit and tried it a couple times. Once it succeeded and once it didn't, so from a card draw mechanic, you take a chance or you don't. That's always a good decision point in the game.

Anyway, *RUSE* is coming along nicely. Thanks for the game and tension-filled scenario.

Meeting Engagement: *Epic Space Marine*

by Russ Lockwood

It has been a while since I brought out the 6mm *Epic Space Marine* troops, so I put on a small game. I used the Second Edition rules, not the Third Edition, because Third Edition abandoned most of the unit differences that made this a clever little d6-based game and used rectangle bases instead of squares. Not that bases matter to me much - my troops are based on 1-inch washers. Games Workshop released a new edition with 8mm figures, but I haven't explored it.

I should mention that while most of the figures are GW, I include a smattering of *Battletech* and other figures. We've long included stats for figures from other systems. It isn't unknown to use GHQ modern 6mm figures as part of armies.

The battleground. Powerplant at bottom. Renaud on left, me on right. Paper contains unit specs.

Rules

I'm not exactly sure where official rules and house rules meet, but it seems to work well.



After initiative, each unit receives one of four orders in secret: Fall Back, Charge, Advance, and First Fire. When revealed, the orders are performed in a specific order: Fall Back Move, Charge Move, Advance Move, First Fire, Melee, Advance Fire, and Fall Back Fire. Stands within a unit must remain within 6cm of one other stand in that unit. If losses occur and larger gaps result, then the next move must be to bring all remaining stands within that 6cm radius.

You need a Charge move to enter into melee (2d6 for each stand plus modifiers). High total eliminates the other. First Fire can't fire into a melee unless the unit firing is the target of a Charge, and then you can only fire at chargers.

End of Turn 1. Circular markers are unit orders.

Each additional stand that gangs up on a defending stand adds another d6 to the total number of dice. So if you have three on one, the first melee is 2d6 plus modifiers vs 2d6 plus modifiers. If the defender wins, the attacker is eliminated and the next melee is 3d6 plus modifiers vs 2d6 plus modifiers. And so on. A pack of low-level underlings can tackle an elite stand...and win eventually.

First Fire can be held and changed to Advance Fire. A hit on a larger figure's shield only takes down the shield if the firer has a negative "target save modifier." Direct fire is Line of Sight. Artillery uses templates. Indirect fire uses possible deviation (arrow dice with two of six sides being on target and four of six being arrows that point to the direction of 2d6 cms of drift).

It's a very binary system: most stands or models are either at full strength or destroyed. Most vehicles have a saving throw after being hit. Larger models, like Titans, have shields that need to be taken down before shots go into the body. We didn't play with Titans or other shielded figures.

When a unit loses 50% or more stands, it takes a morale check. Failure means retreating to the baseline. Success is no effect. Once a unit passes a morale check, subsequent morale checks occur only if the unit takes additional casualties. The system has no army or faction morale. Victory is usually based on grabbing terrain objectives.

Those are most of the nuances.

Jerdeth IV

My battle planet, Jerdeth IV, suffers from almost continuous invasions and battles from a host of competing factions. As this was a learning game, colorwise, the forces involved were generally blue figures and stands vs generally red.



Just to be clear for those who play official *Space Marine*, red stands do not go faster.

Space pirates (of course they're space pirates -- they have a spaceship) -- were offloading illicit goods to the blue faction (Renaud), so the red faction (me) moved to intercept.

My troops advance from the bottom towards the city. The pirate ship is in the upper right corner.

I didn't pay attention to the point totals, but placed units I thought would make an interesting scenario. Both sides deployed a company of Space Marines (mechanized infantry -- Veterans quality for Blue, Regulars for Red), a unit of Terminators with Land Raider tanks/APCs, and a unit of Whirlwind artillery. The Blue faction also fielded a Dreadnought, unit of Knight Paladins, unit of Devastator infantry (shoulder-fired missiles), three ShadowSword super-sized tanks, and a Star Organ (long-range rockets).

Renaud's Knights engage the Land Raider tanks while my Battletech Terminators engage the infantry.



The Red faction deployed a double-sized unit of Falcon tanks, a double-sized unit of StarSlab tanks, a unit of Leman Russ tanks, a double-sized unit of Motorcycle troops, and a triple-sized unit of Robots. Red generally had quantity. Blue generally had quality.

Enter Factions

As this was a short-width table, factions entered the table with either a Charge or Advance order. Woods were half speed for non-infantry. It was free for infantry to disembark from or embark on vehicles, or it could be prorated. For example, move the Rhino APCs half and then disembarked infantry can disembark and move half.

The shooting started turn 1 with artillery strikes and the occasional long-range direct fire from the larger vehicles.

As the factions closed, Renaud took the main city in the center, and took part of the powerplant building on my left flank. I moved up, but I knew trying to shoot infantry out of buildings needed a lot of luck or a lot of troops.

So the firing began, with each of us taking losses. I ground closer to the city in the middle and both our flanks edged forward to cover.

City Battle

The gunfire came fast and furious. I lost a third of my infantry from Renaud's fire before even reaching a point when they could charge. The charge itself was magnificent, if a bit foolhardy.

Renaud had smartly put every Space Marine stand on first fire, so he shot at me when I charged in. Worse, I forget he had Veteran Space Marines (+4 to his 2d6 melee roll), whereas I had regular Space Marines (+2 to my 2D6 roll). At least my Rhino APCs had a +1 modifier against his Rhinos.

You can imagine the results: My infantry was slaughtered but my Rhinos mostly obliterated his Rhinos.

Red (top) and Blue teams' graveyards.



Left Flank

My tanks did long-range battle with his large ShadowSword tanks. It wasn't exactly an even fight. All my Leman Russ tanks were destroyed without a loss on his end. My other tanks climbed the hill and shot to no avail.

My motorcycle troops, using terrain, charged into his Blue Devastator infantry, which I caught in an Advance Move...i.e. no first fire. I had numbers and slaughtered them and their Rhinos in a running fight with minimal losses. Then the motorcycles charged the ShadowSwords. Bike wreckage was strewn across the battlefield, but I was able to gang up and destroy two of Blue's three big tanks. Nothing like a bit of mutually occurring destruction to liven up the center.

Right Flank

I sent my Terminators into the city. Half of them didn't survive his first fire. My Land Raider tank- transports entered the woods for flanking fire on his Knight Paladins.

The Knight Paladins are probably the best painted unit on the Blue side. No, I didn't paint 'em. They were a gift. They engaged my Falcon and Land Raider tanks and came out the worse for wear. All three Paladins became junk heaps.

Meanwhile, I lost half my Falcons. They had a bad morale roll and fled to the rear. I later rallied them and charged into Renaud's Land Raiders. He eliminated them all with first fire. Dumb move on my part.

My big Elven tank advanced, but spray fire as it might, it didn't do all that much. It was the best painted unit on the Red side. No, I didn't paint it. I bought that whole faction from my buddy's collection when he passed away. Now, that purchase was a smart move.



End of Game

Well, I could see that my decimated force was in no condition to press the fight. I had come close to the pirate ship, but Renaud rolled a successful launch at the end of the fourth turn.

It was good to push some sci-fi lead and plastic around. Thanks, for the game, Renaud.



Western Allies Dennis (left) considers his move while Soviet Renaud (right) builds up his defenses.

Triumph & Tragedy: Relearning

by Russ Lockwood

Many are my praises for *Triumph & Tragedy* as a three-player game. Two-player is unplayable because of the secrecy of the blocks and cards. But three player? A thing of beauty.

Dennis played before, but a long time ago. For Renaud, this was his first game. And me...it's not a long time ago, but not recent, either (see the 1/1/2019, 2/27/2019, 11/30/2020, and 6/29/2022 AARs for the face to face games, and the 5/19/2020 and 9/4/2020 PBEM games).

I had the 2nd Edition version, although the GMT website says "Note on 3rd Printing: This is identical to the 2nd Edition, except that any known errata has been corrected." Not particularly helpful, but you can download the rules from the website.

The game lasted about 3.5 hours and we considered it a learning, or re-learning, game. Renaud took the USSR, Dennis the Western Allies, and I took the Axis.

We got most of the rules correctly, although I was flipping back and forth in the rules to try and figure out some nuance or another. All I can say is that the rules are complete, but as for placement within the numerical system, I can only say their logic and my logic are not the same logic. Of course, that's what most of my gaming friends say about me anyway.

The Goof

One thing I missed was that when a player "conquers" a neutral country via diplomacy, the player gets to place and control combat units. In essence, the peaceful grabbing of power gains you the neutral's armed forces. I forgot to do that. I thought they got the units if invaded. My bad.

This is important as the owning players can use these newly acquired ex-neutral units as they would their own units. In effect, it's all one big happy military.

The Game

So, through the mid to late 1930s, we bought and played Diplomacy and R&D cards. Influence markers sprouted all over the map. As Germany, I did OK, grabbing Austria, Rumania, and Low Countries. Here's where correctly placing blocks would help with force levels.

End of the 1939 turn. Note the error of not deploying units in diplomatically secured neutral countries.

I watched the combined West and USSR slowly grind away my markers over the rest of Europe as they expanded their interests elsewhere.

Germany invaded and gobbled up Denmark -- I find this a must-have space because it blocks any surprise attacks by the West on Berlin. I followed this up with conquering Norway. I never could place the third influence marker on Sweden, but I kept it under my influence. Franco was still a good fascist and Spain was under my influence.

Next came the Baltic States and then Poland. So, I had a pretty solid front against the Soviets.

Of course, while I was doing that, ol' Stalin snuck in the back door and put Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria under their influence, and turned Yugoslavia into a Commie ally. Turkey was moving into the Soviet Bloc, but I halted it just before it could turn Communist. Latin America was heading the Commie way.

The West concentrated on Greece, Portugal, Finland, Poland, and of course the USA. The USSR and Axis kept throwing obstacles between Churchill and FDR.

You can see the contrast between the situation after the first turn and after the 1939 turn.

In the 1941 turn, the USA finally joined the Allies, although general peace reigned among the three factions (West, Axis, and USSR).

War is Declared

I didn't want to finish this learning game without war being declared, so I attacked the USSR. All I can say is that I ran into the Stalinot Line. All four spaces I attacked had a 3-factor fortress in it plus an extra unit or two.

In three of the four, I was rebuffed. Only the fourth (Odessa) was I successful, but only because I rolled three 1s on 3d6 -- a 1 in 216 triumph. My other units took care of the other unit in the area.

That was one expensive attack, even with the surprise first fire bonus for the attacker.

We ended the game at that point.

The final tally was USSR 16 Victory Points, Axis 14 VPs, and West 13 VPs.

It was, despite its learning nature and rules flipping, a good game.





The Black Prince leads the English across the bridge.

Chevauchée: Hundred Years War *RUSE*

by Russ Lockwood

As the "U" in *RUSE* stands for Universal, so we left the modern age for a Hundred Years War scenario where the French were trying to cut off the retreat of an English force. The English, led by the Black Prince, were on a chevauchée -- a fancy word for raiding and devastation. The French under Joan of Arc managed to bring them to battle at a loop in the river.

Joan of Arc in the center of her knights. Other forces in the background, including the French hero Jean 'Richochet' Lochet.

By die roll, I was the French and Renaud the English. Of course I said, "Go away or I will taunt you some more."

The English had eight units: two mounted knights (elite), one dismounted knights (elite), two longbow, one spear, one halberd, and the supply train of two ox-pulled carts.

My French had nine units: one mounted knight (elite), one mounted sergeants, two crossbow, one handgun, one spear, one halberd, and two peasants.

Both of us had a big boss (Black Prince and Joan), a mounted Champion, and a foot knight hero. The big boss could activate three units, the champion two, and the hero one.



HYW Rules Change

By and large, from a mechanics standpoint, his HYW version played similar to the WWII and modern versions. I like the single roll for a meet or beat defense number as well as the card activation sequence.

The battlefield. French would enter from left. English would cross river at bridge middle right.

For this version, the biggest change was the inclusion of "Scare." Think of it as abstract morale. When rolling for hits, ties become Scares, not Wounds. After melee, when rolling to see whether wounds are translated into figure loss or not, failed rolls became casualties while successful rolls were translated into Scares.

Then, you roll for Scares. Success removes them and failures keep them on. Casualties and Scares are used to determine whether or not the unit becomes Suppressed (fairly ineffective).

Renaud sets up the English at the far bridge. My troops line the right edge.

The French Defense

The first thing I did was string a line of crossbowmen across the main road in the village. No English would pass. The ox-cart laden with loot would never get to the other side of the table. OK, that's asking a lot from a crossbow unit. I sent the other crossbow unit on its way across the street to occupy the Churchyard and its low wall. It would take them a while.

So I set up a handgun unit on the hill in a perfect L-shaped ambush formation. The unit of spears I put to the flank of the handgunners to secure them. The two peasant units were to their right, and my sergeants were at the far right flank in the open with the Champion.

I sent a unit of halberdiers across the final bridge the English must take and formed a semi-circle at its end. If the English came, they would come across one stand at a time.

That left Joan of Arc and the knights. I kept them as a reserve.

The Bishop looks upon the battle.

The English Advance

The Black Prince led the Knights across the far bridge. He took one look at the missile-troop reception and headed into the town out of line of sight.

Longbow were brought up to contest my crossbow. I won the activation sequence and fired, doing damage to the longbow. Then, finding out my handgunners, led by Lucky Pierre, were just out of range, I had them move in front of the crossbow and unload at the longbow. They took significant damage and were suppressed.



On the far right, the English champion led knights across a ford and charged into my sergeants. I managed to hold through fate. That's when the English Champion, Sir Rosiss of Liver, challenged my Champion, Jacque of Cousteau, to a duel.

It began to rain and you know Jacque had the advantage in water. He punctured Sir Rosiss with his lance for a wound and the English Champion retreated.

That was not enough for Jacque. He charged right after him. In the clash, only a swift interspersion of shield against lance saved Sir Rosiss, who again fled, this time back across the ford.

Begin Turn 3. English Knights vs. French sergeants and Champion vs Champion at bottom left corner. French deploy in woods. English longbow and French crossbow exchange fire across field next to the town.



Jacque was not yet done and charged the rear of the continuing melee between English knights and French sergeants. Imagine his surprise when the entire English unit turned around in the middle of the melee and attacked Jacque, retreating him.

Mid Turn 3. Handgunners duel decimated longbow. Spear vs spear in the woods. Peasants (lower right corner) wait.



Arrow Duel

A second English longbow unit deployed and traded shots with the handgunners, who were stupidly preventing fire from the original crossbow unit. As the handgun unit must activate a rally command before doing anything, that was generally successful, only to see the longbow shaft them back into suppression. They were truly caught.



Dismounted English knights (orange rim bases) with hero smash into French peasants.

English spear filtered into the woods against the French spear that had been protecting the handgunners. It was a back and forth struggle, with the English slowly triumphing. I moved the French hero, Jean 'Ricochet' Lochet, over to join the spear. He managed to stabilize the carnage to more equal proportions.

"See the violence inherent in the system!" the peasants yelled. "Help! Help! We're being repressed."

Lucky Pierre: The Handgunner Hero

As the handgunner unit was whittled down, it finally avoided being suppressed. With its last few men, Lucky Pierre charged the original, and now suppressed and decimated, English longbow unit -- and won! The longbow survivors fled back to the original bridge. Lucky Pierre was oh so close to the ox-carts...

That's when the Black Prince and his knight charged out of town at Lucky Pierre. While all around him fell, ol' Lucky remained the last Frenchman standing and fighting the elite English knights all by himself.

The Black Prince had enough of this brave Frenchman. He charged Lucky, but while Lucky was knocked to the ground, he recovered -- still in the fight, this time against the Black Prince and a full unit of knights.

Oh yes, the fortunes of war encouraged Lucky Pierre to taunt the English mercilessly, including waving his private parts at them.

Lucky Pierre (blue rim base) has two dead comrades (red beads), but fights on against the Black Prince and the knights.



Flank Attack

The second unit of French crossbow finally made it to the wall of the Church and not a moment too soon. A flanking force of English halberdiers crossed a footbridge and charged the crossbow. The crossbowmen and the walls held



the English at bay, dealing Scares and death with every roll. Obviously, the Bishop proved an inspiring figure.

And Lucky Pierre was still fighting.

The Lord and Lady of the Village cheer on Lucky Pierre.

End of Game

That's where we ended after about three hours of gaming. The inclusion of Scares added a mechanic that increased the rate of suppression. We've traded e-mails about the effects and possible alternatives. Stay tuned.

The other thought was some sort of unit rout. To an extent, failing the Wound check represents dead figures as well as figures that are unavailable for a variety of reasons: fleeing, too wounded to fight, and so on. I'm all in favor of Lucky Pierre's heroic performance, but it came down to a 50-50 roll each turn, which he made, and hence fought on. Currently, when an attack puts Wounds equal to figures, no more Wounds occur. Maybe pile on the Wounds? Pile on Scares, too? If Scares equal figures, the figures flee or surrender? Dunno.

Another was the rear attack being met by a full unit, even when it is engaged in a continuing melee. Granted, it was only my Champion, but maybe only unengaged figures would turn to face the rear attack. Dunno. Stay tuned.

Thanks for the game, Renaud.



And one more from the battle...

Before being intercepted by the knights, Lucky Pierre and comrades routed the English longbow and came oh so close to attacking the ox carts filled with loot.

Note that Lucky Pierre's unit was up to four activations (blue die) – although the third was a failure. The unit had two deaths (red beads).

The English knights used an activation to charge (blue die) and had one Scare (white die) from battling with Pierre!

HMGS Next Gen: Historical Gaming Marches On

by John Spiess

Meaux Castle Siege: Darien, CT

I GMed a 1422 Siege of Meaux Castle game in Darien, CT. As the schools are on winter break, a lot of regulars were away. We used some special scenario rules to account for the general illness of the besieging English troops. In fact, Henry V became so ill during this siege, that he died a few months later in August 1422.

The siege towers roll closer and closer...

...until they reach the wall with ladders and lots of assaulting troops.

Of note: The library director came down during the game and let me know that HMGS-NG is a go for their new adult gaming program. The first event will be an AWI game in late April. I gave her the theme and information for Historicon, so she will include that with her advertising.

WWI Verdun Trench Warfare: New Canaan, CT

We played a small engagement from the Battle of Verdun since February was the start of what would become one of the longest and bloodiest battles of WWI.

We had a nice turnout including two families of French descent. How did I know this? Well, when they arrived, they were all speaking fluent French, and then switched to English to say hello to me. In the photos, they are the two kids in red shirts and the girl in the blue sweatshirt next to them. One of the mothers stayed to play as well, since one of the boys was very young and she was pretty considerate in not making me focus on him.

The Verdun gamers.

I later found out that their great grandfather fought at Verdun. One of the boys actually did some homework and prepared a summary of the battle. So instead of my giving the historical summary at the end, we let the boy give his presentation. Nice job!

The WWI game is always fun, so everyone had a good time. They particularly liked the rule that you can try to throw back grenades before they go off. If you are not successful, it blows up in your face. We had some good laughs with that.



WWI Belleau Wood: Larchmont, NY

As always, everyone loves the WWI games, but this time I saw something that never happened before and I thought was completely hysterical.

The Belleau Wood gamers.

All of the units on the board have different troop compositions. Some kids get a sniper figure as part of their unit. In the Trench Wars ruleset, snipers are pretty deadly. Every turn, they get to target a specific figure on the board that they can see. They roll a die and anything but a 1 is a kill. All other shooting is done in groups randomly, so this is the only time you can pick the actual figure. The type of figure is marked under the base. Pretty simple, "O" for officer, "T" for trench fighter, "G" for grenadier, and so on. The catch is that you can't pick up the figure and look at the code.

German WWI sniper team, Clever Alex uses a sniper telescope...

So one of our gamers, Alex, has a sniper figure and I see him playing with his phone. I have a rule that no phones are allowed while playing except if they want to take a quick picture of the figures. A few other kids come over and they all start laughing. So now I think they are just playing a game on the phone, and I tell him to put it away. Instead, Alex was using the camera function on the phone to zoom in on figures so he could see the best guy to shoot at.

You just have to give some credit for ingenuity!

On another note, we had another parent play, and I think he's hooked for Historicon. He will definitely be back next month.

The Celtic and Roman gamers.

Romans vs. Celts: Rye, NY

The Battle of Watling Street saw an uprising of Celtic Britons led by Boudicca against the Romans -- the culmination of years-long painting project.

The array of troops for the Roman vs Celt game.



We had 10 players for the full game, plus about a half dozen more friends just jumping in for a few turns while waiting for pickup. This location is doing very well.

Sarah, the teen librarian, ran another crafting event on the other side, so we lost the Swifties in the game this month. However, they all came over for the historical discussion, so that's always fun. Boudicca is basically a "badass ancient Taylor Swift."

As far as the game went, it was your basic Roman bloodbath. Heavily outnumbered, the Romans are just a tough army to beat. This was no different.

Siege of Acre in New Canaan: CT

This is one of the more popular games we run. Richard the Lionheart is always a big draw. We use *Tactica* siege rules.

The Acre gamers.

Besides the usual siege operations, I wanted to use all of my Saracen cavalry, so I worked in a relief force into the scenario.

The Crusaders lost one of the two siege towers. But once they reached the walls, oil, rocks and arrows couldn't hold them. Lots of casualties, but the Crusaders took almost every wall section.

The defenders, including cavalry, charged out the breach and tried to link up with the relief force. They completely destroyed a few units of archers that didn't expect them to come out. However, their numbers were too few, and both the relief force and city cavalry were eventually overwhelmed. It was pretty close, but the city surrendered.

The breach in the wall.

Everyone had a great time.

Best of all, James did his homework and created a nice summary of the battle and the Third Crusade in general.

They want me to run this next month at the Ridgefield Renaissance Fair.



Acre besiegers reach the wall.



One more from Belleau Wood.

Conundrums: Ongoing D&D Adventure

by Russ Lockwood

Last we left Tazan Rell the Archer and the party of adventurers, we were in need of a little R&R. The last adventure (see the 2/22/2025 AAR), although successful in cleaning out a cultist lair of evil, had come oh so close to eliminating three of the party. We sailed back to Thornmoor, collected our horses, stopped in at Hilltop, and continued on to Sheffield.

The high-level recap: broke the monster siege of Sheffield, pursued and eliminated elements of the wizard and giant alliance, cleaned out half of Kobold Caverns, cleansed Hilltop of its undead (except for the demon in the library), repelled Dark Tide and his undead, and eliminated the Evil Water Elemental cultists in the Drowned Keep on an island in mid Hool River.

So Many Options

We gathered in Sheffield to plan our next move. We had lots of options.

We could go hop back to the Crystal Misty Mountains and continue smashing or at least neutralizing giants' forts and homesteads. We could go hunting evil goblins and some mage called Scyfax in the Torr Hills. We could head back south and hunt Charis "Bonebreaka" Stirling, a lich with an attitude who may be at Stirling Tower overlooking the City of Stirling in Stirling Valley. That's a lot of Stirling to cover. We also need to figure out the wild weather swings that brings snow to the area around Sheffield.

We could head back to clean out the rest of Kobold Caverns and its possible red dragon. We could head back south and visit 46th Sea Prince Ravenshield's fortress located across the Hool river from Thornmoor. We might even conduct some diplomacy with neighboring kingdoms to pull an alliance together to fight the evil horde washing over the land.

We could even try to become the power of Sheffield, as we have lots of pull and most of its original nobles had fled when the monsters showed up to siege the city. Arwyn Varros, the Captain of the Guard, runs the day to day ops of the city by default, but has no will to rule the city.

One thing we didn't want to do is become involved in day to day administrivia of ruling anything larger than ourselves. Sure, we can be in charge, but we prefer to be the Adventurers' Team. As the A Team, we solve problems -- usually, but not always, by killing the evil that promotes chaos and violence. Yep, we're really a bunch of do-gooders in armor.

As Keul noted, "We, like, have as our generic overall goal the health and welfare of 'the Good' totally in and around Sheffield."

Balien voted to head out after the lich Stirling. I must say, he appears to be obsessed with ol' Bonebreaker. I'm not sure why, but it doesn't seem to be a healthy obsession.

Scurg, our Bugbear cleric, seconded the cleansing of the city of Sterling and the undead that roam around it. He's more level headed when it comes to the lich. He's less level-headed when it comes to Scyfax -- obsessed, I would say. Fixing the weather would be third on his list, noting if two wizards gave us trouble, we would stand no match to a dragon. To be fair, one of those top-shelf wizards did call a genie... If not, he volunteered to be part of an outreach to the neighboring states, assuming its kings would listen to a bugbear.

A Tazan Staycation

Due to previous commitments, I knew I would be unable to head out as soon as most members, so I busied myself with my own proposal. Last time I passed through Sheffield, I went looking for a place to create a headquarters for our A Team.

With so much city space vacant, and often in total ruin, we could have our pick. The powers that be were so pleased with us, that when I shared such a plan, they offered up a nice large lot in a once fashionable ruin with the best pricetag -- gratis. During our sojourn against the cultists, the monks of the Basilica agreed to clear the lot so we could build on it.

I offered up a proposal to our party to build a HQ on this lot inside the city walls. We could afford a small landed estate (5,000 GP), or even repairing one, but we wanted to be within the walls. After we clear out the area's various undead and marauders, we'll think about land and a manor house outside the walls.

Anyway, an extra large three-story brick house (2,000 GP bumped up to 3,000 GP) with a laboratory (2,000 GP) would cost about 5,000 gold pieces. A few servants, guards, and maintenance would run about 500 GP per year, so

5,500 GP for a nice HQ and the first year. I added 500 GP for incidentals. That would mean we sell our 5,000 GP ruby and one of the 1,000 GP gems. It also gets rid of any administrative for a year.

I also suggested that we go back down and clear out the catacombs under Sheffield before we head out anywhere else -- must have a clean home base without any undead or kobolds running in the foundations.

My thought is that if all the refugees who ran to Sheffield saw the A Team HQ, they might stick around to rebuild.

Keul, Cristof, and Balien voiced their support of both my proposals.

Nevar will assist in construction and/or renovation of the "base" in Sheffield with Tezan, using Alchemist's Satchel, Mending, Enhance Ability, Heat Metal, Rope Trick and Right Tool for the Job as needed to promote construction and set up the laboratory.

As for Nevar, during the construction process, Nevar will consult with the local clergy and offer services to the local community as a doctor -- a number of his abilities mirror those of clerics. He's also investigating removing a curse from an object (cursed sword)

Although it will take construction time, once the laboratory is completed, he'll start researching how to duplicate potions obtained by the group, starting with the easiest.

The 30 days of relaxation and reflection sped by...

Sheffield, Do We Have a Problem?

Besides creating three scrolls, our wizard Cristof decided to summon the genie from his conch shell. What played out proved interesting.

The Genie Speaks

by GM Sean and Steve 'Cristof'

A sudden rush of mist billowed from the conch as the air shimmered like sunlight on water. A towering, blue-skinned figure with a fish's head and clad in robes emerged, his golden eyes brimming with disdain.

"Ah, the triumphant mortals, drunk on their fleeting moment of victory. How proud you must be, to hold dominion over a prince of the infinite seas -- like crabs boasting they have caged the tide.

"But let us dispense with pretense. You hold my conch, and so I must answer your call. I am Malek al-Naynayir, Voice of the Boundless Deep, Keeper of the Sapphire Veil, and, against all sense or justice, your most unwilling servant.

"Speak your demand, wielders of stolen power. But know this -- I will remember. The sea forgets nothing."

Cristof asked, "Do you know anything about the strange weather or any recent occurrences involving cold or ice?"

Malek folded his arms, his golden eyes gleaming with amusement and just a touch of malice. "You mortals and your insatiable hunger for secrets. Very well. You ask if I know of this unnatural cold? I do. I made it so."

"You did?"

"Yes. My previous masters -- small-minded creatures with delusions of grandeur -- begged for a storm of ice to shroud this land. They sought to unmake the heat, to bring forth endless winter in service to their drowned god. But they knew not the weight of their words, nor the power of their servant.

"You see, the sea is not so easily tamed, and neither am I. A mere blizzard? A simple frost? How dull. Instead, I let the winds stir something far older. Beneath ice-entombed halls, an ancient wyrm slumbered. So I whispered to the currents of fate, let the storm howl just so, and cracked open the vault of its slumber. And now? Now the dragon wakes. It breathes. It hungers. And it is not bound by any conch or command.

"Tell me, oh clever summoner, was that the answer you sought?"

"Yes, it was. So were these small-minded masters conducting any experiments or rituals?"

Malek tilted his head back and chuckled with a sound like distant waves. "Experiments? Rituals? Bah! They dabbled, they schemed, but their minds were shallow pools, unfit to hold the depths of true power. Yes, they chanted their little incantations, scrawled their sigils of frost and tide, and poured their petty mortal will into their rites. They sought a storm, an unrelenting deluge of ice to drown this land in winter's grasp. But they lacked patience.

"And so, in their desperation, they turned to me. Oh, how they groveled. How they pleaded. And how, in their ignorance, they gave me the opening I desired. I granted their wish, but they never asked from whence all this power of frost came. From its frozen tomb, the dragon stirred and answered their prayers, although I suspect they did not live long enough to appreciate the irony."

"What can you tell me about dragons?"

The genie's golden eyes narrowed and a slow smile spread across his face -- one of amusement, condescension, and the faintest glimmer of respect. He stroked his chin, as if savoring the weight of the question. "Dragons. Ah, now you ask of true power. Not the fleeting spells of mortals, not the borrowed might of planar beings shackled by oaths and pacts, but something ancient, something that commands the world as the tides obey the moon.

"They are the bones of the world, the first kings of air, fire, ice, and ruin. They ruled before your kind and not only live in this world, but shape it, hoard it, and claim it. And unlike you ephemeral insects, they do not forget.

"The great white wyrms are the most relentless. Ice is their domain -- not the delicate frost of pale winter mornings, but the cruel, unyielding cold of a frozen world. While red dragons revel in destruction, the white ones do not rage. They endure. They wait. Their hunger is endless. Their malice is simple and pure. And unlike the fools who dismiss them as mere beasts, I know the truth: theirs is an intellect as cold and sharp as the glaciers they command.

"Spells? Oh yes, they whisper to the blizzards. Their sorcery is precise, subtle, and a slow death creeping through the bones. They craft illusions of endless tundra, summon walls of impenetrable frost, and, should they so choose, they can freeze the very blood in your veins with but a word."

Malek crossed his arms and grinned anew. "And now, one such beast awakens, thanks to mortal curiosity and my generosity. It will not parley. It will not negotiate. It will take. What you call your land, your homes, your lives -- these are treasures to be stolen, hoarded, and buried beneath the ice. You might as well ask the tide not to rise. You wish to know everything about dragons? Then face one."

Malek leaned closer. "And if you survive long enough to regret it, remember you have only yourselves to blame."

On Genies

Nevar heard the account and used his Investigation, Arcana, Nature and religion skills to see what he can figure out about Malek al-Naynayir, his past, and this "Sapphire Veil."

Powerful genies may grant from one to three wishes per year. Alas for us, the waking of a Frosty the Dragon was the last wish spell available until next year.

Among the things one can wish for: an object up to 300 feet by 300 feet and up to 25,000 gold pieces, massive healing, and for our purposes, and undo a recent event like putting ol' Frosty the Dragon back to sleep in his vault.

But that's in the future when a wish will be available. An early winter is not unusual, but an early winter where it almost never snows is another thing. Still, where the A Team goes is up to them.

Weathering Heights

by GM Sean

The A-Team, less Tazan and Keul, opted to heed a desperate plea:

"The hamlet of Brackenwood is in dire peril. The storms grow fiercer with each passing day—snow where none should fall, ice choking the river, and the wind howling with voices not of this world. Our fields lie barren beneath the frost, our livestock perish in the cold, and our people grow weak with hunger and fear.

"Yet the blizzard is not our only terror. A shadow stirs at the old tower of Dunharrow, long abandoned and left to ruin. Strange lights flicker from its highest spire, and those who wander too close vanish without a trace. Some whisper that figures move in the snow—pale, gaunt things that watch from the tree line and slip away when approached. The few who have braved the tower's edge speak of an unnatural chill in the air, the stones themselves rimed with hoarfrost, and a sound—deep, guttural, and inhuman—echoing from within.

"Even more troubling, the dwarves of Clan Ironmantle -- our neighbors in the Hellfurnaces -- have not been seen or heard from in weeks. Their forges have gone cold, their trade wagons absent from the mountain roads. We do not know if they too have been swallowed by this accursed storm or if something even worse has befallen them.

We do not have the strength to face this darkness alone. We beg you—send aid before Brackenwood is buried beneath ice and death.

-- By the hand of Elder Vannic Greaves
For the folk of Brackenwood

D&D Weather Alert: The Adventure Continues

By Daniel

"A call to arms?" mused Nevar. While the group was willing to respond to help, Balien and Cristoff pointed out that those available to depart were a little short-handed in front-line fighters. Scurge the Bugbear shaman was willing to be part of the front rank.

As far as help went, a Captain Valcoure from the Yeomanry arrived in Sheffield with 50 men-at-arms to help defend and fortify the city. None wished to accompany the A-Team.

Worse news: Keul was bidding the team farewell and heading back to his home plane. As he had noted, zero members of the A-Team agreed to his stipulations. He couldn't be hanging around with prisoner murdering, thumb-cutting, devil dealers.

Of course we gave him a farewell party.

Meanwhile, Balien returned to Thornmoor and the good ship Legend of the Marmoset. He recruited a crew among the scattered remnants of the humans and sailed across the Hool River. Here he negotiated an informal agreement of friendship with Sea Prince Ravenshield, leaving the Legend under his aegis at the port of Crimson Ford. Ravenshield's navy, if one can call it that, now consisted of three ships.

The Hammer

A newcomer clad in black robes arrived at the city and was directed to us. He carried a staff with a large hammerhead at one end. When asked his name, he replied, "You may call me the Hammer."

As we talked about his desire to help, his robes seemed to move about a little too unnaturally. The head of a bat popped out at his collar. "My familiar, Bruce," he explained.

We swiftly welcomed him to join our band of heroes.

Kobolds On The Loose

Another unexpected arrival was a squad of kobolds bearing a chest. Nevar recognized the cheesy torn red robes: These were from "Pyrofaxus' Domain of Fiery Death" -- aka Kobold Cavern.

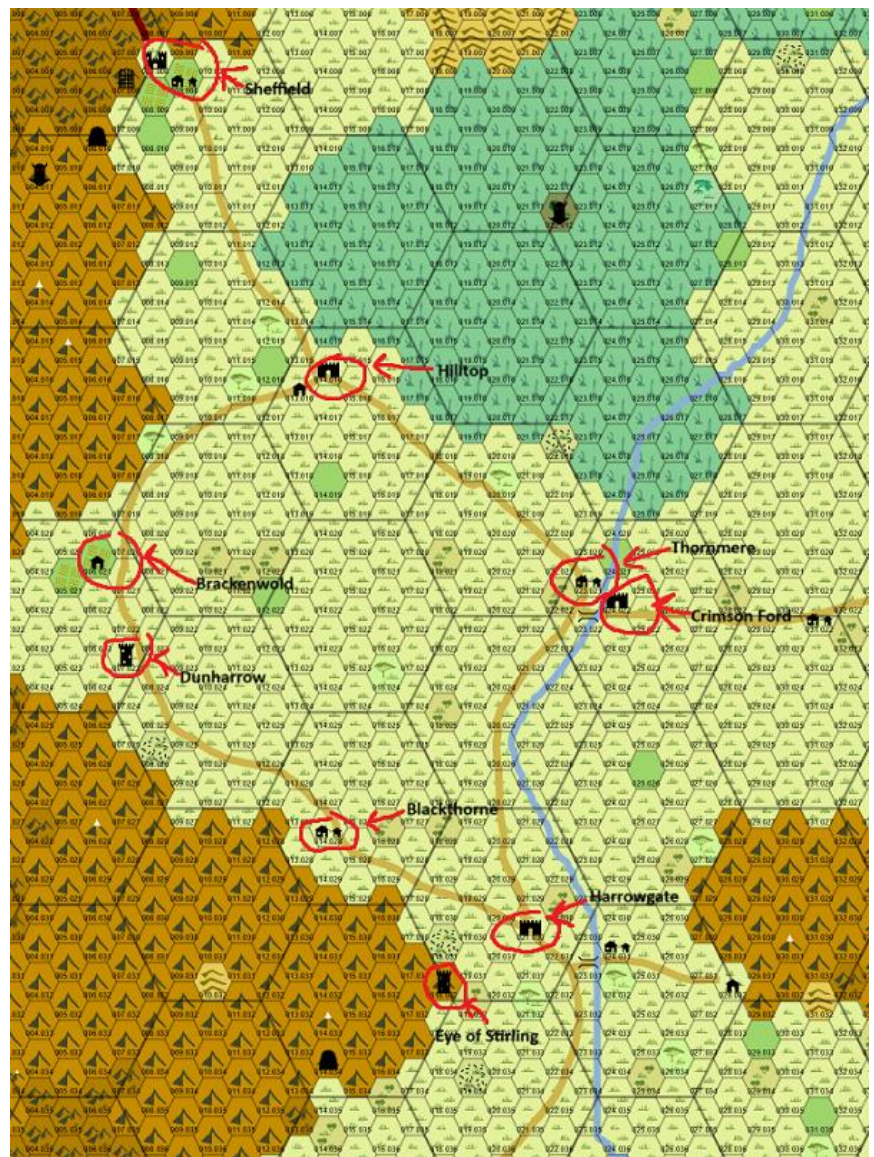
We had cleaned out half the cavern, but when offered the opportunity for a peaceful deal, they sent us away with threats of the fire dragon burning us alive.

So why are they bringing a chest to us?

Were we being offered tribute? If so, the group needed to offer an apology to Tazan for trying to negotiate that the kobolds pay us off to leave them alone. It may have paid off.

Or not.

The winged kobold became a herald, proclaiming "Tremble, oh insignificant ones! Pyrofaxus, the Flame of the Ashen Peaks, Keeper of the Eternal Fire, and Devourer of Fools, has deigned to offer you mercy. Kneel before his name and receive his words!"



Kneeling wasn't going to happen. Apparently, the red dragon was impressed at the damage we did and flattering us about it. The Hammer paid great attention to this testimony and felt that he had joined the right group of people.

The chest contained a few baubles: a great big gold coin with Pyrofaxus' image, a vial of ash allegedly from a burned city, and a red jewel that felt warm to the touch -- magically enhanced.

With trepidation, the winged kobold continued with the real reason for a visit: The red dragon was aware of the White Wyrms named Thyroidamok stirring from slumber in its icy prison. Pyrofaxus was willing to sponsor us to eliminate the White Wyrms, promising gold beyond counting, artifacts of forgotten ages, weapons fit for kings, and riches "you could only dream about."

"I could dream a lot of riches," murmured Nevar.

Furthermore, the red dragon also promised not to bicker about who killed who in his cavern and forgive us our trespasses. Apparently, ol' Pyro can't take on Thyroidamok.

Knowing the offer was at best insincere, Nevar suggested accepting the proposal anyway and quickly — noticing the kobolds were so uncomfortable that they were turning to leave, with or without an answer. Nevar was certain the red dragon would renege on the deal or claim it was never offered — but you never know and Nevar wanted to go back and clean out that lair at a later date anyway.

Cristoff agreed to accept the deal since this is the mission we all decided to follow. "Might as well get paid for it."

The Kobolds received their reply of acceptance and left, leaving fragments of red robes behind as they fled.

Some magic items were now assigned. Nevar acquired a special Orb that could summon a "Frozen Elemental" with three charges a day. Scurg took the cursed sword left from the fight at the river that Captain Marcellus left behind. Every day, Scurg would need to win a battle of wills against the curse, but the sword imparts significant benefits in a battle.

So the A-Team assembled to leave Sheffield and head to Brackenwood: Balien the half-elf Bladesinger (Fred), Cristoff the Wizard (Steve), Gavriel the Wizard (Connor), Nevar the Alchemist (Daniel), Scurg the Bugbear cleric (Chris), and the mysterious Hammer (Ed).

Tazan Rell bid them success and stayed behind to supervise construction of our headquarters.

Forward, March!

The weather continued to be unseasonable, but comfortable during the day.

On the way, we encountered a caravan heading north, led by Vannic Greaves and Izreal the Paladin. He was leading the 50+ citizens of Brackenwood to seek refuge. Vannic indicated that only Barkus Maximus the En, guarded the Sacred Grove. He felt certain that we could consult with it by mentioning his name. Neither was willing to join our group.

True enough, the town of Brackenwood was deserted and we found Barkus, a lonely but magnificent guardian. The Sacred Grove was clearly identified, as no snow was present within its domain and when you entered it, it was mildly warm.

It shared what little knowledge it had about the area and the White Wyrms — but nothing constructive or recent. Nevar asked if he could avail himself to any herbs he might find in the Sacred Grove. Barkus pointed out the Garden in the Grove and Nevar spent his time collecting Athelas, Belladonna, Garlic, Hemlock, Kingsfoil, black and red peppercorns, Black and Yellow Lotus, Malyass root, and Wolfsbane. Grateful for this unexpected bounty, Nevar thanked the treant and suggested that the group might want to camp in the grove for the night if the Treant granted permission to do so. Balien was thinking the same, versus camping in a deserted town.

I Want My Sword Back

During the night, Brackenwood glowed with an eerie light. Further attention revealed sounds of a conflict. An army of skeletons were fighting an army of Daemons and the skeletons were winning.

With mixed feelings about the matter, our group decided to investigate but allow the combatants to continue fighting. Then we would take on any survivors.

By the time we arrived, the conflict had resolved and the Undead were the victors with several skeletons assembled in the village to prepare to engage us. Balien's quick fireball eliminated seven skeletons as Balien, Scurg, Hammer, and Nevar front and flank while Cristoff and Gavriel formed the rear.

Suddenly appearing was an old foe: Captain Marcellus the Swashbuckling Rogue Skeleton, who immediately recognized his cursed sword in the hand of Scurg. "I want my sword back!" he barked as he entered melee.

Another old foe soon appeared: Black Tide the Undead Magician appeared near Nevar. His focus was to disable Cristoff and Gavriel. Nevar summoned a Frozen Elemental to deal with the skeletons on his flank and turned to engage Black Tide.

Aloof and nimble as ever, Marcellus skillfully avoided two fireballs and parried several, but not all, attacks. When Scurg seemed unwilling to surrender the sword and not so easy an opponent to defeat, Marcellus simply wrestled the sword from Scurg. This contest drew the attention of Balien and to some extent Hammer.

Foes Multiply

Soon after Black Tide appeared, a spectral cloud giant materialized behind the group. The skeletons were nearly all gone, but a Orge skeleton remained near Captain Marcellus and now Black Tide was joined by a Banshee who shared the same goal of taking down our magicians.

All Captain Marcellus wanted was that damned cursed sword. As soon as he got it, he turned to disengage and exit the village. Had Balien, Scurg, and Hammer been content to leave him go and help deal with the other foes, the magicians would have been ended up in better shape — but Balien and Scurg were unwilling to let Captain Marcellus's astounding feat be the end of the melee. Both set out after him.

Balien danced away in hand to hand combat with Marcellus, damaging him significantly with mighty slashes and dodging all counterattacks due to a Blur spell. Sparing a look at the A-Team wizards, Balien saw that Scurg stayed behind to help in that battle.

Sadly, the Spectral Cloud Giant cast a spell that apparently affected Scurg, who seemed to freeze in position.

Nevar directed the Frozen Elemental to engage the Spectral Cloud Giant while he successfully attacked Black Tide. The enemy wizard ignored Nevar and cast a spell that floored both A-Team magicians. The Banshee attacked defenseless Cristoff.

The Frozen Elemental traded blows with the Spectral Cloud Giant. Nevar figured the elemental would be dispatched in the next round, but at least this Spectral Cloud Giant wasn't targeting anyone else.

Hammer summoned a creature -- Aberration -- that eventually joined the fight against the Spectral Cloud Giant. Hammer then advanced. His Eldritch Blasts looked like thrown hammers as they pounded into the cloud giant and Captain Marcellus.

The paralyzed Scurg eventually gathered enough energy to unfreeze himself and rejoin the fight.

Black Tide pumped Magic Missiles into the prone Gavriel, which left him crumpled on the ground and knocking on Death's door.

Nevar then applied Shocking Grasp successfully to see if that might distract Black Tide, following up with a Healing Word on Cristoff, who rallied back to the living side. Apparently it did distract Black Tide, who could not counter the Healing Word after being zapped.

Marcellus knocked over Balien with another astounding feat, as Balien scored a 23 against it and still was knocked over. Marcellus then turned and put 60 feet between Balien and himself. Balien got up and took off after Marcellus, now 30 feet behind.

Scurg dealt with the Ogre Skeleton, dispatching it, and then turned to see if he could help the lifeless Gavriel, who was slowly being passing through Death's door.

Black Tide was distracted by another Shocking Grasp but continued to Magic Missile Cristoff, who again fell prone with one foot through Death's Door and another on a banana peel.

A Little Help Back Here!

Nevar called for help. The summoned elemental dished out quite a bit of damage, but its opponent vanquished it, turning on the Aberration.

Marcellus watched the shuffle-dancing Balien and stuck out a foot at just the right moment. Balien tripped and fell over, allowing the evil pirate to accomplish what is best described as moving at triple speed. Marcellus covered 180 feet and disappeared into the night. Astounded by this feat, Balien and Hammer now decided to turn their attention to the battle behind them.

The Spectral Cloud Giant eliminated the summoned Aberration. Nevar summoned the Frozen Elemental again to engage Black Tide while turning to attack the Spectral Cloud Giant with Shocking Grasp. The spell was too much for the severely damaged monster. Nevar was grateful to not have to feel its attacks. Nevar cast Healing Word on Cristoff, but Black Tide countered the spell, despite being walloped by the elemental.

The Banshee now came to attack Nevar, scoring significant Necrotic damage — but the tide of battle was significantly changing.

Black Tide was no fool and disengaged with a Teleport spell.

The Banshee, outnumbered and outgunned, fell. Nevar collected its remains, valued as ingredients for several magic items and potions.

With two of the party dead, we were lucky Scurg remained alive to cast Revivify before a minute passed.

So the battered A-Team regrouped and healed back at the Sacred Grove.

Investigation and Resolve

by Ed

The party rescued a dwarf, Thor Ironcape, who told of arriving at Brackenwood to warn of an attack already in progress. Captured and beaten by Marcellus's cadre, he was left for dead.

Thor offered information about the local area and appreciated his thanks for his rescue, but not enough to be persuaded to join us as we headed to the stone tower at Dunharrow.

The snow got deeper and the cold colder as we approached the structure. This tower was not abandoned, however, as Balien's owl familiar discovered. As it scouted, something Magic Missiled it out of the air, its burnt body plummeted to the ground. It smelled like fried chicken.

Balien scowled and spent the funds to renew his familiar. We spied a declivity in the land within range of a Dimension Door. We resolved to approach across the snowy plain and take advantage of our preponderance of spellcasters to arrive upon the rooftop.

The declivity proved to be occupied by a giant frost salamander and a brief but spirited fight took place. We surrounded, we pounded, and soon it was dead and its treasure our own. We found 30 mighty magic arrows sure to be of interest to absent friends, gold coins, gems, and a magic Stone Giant Strength potion. and other valuables. We took a rest to lick our wounds, cast preparatory spells including a Spirit Guardians by Scurg, and arrived at the top of the tower safely via a Dimension Door spell. Keenly aware that the mighty magic would not last we opened the trap door and assaulted the tower.

Minions of Vespa awaited us. Their leader offered a deal -- we could help them with the demon locked in the basement, but the terms weren't to our liking. These arrogant fools fell before our blades and spells. A young beholder thing joined the fight, but it was also chopped to chutney.

A Demon's Door?

Soon we stood before a much-locked and warded door, but Cristoff remembered he carried a magic chime for opening such things, and it worked. Behind the door we found a tomb -- our dwarven informant's word to the contrary -- and a Cambion demon willing to bargain for our aid on behalf of Iuz. Or it was willing to bargain with all but Hammer, for it no doubt knew well it was soon to die at Hammer's hand.

Fighting soon broke out, and it summoned a Maw. Cristoff trapped it behind a wall of fire and Balien, Scurg, and a summoned aberration fought the thing hand to hand, with Scurg's Spirit Guardians causing it great pains. But wily demons exercise their wiles in many ways, and soon Scurg was charmed and ordered to stop concentrating. Then came the amusing attempts to wake Scurg from his charm.

Balien was not amused by the efforts to wake Scurg, as Gavriel modified a fireball to cause brain damage to all within the area of battle, causing all attempts to lessen the damage to fail. The previously summoned Aberration was summoned again -- and slain. Balien withdrew from the battle to curse stupid wizards and dig through his backpack to find his last healing potion.

Finally, the charm broke and Scurg's IFF transponder functioned correctly once more.

Cristoff's knowledge of the future saved him from demonic influence, and Hammer struck the final blow, slaying the Cambion, as it apparently had foreseen. We found things of worth on the demon and took them for our own.

We investigated the statue of a mighty dwarven hero and found the statue served as a latch for a secret door that gave us access to a true tomb atop which sat a mighty magic shield named MountainWarden. This is just the sort of thing a dwarven king might need to defeat a deadly dragon, as legend claims happened hundreds of years in the past.

Inside the shield, six generations of Dwarven kings' names are carefully etched into the metal, forming a lineage of leadership and honor. Crafted from dark iron and inscribed with ancient runes, the magic runs strong in this shield, offering considerable protection.

We also found a map, engraved in stone atop the tomb, to the lost Dwarven fortress of Krak de Chevaliers. Hidden beneath the map was a book, ancient but still readable, about the history of the Ironheart Clan and the fall of its kingdom. No words covered the last doom that befell King Gundam, but one passage stood out.

Thyroidamok, also known as the Avalanche Unchained, was an ancient white dragon whose fury once scoured the peaks of the mountains. His breath was the fury of winter itself, and his hunger for dominion was as endless as the blizzards he summoned. For centuries, he reigned as an unstoppable force of destruction, reducing strongholds to rubble and burying entire dwarven outposts beneath his relentless storms -- until a dwarven act of defiance imprisoned the White Wyrms within his own lair within the halls of Krak. Yet a darkness grew within Krak, scattering the dwarves that once called the mountain fortress a home.

As the A-Team healed and prepared for its next quest, it counted the loot: Ancient Ironheart History Book, the mighty magic shield named MountainWarden (to Scurg), Map to Krak, Cloak of Protection, Adamantine Chainmail, +2 Warhammer, Battleaxe of Dragon Slaying, five fine Dwarven busts of previous kings (250 gp each), chests with 12,000 gold pieces (GP), and chests with 2,100 platinum pieces (PP - each worth 10 GP).

Other accumulations: 800 GP, 34 PP, Frost salamander pieces (Nevan), 17 gems (worth 50 GP each), 30 (+2) magic arrows, Potion of Stone Giant Strength (to Scurg), Magic Scale Mail +1, and a Ring of charisma (claimed by Balien).

Furthermore, a spellbook was recovered with the following spells: Magic Missile, Hold Person, Darkvision, Expeditious Retreat, False Life, Ray of Sickness, Shield, Fog Cloud, See Invisibility, and Blindness/Deafness.

Good thing the party brought along the mules.

News

Rodger B. MacGowan: Obituary

by Russ Lockwood

I don't usually include obituaries, but RBM deserves one.

Artist, wargame developer, art director, and wargame magazine publisher Rodger B. MacGowan passed away on February 21, 2025. Best known for cover art on wargames, he created over 275 pieces of box cover art for over 20 different wargame companies.

If interested:

Wikipedia Profile: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodger_B._MacGowan

Listings of Accomplishments:

<https://c3iopscenter.com/about-us/profile-on-rodger-b-macgowan/>



New Wargame: Dambusters

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice Games released the solitaire wargame *A Dam Too Far: 617 Squadron's Dam Buster Raid - May 1943*. Players allocate 19 randomly chosen crew members to their Lancaster bombers of 617 Squadron. On the bomb run, you must balance height, speed, and position on approach with the available "Steady" counters to achieve the perfect bomb release point on the German dams in the Ruhr industrial area.

Contains: One 11x17-inch map sheet, 224 un-mounted, double-sided counters, six pages of rules, and seven pages of historical commentary and examples of play.

A Dam Too Far, designed by Amos Burke and featuring graphics by Bruce Yearian, costs \$22.95 plus shipping/handling. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

Info: www.hfdgames.com/adamtoofar.html



New Wargame: WWI The Yanks Are Here!

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice Games released the moderate complexity level wargame *The Yanks Are Here! The Saint Mihiel Campaign September 1918*. This was the first large scale offensive by the United States Army in WWI. General Pershing had insisted since he first arrived in France that US soldiers would only fight under the command of US leaders and as a unified force. The offensive of Saint Mihiel was planned as two-part effort to first reduce the German held salient that threatened Verdun, and then take Metz to breakthrough the German fortified lines.

Allied commanders, however, wanted the US Army to more directly support their offensive along the Aisne and Somme Rivers further north. Only four days of supplies and material were granted General Pershing for the Saint Mihiel offensive. Although the US First Army was successful in reducing the salient, the German Army was in the process of withdrawing anyways and were able to limit the American's advance to just short of their newly established fortified line. It would be American's Meuse-Argonne offensive in October that would result in a more decisive decision, but at a much higher cost in American lives.

Each turn represents eight hours. Units represent battalions, brigades, and divisions. Corps- and Army-level artillery units represent about 100 heavy artillery pieces. Each hex is approximately a half mile across.

Contains: Two 11x17-inch map sheets, 167 un-mounted, single-sided counters, one double-sided counter, and nine pages of rules.

The Yanks Are Here!, designed by Paul Rohrbaugh and featuring graphics by Tim Allen, costs \$22.95 plus shipping/handling. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

Info: www.hfdgames.com/yanks.html



NJARRT American Revolution Symposium: May 3, 2025

by Russ Lockwood

The North Jersey American Revolution Round Table (NJARRT) will host its Second Annual Symposium at the Ehinger Center of Drew University (36 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ) on May 3, 2025 from 8:15 am to 3:00 pm. The program presents five speakers discussing American Revolution events in NJ. The program is tentatively set for:

8:15 - 8:50 Registration and coffee

8:50 - 9:00 Welcome and Introductions

9:00 - 9:40 The New Jersey Volunteers, 1776 - 1783 by Todd Braisted

9:40 - 10:00 Q & A and break

10:00 - 10:40 Battle of Springfield and Revolutionary Spirit of 1780

by Kevin Vancio

10:40 - 11:00 Q & A and break

11:00 - 11:40 William Franklin: Divided Loyalty by Richard Bell

11:40 - 12:00 Q & A and break

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch (included)

1:00 - 1:40 William Livingston's American Revolution by Jim Gigantino

1:40 - 2:00 Q & A and break

2:00 - 2:40 Historic New Bridge Landing: A Bergen Battleground by Todd Braisted

2:40 - 3:00 Q & A and adjournment

The cost is \$50 per person (\$25 for students with valid ID) and includes coffee and lunch.

Registration deadline is April 15. The symposium will be In-Person only, and not recorded. If there are any questions, please call Bob Wong at 908-630-9614 or send an e-mail to arrrt.nj@gmail.com

Parking: Park in Lot "L" next to Building No. 44 on the campus map at Drew University and a 5-minute walk across the campus to Ehinger Center (Building No. 24).

Print vs. Electronic Book Sales

by Russ Lockwood

In general, 80% of books sold are in printed format versus 20% in one ebook format or another (Kindle has about 72% of the ebook market).

Lots of stats:

https://www.tonerbuzz.com/blog/paper-books-vs-ebooks-statistics/?srsltid=AfmBOoqL_WeIKw4akwl-u9btBX04jtk6f_fV3Jfa-S9b0Dm-GlcWDQ-p

<https://www.tonerbuzz.com/blog/how-many-books-are-published-each-year/>

OttoCon 2025: June 27-28

by Russ Lockwood

OttoCon is a small convention for wargamers. Bring everyone you know to play games without having to worry about board meetings, membership meetings, and hours of aimless wandering in the dealer's area. OttoCon is like a big game weekend at a huge house, with many events going on at the same time. It isn't just for wargamers. We want you to play any game your heart desires, from board games, to miniatures, even decision-driven card games.

Every kind of gamer is welcome.

Registration: \$30, or \$20 for one day.

Located at: Comfort Suites, 10 South Hanover St., Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 17013.

To run a game contact: saxenviolets@gmail.com

Batman's License Plate: BatCave Consequences

by Russ Bat-Lockwood (images from web)

For no apparent reason, I suddenly remembered driving near my house and seeing a 1960s Batmobile heading in the opposite direction, presumably for the nearby auto show. Also presumably, it was a replica. Thrice presumably, it was street legal. Or was it?

This was not my only random encounter. I was at the curb waiting to cross the street in 1980s midtown New York City when the Batmobile turned the corner right in front of me. In an era before replicas, that might have been an original from the 1960s show.

That led me, for no apparent reason, to consider how the Batmobile could be on the streets in 1960's actual Gotham City (New York City). Batman upholds law and order, so the Batmobile must conform to the law, right?

Yes, daydreaming is real. And no, I'm not a Bat-fanatic, just a daydreamer at times.

I remembered the Batmobile had a license plate, but now what? Onto the BatWeb I went.



Batmobile

Being a millionaire, the given is that Bruce Wayne had the means and contacts to get parts to build the Batmobile. I'm not sure where he got the atomic batteries to power the Batmobile, but Batman also had a big nuclear reactor in the BatCave to recharge the batteries. So, the Batmobile was actually an electric car...

...with flames shooting out the back. As the Dynamic Duo weren't dead, presumably the turbo boost power and exhaust weren't radioactive.

"Hello, good citizen. We're on the way to the DMV."

Registration?

Anyway, how do you register an atomic battery-powered car? And what address do you put on the registration application? You can probably get away with Mr. Batman as the owner, but will the DMV accept BatCave as the address? Fake address for Mr. Law and Order?

Do state police even patrol this road?

Instead, maybe, Commissioner Gordon can issue a special Gotham registration and license plate? After all, Batman is 'a duly deputized officer of the law.'

As for the BatCave, Bat-aficionados know it's located 14 miles from Gotham City. That seems outside city limits. That curvy road seems like a 35mph zone and Batman drives really fast. Would the NY State Police pull him over for speeding? Or just let him go because he's ... Batman?

At least they could run the license plate, right?

Four License Plates

From someone more knowledgeable than me on Reddit: Four different plates were used during the series -- BAT-1, 2F-3567, TP-6597, and ZEF-451.

As for Gotham, 2F-3567 is a correct 1965 New York number. The 2F code would mean it was issued in Clinton County -- the northeast corner of New York State.

That's a fair distance from Gotham City, but the better to hide the paperwork from prying media eyes, right?

License, Registration, Insurance

Does 1960s Batman, paragon of law-abiding crime fighters, drive with a license and insurance? The address is likely the same as the registration. In the 1960s, he didn't need a photo ID. Maybe he doesn't need no stinkin' license.



As for insurance, Wikipedia noted that Wayne Enterprises was an "American diversified multinational conglomerate owned and chaired by Bruce Wayne, the son of Thomas and Martha Wayne. Wayne Enterprises is based out of Gotham City."

Presumably, it might own an auto insurance company. I bet the spokes-mascot would be a bat, not a lizard.

Inspection

The BatWeb noted that NY State mandated auto inspections in 1982, so would a car in the 1960s need inspections? Um...probably for safety? I don't know and my Bat-Google-fu seems off. I thought inspections were earlier than 1982. If so, how do you explain atomic batteries on board? Or check a jet turbine for emissions?

I used to own a 1958 MG and had to take that through inspection. It's mostly the same as an American car with a couple differences that baffled the inspector. The hand brake operated opposite. In an American car, you pull up the handle and the brake locks in place. Push the button to release. In the MG, you pulled up the handle and pushed the button to lock in place. Then, slightly lift the handle to release.

The inspector pressed the center of the steering wheel for the horn. No sound. I pushed the horn button -- on the dashboard -- to sound the horn. He seemed a bit flustered as he thought it was the radio.

At least the knob for the windshield wipers was in the right spot on the dashboard.

Speaking of windshield wipers, does the Batmobile have any? Does crime take a holiday when it's raining or snowing?

Holy Squeegee, Batman!

We ain't got no windshield wipers!



And what would happen if the Batmobile was involved in a 5mph collision? The front had a Bat-Ram, so no problem, but what happens if the jet exhaust pipe is hit at 5mph? Probably nothing, but if it ever throws the turbine out of whack, next turbo run might result in a Bat-Boom! 1960s cars had big chrome bumpers, not that plastic crap of today.

Supposed it rolled over in a high-speed crash? Would the atomic batteries explode? Catch fire like lithium batteries? Will insurance cover damage from a mushroom cloud?

Why yes, Batman does seem to operate an unsafe-at-any-speed vehicle.

The Real BatCave

The studio set is long gone, but you can still visit the actual BatCave. I was surprised, too. I thought it was a backlot set.

Nope. The BatCave is in the Hollywood Hills in Griffith State Park. It's been used for a variety of movies and TV shows, including Lone Ranger, Superman, and



Wonder Woman. And it's a tunnel, not a cave.

This short video will show you all you need to know. In fact, more than you need to know, but I enjoyed it.

<https://www.66batman.com/2008/09/02/bat-tours-the-batcave/>

Etc....

Other things I discovered while Bat-Surfing the BatWeb: The original \$250,000 1955 Ford Lincoln Futura experimental car was bought for \$1 and customized for the 1960s TV show. Four Batmobiles for the TV show were ultimately made and Batmobile Number 1 sold for \$4.62 million in 2013. A replica based on a 1978 Lincoln Continental sold for \$195,250 at a Mecum auction in 2018.

Holy Inconsistency, Batman!

Hey, it's a campy TV show. It doesn't necessarily have to make sense and it mostly doesn't. From time to time, I catch an episode on late-night TV. From moral dilemmas to fantastical escapes, it's nice enjoyable escapism with a drive down nostalgia lane.

"Robin. Where did you park the Batmobile?"

Maybe something in the comics explains such mundane modern DMV conundrums. Or the animated series. Or maybe not. It doesn't matter. As long as the Batmobile goes Vrrrooom!

For the record, yes, I do own a Batmobile. Three actually. They are each about three inches long, came as a gift, and say Hot Wheels on the underside of the chassis. Na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na...





Good Guys on the left (l to r): Space Marine Marc and Imperial Guard Connor. Ork Ed, GM Sean (light blue shirt). Orks John and Dylan. Note the McDonald's at lower left corner. Squinting won't help you find the Taco Bell somewhere in the distance.

Epic Space Marine: NetEpic Version

by Russ Lockwood

When GM Sean put out the call for a *Space Marine* game, I said sign me up. Only he wanted to use the *NetEpic* rules, which I understand is also called *NetEpic Gold*. When Games Workshop completely screwed the pooch in making version 3.0, enthusiasts like me stuck to version 2.0. Apparently, lots did and 3.0 died a deservedly quick death.

Mickey D's – an objective. Bunkers in front contain space marines. The reddish-orange stand is Whirlwind artillery.

A group made some revisions to 2.0 and called it *NetEpic*. Rules are on the web somewhere and include stats and point systems.



The Big Game

Normally, when we do an *Epic Space Marine* game, we go 2,000 points per person. That's a good afternoon game. Sean upped the points to 3,000 per defender (two Space Marine players and one Imperial Guard player) and 4,000 per attacker (three Ork players). Us defenders also got orbital bombardments, bunkers, walls, and a few laser turrets. That's a lot of points.

As it shook out, I was on the right flank, Marc in the middle, and Connor on the left. Seven objectives were spread out, although three were in my area -- including a McDonald's, an obviously crucial building to hold.

I had a small city of high rises (-2 to hit for my infantry inside) that I studded with walls (-2 to hit for my units behind them). I scattered some bunkers (-3 to hit) around to defend objectives.

My at start positions. Artillery in back at left. Marines in bunkers and buildings. Tanks at wall on either side of small city.

Rule Differences

The main difference is that in second edition (see the game I had with Renaud for game mechanics overview), all units reveal orders at once and orders are executed in a specific sequence. In *NetEpic*, all orders remain hidden until the unit is activated without a sequence.

I'm sorry, but that's a prescription for delay. First, players need to remember what order was placed where. With this many units, who can remember from turn to turn? Then you have the decision about which one to activate first -- more delay.

Now, a 1 on 1 game might not be so bad, but the more players, the more delays. Interestingly enough, GM Sean abandoned that after just three order reveals on Turn 1.

The other change involved saves. Firing to hit a unit in tough terrain might need a 7+, thus requiring a "confirmed 6" to actually hit. A confirmed 6 is a die roll of 6 plus a second d6 die roll needing a 4-5-6 to confirm. If you need an 8+ to hit, the roll of 6 needs to be confirmed with a second die roll of 5-6.

We always played that you could roll a confirmed 6 for saves as well. Not in *NetEpic*. If, because most firers have a -# applied to target saves, you need a 7+ to save, there is no confirmed 6 rolls. The target is eliminated.

I'm trying to think of any others, but those are the two that stuck with me.



My Command

For those interested, here are my points and units:

- 950 Veteran Space Marine Company (18 SMs, 1 Cmdr, 10 Rhino APCs)
- 50 Medic (1 Medic, 1 Rhino)

- 150 Whirlwind Artillery Battery (3 Ws)
- 150 Whirlwind Artillery Battery (3 Ws)

- 150 Marine Bikes (5 Bs)
- 350 Devastator Detach (6 Devs, 3 Rhinos)

- 700 Land Raider Tank Company (10 LRs)
- 50 Mechanic (1 M, 1 Rhino)

- 150 Missile Tanks (3 Whirlwinds)
- 100 Mole Mortars (3 MMs)

- 200 Assault JetPack Marines Detach (6 AJPMs)

In addition, Marc sent a Titan (big mecha) my way, parking it behind a wall.

Here come Dylan's orks. Gargants on left (with Ironman and Ronald McDonald color schemes) and infantry emerging from woods.

The Space Orks

Opposite me was Dylan with ... a bunch of orks. I'm not that familiar with orks, but he had motorcycles, APCs and Nobz (infantry), three Stompers (small mecha), two Gargants (big mecha equal to Titans), infantry, snotling cannons (teleporting gremlins), a weirdboy tower (psychic attack orks), and probably some other odd stuff.

John was in the center opposite Marc and Ed was on our left opposite Connor. Both of them had a lot of oddball Ork stuff, but that's what orks are known for. Their disadvantage is a strict, if somewhat convoluted, command structure and often random orders when it breaks down.

In GW canon, it's a classic matchup.

Ed (left) and John (right) start their attack. GM Sean (center) answers rule questions.

The Orky Attack

I am not exactly sure what happened on the center and left parts of the battlefield. I know Orky Ed took up half the Ork edge of the table, leaving Orky John to



concentrate on helping Orky Dylan smash into me. A big forest in the center of the table helped screen John from Space Marine Marc's fire.

Start Turn 2: On the other end of the battlefield, Connor defends his objectives. Ed's orks are just beginning to arrive.

On my side, Dylan took advantage of terrain to hide behind hills and disperse into woods. Still, not everything could be hidden and I began firing with my longer-ranged weaponry. I concentrated on his Gargants, stripping his shields and then pounding away at the body.

Artillery rained down on whatever I could see. Here was an interesting difference. Our house rules allow an artillery template to be placed anywhere you want in Line of Sight of some friendly stand. Stands touched in whole or part are attacked.

The ork wave charges into my defensive line of Land Raider tanks and infantry in the city.

Here, the template had to be centered on a single stand. Stands in whole or at least half covered were attacked per usual. Stands with less than half covered needed a die roll to see if they were attacked or not. The effect was a reduced number of stands attacked. No worries. Two thirds of the time, the template scattered from the arrow die and hit something else, or nothing.

Melee result: Losses all around.

Crossfire

By turn two, all the orky gimmicky weapons



unloaded on us space marines. Some ball weapon dropped all six Titan shields in one shot. The next shots damaged it and then blew it up. The weirdboy tower melted the minds of stands. The snotling cannons teleported those little gremlins inside of tanks and forced a melee. They were mostly unsuccessful, but I think picked off one tank.

The 'IronMan' Gargant explodes, taking seven infantry stands with it and leaving a crater.

The ork horde stormed against my walls and buildings. My Land Raider tank company put up a valiant fight and took many an ork down, even as numbers told. My mechanic repaired a couple tanks, only for them to be destroyed anew.

One ork unit rolled 3d6 for melee vs. my 2d6, but if they rolled doubles or triples on those three dice, the stand was destroyed. I think a half dozen were blown up that way, but more stands replaced them.

Melee results from the attack on my artillery line. One blue Whirlwind and one red Whirlwind left, but I got a Nobz and motorcycle. The cycle loss breaks the clan.

Meanwhile, my pounding of the Gargants bore fruit. Both had fires start within and first one, then the other, failed to put them out. The explosion not only destroyed the Gargant, but wiped out nearby infantry, too. This caused a random roll for orders for at least one unit, which opted to hit the dirt and stay put.

Lots of red ork APCs mill around, but I still hold the city. I only have one tank left and the mechanic to try and fix it.

It took two turns, but the orks punched a hole in my defense line and motorcycles and the Nobz charged and meleed my second line -- the artillery line. My first fire in defense was only partially successful. Uh-oh.

It wasn't as bad as it could be. I lost two of three melees per battery, but the damage counted against a clan break number. One clan broke and had to fall back and Dylan's other two clans were closing in on their expiration number.

The melee in the city continued.



Game End

There was a Victory Point system involving holding objectives and breaking or eliminating units. Blowing up Gargants and breaking one clan was worth big points. Carnage on the left was ongoing. The center, due to the woods, was relatively quiet, although Marc was shifting units to match John's orky moves against me.

We Space Marines and Imperial Guard needed 90 VPs and got to 106, ending the game.

Thoughts

Well, now I played *NetEpic*, which basically plays like second edition. I still like the flip over all orders and perform them in a sequence. The keep 'em secret mechanic generated more trouble than it was worth. The no confirmed 6 saves were only a tiny factor here and there.

I enjoyed this big game that lasted four hours of actual game play after two hours of set up. I mean, 12,000 points vs 9,000 points is a big game -- at least to me. Well done, all.

Game end...



A big thanks to Sean for GMing the game and to all who shot with me and shot at me.

Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

Crescent Dawn. by Si Sheppard. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 544 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire and the Making of the Modern Age*

This broad history covers the Ottoman Empire from initial battles for supremacy through its golden age of conquest and then a bit into its decline. Much of the expansion was built on Western European empires squabbling among themselves and neglecting the Balkans and Mediterranean -- not to mention forming treaties and commercial deals with the Ottomans to the detriment of other Western powers.

The political maneuverings among Ottoman sultans and rebels, especially power struggles and usurpations within families, is well covered, as is the diplomatic overtures and constant wars with the West.

The campaign maneuvers of the main Ottoman and opposing armies, both westward and eastward, are also well covered. For strategic campaign games, the book provides impressive information.

All the main battles, including Mahocs, Lepanto, Rhodes, Malta, and Vienna, are covered as overviews and the book also covers plenty of other lesser-known battles in obscure locations. The good news: You get a sense of forces, who won, and consequences. The bad news: For tactical tabletop use, you'll need other sources. At least you'll have a starting point for further research.

The book contains eight black and white maps, three black and white genealogy charts, four black and white illustrations, 23 color illustrations, and six color photos.

The smooth prose draws you into the Ottoman empire. I admit that the people and place names with accented letters were generally a mystery to me, although recurring leaders and spots highlighted their importance compared to one-offs -- who often lost a battle and were beheaded. By the end of this book, you're amazed any peasant survived the violence of Ottoman and Western depredations.

Enjoyed it.

Fighting for the Butcher. by Richard Willis. Softcover (6.7x9.7 inches). 248 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *British Troops Fighting in General Mangin's Xe Armee July-August 1918*

This 1918 Second Battle of the Marne featured British divisions integrated into French armies. Most of the book centers around the British 34th Division.

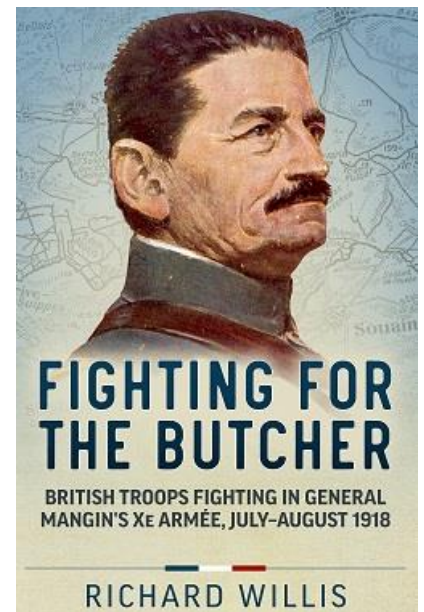
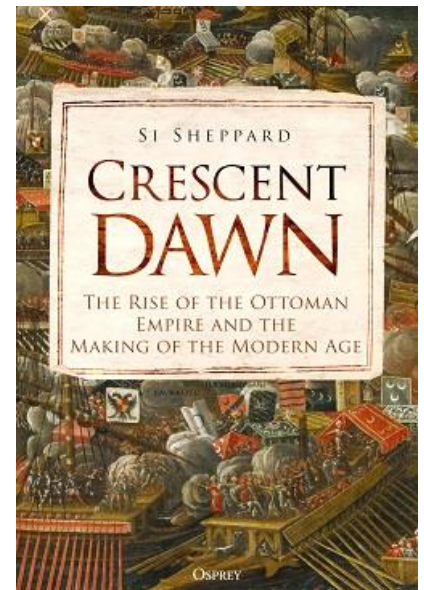
The German offensive drove the Entente armies backwards in another advance to the Marne River, but never broke them. The Entente saw the bulge and wanted to cut it off at its base and bag the troops in the rest of the bulge. It came up with a plan, put their most offense-mind general in charge of Tenth Armee next to the base, gave him 129 FT-17 light tanks, plus some medium Schneider and St. Chamond tanks, and turned him loose.

Alas, the Germans knew that too, and bolstered the base, essentially stopping the advance. The attacks at the tip of the bulge proved slightly better, but tenacious defense, atrocious weather, and poor British-French cooperation stymied the attack. US divisions would eventually reinforce the attack, but American inexperience canceled out the overwhelming numbers for a couple weeks.

Finally, all were on the same page, the language difficulties were overcome, and the attack succeeded in flattening the bulge. The Germans lost 168,000 troops and were well on their way to August 8 and the Black Day of the German Army.

The entire operation, including pauses to adjust the plan, is smoothly handled with prose that telescopes from the broad strategic level of the entire bulge to glimpses of tactical level details at the company level.

An interesting tidbit: Poison gas attacks caused tanks to stall. It wasn't due to casualties, it was due to the gasoline tank engines ceasing to work (p197). I'm guessing it's something to do with air intake problems.



The book contains six black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and 11 black and white maps (most lacking contour lines).

It's a sweet recap of the campaign and shows an evolution of trench warfare tactics by combatants eager to avoid casualties. The analysis of these new tactics is highlighted by examples during the battles.

One conundrum concerns the 34th Division's casualties: either 153 officers and 3,617 other ranks (p205 and p232) or 153 officers and 2,609 other ranks (p208).

OOBs are included, although the numbers are embedded in the text.

The book contains six black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and 11 black and white maps.

Started as a project to trace an ancestor, the book delivers a nice, concise recap and analysis of an overlooked offensive. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

Guam: The Battle for an American Island in World War II. by James H. Hallas. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 585 pages. 2025.

What an exquisitely researched and written account of the loss and recapture of Guam by US forces in WWII. With a small Marine garrison and assorted Guamian police and militia, the island garrison held out for about a day against superior Japanese air, naval, and ground forces.

The US defense plan was little more than a surrender, although if they knew what brutality was in store for native and US soldier alike, they may have shunned the surrender. Mass murders, rapes, and slave labor were the rewards of the Japanese empire from 1941 to 1944.

Through it all, one US Marine, George Tweed, hid out in a cave and was supplied by Guamians before being liberated in 1944. On the flip side, Japanese Corp. Shoichi Yokoi hid out in a cave until he surrendered on January 24, 1972 (p462).

As for the 1944 US invasion, Hallas combed through period reports, oral histories, memoirs, and a plethora of secondary works to create a hyper-detailed and hyper-readable account. The impressive bibliography runs from page 513 to 532. And it sure reads like he used all of them.

The book contains 57 black and white photos and nine black and white maps.

From the amtracs disintegrating from direct hits to futile charges up a hill to a well-planned but failed banzai attack, you get a foxhole-level view of few prisoners taken warfare. It seems every wound and death gets recorded as well as every heroic attack and defense. The smooth and sweet prose avoids being repetitious even though much of the combat action across the island is similar.

Enjoyed it.

German Troops in the American Rev 2: Men-at-Arms 543. by Robbie MacNiven. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Hannover, Braunschweig, Hessen-Hannau, Waldeck, Anspach-Batreuth, and Anhalt-Zerbst*

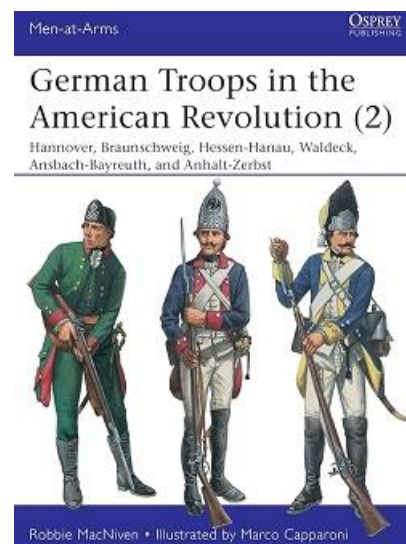
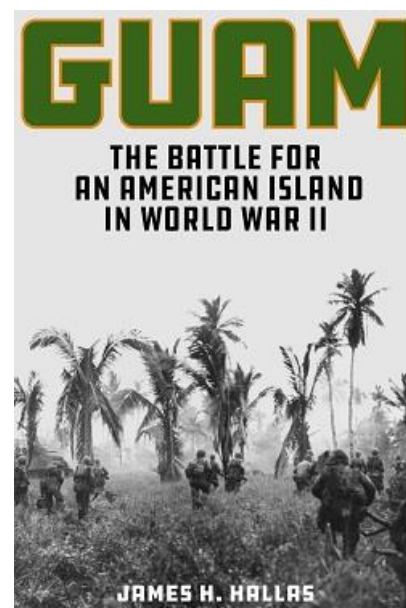
Although German troops are often lumped under the term "Hessian," units came from a variety of principalities with their own uniform nuances.

For each of the above principalities, you get overviews of the unit histories, organization, deployments, and details about uniforms, weaponry, and equipment. Most offer regiment breakdown into battalions and battalion breakdown into companies. Company breakdowns delve into individual soldiers.

The booklet contains one black and white photo, two black and white illustrations, 11 color photos, 26 color illustrations, and a central color uniform section with eight color pages totaling 24 figure illustrations.

Six of the plates are the usual excellent illustrations, but two -- Plates A and F -- seem slightly off, as if the image was dropped onto the page and squashed a bit. I don't know if that's really the case -- it's just my impression. You can still pick out all the uniform details, but it just looks a little off.

Enjoyed it.



Wars and Soldiers in the Early Reign of Louis XIV: Century of the Soldier 98.

Softcover (7.0x9.8 inches). 238 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: Volume 6: Armies of the Italian States 1660-1690 - Part 1

Another fine examination of an army in the series concentrates on the Savoy-Piedmont and Republic of Venice troops. All the relevant info for infantry, cavalry, artillery, and specialty troops is exhaustively covered: organization, recruitment, uniforms, weapons, armor, and tactics. Not to be left behind, the naval assets, especially of Venice, are covered. Of note is the constant change in the number of soldiers per unit (often a company).

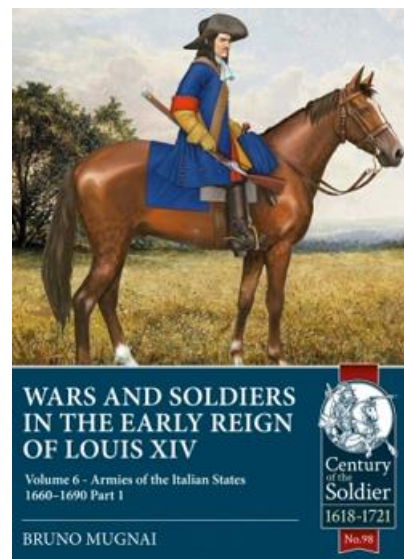
Further, you gain insight into each state's geopolitical strategy and the use of the armed forces during a variety of wars in the late 1600s. I had never heard of the war for Crete, but Venice invested a considerable amount of troops and treasure in an ultimately losing effort. It's info like this that makes reading about history interesting -- just when you think you have a handle on it, another fascinating facet emerges.

Some typos: "volumeentered" (p20) is missing a space; "the e was the key figure" (p128) is likely provveditore; and "Ultimately, In Venice" (p137) the "I" should be lower case.

The book contains 42 black and white illustrations, 17 black and white photos, 15 black and white maps, and a central color uniform section with eight color pages totaling 20 infantry and cavalry illustrations.

The Century of the Soldier series continues to impress.

Enjoyed it.



The Galician Division: 1943-45. by David McCormack. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 205 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Ukrainian Volunteers and Conscripts in the Waffen SS*

Unit history follows the enrolling of Ukrainian volunteers to help the Germans defeat Communist Soviets in the hope of becoming a country. As German success turned to stalemate and decline, Germany went looking for more manpower and plenty of Ukrainians responded -- enough to form a division. Despite not wanting to be part of the SS, they had little say in the matter. They had even less say in their commander, the arrogant and incompetent Freitag, who often asked for a transfer.

The volunteers left for training on July 18, 1943 and the division assumed a three infantry regiment, three artillery battalion, and support troops structure. By February 1944, training was complete enough, although the unit was sent to Lviv for anti-partisan operations, which it learned by experience, not training.

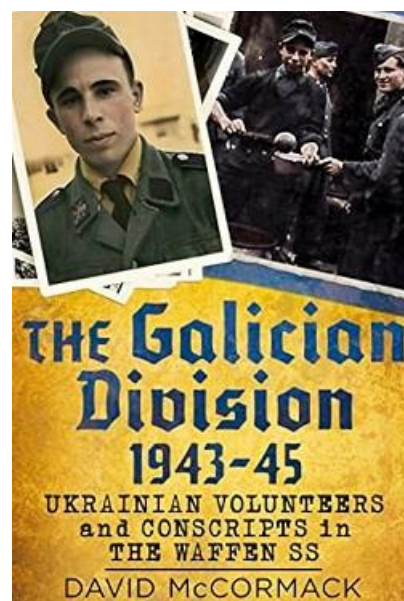
In July 1944, the Germans were desperate enough to send the division into the front lines to plug a gap. It was a disaster. Despite fighting well, only 3,000 men of the 11,000 escaped. It was enough to start a rebuild on September 5, mostly with conscripts. It would serve mostly on anti-partisan operations in Slovakia and Slovenia. By the end of the war, it pulled back with other German forces and plugged gaps in the front line until surrendering to the British in May 1945.

Freitag never did get his transfer. He committed suicide instead of surrendering. Unlike the Cossacks, who were turned over to the Soviets, the British shipped the Ukrainian POWs to Britain, where they were eventually allowed to stay ostensibly to alleviate a shortage of agricultural workers.

The book contains 17 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, two color maps, and nine color photos.

It was an interesting read.

Enjoyed it.



Nighthawk One. by Peter Shaw. Softcover (6.0x9.3 inches). 107 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Recollections of a Helicopter Pilot's Tour of Duty in Northern Ireland During the Troubles*

UK engineering officer Shaw took advantage of a program designed to teach him how to fly a Gazelle light observation helicopter. You might, too, since he includes considerable detail in how to start up the helicopter and fly it.

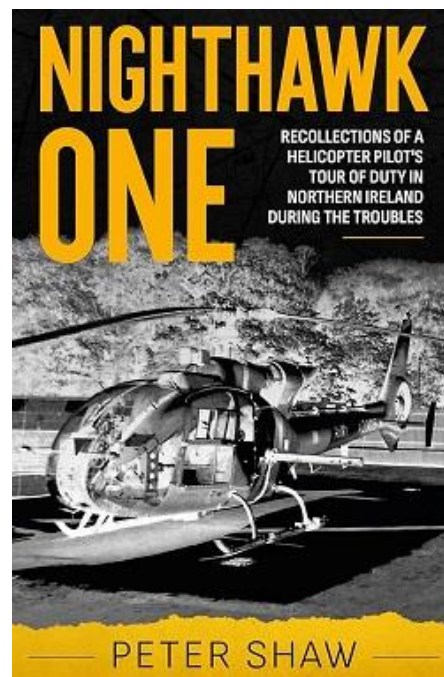
After earning his wings, the Army sends him for a four-month tour of duty in Northern Ireland in 1990. Weather proved to be the most difficult opponent, often requiring considerable skill in flying through storms and fog. As for the IRA, he doesn't mention getting shot at, mostly by paying attention and following safety guidelines. As his helicopter didn't have any weaponry, that's a good thing for all concerned.

He flew observation missions, mostly in support of land-based patrols and impromptu vehicle checkpoints. Once he was sent over a mountain to try and spot a lost patrol. Otherwise, it was all "routine" -- if flying in a warzone can be considered routine -- flying observations and shuttling VIPs around.

One off-kilter phrasing of a quote (p75): "Remember to keep checking for signs of fire would not you." No idea, but the rest of the book read well.

The book contains one black and white map, three black and white illustrations, one color map, and 18 color photos.

Enjoyed it.



The Berlin Blitz: By Those Who Were There. by Martin W. Bowman. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 277 pages. 2022.

This collection of first-person accounts concerns the bombing of Berlin in WWII. Most are from UK RAF pilots and air crew, but some include radio broadcasts and German anti-aircraft troops.

The strange thing is that Bowman seems to have collated excerpts from accounts in other books. There is no bibliography, but the footnotes refer to books as opposed to the usual citations from the archives. I don't know exactly, but that's the best guess I can offer.

As with books of this type, the accounts offer dramatic insight into flying bombing missions at night. The British selected 94 cities worth carpet bombing (p75), with Berlin the psychologically best target.

Some are quite harrowing. Through a gap in otherwise complete cover, a Lancaster dropped its bomb on Berlin, but not its incendiaries. The bombardier thought he might find a better target on the way back to base. Over Munster, flak hit the bomber, igniting the incendiaries. The crew battled the blaze and were about to bail when they realized the plane was still flying and flew almost all the way back to Britain. The plane ditched near Thorney Island, Sussex (p64).

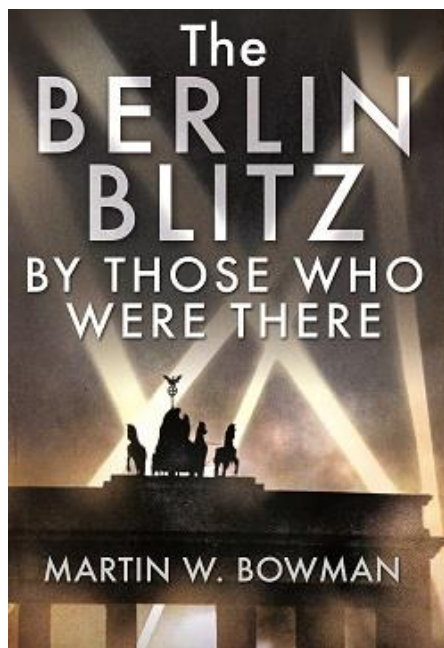
One of the most unusual accounts concerns a Lancaster on fire and the process by which a crew bailed out. Of course, one guy didn't want to jump despite the pilot's best effort to get him to do so (p90).

The chapters are arranged in a rough chronological order. As the war continued, bombing raids became heavier and heavier, as did the flak and nightfighters.

The book contains 62 black and white photos.

On the flip side, the accounts start to become repetitious. That is the nature of the missions: fly to Berlin, brave flak, drop bombs, avoid searchlights, fly home, and tally damage and losses. The details will differ, but after a while, I started skipping around. Ties still go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Elizabeth of York: And The Birth of The Tudor Dynasty. by Beverley Adams. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 186 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Uniting the Roses*

Biography of Elizabeth of York (1466-1503) -- the wife of English King Henry VII and mother of Henry VIII offers an insightful description of the period of the end of the War of the Roses and the beginning of the Tudor era.

She appeared to be a dutiful princess and wife, wielding some power behind the scenes, but not getting involved in politics. She bore numerous children, although as per the times, many died in childhood. She survived exile and fleeing into sanctuaries, but ultimately survived to marry and unite the warring sides of the Yorks and Lancastrians. That wasn't exactly smooth and Henry VII had to face a number of rebellions to keep his crown, but she persevered and with him.

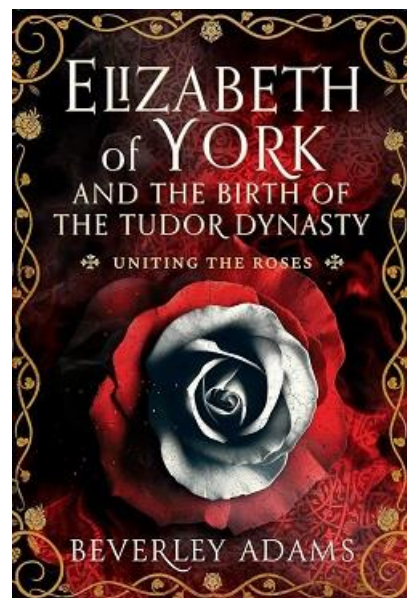
Battles are mentioned, but only briefly. The focus is on Elizabeth, not the kings, pretenders, or generals.

The prose uses rather long sentences and is quite uneven. Some lose track of pronouns. Others use clumsy phrasing. Some just don't make sense. The information seems golden, but the prose seems leaden.

The book contains four black and white photos and 20 black and white illustrations (mostly portraits).

Although uneven and of little use to setting up a tabletop battle, it's good to obtain ancillary info about the War of the Roses, so ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Boots on the Ground: Modern Land Warfare From Iraq to Ukraine. by Leigh Neville. Hardback (8.0x10.0 inches). 288 pages. 2025.

This highly illustrated overview of ultramodern warfare examines weapon systems and comments on their efficiency. Chapters cover main battle tanks, armored vehicles (wheeled and tracked APCs and IFVs), air defense, close air support (helicopters), artillery, rockets, mortars, and other indirect fire systems, drones, electronic warfare, infantry, and special ops.

Weapon specs are a bit sparse to appeal to rivet counters, but the point is the analysis of the efficiency of all these weapon systems among a smattering of militaries across the globe. From full-on combat in Ukraine to asymmetric warfare elsewhere, the text reveals how similar weapon systems with different training levels, strengths and weaknesses operate.

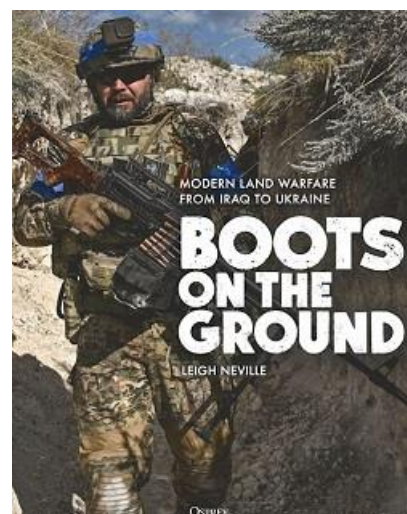
One prediction stood out: "By 2040, uncrewed reconnaissance vehicles will contact and fight against an opponent's uncrewed platforms -- the first true robotic tank fight." (p67). This more or less leads into a discussion of the type of armor vehicles to develop if you don't need to protect a crew. Quite interesting, especially when concept drawings and models of US main battle tanks were released in 2020 (p73).

The book contains 196 color photos.

There's no bibliography, but the footnotes reference a multitude of web sites. This might be one of the first books I've reviewed where the author didn't have to move out of his chair in front of a computer to research a topic. That has good and bad aspects to it.

I admit I'm not much of an ultramodern military buff, but plenty was in here to think about modern tabletop battles.

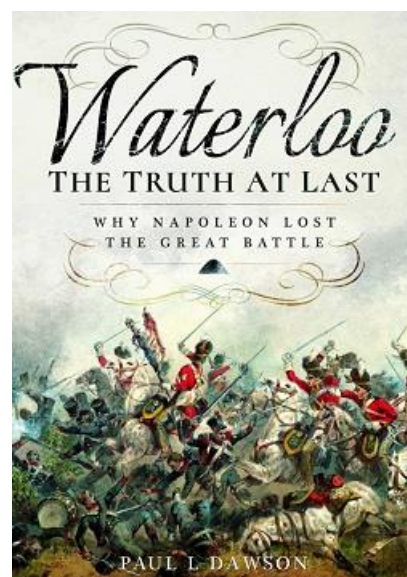
Enjoyed it.



Waterloo: The Truth At Last. by Paul L. Dawson. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 548 pages. 2023 reprint of 2018 book.

Subtitle: *Why Napoleon Lost the Great Battle*

Give the author credit for cracking open muster roll records that had been sealed since 1816 and doing an in-depth analysis of the numbers at Waterloo. Along the way, including examining wounds from death certificates and the time



of death, he recreates a timeline of the battle that is at odds with conventional wisdom.

That sort of academic research, along with personal service records and first-person excerpts, deserves considerable praise. You may or may not be convinced by his conclusions, but he mostly backs it up with hard data -- even as he notes gaps and lost information.

This is not the easiest of books to read. Sometimes, the minutiae obscures the larger situation -- I kept thinking the line about not seeing the forest for all the trees. This book holds 1,181 footnotes. Yeah, it's research galore.

Sometimes, I also wonder. Take the French grand battery supposedly of 80 guns. Dawson says 54. Yet the numbers he quotes (36 12lbs and 38 6pdrs) add up to 72 (p60). His point is that these were deployed in three places, not in a single line (p60). That seems like splitting a third of a hair here, a third of a hair there, and a third of a hair over there.

Where exactly? I don't know for sure. The book has no maps. Zero. Nada. Telling me that part of this gun line is on a small grassy knoll next to so-and-so's battalion isn't that helpful without a corresponding map. The author's too involved in all the details. Us mere mortals, and I've visited and walked the Waterloo battlefield, don't have the battlefield loaded into brain-RAM.

Of particular interest is his examination of the French losses. If you take out the 10,000+ troops who surrendered and became prisoners, losses were roughly equal between French and British. Of note, at least one British cavalry unit captured three columns (battalions?) of French, who dropped their guns, undid their belts, and started running towards the British rear.

This also meant that French leadership was lacking, in part because most troops had not been together as a cohesive unit for very long and the level of command experience was limited. Even the Imperial Guard suffered from this. "Le Garde recule" proved the last measure of fragile French morale.

The book contains 18 black and white photos and 14 black and white illustrations. The 1880 photos of various farms and landscapes are particularly well received.

So, you have a difficult to read book that is more an academic refutation of conventional wisdom about the Battle of Waterloo, but with an exceptional unearthing of records. I admit I kept skipping around. You might be better off finding a topic and looking it up instead of expecting this to read like a typical history instead of a compilation of premise, research, rebuttal, and opinion.

This battle seems more of a near-run thing than generally accepted, but then again, as I like to say, "There's nothing new like history." That's actually a shortened quote from President Harry S. Truman, who said, "There's nothing new in the world except the history you don't know." Hey -- no McNamara quotes about knowns and unknowns.

Enjoyed it.

Leyte Gulf: A New History of the World's Largest Sea Battle. by Mark Stille. Softcover (6.0x9.2 inches). 336 pages. 2023.

The US Navy plans to invade the Philippines and the reciprocal Imperial Japanese Navy plan Sho-I to defeat the invasion have been oft-covered before. What's "new" is the detailed analysis of mission objectives, asset capabilities, and ultimate consequences from the perspective of a career naval intelligence officer.

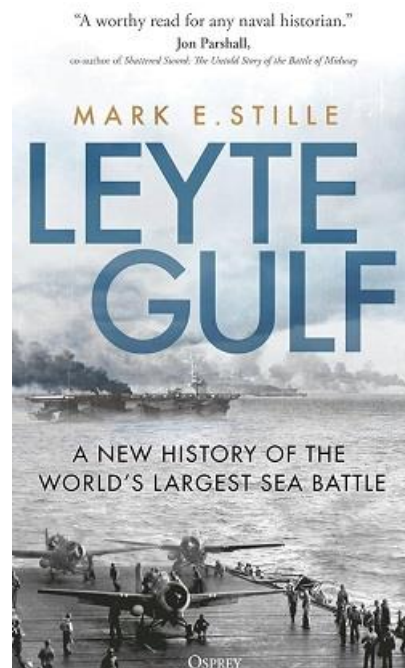
This detailed examination of the 1944 campaign and battle highlights the mistakes of IJN intelligence, communications, and leadership -- which eclipsed USN mistakes. It also exposes the myth that an IJN task force continuing past USN Taffy 3 to the beaches of Leyte would have turned the war around.

The overriding narrative is that IJN failure was virtually pre-ordained. Between lack of communication and coordination, the virtual absence of Japanese aircraft, and an odd selection of sailing times and courses, the IJN seemed to be seeking a glorious suicide run instead of a decisive victory. Alternative Japanese strategies are also considered, although by this time in the war, Japanese success was a mighty slim hope for the IJN.

The book contains 40 black and white photos and five black and white maps.

All the tactical battles are nicely described with good analysis of opportunities taken and missed.

Enjoyed it.



The History of Roman Legion VI Victrix. by Tony Sullivan. Hardback (8.0x10.0 inches). 202 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Original Watchers on the Wall*

The actual history of the VI Victrix isn't that extensive because not a lot survives a couple thousand years. Certainly, there didn't seem to be a scroll that was a unit history. At best, a few mentions here and there supplemented with funeral stones and inscriptions from construction that legion performed will have to do.

Speaking of which, and this is a perfect example of a fact about the VI Victrix (construction marker) leads into a discussion of Roman engineering. New to me: one legionnaire takes one day to build 1.5 yards of road (4.5 feet deep by 5 feet wide). A 5,000-man legion can build 124 miles of road in a year (p55).

In between the hard evidence is an overview of the organization, weaponry, armor, tactics, and culture of a Roman legion and the Roman Empire. As the years go by, the legions change in structure -- all recorded in pleasant prose. As some battles were mentioned that included the VI Victrix, so Roman battle strategies and tactics receive an explanation as well as a reconstruction of a particular battle.

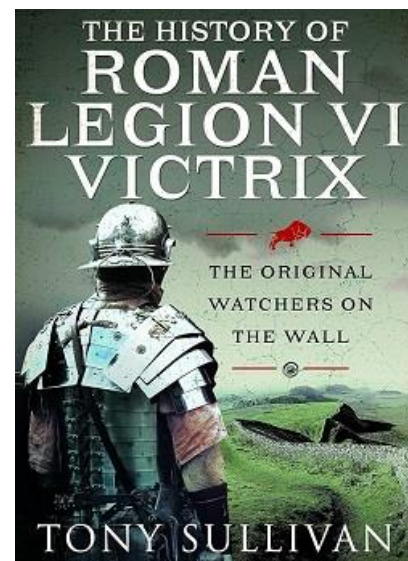
About the only nit I can pick is the lack of an overt explanation about why the legion dropped from 5,000 soldiers to 1,000. "Severus created a new structure" (p138) explains the structure well enough, but not why the change was made. You can read between the lines to surmise that the emphasis on a force of mounted troops in reserve to respond to barbarian incursions led to a decline in the use of foot troops.

The book contains 23 black and white photos, 10 black and white illustrations, and 24 black and white maps. Kudos for including many maps.

A couple typos: "Table 8 gives a snapshot..." (p47) is really Table 6. A Latin translation seems off: Both "Notitia Dignitum Occidentis" and "Notitia Dignitum Orientis" are translated as Register of the Offices of the West (p155). Now, my Latin doesn't extend much further than Veni, Vidi, Vici, but I suspect Orientis is the East.

Some of the explanations are speculative, but always noted and grounded in related information. It's a marvelous introduction to the Roman legion and the military aspects of the Roman empire.

Enjoyed it.



The German Navy 1939-45: Elite 260. by Nigel Thomas. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2025.

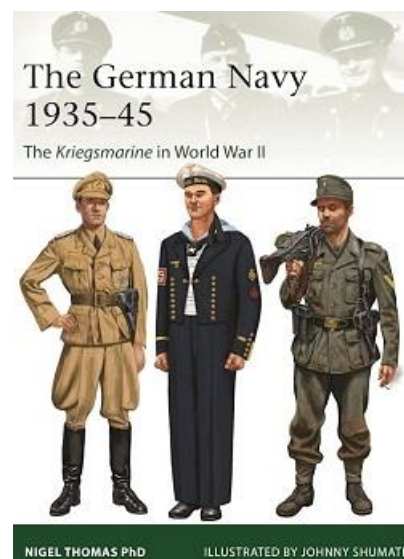
Subtitle: *The Kriegsmarine in World War II*

This overview of the German Navy is half a list of warship orders of battle and some specifications -- from the battleships to the Unterseebootjäger (fishing boats, cutters, and whaling boats used for submarine hunters) -- and the other half dealing with uniforms, organization, and badges. It includes naval land troops such as artillery, security, and late war hastily-formed battalions. The Navy even had penal units (p36) that allowed troublemakers to serve and perhaps return to their ships.

News to me was the Kriegsmarine used a captured British sub (p30), although the list does not specify for what.

The booklet contains 34 black and white photos and eight pages of color uniforms (24 figures in all).

The German Navy was officially disbanded on June 22, 1945 (p12) -- another ominous day in the German WWII history. If you are seeking an accounting of all German ships, boats, and subs, this will be a handy reference. If you need a painting guide to Kriegsmarine sailors and soldiers, this will indeed come in handy. If you're looking for tabletop use...not so much.



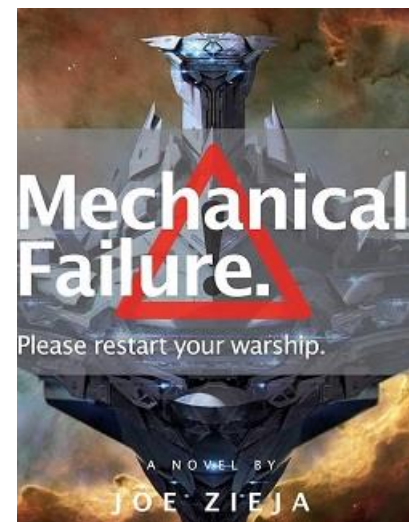
Mechanical Failure. by Joe Zieja. Softcover (5.5x8.3 inches). 343 pages. 2016.

At first I thought this was a straight-up space opera, starting with R. Wilson Rogers' triple-cross trading deal with pirates that went awry. However, much like a *Flashman* novel, Rogers comes out with a medal, a serious charge against him, and an offer to go back into the Empire's Navy to avoid prison. He takes the deal and finds himself an ensign -- and soon aide to the Fleet admiral. I didn't find it particularly engaging, however...

...as I read, it occurred to me this was more a snarky commentary on an imagined future full of bureaucracy, robot dependence, and double-speak. Once my perception shifted, then I settled back and enjoyed the humor (sometimes laugh out loud funny) and madcap antics of the main character. He outwits regulations, electronic paperwork, and a host of onerous entanglements as the fleet prepares for a Thelicosian invasion despite being in a 200-year era of galactic peace. I even got used to the robots speaking their innermost thoughts and their programmed actions.

This is the first book of a trilogy.

Enjoyed it.



Communication Failure. by Joe Zieja. Softcover (5.5x8.3 inches). 325 pages. 2017.

This is the second book of a trilogy and the sequel to *Mechanical Failure*.

The satire and spoofing is still there and generates some chuckles from time to time. R. Wilson Rogers becomes the admiral of the fleet and dodges marriage even as the 200-year-old peace ends. Nonetheless, the 331st Fleet battles back against the odds and begins to talk to the pirates that Rogers triple-dealed against in the first book.

It's not quite as humorous as the first book, but still a worthy sequel.

Enjoyed it.



Mukden 1905: Campaign 413. by John Valitutto. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Russia and Japan's Battle for Manchuria*

In the Russo-Japanese War, the naval Battle of Tsushima first comes to mind, followed, perhaps, by the sneak naval attack on Port Arthur and the subsequent Japanese siege of the Russian base. Yet the Battle of Mukden was a massive battle and another Russian defeat.

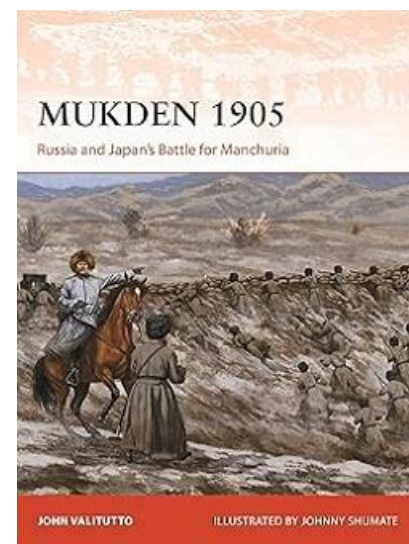
As is typical of the *Campaign* format, this overview covers the top commanders, the forces involved (nice OOB), plans, and the maneuvers and battles. The workmanlike prose may not thrill, but it gets the points across.

The Russian leadership proved awful, the staff work worse, and the execution of plans the worst of all. The Japanese proved far superior on an operational level and relentless at the tactical level.

Mukden was decided in March and the Russians retreated up the rail to a new defense line. The Battle of Tsushima was in May. Japanese losses and costs combined with Russian losses and revolutionary activities in the European part of Russia brought the two to the negotiating table. The war ended in September.

The booklet contains 35 black and white photos, 13 black and white illustrations, two color photos, five color illustrations, eight color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and a pair of the less than useful 3D maps.

Enjoyed it.

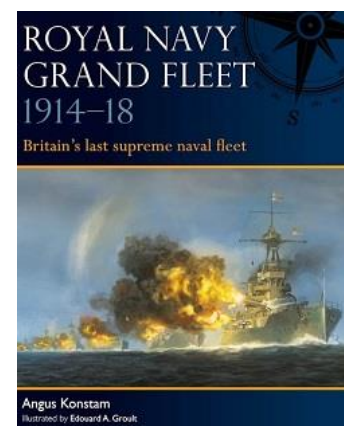


Royal Navy Grand Fleet 1914-18: Fleet 10. by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Britain's Last Supreme Naval Fleet*

The 10th volume in the *Fleet* series follows the format of offering an overview of ships, formations, some specs, commanders, organization, intelligence service, and bases used by the UK Royal Navy in WWI.

The RN was a superb instrument of sea control, keeping the German fleet



penned into the North Sea. It dealt enough damage, even at Jutland where it suffered a tactical defeat, to keep the strategic initiative and deny any sea commerce with Germany.

One typo (p73): "grand Fleet" needs the G capitalized.

The booklet contains 37 black and white photos, four color illustrations, three color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and three diagrams of ship formations. Of the latter, the uninspiring artwork on pages 34-35 consisted of solid blocks. At least the other diagrams had ship icons, no matter how many times they were duplicated.

The workmanlike prose wobbles a bit from time to time, but otherwise provides a good introduction.

Enjoyed it.

USN PT Boat vs IJN Destroyer: Duel 141. by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Tokyo Express 1942-43*

The most famous PT boat in WWII, PT-109, was a crushing defeat for its skipper John F. Kennedy. Indeed, the boats didn't seem to do much but annoy the IJN, although they did have their moments in the Solomons and Leyte Gulf. The biggest problem seemed to be aiming the torpedoes. As the boats were cheap to build and fast to operate, that was enough to harass the Tokyo Express operations, but as engineers will tell you: Cheap, Fast, and Good -- pick only two.

The IJN destroyers proved versatile enough and deadly enough to gain a good reputation. Their losses came mostly from air attacks. AA wasn't exactly a Japanese forte and supply deliveries to Guadalcanal often found the ships prone to air attacks. Dumping supply drums helped, but that's where the PT boats excelled - shooting up the drums before they got to shore.

There is some duplication of text between the JFK sidebar bio (p40-41) and the text (p69), but you'd expect that. Otherwise, the prose is clean and informative.

The booklet contains 44 black and white photos, five color photos, 13 color illustrations, two color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and eight color profiles (four of the PT boat and four of the IJN destroyer).

Another solid volume.

Enjoyed it.

B-26 Marauder vs Me 262: Duel 142. by Robert Forsyth. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Europe 1945*

This is not the first matchup I think of with ME-262 jet fighters and US Army Air Force medium bombers. Indeed, these encounters are limited to April 1945 and not many at that.

It's a competent analysis of development, technical specs, training, and combat deployments. One caution: The claims for enemy aircraft shot down need a bit of cross checking.

The booklet contains 55 black and white photos, 15 color illustrations, two color maps, one color two-page action illustration, and six color profiles (three of the B-26 and three of the ME-262).

The topic seems a stretch.

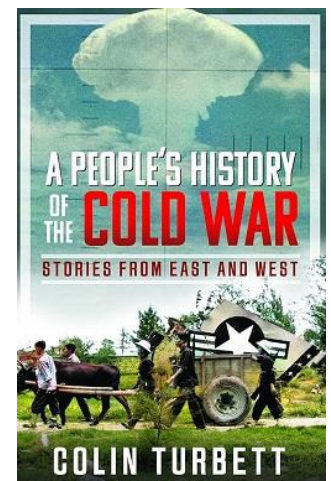
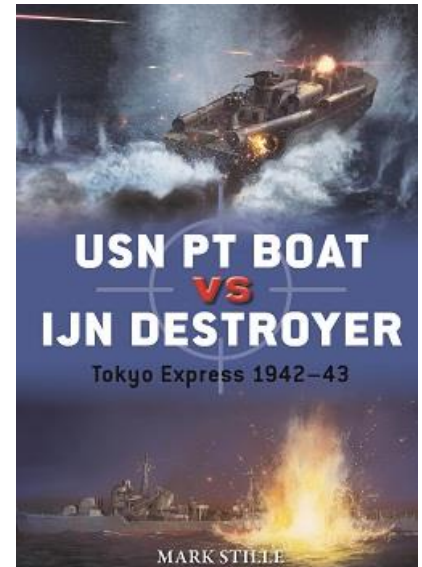
People's History of the Cold War. by Colin Turbett. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 222 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Stories from East and West*

I wasn't sure what to expect. Last time I skimmed a "People's History," it was the North Vietnamese official history of the Vietnam War. That was such propaganda, it was worthless except as an example of post-war Communist propaganda.

It's always good to get both sides of a story, so...perhaps different? Alas, I got no further than the introduction (p. xxiii):

"The communist project of the twentieth century was driven by a conscious and well-meaning desire to end human suffering and inequality, but was attacked an



undermined by the powerful nations who controlled international trade and finance and so never had much opportunity to demonstrate the ideals in practice."

Oh, really?

Every communist country has had sufficient time to put their ideals into practice and every one exists with a gun to the head of its people. One party rule. One party controls which candidates can run. One party controls all media. All education. All judiciary. One party that threatens those for any deviation from its official practices.

To be fair, I skimmed through the rest of the book, "learning" how post WWII decolonization halted ongoing Western atrocities, Western liberal values caused the decadence of youth, and the US military-industrial complex was the root of most evil in the world. If this had some nuance to it, I might be more sympathetic to arguments. But it's propaganda masquerading as fact in its worst form.

The book contains 118 black and white photos and 16 black and white illustrations.

I've read enough history to understand that pendulums swing back and forth. It's in these gyrations, often propelled by wars and conflicts, that sentience emerges from mistakes and then civilization advances. True resolve rests not in imposing or opposing political restrictions, but in maintaining open access to power and accepting consequences for actions.

Disinformation is a communist forte. Here's proof in book form. The only reason I mention this book at all is to show what happens when the majority lacks the courage to protect its rights from one-party tyranny. You get nothing but worthless books like this.

History of Military Encounters with UFOs. by Robert Allred. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 266 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Explanations and Combat Strategies*

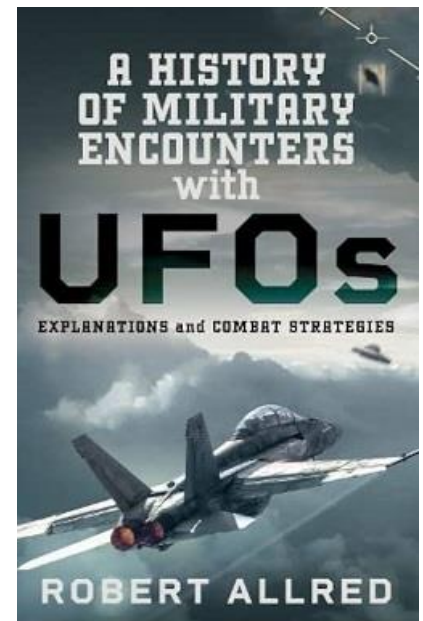
With all the recent talk about UAPs (the new term for UFOs), here seemed to be a topical book on modern encounters and how the US military is dealing with them.

I should have known better. It's actually a survey of past encounters that have mostly been recorded and reported. It starts with the Red Baron shooting down a flying saucer -- at least it debunked that tall tale by a 105-year-old alleged former WWI pilot who allegedly flew as Richthofen's wingman.

The rest of the book are the stories and global eyewitness accounts of close encounters of the military kind. Aircraft chase UFOs, but never catch them. Troops haul away saucer wreckage. Secret government labs reverse engineer technology and perform autopsies on extraterrestrials. Stop me if you heard this before.

The center section contains 15 color photos of various US military aircraft and missiles plus one 1942 newspaper photo of AA fire against a supposed flying saucer.

If you've never read anything about UFOs, then all this will be new. Otherwise, nothing new.



Roman Soldier Vs Dacian Warrior: Combat 80. by Murray Dahm. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Dacian Wars AD 85 - 106*

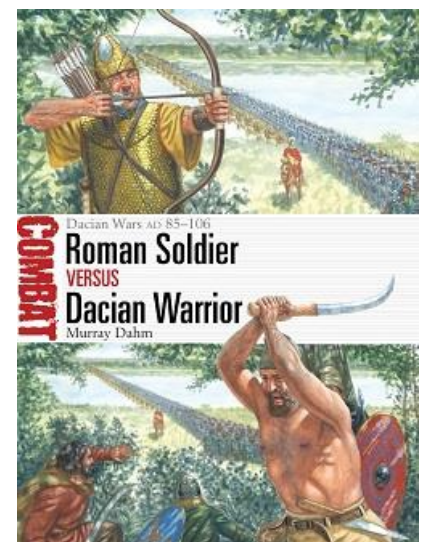
The usual series format continues with an overview of three Roman campaigns against the Dacians: Domitian, Trajan's First, and Trajan's Second. You get a bit of a wiggle with a Roman archer instead of the usual legionnaire, so that's a plus, and you get the Dacian warrior swordsman. Weapons, equipment, tactics, organization, and so on are well detailed.

As for the campaigns, maps, strategies, and battles unfold in chronological order. Much of the action centered on sieges, as the Dacians learned to avoid pitched battles as they usually lost to the Romans. The usual reliance on written texts and archeological digs plus a little educated speculation yields descriptions of the sieges and skirmishes.

The booklet contains four black and white photos, 52 color photos, four color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and four color uniform illustrations profiles (two Roman archer and two Dacian swordsman).

Nicely done.

Enjoyed it.



The Battle of Pinkie: 1547. by David Caldwell, Vicky Olesky, and Bess Rhodes. Hardback (6.9x9.7 inches). 222 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Last Battle Between the Independent Kingdoms of Scotland and England*

Pinkie was a place in Scotland more or less near Edinburgh where a 1547 English invasion was met by Scottish defenders. If you want a near perfect example of how to examine a battle from a wargamer's viewpoint, this book is it.

The discussion of the various English and Scottish formations, accompanied by diagrams, is excellent. Besides details about the soldiers in each army, you get a description about tactics and deployments fit for a tabletop. The impact of terrain on the formations and the resulting battle is superb. The discussion of the mix and performance of handguns and longbows also helps explain the transition to a more gunpowder-based army.

As for number of troops, considerable attention to multiple sources lays out the justification for picking one number over another. This was a serious fight with 22,000 to 23,000 (or as high as 40,000 (chart p99) Scots against less than 20,000 English. The discussion of sources is interesting in its own right.

Alas for history, this was a rather short battle. The Scots tried to take a hill before the English, who sent cavalry to delay the Scots. English gunboats fired into the Scots, causing some disorder, made worse by inept marching in the wake of the cavalry scrum. The English cannon and handgunners hit the jammed troops, someone said to flee, and the hardly damaged Scottish Army disintegrated into a rout.

For wargamers, this would make for a good tabletop battle if only because the historical outcome is mostly failed morale checks.

The book contains 28 black and white photos, 11 color photos, 19 black and white maps, 21 color maps, 34 black and white illustrations, and six color illustrations.

The authors know Pinkie like the back of their hand. Read this book and you will, too.

Enjoyed it.

Second Arakan 1943-44: Campaign 407. by Tim Moreman. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Shattering the Myth of Japanese Invincibility in Burma*

Campaign series booklets provide excellent overviews of a particular campaign. In this case, it's the British attack in Burma that succeeded against the Japanese.

Interestingly enough, the Japanese held a wargame on June 24-27, 1943 in Rangoon (p25) about pushing defensive lines outward in Burma. The First Arakan offensive by the British didn't work well and the British withdrew. The Second offensive worked better.

The usual format of commanders, OOBs down to company level, plans, and so on fill out the preliminaries and the actual campaign unfolds in a series of fits and starts against dug-in Japanese. The building of road infrastructure behind the lines to support the logistics is a key part of the success.

Two typos: "wilful" (p25) should be willful, and "furore" (p26) should be furor.

The booklet contains 61 black and white photos, one color photo, five color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and three of the less than useful color 3D illustrations.

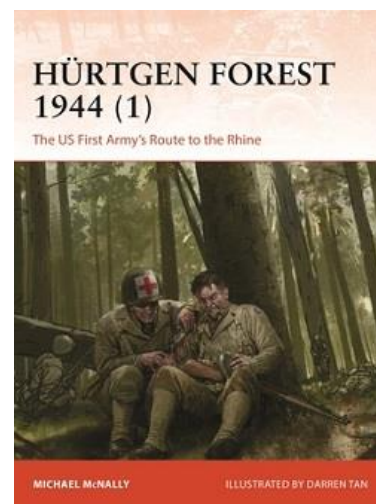
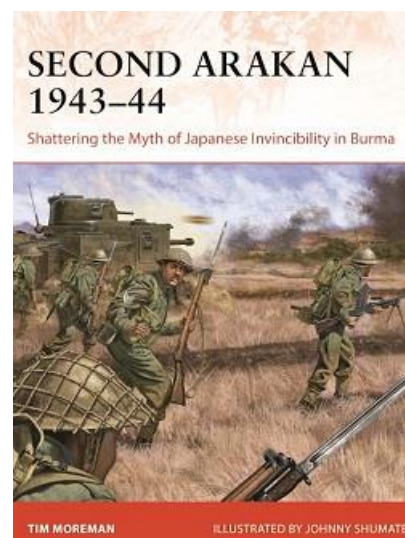
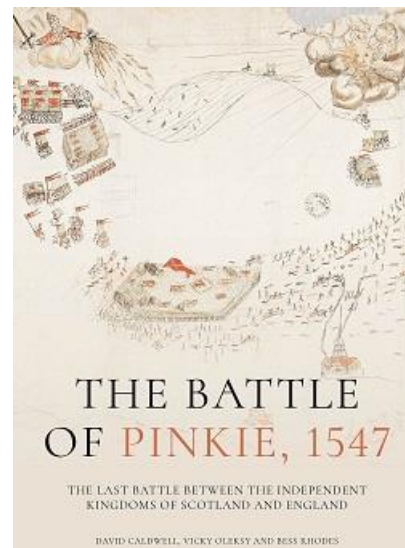
Enjoyed it.

Hurtgen Forest 1944 (1): Campaign 412. by Michael McNally. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *The US First Army's Route to the Rhine*

For a book about the offensive into Germany, it doesn't need to start at D-Day. It could save half a booklet.

That said, the *Campaign* format rolls along per usual with commanders,



OOBs down to regiment and battalion, organization, and the actual campaign...well, once to get to the campaign area. If I had one nit to pick, it's the text says US armored divisions had Combat Commands A-C with a possible fourth designated as R (p25). As I understand it, CCC was an old designation, although it may have been used in the "square" divisions. The "triangular" divisions used CCA, CCB, and CCR designations -- as far as I know.

The pleasant prose launches into the recons and battles around Aachen and then delves into the forests. I especially enjoyed the short, but incisive, examination of logistical limitations that affected the campaign. Some actions are examined down to company level.

The booklet contains 48 black and white photos, 13 color photos, one black and white illustration, five color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and two of the less than useful color 3D illustrations. If you stretch back into publishing history far enough, Osprey released an Ardennes set with tons of regular two-dimensional maps with contours and terrain. I think they were based on 1:25,000 scale US Army Quad maps. Now those were helpful maps.

Enjoyed it.

More from HMGS-Next Generation



Meaux Siege: Storm the castle!

Fun in Verdun.



The casualties of Verdun.



Decision at Belleau Wood.

