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Space Battle Cards: *MagBlast*
HMGs Next Generation: Gaming Resumes
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News: New products and information
Magazines I've Read: *The Centurion*

Books I've Read

Guderian's Panzers: East Front 1941
Hill 119: Vietnam Recon OP 1969-70
The Canadian Theater 1814: War of 1812
The Florida Campaign 1774-83: Rev War
Hitler's Croatian Ally: Yugoslavia
The Creek War 1813-14: War of 1812
Through the Lens 6: WW2 Vehicles
The Campaign of 1812: War of 1812
Aachen: WWII Battle for City
Bio of a Space Tyrant: V4 (scifi novel)
Bio of a Space Tyrant: V5 (scifi novel)
Curtis Nighthawks in USSR North 1941-45
Spectre of Invasion: UK Coast 1900-1918
Rodney and Nelson: ShipCraft 23 Revised
Stand of the Thunderbirds: Oct. 1944
George Washington: Creation of Republic
Taking Command: US Unsung Milit Leaders
Superspy: Hans Tofte SOE, OSS, and CIA
Rare Birds 02: Poland's RWD-14 "Czapla"
Fighters Over France: 1940
Japanese Submarine Aircraft
The Secret War Between Hitler & Stalin
Nemesis: Medieval England's Greatest Enemy
Roman Cavalry Tactics: Elite 263
Stoke Field 1487: Campaign 420



Clockwise from bottom left corner: Renaud, Jerry, Joe, and GM Harry.

3:10 To Yuma: *What a Cowboy*

by Russ Lockwood

Mosey on over to git yer fill of the time outlaw Ben Wade caught a train instead of robbing it. A posse led by a legendary marshal, some deputies, and a greenhorn had to get Wade from the jail to the train station to catch the 3:10 to Yuma. Wade's gang was out to free the outlaw.

The rule set was *What a Cowboy* and uses roughly the same die rolling conventions as the WWII rules *Chain of Command*. Each player rolls six dice and the die roll indicates what the character can do. I don't recall what each number was, but I think a 1 was move, 2 was aim, 3 (?), 4 and 5 reload one bullet or shoot one bullet, and a six was a "Hollywood" maneuver or change weapon.

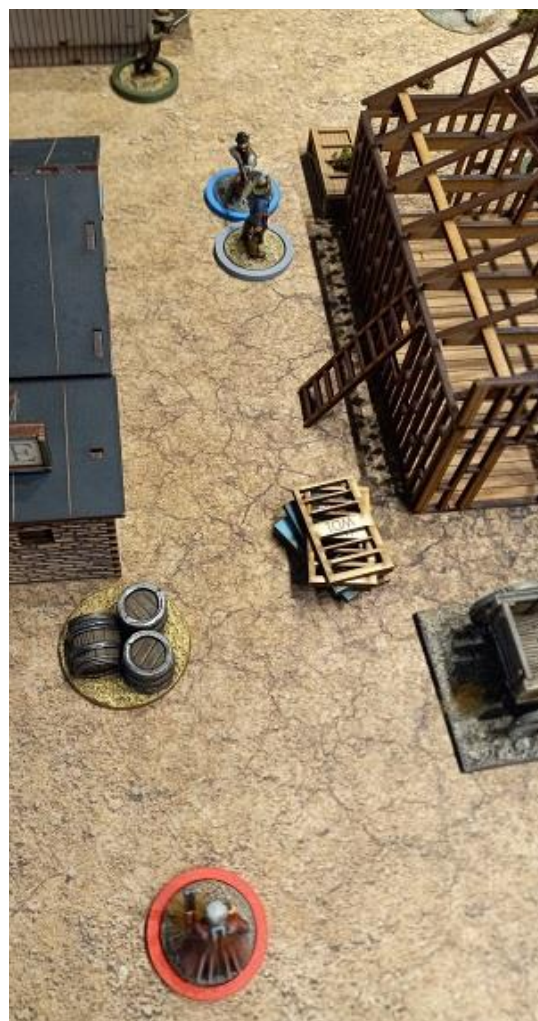
The better characters could automatically change one or two of the dice rolled to whatever number they wanted. Handy, that.

Six-Gun Sammy (orange ring) shoots Marshall El Guapo (blue ring), but not serious enough for Wade (other blue ring) to escape. The first deputy (green ring top left corner) keeps Wade covered until a second deputy emerges.

It's All About The Guns

Every character started with a Colt .45 revolver plus a secondary weapon: Shotgun, Winchester rifle, another revolver, or a knife. Most characters had a special ability of one sort or another. I recall the characters with two revolvers were ambidextrous. I know my Winchester-toting outlaw had a +1 to hit when firing over half maximum distance. All other guns had a -1 to hit when firing over half maximum distance.

In general, each shot is a d6 roll, with a 5 or 6 hitting. The



target gets a 50-50 or so Dodge roll (saving throw). If hit, the final number is compared to a chart. The higher the roll, the more serious the wound, including KIA. In general, you lose dice when hit...and when you lose all dice, you're KIA'd. Of course, the fewer dice you roll, the more limited your actions.

Each character gets a card. The deck is shuffled, a card drawn, and that character performs his 6d6 rolled actions.

Besides the great-painted 25mm minis by Harry, including the Stagecoach and the model train, each character had a 3D printed tray, 3D printed bullets, and 3D printed ammo holders. The Colts had a six-bullet cylinder while the Winchester had a box holding a dozen or so bullets.

Harry was the GM. Renaud and I were the outlaws and started the game hidden. Jerry and Joe were the good guys and started in the jailhouse with prisoner Wade.

The posse moves out along the side street.

Time to Go

Marshal El Guapo came out first, dragging Wade with him, and then came a deputy. That's when my gunslinger, Six-Gun Sammy, ran out of the end building directly at the marshal. My first shot was aimed, but did nothing. One of the other two hit the marshal -- gut shot. He crumpled to the ground (and lost half his dice). He handed off Wade to the other deputy that soon came out of the jailhouse.

We could see they were not heading through the middle of town, but around the end towards the stockyard. Their first couple moves made it to the side of the unfinished house.

The 3:00 stage arrived in town.

Marshal El Guapo, gut shot he may have been, nonetheless fired back at my gunslinger and hit. I moved my slightly wounded Six-Gun Sammy behind the stagecoach, using it as blocking terrain ... until the stagecoach card came up before mine and moved further up the street.

I had my rifleman, Winchester Wally, in the second story window of another house peering down the side street. My third guy, with a shotgun, was in the house closest to the train station.

The Outhouse Outlaw

As the greenhorn advanced into the side street, Renaud's legendary gunfighter kicked open the door to the outhouse and fired in rapid succession at close range. Clever outlaw -- nobody expected him to start hidden in the outhouse.

The outhouse shootout leaves one deputy dead in the street, but the greenhorn (blue ring) guns down the outlaw, whose head is in the outhouse (left).



Renaud may have hit the deputy, but a successful dodge back to the unfinished house saved the lawman. The second deputy advanced even with the outhouse and fired at least twice. Alas, he made only holes in the wood.

Renaud's response chopped the deputy down.

The deputy and the greenhorn shot Renaud's gunfighter down.

Deputy and Wade move past the stockyard as posse moves up. Photo by Harry.



That put them in my sights. The Winchester barked, but only managed to force the greenhorn back. I raced downstairs and aimed out another window. I shot the Winchester again, and amazingly, one of my bullets (roll of a "1" on an intervening object) annoyed the intervening local, who promptly hit Wally at long range -- and did more damage than any of the out-of-range lawmen!

Wally wrapped the wound with his neckerchief and screamed, "Dag-nabbit! What in tarnation!? This ain't yer fight!"

Winchester Wally ran out the door and down the street towards the train station, reaching the last house that contained my other outlaw, Bubba Two-Barrels. Renaud ran his other two characters to the back door of a bar to ambush the lawmen as they came around the corner. One was inside the doorframe and the other just outside.

To The Stockyards

One lawman refused to walk down the street. With a roll of "6," he announced a Hollywood move -- jump through the window of the bar, roll, and come up shooting. His target was the outlaw inside the door frame. Alas, the lawman did nothing except scatter glass and was hit in return. With true grit, he made his dodge and jumped out the same window back where he came from.

Things now became a little fuzzy. One of Renaud's outlaws entered the stockyard with all the cattle, and the lawman stampeded the cattle and crunched him. His other gunfighter was gunned down as he attempted to bushwhack the deputy and Wade.

Winchester Wally and Bubba Two-Barrels fared little better. They were gunned down without doing anything.

The deputy put Wade on the train to Yuma.

Thoughts

A fun game. Harry was indeed patient explaining some of the nuances. It flowed well enough and the dice were indeed giving and taking away with equal vigor. There is no such thing as dead to rights and no such thing as being safe (except if you are out of sight).

Thanks, Harry, for GMing, Renaud for hosting, and Joe and Jerry for entertaining gaming.

Deputy and Wade make the 3:10 to Yuma. Photo by Harry.



Espana 1936: Republican Woes

by Russ Lockwood

Dan pulled out another oldie but goodie from the vault: a Spanish Civil War (SCW) point-to-point wargame called *Espana 1936*. Wow. Have not seen that in a dozen years or so.

At start: Republican red versus Nationalist blue and green.

Republican and Nationalist armies, planes, and generals start on the map. Movement is a very generous. You can move anywhere on the map through as many connected friendly spaces (cities) as you want, with mandatory stopping on enemy controlled or contested spaces. Only spaces with generals can perform combat. The Nationalists have three generals (one unavailable) and the Republicans have four at start.

At the end of turn 1.

Combat is one unit on one unit at a time, tossing a number of d6s looking for 5s and 6s for a hit. Some units and generals have -1 or +1 die roll modifiers. Aircraft and Tank counters add or subtract dice or provide -1, +1, or +2 die roll modifiers.

There is a naval component in the advanced game, but we only played the basic game.

Cards also offer dice and die roll modifiers or can be used for their event: mostly extra units. Control and contesting the cities generates replacement points that can be used to strengthen units (add more dice) or build new units.



By random selection, I was Republican while Dan was Nationalist.

The Game

I battled in four spaces on turn 1 and Dan battled in two spaces, usually with each side exchanging losses. The end of the turn saw a wash of losses and equal replacements...except, Dan played a card that gave him 3 extra replacements to his nine. He also automatically shuttled half of Franco's North African army over to Cadiz.

The beginning of Turn 3, which was also the end of the game.



I had the 3 extra replacements card, but since replacements only arrive on odd-numbered turns, I kept this for turn 2.

As turn 2 dawned, it dawned on me that I was being outbuilt and out reinforced. I was hammered by the newly enlarged Nationalist army as multiple attacks took out my weaker units. My attacks fizzled, especially my two main offenses in Madrid and Toledo.

My clever use of the 3 extra replacement card on Turn 2 produced a rules conundrum. The card said gain 3 replacements on the next Replacement phase. The Replacement phase rules said only odd-numbered turns generated replacements. In most games, card text overrules rules text. But nothing in the first edition or second edition rules or on the web that we found solved that conundrum. So, a wasted card on my part as I should have played it on Turn 1.

Without those replacements, I could not plug a gap in the northeast of Spain. Nationalist units warp-spiced up and around the Madrid area and overran at least two more victory spaces (cities). Barring spectacular die rolls on my part and a collapse of rolls on Dan's part, the Nationalist grabbing of the winning victory space was inevitable. I resigned at that point.

What To Do?

We did a quick debrief, sorting through the cards. The North African army of four 2-strength units overpowered anything I could send or build in the south.

Dan noted the key was the Badajoz space. He sent a full complement of units to take it. Its capture opened up the a highway to the north. He funneled in enough troops to contest Madrid and Toledo and other victory spaces while concentrating on slicing through the north -- equally overwhelmed.

Part of this is the card draw. On Turn 1, I used one of my three card plays to eliminate the -1 die roll modifier on militia units, grabbed a 3-strength unit, and grabbed plane and tank counters which gave die roll modifiers. Dan played three cards with reinforcement units. Add in two more North African Army units and the three extra replacement steps and all of a sudden I'm down four units and three build steps. Turn 2 builds were even worse.

Thus, at the beginning of Turn 3, he shot the gap and grabbed enough victory spaces for the automatic win. It was Blitzkrieg before the Blitzkrieg was invented. He didn't even need the Condor Legion, but they came all the same.

Thanks, Dan, for the game, although it didn't seem like I offered much of one.

ESPAÑA 1936



Francisco Franco making his next big move for Madrid in Espana 1936. Image from web.

Espana 1936: Nationalist Goes

By Daniel

Reviewing the games Russ and I haven't played for some years, we broke out *Espana 1936* (released 2007), which I would best describe as a "card-assisted" wargame versus a "card-driven" wargame. A new version of this Spanish Civil Wargame was released in 2025 and I downloaded the rules to see if anything significant had changed. Aside from new looks and revised card decks, the mechanics were essentially the same. I actually prefer the counters and board of the original game, but I might try to get the new card decks as an upgrade.

Russ elected to stay with the "basic game" (no naval units or rules), which was fine with me. By random selection, I played the Nationalist side. Special Turn 1 rules restrict movement and placement of Generals and support units, but I found I needed to put some thought into what few units I could move.

Movement is unlimited from a friendly-controlled "box" (area) until you enter a "contested" or enemy "box" (area), but if there is only an enemy control marker present, the first unit to enter must stop to convert control, but any other unit(s) can then move through without stopping – so an unguarded backfield could rapidly be overrun if the opponent has available units that can trace a pathway. A unit may leave a "contested" area unless it's the last unit present, but can only move to an adjacent "contested" or friendly area and stop – so you can disengage, but cannot enter an enemy-controlled area. This last condition is a critical one to remember.

The 2025 edition actually has box-shaped areas, but the 2007 edition shows an area as a pair of circles (one red, one blue) to place units. Lines connect to other areas. Tinted "boxes" are Objectives for victory conditions and replacements.

Starting Set-up for Advanced Game (Square-shaped naval units not used in Basic Game).

Advantage Nationalist?

The Nationalist player is the first player to move and commit support (with one exception: The Republican player has a card that reverses this for one turn). In my opinion, the Nationalist Player has more advantages than disadvantages for going first:

Both sides should keep some units uncommitted in reserve to prevent “breakouts” (or be available for exploiting a newly won area), but the Nationalist player does not need to be as careful keeping reserve units close to the front to prevent “breakouts” if a “box” is lost, because the Nationalist player will move first and can block any potential breakout with any reserve unit that’s available. The Republican player has to be more careful about keeping reserves near threatened “boxes” in case of losing a “box” to prevent the Nationalist player from breaking out through the lost “box” and turning a lost battle into a catastrophe. This will often have to be weighed against committing reserve units to respond to what the Nationalist player does with his moves and support placement.

The burden of attack is on the Nationalist side. The forces in Spain are equal at the start, but the Army of Africa will give the Nationalists a significant advantage with four extra 2-strength units and two more generals, but their full weight won’t be felt until Turn 3. The Nationalist player going first does grant one advantage to the Republican player in that all the Nationalist moves and support placement will be revealed before the Republican player does his moves and support placement, so decisions on whether to counter/reinforce where the Nationalist attacks or attack other areas where the Nationalist player can’t respond are all available to assess. Using this to turn battles into victories will be important to prevent the Nationalists from gaining advantages in overall troop strength, especially during Turns 1 and 2 where the Republicans are at least equal in overall strength but have an advantage in generals. These short-lived advantages will disappear by the end of Turn 2 or 3. The Nationalists will often have an overall greater unit strength and number of generals by Turn 3 or 4, which will force the Republican player to use this advantage of going second as wisely as possible.

Let The Revolution Begin...

One of the Automatic Victory conditions is for the Nationalists to capture Madrid during the first three Turns or have sole possession of eight Objective areas.

From my perspective as the Nationalist player, I find my forces divided and the choke-point is Badajoz, so I move two units from Sevilla to Badajoz. I can’t attack because I have no generals available, but it blocks any Republican moves into my rear areas. Historically, Franco struck at Badajoz before considering Toledo or Madrid.

General Varela and the two units at Cadiz move to Malaga to attack, while General Mola is reinforced to attack at Guadalajara. One unit is shifted to Toledo from Madrid and new units reinforce Madrid from Salamanca and hope to hold off the Republican attacks at these sites. Some units are moved to areas along the northern coast to prevent Republican movement into Nationalist held areas.

Russ moves general Rojo into Cordoba and reinforces Madrid, Toledo, and Zaragosa to prosecute attacks where he has a local advantage.

Battles can only be initiated if a general is present, which is a clever game mechanic. If a battle is initiated, the general must be used to assist the first attack. The attacker decides if and when each unit attacks and which defending unit is attacked. Combat is between one attacker and one defender. If tanks or planes (representing “support”) are present, the player decides if and when they are committed. Each attacking unit, tank, or plane can only be committed once per battle. Each tank or plane on the defending side can only be committed once, but a defending unit can be



attacked more than once (by a different attacking unit each time). The number of dice rolled is equal to the modified number of combat factors, looking for 5's and 6's. Generals, card play, and such supporting units can modify the number of dice or the results on one or more dice. These decisions, plus the luck factor, will make or break a battle.

Turn 1 Republican moves and escalating woes. Photo by Dan.

The Nationalists eliminate the lone Republican unit at Malaga and pair of units Guadalajara, while the Nationalists are eliminated at Cordoba and barely survive at Madrid losing two of three units present. The battle at Zaragoza was inconclusive for either side.

Two Moorish units and General Yague arrive from Morocco during the Upkeep Phase -- the only phase of the turn where units from Morocco may be transferred to Cadiz by sea or Sevilla by air.

During the Event Phase, I bring in two 3-strength Falangist Militia units in the north (The F.E.T. de las J.O.N.S. and the Portuguese Volunteers) as well as a +3 Replacement bonus (Call-Up.)

Russ brings in an I-15 Chato air unit and a T-26 support unit from "Uncle Joe" Stalin (1st Soviet Material), as well as a 3-strength Communist Militia unit (5th Regiment is Formed) at Madrid. The Moorish units from Morocco, extra replacements, and new units give the Nationalists an overall strength superiority and three generals per side at the end of Turn 1.

On Turn 2, the Nationalists attack Badajoz, Cordoba, and Zaragoza, while the Republicans attack at Bilbao, Madrid, and Toledo. Clever card play by both sides foil the Basques from taking Bilbao, leaving a 1-strength Falangist militia surviving. The Nationalists endure another losing draw at Madrid and barely survive at Toledo, losing their Ju-52 to the I-15 Chato, but the Nationalists conquer the lightly defended Badajoz and win a pivotal victory capturing Zaragoza with some very favorable dice rolls.

The Beginning Of The End

Franco and the rest of the Nationalist Army of Africa arrive at Cadiz and Sevilla. During the Events Phase, a 3-strength Italian CTV unit (Italian Volunteers), the Condor Legion (Me-109 and Ju-88), and another 3-strength Falangist Militia reinforce the Nationalist side, while the Republicans bring in a 5-strength International Brigade unit (France Supports the Republic - a "What If" card), a +3 Replacement bonus (Call-Up), and War Academy (removes the -1 modifier from ALL his Militia units).

After carefully looking through the rules, the +3 Replacement bonus would be recorded - but not applied during Turn 2, because the "Replacement Phase" occurs on Turns 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and the card did not provide an exception.

I followed up with a rules inquiry that verified the "Replacement Phase" is only on Turns 1,3,5,7,9 and the card does not create a "Replacement Phase" if played on even numbered turns, so Russ should have played this on Turn 1, but in retrospect I think Russ should have been given the benefit of claiming the +3 replacements on Turn 2, as that would have saved him from the catastrophe that would happen on Turn 3 – so I'll make that a "house rule."

On Turn 3, the impact of capturing Zaragoza becomes startlingly clear: The Nationalists can exploit the hole in the Republican line and overrun the back areas where only control markers are present or reinforce battles at two areas where the Republicans can't reinforce. There are plenty of Nationalist units available to capture three Objective areas without a fight, since Badajoz was also captured, uniting both north and south areas and allowing the Army of Africa to reach just about anywhere. Russ has seen enough with either option and concedes.

Only If...

Barring the debacle at Zaragoza, had the dice rolls been a little different, the Republicans could have taken Bilbao, Madrid, and Toledo instead of the Nationalists surviving with one 1-strength unit at each site. That would have kept them in the game. This also shows how quickly the game could swing from turn to turn.

Congratulating the Nationalist infantry. Image from web.



SpaceBase: Golden Hour

by Russ Lockwood

With *Espana 1936* over much too fast, we turned to a favorite card-and-dice eurogame: *SpaceBase*.

We used the fast start option, with 15 gold and a selection of Level 1 and 2 cards to buy. I spent 12 for four cheapo cards. Dan spent all 15 for three cards. They were duly slotted in and I started.

We used the 13th slot option (an expansion pack), but as it turned out, neither of us landed on it during play.

The game progressed when I had the opportunity to buy the most devastating card in all the game: It slots in the 7 spot (since you roll 2d6, that's a 40% chance or so of rolling a 7), needs only one power up, and when used, reduces an opponent's VP score by 4 VPs. I used this every chance I got, which was at least four that I can remember, but it may have been five times. Since you need 40 points to win, dropping Dan by 4 each time kept his VP total modest. Indeed, early in the game I drove his VP total back to zero. It kept me in the game or Dan would have run away with VPs.

Meanwhile, I kept pumping up my force, picking up 1 or 2 VPs at times. Then I finally got a couple hits on my 5 VP card and even rolled a Pluto die for a VP. I got to my buy phase and bought a 6 VP card -- bringing me to 39!

Oh, you got to be kidding: one VP short! Dan's VP total was back in the 20s but he had some killer VP stacks on the upper numbers. Fortunately, on his roll, I generated VPs to push my total over 40 and Dan didn't have enough oomph to catch me.

Another good game.

Thoughts

I did one "defensive" buy -- a card that simply says "You Win" when you power it up enough. I wasn't going to let Dan have that card -- no siree!

Why not?

The greatest *SpaceBase* game we ever played was a tight, neck-and-neck VP battle. I finally pushed over 40 VPs, but since I went first, Dan had his last ups. His die roll was just the one needed to start a cascade of power-ups that filled and activated his "You Win" card. We didn't even know who won. As it 'twere, the card triumphs over the VPs. What a fantastic finish.

Back to the present, that minus 4 VP card was the key to my victory. Putting it in the seven slot with the need for only one power-up just begs for constant use. And I did. It was the only reason for my victory. I think it's a little much.

I guess you can say I was spotted 16 or 20 VPs, which, come to think of it, is a way to balance out player experience.

Still, another good game.

SpaceBase Ho!: Three-Ring Circus

by Russ Lockwood

When I arrived, Dan and Fred were locked in a *Lord of the Rings Magic* card game. I never quite got the appeal of the basic *Magic: The Gathering* game, but as you can appreciate, I am in the distinct minority.

In any case, I was intrigued that they were using Dan's Campaign Game map extensions (see the August 24, 2025 AAR for his description of the variant), so I was pleased to watch. It looked like *Magic* with a 100-card "Commander's Deck." It seemed to play like *Magic*. Eventually, Dan's dark forces rolled over Fred's Fellowship forces.

The map showed Rivendell. It didn't seem to factor into the game, so I asked how the Rivendell map influenced this immediate game.

Dan noted that in this game, it did not. Neither player spent the manna point needed to hop onto the expansion map (and gain the benefits).

While the wives headed off to the beach, Dan, Fred, and me started gaming.

What? No beach time for me? Well, I carried stuff onto the sand. I'm not much of a beach person -- sand gets everywhere, sunburn is a problem, and NJ green-eyed flies can be vicious. Yep, another out of the mainstream view for me.

It's also difficult to game on a beach blanket...

In any case, the cards were put away and out came one of our favorite resource management games, *SpaceBase*. Fred hadn't played in a while, but we talked him through his options.

What!? Why that card and not the other card?
Photo by Dan.

Like any other resource management game, you generate resources, buy intermediate items that combine to create VPs. In *SpaceBase*, you roll 2d6 to see what resources you gather from the 12 cards laid out in front of you (every player starts with the same cards) and then buy more cards, hopefully more capable cards. Some cards contain Victory Points and 40+ VPs gets the win.

The trick, like many card games, is recognizing card combos that generate lots of benefits. The twist is that you first need cash and then at some point in the game, need to buy VP cards. That transition is always tricky for me, but when it works, it's a beauty!

Although I tried to create the balance needed to carry through the cash cycle and into the victory point cycle, my efforts proved inept. I was third and a very distant third at that.

In the second game, we three were fairly close and then Dan completed a trifecta of power-ups to generate 17 VPs from *one* card and popped into the mid 30s. Fred and I looked over the field, saw the VP cards, and called it a game. There was no way to catch him.

Well played, Dan.



Billiards

With a little extra time, Fred and I played a game of 8-ball. Neither of us had touched a cue in a decade and all we could do was compliment ourselves on how much we sucked. Forget being NJ Fats, we couldn't even be NJ Skinny. OK, it might not have been that bad, but in our rose-colored memories, we were certainly better than we played now. No, we didn't clean up the rust from the table.

Fred lines up a shot. You will notice that he is playing solids while not a single stripe is seen. The video game machine is in the background.



Video Games

The place had a videogame machine. I tried my hand at *Asteroids*, *Centipede*, and *Space Invaders*. I found the controls backwards for *Asteroids* -- I may have lasted 30 seconds per spaceship. I got better after multiple games of *Centipede*, but that moved the meter from Totally Inept to Mostly Inept. As for *Space Invaders*, I was pleased to clear one phalanx. Yeah, I know. Pathetic.

Man, my eye-hand coordination really took a hit over all these decades.

Thanks, Dan, for inviting us out for a great day of gaming and BBQing.



Outdoor wargaming on Lou's magnificent terrain. (l to r) GM Lou, Ben, Norm, Burt, and Richard.

Admiralty Island 1944 Invasion: *Command Decision*

by Russ Lockwood

The pre-game photos showed the impressive progression of Lou's island terrain building skills. From insulation through final result, I watched with eager anticipation. The fact that the day was perfect sunshine and temperature and Lou set up the terrain outdoors in his backyard was the cherry atop the whipped cream atop the icing on the cake. Last time I played outdoors was during the pandemic.

Rules: *Command Decision* (CD), a change from his usual *Spearhead*.

Lou goes over Japanese set up option with Norm and Richard.



US Marines

Anyway, the US tag-team of Burt and Ben each commanded six companies of Marines. Landing craft could land two companies per wave, so each of them had three waves. Each wave took three turns: one turn to get within six inches of the shore. One turn to land and disembark. And one turn for the landing craft to withdraw and the troops to advance off the beach.

Landings on Turn 1: Burt (upper left) and Ben in the lagoon.



So the first wave arrived on Turn 1, landed on Turn 2, and the boats withdrew on Turn 3 while the Marines advanced inland. Then, the second wave arrived on turn 4, landed on Turn 5, and the boats withdrew on Turn 6 while the Marine headed inland. The third wave would be the same on Turn 7, 8, and 9.

The Marines had no air support, but did have naval gun support from a destroyer.

The kicker was the US invasion of the Admiralty Island came ashore where the Japanese weren't, so it became more a meeting engagement instead of a defend the beaches battle.

Japanese Force

Richard, Norm, and I commanded a Japanese battalion each.

First blood: One LCI sunk, but Japanese heavy weapons stand A is KIA'd.

I had two companies available to deploy on the left third of the shoreline, one of which had to be at the "Point" next to a 25mm AA gun position. Of course, being a peninsular point, there were two beaches to defend, one on each side of the Point. I defended both by setting up at the neck, with two platoons facing left and two right. We Japanese didn't know where the Americans would land.



The second company I placed next to the "Spillway" (Causeway) connecting my third of the island with the rest of the terrain -- the pond and river in between formed a barrier that was not fordable. I stuck the Heavy Weapons platoon next to the Spillway.

My other company started off table and arrived via jungle trail on Turn 3. I also had a Chi-Ha light tank platoon (one stand) that had a 50% chance to arrive on Turn 3, a 70% chance to arrive on Turn 4, and a 90% chance to arrive on each turn after that.

Norm, in the middle, started with one company in a village on the opposite side of the table from any shoreline. He could ferry in his other two companies, one every other turn, at that village. He had a 25mm AA gun aimed at the docks of the lagoon. He also had a light tank platoon (one stand).

Richard was on the right flank of us Japanese, starting with a company deployed in and around a bunker at the airfield. His other companies, along with a light tank platoon, started off board.

The Japanese also had an off-board artillery battery on call as well as one 6-inch naval gun.

Invasion

Ben's two companies motored into the central lagoon while Burt's two companies landed on the shore of the Japanese right opposite the airfield. Those landing spots ignored me and my left flank. Pre-game, Lou allowed Japanese hidden movement during the game as long as a stand stayed in cover and did not appear within the 2-inch (jungle) or 4-inch (palm grove) line of sight. Trails could be used as part of hidden movement. I shuffled my "Point" company towards the Spillway.

Turn 4: Ben (left) advances off the beach.

I used the off-board artillery and the Heavy Weapons platoon to sink one of Ben's LCIs (treated as a "Weak AFV" in CD parlance). Alas, Ben rolled a one-in-ten chance of hitting my dug in Heavy Weapons platoon and then the three-in-ten chance of destroying it. What luck says the duck!

The Marines' first wave landed and pushed inland. The pitter-patter of my 25mm AA gun was ineffective. The destroyer pounded the AA and forced the crew to fall back into the jungle. The crew later suffered a morale check so bad, they disbanded and hid in caves.

End of Turn 4: Japanese form a line after Norm's Chi-Ha tank is zapped.

Norm's troops, supported by the tank, met the Marines and fought them to a standstill. Marines with integral bazookas soon turned a flank shot of the Japanese tank platoon into twisted, smoking ruins.

Burt's invasion met no opposition and pushed forward, dispatching a Japanese patrol stand sent to discover if the Americans had come ashore. A battle soon swirled around the bunker at the airfield.

The Second Wave and Banzai!

Ben and Burt landed their second wave. Once again, my artillery managed to sink one of the eight LCIs in the wave. The Marines landed and started to move off the beach. The Marines had won the initiative, and so moved first.

The Japanese moved after the Marines. That's when I launched the Banzai attack.



My initial company had remained still. Ben had not sent any stands across the Spillway, so my three stands remained undetected. I screamed "Banzai!" and charged across the Spillway and into the advancing Marines from behind.

My Banzai charge hits rear of Ben's Marines.

I couldn't quite remember how the Banzai mechanic worked, and the core Test of Battle CD rules were mum or I didn't find it in the Table of

Contents at the time. Maybe it is in the supplement. It was hard enough to realize that a Close Assault was part of the General Fire phase and treated as a general fire, not a separate melee phase.

I recalled that stands could pivot, so I had the Marines pivot to face me -- Pity. No rear attack.

Right or wrong, I also recalled that the targets, even if they moved, get a first shot, so I allowed the Marines to fire with an extra Rate of Fire. The results were one Japanese stand eliminated, one forced back, and one no effect and into melee.

My remaining stand in contact rolled a no effect. I left the two stands locked in combat.

Norm's Banzai

In the Marines vs Japanese firefight, Norm's troops came off the worst. One Japanese Heavy Weapon stand was hit a remarkable five times and was eliminated.

Just like me, Norm was in Banzai mode, too, sending an entire company of four stands against two Marine patrol stands. The Patrol stand defensive fire missed. One Marine patrol stand stood firm (there was probably some modifier I missed), but the other was eliminated.

I recall successful Banzai charges get a breakthrough move and attack the nearest enemy stand -- a Marine rifle platoon. That didn't go as well for the Japanese and the charging stand was repulsed and forced back. When it came time for morale, the Marines passed and the Japanese company that charged doesn't have to take a morale text...I think.

Again, my interpretation is probably off, so apologies. I'm sure Marc or Jake will set me straight. I wanted to keep the game moving, not bogged down, so...best guess at the time. It seemed to work out.

Over At The Airfield

I suddenly remembered the 6-inch Naval Gun secreted in some cave and fired it at Burt's LCIs -- hit and sunk one. Man, the Japanese artillery was good at hitting LCIs this game.

Battle at the airfield swirls around the bunker.



Still, Burt was ashore, he had forced back Richard's light tank, and was in a swirl of battle around the pillbox.

End Game

After an hour set up and rules review, we played six full turns in about four hours, but that time also included an hour for lunch and some rules questions.

My company that started at the Point finally marched and crossed the river and formed up on Norm's left against the First Wave Marines. My off-board company made it to about the Spillway without the tank.

My third company lines up next to lagoon (center) and tries to link up with Norm's third company (right side).



As for my Chi-Ha light tank and supporting Battalion commander, it should be called the Chi-Ha-Ha and the joke was on me. I failed the 50% roll and the next turn I failed the 70% roll. When the next turn came, I rolled and Ben watched me fail the 90% roll. He had no idea what I was rolling for, but he complimented me on my facial expression that must have said it all.

Can't complain too much. Ben failed a 90% morale roll with one of his Marine companies and they pinned. *CD* is a game of 10s...

The scenario still had fight left in it, although the US third wave would have tipped the balance. US Stuart light tanks were being landed, the Japanese took a few more casualties, and the US was a little more concentrated than the Japanese in the center and right parts of the battlefield.

Scenario Debrief

As a scenario, from a historical basis, it was well laid out for a game longer than a few hours in the afternoon. Lou mentioned that the actual historical forces involved were companies, but he supersized the scenario with battalions. He toned down offshore US naval gun support, too, and took away any USN air. Well, the only air attack was pre-game against pillboxes, which I think was a 50% or 60% chance of success. In our game, the pillboxes were not hit.

The lack of US victory conditions on the Japanese left third of the battlefield where I was deployed meant my forces took time to redeploy. Besides my first turn Heavy Weapons fire, my only offensive action was the Banzai charge on Turn 6 ... and the artillery, of which I got lucky a few times. Putting a couple objectives in that part of the battlefield would be helpful in getting that command into the game faster.

The other aspect was Japanese deployment. We liked the idea of a meeting engagement versus defend the beaches, but unopposed landings meant intact Marine lines advancing inland. Maybe allow the Japanese to deploy another company somewhere. Maybe give them an AT gun per battalion, too.

Otherwise, 'twas a great afternoon of gaming. Thanks, Lou for the hosting and the other gamers for a fun day.

Admiralty Island 1944 Invasion: GM Recap

by Lou

Ben landed his US battalion right on Beach White, at the dock facilities. Bert landed his US battalion to the left along the coast.

Norm, Commanding the Japanese 1st Battalion, 229th Regiment, attacked as soon as his Chi-Ha tank arrived, but the Americans had a flanking Bazooka shot and took out the Japanese tank.

US Marines landing on island. Image from web.



Norm and Russ were trying to press against Ben's perimeter, but the Stuart tank arrived and stabilized the situation for the Americans.

On the left, Burt's American troops were in a slugfest with Richard's Japanese, but it did appear that the Americans were preparing for a breakout.

We played six turns.

Gonna change arriving times a bit. The Japanese will have more deployment options.

I'm adding a fighter strip on the right side of the harbor along with a dock. That and the Point (entrance to Hyane Harbor) must be secured by the American forces. This will be the 3rd American battalion and the Japanese will have a 4th Battalion, consisting of Special Naval Landing Force (SNLF).

Palm's eye view. The light sand-colored area is light cover. The dark-colored area is heavy cover. Yellow paths.



Iraq: *RUSE*

by Russ Lockwood

Renaud, Joe, Jerry, and I played a modern Iraq scenario. Jerry and I were the US Army good guys rolling into an insurgent village held by Joe and Renaud. The insurgents were all hidden, the US Army couldn't fire until fired upon, and firing at civilians was completely off limits. The insurgents probably buried IEDs about, although we had a 50-50 chance of spotting them to avoid them.

An Iraqi village. US enters from left.

We used Renaud's *RUSE* rules, which AAR readers know have been used and modified before. This is basically the defender rolls a number of d6 dice depending on a variety of factors including cover and takes the highest number. The attacker rolls a number of d6 dice depending on a variety of factors including the type of weapon firing looking to meet or beat that defense number. The number of dice that do score hits on the targeted unit.

When hits equal half or more of the targeted unit's figures, half the targeted unit is removed and the unit becomes Shocked -- degraded capabilities. There's more to it than that as each unit can have a Trait or two assigned that modify rolls, but that's the gist.



To The Outskirts

Jerry and I took two Bradleys each, with three fire teams each of four soldiers: two riflemen, one Squad Assault Weapon, and riflemen with a grenade launcher. We each had a Sergeant squad leader and I had a Lieutenant as the commander. All of us had kevlar armor, which basically meant we won ties when it came to wounds. Sadly, we had no air or artillery support.

The Bradleys advance, my two on the left, and Jerry's on the right. Blue dice are activations used. Buildings are heavy cover. Fields in upper left corner are light cover.



We thought about it and decided to avoid the main street and start with clearing the first buildings. No sooner than we came into range than an insurgent MG team popped up atop a buildings. Their fire was scattered and we soon concentrated fire to eliminate them.

Two more insurgent "squads" popped up against Jerry on two separate buildings. Another insurgent squad popped up from the bushes of a farm field opposite me. Then a group of foreign fighters popped up against me. Then an insurgent command team.

What, is every building filled with insurgents?

The Fedayeen: Renaud (left) and Jerry. Blue and green fire teams are mine. Yellow is Jerry. Insurgents in field.

A Target Rich Environment

While one of Jerry's fire teams was within an inch of annihilation, his return fire proved far more spectacular than mine. I chipped away one-sie, two-sie. He slaughtered half a squad at a time. The two insurgent squads, or what was left of them, fled to put buildings in between them and Jerry's troops.

Jerry considers moving up his red fire team. My purple fire team joins the battle for the field.

Meanwhile, I took some damage, but took out enough of the farm field insurgents to chase them away. The foreign fighters were dealt with in a single volley. The command group soon died as well. I pressed a fire team into the farm field, but was ambushed. None of my soldiers made it out alive.

Just when you thought nothing more could crawl out of the woodwork, a pick-up truck with MMG ("technical") roared to my left flank. Its fire did nothing, but I was forced to veer a Bradley around a sand dune and use the chain gun. The pick-up exploded in a fireball.

Did Somebody Call For A Tank?

The insurgents managed to call in not one, but two, T-62 tanks to come to their rescue.

Any helicopters in the area?

Nope.

Bah, who needs air support when you have Jerry's Bradley. From one side of the town, Jerry lined up his TOW missiles and fired two at the tank. His aim was true and smoke marked the end of one of the T-62s. It was a heckuva shot.



By this time, the insurgents were badly hurt and while technically not at the 50% of destroyed units to withdraw, they were within one or two of such and three more of their squads had more than 50% casualties. Plus it was lunch time.

Hey, an army fights on its stomach!

The US squeaked out a victory.

A little hard to see, but a smoke plume rises above a T-62 tank at the corner of the ruined building on the far side of the village. You can also see the silhouette of the second T-62. Blue die indicates activations in the current turn and the red die indicates number of hits taken by the Bradley.

Thoughts

RUSE is pretty well developed by now. About the only problem I had was with the lack of lethality of the Bradley's 25mm chain gun against troops. I admit I don't know actual specs, but it seems to me that firing only three dice is paltry when a MG fires five dice. Sure, the chain gun has good penetration version soft vehicles where one or two hits can destroy such, but against insurgents on buildings, it was less than effective. I sort of expected to chop up the building as well as the insurgent troops.

What I didn't know, and Renaud noted after the game, was an optional rule about using penetration values against buildings, bunkers, and so on. It basically would have eliminated two defense dice of the three or four rolled, which theoretically means less of a chance to escape damage.

Theoretically, and much depends on die rolls, a MG firing 5d6 without the penetration optional rule, can hit a maximum of five enemy figured versus only three for the chain gun. A US fire team fires 9d6.

Maybe if each chain gun hit counted as two hits?

As for the grenade launcher, trying to hit the broad side of a building proved too much for me. Time after time, the deviation dice sent the grenade short or long for a harmless shot. I was better off with the 2d6 for the rifleman, which I eventually used to far better effect.

To this point, RUSE deviation dice never will land where you point to -- there's no "on target" result. As indirect fire (think mortar) can deviate from one to six inches, only a "1" would do damage to a unit on a building. On a lucky occasion, a round might land six inches away atop another enemy unit. For direct fire, the deviation is halved -- so a "1" or "2" would likely hit the targeted unit.

Maybe if you roll doubles, the round lands where targeted? The damage is fine -- everybody in the radius loses the defense dice from hiding behind walls, etc.

In any case, this was another good RUSE game in the desert of Iraq. Admittedly, I've played through lots of playtests, but Jerry and Joe picked up the basics after a couple of turns.

Thanks, all for the game.





German specialty troops, including commanders, assault troops, extra ammo, flamethrowers, and so on.

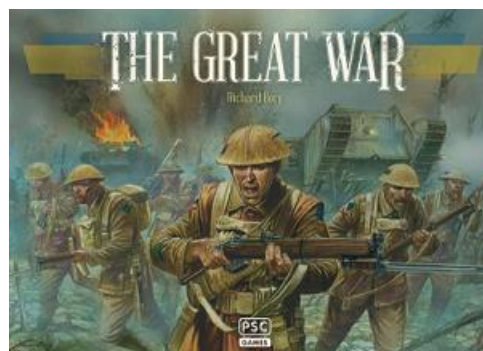
To The Trenches: PSC's *Great War*

by Russ Lockwood

I forget which battle this was supposed to be, but the French were attacking the Germans and had to clear the German trench lines. By random roll, I was the Germans and Renaud the French. The rules were PSC's *Great War* and the plastic figures came from the PSC boxed sets.

The pre-game bombardment thinned out the first German trench line enough and some French units had occupied it. French units were working their way through the communications trenches to the second trench line that was manned by the Germans.

The two bugaboos for the Germans were a pair of French tanks that had managed to cross the trenches and were in the German backfield. Naturally, they were turning around. The green-colored one was the "Green Meanie" and the white-colored one was the "White Menace."



Great War Command and Colors

Basically, this was WWI *Command and Colors (C&C)*, complete with movement cards, tactical cards, icon-filled d6 dice, and tokens. The map is divided into three sectors. You play a movement card to determine which sector or sectors get to activate a certain number of units. If you run out of cards for a sector, even if in the middle of a spirited attack, you don't move units in that sector.

The French up top and the Germans at bottom except for the two French tanks. End of Turn 2.

I realize *C&C* is very popular, but random cards for random



activations usually results in one sector grinding to a halt because no more activations are available. Long-time AAR readers know this never made much sense to me. Doing nothing because you as a player decide to stop doing something is fine. Doing nothing because your opponent did something smart to you is fine. Doing nothing because a bad draw of cards pre-empts your ability to do something seems off. I figure there's enough random chance in taking damage or retreating from firing rolls and/or playing tactical cards to keep players uncertain about outcomes.

Note that I make the distinction between movement cards and tactical cards (gas attack, heavier MG fire, inspired movement, and so on). Most of the latter activate when you pay the cost (most from 1 to 5 tokens, some zero tokens) in tokens -- and you start with 10 tokens and gain more as you roll the token (HQ) icon during the game. Random drawing of tactical cards per turn helps increase uncertainty.

A typical activation allowed most units to move one hex and fire up to four hexes or move two hexes and not fire. MGs and Mortars could not move and fire. Again, tactical cards sometimes altered movement and firing.

Artillery cost an activation and tokens, but only if the card allowed "unit" activations, not "battlefield unit" activations. Artillery used a template and 2d6 -- doubles landed on template hex, otherwise, the shells land in d6 direction. If shells land on a unit, roll d6. As killing a unit in a trench hex is a one in six chance, artillery did little in the game.

One aspect I really liked was the specialty troops -- we got three each and had a variety of types to choose from. I picked two MG specialists -- increased dice and range -- and one infantry specialist that allowed me to move one unit two hexes and fire (instead of only one hex and fire).

First side to eliminate six enemy units wins.

Le Attaque

So the Germans and French slugged it out, often at one hex range, which meant using the skull icons in addition to the burst icons for kills. I did get lucky with a MG unit and infantry unit combined attack and eliminated a French unit in the communication trench on the right. Another French unit caught in the open was gunned down as well. I was up 2-0 when the French nailed one of my infantry units, but I scored a third KIA. Then I managed to whittle down two French units to only one figure each.

Tank Panic

That's when Renaud pivoted his two tanks. The White Menace bogged down (one in six chance on open ground and two in six chance on trench ground), but kept up a steady long-range MG fire. The Green Meanie was the superstar of the game.

The Green Meanie chased one squad out of the trenches and continues the close assaults down the trench line.



Ordinarily, units in trenches could ignore Flee icons. But when a tank dishes out the icons, the targeted infantry can't ignore Flee icons and they run away towards the board edge. That meant my infantry popped up out of the trench and into the open. As appropriate, the tank MGs would gun down the running infantry on the next activation -- assuming the section had a movement card. Likewise, I would have to play a movement card to get the unit back into cover.

I took the chance at shooting at the French units with only one figure remaining. It was mostly 1d6 long range shots and a one in six chance of KIA. I sometimes played a tactical card that gave me two extra dice.

I shot and shot and shot at those single figure units with MGs, mortars, and infantry, but odds be damned, the one in six chance proved elusive. I even tried artillery and managed to roll doubles to land the shells on the figure, but the one in six chance still did not come up.

Meanwhile, the Green Meanie kept shooting up unit after unit. Oh, I shot at the tanks, sometimes even at close range, but every hit needed to be confirmed with a one in six chance roll. So...I needed a one in six chance to hit and a one in six chance to confirm the hit. The tanks needed two hits to be destroyed. Surprisingly, I did inflict one hit on the Green Meanie, but none on the "White Menace."

Now you know why I went after the infantry.

Towards the end. The German trench is just about cleared. You can see at least three French units down to one figure each. So close...

End Game

Renaud had nailed five German units and had whittled down one of my units to a single figure. I was still at three dead French units.

But I had an all-sector movement card and one very long odds chance at winning the game. I put both French single figure units under long-range fire and then close-fired at the Green Meanie. Put a hit on each and that would get me six KIAs and the win. After all, I had been missing all those one in six chances for several turns. It was time for the die rolls to change!

Ah....Nope. Whiffs all around.

Renaud's tank MG'd the sixth unit for the win.

Cleverly played. Once he realized the firepower and virtual impunity of the tanks, his infantry units stayed far away in the trenches while the tanks slaughtered my units.

In retrospect, I probably should've moved up units for a closer shot at his infantry in a later movement/activation instead of long-range firing. Alas, when you are dependent on random movement cards, you never know if you'll ever get another card for that sector. Indeed, some of my sectors had dry spells for multiple turns. I suppose that's an appeal: never knowing if you'll ever be able to activate units in a sector.

Comparing the PSC *C&C* version versus the *RUSE* version, I prefer *RUSE*'s use of activations where you pick the unit as befitting a commander. You can even try to reactivate a previously activated unit via 50-50 die roll (66-33 if veteran troops), versus the automatic reactivation of *C&C*.

Other than the sector movement cards, the rest of *C&C* is just fine and the use of specialty troops quite admirable. Maybe we should use the *RUSE* card system for unit activation with *C&C* tactical cards and combat system.

I'll leave you with Russ' Rule #1: "If you have no movement, you have no game, and I came to game, not sit."

Now all I have to do is think of Rule #2. Maybe: "Never moon a machine gun tank."

Nah. I got nuthin'.



ArrowStorm Rampant: 100YW Tryout

by Russ Lockwood

We tried a medieval ruleset called *ArrowStorm*, which Renaud called a variation of the "*Rampant*" series of rules. It's played on a 5x5 hex grid (technically a 5x5 brick rectangle pattern -- same thing) and includes a point system for a pick-up game like this. It also has Army lists as well for the 11th through 15th centuries.

At start. The red beads mark the game map boundary.

The command system provides each side with four tokens (selections) off a grid of orders: Move, Shoot, Battle, Rally, Special, and Initiative. The Rally and Initiative orders have one box each on the grid and all other orders have two boxes on the grid. The player who rolls best picks the first order, then the players alternate picking orders. Once an order is claimed by a token, it is not available until the next turn.

The order matrix for the placement of tokens. First come, first served.

The player with initiative picks up one of his four tokens and performs that order with one hex worth of units. Move means you can move the unit or units one hex. Battle means you can melee with enemy in the same hex and survivors battle back. Shoot means the bowmen loose arrows at enemy within the same hex or one hex range. And so on.

Each unit has a strength from two to five, which is the number of dice it rolls for attack and the number of hits it can take before being eliminated. Special provides certain units with special abilities, such as Charge that allows cavalry to move one hex and attack, and so on. The Basic combat is a simple roll a number of d6s equal to the unit's current strength and 4+ is a hit (5+ when the target is in cover). The defender chooses which units get any hits and reduces the strength.

Certain units get an extra d6 when rolling against certain enemy units in addition to any d6s granted by the Special Tactic trait. As noted, surviving units fight back, but only with what survived. So, if a unit started as a 3 strength and took two hits, it would fight back with one d6 plus any dice from type or Special Tactic traits. Swinging first is an advantage in this system.

End of Turn 2 on the left flank. The small blue and black dice represent unit strengths.



SEIZE THE INITIATIVE	SHOOT One area	SHOOT One area	RALLY One area
SPECIAL TACTIC	BATTLE One area	BATTLE One area	SPECIAL TACTIC
MOVE One area	MOVE One area	MOVE One area	MOVE One area



Simple To Pick Up

Veteran wargamers will pick up the system in no time. The nuances of the various units and special tactics will take longer, but you can have a good bash like we did in about an hour.

I advanced on the left and caught Renaud's mounted sergeants. Then his knights charged and rolled good hits. My battle back with foot knights was not as effective.

So my left eventually fell as I started shooting on my right. His mounted knights moved over and we had a great knight-on-knight battle and every one of my units was eliminated. The only one left in that hex was the leader -- who I declared captured to be held for ransom (as was the practice with nobles of the day). My longbowmen in the hills ran away...

End of game. My commander faces down all of Renaud's knights...and is captured.



Thoughts

Only odd point was the bowmen didn't get any bonuses against cavalry, only against pike ("Long Spears" in the vernacular of the game). They can do *Arrowstorm* for one extra d6 versus foot and 2d6 versus mounted, but that's a special tactic, not a battle or battle back option.

Likewise, they get no defensive fire before any cavalry hit. That makes Agincourt much easier for the French mounted knights unless their Charge special tactic is negated by house rule due to mud. Mounted knights roll 5d6 and bowmen usually start with 2 strength. Even with a cover modifier, it's a decent chance that one French mounted knight unit can take out one bowman unit before the bow battles back.

Technically, if the French mounted knights park one hex away from the bowmen and the bowmen have a shoot or Special Tactic order, the bowmen will fire at the mounted knights. The knights better have had a Special Tactic (charge order) dialed up to hit the bowmen before they can fire again. If not, that's rather poor planning to park mounted.

That's part of the order selection appeal -- planning ahead. It's also a bit unrealistic because nothing else does anything precisely because of the order selection and use mechanic.

Hence, *ArrowStorm* could also use some sort of Line Command (maybe a house rules special tactic?) so other units don't twiddle their thumbs for most of the game. Order use is a zero sum proposition. Use an order on one unit and the others can't.

Otherwise, *ArrowStorm* is a nice simple game with a clever orders selection and order use mechanics. It's always good to try a new system. You never know what you'll learn.

Thanks, Renaud, for the rules tryout.



Pre-game grins (l to r clockwise): Dave, Mike, Russ, Chris, and Phil. Photo by Larry.

Action On The Russian Flank: *Snappy Nappy* 1812

by Russ Lockwood

While Napoleon led the Grande Armee east towards Borodino and Moscow, a French force of two French corps and one Prussian corp guarded the northern flank. A Russian force of three corps set out southward to meet this enemy force. A meeting engagement ensued.

Snappy Nappy was the rule set, and in full disclosure, I wrote *Snappy Nappy*. I created a map that our host Dave recreated on the tabletop, brought my 15mm figures, and six of us battled it out.

Learning

This was a learning game, so I made the scenario simple. All troops were Veteran, except for a few units of Guard and Militia. Firing and Morale d10 rolls (the two most used mechanics) for Veterans are successful with a base 6+ (50-50 so to speak). Note that most historical-based scenarios call for a variety of unit qualities (including Elite, Conscript, etc.), offering a full spread of numbers between Guard (4+) and Militia (9+).

The French (l to r): Larry, Phil, and Chris.

All commands had seven units: one cavalry, one artillery, and five infantry. No



optional rules were used. No Orders were used -- players could do whatever they wanted. All units were on one table, not on multiple tables and all players adhered to the same Sequence of Play. Command radius was 18 inches for both sides and all commanders were "Dashing." I also gave each side an Army commander (also Dashing) to help with any command radius conundrums.

Two outta three Russians (l to r): Dave and Mike. I'm to be in between, but I'm also taking the photo and didn't have a stunt double.

Victory was based on taking the majority of the nine towns -- although most were on the French side, so the Russians were generally on the attack. I started all units on road in Road March column mode about a foot in of the 8 foot wide by 6 foot deep table -- so lead units were 4 feet apart. As infantry in March Column on the road moved 12 inches, that gave all players at least one full move without worrying about being attacked. After that, well, players could decide for themselves whether or not to remain in highly vulnerable March Column or change formation.

By random die roll, Larry, Phil, and Chris were French. Dave, Mike, and me were Russian. I was supposed to be only the Umpire, but a last minute cancellation due to illness (thank you for not showing up to spread germs) made me the sixth player.

I provided a quick overview of the various formations, terrain, victory conditions, and then let each side have the table for a few minutes to discuss strategy. Then we started. I'm not fond of explaining every nuance of the rules -- players can learn by doing, and as umpire, and especially in a learning game, I point out some rules aspects as they come up to give a player a chance to weigh his options.

Dave's Russians advance towards the towns, where Chris' troops are waiting in line.

Chris And His Rules Copy

Chris especially wanted to try out the rules. He had bought a paper copy a while back and had me sign his copy, which I did with a note that once per game, he was entitled to a free re-roll. He even read my note aloud before the game. So he had his mulligan in hand and took his place as the Prussians. Keep this tidbit in the back of your mind...

The French Advances

The French players generally had the easier time of reaching the villages and then setting up a defense.

Chris marched his Prussians to secure the villages opposite the Russian right flank. He screened his infantry with a Cuirassier unit.



Phil marched his French into the center of the table, which was purposely vacant of villages. Larry marched his French into villages facing the Russian left flank.

Larry had a dilemma at the start. One of the villages was not in his line of march, so he needed to get a unit there. The closest one at the tail end of his long road column, was his Imperial Guard brigade. He turned the unit around and marched to the village, and later marched out.

I did this on purpose. It would take his Guard unit out of immediate deployment for a turn there and a turn back to its original position. At his option, he could also change formation into regular column and head cross country, assuming he kept his leader within 18 inches of the unit. Otherwise, it would have to make a morale check (4+ on a d10) to move.

My Russians advance on Phil's French troops. I've placed my cavalry a little ahead of my infantry in an effort to shield Dave's flank (off photo at right).

The Russian Advances

As for us Russians, Dave headed down the road directly at the Prussians. Upon learning that his Hussars would be at a disadvantage against Cuirassiers, he headed for the hills outside the villages. If attacked, he would be uphill and in Broken terrain -- negating the Cuirassier's advantage against Hussars.

Some of his infantry peeled off to grab the high ground and filter to the left while other infantry units and the artillery blocked the road and slowly advanced on the nearest village.

On the Russian left, Mike split his force to advance on parallel roads, placing his commander within 18 inches of each prong. He captured the nearest village and worked his way to the left of the village now occupied by Larry, who deployed his troops to shield the village.

Mike's advance against Larry, whose troops had secured one village (top of photo).

Remember that Larry's tail-end unit, the Imperial Guard brigade, was behind his main force by a couple turns. Larry also placed his Hussar cavalry in the center of his infantry line.

Mike took advantage of his "extra" unit and that Larry's cavalry would need an extra turn or two to extricate itself from the line. He looped to the left and outflanked Larry's troops.



As for the center, Phil and I faced off. I had my cavalry unit on my right to protect Dave's flank, but Phil raced up his cavalry unit for melee and added his officer. I suffered a minor reverse here, failed a pair of morale checks, and fell back. That allowed Phil to position his 12pdr artillery on the flank to bring fire on Dave's troops.

Four units of my infantry deployed mostly trending left across the road, leaving a dangerous gap between my infantry and bloodied cavalry. I had one infantry unit as a reserve, but it would take a couple turns to cover the gap.

My 12lber artillery was on the left of my infantry and came in range of Phil's infantry. I began to fire away even as I prolonged the artillery to get within a better and more lethal range. My line of infantry kept pace.

Mike's troops advance on parallel roads. Photo by Mike.

Fast Firing

On the right, Dave took artillery shots at Chris's unit in the village. While bombarding the village, Chris managed to roll successful Morale Checks every time Dave hit. Meanwhile, some of Dave's infantry units advanced over and around the hill -- putting them within range of Chris' artillery, and more importantly, in range of Phil's 12lbers in the center.

Dave managed to save versus all hits on his cavalry, but Phil's flanking fire sent an infantry unit routing. Crossfire from Phil's and Chris' artillery soon sent another infantry unit packing.

On the Russian Left, Mike managed to get Larry's cavalry in a crossfire of three infantry units, but Larry's die rolling was impressive on the Morale Checks. Still, with Mike's cavalry pressuring the flank, Larry pulled back his line.

Larry's Imperial Guard made an appearance and garrisoned the village to watch the artillery bombardments by both sides' artillery.

Allied commanders (l to r) Larry, Phil, and Chris consider their defenses. Photo by Mike.

In the center, Phil followed up with his cavalry for another melee, but I had attached my officer. I passed a Morale Check (MC), and in the second round of melee, we tied -- so each had a MC and both of us passed. The third and final round of melee found Phil blowing 50-50 MC roll after roll. His unit ended up only one more MC failure from disintegrating when he finally passed, but the unit hightailed it to the rear.

Just as Phil's artillery fire destroyed Dave's infantry, so my relentless artillery fire sent an infantry unit packing for the rear, one MC failure shy of routing off table.

Phil massed his infantry for an all-out attack on my line. Between the cannon fire and the musket fire, I inflicted damage on the French units and repulsed the attack.



My damaged cavalry repulses Phil's cavalry and my artillery sends one of Phil's infantry units packing (both top of photo).

Commanders Under Fire

Ah. Commander casualties. They happen every so often. Basically, when a player rolls a "1" on a Morale Check, not only does he fail the MC, if a commander is attached to the unit, that generates a d10 roll on the Leader Loss table. This happened a few times and nothing worse occurred than "holes in coat."

Not our brave Dave -- he managed to roll "Decapitated."

A replacement leader comes back the next turn, but is not Dashing (+1) but "Reliable" (+0). Oh, but 'twas a most spectacular ending for Dave's commander.

Chris' Prussians and Phil's French sweep Dave's left flank clean of his Russian troops.

End Game

And that's where it ended after three hours. Although the first turns generated many questions, the end turns found me gaming more and umpiring less -- although I would point out situations that gave players options.

Phil's French artillery (left) decapitates Dave's commander (right bottom corner).

The biggest challenge was the March Column road formation. Players kept trying to move off road at road march rates. We got that squared away. Once into column, line, or square, it was no real problem -- although sometimes a player wanted to change formation (minus one-third) AND change facing (minus one-half) and got caught up in the fractions. Once they figured out that such a maneuver was possible but could only move an inch (technically two inches from March Column on a road), all was well.

Russ (right) grins as Phil's massive charge is repulsed with significant loss. Dave (middle) grades his performance while Chris seems pretty pleased with his defense of the two villages Photo by Mike..

One Last Umpire Observation

The guys helped me pack up the figures, dice, and rulers as we did our informal debrief, when I looked at Chris and said, "Chris is really going to kick himself."

Chris gave a quizzical look at me. I repeated, "Chris is really going to kick himself."

He responded, "What are you talking about?"

I asked with a tad mischievous tone, "You brought your rules, didn't you?"

"Yeah, so....Ohhhhhh!" Not one, but two lightbulbs appeared over his head. "I coulda used a free re-roll!"

Hey, pre-game ancillary concerns often disappear in the heat of tabletop combat.

Yet, I'm still going to pat myself on the back -- his defense of a pair of villages was so intense, he forgot about using his once-per-game free re-roll. That's player involvement.



And so ended a most pleasant learning game of *Snappy Nappy*. Thanks, Dave, for another magnificent table set up and thanks all for the game.

Russian Commander: Recap

by Mike

Not knowing what I would be confronted with and where, my initial deployment aimed for flexibility. I got nervous when I noticed that my left column of three infantry brigades (units) in road column might be within reach of Larry's cavalry.

End of game. Mike's troops are starting to curl around Larry's forces. Phil's forces are being bundled backwards. Chris' defense wins a close action as Dave assaults the village, but is repulsed. Photo by Mike.



I didn't know it was heavy and slower than my cavalry unit, but then it dawned on me that all his units were in road column off the road. I asked him if he had changed formation and moved the pro rata "open terrain" movement rates. He had forgotten, and I helped him redo his previous and current moves and he thanked me.

Note: I guess I should explain Infantry in March Column only gets the 12-inch move on Primary Roads (9 inches on Secondary Roads). In Open terrain, Infantry in regular Column formation moves 6 inches and Line moves 3 inches. Roads mean speed, but any formed unit hitting a March Column on the road gains an automatic victory on the March Column. -- RL

My situation looked better and when I inquired how my infantry would fare if charged by cavalry while in column. I appreciate you want to keep your QRS as brief as possible, but I think you should list all the possible match ups, when for those where there are no DRMs. Also, our aging eyeballs and our ability to read the QRS would probably help us learn the game quicker. So larger font please.

*Note: The rules contain two types of QRS. The center of the rules holds larger fonts but is two pages long. The back page of the rules has the one-page QRS that we used. If you visit the blog *Blunders on the Danube*, click on the link on the home page "Campaigns in a Day w/Snappy Nappy" and scroll to the bottom of that page, you can download the larger font two-page QRS. You can also read every multi-player, multi-table C-in-a-Day recap, along with associated OOBs, maps, and so on. -- RL*

My situation got even better because I now felt I could concentrate my forces on my left against his right-most infantry and one cavalry. The idea was to hopefully send them packing before his center and left could get in position and counter my troops on my weakly held right. I had depleted my own right and hoped my own remaining infantry brigade could survive long enough being in the woods. My artillery was positioned in order to flank his first brigade out of the town in line formation.

I was pretty pleased, not least when I put three additional hits on his cavalry unit, but he then managed to rally two hits off over the next two turns. I think we may have forgotten to observe the penalties when he had two hits. Either way, he had his commander in the right place, which probably saved him as the game ended.

I have little appreciation of how I would have fared had we carried on. My command was clearly weaker than his to begin with, so prying him out of the town would be difficult.

You did right in keeping it simple. I thought I was in the very right location.

Note: During the game, Dave asked me a number of questions about working the unit match-ups of firing and melee. He was trying to grab Chris' first village on the right off the march with part of his force while splitting off the other part of his force on the left to grab Chris' farther village. In theory, this was a valid tactic except that Phil positioned his artillery to flank Dave while Chris placed his artillery next to the farther village. Dave's left force was caught in a flanking crossfire and odds caught up with him. Dave performed better on his right and came closer to taking the closer village. He probably needed one of his center infantry units on his right in the field for additional pressure. But give Dave credit. He had a most spectacular "Death by Decapitation" in the game!

By the end of the game, I was answering fewer and fewer questions. Like with all rules, a second game will no doubt be smoother. I might start each side six inches closer, so that three feet separate the lead elements instead of four

feet. My bad. I am too used to a five-hour multi-table game at SnapCon (see Peter's blog *Blunders on the Danube* for recaps of those wild games) than a three-hour single table game. I'll do better next time. -- RL

Warmaster: Emperor vs. Traitor

by Russ Lockwood

I pulled out an old favorite, *Warmaster*, which was a *White Dwarf* magazine game from way back.

The set up, as I understand it, and Renaud filled me in on the *Warhammer* canon, is that Horus led a revolt against the Emperor. The battles went on across the stars until the final battle on Earth (Terra). Or, in this game, in orbit above Terra.

So Horus has holed up on his space battleship and the Emperor and his troops teleport on board to eliminate Horus and his force. Only Horus' main force is still on Terra. So they teleport up, too.

The Emperor has 14 other units with him -- He and 11 other teleport up in four three-unit stacks on Turn 1, while three other units (Imperial Guard) teleport up one at a time on Turn 2. That's all the Emperor has to sweep the ship.

The Traitors start with 22 units, one per ship section, and all face down. From one to three units (d6 roll) arrive each turn as reinforcements -- all picked randomly from a cup. The units range from Horus and a few combat units to a bunch of crew, traps, and "Horrors" (potentially more lethal traps).

I set up the Traitors and Renaud ran the Emperor.

Renaud the Emperor considers teleportation options. Note that all my Traitor units are deployed face down.

A Gaffe

I haven't played this in a while, and despite the relatively simple rules, which we read as we set up, we needed to pay more attention to the nuances.

For example, while the Emperor and his two bodyguard units teleport to any ship section automatically, the other three Turn 1 stacks roll 2d6 to arrive at a random section. We kinda missed that on the first turn. All arrived where Renaud put them. Ooops. That's not a particularly big deal per se, but one random location (the dreaded roll of 1-5) put the troops in the engine exhaust (instant death). Renaud rolled that magic combo once, but I can't remember the troops involved or if it was the first or second game.

In any case, we consulted the rules a lot to catch some of the other nuances, including re-rolls, Imperial General Kane negates Traps, the special rules concerning specific sections (Bridge, Shields, Engine Room, and Weapons Lockers).

Game The First

One of Renaud's stacks found Horus on the first transport. Unfortunately for the loyalists, this fleeting opportunity ended with an Imperial retreat, which eliminated the stack. The other three stacks plus the reinforcement on Turn 2, proceeded to clear the Bridge, Shield, and other sectors.



As per the game, a slow drip-drip-drip of Imperial unit losses from traps, horrors, and combats ended with most of the ship under Imperial control but with the Emperor alone. I staged a counter-attack and eliminated the Emperor for a Traitor win.

Admittedly, Renaud was learning about the system and what each Traitor unit did. Armed with more experience, we reset.

Game The Second

We kept the same sides: Renaud the Emperor and me the Traitor.

This time, all the Imperial stacks teleported correctly. They began their section-by-section sweep of the ship. This time, Horus the Traitor stayed hidden.

One attack was on one of my crew in one of the Weapons Lockers -- this had a one in six chance of exploding all the weapons. Sure enough, Renaud rolled the lethal 1 and the section killed all. Plus, the surrounding sections had a one in six chance of being destroyed. One of them did, but the rest remained intact.

The Emperor claimed the Bridge (control of which allowed friendly units to move three sections instead of one, although movement always ended upon landing on an enemy-occupied section) and then worked down to take the Shields section.

Shields posed an interesting option of firing a planetary laser to destroy one random section. At the time, Renaud figured that Horus and the Traitors occupied more sections than the Emperor and the Imperials, so he fired. He took out the Bridge.

Nice shot! Now nobody gets to move three spaces.

With the Engine (top) destroyed and the Bridge (bottom) destroyed, the ship begins to disintegrate. The two mid to top photo destroyed sections occurred when the weapons locker went boom.



Rules Quandary

As Renaud cleared more sections, he took a second laser shot -- hit the Engines. The rules specify that if the Engine Room is destroyed, the ship begins to decay in orbit. Yet he hit the engines and the rules are mum. We figured that without engines, the ship's orbit would decay.

Thus began the slow destruction of the ship, starting at the Bridge (already destroyed) and working backwards section by section.

Herein was another rules nub. It says the ship loses a section on each player's turn, but the Sequence of play says a turn consists of Imperial and Traitor phases. We took it to mean that one section was destroyed in the Imperial "turn" and one section in the Traitor "turn."

That brought up the issue of two sections being destroyed each turn but each player only having one movement opportunity. The Emperor was soon caught, but we allowed the Emperor to move before the section is destroyed. But it happened again and again. The other conundrum was what happens if by chance a line of sections are destroyed from Weapons Locker explosions or laser shots such that the ship has destroyed sections separating two parts of the ship. Units can't enter destroyed sections. Dunno. Hasn't happened yet, but we came close.

FYI: Horus remained hidden for just about the entire game.

The ship finally disintegrated and claimed the Emperor.

Thoughts

Sure, luck has much to do with this game, but certain precepts improve your advantage. As the Traitors deploy forces face down, it is not random -- the Traitor player picks the unit and location. As some locations are more desirable than others, selecting the right unit and supporting units can go a long way to whittling down the Imperials.

Likewise, luck is luck, but the composition of the individual Imperial stacks is up to the player. Concentration for maximum odds and the use of the re-roll function helps clear sections.

Taking Shields and using the random laser is indeed a crapshoot. It was amazing that Renaud rolled the Bridge and the Engines for his first two shots. That set the orbital decay in operation and ultimate chasing of units towards the stern of the ship.

The games only last about a half hour, so it is easy to start another, or, switch sides and start another.

Good games, Renaud.

Battle For Germany: Boxed Edition

by Russ Lockwood

I had been wanting to pull this out for a while. Back when I had a *Strategy & Tactics* subscription, the magazine switched from full map and full sheet of counters to half map and half counter sheets. *Battle For Germany* was the first game in the changeover -- I looked it up and it was Issue 48.

This was also one of the few excellent three-player wargames that came along. In a two-player game, one player took the Western Allies and the East Front Germans and the other player took the Soviets and the West Front Germans (including the Italian Front). In the three-player game, the third player took both West and East Front Germans.

It's a traditional hex-based wargame on the low end of complexity. All units move once (no mechanized movement), combat factors are combat factors (no armor vs infantry bonuses), and no air or naval units. Stacking is two units. Attacks are voluntary. No reduced combat factors on the reverse side -- units are either full strength or dead. No supply worries, either. ZOCs stop movement, no moving from one enemy ZOC to another, and enemy ZOCs block retreats even if a friendly unit is in the enemy ZOC hex.

The latter is the key to success. Pushing back a unit and advancing to grab the hex often blocks retreats from an adjacent unit.

I took the Soviets and Renaud the Western Allies. We set up using the historical placement. The start date was December 1944.

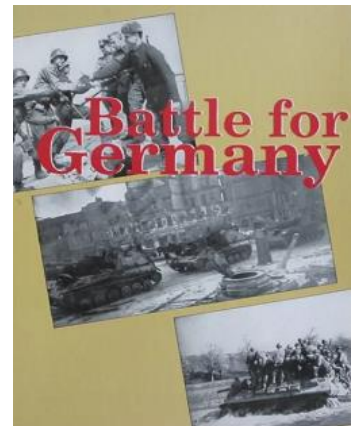
Western Front: I pull off a bit of Bulge magic.

Start The Offensive

I had forgotten just how porous the German East Front was. All of it was under a ZOC, but some decent salients could be exploited. I knocked off a few German units and lost about equal Soviets from EXchange results.

On the West Front, I had to make two attacks (the Battle of the Bulge), one of which knocked off a US unit. I stayed put on the Italian front, in part because of lack of units and in part because I sat atop rugged ground in fortifications.

Renaud's Western counter attacks pushed me



back a hex, and he took a fortified hex. The other attack fizzled. In Italy, he pushed back a unit, but advancing would just invite a lost unit, so he didn't. Through two turns, the Western front stayed mainly as it started.

On the East Front, Renaud attacked in a couple places, scoring some EXchanges and the occasional outright DE (Defender Eliminated). Yet he also left himself vulnerable and my attacks opened up a hole in the Baltic States and I managed to surround a group of four units. I also had a hole punched at the border between Hungary and Yugoslavia.

Alas, as Renaud was new to the game and each player has a number of options and strategies they can pursue, we left it there after about an hour and a half.

A hex-based wargame usually needs more time than that, but I was glad to put it out on the table. *Battle For Germany* certainly plays different than the *Command & Colors* series wargames that Renaud enjoys.

Thanks for letting me pop this on the table.

Renaud tries to fill gaps in his Eastern Front line while massing for counterattacks.



All Greek To Me: *Hera Vs. Zeus*

by Russ Lockwood

Renaud pulled out a card game based on Greek mythology: *Hera Vs. Zeus*.

Apparently, the bickering duo are at it again, probably due to Zeus' penchant for seducing mortals. Both gathered the gods, goddesses, and other monsters to battle it out. The game is a bit of *Stratego* meets *War*.

The decks are identical in terms of card types and numbers. I can't remember all the special abilities of each card, but some are pure muscle with a combat factor and some are both muscle and special abilities with a myth symbol.

To start, you draw five cards to your hand and lay out three in a line face down. Each turn, you get a number of actions equal to the number of columns you have cards in. You can add cards to any column to replace losses. Placing a card in a column is one action. Flipping over a card to attack an enemy card is one action. Playing a card from your hand is one action.

For example, Medusa kills everything against her except for Heros. Pandora eliminates an entire column of cards, friendly and enemy. Persephone allows you to place up to three Pegasus cards from the dead pile back in your hand. A Pegasus card lets you attack one card in the opponent's hand -- if it's a card with a myth symbol, that card is eliminated. If the card has no myth symbol, the Pegasus is eliminated. And so on.

I didn't do very well in the first game. It was over quick because I never quite got the feel for the card interactions.

But it was so quick, we played again. I did a little better, or maybe should say I lasted a little longer. A cute little game of card draw luck and card play reaction.



Eastern Solomons: Double Blind

by Bruce

As the sun rose on 24 August 1942 fleets were in motion in the waters surrounding the Solomons Islands. The Japanese were attempting to send ground reinforcements to Guadalcanal and land troops at Milne Bay, New Guinea, covered by a large portion of the Combined Fleet. The Americans were covering a recent resupply for Guadalcanal as well as trying to foil Japanese plans. This became known as the battle of the Eastern Solomons.

Japanese and US tables.

Long range search aircraft took flight from Rabaul, the Shortlands, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Santa Cruz, and Espirito Santo. The various task forces of both sides dispatched their morning searches for the enemy. The weather was "Clear."

Aircraft units in this game represent nine actual planes. The combat rules used are *Axis and Allies Naval Miniatures* (not the boardgame) using 1/1200 and 1/1250 scale miniatures. Bruce GMs the scenario.

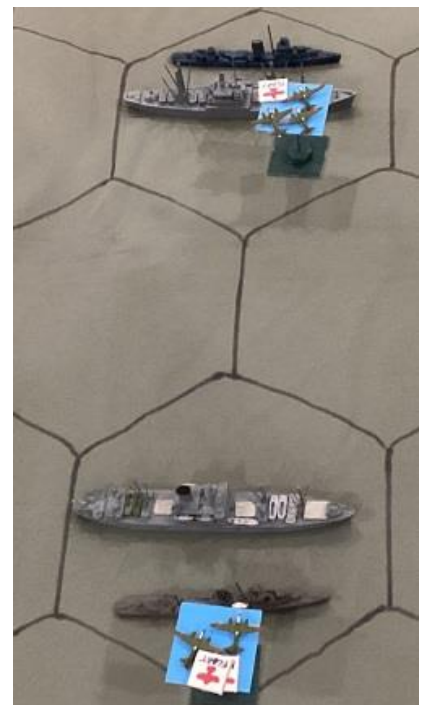
0600 Turn

Three IJN submarines were sighted travelling south 100 miles north of Malaita and reported to Admiral Fletcher. Just south of Guadalcanal, a US supply TF of AKs *Formalhaut* and *Alhena*, escorted by DDs *Helm* and *Henley* were spotted travelling south by a Mavis flying boat. They had been unloading at Lunga Roads since the 21st and had just departed that morning. An airstrike of 45 Betty bombers from Rabaul, supported by a flurry of Jake and Pete floatplanes descended upon the small TF. The valiant destroyers shot down 9 Bettys and caused 18 to abort. Eighteen Bettys pressed the attack and struck the *Henley* with a torpedo, breaking her back. The floatplanes were unsuccessful in their attacks on the cargo ships.

Convoy under attack.

1000 Turn

The weather remained Clear. Three IJN submarines were sighted immediately north of Malaita by a PBY which immediately attacked one of them. The sub unsuccessfully tried to crash dive, but the PBY crippled her. Meanwhile, Admiral Kondo's Advanced Force was sighted 200 miles NE of Malaita. ADM Fletcher sent out 54 SBD Dauntlesses in



two waves. The first wave of 36 bombers achieved one hit on the flagship *Atago* after half of them were turned back by AAA.

Kondo's force under attack.

The second wave of 18 bombers was unaffected by the AAA and smothered the heavy cruisers *Atago* and *Maya* with 1,000 pounders, sinking both. While Admiral Nagumo was unable to locate the US carriers which he now

knew are near, he decided to soften up Henderson Field on Guadalcanal with a carrier strike. A total of 18 Zeros escorting like numbers of Vals and Kates were met over the island by 18 USMC F4Fs of the "Cactus Air Force." While the fighters were busy, the IJN bombers drove through the AAA and achieved three hits on the airfield. One hit can be repaired each turn.

1400 Turn

The weather improved to a clearer version of Clear. US TF 16 was spotted 200 miles east of the northern tip of Malaita by IJN submarines. One I Boat dove and set an ambush while the other two tried to close in.

Meanwhile, Admiral Nagumo launched a maximum strike and called on Rabaul to help. A CAP of 27 *USS Enterprise* F4Fs was sent aloft in anticipation. The I Boat penetrated the ASW screen and hit *USS Enterprise* with a torpedo, causing two hull hits.

IJN submarine ambush.

The TF continued cruising, having detached destroyers suppress and sink the I Boat. Next, a Japanese strike force of 36 Zeros, 36 Vals, 18 Kates, 36 Bettys and 27 Floatplanes arrived over TF 16. See last photo.

While the fighters engaged, wave after wave of bombers attacked. AAA from *Enterprise* and *Atlanta* caused nine Vals and Kates to abort and shot down nine Kates. The remaining Vals hit *Enterprise* with numerous bombs, sinking her as well as hitting the CLAA *USS Atlanta*. The Bettys went for the battleship *North Carolina* and cruiser *Portland*, losing nine but hitting *North Carolina* with two torpedoes, (her armored torpedo belt saved her from becoming crippled). Eighteen of the *Enterprise* F4Fs on CAP had to ditch for lack of fuel while the remaining nine made it to land on *USS Saratoga*. In New Guinea, thirty-six B-26 bombers strike Buna airfield, achieving a hit.



1800 Turn

The weather remained the same. Three IJN submarines were sighted 100 miles north of Malaita. US TF 11, *USS Saratoga*, was sighted 100 north of Santa Cruz, but no further action could be taken, either because of range, aircraft readiness, or the soon to be gathering darkness.

Japanese air strike against Task Force 16.

Sunset: Point Totals

As the sun set a little before 2200 hrs., the point totals for this session are as below:

Japanese: 72 Points -- Sinking *Enterprise* (22 points) and *Henley* (7 points), downing 4 SBDs (28 points) and 1 TBF (7 points), and forcing the ditching of 2 F4F (8 points).

Americans: 63 Points -- Sinking *Atago* and *Maya* (38 points) and one submarine (12 points), and shooting down 2 Bettys (6 points) and 1 Kate (7 points).

NOTE: Points for aircraft use *War at Sea* data cards per squadron. Aircraft units in this game represent nine actual planes, so points are reduced to half, rounded up.

Bruce always sets out a number of books about the battle of the night.





The set up of the first scenario.

Oh It's Hoth, Hoth, Hoth: *Command & Colors*

by Russ Lockwood

Rebel secret decoder ring?

Check.

Keys to the Snowspeeder?

Check.

Light saber?

No.

Wait, what? Where's my light
saber?

Sorry, bub. You're not a Jedi,
but just an ordinary Rebel Lieutenant
tasked with keeping the Imperials from
the generators and the Ion Cannon.

Son of a Womprat!

*Left flank action. Note the dotted sector
dividing line.*



Hey, this is a *Command & Colors* (C&C) game for commanders, not Jedi. It comes with a Campaign system of linked scenarios.

Wellll. Go onnnnnnnn, tell me more.

Plays Like C&C

This *Battle for Hoth* uses the same basic system as *C&C*.

Really? Seriously. Is Richard Borg using a Jedi mind trick? He's popping out more C&C clones than a Stormtrooper factory.

Are you done? Can I continue?

Oh, by all means.

The hex-gridded snow battlefield is divided into three sectors, you draw cards to activate one or more units in one or more sectors, and roll icon-filled dice to get hits. The Rebel figures are soldiers, Snowspeeders, and laser turrets. The Imperial figures are Snowtroopers, recon droids, and AT-ATs. All plastic.

Doesn't look like the figures are to scale?

Duh. Just like all the other C&C variants: multiple scales. These troopers look about 28mm scale, but the rest of the miniatures are much reduced. The AT-AT is only a couple inches high by a few inches long. Not too shabby for 3mm, I'd say. Pico would have a field day. But the models look great!

So they do. Not as many as you'd think for a pricey mass-market game, but they do look good. How many?

Can't remember. Definitely three AT-ATs and two laser turrets. I'll guess somewhere around a dozen speeders and dozen droids? I'd say 30 to 35 soldiers per side.

What about the Ion Cannon? Is it cool?

Sorry. Piece of cardboard, as are the generators. Furthermore, terrain (ridges, crevasses, impassible ice fields, buildings, and rocky hills) consists of cardboard hexes to overlay over the basic map grid. Maybe the cannon will be a future miniature expansion.

Oh. Well, let's see what this is all about...from the top.

You start the campaign with scenario number three.

Whatsamatta with starting at scenario 1?

Scenario 3

Anyway, you set up the terrain and figures, each player draws four maneuver cards and a support card, and the Imperials start with the first card play.

We alternated card play, activating the units in the appropriate sectors and firing away. Basically, two icons on the d6 create hits on infantry, snow speeders, AT-ATs, and recon droids. However, the AT-ATs need

to have a hit confirmed -- a 1 in 6 Burst icon needed. If so, the AT-AT is blown to smithereens. When you KIA a total of five enemy units (AT-ATs are worth 2 each), you win. No saving throws.

Sound familiar? Still not a fan of limiting movement, but the advantage of playing C&C is if you've already played C&C or one of its variants, you've got the gist of all of them.

As the game progressed, I moved into the hills, as did Renaud, and our units assaulted and sniped. I rolled slightly better for the most part, but he made a comeback. I needed big hits now, because that AT-AT has dice at range and I was in range. I aimed for the last Imperial infantry unit.

I said, "Use the Force!" and rolled my 3d6.

Wouldn't you know it, three Burst icons (hits), three Imperial Snowtroopers killed, and the fifth unit destroyed for a Rebel win.

Campaign Rewards

Here's where the campaign game seems odd. Unlike miniatures campaigns, where remaining troops are added into a new linked scenario, nothing of the old force came with you. Given that the game only has three unit types per side: Meet the new force, same as the old force.

You did get to read a paragraph of post-game events -- if the Rebel player wins, you read the Rebel side. If the Imperial player wins, you read the Imperial side.

Being a Rebel win gained me a Support card. The Imperials gained an extra new infantry unit for the next scenario.



What?

You kill off half a star destroyer worth of clones and the next wave gets even more Snowtroopers? Stick me in a Sarlac, why doncha!

First Scenario

We set up the second scenario as indicated in the campaign booklet -- which is labeled First Scenario. Go figure.

I don't remember much about it because I forgot to take a photo and notes. I remember winning that pretty quickly, mostly because Renaud was having an odds-defying bad die roll day. I believe he gave one of the dice a choking grasp. As we used the same dice, it was obvious my Force was stronger than his dark side.

The Snowspeeder scenario.

Fifth Scenario

Don't even ask.

This was the Snowspeeder attack. As the Imperial player went first, Renaud's first card was an orbital bombardment, which he duly sent against three hexes of my speeders.

Wait a sec. The shield generators are still intact!

Plot hole, Mr. Borg!

Once again, dark side dice proved ice cold and I only lost one speeder from the bombardment.

The rest of my Snowspeeders raced forward, slashing in and out of Snowtroopers to slice and dice them in no time. Wow. That was quick.

The end result was a significant win for the Rebels. We kept the Imperials at bay, so now the transport ships have a chance to get away. End of campaign.

Battle For The Ion Cannon

The three linked scenarios in the campaign played quickly, so we set up the one-off Hoth Base Attack scenario. The Imperials got all three AT-ATs as well as the other forces. The Rebels had three units of Speeders as well as other forces.

Some of the Rebel infantry were skilled in close combat (adjacent hexes) while a pair of Imperial Snowtrooper units carried laser MGs on a tripod (cardboard counter). Most Rebel infantry were in trenches.

Death of an AT-AT.

The Imperials advanced and fired, provoking my own advance and firepower. Renaud boldly pushed an AT-AT in the center where one had not gone before.

Ooops. Sorry. Mixing the series. Don't worry, there's probably a *Star Trek C&C* in the works...

I weighed my options -- I hadn't destroyed any AT-ATs in the previous game because I was unable to roll the confirmation kill icon.

Not this time, Darth Snowflake! I sent two units of Snowspeeders and one of infantry into close combat with his AT-AT. I rolled a lot. I hit a lot. Confirmation rolls proved elusive until the last die. Boomchuggalugga! KIA, confirmed! Down went the AT-AT. Renaud put a wisp of smoke on the model. Nice touch, that.



Undaunted, Renaud sent another AT-AT forward to the lip of my trenches. His dice failed him. Obviously, this was but a dare for me to counter-attack, so I did. I used a special card that added a die to all infantry units that performed close assaults (adjacent hexes).

Why, I had two units in a trench just waiting to use that card. Boomchuggalugga the second! KIA, confirmed again! Down went the second AT-AT. Man, was I on a roll. Renaud draped more smoke...

Each AT-AT was worth two VPs, so I had four. On the fourth turn, my Ion Cannon fired to generate a fifth VP. I needed one more unit kill for the win.

I rolled lots of dice and came up with bupkus (the Force is obviously a balance in the game universe).

Still, the turn after that I knocked off another Imperial unit for the sixth and winning VP.

Death of the second AT-AT!



Thoughts

We made a wee bit of an error during play. And when I say wee, I mean a big swing error.

We set up the Rebel troopers and the Imperial Snowtroopers with three figures per infantry unit. The Imperials actually start with four figures per unit -- a little extra staying power. Note that whether a unit has one figure or all figures, it fires the same number of dice. So my 1 in 216 chance of rolling three Burst icons would have left one Snowtrooper remaining in the unit for a full attack back.

So, it played like *C&C*, with relatively few nuances. If you've ever played a *C&C* game, then you'll be able to say "pew-pew" with no trouble at all. Even if you never played a *C&C* game, you'll be able to say "pew-pew" in no time.

Anyway, thanks Renaud for a little *Star Wars* gaming.

And I just want to say no taun-tauns were harmed in the making of this AAR.

Space Battle Cards: *MagBlast*

by Russ Lockwood

Our final game, *MagBlast*, which is set in the Twilight Imperium universe, took longer to explain than it played. Basically, each player gets a flagship with special ability and four escort ships (one per cardinal point: North, East, South, and West so to speak).

My flagship was human and I could get free escort ships three times a game. At first, I kept that ability in reserve, but after playing, I don't see why the human player wouldn't take them all in the first turn. You don't lose anything for getting the three ships up front and don't gain anything by waiting. At least take two free ships with the third in reserve.

The ship card has up to three colored (green, purple, and red) firing icons -- damage cards in your hand match the color or colors. If you don't have matching icons, you can't fire.

You can rotate escort ships around the four points. Attacks can only be from cardinal point to the same cardinal point. So, if the North escort ship fires, it can only shoot at the enemy's North escort ships.

The Game

While I was trying to figure this out, I noticed that Renaud's South ship was weak with only a 2 defense. I poured on the firepower to destroy it, but I didn't see how I could punch out the 8 defense flagship.

Renaud showed me card combos. Ah. So that's how you do it.

We kept playing. Eventually, I amassed enough firepower to put 8 damage into the South side and blow up his flagship. Just call me Southside Russell and the Asbury Nukes.

With that, another fine session of wargaming came to a close. Thanks, Renaud for trying out a trio of new-to-me games.



The smiling gamers of the Aztec game.

HMGS Next Gen: Gaming Resumes

by John Spiess

Aztecs at New Canaan: CT

After running HMGS Next Gen events in early September in Rye, NY, Ridgefield, CT, and Queens, NY, we moved on to New Canaan, CT. We had 17 players including two parents.

Each player controlled two warbands and made choices about the type of warriors to include based on a point system.

For example, each warband could be up 30 points. Among the many choices, the player could choose 10 archers worth 3 points each, or maybe five or six elite Jaguar warriors worth 5 or 6 points each depending on the weapon. Then they had to consider the potential damage that each warband could inflict, and also the durability of the warband. Long story short, this is basically a math lesson of statistics and probability.

When the game was over, we had about a 15 minute discussion of how basic math decided the outcome of the game. I even gave them some “homework” to think about their choices when they got home and how their odds could have been improved.

So between math, the little history lesson on the Aztec and Maya civilizations, and Hispanic History Month, we checked off a few boxes.

HMGS Outreach: Museum Games

by Richard Claydon

The American Heritage Museum (AMH) in Hudson MA held another great event. The format featured a number of aviation historians and pilots telling amazing stories. In the afternoon, many of the planes in the collection were flown including a Waco UIC – Pearl Harbor Survivor, Tuskegee Airmen PT-17 Stearman Trainer, L-5 Sentinel, Fieseler Fi-156 Storch, and an AT-6 Texan.

Richard and the HMGS gaming area.



The Featured Guest was Col. Joe Peterburs, USAF (Ret.), who flew as a P-51 Mustang pilot in World War II and is best known for shooting down German jet ace Walter Schuck's Messerschmitt Me 262 jet fighter on April 10, 1945 — something considered to be nearly impossible by many. Later shot down himself and becoming a POW, Peterburs was able to escape and evade re-capture by joining a Soviet Tank Crew and fighting through Germany before rejoining U.S. forces. Peterburs remained active in the USAF through the Korean War and Vietnam War.

Good turnout for the lecture.



HMGS Outreach ran two games. The first was the SAS Raid on Sidi Haneish Airfield July 26, 1942 and the second a WWI aerial battle.

Using *Bolt Action* rules, the Raid on Sidi Haneish was well received with a number of visitors being familiar with the battle mostly from the TV series *SAS Rogue Heroes*. Each player controlled one jeep and tried to destroy as many aircraft as possible with the Germans being played by the game master. Players scored points for the damage they did to the aircraft ranging from one point for minor damage to 10 points for complete destruction. The highest score was 40 points.

The Sidi Haneish game.



The WWI game, using *Wings of Glory* rules, was popular and ran many times on both days.

I was assisted by my two sons and four of their friends who did a great job helping me run the SAS raid game and running *Wings of Glory* all on their own.

Mood lighting at the airfield.



The kids also went for a short ride on a USMC Mule (M274 Truck, Platform, Utility, 1/2 Ton, 4X4) with the Education Director of the AHM. They will receive credit for their volunteer time in their schools Youth Engaged in Service program.

Having a real miniatures battle was a definite improvement. A list of Clubs, Stores, and Events went down well with visitors. The electronic business card worked well with a visitor from that last event who lost the contact information I gave him and was able to load it directly into his phone. The suggestion for improvement would be to have something to identify the volunteers. On the second day I wore my HMGS lanyard with my name and title which helped.

NEWS

Mea Culpa. In my haste to publish the August 2025 issue, I forgot to include the News section. As the adage goes: Haste Makes Waste. Or, perhaps: Summer chillin' equals brain cell killin'.

So, here's a larger than usual News section that includes still relevant August items. -- RL

HMGS Convention Themes: 2026

by Kevin Carroll

HMGS announced convention themes for 2026.

Cold Wars (February 5-8, 2026 at Wyndham Resort and Convention Center at Lancaster, PA -- aka The Host): Wild, Wild West

Historicon (July 16-19, 2026 at Lancaster, PA Convention Center): 250th anniversary of the American Revolution

Fall In (November 5-8, 2026 at Wyndham Resort and Convention Center at Lancaster, PA -- aka The Host): Special Operations in History

LADG Write-Ups

by Russ Lockwood

If you are a *L'Art de la Guerre* (LADG) rules fan, you should visit Phil's blog. His step-by-step photocopia of his games, some analysis of the moves, and nice blasts of humor make this an enjoyable read.

His first recap in the Historicon 2025 tournament is named "Yi'all come on down now, yi hear?" -- the pun being clear if you see the armies involved.

<https://philonancients.blogspot.com>

Frank Luke Spad XIII: Phoenix Airport

by Kevin Duke

After reading *The Stand*, a biography about Frank Luke jr, the WWI US pilot who specialized in shooting down balloons, was known as the nicknamed "The Arizona Balloon Buster," I found myself flying out of Phoenix Airport and wanted to see Luke's plane again.

Spad XIII. Photo by Kevin.

The Spad XIII on display in Phoenix, AZ, was moved from the airport's Terminal 3 to the 44th Street Station (Sky Train stop). According to the info panel, the airplane on display is 80% original parts taken from three aircraft. Photos of him and his plane of the 27th Pursuit Squadron were used for coloring, the eagle motif, and lettering.

Another Luke jr. Spad XIII is at the National Museum of the US Air Force in Dayton, OH. The museum's website says it is currently not on display.



SPI Forever II: Historicon 2026

by Russ Lockwood

In exchanging e-mails with Russ Gifford, the creator of the SPI Forever event at Historicon 2025, he noted that he planned to again hold the event at Historicon 2026. I heartily endorse that decision and judging by the rotating cast of gamers in and out of the ballroom, they will too.



Of Hcon 2025, Gifford noted:

"Some backstory: Former HMGS board member David Waxtel had been reading my posts of 2024. He correctly realized I was trying to figure out the logistics to do a national SPI board gaming convention. After hearing from David, HMGS called in January and offered to provide me with a 25 x 50-foot ballroom – FREE – at their well-established miniatures convention to offer SPI games.

Wow! But -- I hesitated. I correctly surmised it would be a lot of work. And likely some pain. But – if I didn't do it, I'd never know if it would have worked. So I said yes.

The day was hazy, hot, and humid as I pushed through the last 50 miles of a 1200-mile trip. I'd been on the road 20 hours, with only an hour nap at a turnpike services area, now more than a hundred miles behind me."

Kudos to Dave and the board. And to Russ for his rather impressive driving stamina!

Anyway, to read a more extensive write-up of the event:

<https://www.spigames.net/PDFv11/SPI25RundownFinal.pdf>

And if you want to see his marvelous website:

<https://www.spigames.net/>

New Wargame: Battle of Lutter 1626

by Russ Lockwood

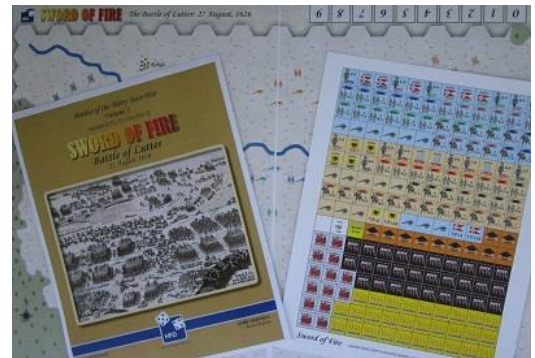
High Flying Dice released the wargame *Sword of Fire: The Battle of Lutter, August 27, 1626*, pitting the army of King Christian IV against General Johan Tzerclaes, Count of Tilly.

The game contains: Two 11x17-inch hex mapsheets; One sheet of 192 single-sided, un-mounted counters; One Player's Aid sheet, and five pages of rules. Cost: \$18.95 plus shipping/handling and state sales tax. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

Each turn represents 30 minutes. Each hex is about 75 meters across. Each unit represents from 250 to 1,500 soldiers. Players need to provide one standard deck of playing cards and one six-sided die.

Designed by Roberto Chiavini and graphics by Bruce Yearian.

Info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/lutter.html>



New Wargame: Battle for Madrid 1936

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice released the solitaire wargame *The Eyes of the Enemy: Battle for Madrid, November 1936*, on the battle for the capital city of Madrid during the first months of the Spanish Civil War. The player takes on the role of the commander of the Nationalist forces seeking to wrest control of key points in and around the city of Madrid that can lead to the capture of the Spanish capital.

The game contains: Two 11x17-inch hex mapsheets; One sheet of 184 double-sided, un-mounted counters; Player's Aid of five pages, and 11 pages of rules. Cost: \$22.95 plus shipping/handling and state sales tax. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

Players need to provide one standard deck of playing cards and two six-sided dice.

All infantry units are mostly battalion sized or similarly sized battle groups (Banderas) of 600-800 men. Tank units represent a company of 12 to 15 vehicles. An inch on the map is about three kilometers. Each turn represents three days of time. Designed by Paul Rohrbaugh and graphics by Ilya Kudriashov.

Info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/madrid.html>



New Wargame: Air Raid on Ploesti 1943

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice released the solitaire wargame *Operation Tidal Wave: The Raid on the Ploesti Oil Refineries August 1, 1943*, on the US Eighth (44th and 93rd Bomber Groups) and Ninth Air Forces' (98th, 376th and 389th Bomber Groups) raid on the Romanian oil refineries.

The game contains: Two 11x17-inch hex mapsheets; One sheet of 80 double-sided, un-mounted counters; Player's Aid of two pages, and eight pages of rules. Cost: \$18.95 plus shipping/handling and state sales tax. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00. Players need to provide one standard deck of playing cards and two six-sided dice.

Each phase represents about three minutes of time. Each air unit represents 10-12 aircraft. An Axis (Romanian and German) Anti-Aircraft (AA) unit represents 10-12 guns of various sizes. Designed by Paul Rohrbaugh and graphics by David Prieto Gomez.

Info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/tidal.html>



Gabions: For Siege and Artillery

by Russ Lockwood

Chris Parker Games announces a series of 3D printed gabions for your siege and artillery emplacements. The 28mm scale set has 12 inches of gabions and the 40mm scale set has 16 inches of gabions. Each set is made up of two long pieces and four single gabions. The photo shows 40mm gabions.

Cost is \$8.00 (28mm) or \$12.00 (40mm) plus 75 cents packing fee.

More info: www.chrisparkergames.com



New GHQ Releases: 1/285 (6mm) Scale

by Russ Lockwood

GHQ released its Batch 4 miniatures. All miniatures are unpainted. Included are:

WWII Soviet T-26 w/early turret tank (R85) 1/285 (6mm) Scale 5 per pack: \$13.99

Modern US M1A2 SEP v3 tank (N675) 1/285 (6mm) Scale 5 per pack: \$13.99

Modern Russian 2S42 Lotos self-propelled 120mm mortar (W144) 1/285 (6mm) Scale 5 per pack: \$13.99

SU-35 Flanker E/M fighter (AC148) 1 per pack: \$13.99

WWI British "L" Class Destroyer (GWB46) 1/2400 scale 3 per pack: \$12.50

WWII Battleship Yamato 1945 with added AA (IJN63) 1/2400 scale 1 per pack: \$23.99

Modern French Durance Class Fleet Replenishment Oiler (HFN4) 1/2400 scale 1 per pack: \$13.99

HMGS Positions: Non-Board

by Kevin Carroll, VP Marketing

As announced at the 2025 Historicon Membership Meeting, the HMGS Board has made the decision to open



Unpainted 1/2400th Scale Modern Micronauts
Durance Class
HFN4 - 1/pk - \$13.99USD

the door, and specific board level positions, to HMGS members who wish to use their talents and experience to benefit HMGS without having to be on the board. HMGS is potentially losing some talented individuals that for various reasons (termed out of the board, not interested in being on the board, not knowing how their skills can help HMGS...) have not been able to contribute their talents. HMGS wants to take full advantage of the depth of experience provided by HMGS members. Yes, you must be an HMGS member to apply.

There will be positions that a non-board member can submit application to be considered for, including: Marketing and Communications; Outreach; and Convention Operations (Con Ops).

More info to come or see the hmgs.org website.

Sci-Fi Solo Trio: Wargames

by Russ Lockwood

With Flying Pig's *They Came In Threes*, one box holds three of Hermann Luttmann's solo science fiction games. The box includes:

Invaders from Dimension X: A reality-warping solo game where your foes don't follow logic or sanity.

Attack of the 50 Foot Colossi: Massive, rock-like entities stomp across a doomed world.

Space Vermin from Beyond: Bugs. Big ones. Hungry ones. And they're coming for your outpost in waves.

A Slick New FAQ and Scenario Book that includes three scenarios, eight counters for *Invaders from Dimension X*, a FAQ for each title, and six d6s.

Details: Age: 14+, Players: 1, Complexity: 6 on a 10 scale, and Playing time: 2 hours to 4 hours. \$75.00

More info: <https://tinybattlepublishing.com/shop/ols/products/they-came-in-threes>



Solomons Campaign: New Wargame

by Russ Lockwood

Avalanche Press released a remake of *South Pacific*, another entry in their *Second World War at Sea* line. It includes over 1,000 die-cut counters representing the ships and aircraft of the United States, Japan, and Australia that fought in the campaign. The 22x28-inch map includes all of the Solomon Islands plus the surrounding seas, and overlaps with the maps from Java Sea on its western edge. It also includes not only the standard, generic Tactical Map but also a special Tactical Map showing "Ironbottom Sound" north of Guadalcanal, where so many Japanese and American ships and sailors would be lost. Has 42 scenarios. \$180.00.

From Wikipedia: Each game is played on an operational map divided into a grid of squares, each representing a 36-mile-wide area. Each major surface unit -- Aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers and fleet destroyers -- are represented with a single 1 inch by 0.5 inch rectangular counter containing the ship's statistics. Minor surface warships (escorts) as well as auxiliaries and merchant ships, are portrayed via 0.5 inch square counters with the associated statistics. Aircraft squadrons (representing from 8–24 aircraft), as well as the game's various status markers, are also 0.5 inch square counters.

When two opposing fleets come into contact on the operational map, combat switches to the tactical map. The tactical map is a grid of hexagons on which individual warship counters can maneuver.

Info: <https://www.avalancheexpress.com/gameSouthPacific.php>



Militracks Overloon 2025: Restored Tiger II

by Russ Lockwood

This is an interesting half-hour YouTube video from Netherlands featuring restored and running WWII AFVs and soft vehicles not only in the clearing (as the Tiger II does in the opening), but also through dirt roads in the woods. Vehicles include: Hetzer, Hummel, STuG, cars, Kettlegrad, halftracks, and more.

Lee added: "Most interesting part is the paint schemes. Apparently they used actual colors from WWII samples so they are not distorted by wear, tear, and being colorized. German Dark Yellow is actually almost Khaki and the Red Brown and Dark Green are much darker than most modellers use."

Video:

https://youtu.be/Uhm8I_IRf5Y?si=UJAA5YIeXx0jyN1p



Snappy Nappy: Marengo on TTS

by Russ Lockwood

On May 10, 2025, Jim Owczarski umpired another *Snappy Nappy* multiplayer game using *TableTop Simulator* (TTS). This time, it was Marengo.

It begins with a rules overview, then gets into the battle.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuSNXrvb9Ak&t=340s>

This is Free Trader Beowulf: Traveller Lives!

by Russ Lockwood

I came across a YouTube review of *This is Free Trader Beowulf*: a book about the history of the RPG *Traveller*. As readers of my past AARs know, GM Sean ran a *Traveller* campaign a couple years ago based on a module.

If you listen to the review, you also can, with a good squint, freeze the video on the Table of Contents for a looksee at what's covered.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVbMtLd27u4>

Domesday Is Coming: ATO 2024 Annual

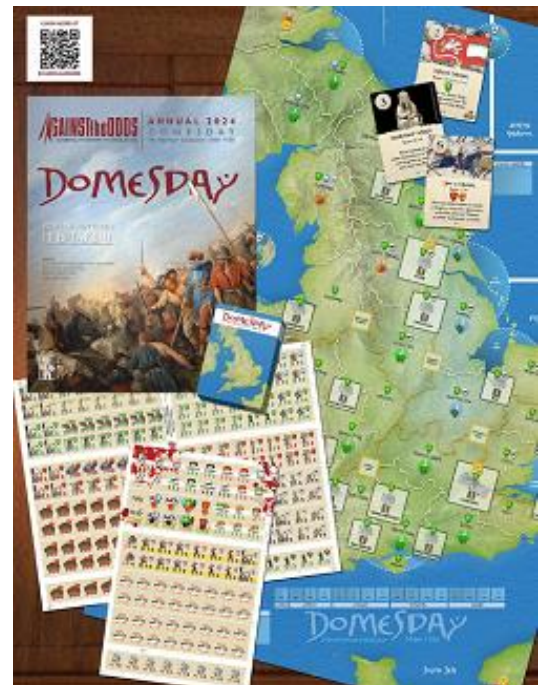
by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine will be releasing *Domesday*, a wargame which explores how King Edward the Confessor of England did not prepare well for his death. He promised his kingdom to King Magnus Olafsson of Norway (a claim inherited by Harald Hardrada), King Sweyn Estridsson of Denmark, Duke William of Normandy, and Earl Harold Godwinson of Wessex.

When Edward died on January 5, 1066, these four powerful warlords raised armies to back their claims by force. William the Conqueror won the crown but had to defend his new kingdom from fresh invasions and rebellious barons.

To formalise his control of the English throne after 20 years of conquest, William ordered a Great Survey in 1085, a record so final and unalterable that it was named Domesday.

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/>



Computer Donation: Vintage Computer Museum

by Russ Lockwood

In the June 2025 AAR, I wrote up my visit to the InfoAge complex of museums in Wall, NJ. One of the museums was the Vintage Computer Federation museum, which is in the process of doubling its space in one of the old military barracks. At the time, I talked about computer journalism in the 1980s and 90s and asked if the VCF took donations.

It did.

So, I raided my attic and drove back in August with the first donations, including my old 1982 IBM PC that had been upgraded with more memory, extra floppy disk drive, and a color graphics card. The old monochrome monitor and graphics card was put into Tibor's upgraded IBM PC and donated to the NJ National Guard back in the day.

I also included a number of old laptops, modems, cables, and software. I warned curator Doug that they were working when I put them in the attic, but no guarantees. I also donated a run of the personal computer telecommunications magazine *Link Up*. Curator Doug was intrigued with that -- he had never heard of it.

I couldn't fit any more in the car, so more will be donated in the future. InfoAge is not exactly close to me.

I also donated my late father-in-law's HO model trains, track, buildings, and accessories to the Garden State model RR club. That took up most of the space in the car. The Radio and TV museum there received a 1934 Majestic radio (vacuum tubes!) and a 1970 Windsor transistor radio courtesy of my late father-in-law. Technically, my wife inherited the train and radio items, but she's glad these museums seemed pleased to take the donations.

I only wished I lived closer.

Back at the VCF computer museum, Doug led me into the storage area and the boneyard of computers past. He had a big old Linotype machine as well as an Apple Lisa and lots of other computers, printers, and such. I should've taken a photo of the work in progress.

The VCF has an annual conference and Doug asked if I could give a talk at the 2026 conference. I protested that I never actually did much programming or ever used a soldering iron. And he replied he would like a half hour about computer journalism at the time. Oh, that's different. I can do that. Besides the anecdotes, I might actually be able to offer useful information.

InfoAge is open Wed, Sat, and Sun, noon to 5pm. The website highlights museum offerings, including kids programs. It's a great afternoon visit.



Table Top Dice Holders

by Russ Lockwood

Chris Parker Games has released 3D-printed Table Top Dice Holders in single and double dice sizes. These are designed for 12mm dice which are the standard size for games.

Dice holders: Singles are 3 for \$1.00 and Doubles are 2 for \$1.00. Plus shipping.

Info: <https://www.chrisparkergames.com/>



American Revolution Lectures: NJARRT

by Russ Lockwood

The North Jersey American Revolution Round Table has sent a schedule of talks 2025-2026. These one-hour talks related to the American Revolution are at 7:00pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Washington's Headquarters Museum, 30 Washington Place, Morristown NJ 07960. They are available to members and may be attended in person or via Zoom. Membership is \$50 per year.

I didn't find a website, but there is a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NJARRT/>

Questions: arrt.nj@gmail.com

2025 Dates	Speaker	Affiliation	Topic	Mtg Format
September 11	Matthew Skic	Curator of Exhibitions, Museum of the American Revolution	Banners of Liberty: Flags from the Revolutionary War	In-Person + ZOOM
October 9	Char Weigel	Vice President, Special Projects for Revolutionary Westchester 250, Westchester County	The Week that Won the War: The True Story of the Firing on <i>The Vulture</i>	In-Person + ZOOM
November 6 (1 st Thursday of month)	Benjamin Carp	Professor of History Brooklyn College	A Teapot in a Tempest: The Boston Tea Party of 1773	In-Person + ZOOM
December 11	Will Krakower	Resource Interpretive Specialist, Princeton Battlefield State Park	The Day is Ours! The Battle of Princeton: Changing Interpretations + a Lasting Legacy	In-Person + ZOOM
2026 Dates				
January 8	Phillip Hamilton	Professor of History Christopher Newport University	Washington Gets His Guns: Henry Knox and the Noble Train of Artillery	ZOOM only
February 12	Colin Calloway	Professor of History and of Native American and Indigenous Studies, Dartmouth College	The Day Native Americans Destroyed the U.S. Army	ZOOM only
March 12	Jim McIntyre	Associate Professor Moraine Valley Community College	A Soldiers' View: Johann Ewald and the Attack on Fort Mercer, October 22, 1777	ZOOM only
April 9	Friederike Bauer	Professor of History Penn State Abington College	Incomprehensible Friends and Rebellious Enemies: German Soldiers in the American Revolutionary War	In-Person + ZOOM
May 14	Richard Bell	Professor of History University of Maryland	The Tragedy of Tom Paine	In-Person + ZOOM
June 11	Chris Sabick	Executive Director, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum	The Underwater Archaeology of the American Revolution on Lake Champlain: Valcour Bay to Arnolds Bay	ZOOM only

Trying Men's Souls 1776: ATO Issue 63

by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine will be releasing *Trying Men's Souls: The Campaign for New York 1776* in upcoming Issue 63. In early 1776, King George III convinced hardliners in Parliament to raise a massive army and fleet that would bring the colonists to heel and end the rebellion. During July a British fleet of over 400 ships, including 73 warships, arrived in New York harbor and disgorged its troops to initially occupy undefended Staten Island. In August, the fleet ferried over 32,000 men onto the shores of Long Island. Opposing them was the largest American army ever assembled with 23,000 men under the command of General George Washington.

The game in the full-color glossy magazine will include: One full color 22x34-inch mapsheet, 264 full color large 5/8-inch die-cut counters, 12 pages of rules, and two pages of charts and tables. Complexity is Medium with average solitaire capability. \$34.95 ziplock includes shipping US. \$54.95 ziplock includes International shipping. Now available for pre-ordering.

Bonus Items: Subscribers and pre-orderers for this issue will also receive a set of three new Pocket Battle Games (with 60 mounted die-cut counters) covering the 1942 Operation Topsy raids in North Africa.

Trying Men's Souls is designed by Paul Rohrbach with graphics by Mark Mahaffey. Full disclosure: I'm the developer of the game.

Info: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=191>



Magazines I've Read

by Russ Lockwood

In a previous AAR, I mentioned that wargame company Accurate Simulations was bringing out a new magazine, *The Centurion*. Well, the first issue -- full color glossy -- appeared in my mailbox and it's a beaut.

Here's what the mag is supposed to deliver: "an all-new periodical of military history, news, analysis, and insights, written by professional military writers, as well as historians and wargamers, discussing the most relevant topics, events, and strategies of armed conflict of all eras and at all levels. Each issue of the magazine will feature two primary topic articles, numerous facts and anecdotes, as well as reviews, quotables, and insights, all contributed by credentialed writers and academicians." (from the AS website)

The Centurion delivered on its promise with an eye- and intellect-pleasing assortment of articles. Here's the list: The Future of the B-52; Is the Tank Obsolete?; Volcano Bomb; The de Gaulle Plot; The Asama Maru; Hawaiian Airlines 1941; NATO Cold War Strategy; Japan's Red Baron; Military Book Review; Columbus Reexamined; Wit & Sagacity; The Soviet B-29; Vichy Raid on Gibraltar; and The Fault Explosion. Full Disclosure: I contributed three book reviews to the issue.

I gotta say the Columbus article was a masterpiece. That's not to minimize the other articles, which were good, but great magazine articles offer new info about old subjects. Columbus delivered. According to the publisher, a follow-up article on Columbus' third and fourth voyages is planned for Issue 2.

Despite being published by a wargame company, there are no wargame articles within. This is pure military history.

I also liked the idea of 12-point type for the text. No squinting needed!

Interestingly, Accurate Simulations has started the process for *The Centurion* to be carried in Barnes & Noble bookstores. That would be a coup.

Currently, the company is waiting on B&N before deciding on any type of subscription plan. You can order a copy of Issue 1 from Accurate Simulations' website. The cost is \$10 plus shipping.

Enjoyed it.

Info: <https://www accuratesimulations.com/>



The video shows a parade of vehicles moving through the woods – and apparently, you can hitch a ride.

BOOKS I'VE READ

By Russ Lockwood

Guderian's Panzers. by Craig W. H. Luther. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 401 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *From Triumph to Defeat on the Eastern Front 1941*

This profile of Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group during Barbarossa offers a marvelous operational history of the Group's actions from June to December 1941.

The praise for Guderian's leadership comes as fast and furious as his advance deep into the Soviet defenses. Time and again, he drove his steadily eroding divisions into and through Soviet units, preventing defensive lines from forming. The first two months proved to be Blitzkrieg at its finest and this book explains how it was done and the decisions Guderian made to enhance the offensive.

On the flip side, Guderian could be exasperating to deal with and often used his own initiative to disobey direct orders. Mostly, his instincts were good, but sometimes, not so much. His decision to drive on and not close the pocket in Smolensk allowed 100,000 Soviet soldiers to escape and form the cadre of future units (p72).

At times, his units were so far in the rear of Soviet defenses, the "advanced supply depot" was 400km behind them and railheads were 750km behind them (p80). Yet he drove them onward despite fuel, ammo, and spare parts shortages and few replacement troops.

He opposed the turn to the south to close the Kiev pocket -- a pocket shaped like a triangle that measured roughly 500km on a side. Luftwaffe attacks had to be used to compress and eliminate the pocket (p164). Despite the bagging of prisoners and material, his focus remained on Moscow.

Operation Typhoon started with his units at roughly 75% strength compared to June 22, 1941 (p196). Shortages of ammo, fuel, replacement troops, and parts had still not been resolved, but he started the drive to Moscow nonetheless. Railroads converted from the USSR standard 1528mm wide to German 1435mm moved slowly -- about 10km to 12km per day -- despite the number of specialty RR units used (p118).

By Nov. 6, 1941, the combat power of a German panzer division was only 35% of its paper TO&E strength (p272). Yet from June to December, the USSR mobilized 285 Infantry Divisions, 88 Cavalry Divisions, 12 Tank Divisions, 93 Tank brigades, and 174 rifle brigades (p364). Long odds indeed to reach Moscow as wargamers know.

The book contains 105 black and white photos, three black and white maps, and eight color period maps.

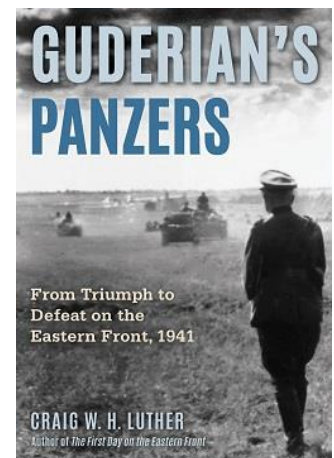
Long ago, Mark, Tibor and I played *Drang Nach Osten*, GDW's division-level (with lots of brigades, regiments, and even some battalions) wargame of Operation Barbarossa. It took us a long time, but we had the time and the space to leave everything set up turn after turn. We each played a German Army Group, and then when we put on our Soviet hats, we swapped spots so that we could play against someone other than ourself.

By dint of a fortuitous discovery of a weak part in the Soviet line, I managed to open up a corridor and several panzer divisions and support units smashed into four of the seven hexes of Moscow -- including the all-important center hex. I burned the factory, shot Stalin and Stavka, and waited for the inevitable counter-attack. I lost most of the panzer divisions and was kicked out of Moscow. Funny, the war went on nonetheless across the hex grid.

We also once played in a massive play-by-mail game with teams. I was a Soviet and had about a 20-hex front in/near the Valdai Hills. Here are your troops -- position as you see fit. Great fun at first, except Stavka increasingly fiddled with commanders' units. It makes sense -- I didn't know what was going on elsewhere, so when Stavka went looking for units to shore up their overall line, out some came from my force and my carefully considered deployment was re-jiggered. Alas, more and more of Stavka micro-managing took the fun out of crafting a line with what you got. What's the point of positioning units if they're all going to be re-jiggered? Now, if you told me at the start of the turn I would need to send off a few units, that would be different. I don't remember how it ended, but it was chronicled in a newsletter.

Reading this well-written book makes we want to pull out *Scorched Earth* (upgraded version of *DNO*) once again. Even with the thousands of counters in *DNO/SE* and a map that stretches across a ping-pong table, it's difficult to duplicate what Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group (later 2nd Panzer Army) did in those six months. This book explains why. Brilliant.

Enjoyed it.



Hill 119. by Michael O. Fallon. Hardback (7.2x9.9 inches). 465 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Defending a Reconnaissance Marines' OP Vietnam 1969-70*

Hill 119 sat about 25km southwest of Da Nang and overlooked Go Noi Island, a hotbed of VC and highway for the North Vietnamese Army into South Vietnam and the Da Nang area. The Marines stuck a platoon on that hill to observe and report enemy movements.

Escalation improved the lookout to an outpost, complete with bunkers, trenches, and a tower. Spotted enemy brought down artillery barrages and air bombing. Patrols looked to disrupt VC and NVA activities.

As the author commanded the OP at times, you get excellent explanations of day-to-day actions. Admittedly, the first 50 pages or so are a repetitive accounting of sighting reports and calling in airstrikes and artillery strikes. But when you get through that section and OP responsibilities are expanded, you'll be rewarded with a riveting account of patrolling, ambushes, booby-traps, and repelling attacks.

Patrols were often made up of six men for prisoner snatch or ambush. A bomb damage assessment patrol was usually nine men. Appendix 3 explains patrol compositions and duties. The book is filled with skirmish possibilities.

You'll learn about ever VC and NVA trick to escape detection and mitigate US attacks. The US never really cleared the island for long, even when they brought in bulldozers and leveled half the island.

A couple typos: "spilt" (p219) should be split and "report into" (p316) should be report to.

The book contains 15 black and white photo, 50 color photos, and 24 black and white maps. I can see a modeler making the OP for the tabletop.

If you want a captivating book about small units in Vietnam, this is it. I should say captivating after the first 50 or so pages. Once I got past those pages, I read this book until the wee hours of the morning. Superb.

Enjoyed it.



The Canadian Theater 1814: War of 1812. by Rich Barbuto. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 96 pages. 2025 reworking of 2013 chapters.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

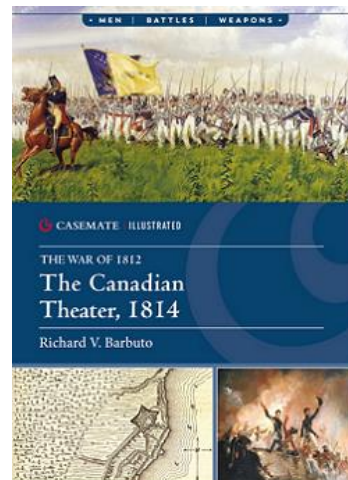
Once again, 1812 expert Rich Barbuto edited US Army chapters to create a delightful recap about expeditions in Canada during the War of 1812. Sometimes you can't believe the rivalries within the US military that handicapped strategic efforts, but individual tactical commanders could sometimes save the situation.

You get nice recaps of the main battles: Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, Siege of Fort Erie, Plattsburg, and Maine plus a nice selection of other skirmishes and small battles along the border.

The booklet contains one black and white photo, 23 color photos, 11 black and white illustrations, 20 color illustrations, two black and white maps, and eight color maps.

You'll likely need other books to make a tabletop wargame proud, but this marvelous overview can ignite that spark of interest. Well done.

Enjoyed it.



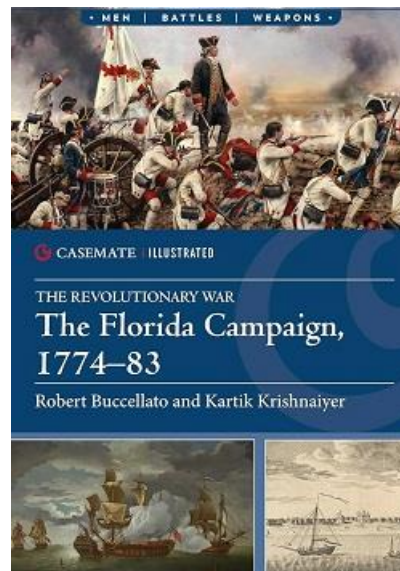
The Florida Campaign 1774-83: The Revolutionary War. by Robert Buccellato and Kartik Krishnaiyer. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 128 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

The Spanish campaign against the British in Florida during the American Revolution offers an example of what a driven commander with a flair for leadership can do with just enough resources to get the job done. Galvez first cleared the British forts in the area around New Orleans, then led an expedition that captured Mobile.

After that, it was on to siege Pensacola. In wargames terms, a rather lucky die roll decided the siege. In historical terms, a lucky shot decided the siege.

You'll need a bit more OOB information to make this a wargame campaign, but the illustrations of fortifications provide enough to set a table for each main spot.



The illustrations and explanations of St. Augustine and surrounding Spanish fortifications and various British movements would make for a nice second wargame campaign.

One typo: "for 200 hundred years" (p57) needs the "hundred" deleted.

The booklet contains four black and white photos, 66 color photos, 11 black and white maps, and nine color maps.

It's an excellent introduction to the Florida campaigns during the American Revolution and quite inspiring to the wargame imagination. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

Hitler's Croatian Ally. by Antonio J. Munoz. Hardback (6.8x9.7 inches). 128 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *The Croatian Army and the Battle for Yugoslavia 1941-1945*

The Yugoslavian guerrillas, especially under Tito, caused the Germans and Italians significant problems in trying to control Yugoslavia and its lines of communications to Greece and elsewhere. With German attention riveted on the Eastern Front in the USSR, only minimal German forces were sent to Yugoslavia, and mostly not first-rate divisions at that. That meant raising local forces, including Croatian units that eventually became division sized.

Croatian units were equipped largely as German units, albeit with less heavy equipment such as artillery and vehicles. The text does a commendable job at explaining the changing TO&Es and OOBs throughout the war. Appendices cover Croatian Navy and Air Force.

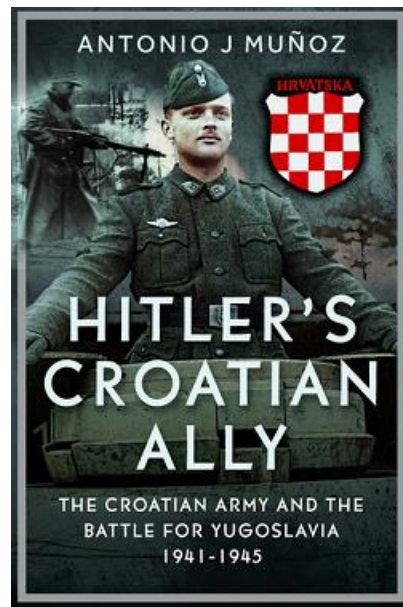
Guerrilla sweeps are covered at the operational level, with the focus on operations using Croatian units. Of note is the lackadaisical Italian approach to coordinating with the Germans. Many times the Italians were slow to close gaps and the guerrillas often slipped away.

Couple typos: "Edit of Milan" (p5) is likely Edict and ". the" (p23) needs the T capitalized. One odd statement: "Hitler's plans for Europe called for Italy to remain neutral in the war" (p36). Mussolini's comments from other books indicate he was told the war would start in 1944 or so, not that Italy was to remain neutral.

The book contains 32 black and white photo, 24 black and white illustrations, 22 black and white maps, and four black and white graphical TO&Es.

I had only an inkling that Croatian units were raised by the Germans in WWII. Now I have a thorough examination of the process, organization, and use of these troops against Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia during the war.

Enjoyed it.



The Creek War 1813-14: The War of 1812. by Richard D. Blackmon. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 78 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

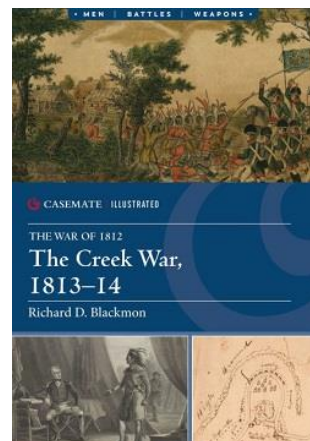
The Creek Indians (Native Americans) raided in and out of Georgia during the War of 1812. They proved effective and the US sent federal troops supported by a calling out of the Georgia and Tennessee militia. A split in the National Council caused some tribes to side with the US, while most other tribes stuck with the leader Red Sticks to continue with new raids into Alabama and Mississippi.

The US came up with a three-pronged strategy that suffered some defeats, but ultimately triumphed. More and more troops joined the campaign and Red Sticks' victories became fewer and fewer until his tribes' settlements were razed. A treaty ended the war, but Red Sticks ceded about half the Creek territory to the US, Georgia, and Mississippi.

The booklet contains four black and white photos, 21 color photos, 15 black and white illustrations, 13 color illustrations, six black and white maps, and five color maps.

This, too, is a well done overview filled with marvelous illustrations.

Enjoyed it.



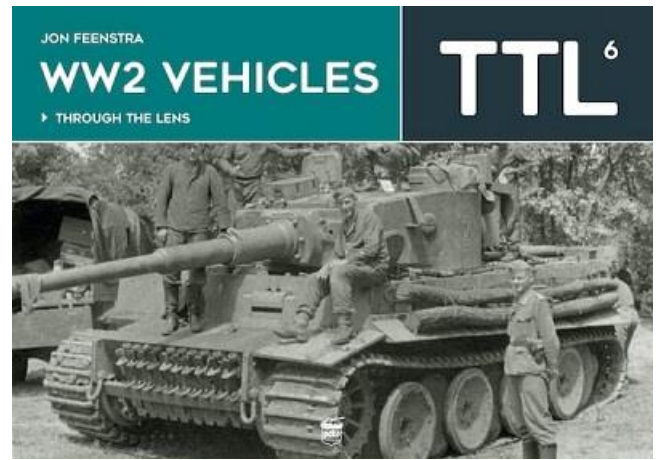
Through the Lens 6: WW2 Vehicles. by Jon Feenstra. Hardback (horizontal 11.9x8.5 inches). 123 pages. 2025.

This is another fine volume in the *Through the Lens* series, which presents over-sized photos at one per page. *Volume 6* offers photos in six groupings, with each group containing 20 photos: Kubelwagen, Tiger II, 88mm gun, S.I.G. 150mm self-propelled gun, Hummel self-propelled gun, and the French tank Somua 35 in German service

My particular favorite is the S.I.G. and halftrack convoy. Runner up: a Tiger I stranded in a snowy ditch with the rest of the platoon following on the farm track and a couple more in the background seeming to be on overwatch.

TTL 6 does an excellent job of presenting WWII black and white photos. These 120 black and white photos offers exquisite views for modelers and wargamers.

Enjoyed it.



The Campaign of 1812: War of 1812. by Steven J. Rauch. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 96 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Casemate Illustrated*

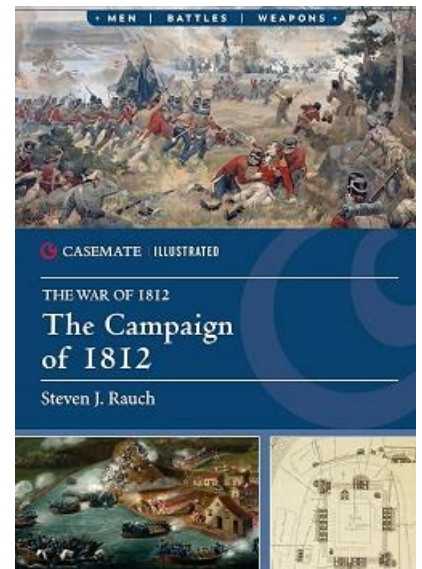
Again, this volume comes from the chapters in the US Army book, but pumped full of marvelous illustrations.

It reads well enough and provides a good strategic analysis plus short recaps of notable movements and battles in 1812. The sheer level of incompetence among most of the senior US leadership led to a variety of US military disasters versus British, Canadian, and Native American enemy forces. The shortcomings of US logistics certainly hindered military operations.

The illustrations make these booklets. The book contains one black and white photo, 10 black and white illustrations, 19 color photos, 24 color illustrations, four black and white maps, and five color maps.

This volume in the series makes a good starting point for an overview of the good, bad, and ugly operations of 1812. Certainly the illustrations included reinforce the name of the series.

Enjoyed it.



Aachen. by Robert W. Baumer. Softcover (7.4x9.7 inches). 426 pages. 2015.

Subtitle: *The US Army's Battle for Charlemagne's City in World War II*

This recap of the US Army's WWII drive to Aachen, German counter-attack, and ultimate capture of the city offers an extensive examination of platoon- and company-sized engagements.

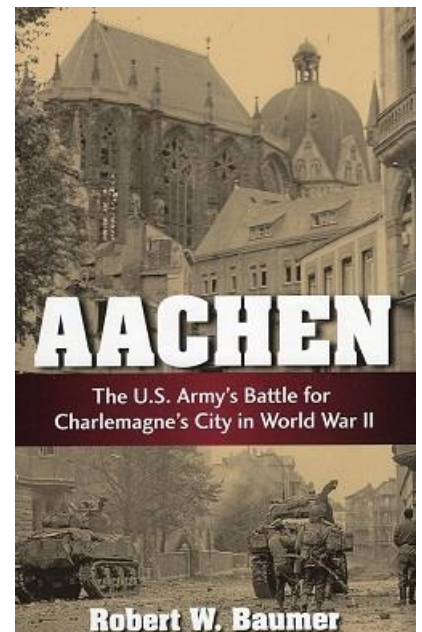
Much of the approach meant battling German infantry in pillboxes, which were taken one at a time using flamethrowers, grenades, direct tank fire, and other close actions. While a few held out until all defenders were killed, the majority surrendered after not too much of an attack. Poor morale was one of the reasons.

The German doctrine of counter-attack also meant that sometimes intact pillboxes were lost due to US retreats and had to be taken anew. The same went for villages defended, captured, lost, and recaptured. There are more than a few tabletop scenarios that can be lifted from the text. As for the city itself, the house-to-house fighting receives ample coverage. Nice terrain descriptions inside the city and out.

The book contains 38 black and white photos and six black and white maps. I'd like to see more maps -- six doesn't do the text justice.

Otherwise, this is a nice, sharp tactical-level examination of a US attack on the first German city of the Western Front.

Enjoyed it.



Bio of a Space Tyrant: Volume 4 Executive. by Piers Anthony. Paperback (4.2x6.9 inches). 328 pages. 1985.

It's tough being a dictator trying to fix all the problems of the Jupiter government -- starting with the budget. While simplistic in explanation, Tyrant Hope Hubris delegates responsibility for the various departments to his high-powered team members, who hatch plans to solve budget deficits, overpopulation, unemployment, profiteering, poverty, illiteracy, foreign incursions, and so on.

It takes time. If it was a movie, it'd have a music montage to skip those eight years of painful edicts, including forced contraception, tax reform, decriminalizing drugs, prostitution, and all the vices and then taxing them, diplomatic saber rattling, and so on. I did like the Senators using icicles to avoid weapon detection and try to stab "Caesar" to death.

Meanwhile, the assassination attempts fail, the executions begin, his sex life restarts with virtual shared reality with a mistress. In a bizarre twist, Tyrant Hope becomes efficiency expert Jose Garcia, working his way up the management ladder at a newly nationalized company. He even gets to be a leader in the Resistance movement.

Society's problems resolve, but a happier public generates complaints grow about forced contraception, which is eventually phased out. That leaves a few other problems, including a high-stakes personal meeting with the head of the Resistance: his wife.

Uneven, but ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Bio of a Space Tyrant: Volume 5 Statesman. by Piers Anthony. Paperback (4.2x6.9 inches). 328 pages. 1986.

Tyrant Hope Hubris resigns and exiles himself to Saturn, where he becomes a roving ambassador to gain support from all the other planets for the Faster-the-Light project. Being a tyrant has advantages and disadvantages, but diplomacy and the Saturn Navy are powerful incentives for other planets to cooperate, while assassination and kidnapping attempts require cleverness to escape.

In the end, it's a little more *Mission Impossible* than *Star Wars* in the effort to solve most dilemmas, not the least of which is confronting the old toxic Jupiter ex-President Tocsin, who has reclaimed the office and is trying to institute his own brand of tyranny.

Again, a bit uneven, but ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Curtis Nighthawks in the Soviet Far North 1941-45: Europe at War 49. by Andret Latkin. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 80 pages. 2015.

Subtitle: *Volume 1: Origins and Early Combat Operations 1942-May 1944*

This traces the use of P-40s in the USSR during WWII. As you might expect, lots of first-person accounts pepper the pages, often accompanied by the pilot's hand-drawn maneuvers of the aerial battles. It's like color ribbon diagrams, only period and in black and white.

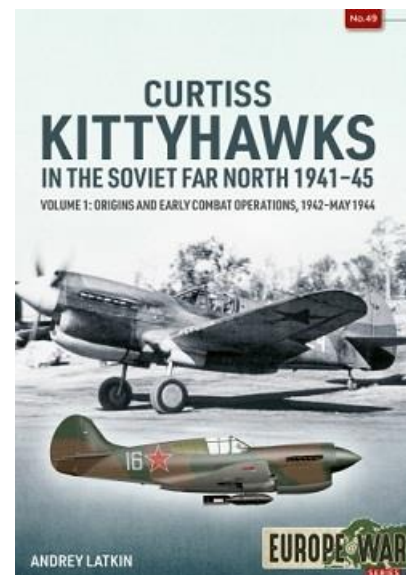
Quite often these go day by day and month by month. Indeed, these go on quite a bit. I tended to skip through the second half of the text because it seemed like a lot of rinse and repeat. Yet, the benefit of all this can be a plethora of scenarios for air-to-air battles.

Some of the strikes were against convoys and airfields to offer a bit of variety.

The book contains 46 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and 20 period black and white maps/maneuvers.

It's another fine volume in the series.

Enjoyed it.



Spectre of Invasion. by Steve R. Dunn. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 352 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *The Royal Navy and the Defence of Britain's Coast 1900-1918*

What a fascinating examination of British coastal defenses prior to WWI, starting with a speedy recap through the ages and a survey of novels positing an invasion of Britain by a variety of foreign powers.

Quite interesting are post 1900 funding decisions between the Royal Navy and the Army. One premise is that a strong Navy would stop any invasion, so you only need a weak Army. The other premise is that the Navy can't stop small raids or even a large invasion of 70,000, so you need a strong Army to repel the invaders.

The compromise was that enemy raids of 5,000 to 10,000 were an acceptable risk, but large invasions were not, so the majority of the funding went to the Navy. The Army would be minimal, but instead a voluntary militia force of 315,000, called Territorial Force, would be raised (p53). That number proved hard to raise via volunteers and conscription bills failed to pass even as late as 1913.

Still, WWI-era forts, coastal ships, and coastal batteries were proposed, approved, and built. They proved less than optimum at stopping a number of German Naval bombardments and air raids during the war, but the defenses expanded and tightened up as the war progressed.

A couple missing period typos (p225 and p237), but otherwise clean.

The book contains 110 black and white photos, 21 black and white illustrations, and three black and white maps.

I never thought much about coastal defense of Britain beyond the Navy that fought a few naval battles like Dogger Bank and Jutland and the odd shore bombardment. Yet there's a whole layer of British defense behind the naval wall of ships and this book explains it well.

Enjoyed it.

Rodney and Nelson: ShipCraft 23 Revised. by Les Brown and Robert Brown. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 80 pages. 2025 revision of 2015 book.

The *Craft* series of modeling booklets is always a pleasure to read. While my plastic modeling days are long behind me, the historical info offers an overview of design, construction, and deployment. The color photos of completed models are inspirational and the color camouflage profiles can be applied to any scale miniature.

ShipCraft 23 covers Britain's *HMS Rodney* and *HMS Nelson*, from their 1921 start onward. Shortcomings of ship handling and firing are examined, along with refits and upgrades and their WWII service. *Rodney* was scrapped in 1948 and *Nelson* scrapped in 1949.

While you will find the odd model tip here and there, this is not a how to -- more of a here's what you can do if you are as skilled as the highlighted modelers.

The book generally uses the same format as others: p 1-16 history; p17-23 model kits and accessories available; p24-44 color camouflage profiles (1927-1945); p49-58 ship appearance and alterations; p58-63 plans (but no scale mentioned); and p64 bibliography and model companies' contacts.

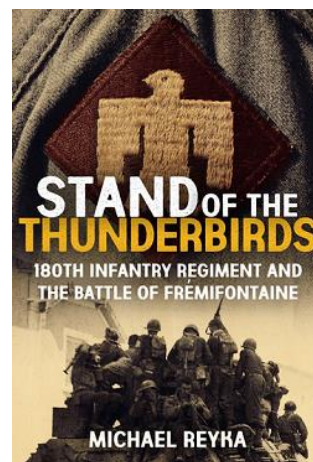
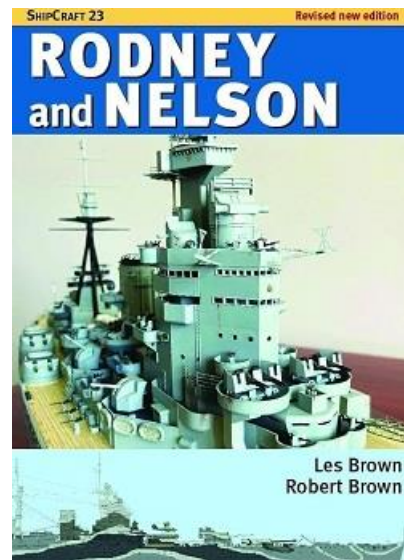
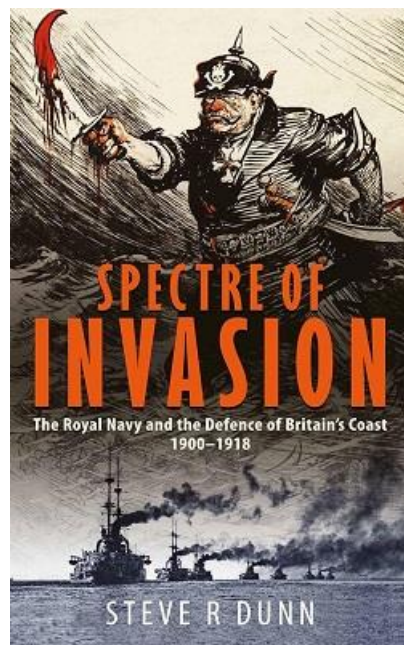
The book contains 40 black and white photos, 32 color photos of model kits, 70 "Showroom" color photos of complete models in 1:200, 1:350, 1:600, and 1:700 scales, and 16 black and white ship plans (no scale).

Enjoyed it.

Stand of the Thunderbirds. by Michael Reyka. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 230 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *180th Infantry Regiment and the Battle of Fremifontaine*

This is less a combat history of a tactical battle and more a travelogue and personal research into finding the author's father's spot in the battle. The author searched archives and interviewed people in the US and France about the battle in general and his



father in particular. His trip in 2010 eventually followed the 45th division attacks through nearby villages until it reached Fremifontane, which was part of the defense line that received a German counter-attack.

His father manned a HMG in Co. H, 2nd Battalion. Period maps help define the position and a guide helped smooth relations and language issues with local residents at each stop. Ultimately, the son reaches Fremifontane and believes he found the actual foxhole his father used when falling back from the initial German onslaught.

The book contains 28 black and white photos and 15 black and white maps.

The maps help set up a tabletop scenario, although you'll probably need a bit more OOB and TO&E research to fill out the forces. All in all, it's a pleasant read and a bit of a "how-to" manual on researching a relative's involvement in WWII.

Enjoyed it.

George Washington and the Creation of the American Republic. by William M. Fowler, jr. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 281 pages. 2025.

After George Washington resigned his military commission, he went back to Mount Vernon, where his estate and various properties were in a bit of disarray. He held a considerable amount of land in the then far western areas of Virginia and his agent had been lax in collecting rents and tolls. While not destitute, his finances needed shoring up, for he had not taken a general's salary during the Revolution.

Off he went, met resistance from the tenants and squatters, and eventually he sued them all and won. They vacated the land. He invested time and energy backing a canal and road project to improve transportation into the west -- not coincidentally where his lands were located. He never saw its completion, for the canal took decades to build -- just in time for railroads to begin hauling goods and passengers.

As he slowly put his farms and finances back into order, a multitude of friends and acquaintances urged him to get more involved in the politics of the US as the Articles of Confederation proved too limiting to keep the country united in the face of considerable states' rights issues. Once more, duty called and Washington reluctantly attended the Philadelphia convention that drafted the original Constitution and the formation of government as we know it. He was unanimously elected as President.

No images are within this book.

The book concentrates on the short time between his resignation as military Commander in Chief and election as President. It is filled with insight and conveys events and details with smart, smooth prose. I admit little knowledge of this period, so this fills a gap for me.

Enjoyed it.

Taking Command. by Thomas D. Phillips. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 307 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *America's Unsung Military Leaders, Innovators, and Difference Makers Since World War II*

This series of short bios covers commanders who countered enemy attacks with innovative and forceful leadership from Berlin Airlift to Afghanistan. Some of the bios I found most interesting were Turner, who coordinated the Berlin Airlift; Walker, who kept the Pusan Perimeter intact; Weyand, who was the architect of the military victory during the Tet Offensive; Thurman, who was the architect of the Panama invasion that captured Noriega; Warden, the planner of the air offensive against Iraq in the Gulf War; and McRaven, the architect of the attack that killed Bin Laden in Pakistan.

The book contains 24 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and 14 black and white maps.

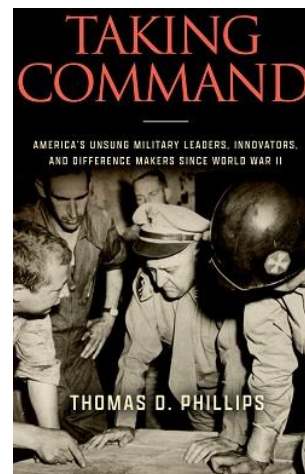
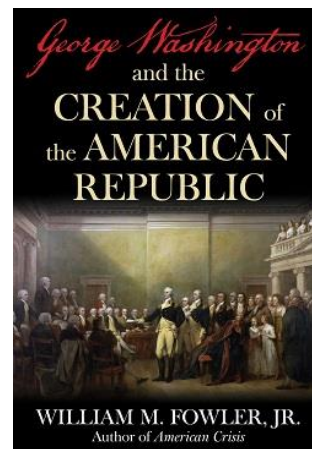
All totaled, 27 short bios of varying length and depth make for some interesting reading. Enjoyed it.

Superspy: Hans Tofte. by David A. Foy. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 213 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Intelligence Officer for SOE, OSS, and CIA*

Here's a bio of someone I never heard off, but apparently had a promising start with the OSS in Yugoslavia and mixed success and failure during the Cold War. He certainly got around in South America, Europe, and Asia planning and executing various schemes as only the CIA can envision.

Tofte argued against the Bay of Pigs invasion and the use of body counts as a measure of



success in Vietnam. He preferred a softer approach that had worked in Yugoslavia, but was overruled.

The book contains 14 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and two black and white maps.

It's a pleasant read and contains some fodder for Cold War spy RPGs that would take place in the shadows.

Enjoyed it.

Rare Birds 02: RWD-14 "Czapla". by Andrej Glass. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 24 pages. 2015.

This short booklet covers a pre-war and WWII Polish observation plane. A short history outlines its design, development, and attributes. Only 79 were built before Poland fell, with 17 flown to Romania and subsequently used in WWII.

The booklet contains 30 black and white photos (mostly crashed or partially destroyed), nine black and white illustrations, 18 black and white 1/48 scale drawings, four black and white 1/72 scale drawings, two color cockpit instrument panel illustrations, and four color camouflage profiles.

It's always good to learn something new about WWII and to me this was a rare bird indeed.

Enjoyed it.



Fighters Over France: 1940. by Stratus Team. Softcover (horizontal: 11.7x8.2 inches). 72 pages. 2025.

Aircraft modelers and wargamers who wish to add pizzazz to their plane miniatures will enjoy this book of color camouflage profiles: mostly side but some overhead and underwing. Fighters from France, Germany, Britain, and Italy are included.

Each color camouflage profile is based on a specific pilot at a specific time during the WWII campaign in France.

The list includes: UK: Hurricanes and Gladiators (but oddly, no Spitfires or Defiants); France: MS-405/406, D520, H-75, CR-714, MB-152, FK 58, and PO-63/631; Germany: Bf-108, Bf-109, and Bf-110; and Italy: CR-42 and G-50.

The book contains 10 black and white photos, one black and white map, five color cockpit instrument panels, and 92 color aircraft profiles. It also contains 21 color ships with associated FS numbers to help modelers select the correct color shades.

One bit of errata: My review copy came with a full color page (p33) of a CR-714 where the original book page had the number 242 instead of 201 as referenced in the aircraft description. My guess is the cost of adding a separate page correcting the error was far less than reprinting the entire book. It's a nice touch to correct a mistake like that.

Gorgeous illustrations make this book.

Enjoyed it.

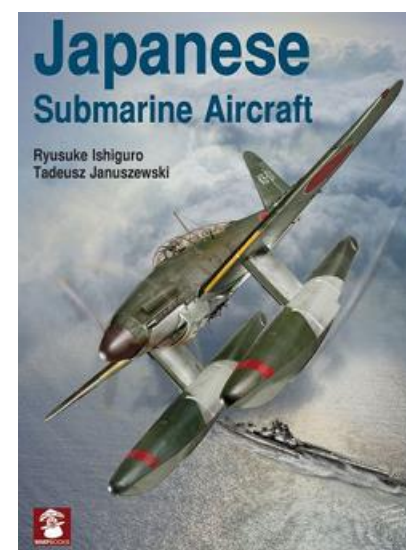


Japanese Submarine Aircraft. by Ryusuke Ishiguro and Tadeusz Januszewski. Hardcover (8.5x12.0 inches). 176 pages. 2015.

On January 6, 1915, German U-boat U-12 carried a FF-29a seaplane on its deck towards the British coast. The U-boat submerged, the FF-29a took off and flew over the Kentish coast and harbors before flying back to its base in Zeebugge (Netherlands). The feat was not repeated.

Japan got seaplanes at the end of WWI and began experiments with creating submarines that could launch and recover planes. The first one was J-5 with a Yokosho E6Y1 seaplane in 1931.

Indeed, the first operational use of such a combination was on Dec 17, 1941 over Pearl Harbor for a recon flight. The mechanics successfully pulled the seaplane from a sealed deck hanger on submarine I-7, assembled it, and watched



it fly to Pearl. The sub submerged and awaited its return, when it was disassembled and stored in the deck hanger. Other flights took place over harbors in Australia. Although significant sub-based flights faded, by the end of the war a plan was crafted to bomb and torpedo the Panama Canal locks. The war ended just before the operation was to commence.

The first bombing of continental US was on Sep 9, 1942 by a sub-launched seaplane that tried to start wildfires in Oregon. The rainy weather foiled the attack.

I-10 launches Yokosuka E14Y in 1944. Image from web.



The book details the design, development, production, and operations of every Japanese sub-based seaplane, including variants. The biggest obstacle was time to assemble and disassemble the planes. While under five minute times were hit on dry land, the time at sea was closer to 45 minutes to an hour.

A few typos: "operation" (p31) needs a capital O; the production chart (p71) is one cell off for the Overall Total; "aircraft ." (p113) has an extra space between the t and period; and "aircraft ," (p116) has an extra space between the t and comma.

The book contains 134 black and white photos, four color photos, 19 black and white illustrations, one color illustration, seven color maps, 65 black and white 1/72 scale drawings, seven black and white 1/48 scale drawings, and 39 color aircraft profiles.

While sub-based seaplane missions didn't make much of a difference in the scheme of the WWII's war in the Pacific, the comprehensive nature of the book offers an interesting sidelight of WWII operations.

Enjoyed it.

The Secret War Between Hitler & Stalin. by Norman Ridley. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 225 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *Intelligence and Counterintelligence on the Eastern Front*

Convention wisdom notes the Germans underestimated USSR manpower reserves in WWII. This book will explain why.

It covers the various kinds of intel and counter-intel, including radio intercepts, agents, Luftwaffe overflights, and other aspects of gathering information. The Soviets were better at it, especially cultivating agents, camouflage, and maskirovka (disinformation). You can also add in British forwarding of ULTRA information, although Stalin was disinclined to believe what the British sent over.

By November 1941, the USSR had 490,000 dead, 1.1 million wounded, 520,000 missing, and 3.8 million POWs in German hands. It's easy to understand how such numbers would crush Western European countries, but the USSR was made of sterner stuff. When German intel said the USSR was unable to launch any winter attacks, Stalin shipped in armies from Siberia and the Far East once USSR intel discovered the Japanese would not attack.

I found the use of Soviet partisans to gather intel quite interesting. Although not much of a fighting force per se, their initial annoyance became a greater and greater threat to German logistics and German prisoners yielded some gems of intel.

On the flip side, the Soviets had considerable intel about the German build-up in 1940 and 1941, including unit movements, bridging equipment available, and airfield construction. Other sources gave general dates of the invasion, but Stalin refused to believe any of it. Once Barbarossa began, panicked Soviet units broadcast radio messages in the clear, often providing the Germans with accurate tactical info.

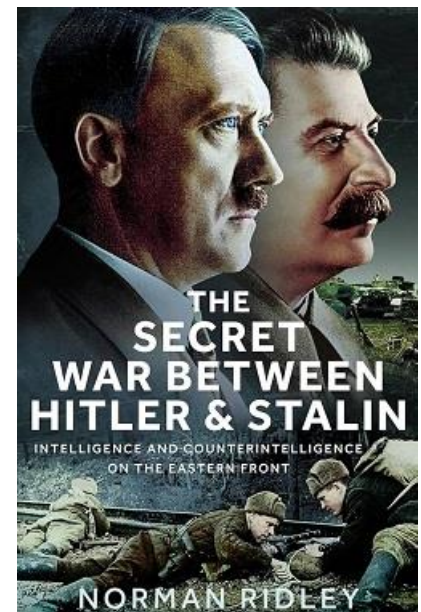
Still, the Germans relegated intelligence work as a low priority.

Several typos: "Operation Toch" (p11 is Operation Torch; "Hindenburg's had called" (p12) should have the "'s" deleted; "Heilman passed along Luftwaffe reports to Soviet intel...Berlin was highly impressed" (p46) seems like Moscow should be impressed; and "KNVD" (p149 and p161) should be NKVD.

The book contains 16 black and white photos and three black and white maps.

While not exactly a page turner, the workmanlike prose turns out the information and decisions that caused overall German intel failures and overall Soviet successes.

Enjoyed it.



Nemesis: Medieval England's Greatest Enemy. by Catherine Hanley. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 304 pages. 2025.

What a fascinating political book about England vs France as told through a biography of French King Philip Augustus. He may have become king as a teenager, but he learned the art of manipulation quickly. He sowed discontent among his enemies, domestic and foreign, until he rid himself of contenders and coerced English nobles to bend the knee to him.

A sometimes bewildering array of royalty, nobility, and ecclesiastical figures pop in and out of the narrative, not to mention the births, deaths, and marriages between them all. It's all about who allies with whom and whether they stay allied or switch sides. The main English kings are Henry II, Richard I (the Lionhearted), and John -- the latter better known via the legend of Robin Hood. The main French King is Philip Augustus, although becoming king (1179) and remaining king (until his death in 1223) proved challenging.

Very little military action is discussed except for the successful siege of the formidable fortress of Chateau Gaillard and the Battle of Bouvines. This is a bio centered on the politics of the era and the skill of Philip Augustus.

One nit to pick: just about every page has an asterisk somewhere in the text and a footnote at the bottom of the page. It is annoying to keep breaking up the narrative with information that either should be inserted into the text if it's important or just plain deleted. It's about a 50-50 proposition, but why the editor let these asterisked notes stand is beyond me.

The book contains three family trees and six black and white maps.

Other than the annoying asterisks, the book is generally well written. You really need to be at the top of your short-term memory game to keep all the personalities straight, but it's done as well as possible.

Enjoyed it.

Roman Cavalry Tactics: Elite 263. by M. C. Bishop. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2025.

Era by era, the equipment, organization, and tactics of the Roman cavalry receive the usual well-executed overview. The main periods are: Republic (pre-27BC), Early Principate (27BC to 117AD), High (117-192AD) and Late Principate (192-284AD), and Dominate (284-476AD).

Each period follows the same category format: Situational introduction, Strategic Deployment, Tactical and Formation Deployments, Notable Actions, and Arms and Equipment. As the periods change, so too are changes noted in each category.

My only complaint is that a scale does not show on the maneuver diagrams. I mean, I can guess by looking at the individuals in the illustration, but it'd be nice to confirm my estimate.

Otherwise, the booklet contains one black and white photo, 40 color photos, 12 black and white illustrations, and 27 color illustrations.

It's a nice introduction to Roman cavalry tactics through the ages. Enjoyed it.

Stoke Field 1487: Campaign 420. by Dickon Whitewood. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2025.

Subtitle: *The Last Battle of the Wars of the Roses*

Uneasy rests the crown on an English king's head during the Medieval period. The Wars of the Roses offered plenty of combat to secure the throne, including the Battle of Stoke Field on June 16, 1487.

In some respects, it was a small battle, for the Earl of Oxford's troops, the vanguard of the king's army, defeated the rebels under the Earl of Lincoln before King Henry VII's force arrived on a parallel road.

The usual *Campaign* series format is used, with an Introduction (including the failed revolt by Stafford and Lovell), Chronology, Commanders, Forces, Plans, and the nitty gritty of the campaign and the battle. Aftermath deals with the consequences of Henry VII's victory and the Battlefield today offers a glimpse of a battlefield tour.

The booklet contains three black and white photos, 36 color photos, 11 black and white illustrations, 22 color illustrations, seven color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and two color 3D illustrations.

Another fine volume in the *Campaign* series, this one about Henry VII's efforts to squash rebellions.

Enjoyed it.

