

March 2022

Samurai Invade Renaissance Korea: *Fields of Glory*
Return of Von Lockwood: *Normandy Command Decision*
Spanish Civil War Card Game: Improved Prototype
Kursk Playtest: *The Art of Armored Warfare*
Clash of Carriers: Turkey Shoot Intro
GDW Imperium: Blast from the Past
Imperium: Empires in Conflict
Spanish Civil War Card Game: Three Players
Snappy Nappy TTS: 1809 Conclusion

Books I've Read

On To Stalingrad: Die Wehrmacht im Kampf Dec. 1942
US Army Combat Engineer Vehicles: 1980 to the Present
Charles X's Wars: Volume 1 1655-1660
British Aircraft of World War One
Wellington's Cavalry and Technical Corps: 1800-1815
USS Indianapolis: CA-35: Legends of Warfare
The Battle of Gettysburg 1863 (1): Campaign 374
Hitler's Court: Third Reich Inner Circle
The Forgotten American Volunteer Group: 1932
P-51B/C Mustang: Northwest Europe 1943-44 (Dogfight 2)
The Vietnam War: 1956-1975 (Essential Histories)
The Silent Service in World War II
The U-Boat War: Global History 1939-1945
The Paras in Iraq: Operation Telic 1
SS Foreign Divisions: Baltic States (ImagesWar) 1941-45
Out of the Dark (sci-fi novel)
Halbe 1945: Eyewitness Accounts from Hell's Cauldron
Mauser Rifles: Volume 2 - 1918-1945
7 Seconds to Die: 2nd Nagorno-Karabakh War
Fubuki-Class Destroyers: WWII IJN (Legends of Warfare)
Everything Worked like Clockwork: UK Mech 1918-1942
Soldiers of Fortune: Elite 244
Hawker Hurricane IIC: Single No. 36
Lebanese Civil War: Volume 2 (Middle East at War 41)
The Battle for Tinian: Vital Stepping Stone



Samurai Invade Renaissance Korea: *Fields of Glory*

by Russ Lockwood

Our host for the evening, Dave, always lays out a marvelous table with spiffy terrain and well-painted figures. This last session, he outdid himself.

For who knows how long, probably measured in covid-years, Dave painted and crafted and squirreled away 25mm figures and terrain for a Japanese-Korean Renaissance-era wargame. Somewhere in there, Mike helped with some of the buildings.

An oasis of serenity near the edge of brutality.

When unveiled, we all started to pick up the figures for a closer look see. Samurai, monks, foot, cavalry, artillery, ships...wait, what? Yes, a ship. It was for decoration, not battle, but...cool. A large pagoda structure, warlord camps, teahouse (or brothel, we couldn't read the language), bridge, and other little vignettes were all over the table.

Umpire Dave (left) explains what tortures await those commanders who break his figures. Korean players Rich (center) and Marc already know the penalty. Dave brought the white tower of saki.

It was magnificent, and that description does not do the panoply justice. I hope my photos and the photos of other gamers provide the visual delight that marched and charged across the tabletop.

I thought to myself that if he enters this into a painting competition for armies, both armies win first place.

Truly glorious.

Marc (left) and his co-Korean commanders Sam (middle) and Troy.

The Opposing Armies

This was not any specific battle, but representative of a Japanese force meeting Korean resistance. The Japanese primarily sported melee weapons and armor, while the Koreans favored firepower.

Shogun Jay (right) leads the Japanese side of Daimyo Dan (cap), Chris, and Russ (taking photo). Umpire Phil (left) checks the rules as the Japanese move out.

Based, per usual, on die rolls for random side selection, I ended up on the Japanese side along with Chris, Dan, and our fearless shogun leader Jay. Opposing us were the famous K-pop wargaming group RMST4 -- Rich, Marc, Sam, and Troy. Meanwhile, Phil, Dave, and Mike umpired this *Fields of Glory Renaissance* game.



The Samurai Plan

Jay laid out the samurai plan -- let the right flank cavalry crush the Koreans and follow as advantage ripples down the line from right to left. Or as Dan explained: the left holds and the right swings like a door towards the center.

Out right-most commander was Daimyo Chris in charge of the cavalry. Our fearless shogun assigned him the main attack, assuring him that they represent the very best mounted troops known to the Emperor.

The pagoda on the left flank of the Japanese force. Jay's troops at bottom.

I was next to Chris, tasked with keeping up while helping swing the front line into the Koreans like a sumo wrestler charging into a scrawny schoolkid. Dan was next, to keep pace with me and keep contact with our fearless shogun Jay.

Jay had the worst troops in the Japanese Army. Their training was poor.

How poor were they?

They were so poor, during pointy stick drills they couldn't pay attention.

They were so poor, they drank imitation saki.

They were so poor, they could only etch one line of a haiku on a grain of rice.

At least he was defending a hill.

Umpire Dave allowed us to alter our disposition slightly within the bounds of our command. I took advantage of that, placing my armor-clad samurai in the front line next to Dan's samurai and backed by a small samurai unit in the second line. My bowmen and ashigaru gunners were to the right in the front line with an ashigaru spear unit supporting in the second line.

Somebody call for an amphibious assault?

Mind you, my brain rust concerning these rules was in full force as I crammed the second line of troops almost up against the front line. When asked what I was doing, I replied that you get the +1 morale roll die modifier when the unit was one-inch behind the unit testing.

Uh, no. It's up to six inches behind for support.

Ah. Oops. Wrong rules.

Koreans move out first. Photo by Mike.

I also had this small light artillery unit that I kept shifting around trying to find the right spot. Middle of my line? Nope, the slowpokes will never move fast enough to hold the line. Left next to Dan's troops. Nope. Breaks up the samurai line.

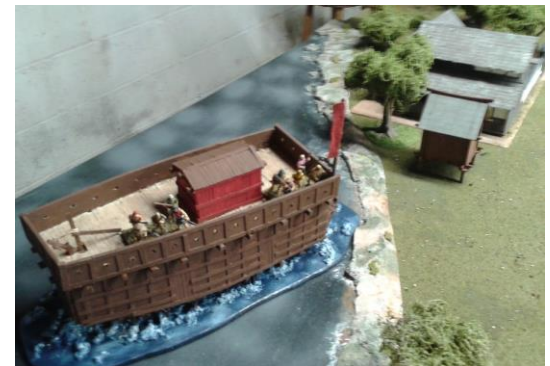
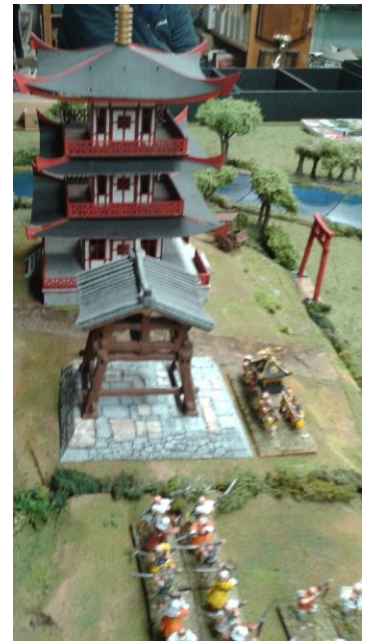
What remained was the right side of my line next to Daimyo Chris' cavalry. Well, that doesn't look good. It'll never keep up. But anywhere else it gets in the way.

Bah! By the itchy right buttock of the Origami Oni, 'tis a miserable locale no matter where I place it. I put it on the right. As the firearms have only a three-Movement Unit (MU) range and the light artillery can shoot out to eight, maybe I'll be able to get in a pot shot.

I left myself, that is, the leader stand, in the middle. I only had a 4MU range to get the +1 morale roll die modifier, so I put myself in the middle of all my troops.

I got a plan, I got a troop span, and I got a samurai command on my left under Daimyo Dan. Time for action, man!

Sam (left) advances his Korean foot while Troy (middle) goes over the hill with his regular cavalry. Umpire Phil (right) looks up a rule. Chris advances his small unit of Japanese light cavalry to meet Troy's larger light cavalry unit by the town. Photo by Dan.



The Korean Plan

Best I could tell, the Korean Army was to shift to crunch our center, presumably hitting the seam between me and Dan. At least that's what it looked like on the approach marches.

The light cavalry exchange missile fire. Photo by Mike.

Soldiers of Nippon, Game On

Daimyo Chris raced ahead, his light cavalry on the right hugging the buildings and his heavy cavalry on his left spoiling for a melee. My poor light artillery struggled to keep up and I just gave it up as a bad job.

Against the cavalry, Troy maneuvered his cavalry across a hill and headed down to the plain.

Turn 4: The cavalry melee. (Clockwise from lower left corner): Rich, Marc, Umpire Mike 'sketching,' Sam, Troy, Umpire Dave, Umpire Phil, Chris, Jay (purple shirt), and Dan (cap). Notice the two plans in action.

Shogun Jay struggled to contain his anguish, believing Chris' cavalry needed to be better positioned to survive the missile storm brewing on the Korean side.

The light cavalry melee from the Japanese view. Photo by Mike.

But survive it he did with clutch die rolling that showed his armor made of teflon and his troops morale so high, the imitation dancing K-popsicles group "Butter Top Samurai (BTS)" sang:

Side slice, right-left, ka-ta-na.
High to the head, like-won-a,
Baby.
Know that he's a gonna,
Let me prove I'm primadonna.
Side slice, right-left, ka-ta-na.
Get it, heads will, roll.



Daimyo Chris could move no wrong, do no wrong, and roll no wrong.

The two sides' lights initially crashed next to the buildings... and Daimyo Chris then showed that he was perfectly ready to take the battle to RMST4. Oh, he lost a stand, but he smashed into melee and chased the Korean light cavalry off the board. He tried to control his ebullient troops, but they rode like kamikazes into the rear of the retreating foe. The routers routed even routier than usual.

Meanwhile, the regular cavalry faced off.

Cavalry Crash (L to R): Rich, Marc evaluates the odds with Sam, Troy feels the odds are in his favor, and Umpire Phil resolves the odds.



Daimyo Russ and the Garden of Delight

RMST4 Sam set up a gauntlet of fire that my sweet, sweet samurai lads needed to survive in order to close and crunch. As my ashigaru gunmen squared off against the opposing gunmen, I worried about the additional firepower Sam and Marc could bear.

Turn 5: Chris points his samurai cavalry at the Koreans. My advance continues under a hail of missile fire as Dan's supports my samurai. Jay holds Pagoda Hill, but sends forth a single unit of bowmen to taunt Rich's Koreans. (L to R): Marc, Sam, Troy, Umpire Mike, Umpire Phil, Chris, and Dan. The plan. The marvelous plan. Unfolds.



Indeed, the tag team duet of Sam and Marc unleashed a considerable number of arrows and lead bullets my way, but I held strong as the power of the morale dice kept me in the battle. I plodded forward.

Sam's view of the early cavalry battle. Photo by Mike.

My Left Flank

Dan easily kept up with me, allowing his armored samurai to absorb barrage after barrage. He hardly ever seemed in danger, although he occasionally took morale tests that he passed.

Shogun Jay relaxed on the balcony of Pagoda Party Towers, content with keeping the left



secure. From what I could see, he was taking tea on the penthouse balcony and waiting for a sumo wrestling exhibition as a way to pass the time.

Turn 6: Korean commanders Rich (middle) and Marc (right) swing towards the center, missile-armed troops in front. Umpire Dave watches the Korean plan come together.

On the Right Flank

Meanwhile, the right flank held all the action as Chris' cavalry charged and countercharged Troy's cavalry. The battle of the lights was over, but the battle of the regulars was about to begin.

The two forces showed little maneuver in the tight confines of the right flank. It was a relatively head-to-head charge with slight overlapping on the right flank by Chris and on the left by Troy.

This time, the fight was tougher. Indeed, in one underdog moment, Chris needed four hits on four dice...and got it!

Somebody call for sixes on all 4d6? Photo by Mike.

Another time, Chris rolled four hits on five dice, only to be bested by Troy, who rolled five hits on six dice. Chris faced yet another 2d6 morale test (9+ to pass) and d6 'death die' roll (on a 1 to 5 lose a stand)...and proceeded to roll 12 on 2d6 for morale and a 6 on a d6 for the death die. Not only did his troops pass morale, they didn't even lose a stand. Phenomenal!

Chris rolled so well, he joked that his fall due to hubris would be catastrophic. "I'm going to slip on the only patch of ice on Dave's driveway and go down hard."

I can assure you that there was no ice on Dave's driveway, nor did an asphalt monster reach out to trip Chris. We all may want to have his dice bronzed for their performance...or have Chris bronzed, so amazing were his rolls.

The red rout chip falls on Troy's light cavalry... Photo by Mike.

Jay joked that several on line gambling concerns and casinos were actively bidding on those dice.

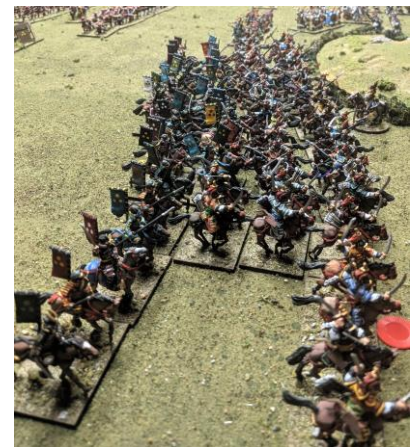
Rich offered congratulations to Chris for saving all of his best dice to lead the victorious samurai attack with his elite cavalry. "Like a hot katana through warm butter," quipped Rich.

Whatever mojo was in Chris' dice today, his cavalry drove the enemy into the hills, literally.

The regular cavalry charge. The cavalry on the right is Chris' Japanese lights, fresh from sending the Korean lights packing, turn around and prep to fall on the rear of the Korean cavalry. Photo by Mike.

Daimyo Russ and the Desperate Hope

RMST4 Sam's arrow and shot storm continued unabated and I couldn't quite get to where I needed to go until several moves into the game. As feared, my light artillery plodded along. Worse, I couldn't fire if I moved, so it did not get a shot in until later in the game. When it finally closed up with my ashigaru with guns, it sat for a turn. That also gave my slightly depleted



arrow boyz some maneuvering to bring fire on enemy ashigaru with guns. With three units on one, Sam's ashigaru broke and fled from the battle.

It wasn't all my way. My arrow boyz and gun-garus each took hits to crumble a stand into the dirt.

Daimyo Russ (lower right) orders an advance. In front of him, ashigaru, helped by artillery (off photo to right) and damaged bow, fire at Sam's ashigaru with devastating effect. Meanwhile, my samurai chase away Sam's bow and face down Korean heavy weapon infantry. More of my samurai support at bottom left corner.

My samurai stood firm while advancing into the enemy bow range. The pointy sticklet shower left my samurai unharmed due to clutch die rolls when I needed them.

Still, it was enough to anger the samurai, who charged. Marc's bowmen evaded through heavily-armed infantry and my samurai followed up. The arrow storm was over. That was the good news. The bad news? Sam's artillery had an open lane for firing at my samurai.

Same situation, but across the entire battleline. Green chips indicate unit had failed one morale check. Photo by Mike.

Once again, clutch rolling meant my samurai were not in the least impressed with Korean artillery. I wasn't impressed with Sam's infantry, either. I called for a banzai charge and my samurai crashed into them. However, they were a little tougher than I had envisioned, as this was a heavy unit instead of the medium units elsewhere. It was essentially an even-up fight.

I didn't hesitate. I joined the samurai. Not at the front, mind you, for I had better things to do long-term than take a chance of being waxed on some spear and waxed off to the ground amid the slaughter of the battlefield. No, I joined to help steady the warriors, keeping fear from their minds.

It worked. The samurai never lost a melee for multiple turns, finally routing the Koreans. I followed up, but not too far. I kept maintaining the contact with Daimyo Dan's samurai on my left. He also moved a unit slightly behind my victorious unit, just in case...

After routing the enemy, alas my nearby bow boyz routed and that unnerved the samurai despite my best efforts. Strange fates, this game. Round after round of intense hand-to-hand carnage and they stand strong. A bunch of feeble bowmen flee and all of a sudden, their spirit of Bushido sits down and takes a nap. I can't complain. My die rolling, while not Chris-like, proved better than usual.



Sundown

The battle raged for three hours, from about 8pm to 11pm, and then Umpire Dave called it. He looked over the casualties, the routers, and the positions and declared what all tableside already knew: The Japanese had won this battle.

The hand of fate, or at least of Sam, picks up the routing Korean heavy weapon infantry, bested by the samurai under the eyes of Daimyo Russ.

Chris' cavalry was already attacking Troy's rapidly diminishing force from flank and rear. I had routed two of Sam's units head-on and Chris' cavalry was coming to sweep in on the flank. Dan had been toying with Marc, accepting bow fire that often did nothing, and awaiting his chance to charge. Jay moved a couple of units off of Pagoda Hill to try and keep Rich from entering the battle, but was otherwise content to be the hinge on which his three subcommands would swing.

It worked.

Bravo, Dave, for the pure spectacle of aesthetic delight.

The Korean cavalry flanks begin to collapse and starts to rout. Photo by Mike.

A Plan Comes Together

by Dan

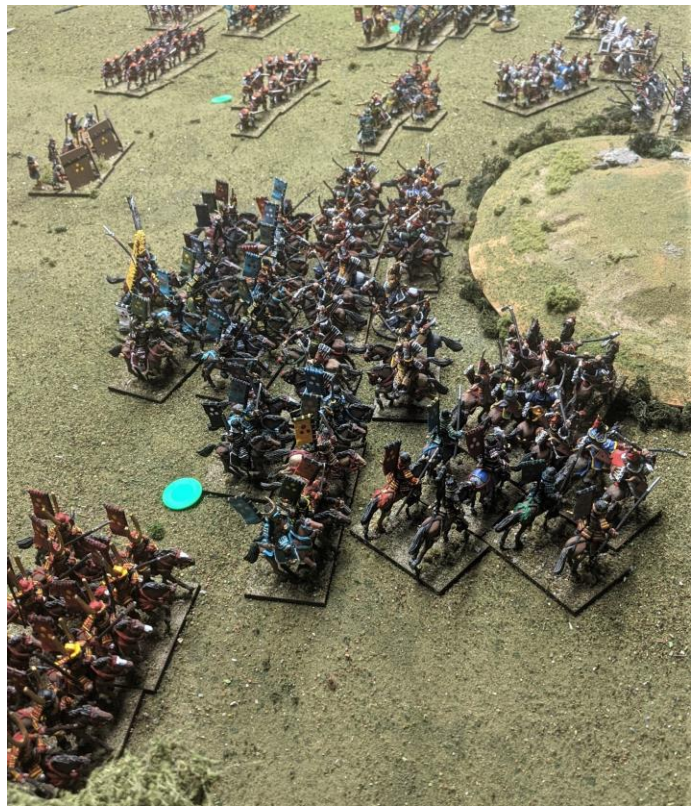
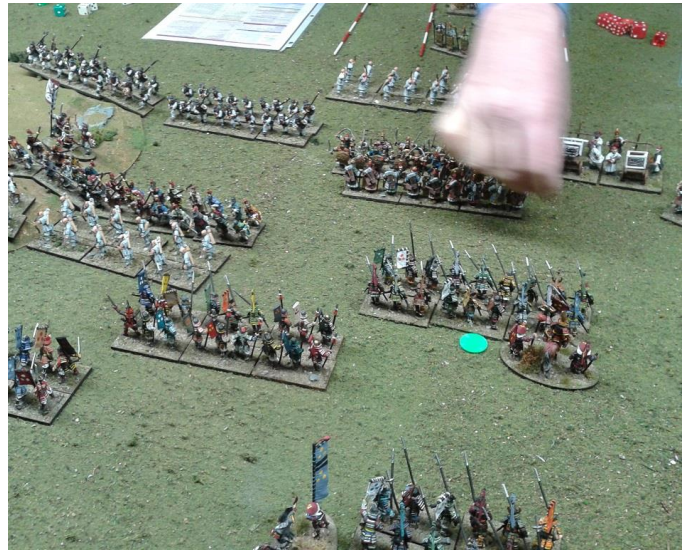
This was a very attractive game.

A rare event occurred: Everyone on our side followed the game plan (the "swinging door" maneuver) and it worked as intended.

Chris did most of the "swinging," demonstrating that a good plan followed by good dice rolls wins the day.

I was content to maintain the battleline between Russ and Jay, who was the "hinge" of the "door". I declined chasing away the enemy archers skirmishing in front of me, since they didn't really bother my samurai (save one test) and as long as they stayed in front of the Korean battleline, the Korean melee troops couldn't engage.

Daimyo Russ' samurai follows up the routing Korean heavy weapons infantry. They are likely to get smacked by Sam's artillery and bowmen, but the advance must continue. Chris (left) has done his job and routed Troy's Korean cavalry and is ready to swing into the center. Dan's samurai keep pace with the 'swinging door.' Shogun Jay should look happier with a battle looking more and more like victory. Photo by Dan.



I suspected the Korean infantry would fight on even terms with mine (as their Heavy Weapons negate any armor advantage I would have normally enjoyed) and although I had superior-rated troops in the front, there were more of them massed in my sector than I had (and I did not want my archers to be forced into a melee).

Total cavalry victory as Korean cavalry run away over the hill – pushed from behind by victorious Japanese cavalry. One cavalry melee remains, but Chris lines up his unengaged units for a flank charge. Russ' ashigaru wheel slightly to fire at Sam's bowmen. Russ' shielded light artillery unit is left behind in the advance.



We'll never know what would have happened had it came to melee, but seeing the good news happening on my right allowed me the luxury of waiting for the enemy flank to collapse. Had the "good news" on the right flank turned out to be "bad news," I would have been obligated to charge to try to win the battle in the center.



Final positions. A Japanese victory. When Daimyo Chris left the field of battle, he said, "Forget Disneyland. I'm going to a casino!"



Pregame (l to r): Rich, Marc, Sam, Troy, Phil, Dave, Chris, Russ, Dan, and Jay. Photo by Mike.

The Return of Von Lockwood: Normandy *Command Decision*

by Russ Lockwood

Major von Lockwood woke up in the battalion aid station, sore but apparently intact. The medic saw him sit up and hurried over.

"You're fortunate, Major. Just a few pieces of shrapnel and a few bruises. How are you feeling?"

"Slammed, but intact. Where are we?"

"Battalion aid station, although currently under British occupation. They took Hill 13 and the town and found you in a pile of human pieces and radio parts."

Von Lockwood grunted and looked around. Not a paratrooper to be seen. He eased to his feet, stretching as he took a few tentative steps.

British aid station. Image from web.

"You should be fine, Major. A Tommy doctor looked you over, removed the shrapnel, and declared you fit enough."

Von Lockwood grunted anew. "Time for me to go. Any guards?"

The medic shook his head in the negative.

"Any cover?"

"Woods to the north, 25 meters."

"Then we'll see how far we make it. Fall in behind me."

"With respect, Major, the Tommies are overwhelmed with German casualties. I believe my duty lies with our wounded," the medic said.

Von Lockwood nodded. "I'll look you up when we've driven them back into the sea."

With that, he hesitated at the tent flap for a moment to orient himself and then sauntered into the woods, untroubled by any British soldiers. He edged deeper among the trees and set out to find his regiment...

HQ. Image from web.

Von Lockwood strode into the town hall serving as Grenadier Regiment 711's headquarters. "Major von Lockwood, reporting," he snapped, bringing himself to attention.

Colonel von Raiff looked him over, noticing the bandages on his arm. "Your uniform needs attention, Major."

Von Lockwood looked down at the shredded sleeve. "Yes, sir. British tailoring on Hill 13. I will attend to it best I can given the circumstances."

The colonel nodded. "And you escaped?"

"Yes, sir. Walked out of the aid station during the confusion and stayed off the roads to evade patrols. The front lines are still somewhat porous, so I eventually made contact with our troops and hitched a ride here."

"Well, welcome back, Major. I am sorry to say your previous colonel was shipped to the Russian front, but I am still reconstituting the 711th. You may resume command of your battalion, or I can forward you to medical."



"Tommy doctor did a good job patching me up. I will resume command."

"Good. We don't have much time." Colonel Raiff shuffled through papers. "We've brought second battalion near enough strength as we can. You'll have three companies, but not the battalion mortar."

"Understood," von Lockwood replied.

Raiff looked up. "Come with me."

The two ascended the steps and looked out across the town. We expect three battalions of paratroopers from that direction, beyond those two hills. We have to hold this town called Annabelle and the hill behind it. Call it Hill 14."

"And our forces?" von Lockwood asked.

"We have two battalions: your reconstituted second battalion and the reconstituted first battalion. We also have two extra companies of infantry and a 75mm anti-tank gun platoon we scrounged from the retreat. Amazingly, we even have land mines."

"Artillery support?"

"Not much. A battery of 150mm guns and two batteries of Russian 76.2mm guns. No battalion mortars."

"Not much better than what we had at Pepe Le Pew."

Colonel Raiff released a guttural "Ja." He compared his view to the map he carried. "I'm considering dispositions."

"You don't, by any chance, have a Sergeant Schultz available?"

"Too late. I shipped him off to the Fallschirmjagers." Raiff glanced up from the map. "Should I recall him?"

"No need. I won't need a foxhole in town."

Table start. Brits up top. Annabelle at the crossroads. Hill 14 at lower left.

Continued Campaign

This *Command Decision* scenario follows on the end of the previous month's *Command Decision* scenario (see the 3/3/2022 AAR). If you remember, some companies bolted and ran in a couple 1-in-10 die roll disasters.



Once again, the British are on the attack and the Germans must try to stop them. This time around, both sides contain some wiggles in their OOBs.

Jake is a blur of motion and the end of Turn 1 as Garret ® looks on.

Defense

The short version of defense is that Marc's First Battalion generally was to the left of the main road and my Second Battalion was on the right. In front of us was a saddleback ridge with a pair of hills: Tripwire Hill in front of me and Anti-Tank Hill in front of Marc. Both of us put a company on them to slow down the British advance and allow our artillery to come into play. Marc had our one AT gun in the hedge backing his hill.

The second company of my battalion was to the right of the town of Annabelle, dug in behind a hedge. Alas, it was only an ordinary hedge, not a stout Normandy bocage hedge.

TripWire Hill troops face Garrett's paratrooper battalion and Churchill platoons – but not for long.

I placed my third company in town along with the two attached infantry companies. That covered three of the four major 'blocks.' The fourth block was empty because we had run out of troops. It would serve as a rallying point for all the troops I expected to break from bad morale rolls.

Marc concentrated his other two companies, plus the 150mm howitzer, on Hill 14, roughly behind Annabelle.

As before, we each had a 76.2mm artillery battery for support.

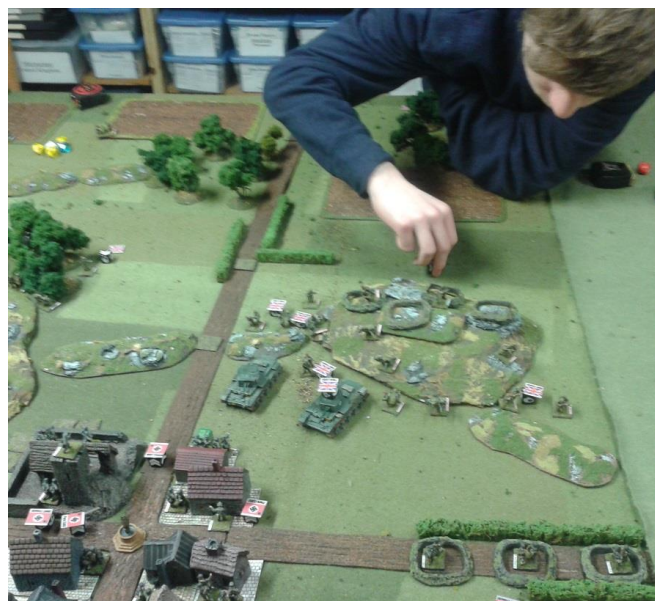
Brits overrun Tripwire Hill and advance on Annabelle as well as my second company of Germans in the hedge.

Offense

The Brits were much like before: three battalions of vicious veteran paratroops with mortar and 105mm artillery support. Of course, the Brits had an OOB wrinkle. They had the deadliest weaponry on the board -- two Cromwell tank platoons.

Were they deadly because of the 75mm HE they could fire?

No.



Is it because of the MG fire they could bring to bear?

No.

Then, what?

'Twas a big -2 to morale to any German within 12 inches plus a -1 to morale for nearby British infantry.

AT Hill holds out, but not for much longer either.

Seriously?

Yep. Panzer panic is real in *Command Decision*. Without going into too much detail, numberwise, an intact Regular German company in foxholes that spies with their little eyes a British tank-infantry pairing has a 30% chance of failure.

The British paras in cover pass at 1-11, but sees German infantry (-1), and thus pass on 1-10. Ergo, they can't fail. One platoon has to fall back or die to even think about a chance of failing morale. Once the Brits come out of cover, percentages get better -- at least from the German standpoint.

Oh, and the Brits also had a pair of recon vehicles for good measure.

Morale failure of my hedge row company as Annabelle gets pounded. Note the (ignored) mine on the main road between the two ridges.

Ah, but us Germans had landmines.

I stuck 'em at choke points on the road, figuring the vehicles would have to lose valuable time going through hedges and over hills.



The Attack

Two British battalions formed a loose skirmish line and quickly sent their recon platoons up to spy out the Germans in foxholes atop TripWire Hill and AT Hill.

By the end of turn 5, the Brits overrun AT Hill and start to infiltrate into the woods (bottom left) to flank Hill 14.



The artillery and mortars came in on both sides. The tank fire and MMG fire and rifle fire came in and Herman's yer uncle, my company on Tripwire Hill was slaughtered, leaving only the command stand to flee back to town.

Marc was made of sterner stuff and held AT Hill the way I thought it was going to be held -- i.e. more than one turn.

At least the 75mm AT Gun took a shot at a Cromwell before the crew fled the scene and not due to morale failure from seeing the Tommy tank-infantry combo.

Marc (left) watches Jake's relentless advance of the Brits.



What About Those Mimes?

Surely, you mean mines?

Nope. And stop calling me Shirley.

First of all, the mines can be seen and so avoided.

None of the terrain had any effect on any British unit's movement. So, the tanks and armored cars just veered through hedges and over hills with nary a care in the world. Infantry, too.

Hence, I called them mimes, because all they did was mime minefields. Not a one exploded.

Tommy the Tank Engine

Garrett's infantry battalion swept up and over TripWire Hill, only to hit my second company in the hedgerow.

Well, that didn't last long. Fire forced two of the four platoons to fall back. Along came the morale roll, and with a 50% chance of a fail, they failed, and failed big time (a 10 on a d10). Worse, they needed a battalion or regimental commander to slide over and try to rally them.

What the CD experts failed to warn me was that you can't rally within 12 inches of the enemy.

Oh!

So leaving them in the woods was a bad idea... But as they are also pinned....

Ah.

Pinned does NOT mean they don't move. You can move them just fine.

Oh?

Then why is it called Pinned instead of something like "Annoyed." I bet there's never been a rule set with a morale condition called "Annoyed."

I suppose 40 years of the same term ought to soak in, but I haven't played *CD* recently enough to learn it.

The Brits start to clear Hill 14 on left and clear the town of Annabelle at top. The Marder is under all that smoke in town. By now, the retreat should be starting, with the STuG providing a rearguard.

Meanwhile, On The Left

Jake infiltrated his paratroopers through the woods line to flank Hill 14. He used the third British battalion to shoot the gap between him and Garrett to attack AT Hill. Then he added the armored cars.

Marc proved adept at holding AT Hill. His company hung on, even as Jake carefully kept his armor more than one inch away from the German platoons -- each of which had panzerfaust.

And if you remember from last AAR, troops with panzerfausts can't move and shoot the 1-inch range panzerfausts. As a result, they just get hammered into bloody pools at the bottom of their foxholes.

The same problem occurs in towns. Spotting troops in a block is at two inches. Panzerfausts shoot one inch.

You might as well not even have them -- unless you're playing hidden movement where the opponents can't see your stands. Let's see if those tanks would be as bold if they didn't know where the infantry stand hid.

Meanwhile, the artillery played back and forth across the fields and foxholes with the occasional KIA result. No matter, the British morale held firm. The German morale, meh.

Final Battles

Then, Marc pulled an ace out of his sleeve -- a Marder in all its armored thinness in town took a shot at the British armored car. One hit, one wrecked car. German morale soared.

Then all sorts of firepower pain visited the Marder and poof went the Marder.

The British infantry edged closer and closer to the town of Annabelle. The Germans took their opportunity fire to lesser or greater effect. The return fire did a little damage, but less than expected.

The close assaults produced melees that saw the Brits go 2:1 against German platoons with predictable successes.

The German morale checks failed and what few troops remained fell back through the town.

Say 'Ello to My Leetle STuG

I brought out the STuG and stuck it in the village of Feu le Guerisseur, it's deadly 75mm pointed in



the direction of the advancing Cromwells.

BOOM CHUGGA-LUGGA!

The cannon roared a round into the lead Cromwell.

Ooo eee ooo ah ah, tink tank, walla walla clink clank.

The hit did little except force the Cromwell to fall back. So much for the big reveal.

The British attack into Annabelle sent more Germans packing.

Hill 14

The British artillery played across the desolation of Hill 14, turning it into Hill 13.5 with all the ordnance expended upon it. A few German platoons were buried there as well.

Opportunity fire against British recon did little and the British paratrooper steamroller seemed invincible.

The End

We called it after eight turns and 2.5 hours. It was pretty apparent that the German infantry and the STuG were not going to hold off the British capture of Annabelle and Hill 14.

My notion of adding a company of better troops did little in the face of added British tanks. I suppose I should have brought out the STuG on Turn 1 and let the British infantry face -2 die modifiers to at least give the Tommies a chance of failure and falling back.

Marc had planned a trilogy, but after two straight sweeps of the Germans, the third game was abandoned.

I suppose I should have taken a British battalion and see what happens. If that fled, then we know it was the commander's fault.

Er, with me in charge, any fleeing would definitely be the commander's fault, no matter what side I would be on.

Thanks, Marc

That said, it's interesting re-learning a system and all the boogie-woogie nuances that come with any rules set. I will say one thing: *Command Decision* always gives me a sense of story. Now, if I can only master the nuances well enough to ride into the sunset in the glow of victory instead of ignominious defeat.

Thanks for hosting, Marc...and my opponents for putting up with semi-noobie questions.

Now, this is what we needed...image from web.

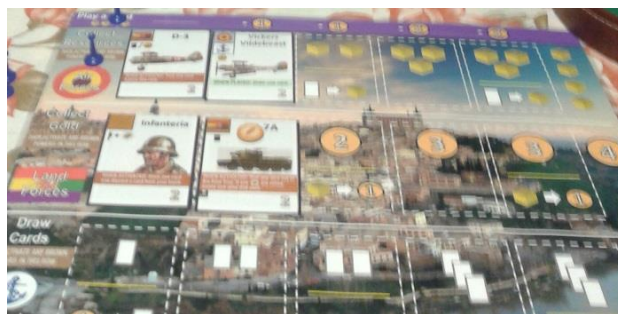


Spanish Civil War Card Game: Improved Prototype

by Russ Lockwood

Dan improved his Spanish Civil War Card Game (*Guerra Civil Española*) with additional cards, including event and wild cards, to provide a little more SCW feel.

The player mat early in the game. I brought out two air and two ground units, but my navy is nowhere to be seen.



We played a number of games. As I noted previously, they take about an hour, if that. As I'm now familiar with the sequence, each turn takes less and less time, while the resource acquisition and management still challenges your planning ability.

Something I started to take advantage of was trading in two unneeded resources for one that was required. This resource drain does allow you to deploy more cards (forces), which can help in the later turns.

The dice and card draws ensure replayability.

One aspect that may need attention, although it is historical, is that the Nationalists won every game we played. Indeed, when we switched sides and I played the Nationalists and Dan the Republicans, I won as the Nationalists. It may be coincidence or it may be numerical. The games are always close, say, less than double-digit victory points (or a card or two or three), but from a design perspective on a historical game, giving the historical winners a 60% chance of winning vs the losers at 40% is about as far apart as you want.

It is cool to see all the rickety pre-WWII equipment being played instead of late war Tiger tanks, Sturmoviks, aircraft carriers, and P-51s. When you have to ask, "What the heck is this?" you know you're in new territory.

You can use this as a scenario set up: Most games bring out about eight or nine cards, which would give you eight or nine units.

Well done. We salute you.



A salute somewhere in Spain. Image from web.

Kursk Playtest: The Art of Armored Warfare

by Russ Lockwood

Lee brought his *Art of Armored Warfare* (AAW) rules around for another go, this time revised from previous playtests and including terrain on a smaller table.

AAW mostly uses one stand equals one battalion. I say mostly because some German tank stands represent only a company of Tigers or Elephants and took fewer hits before being destroyed -- or, more realistically, combat ineffective.

Designer Lee (left) lays out a 15mm Kursk scenario. Dennis takes the Germans while I have the Soviets.



The idea is to upscale a game to represent a corp of three divisions. For this scenario, it's three SS divisions (three commands) against three Soviet tank corps (which is roughly the equivalent of a division). As I recall, I had 27 or 28 stands to Dennis' 19 stands.

Each game is four turns long and supposed to take 2.5 hours. We only did two turns, but this included kibitzing, questions, answers, thought processes, historical trends, and so on. It's a playtest.

Command and Control

AAW uses the *La Art d' la Guerre* (LADG) d6 + commander rating divided by 2 (round up) equals the number of pips to use. You also get a commander-only pip. Like *DBx* and *LADG*, units that remain touching and performing the same move use one pip. As the Germans have fewer stands, say about six per command versus the Soviet nine stands per command, the Germans have slightly better command control.

Purple hits show the difficulties facing the Soviet advance.

The other advantage of more pips is using them to try and roll off hits -- think of it as commanders rallying companies back into a semblance of order.

The Germans are almost all veteran units while a third of the Soviets are mediocre, so quality



goes to the Germans. That benefits or penalizes firing, defending, and passing Quality tests. The one even-up benefit for the Soviets are artillery and aircraft -- Elite.

AAW uses a point system, so while the total points were equal, the German stands cost more and hence the Germans had fewer stands than the Soviets.

Where's Are the Soviet AT Guns?

Remember this is a big scale, so all those Soviet AT guns at Kursk are subsumed into other formations for this game. I suppose that goes for minefields, too. Or else the Germans had broken through the first two lines and this was the Soviet armored counterattack to stop a big breakthrough.

As played, it's a tournament-style meeting engagement.

Given the scenario, victory goes to the side that knocks off a certain percentage of enemy units. It doesn't matter what the unit is, just that it's dead and removed from the table (2 VPs) or "wounded" and remaining on the table (1 VP).

The Advances

As you can see from the Soviet view of terrain, the battlefield divides into three sectors: Open steppe left of the RR tracks, mixed terrain in the middle between the RR tracks and the river, and mostly open right of the river. I assigned one command to each, as did Dennis.

Dennis' Germans grabbed the initiative and leapt forward to grab a town in the middle and keep pace on the flanks. I led with my tanks and kept the motorized infantry in the back. On the right, my foot infantry lurched into the village, far behind the tanks.

Artillery and Air

Artillery has a 24-inch range and air can be anywhere on the tabletop. So, we both pounded each other with long-range fire.

Here there was a bit of confusion as to the timing of when counterbattery hits take effect. This was a particularly interesting discussion about mechanics and timing. Since this is I-go and U-go, and two arty/air/unit firing phases per turn, it matters, especially when firing in support of close assaults (melees, so to speak).



Two motorized Soviet rifle battalions backed by armor, air, and artillery, try to storm the village defended by a pair of SS infantry battalions flanked by superior German armor. Yellow chips represent German artillery fires while red chips are naturally Soviet artillery fire. The blue dots at the back of some Soviet stands indicate 'mediocre' troops. The red dot indicates recon troops.

In the end, and for the next game, Lee separated out arty/air into its own Phase. No confusion there.

For this game, the arty/air combo proved devastating, killing off about two-thirds of all units that were eliminated in the game. The other one-third came when units fired at enemy partially nailed by the long-range fire.

My T-34 stands could take three hits. As the number of hits depends on a variety of factors plus the d6 roll, most successes were of the one hit variety, but Dennis did score two hits on rare occasion. However, when you combine an arty attack, air attack, and a tank attack, it is possible to vaporize an enemy unit in one firing phase.

Dennis did a particularly nice job of killing off alternate T-34s in my central group, which caused problems in the next movement phase -- I needed lots of pips to reorganize.

The Close Assault Melee

I had to try the melee and so on turn 2 sent my motorized infantry to drive the Germans out of the town. I moved the heavier tanks from the left command onto the RR tracks to pester the German tanks to the left of the village. I added air and artillery support to the melees -- as did the Germans.

Here we had another discussion about infantry factors when on the defense. Again, it also included a mechanics discussion. Since this is an opposing d6 roll mechanic, adding 1 to a die roll can be significant. The brain trust pondered...Lee came up with a solution to try in the next playtest.

Alas, the dug in Germans survived all I had to offer. As the die rolls were about even, the veteran German infantry showed that the Soviets would not get a quick overrun against dug-in infantry in a village.

That's Where We Left It

It was about an hour per turn. All the losses were due to firing, none to melee, and about two-thirds from arty and air attacks alone. Lee liked those firing results.

Dennis, a *LADG* point hawk, noted that with such pronounced results, taking arty and air would prove a points winner. Maybe. All point system suffer from abuse -- tournaments often have certain armies more powerful than others, so it is possible for tournament folks to load up.

My philosophy is more about having a good historical battle than tweaking point lists, but to each their own. That was abundantly clear in the pandemic lockdown "Play by Phone" *LADG* 'tournament' where I had a perfect record -- not a win in three games. Not even close to a win in three games.

In any case, the design progresses. It's a little "block-like" on the table, but then again, as a corp commander, you don't like gaps and the pip system encourages you to stick together. Well, that and isolated battalions are dead meat to a concerted divisional attack unless they enjoy quality and terrain advantages.

It's getting there.



Optimistic Soviets advance towards the town...Image from web.

Clash of Carriers: Turkey Shoot Intro

by Russ Lockwood

I set up the *Clash of Carriers* prototype coming in *Against the Odds* magazine so Dennis could get a feel for the system.

Dennis starts moving the US Navy.

As a learning sequence, Dennis sorted through the US fleet. As we pulled activation chits, the Japanese were able to launch an airstrike with land-based aircraft. It wasn't a big strike, but I caught the USN Task Group without fighter CAP.

Even with that advantage, the US AA proved deadly, but I still had a couple aircraft left over for low-odds rolls: 10% to hit. I missed both and went back to the airbase.

Dennis pulled a Task Group chit and sent a strike package to Guam, where he eliminated the Japanese aircraft.

Another pair of Japanese air strikes from islands resulted in the same effect: one low-odds die roll each time. However, this time, the US CAP shot down a few aircraft, then the AA shot down a few aircraft, and then I had low-odds rolls.

Japanese aircraft face off against US CAP from Enterprise and Lexington from Task Group 58.3.

That said, I forgot about the 50-50 die roll that said AA-downed aircraft get a 50% chance of completing their attack before being eliminated. VPs maybe left on table. Doh!

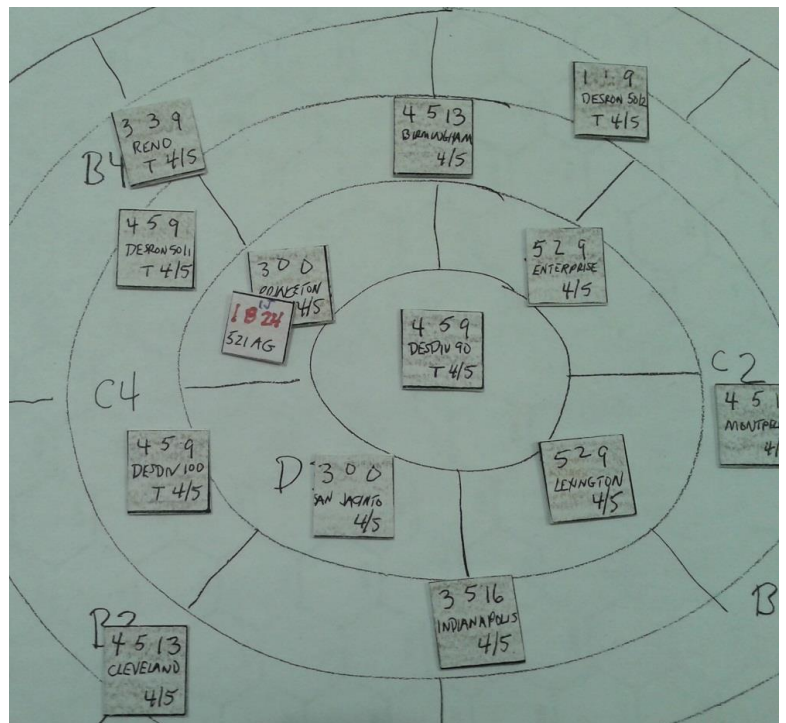
While the system is simple enough to understand and the results are historically accurate, you will spend time moving TG ships on and off the tactical grid.

One Japanese bomber attacks without success.

But that does give you control over how you set up the defensive rings around the US carriers -- and that's really all the Japanese care about. Victory point wise, one carrier hit is 4 VPs (20 for sinking one -- you need some luck for that) or hit on a light carrier gets 2 VPs (10 if sunk). A non-carrier hit doesn't generate any VPs -- you only get VPs when you sink a ship -- like 8 VPs for a battleship, which takes a dozen hits.

Remember this is the 1944 Battle of the Philippine Sea, aka The Marianas Turkey Shoot. The Japanese have nine carriers, but the USN has 15 CVs and CVLs. US aircraft and pilots are better. We didn't play with submarines, which, historically, sunk two IJN carriers before they could launch plane one.

We'll do better next time. A terrific system, but the IJN is up against the odds.



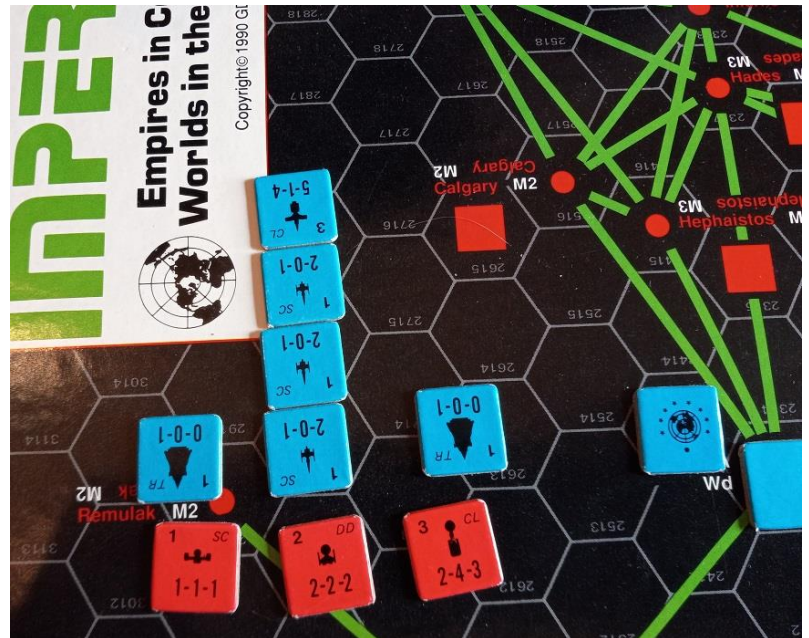
by Russ Lockwood

Marc describes the mechanics in his report, so I'll concentrate on the game.



I figure I'd hold 'em at Sirius and then put the strike force in motion through the right side crossroad, Dushaam.

No matter, the next turn's newly built Terran ships turned my trio into space dust and restored the frontier.



To Planet Bent With Undergrowth

Meanwhile, my right flank force warped to Barnard's Star and the heavily defended Terran outpost with one division, one planetary defense battery, and one outpost. I was unable to neutralize the batteries, so each of them takes shots at each of my ships, including descending transports. Uh-oh.

From Marc's perspective, the Terrans rebuild everything except at Barnard's Star (center left) while I garrison Sirius (center right) and stare down the Terran outpost and scout at Procyon (center right).

I lost a boatload of troopers and a number of orbiting ships, but got three units on the ground. In the simultaneous ground combat, it was mutual destruction -- I wiped the Terrans off the planet surface and they returned the favor. Well, that was an eye-opening waste of resources.

In my second move for the turn, I warped back to my starting system and its batteries.

So, a game with frontiers, and war with tears...

I Took Another, Fleet Just As Fair And Having For Sure The Better Claim

I had to rebuild, so I tried an Appeal to the Emperor, and scored 10 Imperial Buckaroones. When you only have 23 (and have to pay 3 for monitor ship maintenance), that's a big production boost for the next turn.

Because I Was Brassy And Hunted Bear Though For All That Was Parking There A Fleet Armed Really About The Same

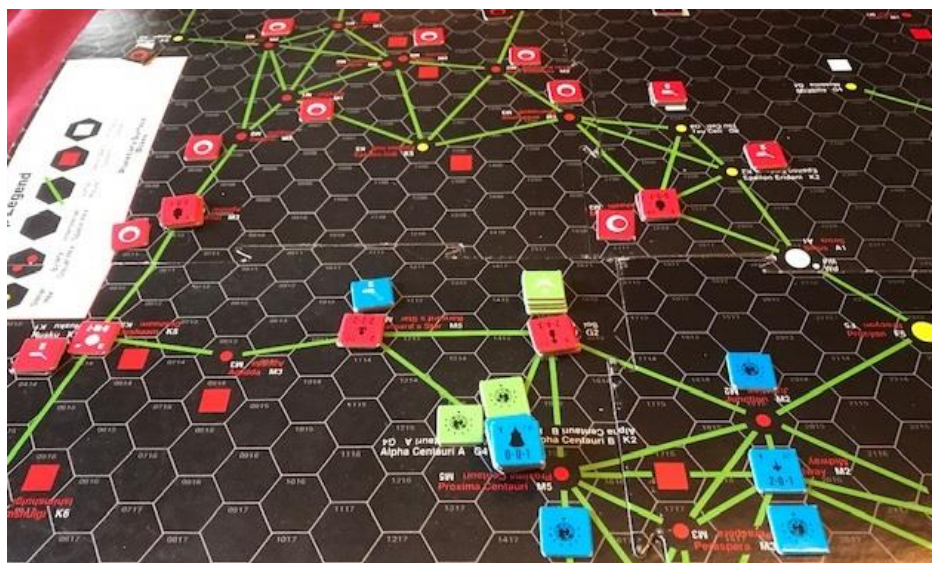
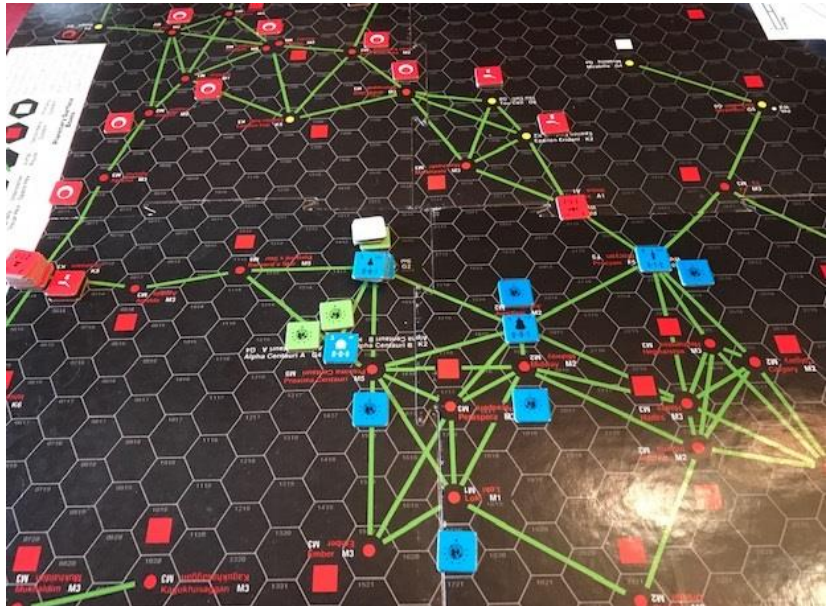
I rebuilt my ships. I built one outpost. Terra rebuilt its ships. Terra rebuilt outposts and then some. I didn't ask the Emperor for anything -- it was too unpredictable -- but a random event noted that I'd score double Glory Points in the next turn.

And Both My Task Groups Equally Flew In Warps My Step Had Trodden 'Fore Oh, I Sent The First Barnard's Way!

My right flank fleet crashed the party at Barnard anew. My left flank fleet stormed first one outpost, and then another, with a blockade fleet around Sol itself, the two wings of my offensive meeting in the middle. My Glory Points ratcheted upwards.

The Red Imperials ignore the ground force at Barnard's Star while another force blockades Sol (center) after going through Sirius (white sun) and Procyon (yellow sun at right).

Yet Terra's courage and building capacity created a missile boat fleet that broke my blockade and



trapped my left fleet behind Terran lines. My luck held and I made maintenance rolls so I had no reduction in combat power.

Yet Knowing How Way Leads On To Way I Doubted If I Should Ever Come Back.

I took out one last outpost and scored one last Glory Point to seal the win.

With my fleet at Barnard's Star destroyed by a big pile of Terran ships and smaller ships popping up to break my path to Procyon and Sirius (white sun), my fleet blockading Sol is blockaded itself.

Considering all the rules lookups and working towards interpretations, it did not take overly long -- perhaps about four hours for the five turns. We recorded the game using the "Interwar" years, which turned out to be somewhat anti-climactic in that all forces went sent back to their capitals just in time for another war.

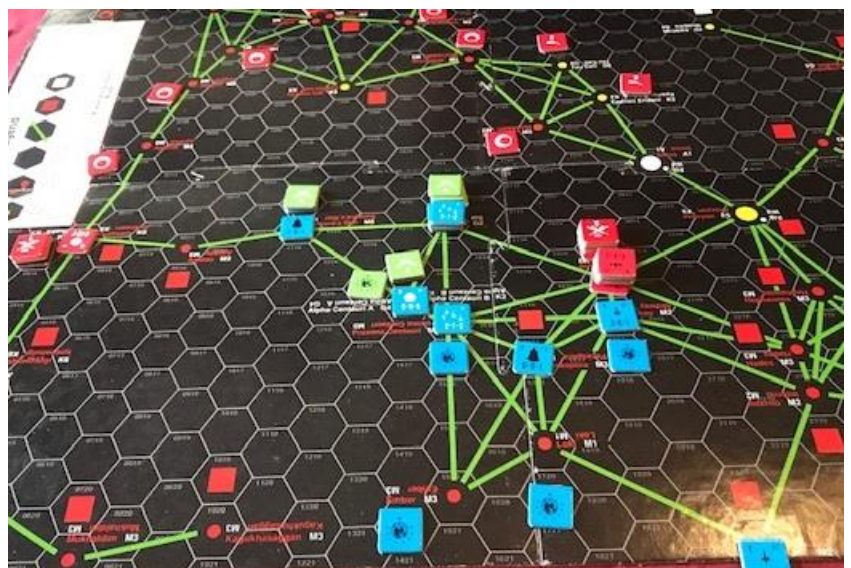
Imperium has much to offer, but it also has much to interpret. The combat system is pretty clean, although it would be nice to have larger ships take more punishment. They have a larger defense factor, but once the Terrans figured out the double fire (2x strength points) gimmick, the battles quickly became one for one mutual annihilation between Terran missile boats and every Imperial ship.

Worth another play, although with essentially unlimited movement (until you find an enemy ship) and two choke points, it's less widespread offensive and more two fleets meet. You have to get used to idea of just sending ships out to be destroyed in order to gather (or subtract) Glory Points.

**I Shall Be Telling This With A Sigh
Somewhere Ages And Ages Hence:
Two Warps Diverged At a Sun, and I,
I Took 'Em Both And Rolled The Die,
And That Has Made All The Difference.**

--Poem by Governor Robert 'Stay' Frosty

End of game. I break through on the Sirius and Procyon warps to capture Junction with a big pile of ships and troops to grab the last Glory Point needed for the win.



Imperium: Empires in Conflict, Worlds in the Balance

By Marc

You rarely see a wargame title this long. I will refer to the original *Imperium* as *Imperium* and not IEicWitB or even IEWB...

An advertisement for *Imperium*. Image from web.

Background

Back in 1977, not long after *Star Wars* was released in theaters, the first edition of *Imperium* was published, followed by a second edition a few years later. *Imperium* is a strategic sci-fi wargame set in the same universe as the *Traveller RPG*. I picked up the second edition and played it a few times and enjoyed it although I never fully investigated all its nuances.

Fast forward to 2001 (only 21 years ago, OMG!). Avalanche Press released a new version titled *Imperium: 3rd Millennium (I3M)*. Naturally I was very excited, but upon examining this new edition, I saw, along with the improvements, several different flaws in the new design.

For a lack of opportunity and opponents, both games sat on the shelf until recently when I decided to try playing them again. I had played one solitaire game of each version of *Imperium* and *I3M* when I convinced Russ to give *Imperium* (not *I3M*) a try.

I played these games again to see if 1) the original was as good as I remember, 2) I wanted to see if the remake is any good to begin with and 3) I wanted to see if I could adapt concepts into the space combat game I am currently designing.

Imperium Rules Summary

Boardgame Geek has a number of reviews that are very good, but I will summarize the second edition sequence of play here:

First the Bookkeeping

A game turn is divided into two player turns. In the First Interstellar War, the Terrans take the first player turn, followed by the Imperial player. Each player turn includes some familiar steps: Calculate income (measured in 'resource units' (RU)), pay maintenance, build new units which arrive on future turns, and take reinforcements that are scheduled to arrive this turn.

I want to point out that one of the game's more 'interesting' rules is maintenance. The bigger the ships, the higher their maintenance value. You either must pay the maintenance value in (RU) each turn or roll equal to or greater than the maintenance value each turn. Failure in either case results in the ship becoming disrupted and suffering a -1 on its attack rolls and granting opponents a +1 on their attack rolls versus the disrupted ship and risking not being able to move during the movement phase.



Maintenance can be expensive, a dozen ships of cruiser size or smaller can easily consume half your income or more each turn if you are not careful. This limits your fleet size, which allows the game to function with a smaller counter mix, and it encourages players to attack before risking the maintenance rolls.

The way this is implemented in the rules, however is counter intuitive as the rules force you to pay maintenance for every unit located at a world. You cannot choose to roll the dice, even if the ship has a low maintenance value and is guaranteed to pass the roll. This encourages you to disperse your fleet for maintenance purposes but (in our reality anyway), fleets are kept in centralized locations when being maintained plus you must keep your ships together to use them as a reaction force. A simple statement such as “Players may choose which form of maintenance to use for each ship located at a friendly world” would have made these rules more flexible and (in my opinion) more logical.

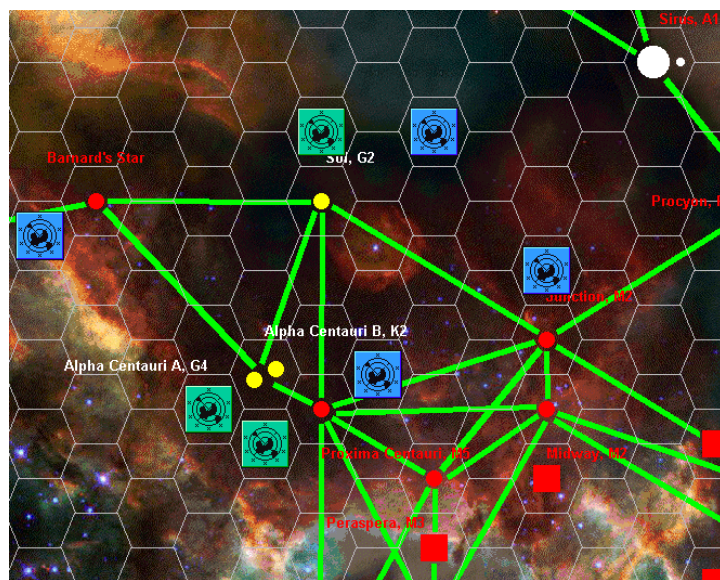
Then the Blowing Stuff Up

Once these housekeeping tasks are complete, the player whose turn it is moves his ships and fights any battles in systems where ships from both sides are present. Then the other player is allowed a limited move in response, resolving any combats generated and then the acting player moves and fights again. Combat occurs after each movement step in systems containing ships from both sides. The opposing player follows the same steps. After each player completes a player turn, the game turn is complete. Movement in Imperium is, for all intents and purposes, unlimited. A ship can move any distance using the green ‘warp lanes’ so long as it doesn’t enter a system containing an enemy warship. When performing a reaction move, ships are limited to moving across three ‘warp lanes’. Ships can also move on the hex grid using ‘sublight’ movement, but then they move 1 hex per turn. So ‘sublight’ movement is rarely used.

Chrome Wars: It’s Not Good Not To Be The Emperor

This is a fairly standard sequence of play. As always, it is the special rules surrounding this framework that makes a game different. In *Imperium*, the first of these rules is that each game represents a single limited war between the Terrans and the Imperium. The war is fought until a certain number of Glory points are won or lost by the Imperial player at which point the war ends. Interwar rules are then followed to establish the positions of both sides at the start of the next war, which are based on how the war ended. War follows war until either the Imperial governor’s capital or Terra is conquered. Taking the enemy capital is the campaign goal and at that point the campaign ends.

The Terran home sector. Image from web.



The next piece of chrome is that the Imperial player is the governor of the region containing Terra and is not the ruler of the entire Imperium. As such, the Imperial player has limited income and must appeal to the Emperor for additional funds or before producing the largest warships the Imperium has to offer. Also, there are events happening throughout the Imperium that may have an impact on this small corner of it, and the Imperial player has to deal with these events along with the attacks of the Terran player.

These events are represented by the Imperial Intervention and Imperial Appeals steps that take place at the start of the Imperial player’s turn. During the Imperial Intervention step dice are rolled and a random event determined. These events can be good or bad for the Imperial player. After the effects of the event are determined, the Imperial player has the option of appealing to the emperor for increased income or the ability to produce bigger warships. Appealing does cost the Imperial player 2 points of Glory each time and so is rarely done. Another special rule is that the two factions receive income differently.

The Imperial player gets a fixed ‘allowance’ of 10 RU each income phase to purchase units, plus a tax of 1 RU from each system he controls, whether it is a densely populated world or tiny outpost. The Terran player gets a larger amount of income (8 RU) from each world he controls, plus 1 RU from each outpost. This results in a slightly

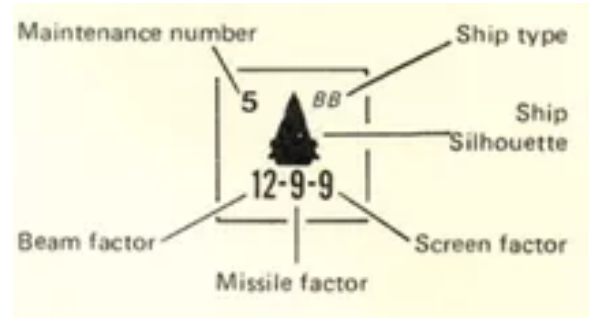
higher income for the Terran player. Balancing this is the fact that losses incurred by the Imperial player are replaced by the Imperium for free, but only one ship per turn can be received this way, so ships become backed up in the replacement queue and eventually the Imperial player ends up rebuilding smaller, cheaper ships out of his own funds and the replacement queue is reserved for cruisers and larger vessels.

Tactical Combat: Napoleonic Warfare in Spaaaaace

Combat is a line them up and knock them down affair. The defender picks a ship and puts it into the line of battle and this ship is matched by the attacker. Excess ships may be assigned to support other ships already in the line or they may be screened and kept out of the battle. This is the location of motherships and transports usually.

Ships compare their combat values (missiles at long range and either beams or missiles at short range) to the target ship's defense value and the appropriate CRT is consulted. This produces a number that you must equal or exceed on 1d6.

Counter information. Nary a BB in our game.



Optionally, a ship may double its missile factors, but they cannot fire missiles for the rest of the battle. Beam attacks can be suicide attacks, but the target of the suicide attack fires on the 'suiciding' ships first. Beams are more effective pound for pound, having to hit numbers generally one better than an equivalent missile attack and at short range beams fire and take effect before missile fire.

Terran ships have better beam armaments, while the Imperials have better missile armaments. To really be successful, the Terrans must close to close range as beam weapons can only be used at that range. But every combat starts at long range where the Imperials have the advantage. Each combat round after the first, both sides roll dice with high roller choosing long or short range. Ships exchange fire and then after the first combat round withdrawals can be declared. Most combats are over after 2-3 rounds.

And this is one of the things I really like about *Imperium* – the tactical combat does give you choices to make but is over very quickly. In the Avalanche Press remake, they introduced a *Great War at Sea*-style tactical combat game which drags the game out a bit too much. If I had more time to invest in a game, this new version of tactical combat would be fine. At this point in my life, the original rules work fine: a bit more complex than *War at Sea/Victory in the Pacific* and a lot less complex than *Great War at Sea/WW2 at Sea* (not to mention every other tactical starship combat system out there).

At Start: War One – Fight!

After going over the major points of the rules with Russ we setup the First Interstellar War. I suggested that Russ take the Imperials as this way he would experience all the extra rules as they are focused on the Imperial side. Russ agreed and off we went.

If you look at the at start positions in the photo, 'Terran space' is the cluster of systems in the lower-right corner of the map and 'Imperial space' can be considered the rest. There are two warp lane routes (the green lines) connecting both areas. The 'Western route' is on the left and passes through the Terran outpost at Bernard's Star, while the 'Eastern route' passes through Sirius system. The Sirius system does not have adequate resources in it to provide fuel to fleets and so fleets can enter the system but cannot exit it unless there is a friendly tanker ship in the Sirius system or in the fleet moving through the system.

PRODUCTION TABLE

Cost	Counter
—	World
4	Outpost
10	Planetary defense
2	Regular troops
3	Jump troops
1	Scout
3	Destroyer
6	Light cruiser
10	Strike cruiser
12*	Heavy cruiser
14*	Attack cruiser
16*	Dreadnought
18*	Improved dreadnought
20*	Battleship
6	Monitor
4	Missile boat
7	Mother ship
1	Fighter
1	Transport
2	Tanker

*The Imperium may not produce asterisked ship types until permission is obtained from the Emperor.

The Imperial player starts with a tanker, but the Terran player does not. Russ deployed his tanker in the smaller fleet deployed just 'north' of Sirius. Russ' main fleet was deployed along the 'Western route' poised to attack Bernard's Star.

In the First Interstellar War, the Terrans are the aggressors and move first in each game turn. But the Terran fleet is no larger than the Imperial. Because each player receives reinforcements at the start of their turn, you have to carefully decide where to attack and still have sufficient forces to manage the other players reinforcements that arrive on their following turn.

War Summary: Intervention and Appeals

My notes for turns 1 and 2 are a bit vague, but what I do remember is that Russ' first Imperial Intervention was a 'no result' on turn 1 and so Russ Appealed to the Empire on turn 1 for additional funds and received a one turn grant of 10 RU. Russ didn't do this for the rest of the game as each Appeal costs him 2 Victory Points (VP) and VPs are hard enough to get.

In my opinion, while the Imperial Intervention events are roughly split equally between 'good' and 'bad' events with a few 'no event' results thrown in, the fewer random events you have to deal with as the Imperial player, the better. No news is good news.

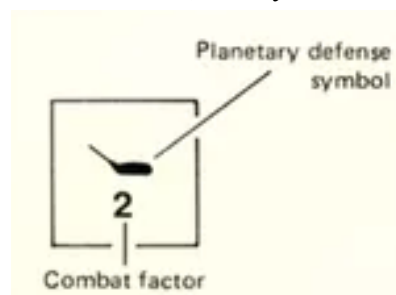
Key Battles: Objective Sol

On turn 1, I didn't want to attack the Imperial fleet at the far end of the Western route as that fleet had a monitor in it and that was a tough unit to attack, and I didn't have a tanker to get past Sirius. In hindsight, I probably should have deployed my own monitor into Sol or Bernard's Star, instead of Alpha Centauri, moved ships to the system adjacent to Sirius and deployed a scout into Sirius itself as a delaying tactic, but hindsight is so often '20/20'.

Turn 2 yielded another 'no event' result for Russ and he declined to Appeal. Two major battles occurred during the early turns: One where Russ crossed the Sirius system 'in the east' with his tanker and a trio of warships and I responded with a fleet of scouts and transports, led by my only CL; And the other 'in the west' where Russ attacked Bernard's Star. In the 'eastern battle', Russ' fleet was small, including a CL, DD, and SC, but my fleet, although larger, graphically demonstrated the armament difference between the two factions. In this battle, I could not win the die roll to close the range and so my fleet was destroyed for little gain.

'In the west,' Russ brought sufficient units to land troops on Bernard's Star and destroy the Outpost and Planetary Defense System there, but his fleet took such appalling losses during the bombardment that he abandoned the system, and I was able to rebuild it on my following turn.

Planetary Defense counter.



Russ went on the offensive again through Sirius and despite the horrific losses we inflicted on each other's fleets, Russ went so far as to put what was left of his fleet into orbit over Sol trying to cripple my production, but it all went to Alpha Centauri instead. The rules don't go into such details about blockading systems and where the Resource Units go.

Also, about this time (I think it was turn 3) Russ rolled a random event that granted him double victory points for the turn and was able to cash in on that when he destroyed another outpost. On turn 4, Russ' random event was 'Token Reinforcements' and Russ rolled the lowest possible amount for the event and could only afford 2 scouts which arrived on turn 4 to help with the fight. Russ destroyed one more Outpost in the Junction system and that gave him the final victory point he needed to win the war. This was a quick win compared to the 8 turns my solo game took to complete, but it still took us 3-4 hours to play the war to its conclusion.

Random Event Table.

IMPERIAL INTERVENTION TABLE

Die roll	Event
2	—
3	Depression
4	Boom
5	Imperial succession
6	—
7	—
8	Imperial attention
9	—
10	—
11	Frontier crisis
12	Token reinforcements
13	Reinforcements
14	Mandated offensive
15	Recentralization

Interwar Rules: Next War Set Up

After that, we went through the Interwar rules and determined the setup for the next war should we decide to play again. In summary all forces are recalled to their respective capitals, the length of the peace is randomly determined, any cutoff outposts are removed from the map, the income for the interwar period is determined (the loser of the last war gets a full turn's income, the winner gets half), reinforcements are laid down and received and players alternate placing any outpost they built. Lastly, both players deploy their forces to systems they own, and the loser moves first in the next war.

Compared to My Solo Game

I expected Russ to play the game differently than I did in my solo game and he did not disappoint. In my solo game, almost every Imperial Intervention resulted in an event and at least half of those events worked against the Imperial player and so the war lasted longer and Terrans had more success, and the game ended in a Terran victory. Also, I didn't really press an attack through Sirius. Russ successfully prosecuted his attack into 'Terran space' through the Sirius system and that made the Terran defense much more difficult, and I think this was a major factor in netting him a quick Imperial win.

Russ' fresh eyes also raised a number of questions and cases about the rules that I hadn't considered yet.

Flaws in Clarity

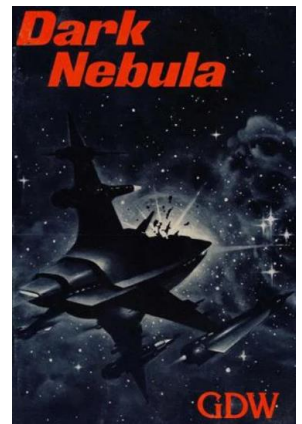
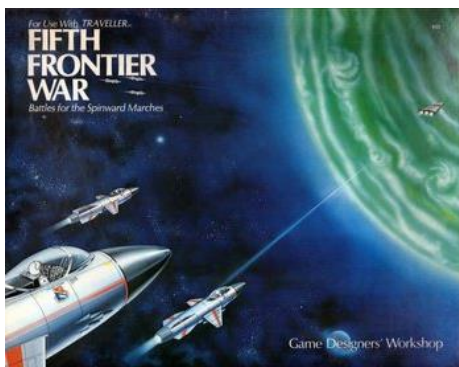
The biggest complaint I have about the game is a lack of clarity in the rules and the fact that the rules are not presented in sequence of play order. The rules for Economics, Imperial Intervention, and Appeals are in the back of the rulebook, after movement and combat, even though they occur first in the sequence of play. Building new ships is not a separate step in the Sequence of Play and so you must go digging through the Economics section to find the relevant rules. I went and retyped the rulebook into sequence of play order to help with these issues.

There are several cases that I came up with in my solo play-through and another half dozen that Russ raised in our game that could have been more clearly explained in the rules. Russ, Dan, and I had to re-read several sections before making a ruling that could have easily been stated explicitly. I can quibble about the usefulness and balance of some Terran ships (the Terran SC, DD and CL come to mind immediately), but with more average die rolls, I might be instead saying the Terrans are overpowering.

In fact, this raises an excellent point. There are advantages and disadvantages to each side and there is not an obviously 'better' side to play.

Is It a Good Game?

Overall, Yes. If you embrace the rules as written it poses an interesting challenge for both players, but unless you play the following wars, I am afraid the game will devolve into both sides playing out the initial scenario using the same optimal moves every game and that is sad. There is so much going on in this game that it is a shame to see it limited to a single scenario. At least one person on BoardGameGeek called *Imperium* an 'excellent tool-kit' for creating other scenarios and games and I agree much more can be done with this basic system. The same sequence of play is used to drive two other games by GDW: *The Fifth Frontier War* and *Dark Nebula*.



Spanish Civil War Card Game: Three Players

by Russ Lockwood

As noted in a previous article, Dan's prototype SCW card game (*Guerra Civil Española*) played smoothly as a two-player game, but Designer Dan also had intentioned it to play as a three and four player game, too. So, Marc, Dan, and I tried a three-player version.

In a two-player version, one player is Republican and the other Nationalist, which restricts the cards you can play to only those of your side. In the three-player game, you can play any card to your mat.

That's a big change. It's quite a bit more fluid. Other than that, the mechanics are identical to the two player game.

One consequence of adding another player is that cards with end of turn consequences get triggered more often when two (or more) players fulfill the prerequisites of the card. For example, there's a card that provides a resource if another player opts to gather gold. With two players, gold gathering is triggered more than one player.

Game the First

Marc didn't need many turns to fathom the basic mechanics. The nuances of when to play each card and how to obtain resources take a little longer, but everything fits together in layered consequences.

For example, you really want to get those first column of cards played quickly to increase your card, gold, and resource collections. Sometimes the cards come easy and sometimes hard. That's the way card draws from a deck go.

I squeaked out a two-point victory in the first game, with Dan second and Marc third. After wrapping up the first game, Marc noted that it could be adapted from the SCW to WWII. Sure can...and likely more. He also noted that even though he was third, the score was close. Marc immediately wanted to try again. I told you this was smooth.

Game the Second

The cards newly shuffled, we started anew. Now, in this game, I learned how the special 'move' cards worked. Some cards let you shuttle between rows, which means that if you plan ahead, and for me that's a pretty big if, you can put a little offensive boost to your card, gold, and resource collections. Every little bit helps.

We also played with double secret personal goals and double public any player goals. If you match the conditions on these cards, you gain extra VPs.

In the end, thanks to these goals and a nifty display of special move cards, Dan squeaked out a couple point victory over Marc while I came in third by double digits.

Still clean mechanics and still quite good.

Start of the three-player SCW game. Marc (left) and Dan.



Snappy Nappy TTS: 1809 Conclusion

by Russ Lockwood

I tuned in live for the fourth and final Saturday night fight of the 1809 Campaign run by Jim of Armchair Dragoons using *Tabletop Simulator (TTS)* as the online platform and *Snappy Nappy* rule set.

Mea Culpa: Battle Names Mix-up

I have to apologize to those who read my summary of the first three sessions (see my 3/3/2022 AAR or head over to the Armchair Dragoons website for the online version). I labeled the battles incorrectly.

Ooops.

The town of Au.



The Correction:

What I labeled "Abensberg" was really the Battle of "Au."

What I labeled "Landshut" was really the Battle of "Abensberg."

There was no Battle of Landshut (it had already been captured by the Austrians).

At least "Regensburg" really was the Battle of "Regensburg."

As Meatloaf didn't sing: One Outta Three is Bad.

My problem? Um...brain dead?

My reason? I kept mishearing "Au" as "Owwwbs," which I took as being short for Abensburg.

No. Au was Au. Abensburg was Abensburg. My bad.

As for Landshut, I figured the incredible fighting, which was really to prevent the link-up of Davout and Napoleon, was because Landshut (a victory condition) was the target.

Eh...No. I simply didn't know the map well enough.

But you know what's really off? I watched the first two sessions on YouTube, where I could (and did) "rewind" to get the nuance of the battle right.

Doh!

Enough self-flagellation. Onto the fourth and last session.

Remember that the time resets with each session, so when I mention a time here, it's approximate and for the fourth session only.

Replay on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYBqI2Yshb4&list=PLnTxkmKEim-PPOIW05Gp2MxHGxDH0Hbfc&index=4>

The Battle of Au (nee Abensburg) continues.

The Real Battle of Au (nee Abensburg)

When last we left the Austrians, the pincer movement was on as the outnumbered French held the town and were delaying and defeating the



piecemeal Austrian attack from their flank. The Austrians kept pushing, but were scrunched up and could not bring their overwhelming force to bear.

Worse, they parked the artillery battery on a hill overlooking Au and kept their infantry in between cannon barrel and enemy. Oh, they finally got some shots in, but too little, too late.

The Austrians, at about 35:20, missing yet another roll, joked, "It must be raining."

The Real Battle of Abensburg (nee Landshut)

A couple of *TTS* goofs occurred as the action shifted. At 38:20, all of a sudden we were hearing some sort of documentary audio -- one of the players was watching one and since the *TTS* communications is a party line, we all heard it. At least it wasn't a soap opera -- the real soap opera is on screen at Abensburg.

The lost cavalry unit moves to outflank the Austrians.

At 38:55, one of the players inadvertently moved an enemy unit by mistake. It was quickly sorted out by Umpire Jim, but this served as a reminder that *TTS* has no artificial intelligence. Anyone can move anything any time.

At 40:20, the French player lost sight of a unit that fell between two defined "tables." Umpire Jim quickly sorted that out, too, but it remained a bit of a problem.

Nonetheless, the battle swirled as units marched, fired, took morale checks, and fell back or vaporized.

At 56:11, the big French 12lber battery, which had been deucedly effective all game, rolled 3d10 and all missed. The Austrian player quipped, "First time that gun didn't do anything."

At 1:16:00, a cavalry charge bounced off a square.

Behind French lines, at 1:20:45, Napoleon attached to a unit to try and rally it. Remember that a morale roll of 1 triggers a roll on the Leader Loss table. All held their breath as the digital die binked its way to a stop -- a 10! Now, that's a Napoleon roll! Rally up!



Napoleon attaches to a Bavarian unit for a rally roll. The French player held his breath, but rolled a 10! Magnifique!

An Interlude of Laughter

Throughout the game, the rules mechanics generated questions and answers. It's to be expected. Most of the folks had not played *Snappy Nappy* before. Umpire Jim did a fantastic job sorting things out, helped by the players that had the rule set.

Now, unless asked a direct question, I kept quiet. Well, except for that Archduke Charles morale roll of 1 -- that was important to point out.

Anyway, I may have written the rules, but the umpire runs the game. There may be special scenario rules and there seemed to be at least one regarding Austrian order (in)flexibility for the leader rated 'Poltroon.' Other than that, it all played as I envisioned. It's really interesting to me to see how different groups use the rules.

But I had to chuckle at 1:22:47 when after a mechanic interpretation, one of the players joked, "I'm glad Russ isn't writing in chat 'My God, what the hell are you doing to my game?'"

No, my chat comment was to the effect: "You're all doing fine."

'Tis true: Gamers are moving, firing, and getting the hang of the morale roll mechanic -- it's all good to me.

Back at Au (nee Abensburg)

Known to us observers, but unseen by the Austrian players, a French corp (Massena, I think) was heading towards Au.



A French corp (left) erects a pontoon bridge and heads towards the Battle of Au. The woods, I believe mark the boundary between two tables, so the Austrian (right) have no idea what's about to arrive on their flank.

Part of it tried to go through the woods (slow) and the rest were going cross country. There just weren't any roads in that particular area.

There was a river and the French player deployed the pontoon bridge to cross just to the side of Au.

At the battle proper, the French cavalry caught an Austrian infantry unit in line on the flank -- and the Austrians failed to roll for hasty square. Poof, there went that infantry.

Somewhere in there, about 2:10:00 or so, the whole table went quiet, players deep in concentration. At 2:15:00 or so, perhaps thinking the internet connection had dropped, one piped up "Are you there?"

A chorus of affirmatives sang out. One player offered up "It's an operational pause."

Touché.

The pause stretched out to pretty much a stalemate as the French relief force (Massena?) began to enter the area around Au.

Back at Abensburg (nee Landshut)

Clever maneuvering resulted in that Austrian cavalry that had previously bounced now being hit from front and rear. I typed, "It's a cavalry sandwich!"

The French trap closes on the Austrian cavalry sandwich.

That prompted Umpire Jim to remember that during a trip to Austerlitz, he and his wife stayed in a B&B that had an attached restaurant that named all its menu items after Marshals and other commanders. He recalled having Murat



Steak while his wife had Bernadotte Soup in a Bread Bowl.

The cavalry sandwich attack, as you might expect, was an automatic win for the French with a 41-20 difference that resulted in two automatic dropped morale levels and two morale checks. The MC failures eliminated the unit -- to my mind, most of it surrendered since most of it was surrounded.

On a hill at 2:32:15, under the eyes, or at least the command radius, of Napoleon, two Bavarian units hit an Austrian one. The die roll for the Bavarians bounced to a 10. Another 10 for Napoleon! It sent the Austrians packing.

The French continued to press forward, and the Austrians were routing down the road back to the real Landshut.

At Regensburg

The Austrian commanders on tabletop were "weak" and "poltroon," but the player was quite competent, driving the French covering force backwards and in some cases into the fortress. The 6lber cannonade did nothing against a fortress and the "Screen" order didn't allow the Austrian force on the side to try and storm the fortress.

The Austrians drive the French covering force back into the fortress.



Elsewhere

A strong Austrian corp, released from Landshut marched in the general direction of Au, but needed far more time to actually fully deploy against any French forces, although one blocked his way.

The strong Austrian cavalry force from Landshut heads up the road, but is too late to intervene save for a couple of artillery pot shots against delaying French cavalry.



Game End

So the game ended after 16 hours of play (four sessions of four hours each).

The Austrian victory conditions were to possess Regensburg and Landshut and prevent Napoleon from linking up with Davout. The French were the reciprocal.

The French held Regensburg.

The Austrians held Landshut.

In the battle for the link up, although the Austrians fought valiantly, the French held on just enough for most of the game and then shoved the Austrians out of the way.

For the French, like Meatloaf sang, two outta three ain't bad -- a French victory, but not a total blow out.

Comments: The Reveal

As Umpire Jim explained the game versus history, one of the players piped up: Can you allow us to see all the tables? Jim chuckled as he realized that only he and us peanut gallery spectators could see all the tables.

Comments: Au (nee Abensburg)

A few "Ohs" and "Huhs" escaped the players as the tabletop became seen by all. At 3:12:30 or so, one of the players blurted, "Holy Cow! All that forest?" Another seconded that with "Oh, no. No road!"

Umpire Jim noted Table B (Massena?) had no roads, which penalized the French, although the player noted he had made a choice (through the woods) that turned out to give a case of the slows.

As an aside, roads are indeed important when you need to move to get into position for battle. Furthermore, when you play on physical tables, if no enemy is on your table, you can move as fast as you can go through the sequence of play. This helps get all players involved in a game.

At 3:14:00, the Austrian player at Au said, "Great fight versus Oudinot, but my flank was not fast enough."

The Austrian flank was not fast enough in part because the French threatened the flank and the Austrians stood firm – but it cost time and troops.



The French player (Oudinot?) commented that Au was like Verdun -- "I kept throwing in more and more troops, but it didn't matter."

Comments: Regensburg

At Regensburg, the Austrian player's one corp was given a Screen order, which meant he could not get close to the wall, much less assault it. He realized an Attack order would take too long to get given the number of turns remaining in the game. His other corp cleared the French screening force without too much trouble, but he not only outnumbered the French, he had them flanked, too.

Comments: Abensburg (nee Landshut)

Over at the Abensburg table, the Austrian player said he was pleased with his deployment, noting that he didn't need to beat the French, only that he had to prevent Davout and Napoleon from linking up. His die rolling at the beginning was pretty atrocious, which contributed to early French success. The die rolling leveled out as the game went on, but much of the damage was done.

Cascading morale checks and failures created a significant number of troops milling around in the rear areas. 'New' Archduke Charles could only attempt to rally so many...but the corp would get away down the road to fight another day.



A precept of *Snappy Nappy* is that descending into chaos is easy, but restoring order is difficult.

He also found out about enemy troops appearing on his flank -- an advantage of table fog of war. You never know what could be coming unless you pop troops over into the other table. The cavalry sandwich was one manifestation of deep flank penetration.

Indeed, one of the French players was sure the Austrians were coming over bridges deep in his flank and dropped a pair of cavalry units back to make sure any such advance was contained. None showed up.

Umpire Jim noted the Austrians captured Landshut early on and then left a big garrison that just sat through most of the game. Those troops, and good troops they were, would have been welcomed at either of the two big battles -- Au and Abensburg.

Comments: Overall

Umpire Jim, who must have spent far more hours planning and prepping the TTS game than the 16 hours he ran it, shouted, "We did it!"

Right after, someone added, "And it came out good."

And yes it did, turning an idea for the 1809 campaign into a four-session *Snappy Nappy* game. "I was glad to see the big fight at Abensburg," He said. "That was awesome."

One noted: It's been a great game. The fog of war really worked for me. It was hard to follow sometimes, but I suppose that was the point.

At 3:23:44, "This was a joy. An absolute joy."

Just after: "It was a really fun game."

And let me give Jim the final word: "It came to a satisfying conclusion. You can evaluate and make sense of it."

Waterloo in June

But Jim wasn't quite finished. He popped up a preliminary map of the next *Snappy Nappy* Campaign: Waterloo. He plugged Peter's BlundersontheDanube blog -- Peter had umpired a physical 20-player, Waterloo Campaign in a Day *Snappy Nappy* game on the battle's 200th anniversary in 2015 up at The Portal in Manchester, CT. Maps and OBs are on the blog and presumably Jim went for a look see to help create his *TTS* version. He probably changed things here and there so players don't view the same.

One *TTS* change: "gaps" will be left between "tables" so that units are not "lost" to their owning players as they cross the "table edge."

The whole *TTS* Waterloo campaign area map is 248 x 200 inches, divided into numerous 6 x 4 foot tables. Sounds grand.

Fantastic Fight

What a fantastic fight! Jim and some of the gamers are obviously very adept at using *TTS*, and it shows, but others were new to the interface and learned how to manipulate the troops pretty quickly.

Part of the appeal of miniatures gaming is the social commentary offered tableside by gamers. I wasn't quite sure how that would play out over *TTS*, but I was very pleasantly surprised that the rules discussions, player helpfulness, and usual bouts of jokes and color commentary -- not to mention hearing the lamentation of the players over die rolls -- continued over the audio 'party line' of participants. And the use of a chat box for us peanut gallery spectators to offer up our own commentary was a plus (even if it took almost a minute to show up).

I don't know how long it took Jim to set up the table and troops, but everything sure looked good. I'm sure there are graphics constraints -- lots of windmills in Bavaria this time of year -- but I'm not one to talk as my own tabletop 'splendor' runs more to felt blobs than spiffy terrain.

And apparently he was so inspired, he's setting up a Waterloo campaign for June using the *Snappy Nappy* rules. You can drop by the Armchair Dragoons website for details as they arise.

Great job, all!

Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

On To Stalingrad: Die Wehrmacht im Kampf. by Horst Scheibert.
Hardback (6.4x9.3 inches). 192 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *Operation Winter Thunderstorm and the Attempt to Relieve Sixth Army: December 1942*

Reprint of 1956 *Die Wehrmacht im Kampf Number 10*, translated into English. The author commanded a German panzer company in 1942 during the attempted relief of Stalingrad.

Entries from 1942 unit reports and radio traffic messages mixed with insightful narrative present a compelling German eye-view of the winter attack to break through to the German Sixth Army trapped in Stalingrad. The Soviet encirclement proved stronger than expected and the terrain and weather proved more difficult than expected, but the attack plowed 100km towards Stalingrad, leaving only 48km remaining before the relief effort was called off.

The suspense at operations with fuel and ammo shortages due to inability of truck supply columns to move grows with each Soviet attack. The Germans showed considerable tactical acumen, but sooner or later, they couldn't attack without ammo. Lack of bridging equipment meant long detours, although sometimes that created opportunities for surprise when fighting an enemy at 1:3 odds. Experience must generate a lot of column shifts.

Plenty of scenario opportunities, although you'll have to know your TO&Es. The text supplies details down to approximately company level with OOBs in the appendix. No photos, but 16 black and white maps offer enough

tactical detail for an experienced GM to create a fair approximation of the terrain. Just make sure you have plenty of balkas (ravines) and plenty of swells that offer some protection from direct fire.

One interesting factoid:
The 6th Panzer Division was sent by train from Brittany (France) to Stalingrad area in 18-20 days. Think about that the next time you need strategic movement.

Panzers on the way to Stalingrad. Image from web.



And an amusing anecdote:

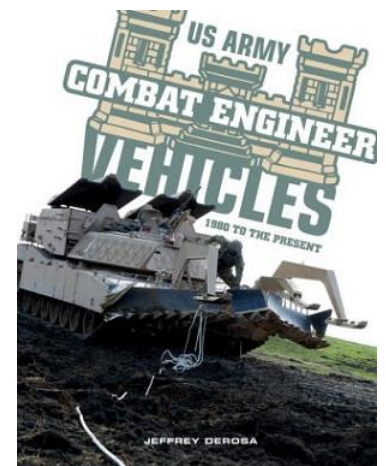
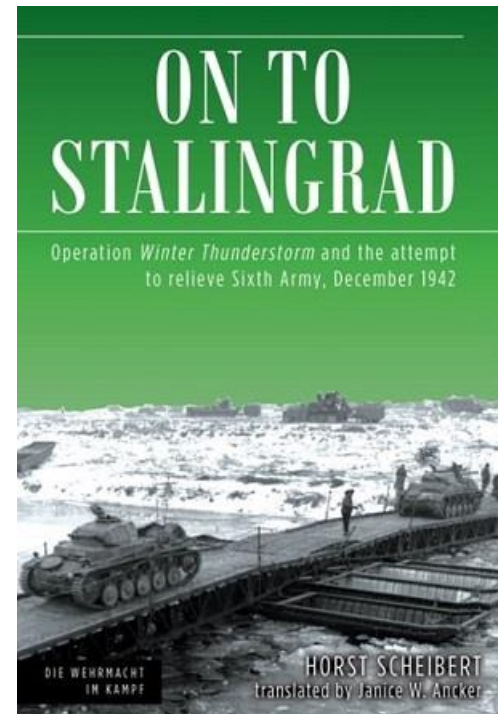
The author "found" an abandoned US Jeep on the battlefield in apparent full working order. He got out, hitched it to his panzer, and towed it away. He noted he later had fun driving his Jeep around (p85).

This is the second in the reprinted series that I've read and Casemate plans to continue reprinting the series. Here's hoping the rest are as good as the first two. The other was *Counter-Strike Operations: Combat Examples and Leadership Principles of Mobile Defense* (see my 3/3/2022 AAR or here on hmgs.org for the review).

Enjoyed it.

US Army Combat Engineer Vehicles: 1980 to the Present. by Jeffrey Derosa.
Hardback (8.75x11.25 inches). 144 pages. 2022.

While we usually concentrate on a tabletop full of tanks, APCs, infantry, and IFVs, the Army has plenty of support vehicles for a variety of tasks to support



the front-line troops. Author Derosa served in a combat engineer unit and many of the photos are from his personal collection.

The first three chapters each focus on one vehicle: Chapter 1 is the M728 CEV, Chapter 2 is the AVLB Bridgelay, Chapter 3 is the Earthmover ACE. The remaining chapters mostly cover multiple vehicles.

A technical and developmental overview leads into a description of operational use. Most of the book consists of the photos -- 250 color photos and 15 black and white photos, plus 14 black and white illustrations that label the major components of those first three vehicles.

One aspect I would have liked to read is the time it took to perform tasks. For example, how long did it take to lay the bridge? How long did it take to dig a firing position for a tank? While modelers may not seek such info, scenario designers sure do.

But what a tremendous collection of photos in all aspects of operation, from training missions to field operations. Modelers will appreciate the close-up shots that can help make their versions of kits distinctive.

Enjoyed it.

Charles X's Wars: Volume 1. by Michael Fredholm von Essen. Softcover (7.2x9.8 inches). 282 pages. 2021

Subtitle: *Armies of the Swedish Deluge 1655-1660*

This is number 80 in the *Century of the Soldier 1618-1721* series, which I've come to appreciate as I've delved into periods I knew very little about. It contains an overview of Swedish, Commonwealth (Polish-Lithuanian), Brandenburg/Prussia, Moscovite, Transylvanian, Ukrainian Cossack, and Crimean Khanate armies. Tactics, uniforms, organization, recruiting, equipment, and types of troops are explained. The Moscovite artillery description is a little shortchanged, other than a passing mention that it was still quite good (p207).

Even if you've never heard of the 13 Years War, you'll be equipped to field and fight a miniatures army on the tabletop. A chronology 1654-1657 offers bullet point events. This swirl of war begins with a Cossack revolt against the Commonwealth (p55).

By the way, Ukraine started with a 'proto-state' in the 1500s called Sech consisting of lightly-fortified settlements, but was soon attacked and conquered by the Commonwealth. Ukraine as an entity only started to re-emerge in 1648 in the environs around Kiev (p216).

A total of 108 black and white images, 32 black and white photos, six black and white maps, and eight pages of color uniforms plates with two illustrations per page supports the text.

For those looking for a new campaign area, Eastern Europe in the mid-1600s can certainly offer considerable political maneuvering and military action.

Enjoyed it.

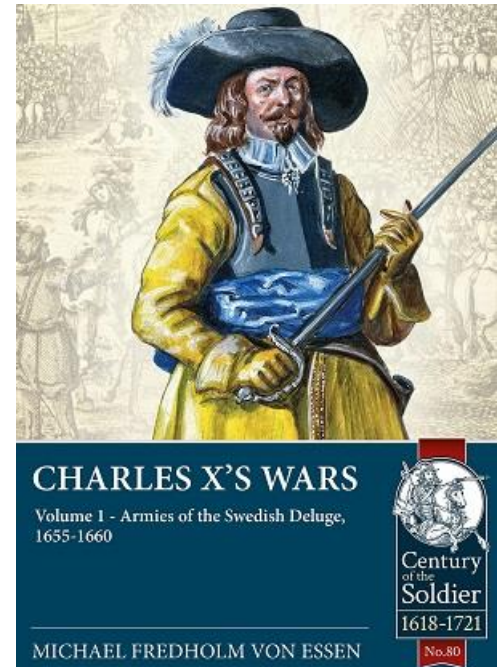
British Aircraft of World War One. by Lee Chapman.

Softcover (Horizontal: 9.7x6.6 inches). 128 pages. 2021.

The goal was to photograph every surviving British WWI aircraft, which really aren't many considering the number produced during the war. Most are museum pieces, but some have been restored and still fly.

In addition, the 151 color and 10 sepia-tinted photographs cover modern reproductions and replicas, which sometimes are museum pieces and sometimes fly. The aerial shots of real and replica aircraft at air shows are mesmerizing.

The oldest British aircraft that still flies is a 1912 Blackburn (p24-25). Also, if you remember the movie *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*, the Bristol Boxkite is an original except using a 100hp engine instead of the original 50hp engine (p16).



The text is somewhat uninspiring, but to be fair, the author refers to the book as "potted history" (back cover) -- a surprisingly honest evaluation. Mostly, the text notes the surviving plane or replica, some specs, short history, and where it can be seen.

As for the survivors, some notes: three BE2s (p27), two RE8s (p38), four Sopwith Pups (p50), eight Sopwith Camels (p77), four SE5s (p85) and six DH9s (p108). There are others, but that gives you an idea of the rarity of the aircraft.

One correction: "balloons utilized for military observation from as early as the American Civil War in 1862..." (p16)

I believe that's not exactly correct. I understand the French and Austrians both fielded hydrogen-filled observation balloons during the Napoleonic Wars, although they were generally too slow to keep up with the armies.

So, the text is so-so, but the photos are fantastic at capturing the old warbirds. If you're looking for multi-color patterns, other books do a better job. These aircraft are relatively plain looking, but the joy is in staring at a page and imagining that you're watching them in flight.

Enjoyed it.



Wellington's Cavalry and Technical Corps 1800-1815: Including Artillery. by Gabriele Esposito. Hardback (7.1x9.9 inches). 132 pages.

Consider this the cavalry and artillery companion to *Wellington's Infantry: British Foot Regiments 1800-1815* (see my May 3, 2021 AAR or hmgs.org for review) and to an extent *Napoleon's Imperial Guard: Organization, Uniforms, and Weapons* (see the 9/2/2021 AAR or hmgs.org). My same comments apply.

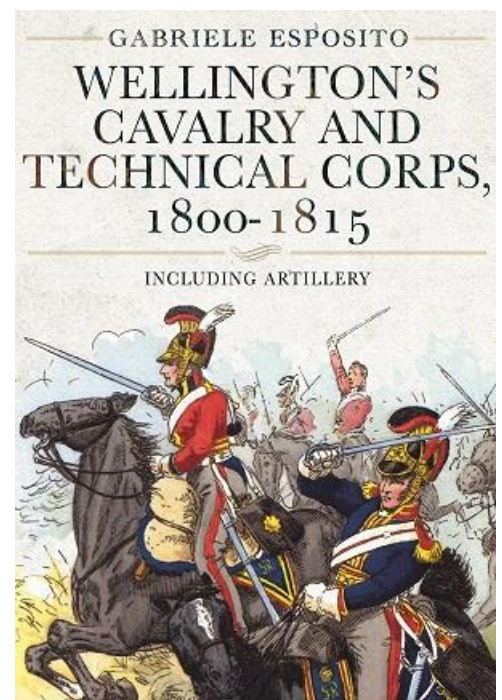
This is primarily a book for newcomers as it offers short regiment-by-regiment histories, which often start in the 1600s, plus organization, equipment, and uniform overviews. It's supported by 54 color and two black and white public domain illustrations that grognards have likely seen before. The artillery uniforms are 1797 and before, so they don't exactly fit the time frame.

This time around, 16 of 26 sources cited in the bibliography are Osprey booklets. The overview information is solid, but don't expect too much original research. Minimal combat descriptions, formations, and campaign overviews are included. It gets a little repetitious at times, but then again, this is more compilation than composition.

And once again, the more obscure units form my greater fascination for the book, noting units in the various colonies around the world.

It's still a good overview and worthy companion volume.

Enjoyed it.

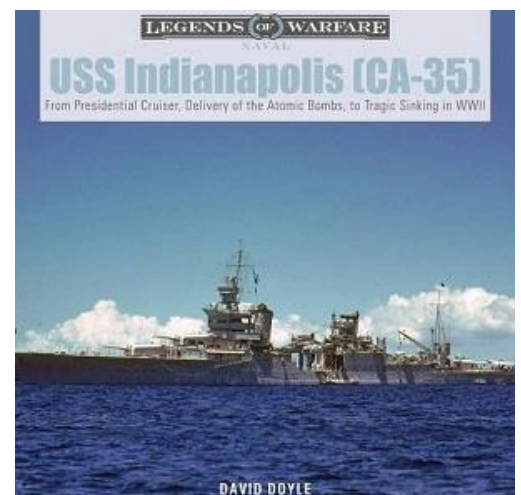


USS Indianapolis: CA-35 (Legends of Warfare). by David Doyle. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 128 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *From Presidential Cruiser, Delivery of the Atomic Bombs, to Tragic Sinking in WWII*

Another in the photo-intensive series covers the cruiser that sparked a decades-long battle to clear the captain's name after Japanese submarine I-58 sank her. Up to then, it certainly led a fine career, serving as FDR's transport on a trip to South America and then in a number of WWII Pacific campaigns.

Initially, it may not have been a great ship to serve on. One sailor fell overboard near Alaska on July 20, 1942 (froze, but recovered), another fell overboard in San Francisco (recovered, but deceased) on March 9, 1943, and nine were swept away by waves on May 4, 1943 (two recovered alive, but seven deceased) (p51-54).



The photo captions (p31 and p33) discuss 1934 turret roofs painted with red, white, blue, and yellow squares for recognition, but none of the photos give a good view of that pattern. The recognition later changed to rectangles on the forward turret roofs and a circle on the aft turret roof, which can be seen in photos (p39 and p49). New side camouflage schemes show up clearly in later photos (p83-85 and p99).

After being torpedoed by I-58, the ship sunk with only 314 survivors out of 1,195 crew (p122). On August 18, 2017 the research ship Petrel found the wreckage at 18,000 feet in two large sections (p123). Nine color photos show what's left of the ship.

The book contains an additional 224 black and white photos and 17 color photos with high quality production values. The caption seem longer and more detailed in this volume than others, which is a bonus. I hope the series continues to use these more extensive captions.

Enjoyed it.

The Battle of Gettysburg 1863 (1): Campaign 374. by Timothy J. Orr. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The First Day*

With all the tomes of Gettysburg out there over the last 159 years, why would Osprey do Gettysburg? It's like Waterloo -- been done to death.

Yet, the *Campaign* series specializes in succinct overviews and this seems as good a time as any to revisit the battle -- and it's a good recap. Yes, I'm a bit jaded with the well-known battles, but this narrative mixes a touch of with first-person accounts to create sweet prose that flows across the page. Take a bow Mr. Orr, or should I say Dr. Orr.

Great. Now don't get cocky with the other couple of volumes.

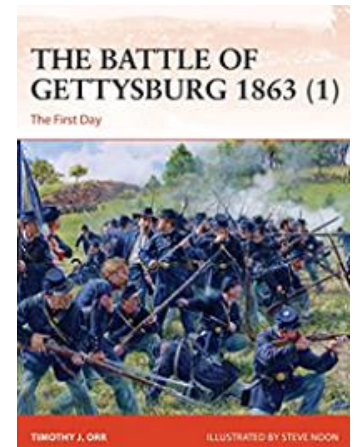
If I have a lament, it's the lack of numbers in the OOB. Us wargamers want all the numbers: regiment, brigade, division, and corps. That goes for artillery types and tubes, too. That's a minus.

The usual mix of graphics accompany the text: 60 black and white photos, two black and white illustrations, eight color maps, three color two-page battle illustrations, and three of the 3D maps that would be more informative as flat 2D maps with contour lines. Yeah, I know, you might say I'm continuously making a mountain out of a molehill. That's precisely my point: I can't tell if that bump on the map is a molehill or a mountain.

Ba dum bum.

Campaign 374 is just a pleasant read about strategy, tactics, and analysis that covers the first day of Gettysburg. It's perfect for those budding history buffs -- then, take 'em to see the battlefield. And give 'em a few miniatures, too.

Enjoyed it.

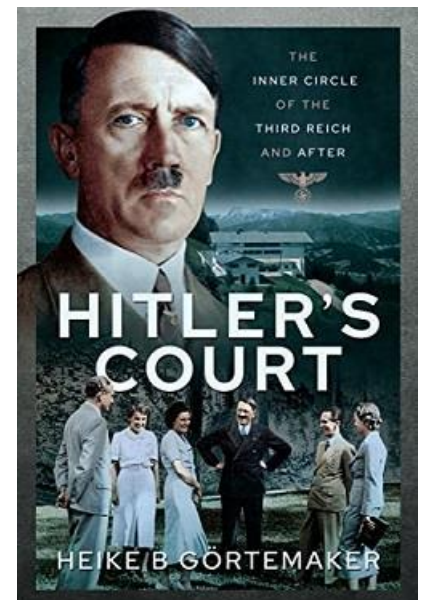


Hitler's Court: The Inner Circle of the Third Reich and After. by Heike B. Gortemaker. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 356 pages. 2021.

Hitler's rise to power came with significant help from a variety of abettors. Some are household Nazi names, like Goebbels, Goring, Hess, Bormann, Braun, and Speer, but many others are not. Yet all contributed to aiding the rise of the Nazi Party in general and Adolf Hitler in specific.

These were conscious decisions by those seeking power, although Hitler often discarded members of his inner circle as their use diminished. The jockeying for position to remain in Hitler's favor is a constant theme, as is the scheming to personally profit from such a position.

It's a quality translation, although some typos slip through: "worked as a ship's doctor...", the served as..." should be "then served as" (p127); a "23 July" phone call referencing the start of Barbarossa might be a month after the invasion, but likely it would be a day after - 23 June (p185); and "in the American..." seems like it should be "American Zone" (p228). One translation quirk: "infant-school teacher" is probably better translated as "pre-school teacher" (p97). "Hitler Fund for the German Economy...was suspended to 31 May 1945" (p98) is a bit unclear to me. Was that date really 1935? Or was it really suspended a full decade into what turns out to be the post-war period? Whatever it is, rest assured that apart from these couple of wiggles, the rest of the translation is crystal clear.



Of note that after the war, the Allies rounded up and arrested 300,000 Nazis (p216), but most were let go unless the Allies found some egregious war crime. The paths of several prominent members of Hitler's circle were tracked as some evaded capture for a while.

No photos are included.

All in all, it's a fascinating look at the levers and layers of power in the Third Reich. Chronicling the rise and fall of the Third Reich through the eyes and actions of the circle proves unique, even if the subject matter is a joyless topic.

'Enjoyed' the subject matter is a bit much, but I certainly appreciated the detailed information and analysis about the upper echelon of Nazi society.

The Forgotten American Volunteer Group. by Dan Hagedorn. Softcover (6.6x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2020.

Subtitle: *US Volunteers in the Columbia-Peru War 1932*

This abbreviated summary is from Chapter 13 of the book *Latin American Air Wars and Aircraft 1912-1969*. Despite the title, the first 52 pages cover the establishment of the Columbian Air Force, with the group of 58 American pilots and mechanics coming in later to form El Mision de Aviacion Norteamericana. They replaced the German and Cuban mercenary pilots that left (p42).

The history of buying French, German, and American (Curtis-Wright mostly) aircraft created a large, if poorly maintained, air force by the time Columbia and Peru went to war 1933-1935 over a sliver of wilderness between the Amazon and Putumayo Rivers (p86). The aircraft sales reps proved to be most mercenary and the sales to Columbia kept Curtis-Wright in business during the Depression. It kept the pilots and mechanics in cash during the Depression, too.

A chart of Columbian aircraft purchases is included (p44-p52).

The Americans mostly taught Columbian pilots and worked on the various Curtis-Wright aircraft, although two Americans flew in combat (p63). The book doesn't contain any combat examples, just training.

The book contains 90 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, one color profile (Curtis Cyclone Falcon), and one black and white map.

The title is a tad misleading, but the information about an obscure group is interesting. Enjoyed it.

THE FORGOTTEN AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP

US VOLUNTEERS IN
THE COLOMBIA-PERU WAR, 1932

DAN HAGEDORN



P-51B/C Mustang: Northwest Europe 1943-44 (Dogfight 2). by Chris Bucholz. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2022.

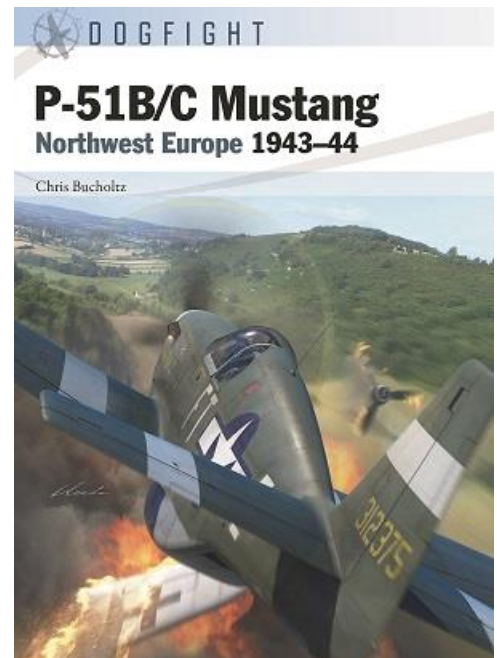
This is the second volume in a new series, although for all intents and purposes, it still looks an awful lot like an Air Combat volume. Like *Volume 1 FW-190D-9: Defense of the Reich 1944-1945*, *Dogfight 2* contains more first-person accounts and two-page color "ribbon" combat illustrations.

The booklet covers aircraft development, including a significant number of plane defects that needed addressing. Tactics, Luftwaffe opponents, and pilot reminiscences of notable dogfights make up the rest of the book. A number of these can be used to create tabletop scenarios.

It's all supported by 47 black and white photos, two color photos, one color map (Allied fighter ranges), two color illustrations, one two-page color battle illustration, and three 'ribbon' illustrations of specific dogfights.

For those with a yen for more P-51 info, I reviewed a number of books *P-51B/C & F-6C Mustang: Yellow Series* (scale drawings) in the Jan 22, 2020 AAR; *NAA P-51B-1-NA Mustang: Single No. 23* (scale drawings) and *P-51 Mustang (Flight Craft 19)* in the Dec. 21, 2020 AAR, and *North American P-51D/K Mustang: Yellow Series* (scale drawings) in the Sep 2, 2021 AAR. All reviews are also posted on HMGS.org.

One typo: Extraneous comma "peeled, off" (p66). Otherwise, clean.



I'm still not convinced that the ribbon illustrations are the best way to capture the swirling nature of dogfights, but at least they represent the best effort so far. In the future, when Osprey books are converted to virtual reality, I'm sure a moving dogfight will be like a video game that can be viewed from multiple angles.

Until then, you'll have to settle for readable accounts. Enjoyed it.

The Vietnam War: 1956-1975 (Essential Histories). by Andrew Wienst. Softcover (5.9x8.3 inches). 144 pages. 2002/2022 reprint

This 2022 reprint of the 2002 booklet *Essential Histories: The Vietnam War 1956-1975* offers a well-written overview of US involvement in Vietnam. Repudiation of the 1954 Geneva Accord led to the establishment of South Vietnam and the US slowly and inexorably descended into the defense of South Vietnam.

The overview offers a well-written recap and analysis of US political and military successes and failures. It eschews tactical battles in favor of a strategic outlook.

The booklet contains 29 color photos, 23 black and white photos, and 10 color maps to provide an excellent introduction to the war.

Enjoyed it.

The Silent Service in World War II. Edited by Edward Monroe-Jones and Michael Green. Softcover (6.0x9.0). 262 pages. 2012 and reprinted 2022.

Subtitle: *The Story of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force and the Worlds of the Men Who Lived It*

Most of the 46 short tales are reprints from *Polaris Magazine* and the Submarine Research Center. They are quick enough to read and contain a collection of personal reminiscences of submarine life, missions in the Pacific against the Japanese, and the occasional humorous anecdotes.

It offers interesting glimpses of what it was like to set up and fire torpedoes then endure depth charges. It took a bit more to dive and surface than just close a hatch. Some of the detail offers a fascinating peek into the workings of a submarine.

Some typos, none particularly fatal except "LIN 1-401" (p237) should be "IJN I-401."

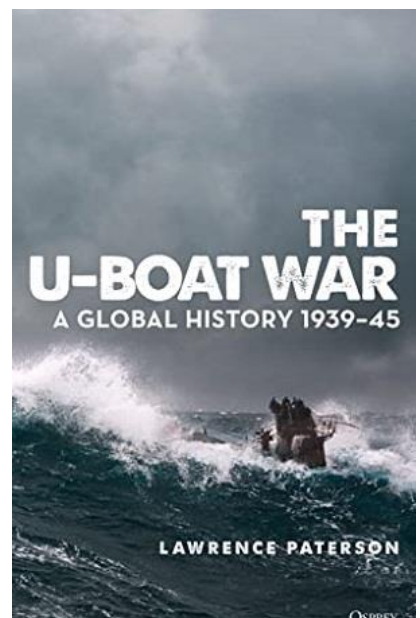
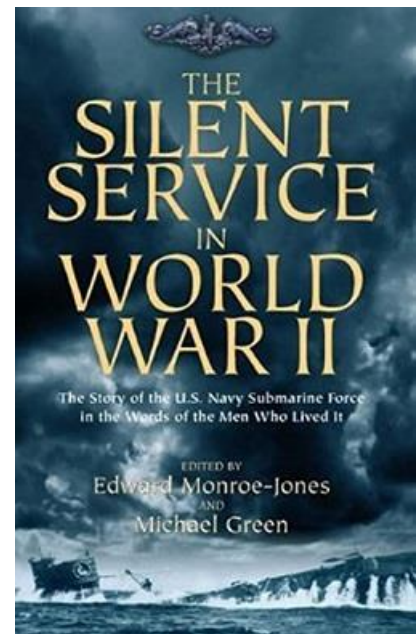
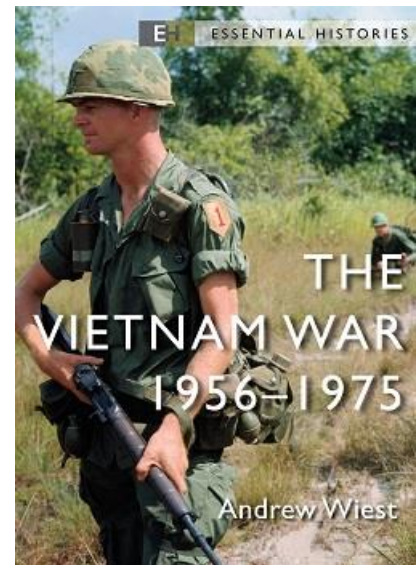
It contains 42 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, and one black and white map of the Asia-Pacific region, from USA to Burma and from New Zealand to USSR.

Easy to pick up for a few minutes, easy to read, and easy to put down. Enjoyed it.

The German side of WWII submarine warfare receives an intensive examination of operations in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the Mediterranean Sea, and even a bit of the Pacific voyages. The narrative explains the pre-war strategy and the scramble to adjust to a war that was years ahead of scheduled naval construction programs along with torpedo misfires every bit as exasperating to U-Boat crews as US torpedo problems were to US crews. Both sides blamed their inept Torpedo Design Bureaus for design flaws and lack of follow-up to complaints.

Italian subs get touched upon, but a separate book like this one would be as well received as this one. Little known, at least to me, submarine trivia: When the Allies seized Vichy cargo ships in and around Africa, two Vichy submarines started hunting and sinking Allied cargo ships (p161). A pair of unnamed German-captured Dutch "boats" (p163), later identified as subs and designated UD3 and UD5 (p203), were converted into torpedo transports to resupply U-boats.

A pair of typos: The German G7a torpedo had a "75km" range, while the



G7e had a “50km” range (p24). That's a heckuva torpedo range, but I suspect both numbers are missing a decimal point to a more realistic 7.5km and 5.0km range.

The book contains 56 black and white photos and one black and white illustration.

Unusual I never heard of this trivia before: U-501 Capt Hugo Forster, who apparently surrendered his boat without a fight, was repatriated to Germany in January 1945 in a prisoner of war swap (p148) to stand for a court martial. In February, he committed suicide in a cell in Germany rather than face trial. There is no footnote to this anecdote, but I didn't know the Allies exchanged POWs, or at least healthy POWs.

Technically, U-505 in Chicago. Image from web.



A little USSR trivia: 50% of the tonnage shipped to the USSR by the Allies came via the Pacific and Vladivostok, presumably on Soviet-flagged ships, while 27% came via the Persian Gulf and 23% via Arctic convoys (p165).

Finally, some sinking trivia (p315): Of the 1,394 wartime U-boat commanders (including those in training), 847 (60) never sank a single ship, 349 (29%) sank one to five ships, 66 (5%) sank six to 10 ships, and 82 (6%) sank 11+ ships. On occasion, Allied shipping losses touched upon the theoretical number that would starve Britain, but never for very long and by mid-1943 onward, US mass production, Allied weapon advances, and air coverage by extended range land-based aircraft and beginning of carrier-based aircraft doomed the effort.

This is a well-written and well-argued book through the first three-quarters of its pages. The last quarter seemed a bit truncated and more tabular recitation than explanation, as if in a hurry or perhaps lack of information. No matter, it's a great look at U-boats and WWII submarine warfare.

Enjoyed it.

The Paras in Iraq: Operation Telic 1. by Craig Allen. Softcover (6.7x9.7 inches). 128 pages. 2020.

From *Britain at War* magazine comes a recap of Operation Telic 1, which saw 3rd Para battalion invade Iraq in 2003 and capture Basra before heading onto Baghdad. Written by the 'media escort,' it captures the advance across the border in a vehicle convoy, not a para-drop, although a squad did use a helicopter to drop into a village, poke around, and then leave.

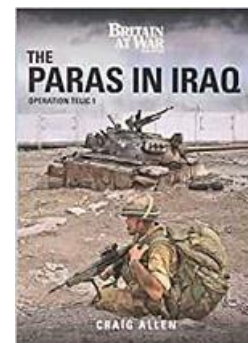
The Baghdad sortie ended up recapturing the British embassy and then cleaning it up in between foot patrols. There's not any tactical actions or even anecdotes. Only one paratrooper, Private Andrew Kelly, was killed in an unspecified 'shooting incident,' whatever that means -- accidental discharge? Suicide? Murder? (p113) So much for Mr. Embedded Media telling the full story.

The text is not the star of the book, but 356 color photos offer clear, sharp, excellent photos of soldiers, their kit, and their surroundings to modelers and dioramists.

Enjoyed it.

SS Foreign Divisions & Volunteers of Lithuania Latvia & Estonia 1941-1945 (Images of War). by Ian Baxter. Softcover (7.4x9.7 inches). 119 pages. 2021.

The Baltic States' SS units get their turn in the photo-intensive *Images of War* series with 152 black and white photos and five black and white illustrations. Some photos, like the T-34 shot (p107) and the Netherlands SS units (p98-99 and 101) somehow got shuffled into the book. No, I don't know why.



Of a more lethal failure, two photos (p49 and p109) of the same truck accident, albeit from different angles, say the accident was in Nov 1943 and Jan 1945. It sure seems like the same accident, from the position of the truck relative to the terrain. So, which date is it? I don't know the answer to that, either.

I don't know if it's my eyes, but the photos seem murkier than usual. Certainly the photo on the cover has been sharpened from the image printed in the book (p106). After using Photoshop on about 65,000 illustrations for the late, great MagWeb, it doesn't really take that long to give each photo that little touch up. If they can touch up the MG team cover photo, the graphics department can touch up the others. It would make it a much better book and an even bigger boon to modelers.

Two interesting photos: The three finger mitten-glove (p82) and the SS crossing an open field in a spread-out formation (p103) -- think about command and control on a tabletop for your skirmish game.

The other photos are somewhat typical, although the impromptu foxhole-to-bunker entrenchments offer a few ideas for terraining.

It's not the strongest entry in the series, but it's good enough to say I enjoyed it.

Out of the Dark. by David Weber. Paperback. 522 pages. 2010.

A guilty pleasure for me are sci-fi novels with a 'Pearl Harbor' sneak attack by aliens. Sure, I know that's a trite trope, but what can I say, I like reading variations on how the humans respond.

So, along comes the Shongairi, which might be some sort of bastardization of Sean Connery, or maybe not. Or maybe someone overdosed on Zardoz.

Now, you'd think that a warp-capable alien force would park in orbit and announce the equivalent of 'take me to your leaders' with a few musical notes, or maybe some coffee stain ring language, and suggest surrender. Not the Shongairi -- they rain kinetic weapons all over the globe, killing off half the population and thoroughly instilling a need for revenge within the survivors.

Still, that's a great 'Pearl Harbor' opening.

Less interesting is the usual band of ex-military survivors that happen to have a remote cabin that they've fixed up with off-the-grid amenities. Oh yeah, they own a gun range, so weaponry a plenty for all the family members.

More interesting is US Master Sgt Stephen Buchevsky, stranded in Romania from the attack, who keeps his little band of survivors on the move, whacking all alien efforts to kill them off. Meanwhile, other survivors form hit and run groups to keep the aliens off balance and make expansion from bases expensive.

So, about half the book is interesting and the other half less so. It was all purring along until the end, when the humans completely defeated the aliens, captured the orbiting ships that weren't destroyed, and won the day in a few pages.

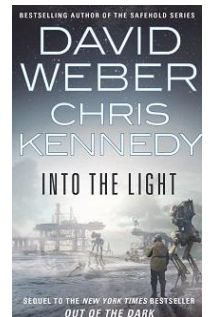
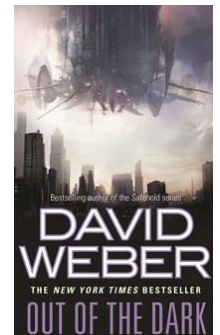
What? How?

Vampires.

I kid you not. The aliens in Romania pushed too close to the last surviving Vampire posse and enough humans agreed to become undead to save humanity. Blech.

It's as farfetched as two guys with a laptop unleashing a computer virus in an alien mothership.

There is a sequel, *Into the Light*, that I started but abandoned after 175 pages as it dragged and dragged without much happening.

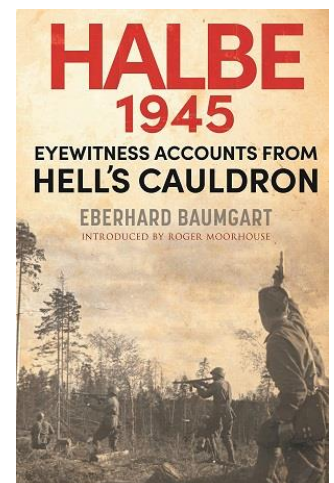


Halbe 1945. by Eberhard Baumgart. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 192 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Eyewitness Accounts from Hell's Cauldron*

This is a reprint of a 1999 German book *Halbe 1945: Durchbruch in den Untergang*, translated into English. The accounts describe German soldier and civilian efforts to escape the Soviet encirclement in a town called Halbe in 1945. It certainly captures the horrors of shellfire, firefight ferocity, crawling over corpses, and other grim measures needed for survival.

Some Soviets come across as professional soldiers, but most were of the looting, murdering, raping kind that mimicked German depredations in the USSR. I would have liked a map, but none are among the 81 black and white images, although orders, propaganda leaflets, and period newspaper pages are (although in original German).



My guess is that Ukrainians experienced in 2022 what the Germans did in 1945. Chilling in places, so I don't want to say it was enjoyable, but it does provide exceptional first-hand accounts of desperation.

Mauser Rifles: Volume 2 - 1918-1945. by Luc Guillou. Hardback (9.2x12.2 inches). 77 pages. 2021.

Oversized book offers a technical delight for serious gun collectors. It also crams an amazing 293 color photos, 48 black and white photos, one color illustration and one black and white illustration into the book. Those photos zero in on the details, such as plate stampings and serial numbers, for true enthusiasts.

I can certainly appreciate the expertise in separating the Mauser variants over those years. The book also covers Czech Vz.24 and G.24(t) rifles, captured Polish rifles, and the wide range of accessories.

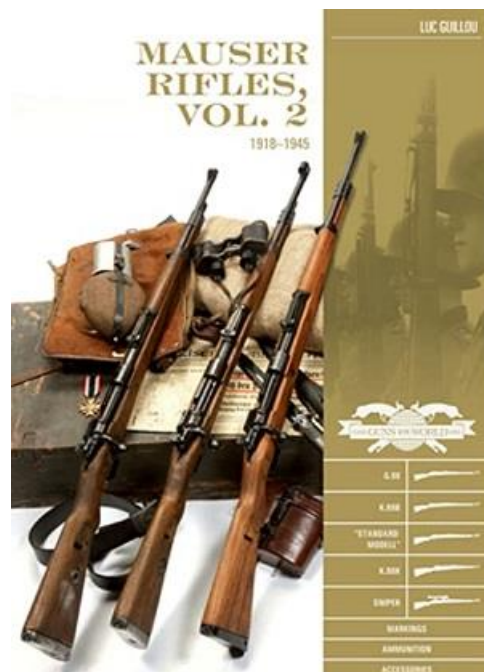
I picked up one typo: The Klein Kaliber Wehrsport Karabiner is abbreviated once as KWK (p21), but is KKW elsewhere in the book.

And I was amazed to discover that concentration camps had their own armaments manufacturing sections for firearms. However, talk about unmotivated employees... The rejection rate at Buchenwald was at least 10 times the rate at regular factories.

FYI: *Volume 1* covers 1870 to 1918.

Admittedly, my eyes tended to glaze over from the technical detail at times, so when the text went into mechanical minutiae, I started skim-reading the paragraphs. Yet for Mauser collectors and gun enthusiasts: jackpot.

Enjoyed it.



7 Seconds to Die. by John Antal. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 179 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *A Military Analysis of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War and the Future of Warfighting*

This covers the 2020 war between Armenia and Azerbaijan across their disputed border. This is the second time they fought. The first round went to Armenia. The second went to Azerbaijan and this book explains why and how their war offers an indication how future wars might be fought.

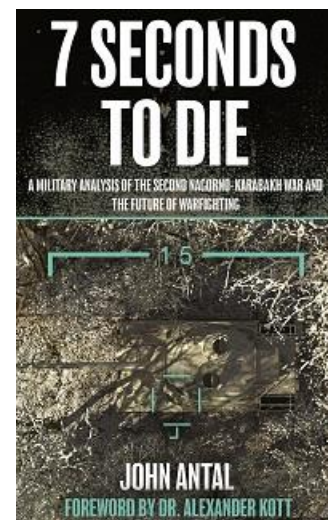
The book divides into three parts: recap of the war, conclusions drawn from the war, and 14 lessons to learn for the next war.

In essence, Azerbaijan learned from defeat and thanks in large part to its oil revenues, invested in unmanned technology at about a 6:1 ratio over Armenia (p128). Armenia, quite the poorer, did the best it could setting up a static defense, but its forces were hunted and harassed by drone strike after drone strike. It went a lot like the US invasion of Iraq, only with a lot more unmanned strike missions.

The book contains 35 black and white photos, seven black and white illustrations, and seven black and white maps.

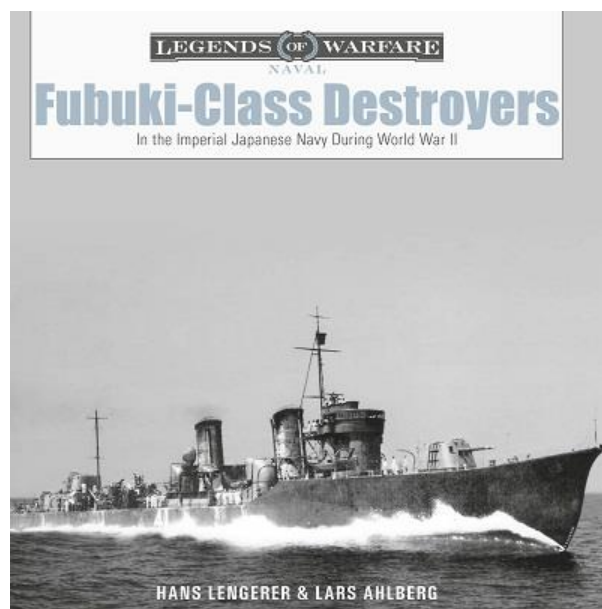
As for the lessons, most are self-evident: conceal ("mask") your own forces, find and strike enemy forces, dominate the cyber aspect, and train/prep like crazy. Azerbaijan did, Armenia didn't, and a chunk of Nagorno is now Azerbaijan.

Enjoyed it.



Fubuki-Class Destroyers: IJN in WWII (Legends of Warfare). by Hans Lengerer and Lars Ahlberg. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 128 pages. 2022.

The photo series tackles the 24 Fubuki DDs, of which only two (Hibiki and Ushio) survived WWII. Initial design in the 1920s proved defective due to engine and weaponry weight exceeding specifications that put too much stress on the hull.



This was corrected with a heavier hull and reinforced plating, but with a loss of speed (p4).

Each chapter focuses on one aspect of the ship: armament, machinery, protection, construction, and so on. You'll get a fine mix of specifications and reality, plus the alterations that occurred.

Most of the 172 black and white photos show ships at medium range, with some close-ups of systems. It also has 25 black and white illustrations.

Great images, production values, and information make this another winner in the series for those with a yen for Fubuki history.

Enjoyed it.

Everything Worked like Clockwork. by Roger Salmon. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 320 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The Mechanization of British Regular and Household Cavalry 1918-1942*

Well-researched and well-footnoted academic treatise considers the politics and economics behind the s-l-o-w transition from horses to tanks and armored cars. The priority on air and naval defense meant the Army came out third best in funding, exacerbated by a 1920s unemployment rate that never fell below 10%...Don't even ask about the Depression of the 1930s. The losses of WWI still reverberated in society, leading to a strong pacifist movement in Britain that defunded the military, even as Italy and Germany rearmed.

It contains 46 black and white photos in a mix of people and machines.

Part of this analysis is absolutely fascinating, but part presents sheer drudgery. Many is the time I wanted to abandon reading, only to be surprised with another interesting section. It was a sine wave of interest -- up and down and up and down. I'm glad I slogged through it, but unless I'm setting up *A Very British Civil War* campaign, I doubt I'll ever read this again.

Ties go to the author. Enjoyed it.

Soldiers of Fortune: Elite 244. by Anthony Rogers. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2022.

This overview of the mercenary world primarily covers Africa, but also Indian Ocean, South America, and Yugoslavia, in the latter half of the 20th century. It also includes the private military contractors, the best known being Wagner Group (Russian) and Blackwater (US).

Recruitment, training, and operations get the once over. You can likely pull some scenarios from the pages, although you'll have to find other sources for maps and terrain.

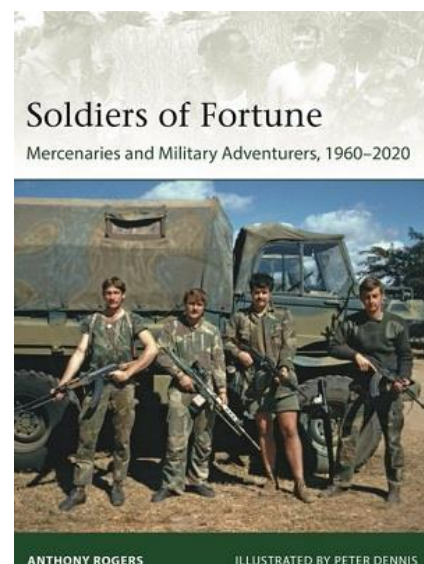
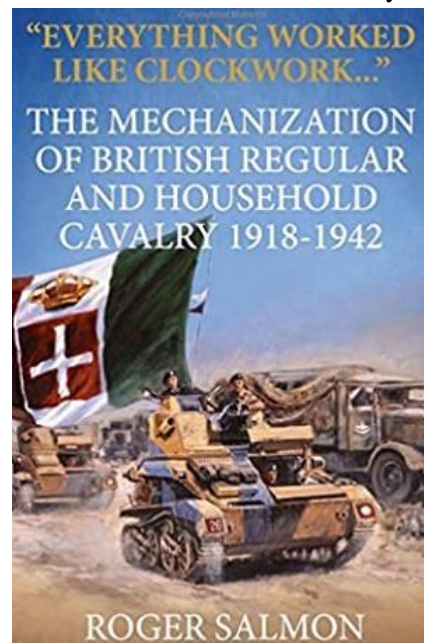
The 38 color photos, 10 black and white photos, and eight pages of color uniform illustrations (three per page for a total of 24) offer plenty of material for painting up such troops.

Hawker Hurricane IIC: Single No. 36. by Sgt. Antoni Beda. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 82 pages. 2021.

As with the other volumes in this series, no text to speak of other than the terse photo captions that highlight various systems of the aircraft. The booklet contain 21 black and white photos, six black and white illustrations, two color photos (cockpit), one color illustration (instrument panel), four color profiles (top, bottom, left, and right), five 1/72 scale black and white drawings, five 1/48 scale black and white drawings, and 22 other scale drawings of various aspects of the plane.

Lebanese Civil War: Volume 2 (Middle East at War 41). by Tom Cooper and Efim Sandler. Softcover (8.2x11.8 inches). 82 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *Volume 2: Quiet Before the Storm 1978-1981*



The second volume is much better than the first (see my 12/12/2019 AAR or HMGS.org for the review of *Volume 1 [MidEast at War 21]*), with a better focus on the narrative of a disintegrating country

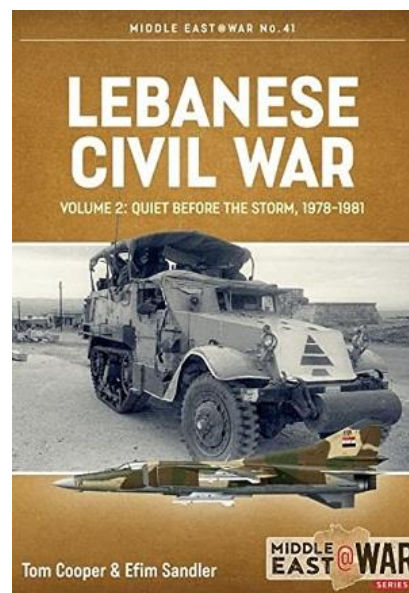
The hodge podge lodge of factions vie for control with attacks and revenge attacks as the Syrian Army threatens to intervene and then finally rumbles across the border. The Israelis are not far behind to try and clear the terrorist groups from southern Lebanon while downing Syrian Air Force jets.

A considerable number of small-unit actions receive succinct overviews, although GMs will need additional sources of information to create scenarios based on these short accounts. The exception is the Battle of Zahle between a Lebanese militia unit and the Syrian Army -- that's well defined enough for a general scenario.

The booklet contains 79 black and white photos, five black and white maps, one generic color map of Southern Lebanon, and 12 pages of color profiles -- 16 vehicles/tanks, one drone, one artillery gun, two helicopters, two ships, and 11 jet aircraft.

If you want to set up a mini-campaign for control of Lebanon, these *Middle East at War* booklets can help sort through the alphabet soup of factions and provide an overview to get the political militias and forces into focus.

Enjoyed it.



The Battle for Tinian. by Nathan N. Prefer. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 238 pages. 2022 reprint of 2012 book.

Subtitle: *Vital Stepping Stone in America's War Against Japan*

This detailed look at a small invasion makes for interesting reading and just about everything you need to set up a tabletop scenario. The island was captured in about 10 days, although the last Japanese soldier, Murata Susumu, didn't surrender until 1953 (p167). About the only thing you need is a map -- the seven black and white maps are rather generic and show few details.

That's a pity. The US Marines and Japanese OOBs are quite extensive. You'd expect the US OOB to be accurate down to the last Marine, but ... you have to pull actual troop numbers from the text. The Japanese OOB includes estimated numbers.

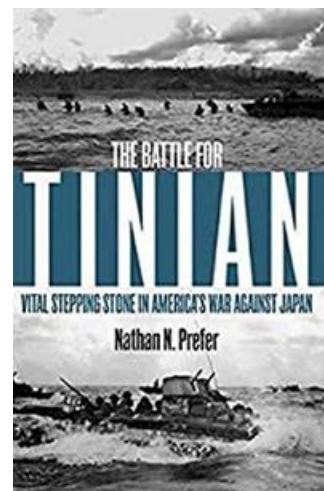
Part of the ambiguity is that the Marines took casualties capturing next-door island Saipan. The 2nd Marine Division took 6,170 casualties and the 4th Marine Division took 6,612 casualties (p57), but the pair only received 1,268 replacements (p63) before invading Tinian.

The prose reads as smooth as a good novel, with a mix of narrative, first-person accounts, and insightful analysis of the changing situations for the US Marines and the Japanese troops.

One typo: One private's name is spelled Tulley with a 'u' (p92) and in the next sentence, it's spelled Tolley with an 'o' (p92).

With a primarily battalion-level view, it's an interesting examination of an invasion that had learned lessons from frontal assaults at Tarawa and Saipan and came in from unexpected beaches and rolled up the Japanese defenders.

Enjoyed it.



Little Wars Convention

Just a reminder that the Little Wars convention by HMGS Midwest runs April 21-24, 2022 at the Sheraton-Naperville/Lisle Hotel, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532. 630-506-1000

Special Guest Frank Chadwick will run his still under development *Breakthrough* rules: 15mm WWII battalion per stand rule set.



And now, the funniest April Fools joke yet (see next page...)