

Big Siege at Lille: Age of Marlborough

Settlers of Hawaii: *Catan*

Dominion: "Forbidden Treasures"

NJ Game Day and Flea Market: Feb. 4, 2023

Potomac Wargamers/NOVAG Game Day: Jan 28, 2023

Wasp-Waisted Bulge: *WWII Command Decision*

Monsters on the Loose: *Team Titan*

Timoshenko's Attack: *WWII Squad Leader* Scenario

The Moose Is Loose: *Moose Master Card Game*

From The Overall French Commander:

Snappy Nappy Observations

Got Any Corps? *Go Waterloo Quelle Affaire*

Close, But: Post-Game *WQA* Rules Re-Read

3D Printed STuG III: Sample

WWII Tank vs. Tank Playtest: *Skirmish Action II*

Books I've Read: 1,000th Review

Warplanes of the Third Reich: 1,000th Review

Far Distant Ships: Blockade 1793-1815 (RR86)

Stalingrad Airlift 1942-43: Air Campaign 34

To Save an Army: The Stalingrad Airlift

Caesar's Civil War: Essential Histories

Post-Roman Kingdoms: AD 450-800 (Elite 248)

Infantry Antiaircraft Missiles: Weapon 85

US Soldier vs Chinese Soldier: Combat 59

Thieves of Mercy (ACW naval novel)

The Genius Plague (sci-fi)

The Italian Wars: Vol. 4 Ceresole 1544

Panzers in Normandy: Then and Now

Chinook Crew Chick: Female RAF Crew Member

The Last Cavalry Sword

2 CM FLAK 28 & 30: Camera On 28

Killing Hitler's Reich: Austria 1945

American Interceptor: USN Convoy Fighters

Eagles of Destiny: Vol. 1 Pakistan AF 1947-1956 (Asia at War 38)



Cold Wars 2023: March 9-12

A little reminder to put on your 2023 calendar.



Big Siege at Lille: Age of Marlborough

by Russ Lockwood

The walls and bastions of the French-held fortress of Lille stretched for six feet across the tabletop. The Allied siege works stretched even further. Both looked a little thin in terms of troops, but no doubt the Allies looked to have reinforcements coming to help. No doubt the French would see reinforcements come from within the off-board city.

Er, doubt.

Boy, did we all misread the situation.

The imposing fortress of Lille and the siege trenchline around it. You can just see the breach in upper right corner. Supply town is in upper left corner. Powder cavalry is aiming towards the gate of Lille in upper middle edge.



New Year of Gaming

Once again, we lads gathered in Dave's basement for the start of a new wargaming season. For me, personally, my first game here was back in Dec 1988 -- a 25mm chariot race with full circus maximus.

This being 2023, it's the start of my 35th year gaming with this group. Job transfers, aging, and even deaths whittled away some of the early gamers, but new gamers emerged.

From left to right: Allied Dave, French Marc, and Umpire Troy.



For the first game of 2023, Umpire Troy offered up the Marlburian Siege of Lille. Random die rolls found our commands: Jay, Phil, Chris, and Marc as French and Rich, Dave, and me as Allies.

After a Champagne toast provided by Rich, we got down to rolling dice.

From left to right: Frenchies Phil, Chris, and Jay, and British Rich. Supply Town on right edge.

A Lille Relief, S'il Vous Plaît

The main forces we thought would help the Allies prosecute the siege? They were mostly the French relief force.

Troy created a three-ring circus of



French objectives: Hold a key house inside Lille, take three of five buildings in a town outside Lille, and get one of two units of gunpowder-loaded cavalry resupply units through the Allies and into Lille. The Allies had the opposite: take the house inside Lille, take three of five houses in the town, and stop a cavalry resupply unit from entering Lille.

Troy adapted *Regimental Fire & Fury* rules for the game.

French defenders await the British attack. Smoke puffs mark cannon batteries. The key building is at bottom left corner.

Wrinkle the First: Allied Rooster Needed

All French units were up and ready to go on turn 1. Alas, among the Allies, only the British units opposite a breach in the walls were armed and ready. The rest of us? We needed to roll per unit, needing an 8+ on a d10, to get the unit started. If not, we got a second chance on Turn 2 with a 6+. If not, we all woke up on Turn 3.

Worse, except for the British, every unit that woke up also needed a full turn to consolidate into a unit.

Our Allied units would also wake up if shot at or within 2 inches of enemy. Nuthin' like the smell of gunfire in the morning as a great cock a doodle doo!

French landing at Supply Town.

Wrinkle the Second: Amphibious Assault

The French could land two units per turn next to the Allied supply town -- and one unit already grabbed a beachhead. Not a single Allied infantry unit was within spitting distance. Dutch cavalry, yes, but infantry that could actually capture blocks in a town? They would have to be pulled from the siege lines.

Fortunately, the French had no units opposite the center section of the siege lines.

Wrinkle the Third: Platoon Fire

All the non-skirmish units got platoon fire, which essentially doubled the rate of fire at very short range (up to 3 inches). Some discussion ensued about which units actually used platoon fire, but Troy stuck to his original scenario.

Wake up call. French skirmishers fire at my Allied infantry. Phil's real light cavalry (upper edge) head across a field to engage my Dutch cavalry (off top of photo). Meanwhile, his powder cavalry gets on the road, supported by an infantry regiment and a cannon battery.



To the Siege Lines!

French commander Jay, opposite the breach, awaited Rich's British assault. Artillery fire criss-crossed no man's land, soon to be joined by small arms fire.

The British fire seemed to have little effect on the French defenders, while the crossfire from the wall and bastion took a toll among the advancing British.

Initial British advance towards the breach and the bastion.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

French commander Marc disembarked two infantry units next to Supply Town. There was no opposition. The nearby Dutch commander (Russ -- hey, that's me) rolled nary a number even close to 8 to wake up the horses.

Indeed, I couldn't roll an 8+ for any of my other five infantry and four artillery units either. What a disaster! Obviously, the die was a French ruse de guerre. It looked like a d10, but it rolled like a d4.

If this kept up, my troops should have dressed in their brown pants. Something must be done! I swapped out the miserable pink die for a new one.

It was a brown die.

Yes, it was! The irony wasn't lost on me.

Charge of the Gun Powder Brigade

French commander Phil moved up both his skirmisher units on the far left side of his line, apparently in an effort to pin my troops in place.

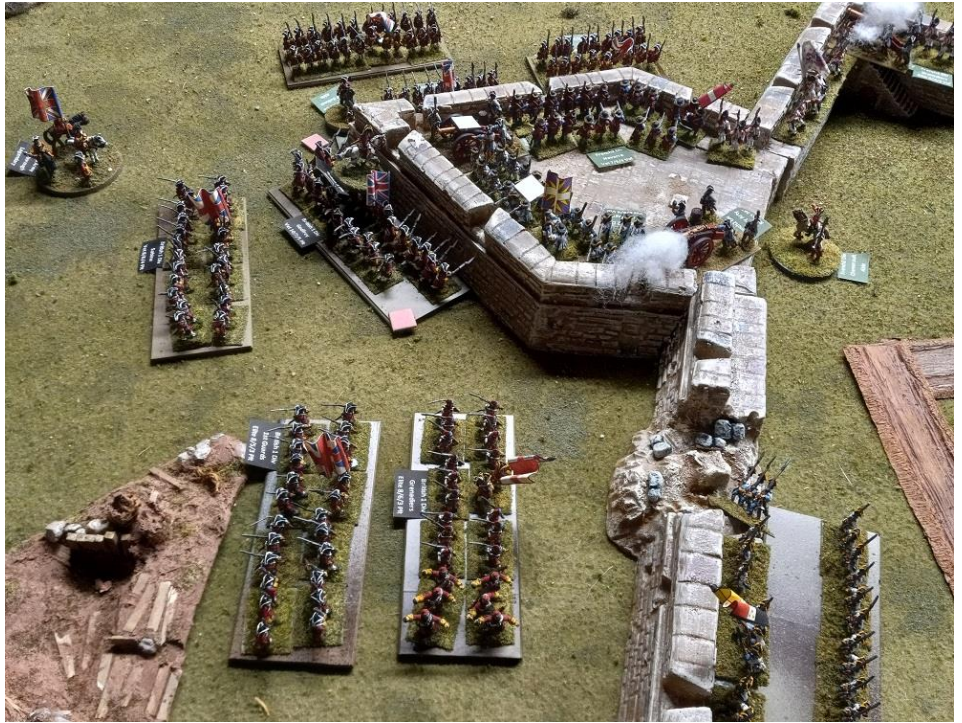
It worked.

Meanwhile, his infantry unit and cannon headed at me around the bend in the siege works. The two all-important gunpowder cavalry units hopped on the road, waiting for a hole in the defensive line.

Phil's powder cavalry finds a hole...or is it a trap?

Two things about Phil's gunpowder resupply cavalry units. First, they didn't fight because they were so encumbered by the powder bags. Second, Phil only needed to get one of the two units inside Lille, but the unit could not be "spent" in *RF&F* vernacular -- i.e. it had to be mostly intact.

His three real cavalry regiments galloped against my three Dutch



regiments near Supply Town. So much for trying to stop Marc from capturing the town. Cavalry does not attack buildings.

I'm a Lille Short

My infantry units formed. I discovered that I had only about 30 inches of units to defend about 60 inches of siege lines. Uh-oh.

I held the works opposite the two skirmisher units with two of my units. I put a third somewhat close to the second unit, facing Phil, but that left the road uncovered.

The fourth infantry unit was a bit of a dilemma. I wanted to turn it around to face Phil's relief force and secure the road, but Chris had artillery and infantry opposite me inside Lille. I could hear the wheels turning in his head. He was thinking about making a wine and cheese run. I couldn't afford a French sally and so kept my fourth infantry unit covering the rear of my third unit -- just in case Chris came out. He'd probably demand Grey Poupon, too.

As for my fifth infantry unit, I almost turned it around and sent it towards Marc, but Chris' force would have been overwhelming and so I left it facing Lille to cover the fourth unit.

As for the four artillery pieces, I turned three towards Phil and sent one to help Dave.

Drive The French Back Into the Sea...Er, River

Dave gathered what infantry he could wake up -- and it was just about all of 'em on Turn 1. His cavalry and horse artillery all sprung to life. The infantry on the siege lines answered the call of bugle and drum. He was on his way in record time.

Apparently, his pink d10 glowed with the power of the sun and woke up his troops. It obviously had all the high numbers that mine forsook.

The only reason my artillery piece caught up with his infantry was that I had a shorter distance to travel.

Although my cannon fire was at low odds, the artillery announced the presence of a determined Dave.

Dave (left) attacks Marc's defense of Supply Town. My artillery fires with little effect.

Back at the Breach and Bastion

That would be a great name for a pub: The Breach and Bastion. Maybe that was the building the British sought inside the city. Given the intensity of Frenchman Jay's firing, it was likely named Cafe du Nevergonnagetinhere. Hmmm. That name probably needs an accent mark somewhere.

In any case, the British moved up, firing as they went, and caught a lucky break. Rich's assault on the bastion won a melee, tossing the French back and grabbing a toehold. The French counter-attack failed. It wasn't much, but it was a start.

Of course, the troops closest to the breach were almost at half strength and close to being spent. Other British units were beat up, too.

The French were mostly intact. Disordered, but intact.



The Charge of the Powder Brigade

On the other side of Lille, Phil's skirmishers were in an increasingly unequal fight with my units in the trenchworks. My two units platoon-fired his two skirmisher units into oblivion.

The brown die was working. It actually gave a range of rolls fit for a d10.

Phil's cannon and regular infantry attacked my third unit in the trenchworks, and even charged it on occasion, but my troops repelled every charge and gradually won the firefight.

One of the two powder cavalry units obliterated down to "spent" status flees from my charge.



Indeed, the French charged my artillery, but a stellar roll halted the charge before it reached the works. That was a key victory.

Seeing the decline of his skirmishers, which would release my troops, Phil made his move. The lead powder cavalry unit raced down the road, braving the artillery and small arms fire.

Alas, l'audace made him go just a little too far, for not only was he shot up and lost stands, he also parked his flank in front of my fourth infantry unit.

The charge went in, the dice bounced, and my unit won a resounding victory, forcing a retreat off the road and away from the gates of Lille. Better yet, at least for me, the stands lost pushed Phil's lead powder cavalry unit into the Spent category.

Yet, it was looking grim for me to keep Phil from delivering his powder with the intact second cavalry unit.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Phil had done a masterful job of exploiting my Dutch cavalry's inability to wake up. One finally did, but the other two, including my cuirassiers, slumbered on.

His three light cavalry units charged, one on one with my light cavalry regiment in which he had a +1 die roll advantage (leader attached) and the other two which also had an advantage since my cuirassiers fought disordered.

In these two attacks, his die faltered and my die shone. I won both melees, repelling the French cavalry. I even wounded his leader.

Phil's French cavalry charge my Dutch cavalry (light on the left, cuirassiers on the right).



In my half of the turn, I charged and won two more melees so handily, I demolished two French cavalry and had a breakthrough charge that nailed the third French regiment.

It was a monumental display of tactical brilliance on my part. Welllll, maybe the brilliance was due to the disparity of the die rolls.

Did I mention the brown die was working at just the right times?

The result of the a melee: Phil's leader is wounded (upper left corner), French saddles are emptied, and the Dutch charge was even more impressive.

The Supply Town Brawl

My lone battery peppered the buildings of Supply Town to no effect. Someone forgot to put cannon balls in the barrels!

Meanwhile, Dave collected his infantry, used his cavalry to make sure the French stayed inside the town, and charged the first of the five buildings. Defensive fire fizzled and the melee swept the French back into a different building.

One building down and four to go.

The Last Gasp of the Powder Boys

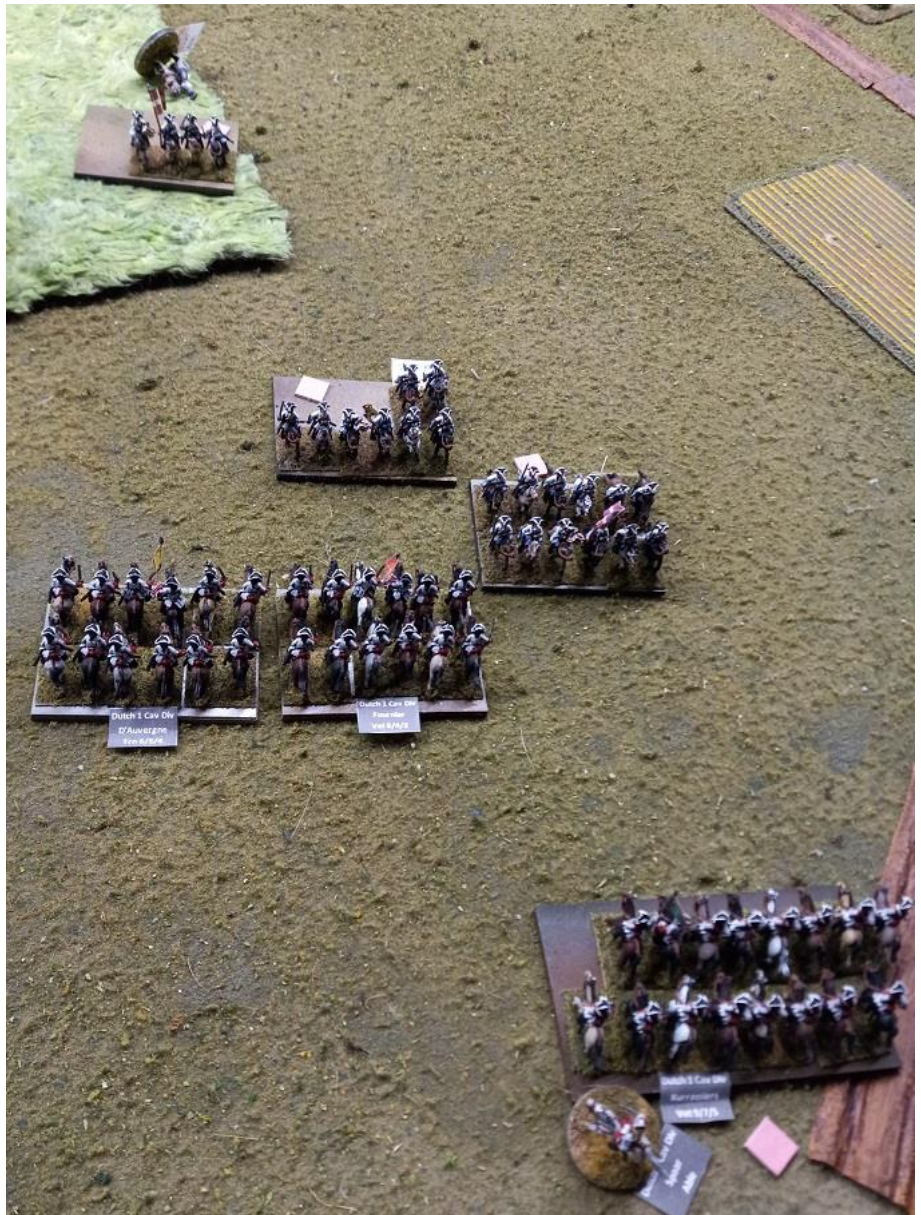
As I eliminated both skirmishers and poured fire into the flank of Phil's infantry, sending that packing as well, Phil swerved his second powder cavalry unit around the battlefield and back onto the road. I had one shot of infantry fire that proved deadly, and one melee that also proved deadly, but although four stands of 10 fell, that left six, and his first powder cavalry unit only became spent at five.

Dave will capture the first building of Supply Town.

The cavalry regiment retreated away from the charge and towards the gates. As six stands were over five, it seemed Phil had won his one-third of the victory conditions.

Not so fast!

I looked at the unit's tag. And then



looked again.

"Wait. This says six," I noted. "If it's down to six stands, it's spent."

I looked at the other unit. It definitely said five.

I flagged down Umpire Troy. "This one says spent at six and the other at five. Is that right?"

"Yeah," he replied. "One wasn't as good as the other."

I looked at Phil. He looked at me. We burst into a chuckle. We figured both carried the same stats. Had he reversed the order in which the powder cavalry moved down the road, he would have accomplished his mission. As it stood, I squeaked out a small win with a real small "w."



Post-game, he realized that he should have halted that second powder cavalry unit in between my two units to avoid infantry fire and a charge. Alas, in the heat of battle...

Phil's second powder cavalry unit swerves around my worn infantry unit on the road, but parks in front of my fourth infantry unit. A volley, a charge, and the second unit joins the first in "spent" status.

Time, Gentlemen

With that, the eleven o'clock hour struck and three hours of tabletop battling came to a close.

As for the objectives, Rich's British were too beat up to do more than prolong the battle for the bastion. Jay never let him get into the city.

Marc held four of the five buildings and seemed unlikely to be levered out. Dave had cavalry aplenty, but other than a sacrificial charge through the streets to pick off the French artillery, there was little it could do.

Phil's force had routed off the table except for the artillery battery -- currently hoofing it away from my force. One powder cavalry unit made it into the city and a second might make it into the city, but as both were spent, too little powder would be delivered.

Two outta three ain't bad. It was a well-earned French victory.

A Little of Lille Siege History

Historically, the Allies sieged and took Lille, but it took so long, it delayed the Allied campaigning season, meaning Lille performed its intended role. The French amphibious assault actually took place several kilometers away and not as close to the city as the tabletop indicated, but it was too important an event to leave out of the scenario.

Thanks, Troy for umpiring the game and Dave for hosting.

Rich's British gain a toehold on the bastion, but at what cost to his four main attacking infantry units? Jay's defense looks solid.



Settlers of Hawaii: Catan

By Daniel Burkley

From my survey of players available to game between Christmas and New Year's Day, there were five available on December 28th and all five had all indicated *Settlers of Catan* as a game they would play.

Catan Geographies: Hawaii
from GenCon 2015

Allowing for the possibility that a non-responder or two might find themselves available and looking for a game – and the possibility that someone might test

positive for covid (which happened for one player), I prepared for as many as six players. Only one attended, but we made an afternoon out of it.

I suggested *Settlers of Catan: Hawaii*, which I picked up at GenCon 2015. It's one of my favorite "boards" to play one (and one that I've never won a game on). Intended for 3-6 players, we gave it a go with two players.

Each player starts out with three settlements. First to 15 VPs wins. Considering that 40% of the resource hexes are fish, using the "fisheries" becomes a significant strategy (plus the more "fishing boats" you have on the "fisheries", the more VPs you can gain). All the "ports" are actually at sea as well, so that's another incentive to "go fishing".

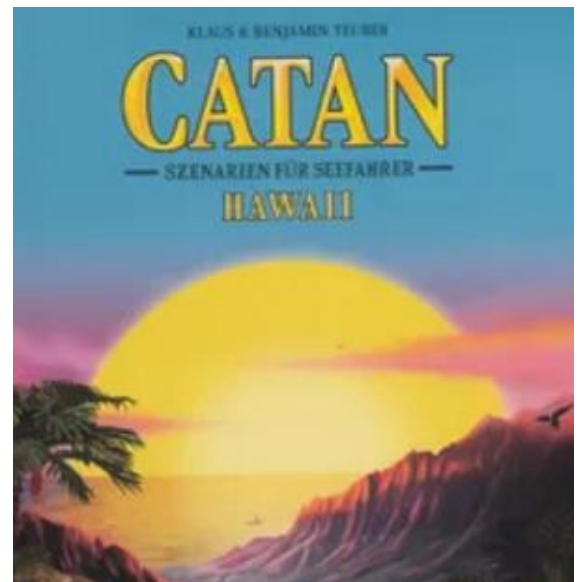
With plenty of space to work with, both of us felt we had "choice" locations, but it's the dice rolls that ultimately reveal which sites were more "choice" than others.

The game started off slowly with progress based on resources gathered. Mike developed his "fishing fleet" more than I did, but I had more land development. Once we both got above 10 points the pace picked up. I have a lot invested on 5, 6, and 8, while Michael's big pay-offs were 8, 9, 10.

On the last '6' rolled, I was able to steal the "Longest Road" (worth 2 VPs) from Mike, giving me 13 points and dropping him to 9 points. Then the dice grew very "cold" for me: 10, 10, 7, 9, 7, 8, 3, 9, 8. Mike's fishing fleet had a virtual monopoly worth 4 VPs now and he easily re-claimed the "Longest Road" (and the 2 VPs that go with it).

The couple of cards the "Robber" stole for him helped establish a new settlement and grabbed a VP site, so at 14 VPs vs 12 VPs it looked like a lock. What I didn't know was that Mike drew the "Old Boot" from the "fish bowl", requiring another VP to win – so he needed 16 VPs.

It didn't matter, as he still got good enough numbers to progress, while I still had my dry spell, so Mike "coasted" to victory: 16 VPs to 13 VPs.



Dominion: “Forbidden Treasures”

By Daniel Burkley

Mike and I next tried a game of *Dominion*. The pre-made set of 10 Kingdom cards was rolled for randomly from among 600 different set-ups I put together from various sources.

Mike had the 5 / 2 split in coins and I had the 4 / 3 split. His initial purchase of *Sirens* guaranteed I would get a few Curses during the game, prompting me to get a *Sirens* later in the game. *Blessed Village*, *Idol*, and *Tracker* were mutual choices that allowed us both to be blessed with *Boons* on many turns.

Mike was fortunate to get Gold cards relatively early, which allowed him to purchase the first Province. I had more *Fishing Village* and *Tragic Hero* cards, which allowed me to cycle through my deck a bit faster than Mike and soon I was able to catch up on Gold and purchasing Provinces. A Boon allowed me to trash a card and I chose my *Haunted Mirror*, which gained me a *Ghost* card. The *Ghost* proved to be a turning point in the game when it showed up on a later turn and I revealed a *Tragic Hero*. The double-play of that card at the start of my following turn gained me two Gold cards and a well-timed purchase of *Cemetery* allowed me to trash two Curses.

The game came down to my last turn, where I was able to generate 12 coins and two ‘Buys’, letting me purchase a *Cemetery* and the last Province. That extra *Cemetery* ended up giving me a 1-point win.

We ended our gaming session at that point. We each had one win for the day.



NJ Game Day and Flea Market: Feb. 4, 2023

By Russ

Join OMM on Feb. 4, 2023 for a NJ Game Day and Wargame Flea Market at the Community Center in Whiting (Manchester) NJ.

The address is 92 Fairway Lane Whiting NJ 08759. If using GPS, this comes up as Manchester NJ.

This is a central location with easy access by major highways. It's 48 miles from Philadelphia (via NJ Rte 70), 50 miles from Atlantic City, and 80 miles from Morristown, NJ.

Admission is FREE.

Games so far: *Art d' la Guerre* ('Jersey Boys'), *WWII Skirmish Action* (Sowers), a one-table *Snappy Nappy* (Lockwood), *Flames of War* (Whitesell), *Vietnam Company B* (Poltorak), and *Dietrichdorf 1807* (Bruckenn).. GMs who wish to put on a game are welcome.

Contact: Dennis Shorthouse (OMM) for GM and other information.

E-mail: militarymatters@att.net

Come beat the winter blahs with a day of warm wargaming.

Potomac Wargamers/NOVAG Game Day: Jan 28, 2023

Once again, the Centreville Library will be the site for another games day of wargaming -- January 28, 2023. The Library is located at 14200 St Germain Dr., Centreville, VA 20121. It's just off I-66 exit 52 on Route 29.

The game day will run from 0800 to 1700. Game set-up is from 0800 to 0900. The fighting starts at 0900 and we have to be cleaned up and out of the room by closing time at 1700.

There is room for nine wargames, so if you want to run a game, contact Brian: brian.dewitt@juno.com

Wasp-Waisted Bulge: WWII Command Decision

by Russ Lockwood

Here we go again: Another Battle of the Bulge mission with the US trying to push past a German defense in ugly tank country. In this case, our armor had no choice but to cross a stream next to an impassable river.

The raw tabletop with eventual starting positions.

The good news:

Two bridges were available and the stream was fordable by tanks -- if you could make the bog down roll. The bad news: The river's fords were impassable to all vehicles and the two bridges sure looked like premium tank ambush country.

The worse news: Our old friend from the last Bulge game, the Jagdpanther (at right), sat in a wood covering roads from both bridges. You can bet the town atop the hill had an AT gun pointing at those very same bridges.

Veteran German commander von Daniel positioned his troops well. Infantry formed a semi-circle of support, with the town filled with 'em.

As for the US players: Dan had played before, Alex was at his first *Command Decision* game, and by dint of several games last year, my commander rating had graduated from Hopeless to Inept (see the 11/03/2022 AAR for the recap of the previous Bulge game).

Dan's 'Can-Do Plan, Man

Dan, not to be confused with von Daniel, would take his tanks down the road to the bridge nearest the Jagdpanther. Alex, commanding an infantry-only force, would advance from a flanking position and cross the river.

Two turns later, I would advance down the other road to the other bridge. We'd coordinate the attack so all our forces would be able to move and fire at once to overwhelm the Jagdpanther, then sweep up the hill, clean out the town, and clear a way off board.

Simple.

From left to right: US Alex, Umpire Marc, and US Dan. Notice the dual line of Dan's armored vehicles heading to one bridge.



A Buzzing Fly in the Preparation H

The stream cut through a deep ravine, so every time a tank moved off the road, it had to make a bog down roll. Worse, no other vehicle (including half-tracks) could move off the road within the ravine - - and a portion of the road descended into it almost from the edge of the board.

Von Daniel's deployments.

The ravine also blocked line of sight into and out of it. Von Daniel made sure the Jagdpanther and supporting infantry company was out of the line of sight from anything inside the ravine.

The sinister Dr. von Daniel (left) visualizes surrounding and crushing the American attack.

Getting Into Our Jammies

It didn't take long for Dan's vehicles to find themselves in a massive traffic jam on the one road into the ravine. Everything was stacked up as the tanks and half-tracks headed to the one bridge.

Dan, no fool he, was not about to send the Shermans over one at a time next to the Jagdpanther, so he decided to spread out.

Sure enough, here came the bog downs and his Shermans churned to a halt in the mire.

Infantry Attack

Alex moved the US infantry from the flank through the woods. Umpire Marc offered some hints about not bunching up and staying under cover. A little readjustment later and Alex had his troops in good order.

Alex (left) moves up infantry as Dan moves up the armor.



As Alex's troops broke cover and came off the hill, von Daniel's artillery caught him in the open, and chased him back into the woods. Alex paid more attention to positioning and soon swept towards the German position on his side of the river.

Poof! Oh, that canny von Danny... The German infantry company on our side of the river vanished. They were all dummy platoons, placed by von Daniel to delay the Americans.

They also reduced US movement so that the tail end Charlie platoons were in the open. Down came more German artillery, this time ping-ponging a platoon or two.

Alex passed the morale checks and headed for the ford over the river. Alas, he also decided to loop around via another ford and started crossing the second bridge.

My own traffic jam on Turn 3.

Boogie Woogie Bottleneck Blues

Apparently, my jam was the Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B without his bugle. Alex's looping infantry on the bridge blocked my tanks from crossing. I was in a jam, traffic jam, as bad as Dan's mired tanks. I parked the half-tracks and infantry in the woods near the bridge, ready to make a dash when the road cleared.

Turn 5. Bog downs galore as Dan attempts to outflank the Jagdpanther. Meanwhile, Alex's infantry clog "my" bridge (top of photo). Get outta the way! Let a rabbit through!



At least Dan was making progress by rolling the occasional un-bog roll. He crept across the stream seeking to outflank the Jagdpanther. Mind you, it was tough going and I suspect that his die rolls were a tad under the expected odds. He even tried towing tanks with other tanks...

Isn't that always the case? You make the die rolls and you're brilliant plan succeeds. Fail the rolls and you can blame the dice.

Slowly, Dan's tanks slithered across the stream. Supporting infantry was heading in their direction, too.

Meanwhile, von Daniel, never one to waste an opportunity, brought a rain of fire down upon the bridge, the ford, and everywhere the US infantry was in the open.

No choice for Alex at this point. He had to be in the open to get across the river and stream. Fortunately, all that German artillery missed except for some harassment fire at the bridge.

I scattered artillery fire across the town, picking off a stand here and there.

Shermans 1: Jagdpanther 0

With infantry clear, I roared my two Shermans and one M-18 across the bridge and headed for the Jagdpanther, drawing within spotting range. The German AT gun in the town barked and forced my M-18 back.

The Jagdpanther failed to fire at my Shermans in the open.

At this moment, Dan mouthed, "It's a fake."

"Oh, yeah!"

That was confirmed moments later when Marc pulled the Jagdpanther off the table. Dummy tank.

The way to the town was open.

My Shermans expose the Jagdpanther as a fake. Dan defies the odds with his bog down rolls. And not in his favor.

Infantry Battle

Alex's infantry stormed closer to the German company covering the side of the town in the woods. Carnage. Platoons retreated or died or stood as the die tumbled about. I had sent my recon jeep to take a look see, but German fire turned it into a funeral pyre. That's one way to find the enemy.

I had brought US artillery fire down on the town and it was having an effect as more German platoons fired and were spotted.

End of Game

My notes say we played eight turns in about three hours. The Germans still held the town, but the US had a foothold across the stream with more of Alex's US infantry coming across the ford and my armored infantry company ready to cross. Alex did well in his first game, pressing the attack as was needed.

Dan remained bogged, but had pushed four tank platoons to the edge of the ravine -- ready to take on the German infantry company in the woods once the US infantry support came up.

I'm not sure how many turns were left to dig out von Daniel's infantry from the town, but it would take time.

The star of the German show was the Jagdpanther. That convinced us to burn time and avoid the bridge until Dan's tanks could crawl across the muck and outflank it. It also drew occasional artillery fire. That was one exceptionally effective dummy unit!

Who knows, next time it might be real...

I'd call this a minor German victory.

Well done, all. Thanks for hosting, Marc.

Von Daniel fires at the advancing Americans.



Alas, I could not make the Titan game, but Dan was kind enough to provide an AAR. I last played this game back in Sep 2022 (see the 9/26/2022 AAR for game mechanics and recap). Dan created a team version of the game for large multiplayer games. Besides the recap, his alterations are included below. -- RL

Monsters on the Loose: *Team Titan*

By Dan

We had four players for our January 2nd “Team” *Titan* game. I first introduced *Team Titan* in 2003, updating the rules in 2010 and again in 2022. Originally designed to avoid individual player elimination and bigger games (6-12 players), with only four players attending, many of the big game rules were not used, but we still played a 2-on-2 team game. We got started at 11:30 AM and finished before 7 PM with a dinner break.

All of us had played *Titan* before, but for some it was years ago. We reviewed the rules before play and went over the significant differences a *Team Titan* entails versus standard *Titan*.

Team Turn - Players on the same team [take their turn together](#):

- Each player on a team rolls separately.
- Each player on a team **must** move at least one of their own Legions.
- [Any Legion on the same team can pass through](#) any allied Legion.
- [A team remains in play as long as one Titan is still in play among the players](#). It is strongly recommended that similarly colored Legion Markers be used for each team (such as yellow, gold, and brown for one team, and light blue, dark blue, and black for a second team, etc).
- Players of the same team **cannot** stack their Legions together.
- A Lord still has the ability to *Tower Teleport* from a Tower on a roll of 6 (either teleporting to another Tower anywhere on the board, or *anywhere* within 6 spaces. The Lord must be revealed to do either option.
- A Level 10 Titan (ie: X=10) still gains the *Titan Teleportation* ability: On a roll of 6, the Titan stack can move from whatever space it is in to ANY space on the board.
- **Only one Legion from a team can attack an enemy Legion**. First come, first served. If a problem occurs, have the player with the fewest Legions move first (to satisfy the mandatory minimum move of one Legion).
- Points are scored as normal.
- [A player who loses their Titan is still in the game](#), as long as one member of the team still has a Titan, and can still gain Angels through points.
- [Each player will always have 12 Legion markers available during the game \(since you cannot gain another player's markers by knocking him out of the game\)](#).

Team-mates set up in neighboring Towers with the opposing team in an opposite pair of Towers. By random pull, Steve and John formed one team, while Michael and I formed the other team. A Turn 1 mulligan was allowed, which John took advantage of.

I was fairly happy with my rolls and progression of my Legions, until John started colliding with some of them. Most ended up destroying both legions, as I dropped down to four Legions on-table with John getting as low as three Legions on-table, while Steve's seven Legions avoided combat – but Mike proved most successful of all players, fielding 10 Legions before conflict became unavoidable.

Mike (left) prepares to battle Steve for control of a hex.
Photo by Dan.



Steve was able to field one Legion with a Serpent, while Mike had a Legion with a Giant and another with 2 Griffons. I managed to get a pair of Warbears and a Wyvern escorting my Titan by the time I cut loose the 3 trolls that

helped spawn them. John's Titan stack became more of a refugee stack, running around the outside track, building Cyclops and Gorgons and casting off the unwanted as rear-guards.

Mike (left) and Steve battle. Photo by Dan.

The game wound down surprisingly fast as Michael parked his Titan stack next to Steve's Titan stack in a Tower soon after it digested my weak stack in that same Tower.

Why Michael put his Titan stack next to Steve's and why he did not muster after he arrived are still mysteries, for when Steve decided to attack Mike's stack in the Marsh, Steve had seven creatures and Michael only six: Titan, three Trolls, one Wyvern, and one Gorgon. He had apparently forgot to recruit after ending his movement at the Marsh, so he *could* have had a Ranger present as well. That might have dissuaded Steve, since Michael would also have a seven-creature stack.

Titan Against Titan Showdown: Two Titans Enter, NO Titans Leave! John (left) vs. Mike.

But battle they did, as each found out the other's Titan was present. Although outnumbered, Michael fought well – well enough to eliminate Steve's Titan in the same instance his own was eliminated. Under the Team rules, as long as one Titan is still present on a team, all players are still in the game – so Steve won the battle and earned points enough to qualify for an Angel.

The very next turn, Michael found John's Titan stack. John recognized that he would win the battle, but lose two to three creatures in the process, leaving him with four or five, assuming he earned an Angel.

However, with my seven-creature stack right behind his and another in front of him, he felt doomed, so he resigned at that point.



Titan Box Cover. Image from web.

*Knit one, perl two million.
Somebody really liked Titan.
Image from web.*



Alas, I could not make the SL game either, but Dan was again kind enough to provide an AAR. You can certainly recreate this scenario using the SL OOB below for Flames of War or other WWII rule set. With a bit of fiddling, you can also adapt this to Chain of Command, Bolt Action, Skirmish Action, or other skirmish-level rule system. -- RL

Timoshenko's Attack: WWII Squad Leader Scenario

By Dan

We had five players for our New Year's Day Event, based on Scenario G1: *Timoshenko's Attack* (from *The General* Volume 23, Nr.3). While an *Advanced Squad Leader* scenario, it was converted for use with *Squad Leader* counters and rules.

This scenario is played on three separate boards. The Germans have a Force Pool that they must divide into 4 forces (one assigned to each board, plus a Reserve). The Russians have 3 pre-set forces, but must choose which board each will advance onto.

The Russians have 9 turns to "break-through" on any one or more boards (meaning they have to exit at least 13 VP's worth of units off any *one* board).

OOBs

Original German

Force Pool: 1 x 10-2, 1 x 9-2, 1 x 9-1, 2 x 8-1, 2 x 8-0 Leaders, 15 x 4-6-7 squads, 3 x 2-4-8 crews, 7 x LMG, 3 x MMG, 1 x HMG, 1 x 50mm MTR, 1 x Radio (105mm OBA), 1 x 37L AT gun, 1 x Kubelwagon

The three boards.

German set-up area is anywhere from the mid-point to the top of each board. **Note:** No Line of Sight or shooting between boards!

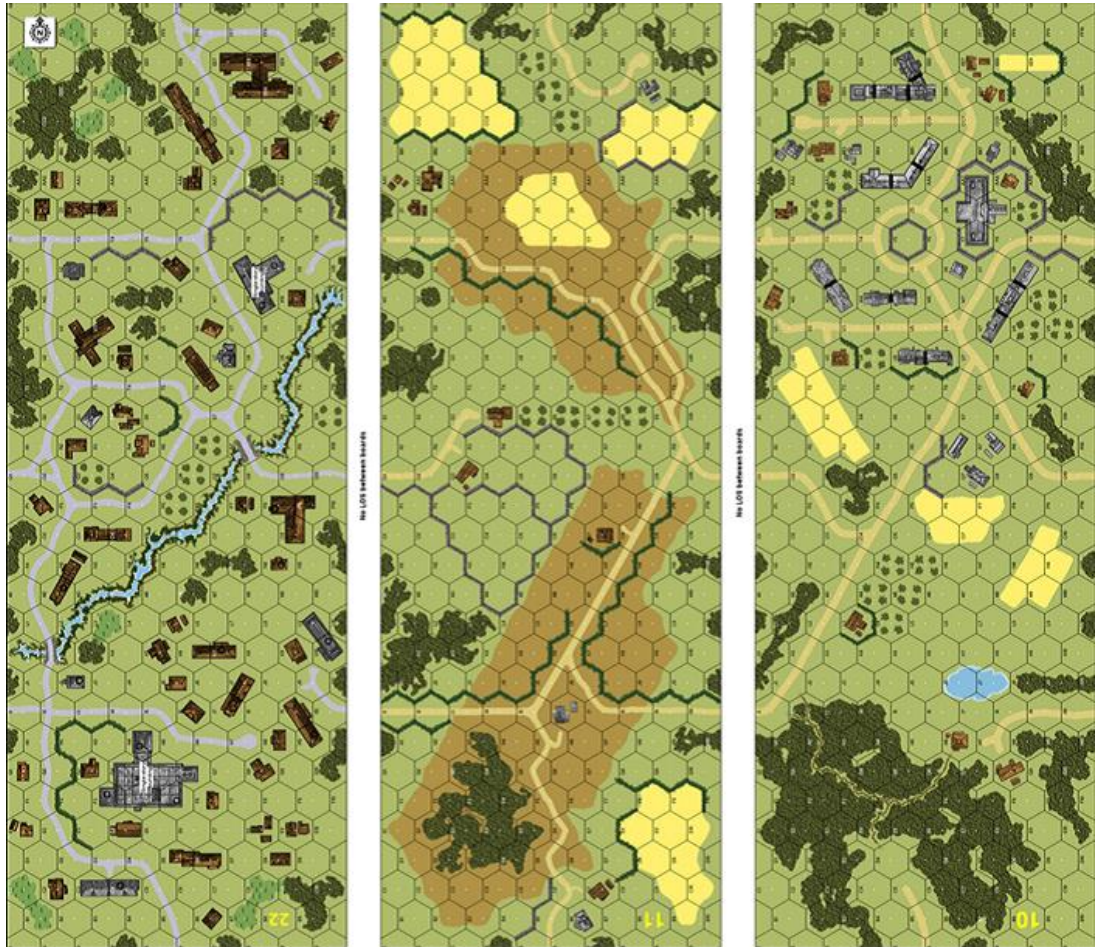
Russians enter from the bottom of each board on Turn 1.

Original Russian Force #1: 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0 Leaders, 6 x 5-3-7 squads, 3 x T-28B tanks

Original Russian Force #2: 1 x 9-0 Commissar, 1 x 8-0, 1 x 7-0, 1 x 6+1 Leaders, 15 x 4-4-7 squads, 4 x LMG, 2 x MMG

Original Russian Force #3: 1 x 9-1, 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0 Leaders, 9 x 4-5-8 squads, 5 x LMG, 1 x Radio (81mm OBA)

I allowed the players prior to the event to choose a side (Axis or Allies) and a preferred *European* nationality. Two preferred Russians, one preferred Italians, and the other two didn't care – so I altered the forces to include Italians in the Force Pool and slightly altered the Russian forces.



New German Force Pool: 1 x 10-2, 1 x 9-2, 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0 Leaders, 9 x 4-6-7 squads, 3 x 2-4-8 crews, 3 x 4-3-6, 1 x 2-4-7 crew, 4 x LMG, 2 x MMG, 1 x HMG, 1 x 50mm MTR, 1 x Radio (105mm OBA), 1 x ATR, 1 x 37L AT gun, 1 x Kubelwagon (reduction of 3 Leaders, 6 squads, 3 x LMG, 1 x MMG, but addition of 3 x 4-3-6 squads, 1 crew & ATR)

New Italian Force Pool: 1 x 9-1, 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0, 1 x 7-0 Leaders, 3 x 4-4-7 squads, 6 x 3-4-7 squads, 3 x 3-4-6 squads, 1 x 2-2-8 crew, 3 x LMG, 1 x MMG, 1 x 45mm MTR, 1 x Molotov, 1 x 37L AT gun, 1 x Truck.
(Addition of 4 Leaders, 12 squads, 1 crew, 3 x LMG, 1 x MMG, 1 MTR, 1 Molotov)

New Russian Force #1: 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0 Leaders, 6 x 5-3-7 squads, 3 x T-28B tanks, 2 x LMG – assigned to Board 11 (Center)

New Russian Force #2: 1 x 9-0 Commissar, 1 x 8-0, 1 x 7-0, 1 x 6+1 Leaders, 15 x 4-4-7 squads, 4 x LMG, 2 x MMG, 3 x 4-3-6 squads, 1 x T-26S tank – assigned to Board 22 (Left)

New Russian Force #3: 1 x 9-1, 1 x 8-1, 1 x 8-0 Leaders, 9 x 4-5-8 squads, 5 x LMG, 1 x Radio (81mm OBA), 3 x 4-5-8 squads, 1 x T-26S, 1 x T-26 (Flamethrower) – assigned to Board 10 (Right)

Set-Up

An all-German force (5 squads, 1 crew, ATR, LMG, MMG, HMG & MTR) set-up on Board 22 (left), an all-Italian force (2 Leaders, 8 squads, LMG, MMG, MTR, Molotov) set-up on Board 10 (right), and a hybrid force (1 German leader w/radio, 2 German squads, 2 German crews, 2 LMG, German 37L AT gun, 1 Italian Leader, 3 Italian squads, 2 LMG) set-up on Board 11 with a small hybrid force as a Reserve (including 2 Leaders, 4 squads, 1 crew, the truck and Kubelwagon).

The Game

Board 22

The Russian player (Erik) is new to *SL/ASL*, but eager to learn. With 18 squads and a tank, he advances with cautious confidence, occupying the nearby buildings and advancing the T-26 along the road. His brother, Dylan, has played *SL* more often. Not content to wait for the Russians to reach his positions, Dylan *advances* the Germans beyond the midpoint, sets-up his 50mm mortar on the road, and starts hammering the Russians with two fairly strong fire groups. Erik manages to roll a “2” on his first Morale Check and one of his Russian squads goes berserk, but Dylan mows it down before it can reach the Germans.

Squad Leader Battles. From left bottom corner clockwise: Dylan, Fred, Keith (standing), and Erik. Photo by Dan.

Erik quickly sees his Russians don't have the same range, let alone the same firepower, so he realizes he must advance so he can get within effective range. Some Russians try to follow the T-26, but are broken up by the German 50mm mortar, which consistently scores hits (and more importantly, forces Morale Checks) throughout the game – and despite being on the road, braves what little return fire comes his way and never breaking a sweat!

Erik loses about six squads before he scores his first kill and gets a short-course on urban fighting. His troops are constantly tested, eventually generating a Hero (from a Heat-of-Battle roll). By Turn 6, he has gotten some men to the middle of the board and killed off two more German squads, but by Turn 8 it is very clear that he will not be able to exit 13 VPs worth of Russians off the edge of Board 22 before the end of Turn 9.



Board 11

The Russians advance up the road with three T-28B heavy tanks carrying infantry riders, followed by three more squads. No enemy is in sight until the tanks pass the lone building on their low-lying hill, at which point a German 37L AT gun opens up on the lead tank from the other low-lying hill. The first shell glances off, forcing the infantry to hop off. They pass their mandatory morale check with a “2” and go berserk. The second shot from the AT gun knocks the tank out (thanks to Dylan’s low roll of “3” on the To Kill Table).

The AT gun starts to shoot at the second tank on the German half of Turn 1, forcing the infantry riders to hop off (but they pass their MC without going berserk). The Germans in the valley between the two low-lying hills move to cover the road between the two hills, knowing the berserk Russians must run down it soon enough. The T-28B fires back with no effect.

On Turn 2 the berserk Russians run down the road to engage the AT gun, but never make it past the valley, where the Germans and Italians hose them down. The German Leader with the radio established radio contact and gets a spotting round on the Russian-held hill, providing enough incentive for the Russians to exit the hill ASAP. The two remaining tanks descend into the valley to face-off against the German and Italian MG nests, while the remaining Russian infantry move off their hill and into nearby woods along the right side of the board.



Keith (left, foreground) advances towards the victory edge. Photo by Dan.

The tanks clear out all three enemy MG positions on Turn 3, scaring off the enemy infantry and forcing them to leave behind three machine guns.

On Turn 4 the tanks charge the AT gun with the leading tank performing an overrun (and passing it breakdown rolls). The AT gun fails to stop it, but the overrun leaves the crew intact, sandwiched between the two tanks. MG fire from the second tank breaks the AT crew, which cannot rout to safety. The Russian infantry advance up the right side to occupy the Italian MG nest, but a German crew behind the Italian MG nests disturbs some of the Russian infantry.

This same German crew eventually re-mans the AT gun after the tanks split up to disperse the German infantry that recovered. One tank returned to take care of the AT gun, approaching from its “blind side”, but the AT gun pivots and still manages to hit the tank in a near miracle shot and knocks it out at point blank range.

The last Russian tank motors over the hill behind the AT gun as it tries to overwhelm the last intact infantry force on the board, along with the Russian infantry. If they can do this, the Russians will be in good position to breakthrough off the board edge. The AT crew swings the AT gun around again, missing the tank with its first shot, but hitting it before it would disappear from view. It’s a side shot, requiring a “5” or less to knock it out. Dylan rolls a “2”, setting it on fire – and with that, Daniel’s last chance to win the game go up in smoke on Turn 8.

Board 10

Keith’s Russian “Guard platoon” advances aggressively. Perhaps *too* aggressively, as some rash Russians try to swing down a road and get mowed down by an Italian MG nest. The brave Italian “forlorn hope” in the forward-most building is the first to resist the Russian charge and hand-to-hand combat ensues. The outnumbered Italians fall as Fred tries to take out the entire force at 1:4 odds, but to no avail.

The Italians put up a stiff fight, holding a strong position of stone buildings. The Russians pull out their trump card: A T-26 armed with a flamethrower, which the Italian 37L AT gun fails to stop. Aimed at the corner building, despite rolling an 11, the flamethrower still chases out the Italians but expends all its fuel in the process.

At least the T-26 still has a machine gun, but that malfunctions two turns later. The other T-26 tries to unzip the Italian position from the opposite side as the Guards fire at them from the front with limited success. As Italian casualties mount, the call for reinforcements is made.

A kubelwagon armed with a crew and MMG hot-rods onto the table, wheeling around buildings and parking behind the last operational T-26. Blazing away from behind at point-blank range, the MMG tries to immobilize the T-26, which Dylan does with another roll of 2.

Keith needed that tank to exit the board along with his available infantry, but now there is no way the Russians can do that before the end of Turn 9.

After Turn 8 was concluded, the Russians admitted defeat.

*The kubelwagen panzer in action.
Photo by Dan.*



A great scrappy game where the action gets crazy at times and all sorts of mayhem erupts.



T-26 tank. Image from web.

The Moose Is Loose: *Moose Master* Card Game

by Russ Lockwood

The subtitle says "Crazy Party Game for All Ages." Well, sorta. Who knows, maybe this plays well at the Moose Lodge? Dunno. I do know it's a party game for the kid crowd and needs three or more players.

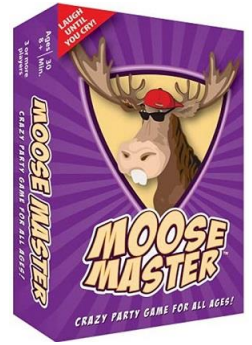
The *Moose Master* card game is governed by Moose Rules, such as not touching a body part (like hair or face), not using a body part (like thumbs), or other (can't refer to people by their first name or keeping your eyes closed while speaking). These get changed from time to time depending on the draw deck.

Susan gleefully reads a card for some action.

Mostly, the draw deck tells you what to do -- point left, point up, go around the table telling a story one word at a time, rhyming words, saying words in a category, and so on. Failure to do said action, or being the last one to do said action, results in a penalty card.

Most of the time, you keep the penalty card. Some are given to other players. Some have you change a Moose Rule, and so on. When you accumulate seven penalty cards, you're out of the game.

It's a bit like *Fluxx*. Simpler, though, for kids. It's definitely not a two-player game as I found out. If you're handing out penalty cards, or being last, well, no real choice, is there? So, not exactly for adults, except those indulging 10-year-olds, but if it gets kids gaming, I'm for it.



From The Overall French Commander: *Snappy Nappy* Observations

by Steve T.

Alright, it's been a little while since the event, so my recounting of the 1812 North campaign may not entirely match the pictures (<https://blundersonthedanube.blogspot.com> -- this is the Jan 8, 2023 entry). Besides that, my memory of names is genuinely appalling. Let it be said though that my lack of "definition" does not indicate a lack of enjoyment I had during the event. This was my second *Snappy Nappy* Campaign in a Day and surely not my last!

Steve (left, blue tag) sharing a laugh with fellow gamers.



Being my second time, it may be unusual to hear that it is my second time playing the role of over-all commander. My first time at command was an act of bravado, this event saw me leading as an act of duty when the original player in command arrived late due to a work issue.

Along with the role of Oudinot as high commander, I was also playing as Doumerc. I admit that the dual command was a huge advantage, not necessarily accounted for in both the design and spirit of the game. However, I took it upon myself to restrain from making decisions based on knowledge from simultaneous boards.

Battles and Commands

Liberties I did take were to send Doumerc's heavy horse with Oudinot, leaving only a couple stands of light horse with Doumerc. The two commanders combined accounted for a small pittance of the French forces, so my contribution to multiple combats was minor.

The scenario seemed simple. Unsettlingly simple: The French were to march North, hopefully find a path to St. Petersburg. From the get go half of our forces would blitz North until we met the enemy, the remaining commanders were to find meet the enemy in the center of the map (or what we thought was the center).

The Mad Quarter Hour

The first 15 minutes of the event were hectic! We marched fast and reports (all written of course) came in quicker than I could have expected or respond to. What I did immediately notice was that we had crossed more than half the map towards the Northern edge, our assumed goal, without contact. I thought it could be a bad situation where the French and Russians had either passed each other or were spiraling in an attempt to out maneuver. If we were the first to be outflanked then surely we would not recover the position and our supply lines with it.

This was not the case, and something possibly worse happened. Multiple French commands met multiple Russian commands on the same table, all in the opening hour. Disna would be a primary battleground, and having a taste of *Snappy Nappy*, I knew that this would not be resolved quickly!

Perhaps the GM will be disappointed to hear this, but I rushed Oudinot to join the table of Disna, eyes would be faster than messages and the combat would have to be monitored, already the French were on the back foot positionally. It was later acknowledged that Oudinot's arrival, which happened to be in the flank of one Russian line, was a significant deterrent of what would have been an aggressive Russian attack!

When French reinforcements arrived it was my decision to commit them to the same table. Disna became a gridlock, multiple commanders on a single table and to my observation, none who wanted to be the first to attempt to break free. Disna would be fought with cannons and should have been resolved with bayonets. Regardless, the Russians were tied up around Disna for the event, which made the Northern push the determining factor of success.

We came shy of our objective, it was actually my second role, Doumerc, alone who entered the final northern table whose road would lead to St. Petersburg. For the briefest moment, Doumerc, accompanied by two units of light horse needed only to ride the long road, but it would not be. Not a turn later, Russians began arriving at the far end of the final table, then more, and more. Doumerc had to turn back to warn the engaged French back down the road of the impending Russian flank.

Retreat

A retreat back South to Polotsk was initiated and not a moment too soon. It was a thrilling moment when several French commands, including Doumerc, were jammed up on the single road of retreat. Russians previously held back across the river by cannons were now rushing to cut off the retreat, emboldened by the masses of Russian reinforcements entering the table at near-musket range of the French.

To my own surprise, a good number of the French escaped the table and were able to set up a stand on a hill. I would learn in the campaign debrief that this was accurate to history! The game concluded with the French position outgunned and out ranged, I'm sure it would not have been a close fight.

I will of course mention the use of spies, a fun addition but maybe underutilized. The duel was a fantastic intermission to the conflicts. In future practice, I suggest that the spies be involved in the manipulation of the written orders, maybe stealing orders or planting false orders.

My Concluding Thoughts

The *Snappy Nappy* Campaign-in-a-Day events are a fantastic way of conducting a large-scale event and in my opinion are very successful in doing so. I do think the bottleneck at Disna could have been avoided. It was the result of both the French and Russian's assuming that impassable sections of the map were actually traversable and liability to being flanked. Both forces marched to be the first to secure the location and met head on, but not in such a way as to deploy long lines, where *Snappy Nappy* could really shine.

Had I any amount of infantry I would have led the example of breaking a stalemate by force. As the game wound down, I attempted a cavalry charge into cannons with the hopes of inspiring a more reckless approach from my allies. Alas we mostly traded cannon fire.

I'm looking forward to future events, hopefully *Snappy Nappy* will return to the Portal next year! Thank you again to everyone who put the time, money, and effort into a truly fantastic event, as a 27-year-old hobbyist, you are an inspiration that I may sooner than later expand my efforts to run events that encourage others to participate in large scale historical wargames.

Steve's recap succinctly explains how he approached his role as French C-in-C and, more importantly, how he viewed the event as a whole. Kindling this kind of interest, challenge, and camaraderie is exactly what wargaming (and HMGS) is all about. This comes from Peter's Blunders on the Danube blog. Google it and visit for other commanders' commentaries. My write-up of this Campaign in a Day is in the 12/01/2022 AAR -- RL

Got Any Corps? Go *Waterloo Quelle Affaire*

by Russ Lockwood

On a cold January evening, I stopped by Renaud's house to break in a game he had purchased: *Waterloo: Quelle Affaire* (WQA) by River Horse games. I hadn't heard of it, but it played on a 12 wide by 14 deep hex grid, used extra-large counters my grognard fingers appreciated, came with a set of cards that governed movement and special events, and used d6s for combat.

The rules book was relatively short.

Short it may be, but we still managed to perform some mechanics incorrectly during the game. We corrected as we ran through the turns, so by the end of the game, we believe we figured it out.

Per usual, we didn't go back to change anything in this learning game. If we found an error, we just moved along from that point on.

Hey, it's the first time with a new game. We have no idea what would happen. That's often the most entertaining play of any game -- you play by historical instinct and see whether the rules pass muster or not. I don't have the rules in front me, so let me tinge this recap with a partial grain of salt on my memory. You've been warned...

I was the British and Renaud the French.

Renaud attacks the flanks.

Set Up

A player aid card reproduced the map set up for British and French, with the reverse side listing the units within each corps.

Each player takes his basic cards -- one card per corps, plus the associated C-in-C (Wellington and Napoleon). For the Allied player, the Prussian cards are set aside as they come in later. These commander cards are used every turn.

Shuffle the cards of the special events deck, draw one, and shuffle it into the commander card deck. Special event cards are used once per game.

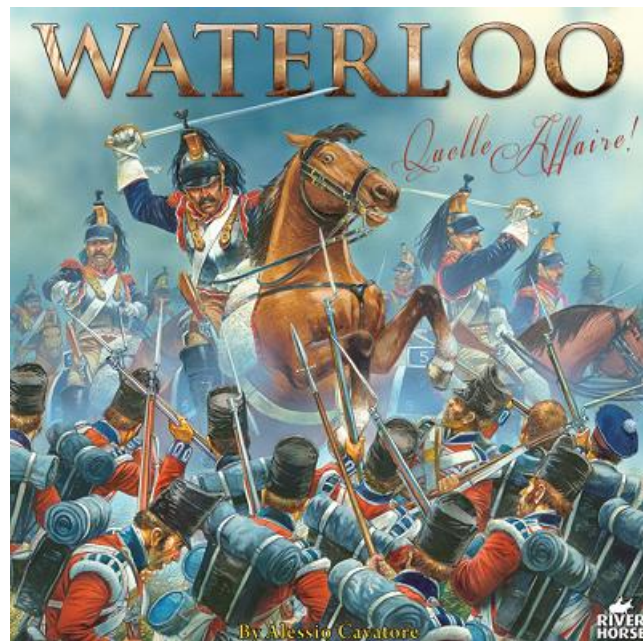
Each player draws three cards -- the maximum hand size -- from this Combined deck (commander cards plus one special events card).

Each player also gets a General Combat cardboard tile -- this lets you launch an attack on your turn against any enemy units adjacent to friendly units. This became more important as the game went on. In fact, it's a brilliant mechanic that keys off the card movement system. More later.

Cards Drive the Movement

Commander cards allow you to plop a commander token on any hex and activate units of that corps in that hex and the six surrounding hexes. Thus, if you want to get maximum movement opportunities from a corps' worth of units, it pays to keep them together.

I can tell you this card movement mechanic is frustrating in two ways: You want to move units of a certain corps, but you don't have the associated corps card, and, you want to move multiple corps counters, but they're too far apart.



I'm not sure about the French, but the set up scatters British corps' units all over the place. Play a card and we often moved only a single counter. The decision making comes from deciding which counter is more important to move.

You can move through friendly units, but the game has no stacking.

And you can see this coming... when you really want to move a corps' counters, that card has already been used. Sigh.

The Equalizer in the Deck

The Wellington, Napoleon, and Blucher cards allow you to plop down their token on a hex and activate all units in that hex and the six surrounding hexes. This C-in-C card can cure a lot of positional ills and move an attack or counter-attack forward. Otherwise, unless you spend the time sorting the corps, you have a lot of piecemeal movement.

The other mini-equalizer is a Move-and-Attack one enemy unit card. That can pop a unit or shove it out of the way.

French Card Advantage

At the beginning of the game, the British have six cards in their hand while the French have about 10 or 11. As a result, the French play multiple cards at the end of the movement phase without a British response.

I saw this on the first turn, so I held back the Wellington card and just passed playing a card. When I finally watched the French play the last card (as they had initiative and played cards first), I played the Wellington card. Alas, when you pass, you end your turn – no holding cards for later.

Ooops.

Wellington humbugged himself!

The end of Turn 1. French clear Papalotte (British left flank) and British support Hougomont (right flank).

Prussian Cards

When the Prussians arrive, they add four cards to equalize the number of cards in the opposing decks.

In a pre-game set-up mistake, one of our many during the game, the British Move-and-Attack card was left within the Prussian cards, so I missed playing it for the first four or so turns. I simply thought the deck was asymmetric. Silly Welly!

End of Turn 3. French press the ridge (left flank).

Defend the Road to Brussels

So we started the game. Although I won the 2d6 Initiative Roll, I let the French go first. I was on defense. It looked pretty solid. Oh, I wanted to switch a few units around. No problem.

No problem until I started trying to figure out the card order to get everything set up the way I wanted to. Little did I know that would take me half a game.

I warned you this card mechanic was frustrating.

That said, it was no less a problem for the French.



So, we alternated playing cards, with the French having more corps than the British and thus, a little better command control.

End of Turn 4. French take Hougomont! Combined arms attack on ridge creates a hole, but British patch it up.

Artillery Stumble

We misinterpreted the artillery rules, much to the British benefit. We thought they were all equal when firing. My first shot destroyed a French battery that had advanced towards the ridge. That hamstrung the French. It also didn't seem right.

Eventually, us two veteran wargamers read and re-read the artillery section. We believe the combat value on the counter represents the number of dice rolled when adjacent to a target, subtracting one die per hex of range, up to a range of three hexes.

British artillery is a 2-factor unit, thus 2d6 for combat versus a target adjacent (one hex away) and 1d6 versus a target two hexes away. Most French artillery units are 3 factors, so they outrange the British. That doesn't make much sense that French 8 lbars are better than British 9 lbars -- I suppose it reflects number of tubes and/or higher quality artillerymen. One French artillery unit is 5 factors. We guess that means 12 lbars.

Alas for the French, we played with equal ratings for most of the game. That made for a British advantage.

The General Combat tile on its Combat side.

General Combat Cardboard Tile

This is the brilliant mechanic of the game within the context of the card movement system. Instead of playing a card, you declare General Combat.

All of your units can now attack adjacent enemy units. This allows you to gang up the factors so attacks with a dozen dice are often possible. That's how you put the three or more hits on a target to eliminate it.

Combat is simple Featherstonian 5s and 6s hit, or, if the target is in better terrain (like the British lining the ridge or a unit in a town), then 6s hit. We got hip to the combined arms (infantry, cavalry, and artillery hitting the same target) bonus of +1 die modifier.

Some units, like Imperial Guard, are so good, they ignore the first hit. You got to really work to eliminate them.

The move and attack card.



On Came the French

The first thing Renaud concentrated on was eliminating the garrisons at Hougoumont, Le Haye Saint, and Papelotte. Although Hougoumont held out for a turn, and Le Haye another, all fell and the French moved in.

The French marched up to the ridge and launched a combined arms assault on the weakest unit -- and won. The British infantry scurried backwards, but the French declined to stick one unit into a hex with Brits on four sides. No worries. I used a card to send in a bigger, badder infantry unit from the reserve.

Napoleon's Hemorrhoids

I don't care about the actual title of this special event card. I declared, "Napoleon's Hemorrhoids!"

As noted, Wellington, Napoleon, and Blucher plop down on a hex and can activate units in that hex and the six surrounding hexes. With this card, Napoleon had to roll a d6 to see how many surrounding hexes will have units activated. The first time I played this, Renaud rolled a "1." And so Napoleon shifted around his saddle more than he shifted around troops.

Death of the Prince of Orange

Somewhere in here, Renaud played the French Stratagem card "Injured Commander." Yes, that's its real name. He randomly chose the Prince of Orange card and rolled a die. The die bounced through the dice tower and turned up as a 6.

Blimey! The Prince is dead. More importantly, his corps card is removed from the game. So, his corps is absolutely paralyzed. No card, no move. I guess no one would step up and take command. Some might argue his replacement card would be better than the original.

Only Wellington or a special event card would be able to move his troops from now on.

British Advance

I eventually took Hougoumont back and then launched a devastating attack on the Imperial Guard cavalry on the extreme right flank by Hougoumont. I not only won the melee, but obliterated the IG unit.

End of Turn 6. The British take back Hougoumont and Le Haye Saint, but suffer a reverse on the right flank. The Prussians arrived and started to push the left flank until they met the French Imperial Guard.

When an IG unit retreats or is eliminated for the first time, every French unit takes a morale check -- on a roll of 1-5, no effect, carry on. On a 6, the unit loses a step. Out of the 24 rolls, Renaud rolled three 6s. This check only happens once per game.

With the IG cavalry gone, I pushed ahead into the woods and pushed a cavalry unit beyond that.

A French counter-attack smacked my unit backwards. I had over-extended. As soon as I could, I pulled back.

I should have learned from an earlier Marshal Ney attack on my extreme left flank. I neglected a part of the ridge line, so a French cavalry unit flanked my left-most unit holding the ridge line. We didn't find the section of the rules that explained what happens when half the French units attack a hex across a ridgeline and the other half do not. I figured it was like most wargames where the defender gets the benefit only if all units are attacking across the dotted ridge line.

Ney's attack pushed me backwards. He followed up this time.



Later, seeing he was exposed and taking losses, Ney pulled back. There were just too many Brits to fight through to get to the road.

The Prussians Arrive

I got lucky that the Prussian rolled well for their 4th Corp to arrive at the earliest turn. I also rolled well to have them enter close to the British line. It could have been that they enter deep in the French flank, which would have caused consternation, but working to extend and strengthen the British ridge line helped the Allies.

The French advanced the rest of the Imperial Guard against the Prussians. The four elite IG counters may have lost combats, but their elite status meant they never lost a step – in contrast to the long-gone cavalry.

General Combat Tile Use

We both used the attacks to clear out enemy units. I especially pulled the trigger when I had "enough" attacks. I also concentrated on a few units rather than the entire front.

You do not have to attack adjacent units. You pick and choose your battles. I also tried to increase the number of combined arms attacks. It seemed to work. The French dead unit pile grew, as did the collection of damaged (flipped over) units. Renaud repaid the compliment, especially with the Imperial Guard.

I couldn't stop the Imperial Guard, but I could and did, concentrate on regular French units.

End of Turn 8. The game ended the next turn with the Allied center advancing.

So the Game Ended

After about 4.5 hours, we completed 9 turns of the 10, or about a half-hour per turn.

My goal was to eliminate 45 combat factors worth of French. Renaud's goal was to eliminate 50 combat factors worth of British/Prussian.

With the elimination of a French cavalry unit, I pushed past the 45 factor mark for the win. Renaud had nailed about 25. I will note that I retreated from some combats that I should have been eliminated. And we all know that a counter that runs away this turn gets to roll dice another turn.



Thoughts and Observations

As we pondered the map, we thought about a couple of house rules that might make more sense.

First was cavalry not being able to enter woods. I'd extend that to artillery.

Second was not allowing a combined arms bonus when the defender was in woods or towns, although that is the mechanism to offset the defensive bonus.

Other than that, we need to play the game again to doublecheck that the rules and lessons learned are applied correctly.

And it is worth playing again, even if card use often proves frustrating. The combat tile mechanic is brilliant within the context of the card system.

Renaud commented that he thought it would play faster because of the limited size and counters. I noted that players, including me, hemmed and hawed over a single counter move because you may not get a chance to move that counter again until next turn.

WQA was certainly entertaining. Thanks, Renaud, for hosting.

Close, But: Post-Game WQA Rules Re-Read

By Renaud

Went back to the rules and found a couple more things we were doing wrong.
And would certainly change the way the game played – RL.

The ridge only offers extra protection against artillery bombardment (all forms), not against infantry, cavalry, or artillery melee attacks (from an adjacent hex)

Once a commander has lost all his units, his card is set aside (whether from hand or when drawn) and another one is drawn instead.

A biggie: Each unit on the defeated side suffers the result (that makes it far more expensive to have multiple units attack an enemy and be defeated), which is applied one unit at a time. So if the attacker suffers a Damage and Retreat result, **every** attacking unit in the same melee suffers that result, one by one.

Artillery can fire a maximum of 3 hexes -- even if their CV is not reduced to zero past those 3 hexes – i.e. the French 5 factor artillery still fires only three hexes. I'd probably house-rule to allow fire as far as a CV of 1 takes it. I'd probably also limit overhead bombardment to a minimum range of 3 hexes and an empty second hex.

There is no rule to address range when artillery is providing defensive support against a multi-pronged attack. Is it closest enemy unit? A house rule on range may address that on its own as artillery behind the target of the attack may have no or only one target.

There's no rule for being forced to retreat off the board. House rule: take damage instead of retreating.

Additional Possible House Rules

Possible house rules under consideration for more historical accuracy:

- 1) Artillery range is only limited by Combat Value (e.g., a CV5 artillery unit has a range of 5 hexes and rolls 5/4/3/2/1). Artillery or cavalry in woods or a BUA has a CV of zero.
- 2) Cavalry cannot attack an enemy in woods or a BUA (hence it is also not possible to gain a combined arms bonus).
- 3) Attacking cavalry that eliminates its opponent or forces it to retreat and vacate the space it occupied can not only take ground, but may also attack again with its CV reduced by 1, but only if it has not exhausted its movement allowance including the move to take ground; British cavalry must do so.
- 4) Light cavalry (MA of 4) can evade attacking infantry or artillery and avoid combat altogether by moving two hexes away -- the enemy still gets to roll for hits (6s only) and the evading cavalry is deemed to have a CV of zero.
- 5) A Commander card activate "chains" of qualifying units (in which each unit is adjacent to at least 1 other unit), with the commander token able to act as a link between separate "chains."

3D Printed STuG III: Sample

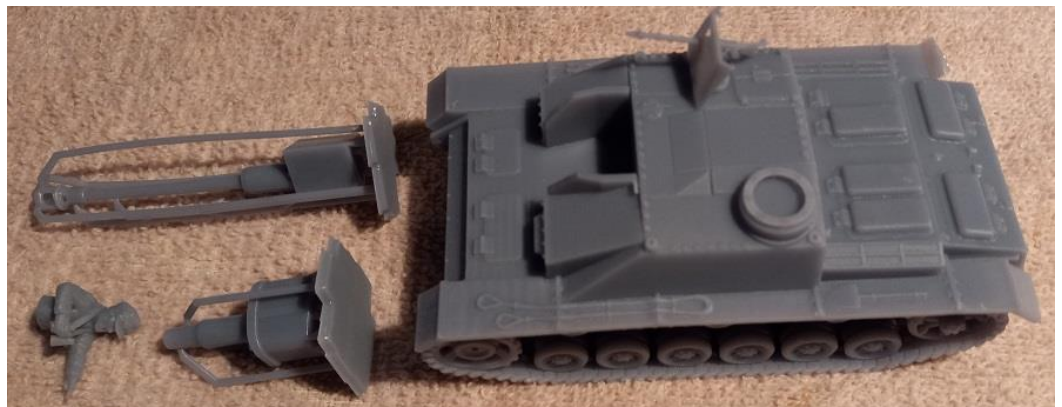
By Russ Lockwood

This is a sample STuG III from Parker Games. You may have seen the booth at Fall-In. You get a commander plus choice of main gun.

He 3D prints lines of miniatures: 7YW, Medieval, and Lord of the Rings. Custom prints, too.

See 'em all:

www.dayofbattle.com



WWII Tank vs. Tank Playtest: Skirmish Action II

by Russ Lockwood

Lee released *Skirmish Action* a couple years ago. Based on feedback, he has been revamping the rules for smoother play and simpler mechanics. Allen and I tried the new playtest version, *Skirmish Action II*. In any case, we tried a roughly even-up battle between German armor from the 21st Panzer division and a British armored outfit. I guess I should spell that "armoured."

Designer Lee (left) and Panzer Commander Allen (right) discuss a pre-game point of mechanics. The A, B, and C squares are victory areas.



Prior Complaints

As Lee describes it, the most negative feedback came from the 1 and 6 rules. In the original *Skirmish Action*, a roll of 1 was an automatic miss by the attacker, no matter what the situation. Likewise, a defender roll of 6 was an automatic save, no matter what the situation.

Skirmish Action II changes that. An attacker roll of 1 is still a 1 added to the weapon factor, but any damage is also one level less on the damage chart.

A defender roll of 6 is no longer an auto save. Instead, the defender adds 6 to the defensive factor, rolls the die again, and adds the result to the defensive factor. If another 6 pops up, add another 6 to the defensive factors, and so on.

This worked for one of my Shermans, which was shot at by a Tiger, but I rolled $6 + 6 + 4 = 16$, which was added to my front armor of 8 for a defensive factor of 24. The Tiger rolled a 5, which was added to its AP attack factor of 13 for an 18. No effect. Not even a scratch on the paint.

A defender roll of 1 is still a 1 added to the defensive factor, but the minimum combat result is a fall back. It might be worse if the attacker generates a high attack factor, but the minimum is a defender fall back.

A Combat Results Table Complaint

Other feedback noted that the CRT left units intact or destroyed. The new CRT introduces graduated levels of damage, such as immobility for tanks (track shot off).

Most Other Mechanics the Same

Initiative is still by card, where each player draws a number of cards from a common deck equal to the number of units and assigns one card per unit. The lowest card activates first. Activations go in ascending order and because cards are shuffled every turn, no two turns will be alike for activations.

Each unit gets one action (move, fire, go on overwatch, dig in, etc.) and a d6 Quality test for a possible second action.

It's possible that one side gets multiple activations in a row. Likewise, it's also often that the sides alternate activations. It's all in the card draw.

The charts still offer considerable detail as you'd expect from skirmish-level WWII rules. For this scenario, my list had nine types of troops/tanks. Familiarity with which color-coded column to use when firing and taking fire helps speed the game.

Victory is by capturing more areas with infantry (not vehicles) than the enemy. This scenario had three victory areas. I was the Brits and Allen the Germans.

My Achilles feel the wrath of German overwatch fire. The rest of my UK armor hides. You can just see burning German H39s on middle left edge of photo after the Sextons were through firing.

The Battle

I drew the lowest card and zipped my universal carriers and half the infantry of that unit to the farthest victory spot. Allen stuck his Tigers on a hill dominating the other two areas. Uh-oh. Then he put them on overwatch. Double uh-oh.

Then he put the H-39s armed with German 75s in an orchard on overwatch. Triple uh-oh. I mean quadruple uh-oh.

I rolled my pair of Achilles tank hunters up to a hedge. The H39s, using their overwatch fire, blew them apart.

I hid the rest of my armor. Obviously, the situation needed some further thought.

A German platoon infiltrated into a small hamlet on my right. My infantry platoon also hid.

Hey, I'm thinkin' here.

Second Turn

I brought in artillery on that hamlet. Rather, I tried to bring it in, but the phone line was down. I tried again. Can you hear me now? This time I connected and in came the arty.

It did a little damage here and there, but the Germans were still in good shape.

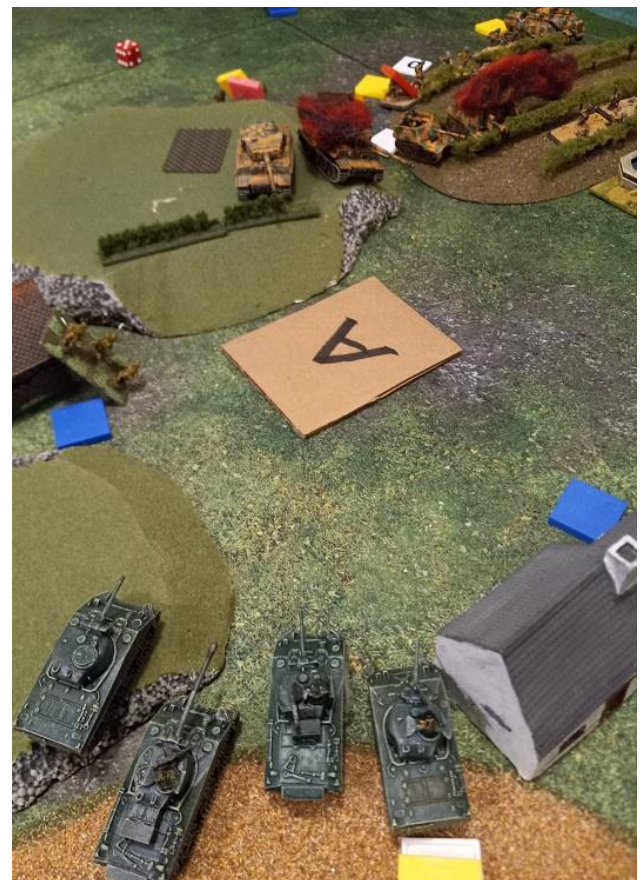
Meanwhile, Allen sent a platoon and halftracks to attack my half a platoon defending the far victory area. I was in buildings. It didn't matter. Despite defensive fire from overwatch, I don't think I rolled higher than a 3 on a d6. I was battered and tossed out of the buildings. The Germans settled into the buildings.

But the center spot was a different story. I swung three Shermans and a Firefly around a building to stare down the Tigers. Better yet, I rolled lots of 6s to avoid getting blown to bits by the Tigers or the H39s. One Sherman was shaken and had a track blown off, but all four survived and made their Quality Test to fire back. Two H39s were blown apart, the third suffered a crew bail out and morale fail, and the Firefly destroyed one of the Tigers.

The luckiest Sherman is next to the farmhouse – shaken crew and track damage. But two of thee H39s and one of two Tigers were burning.

Then I used the other Sherman platoon to concentrate fire on the remaining Tiger. Two Sherman and the Firefly shots bounced, but the third Sherman rolled well and caused just enough attacker points for the Tiger to become Shaken.

Meanwhile, the Sextons (25 pounder armament) rolled



forward and spotted even more H39s. Two H39s went up in flames. I would have had the third, except the flames of the two burning H39s blocked my line of sight to the third.

Hamlet Heroes

Finally, I bombarded the German infantry in the Hamlet using the arty, followed by small arms fire and then close assault (melee). Fire enough shots, stone walls or no stone walls, and you will roll a 6 to roll for more attacker factors, which is basically what you need to boost the attack factor to do harm to infantry defending buildings. As I outnumbered 'em, I shoved 'em all out. Those I didn't eliminate, that is. Oh, I lost a couple melees, but won most.



End of Turn 2 and end of game. My lads have captured the hamlet (right edge of photo), although the Firefly in a platoon of Shermans lost the shootout with the Tiger. The other Shermans peppered the beast enough for some damage.

Allen tried to rally the H39 crew, but failed. He also tried to rally his infantry platoon and mostly failed.

End of Game

That's where we ended it: Two turns in two hours. I was bleeding infantry, but Allen was bleeding tanks. He had one Tiger and two H39s left. I still had six Shermans, two Fireflies, and three Sextons. That should be enough to tackle the trio.

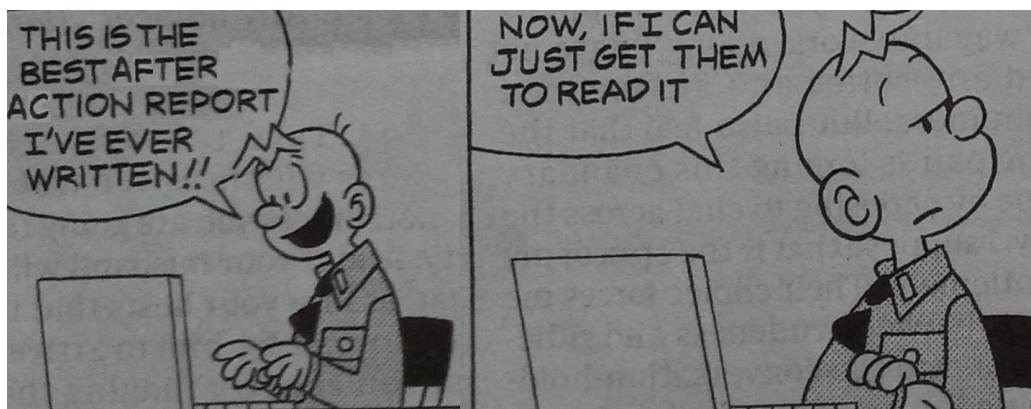
We both had one victory area and the third was a toss up, but he had the infantry to spare. Whether his infantry could survive a pasting from my surviving tanks would be another story.

Promising Playtest

The tank battles proved quick and deadly at times with the run of 6s offering surprise and accolades. The addition of varying levels of damage made it better, and the revised 1 and 6 rules removed some of the angst.

Skirmish Action II still uses a number of markers, but clever types of markers would blend into the terrain. We used jarring colored squares to make sure everyone knew what was going on, and we did stop and discuss rules and ideas as we played.

The second version showed considerable strengths over the first edition.



Books I've Read: 1,000th Review

By Russ Lockwood

I began to think about my 1,000th book review up on hmgs.org a few months back as the number crept up on that milestone. Would it be just a random book or should I select it?

I should clarify that this is the 1,000th review of non-fiction books, with a dozen or so historical fiction books and rule set or two included, that would be posted on hmgs.org.

If you've been reading my AARs, you know that I also posted reviews for 142 other fiction books, mostly science fiction. I never kept count, but the hmgs.org web site did, and thus triggered my thoughts on a 1,000th book to review. I decided on a particular book.

One from the Past

I chose *Warplanes of the Third Reich* because this formed the main source of the first article I ever had published. Back when I was an early teen, I did a short profile of the JU-87 Stuka, including a pencil profile drawing of the plane, for a short-lived magazine called *Pursue & Destroy*.

I can't remember which version of the plane, although I'm pretty sure I still have that issue in some box in the attic. It's definitely not something I would throw away. Alas, I recall my pencil drawing was too light, so the editor's tracing with a dark pen marred the straight lines of the original. No matter. Now I was published.

It certainly wasn't a tour de force of brilliant prose, but it was in black and white and proved to be the start of my pairing prose and wargaming. I did other articles and branched out, but that was article zero.

When I first started thinking about a thousand, this book showed up on the used rack at OMM. The more I looked at it, the more I remembered, and the more I thought this would be an appropriate and nostalgic book for my milestone.

Warplanes of the Third Reich. by William Green. Hardback (9.2x11.25 inches). 672 pages. 1979 reprint of 1970 book.

I paged through this tome, once again amazed at the breadth of information about aircraft Germany produced from 1933 to 1945. From Arado to Siebel, you get short development and operational use histories, specifications, and variations. Obviously, the main aircraft dominate the pages, but it's mind-blowing to see the variations.

For example, did you know that Junkers produced a JU-87D-3 with two 'personnel pods' (one on each wing) that would hold two soldiers each and be detachable, with a parachute to float the troops to the ground? Included two black and white photos and two line drawings: one side profile and one head-on (p439-440).

I didn't do my usual count the images, but the blurb reports the book contains hundreds of black and white photos and over 2,000 line drawings and cutaways. I'll take their word for it.

I did count the images in the color section: 63 color camouflage aircraft profiles, 32 color unit emblems, and assorted other color illustrations.

Sure, a lot of the specs and variations are likely somewhere on the web, but there's something about being able to peruse the pages for similar planes that make this large book a gem. You don't necessarily read this like a novel, but even today, this resource amazes me.

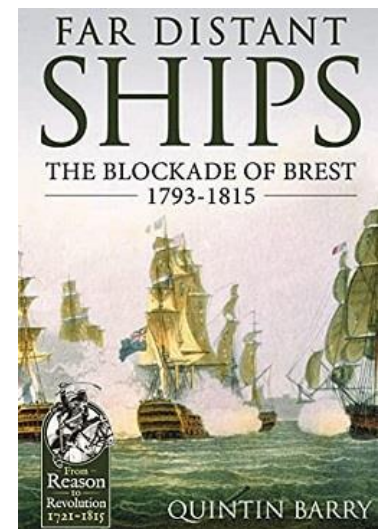
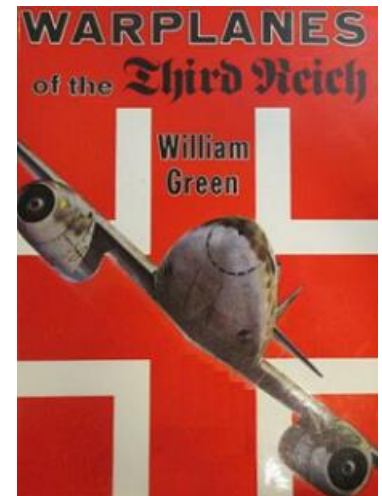
Enjoyed it.

Far Distant Ships: Reason to Revolution 86. by Quintin Barry. Softcover (6.2x9.3 inches). 351 pages. 2022 reprint of 2017 book.

Subtitle: *The Royal Navy and the Blockade of Brest 1793-1815*

The subtitle explains the contents of another prized addition to the *R&R* series. In chronological order, the book details Britain's efforts to bottle up French ships in Brest, and to a lesser extent, other ports.

This is a close blockade, with squadrons of ships on station at all times,



save for when gales and other bad weather scattered the British ships. Other squadrons were sent to blockade other French and Spanish ports.

Numerous actions are covered, from single ships to fleets, which can be turned into a tabletop battle with age of sail naval rules of your choice. You will often need another reference to cross reference names with the types of ships involved. FYI: The Glorious First of June is covered, but Trafalgar is not.

The book contains 20 black and white illustrations and seven black and white maps (three geographical area maps with scales and the four tactical battles without scales).

Of interest is a considerable amount of backstabbing and ill will among the British commanders, with letters to the Sea Lord and Admiralty complaining about seniority, ships, and rampant gossip. Excerpts galore populate the pages. However much it is a part of blockade history, I eventually find the carping increasingly wearisome. Barry inserted far more excerpts in this book than his excellent *Crisis at the Chesapeake* (see my review in the 7/28/2021 AAR or up on hmg.org). I'd prefer more of his well-reasoned and well-written analysis and less 19th century moaning.

Enjoyed it.

Stalingrad Airlift 1942-43: Air Campaign 34. by William E. Hiestand. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The Luftwaffe's Broken Promise to Sixth Army*

With this booklet covering the same topic as *To Save An Army*, I read this shorter one first as *Campaign* series volumes provide overviews of the topic at hand. Per usual, the format offered up background, an analysis of the men and equipment involved, and a synopsis of the operation.

While the theoretical numbers looked good, the reality of front-line operations in appalling winter weather on improvised air fields proved inadequate to supply the surrounded Sixth Army. For example, the JU-52 transport aircraft averaged only 30% to 35% operability rates (p40). The charts on pages 85 and 90 succinctly display just how short the supply effort performed.

Add in increasing Soviet air defenses of AA and fighters along with diminishing Luftwaffe strength and you have an air disaster equal to the ground disaster. It ended in air dropping supply containers as airfields were overrun by Soviet troops.

The booklet contains 62 black and white photos, one color photo, one color chart of capabilities of transport aircraft, three two-page color action illustrations, and six color maps.

The Luftwaffe strove mightily to bring in supplies, but ultimately it became a losing battle.

Enjoyed it.

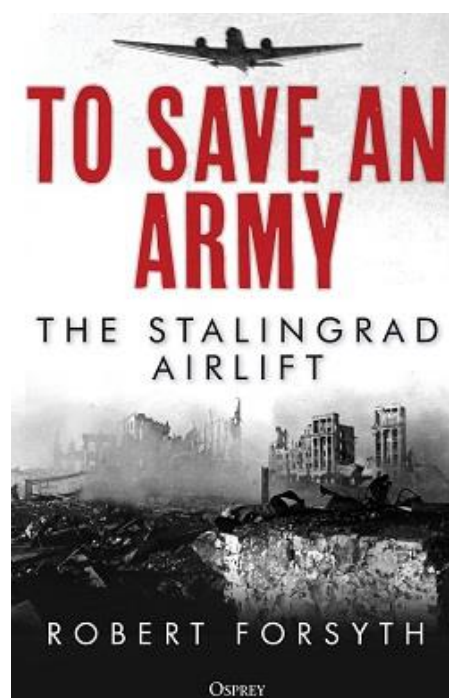
To Save an Army: The Stalingrad Airlift. by Robert Forsyth. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 352 pages. 2022.

After reading the booklet *Stalingrad Airlift 1942-43: Air Campaign 34* booklet (see above), I dove into the book-length *To Save an Army* expecting a more detailed account of the Luftwaffe supply effort. The result exceeded my expectations. I only was surprised that Forsyth didn't author the *Campaign* booklet -- both are from Osprey.

This book starts with an overview of the Luftwaffe's Demyansk supply airlift the year before Stalingrad. That proved a success and the basis for optimism about supplying Sixth Army. That the Demyansk pocket held far fewer German troops and the Luftwaffe held absolute air superiority didn't seem to count for much in the calculations regarding air transport capacity and the needs of 250,000 troops.

Also worrisome was that at the start of Operation Blau in June 1942, Luftflotte IV mustered 1,700 aircraft of all types, but only 1,200 were operational (p47). One month later, that number was down to 718 (p64). The decline was due to constant ferrying of supplies to front line units that outpaced ground supply efforts.

By the time of the Stalingrad airlift, actual capability was far below numbers of machines. Airfield conditions were primitive at best and made



worse with every winter storm and Soviet attack. Descriptions of operations in -25 C to -30 C degree temperatures and blizzard conditions are so vibrant, you'll want to read this in the middle of summer to avoid a chill.

As an example, on January 16, 1943, the Luftwaffe reported 16 of 141 JU-52s, 41 of 141 HE-111s, one of 20 FW-200s, and three HE-177s were ready for flying operations (p238). On Jan. 27, 1943, with reinforcements, the numbers were 55 of 331 JU-52s, 19 of 154 HE-111s, two of 20 FW-200s, and zero of 18 HE-177s were ready for flying operations (p272).

The Army calculated that it would need 750 tons of supplies per day for full operations and about half that for defensive operations. Tinkerings based on existing supplies and eating horses adjusted the tonnage, but the goal was 300 tons per day. From Nov. 24, 1942 to Feb. 3, 1943, the Luftwaffe delivered 8,350 tons, or about 116 tons per day. The best day was Dec 7 with 362.6 tons (p286).

The airlift also brought out 24,900 wounded (p286) -- although also reported as 24,910 (p300). The Luftwaffe lost 488 aircraft and about 1,000 airmen.

The book contains 57 black and white photos, six color aircraft profiles, and three black and white maps. Numerical tallies are also in the appendices as the author reconciles different numbers from different sources.

This adds up to an intensive look at a valiant, if failed, Luftwaffe effort to resupply the Stalingrad pocket. Smooth prose, vigorous research, and critical analysis make this a winner.

Enjoyed it.

Caesar's Civil War: Essential Histories. by Adrian Goldworthy. Softcover (5.8x8.25 inches). 144 pages. 2023 reprint of 2002 book.

Using Julius Caesar's writings as a backdrop, this overview tackles the war for supremacy of Rome between Caesar and Pompey. Smoothly written, it says updated with new maps and photos, likely, and I'm guessing here, using an influx of photos available from museums and other collections via the internet. Unfortunately, tactical battle maps lack scales, although the operational and strategic ones do post a scale.

This overview provides the background of both commanders and often of their staff, plus the political alliances and overall state of the Republic. You'll get enough detail to tickle your interest, hopefully, to investigate the history in greater detail in other books. The bibliography certainly has enough primary and secondary sources to get you started on understanding Roman history.

The booklet contains 51 color photos, one black and white photo, and eight color maps.

It's an excellent encapsulation of Caesar's victory in the civil war and it ends with his dictatorship and assassination. Essential Histories volumes offer a good start to a historical period and this one is another winner.

Enjoyed it.

Post-Roman Kingdoms: AD 450-800 (Elite 248). by Raffaele D'Amato and Andrea Salimbeti. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Dark Ages Gaul & Britain AD 450-800*

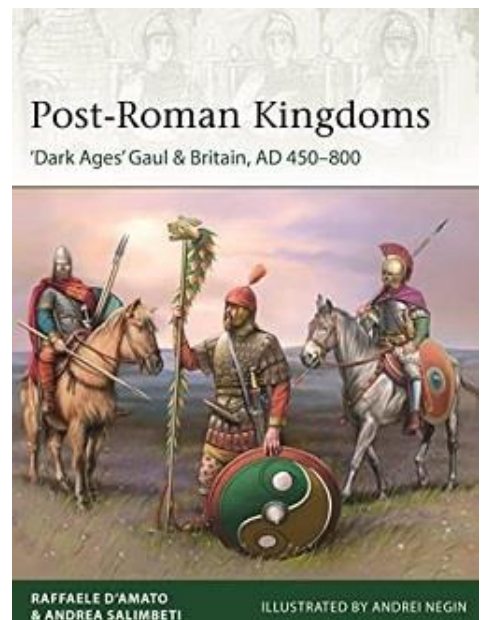
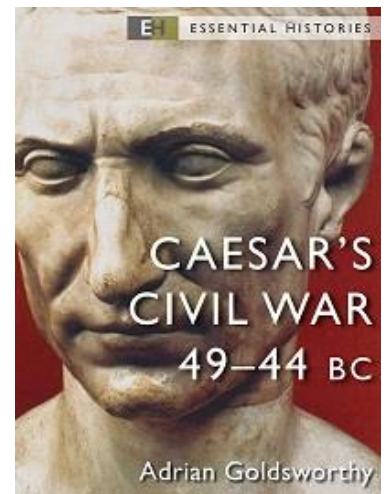
Covers the period between the fall of Rome and the rise of Charlemagne as tribes reasserted their political will via combat.

Excellent archeological and historical overview of the period with research and analysis of the arms, armor, and organization used by the Anglo-Saxons, Germanic, Welsh, and Gallic tribes to be the successors of Rome.

The booklet contains 53 color photos, mostly archeological finds, four color illustrations, 13 black and white illustrations, and eight colors plates with 15 infantry and 10 cavalry uniform illustrations.

It's a fine look at the small kingdoms and warlord-led factions of the era.

Enjoyed it.



Infantry Antiaircraft Missiles: Weapon 85. by Steven J. Zaloga. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Man-Portable Air Defense Systems*

What's this? A Zaloga booklet not about tanks? Depending on your interest in post-WWII warfare, it's either the end of civilization or the start of a golden age of Cold War-era information.

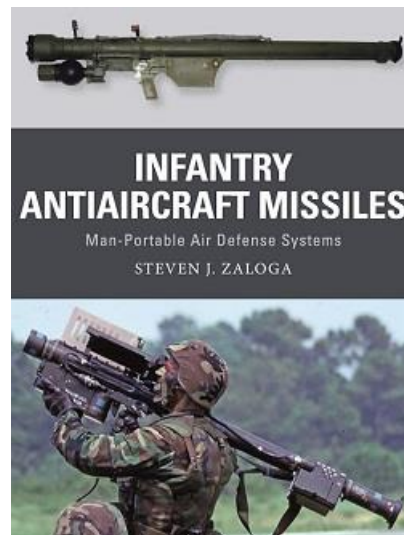
I'll vote for the latter as he dissects the research and development efforts of a variety of countries to create an effective man-portable AA air defense (MANPAD) missile system.

Of note, in 1944, the Germans produced the Luftfaust (later renamed Fliegerfaust) as the first MANPAD that had a four, and later nine, 20mm projectile "shot." It started production in January 1945. It never quite worked as advertised (p11-12).

The booklet contains all the specs and overviews of the various models developed on both sides of the Iron Curtain and then use in combat, primarily in Vietnam, Egypt, and Afghanistan (p46-p75). Despite the 2023 copyright date, the booklet came out in 2022 and does not contain any references to the use of MANPADs by Ukraine against Russian air.

The booklet contains 37 color photos, 11 black and white photos, four color illustrations, and two two-page color action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.



US Soldier vs Chinese Soldier: Combat 59. by Chris McNab. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Korea 1951-1953*

As with other volumes in the series, the format consists of analyzing the training, weapons, and tactics of both sides before heading into the scenario-worthy trio of battles.

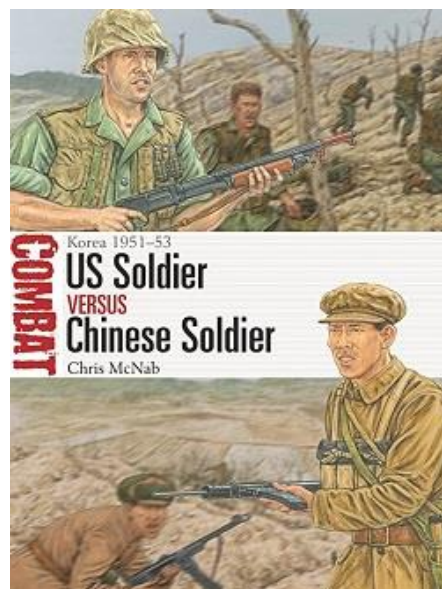
The *Combat* series is back on track, map-wise, with three tactical maps to accompany the descriptions of the battle of Chipyeong-Ni (Feb 5-15, 1951), Triangle Hill (Oct 14-25, 1952), and Pork Chop Hill (Jul 6-11, 1953). And they all have map scales.

You'll need other sources for a proper OOB, but you can pull enough info from the maps and text to create decent tabletop scenarios.

The booklet contains 44 black and white photos, four color photos, five color maps, four color uniform studies (front and back of each soldier), and three two-page color action illustrations.

With 2025 being the 75th anniversary of the start of the Korean War, now may be the time to start investigating the battles. With *The Korean War: Essential Histories* (see my review in the 12/26/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org) and *Combat 59*, you'll be well on your way to understanding the war.

Enjoyed it.

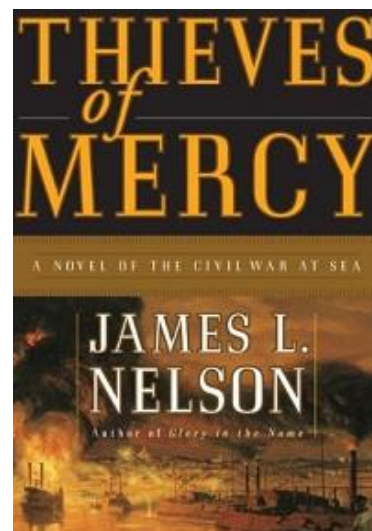


Thieves of Mercy. by James L. Nelson. Hardback (6.0x9.4 inches). 463 pages. 2005.

Confederate Captain Samuel Bowater steams again in this sequel to the novel *Glory in the Name* (see my review in the 6/29/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org). This time, he joins an ad-hoc River Defense Force flotilla on the Mississippi River near Vicksburg as his ironclad Tennessee is being built.

In between action against the Yankees, he's involved in a hilarious brawl in a theater as fellow Captain Mike Sullivan objects to a presentation of Hamlet. Meanwhile, the resourceful love of his life makes her way to the Vicksburg area to aid her beloved captain and his men.

Enjoyed it.



The Genius Plague. by David Walton. Softcover (5.5x8.5 inches). 384 pages. 2017.

After reading this, you probably won't look at a mushroom the same way again. In this combo book of science fiction and thriller, fungi take center stage as a way to boost intelligence as well as perform mind control on people. I kept thinking of *Flowers for Algernon* as I read it.

A mycologist accidentally discovered the effect due to a terrorist attack on a boat in the Amazon region. Before long, a vast conspiracy is targeting the US nuclear arsenal, ostensibly masterminded by the fungi. Sometimes, it's a little too neat as when spores scattered on a computer cable infect all the computers, but those are the mushrooming effects of super spores.

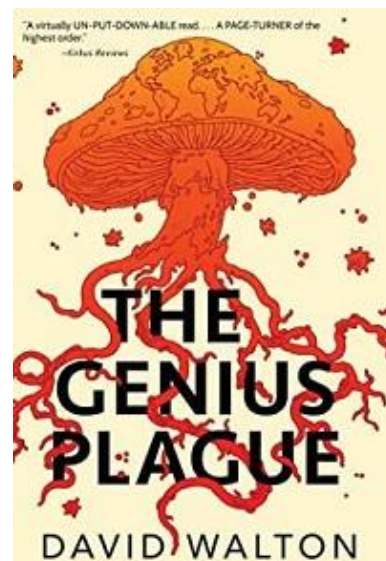
The most effective parts are the examinations of the initial infection and our hero's efforts to crack codes at the NSA to get to the root of the problem.

I was less thrilled with the thriller parts. Why would you need guns and nukes when spores will do? I suppose it's like WWI and gas -- everyone can mask up to neutralize spore attacks. Yet, as we know from coronavirus, universal masking is an impossibility, making contagion almost a certainty. Let's not think too hard about how spores infect computer cables, but not through masks. Better living through plastics, I guess.

Then comes a counter-conspiracy: Create an anti-fungal cure that will defeat the mass-mind attack by turning everyone into a mindless slave controlled by one general. The discussion is whether that's better or worse than nuclear mushroom clouds.

As for the ending, I kinda, sorta get the idea on how to "defeat" (if that's the right word) the fungal infection. I re-read it multiple times and still have to figure out why American Sign Language worked to break the "slave" commands. It's even harder for me to understand how to implement the actual "cure" for humanity. I feel like I'm missing something. Apparently, I need to inhale more mushroom spores.

Ties go to the author: Enjoyed it.



The Italian Wars: Vol. 4 - Battle of Ceresole 1544. by Massimo Predonzani and Simon Miller. Softcover (7.1x9.8 inches). 126 pages. 2022 reprint of 2012 book.

Subtitle: *The Crushing Defeat of the Imperial Army*

Subtitle: *From Retinue to Regiment 1453-1618 No. 15*

The book contains fascinating information, but the reprint is riddled with typos, primarily of the missing space between words or after periods variety. These are not fatal, per se, but the editor must have been asleep at the spellchecker that day.

Missing spaces after a period on pages 12, 13, 15, and 19. I'd add p27, but technically, the missing space should be after a comma. Missing spaces between words on pages 14, 20, 26, 42, 60, and 100. Bingo! Sorry. Couldn't help myself. I'd add p104, but technically, the missing space is between a word and a number.

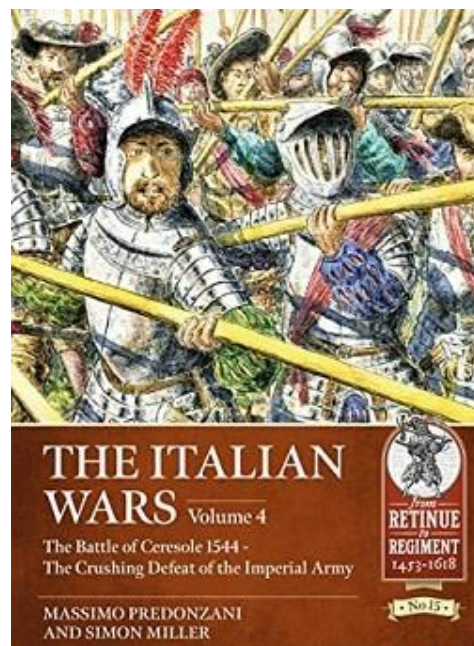
What are fatal are other mistakes: "1/4 and then was not..." (p12) -- 1/4? I can't even guess. "The pike was one arm length longer (approximately 60cm) than that of the landsknechts (about 70cm)." (p30) - - 60cm is about 2 feet, but what does the 70cm number supposed to represent? And "companies of 50 men at arms each, with 50 archers on horseback and 50 on foot." (p62) poses a bit of confusion, but I think it means the companies totaled 150 men, divided into thirds by troop type.

If you can tune these out, the text contains a wealth of information about the situation, commanders, unit types, weapons, and uniform colors covering Italian, Spanish, French, and Swiss troops.

As for the battle itself, marches (p70-79 with one circa 1544 map) and numerical OOB analysis (p80-84 with one map) come before a clear account of the battle (p85-103, with three tactical maps). You can certainly pull together a tabletop scenario with the information within.

So, the editing is sloppy, but the information is brilliant.

Enjoyed it.



Panzers in Normandy: Then and Now. by Eric Lefevre. Hardback (8.5x12.0 inches). 212 pages. 2023 reprint of 1983 book.

You read that right. The book was released in 1983 with the aim of tracking down a variety of German panzer regiments that fought in Normandy. There were so many wrecks, that even after the Allies took them away and the French Army deployed a Panther unit, wrecks abounded until 1975.

All the specs, developments, and deployments of the main panzers, including IV, Panther, Tiger, Tiger II, STuG, Jagdpanther, self-propelled AA, and other armored vehicles, are covered. TO&E diagrams showcase organization, even if actual numbers in the field were far fewer than book strength.

Better yet, you get a combination of operations and first-person accounts of the panzers in action in a variety of battles, including a detailed look at the tactical acumen of panzer ace Michael Wittman.

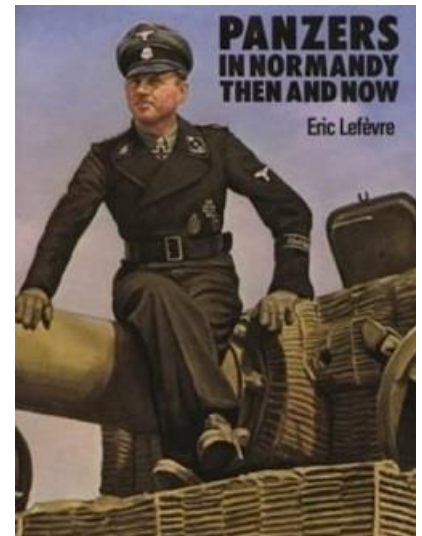
The book contains 332 black and white photos, six black and white illustrations, 24 black and white maps, and 27 black and white visual TO&E diagrams, including an extensive look at a Panzer Regiment 44 (p8-16).

There is not an updated version -- it is a straight reprint of the 1983 book. It includes a lot of then and now images, where a 1944 photo is paired with a 1983 photo of the same spot and at the same angle. This was the hallmark of a UK magazine called *After The Battle*.

Back in the 1990s, I visited the offices of *AtB* while hoping to sign a deal allowing MagWeb to include the magazine. That didn't pan out, but I still remember the feat of parallel parking on a London street outside the offices. That may not mean much to UK readers, but for a guy off an airline flight to drive on the 'opposite' side of the road and parallel park 'opposite' in a city, it's an accomplishment.

In any case, this 40-year-old old book still contains fascinating information.

Enjoyed it.



Chinook Crew Chick. by Liz McConaghy. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 194 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Highs and Lows of Forces Life From the Longest Serving Female RAF Chinook Force Crew Member*

This breezily written autobiography features her military life as a CH-47 Chinook helicopter loadmaster with the Royal Air Force. She served two tours of duty in Iraq and 10 in Afghanistan.

Along the way, you'll find many laugh-out-loud antics, pranks, and other events. In the heat of Iraq, the pilots decided to cool off the helicopter by flying through a 50-foot-tall water fountain, only to discover halfway through that the water flowed up from a broken sewage main (p47).

Then you get moments of danger, such as when she fell out of the helicopter and dangled from a harness during a training mission (p30).

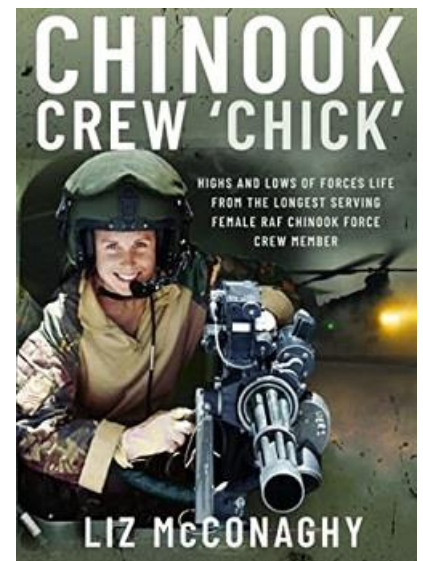
As the book progresses, the events get darker as she flies medical evac missions in Afghanistan. Sure, she recounts a considerable number of lighter moments, but patients coding in mid-flight darken the tone.

The book contains 19 color photos and 14 black and white photos.

Neck and back injuries catch up with her and result in a medical discharge. A loss of purpose, death of a close friend from cancer, divorce, and delayed PTSD take a further toll and edge her into a suicide attempt. Good fortune and caring friends bring her back from such blackness and put her on a road to recovery.

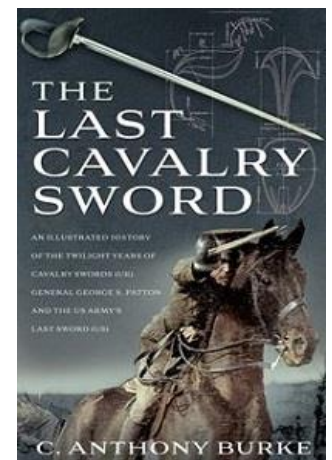
It's not the sunniest way to end the prose, but it's as honest as the rest of the book.

Enjoyed it.



The Last Cavalry Sword. by C. Anthony Burke. Hardback (7.1x9.9 inches). 117 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *An Illustrated History of the Twilight Years of Cavalry Swords (UK), General George S Patton, and the US Army's Last Sword (US)*



The long subtitle summarizes the contents, with 85 black and white photos and 17 black and white illustrations (mostly patent drawings) of swords. A quick history of cavalry swords from Roman times begins the book, with emphasis on Napoleonic and American Civil War period swords.

While some Middle Eastern swords are mentioned, no swords from Japan, China, or other Asian locales are covered.

The transition from curved to straight cavalry swords gets full attention and ends with an analysis of Patton's design being accepted by the US Army and put into production just prior to WWI. Springfield Armory produced 24,799 and Landers, Frary & Clark produced 54,000 of the swords (p93).

Decades ago, I read Burton's book on the history of the sword, which covered the subject in detail for its time. While this book won't do much for the tabletop wargaming crowd, it proved an interesting adjunct to Patton's enthusiasm for cavalry.

Enjoyed it.

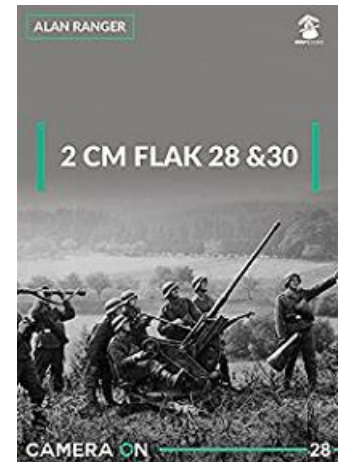
2 CM FLAK 28 & 30: Camera On 28. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 80 pages. 2022.

This volume in the photo-intensive series covers the AA guns as completely as the other volumes cover their weapons and vehicles.

The 137 black and white photos concentrate on pre-war and early-war situations, with a variety of staged and casual photos. You certainly see a good selection of equipment shots, including some closeups, as well as uniform shots from mostly undressed to parade-ground perfection. Lots of details about the dug-in positions, from deployed on flat ground to wood-lined pits to concrete emplacements should give modelers a considerable number of ideas.

The most interesting photo to me was German AA stationed on the Canary Islands in 1940 (p12 -- Germans garrisoning a Spanish island?), with runner up being a 1938 drill with troops wearing gas masks (p44).

Enjoyed it.



Killing Hitler's Reich: Battle for Austria 1945. by William Alan Webb. Softcover (6.7x9.7 inches). 590 pages. 2022 reprint of 2019 book.

This impressive compilation of the deployments and battles of every German unit that ever fought in Austria from April 1 to May 23, 1945 covers a somewhat neglected area of WWII. Usually, it's Bulge to Berlin to Berchtesgaden, with minimal examination of tactical engagements between Allied spearheads and German rearguards. There's a considerable amount of fighting with plenty of German ad-hoc units trying to stop the Soviet steamroller and the American and British dashes.

That the Germans could mount any sort of defense from the wreckage of the German army and hastily drafted levies is amazing. That bits and pieces of units organized for small-unit counterattacks to recapture key towns and terrain is mind boggling. Based on all the anecdotes within, you can pull a hundred wargame scenarios for platoon up to battalion level. How rules will reflect actual performance will be up to the GM, but at least you have building blocks of OOBs. You can extrapolate the general terrain from surrounding prose.

That said, the book also suffers from a lack of cohesive narrative. Each day is a chapter, and each unit's actions are contained in a subchapter. The result makes it read like someone's notes for a book instead of a book.

Judging from the bibliography, it seems like he read through a lot of secondary books, found a unit, jotted down its location, day, and associated anecdote, and then went onto the next unit he found in the pages. Over and over again. And over again.

I may be wrong, but I don't see primary sources -- US Army records, microfiche records of the Germans, or USSR archive notes. Autobiographies, sure, and some exceptional books (both hardcover Nafziger books are listed and Nafziger used microfiche records of the Germans), but I don't see the usual bibliography references of official records. The index is fantastic -- comprehensive and offering multiple ways to find information.

The book contains 10 maps of an operational nature of about 15km to the inch if I measured the map scale right. Lots of little towns are named and positioned.

When using this day-by-day, unit-by-unit organization, I never quite got that overall understanding of operations beyond panicked German efforts to plug gaps and inevitable Allied victory. Maybe that was all there was.



I read to page 263 (Apr 1 - 10) because the entries became repetitious, then jumped ahead to May 1 through the end of the war.

On the one hand, Webb culled a lot of unit information from a lot of books. As I said, impressive. It doesn't make for great reading, but it does offer a considerable number of late-war scenario opportunities with troops from scratch quality to elite status. And that's the strength of the book.

Enjoyed it.

American Interceptor: US Navy Convoy Fighter Projects. by Jared A. Zichek. Hardback (8.5x12.0 inches). 359 pages. 2022.

This exhaustive technical examination of six vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) projects from the 1950s were supposed to supply convoys with compact fighter escorts deployed on cargo ships. These propeller and jet-driven aircraft were mostly paper projects with a couple prototypes built that never quite measured up to expectations.

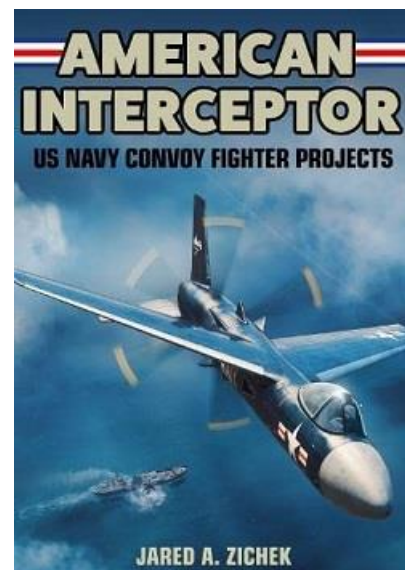
These fighters were meant to launch vertically and then land vertically on a ship. If you've ever seen the SpaceX rockets land on a raft at sea, you have an idea about the recovery process.

The technical details made my eyes roll back in my head -- that's how zeroed in the author went in a system by system and subsystem by subsystem analysis of strengths and weaknesses of each plane.

The book contains 90 black and white photos, 415 black and white illustrations (vast majority being patent and engineering drawings), one color illustration, eight color photos, and 24 color aircraft profiles.

I admit I read the first chapter on early patents for VTOL aircraft --1929 and 1930s -- and the first two projects of the early 1950s. I can certainly see some sort of Pulp RPG game out of this with a scientist (mad or sane) tinkering away in his makeshift lab as Nazi or Commie agents and thugs come to steal his plans or planes. Or, flip the scenario where US or UK commandos storm a cargo ship carrying a working model with super bomb. Hey, I said pulp...

Back to the history portion of this review: If you revel in technical details of obscure aircraft projects, this deserves a spot in your library.



Eagles of Destiny: Asia at War 38. by Usman Shabbir and Yawar Mazhar. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 76 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Volume 1: Birth and Growth of the Royal Pakistan Air Force 1947-1956*

Another fine volume in the series tackles the beginnings of the Pakistan Air Force, from RAF days in India to independent service of a new nation.

As you might expect, Pakistan had virtually no infrastructure for an air force. Nor did it have much in the way of training procedures, experienced maintenance personnel, experienced pilots, or aircraft. Most planes were WWII cast-offs.

What it did have is a small number of talented officers who had worked their way up the Indian AF food chain to form a core of the Royal Pakistan AF (RPAF). Surprisingly, it also had an influx of experienced Polish pilots, crew, and other personnel (p41). Why Polish? They didn't want to go home to a USSR-occupied Poland and also felt the RAF dealt them a bum hand. Pakistan seemed more welcoming at the time.

Interestingly, the RPAF flew supply missions to Kashmir with an understanding from its Indian counterparts that nobody shot at flying aircraft, but strafing and bombing of aircraft on the ground was permitted (p45).

The book contains one black and white map, 68 black and white photos, one color map, and 21 color aircraft profiles. An appendix lists all aircraft obtained by the RPAF up to Dassault Mirage IIIs.

The second volume will cover the wars with India, but the first volume sets the stage for the creation of the RPAF.

Enjoyed it.

