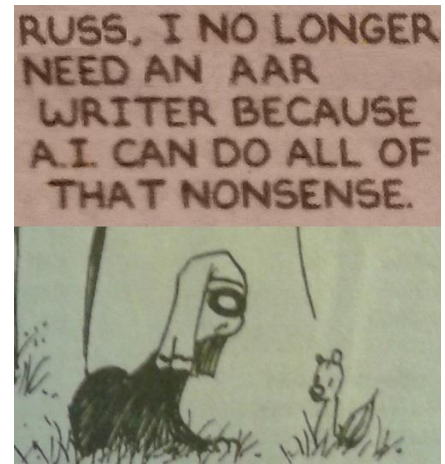


**Convention Recap:** NJ Game Day (LeeCon) 2022  
**HMGS Next Gen News:** Multiple Events  
**Potomac Wargamers/NOVAG Game Day:** Jan. 28, 2023  
**I've Been Raabed:** *Command and Colors Napoleonic*  
**Dominion:** Another Pair of Card Games  
**Cold Shower:** *Cmd Decn* Operation Typhoon 1941  
**Abington Wargame Flea Market:** March 19, 2023

## Books I've Read:

**Rome to the Po River:** German 362nd Inf. Div 1944-45  
**Tac Recon:** USAF Tactical Recon WWI to Gulf War  
**A Pair of Aces and a Trey:** WWI Observation  
**Combat Divers:** Illustrated History Special Forces  
**The Shogun's Soldiers:** Volume 1 1603-1721  
**Leading Like the Swamp Fox:** AWI Francis Marion  
**The Soviet High Commands:** Peace and War 1941-1992  
**Congo Mercenary:** 1964-1965  
**The Meuse Heights to the Armistice:** Sep-Nov 1918  
**Blood & Broken Glass:** Northern Ireland 1991-93  
**New Pompeii** (sci-fi novel)  
**Jedburghs:** Set Europe Ablaze 2 (hist. WWII novel)  
**Baghdad Blues** (Historical Modern Iraq novel)  
**Lavochkin La-7:** Monographs 88  
**The Mighty Eighth:** Masters Over Europe 1942-45  
**America's Few:** Marine Aces of the South Pacific  
**Bristol Blenheim:** TopDrawings 130  
**Fiat G.55 Centauro:** TopDrawings 131  
**Lockheed F-104 Starfighter:** Kit Build 8  
**Panzers on the Battlefield 3:** WWII Photobook 23  
**Onwards to Omdurman:** 1896-98 (Musket to Maxim 26)  
**The King in the North:** Picts of Portriu and Ce  
**Hitler's Air War in Spain:** Rise Luftwaffe  
**Russian S-300 and S-400 Missile Systems** (NVgd 315)  
**Mongol Warrior vs European Knight** (Combat Men 70)  
**Soviet Naval Infantry 1917-91** (Elite 249)  
**Naval Battle of Crete 1941:** Campaign 388  
**F-4 Phantom II Wild Weasel Units:** Combat Aircraft 147  
**Afghanistan 1979-88:** Air Campaign 35  
**ANZAC Soldier vs. Ottoman Soldier:** Combat 68  
**Waffen-SS Soldier vs Soviet Rifleman:** Combat 71  
**H6K Mavis/H8K Emily vs PB4Y-1/2 Liberator:** Duel 126  
**12th SS Panzer Division:** Goodwood to April 1945  
**Soviet Destruction of Army Group South:** 1943-1945  
**World War II Snipers:** The Men, Their Guns, Stories



## Cold Wars 2023: March 9-12

A little reminder to put on your 2023 calendar.



# Convention Recap: NJ Game Day (LeeCon) 2022

by Russ Lockwood

Give Lee Sowers credit for coming up with the idea of a small, local NJ gamers convention to chase away the winter blahs. His development had a community room that could be reserved for an event. It needed to be paid for, including the cost of a janitor who had to be there the entire time -- to a maximum of eight hours.

He floated the idea to Dennis of On Military Matters, who made a few calls to his *La Art de la Guerre* (ADLG) group to see if any of them were up for an official tournament. That proved fruitful.



Dennis asked me if I would run a Napoleonic game of *Snappy Nappy*. I said sure, but a one-table game, not a multi-table Campaign in a Day extravaganza.

Lee said he'd run two games: WWII *Skirmish Action II* and a *Skirmish Action Cold War*. More calls and more games: Vietnam Company B (Ted), Dietrichdorf 1807 (Cliff), American Revolution (Keith), and French and Indian War (Bill).

*The left side of the hall at noon. I later counted about 50 attendees during lunch, although a few more may have come after.*

## Details, Details

Now came the cost. Entry would be free. Yes, free.

Lee and Dennis discussed the rental cost for the facility when I suggested a flea market section -- the cost of the tables would offset the cost of the facility. Aha! Put me down for a large table (\$20) -- putting my money where my mouth is, you understand. More calls and more tables sold until all were taken. Excellent.

What about food? Pizza delivery: \$5 gets you two slices and a can of soda. Individual can of soda for \$1.

The Community Center was in Whiting (Manchester) NJ. I did a quick Google Maps query. It was 48 miles from Philadelphia (via NJ Rte 70), 50 miles from Atlantic City, NJ, and 80 miles from Morristown, NJ.

Thus Lee and Dennis put together what I called NJ Game Day and what we unofficially called LeeCon. So they built it. Now to see if anyone would come.

*And the right side of the hall at noon. Flea market tables on right along windows.*





## Game: *Snappy Nappy*

I set up a three-on-three, French vs. Russian game on a 4x6-foot table. A few woods, a couple hills, a pair of towns, and seven units per player would be about right.

It would be a learning game, so I gave each player a commander (one stand), five infantry units (two stands each, representing a brigade), one cavalry unit (two stands), and an artillery unit (one stand). All stands held 15mm troops. An inch represents 150 yards and a turn is an hour.

*A few turns into Snappy Nappy. Russ (that's me) in blue shirt helping Michael find a chart on the Quick Reference Sheet. Hugh in red sweatshirt. Dave checking his phone.*  
*Photo by Dan.*

Everything, including the clipboards to hold the quick reference sheet and the roster sheet, the rulers, and the pencils fit into one box (the kind that holds copier paper).

As for the troops, each player had roughly the same quality (from Militia to Elite, although two of the French players had Guard instead of Elite).

*Russians (l to r): John, Hugh, and Michael.*

The Russian side found John, Hugh, and Michael against the French side of Dave and John, with me filling in for the third French player. None had played before. Well, except me.

For those interested: You can download the *SN* Quick Reference Sheets from the blog *Blunders On The Danube* run by Peter. See the *SN* Campaign section.

### Set Up

I gave a quick rundown on formations and pointed to various sections on the Quick Reference Sheet for sequence of play, movement rates, firing, morale checks, and melee. I never go into great detail, figuring most gamers would rather learn by doing rather than listen to me drone on. I would stop the game when needed and have the commanders look on while I demonstrated the mechanics.

*And the French: Dave (left) and John in the mid game.*

There is nothing particularly unusual about most of the mechanics. Crafted into a playable and quick game, sure, but nothing esoteric. The only thing that needed reminding was that a hit generates a morale





test and you roll for morale until you pass or the unit routs off the table. It's the *Snappy* claim to fame!

Dave heard that and quipped, "The game will last 15 minutes."

"Maybe," I joked. "But the game is called *Snappy Nappy*."

*At start.*

I set up the troops one foot in from the respective edges, so about two feet separated the opposing forces.

## The First Few Turns

The forces maneuvered as players thought best, mostly learning the movement rates (infantry column is six inches, infantry line is three inches, changing formation is a third of movement, etc.).

Onward they moved, playing more by Napoleonic instinct than by rules familiarity. They soon got the movement, firing, and morale checks down. When it came to melee, which is an admittedly different mechanic, they needed a little help from the GM, but nothing they didn't understand after a couple melees.

Per usual, some elite and veteran units blew morale die roll after die roll until they routed off the table, while some militia and conscript units made morale check after morale check.

One of Hugh's Conscript units passed two morale checks to hold the center of the line, drawing some surprise moans from the French and surprise glee from the Russians.

The St. Petersburg militia under John deserved considerable praise for withstanding shot and bayonets from French veterans and then leveling their own firepower to send the French packing!

*Turn 3. Quick to advance. Foreground: Dave's French (left) make it to the hill first. Middle: Russian Hugh (holding ruler) discovered woods can break up an advance. Top: John's Russian (right) and my French face off on the hill.*

## The Middle Game

On the Russian left, Michael's light cavalry defeated the French light cavalry and swept around the flank. However, his infantry units on his left fell to Dave's assault. Dave used a daring tactic.

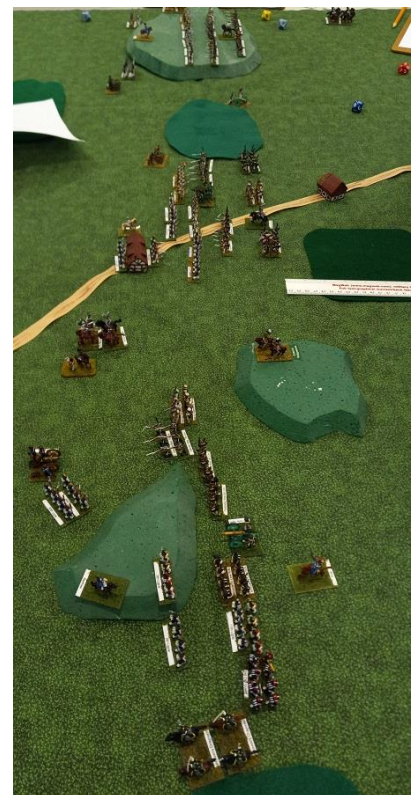
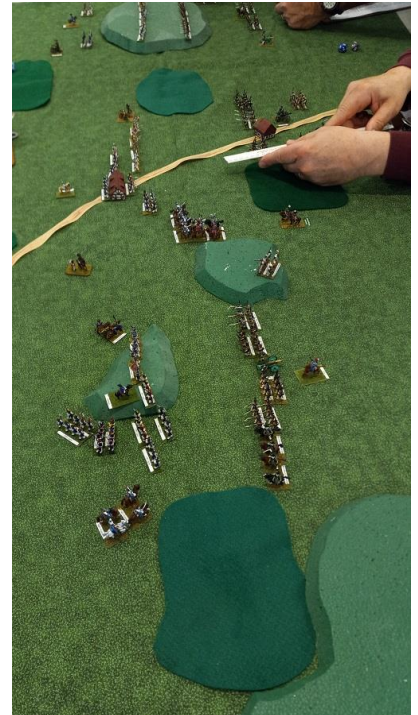
Dave put a line of poor troops (conscripts?) in line in front of his Old Guard and veteran troops in columns. The idea was to soak up the Russian fire, which the conscripts did by passing morale checks. Then, the columns charged through the conscripts to hit the Russian line. It must have worked because I saw a hole on the Russian left flank.

Meanwhile, Michael pushed troops atop a hill in an effort to push on his right.

*Turn 5. Fights galore. Bottom: Michael's Russian cavalry send the French packing next to the woods, but Dave's infantry double team the Russians into rout. Middle: Russian Hugh (right) and French John (left) engage in firefights and melees. Top: My French cavalry hold the hill and send John's Russian cavalry packing in panic.*

In the middle, Hugh stretched his troops on defense, allowing the French the initiative on where to strike. The Russians brought their artillery into play first, but the line held thanks to those key conscript morale rolls.

Meanwhile, John placed one of his best units as a town garrison while sending out his militia and conscripts in the assault. He thought it was a lowly





unit, but misread the roster.

One thing *Snappy Nappy* teaches is that better quality troops generally do better in the field. Dice being dice, you do get the outliers of firing and morale rolls like Hugh's conscripts, but overall, odds say good troops will hold a position or take a position better than poor troops.

On the Russian right, John marched his troops atop the hill and swung his cavalry right and his artillery left. The French won the cavalry battle on this flank, sending the Russian cavalry heading towards the rear -- not routing, just in a panic. John moved his commander to try and recover the unit.

I formed a line with the French opposite the Russian line. Meanwhile, my French artillery won the artillery duel and the Russian artillery routed off table.

*Turn 6: Michael wheels his cavalry back into the fight while pressing forward with the rest of his force. His cannons have a flank shot on Dave's French.*

## The End Game

With the flanks clear, the smart thing for me to do was position the cavalry to threaten the end of John's Russian line and move the artillery to a flanking position as well.

Alas, French John and Dave, while they had their successes, were also suffering more and more morale losses, rendering their commands ever increasingly fragile. As routs mounted, they called it a game.

*Turn 7: On my end of the table, my line of French (top) advance to firing range (1 inch) while my cannons win a gun duel. On the bottom, Russian John attached his leader to his cavalry and makes the roll, improving their morale from Panic to Disrupted.*

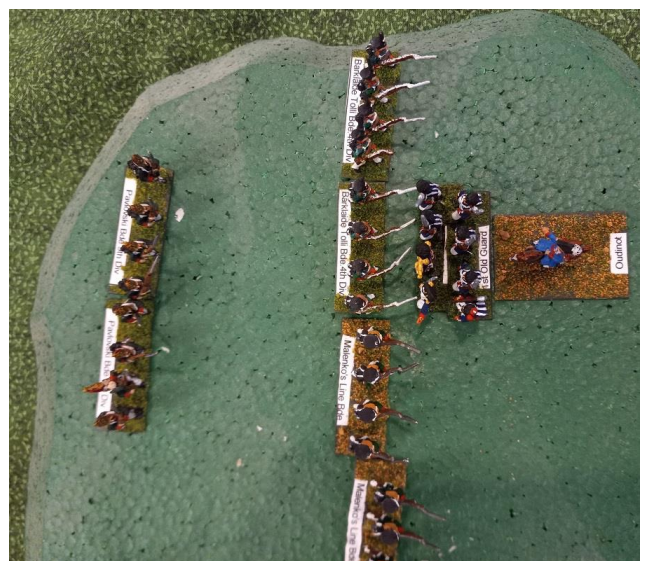
I then showed John what happens when cavalry attacks a solid square: the cavalry odds of winning are really small! Thus, using infantry and artillery to fire away at the squares to disrupt and *then* charge them would be the better idea. How Napoleonic.

I also sent the entire French line into melee... and watched all but the Guard brigade fail morale and stagger backwards until all that was left of my line was the Guard. It did enough to win, but Russian morale held well enough not to rout. Even the St. Petersburg militia stood firm.

*Turn 8. My big French charge wilts under John's expert marksmanship. All that's left is the Imperial Guard attack led by my leader and it is not a sure thing by any means!*

## Under Two Hours

So the game came to a player conclusion in under two hours, and that was snappy enough for a first game for all, included rules mechanics explanations. For a longer game using the same mechanics, you can increase the number of units from seven to 10 or 11. For a multi-player convention game, seven is just fine to learn the system and get in some tactics and combat.





Lots of movement, firing, and melees, with units holding firm or routing uncontrollably. In other words, a typical *SN* game.

Now, the game pitted equal commands, so defense generally gets a benefit. However, as Dave found out, gaining a local superiority by pitting three units on one resulted in a tactical victory.

Michael noted that units can rout pretty quickly. Yes, that's a design decision on my part to make games move.

I also noted that instead of rolling multiple times for failed morale, the GM could use a scenario-specific rule to allow only one loss of morale status per failed morale roll. It's a longer, less snappy game, but one that players may enjoy more.

Fine *SN* game all around.

*Dennis calculates the ADLG tournament points for the winners and losers and then creates the match ups for the next round.*



## ***L'Art de la Guerre* Tournament**

Dennis organized the *L'Art de la Guerre* (ADLG) tournament, which drew 10 players. As umpire, Dennis matched gamers up for the three rounds. Judging by the armies used, I suspect it was an "open" tournament using any *ADLG* army within the points system.

*Jeff came in third in the tournament, but first in the best dressed competition.*

### ***ADLG* Results**

1.	Phil Gardocki	268	Nikephorian Byzantine
2.	Jay Stone	205	War of the Roses
3.	Jeff Wilttrout	202	Kingdom of Axiom
4.	Dan Bigelow	178	Three Kingdoms Korean
5.	Allen Kaplan	174	War of the Roses
6.	Mark Cribbs	162	Albanian
7.	Carl Stefanelli	124	Scots Isles
8.	Kevin Hatch	124	Communal Italian
9.	Vince Rospond	119	Achaemenid Persian
10.	Jim Bisgnani	66	Nikephorian Byzantine

*ALDG tourney: Kevin (right) begins to move against Carl. Next to them is Phil (left) and Mark. Behind Kevin is Vince (standing) and Jeff. Next to them is Jay and Allen (moving). And by the window is Dan (left) and Jim. The lone figure is Umpire Dennis.*

I don't know if there was a prize for the winner except for bragging rights and points towards the *ADLG* international standing, but for tournament gamers, that's satisfaction.

*Early round action: Jay (standing) maneuvers against Allen. At top right corner of photo: Dan contemplates what to move next against Jim (just off photo on right).*





## Other Games

As I was either running *SN* or manning my flea market table, I'm afraid I don't know exactly how the other games turned out, but I did pop over to take photos from time to time.

If I missed a game, I apologize.

*Keith (left) umpires an AWI game for (l to r) John (green shirt), Mike, Mark (moving), and Joe.*



## American Revolution

Keith put on a 28mm *Sharp Practice 2* game for five players.

## French and Indian War

Bill put on two 28mm F&I war skirmish games. I don't recall the rules. Exquisite Highlander figures.

*Bill (left) waves hello before the start of his game as Rob looks on.*



## Vietnam

Over by the window, Ted put on a Vietnam wargame for at least a trio of players.

*Ted (seated holding glasses) discusses his Vietnam game with three gamers (sorry, I forgot to get your names).*

## Napoleonics 1807

Cliff put on his 1807 Dietrichdorf game for a half dozen Napoleonics players.

## WWII

Lee not only secured the Community Center for Game Day, he also put on a WWII game using his upcoming *Skirmish Action II* rules. Sadly, I missed taking a photo of this morning session game.





## Modern

But I did snap a pic of Lee's afternoon Modern game that extends his *WWII Skirmish Action II* rules into the Cold War period.

*Umpire Lee (in green left) explains a finer point of Cold War Skirmish Action game.*

## Dominion Card Game

While manning the flea market tables, Dan and I played a game of Dan's Traveling *Dominion*. It's his variation, with the main differences being only five (instead of 10) Kingdom cards and only one card of each Kingdom type.

## Flea Market

All eight (?) flea market tables were sold and filled with a variety of wargaming figures, boardgames, and publications.

*Umpire Cliff (left) runs his 1807 Dietrichdorf game.*

## Great Day of Gaming

I certainly enjoyed the day of gaming. Lee and Dennis are already talking about improvements. I think it went well for a first time event and they even came within \$50 of breaking even. Maybe a tip jar. Lee and Dennis are considering doing another. I'll let you know.



*A shot of the Flea market section along windows.*



*Dan (Orioles cap) and I play his Travel Dominion.*



# HMGS Next Gen News: Multiple Events

by John Spiess

*With all the sturm and drang about the graying of the hobby over the decades, HMGS Next Gen is doing something about it by traveling to schools and libraries and putting on historical miniatures games for middle and high school students. And yes, some of the parents get involved, which is a nice touch.*

*The following came from John Spiess and the HMGS Next Gen group that carted over the games for fun and historical education. --RL*

## Gardiner Library: Gardiner, NY

Here are some pictures of the February 4, 2023 game day at Gardiner Library.

*Group photo of Gardiner participants.*



## The Pitch

Gamers play strategy-based, historical miniatures games on three-dimensional boards with painted figures, terrain, and features reminiscent of some famous conflicts in history. Games will be facilitated by experts from HMGS Next Gen, Inc. who understand the best ways to create scenarios that will be both challenging and rewarding for the players.

*WWI trench warfare game.*

This month play WWI air combat with biplanes and triplanes using the *Wings of Glory* rule system, a High Seas adventure with plundering pirate sloops and British frigates trying to stop them using the *Limey's and Slimy's* Pirate rule system and The Argonne Forest in 1918, a German and American fight in the trenches during the last months of WWI using modified *Trench Wars* rules.

*WWI air warfare game.*

## The Games

We had a huge turnout of 22 kids and parents. We ran three games with two sessions each. We had a morning session, broke for lunch, and then the kids switched to another game for the afternoon session. That way, they played two different games each.

Eddie ran a pirate game. Gregg ran a *Wings of Glory* dogfight. Steve and I ran the *WWI Trench Wars* game.

We also hooked three parents who not only stayed, but played, and now want to go to Cold Wars. Pretty cool.

*Shiver me timbers. A pirate game.*





## Stamford: After School Gaming

Jim and I continued the after-school gaming program in Stamford, CT. The sessions are three times a week.

This photo is of a pretty cool castle siege game. It's a board game that we are now converting to playing with miniatures. If you zoom in, you can see the castle in the center.

*John (right) umpires a castle capture game at Stamford.*



The kids have to play as a team to fight off the barbarians. We are converting it to Romans in Britain or Gaul defending an encampment.

*Greenwich WWII day with Spearhead.*

## Greenwich: High School Program

Hot off the press. Greenwich, CT, High School is the newest school with a Next Gen program. This high school added gaming to their History WWII unit.

The whole class played *Spearhead* last week. The girls were unbeatable in all games.

*The big winners at Greenwich.*



## Simsbury: WWII Battle Scenario

### The Pitch

On Saturday, February 11, 2023, from 11 am to 3 pm, HMGS Next Gen, Inc. will run a miniature gaming event at the Simsbury, NY, Public Library.

This session is for grades 7-12 and will feature a WWII battle scenario. Student gamers will have the opportunity to play strategy-based, miniatures games on three-dimensional boards complete with painted figures, terrain, and features from a historic battle.

*More of the Greenwich WWII games.*

Games will be facilitated by experts in their craft, who understand the best ways to create scenarios that will be both challenging and rewarding for the players.

If you've never seen a miniatures game before, they are played using dice, tape measures, cards, and other implements, in which teams of players will battle it out to meet the conditions of the scenario.





In some ways, they are familiar to anyone that's played *Risk*, *Stratego*, *Axis and Allies*, and other popular board games. In the case of miniatures, games are played on fully terrained boards, with playing pieces as small as 6mm and as large as 54mm. They are enormously fun.

*Simsbury WWII Bolt Action game.*

## The Game

Jared ran a 28mm *Bolt Action* WWII game at Simsbury Public Library. My scratch-built blown up church is finally getting some table time.

Simsbury is new but has the promise to be a nice hub for people in the Hartford area. The head librarian is a big supporter of miniature gaming.

*John's wrecked church at Simsbury.*

## Torrington: Summer Program?

Jim Stanton is currently working on a bid to run a summer program for the City of Torrington, CT. Fingers crossed.



*A pair of photos of Gardiner gamers. Maybe we'll see them at Cold Wars?*



# Potomac Wargamers/NOVAG Game Day: January 28, 2023

AAR and Photos By Fred Haub

Brian Dewitt and Tim Tilson again coordinated another highly successful annual wargame day at the Centreville Library in Virginia. There were nine wargames spread out in a great facility, and just enough participants to play in every game. The weather was dry and comfortable, making it easy to get to the event and bring in troops and terrain. Everyone had an enjoyable time.

*Borodino in progress.*

We had a great turn out of games and participants, the weather was outstanding, and we even had enough door prizes that everyone walked away with a little something. A big thanks goes to Brian Dewitt and Tim Tilson for doing all the work to make it happen! Also, a big thanks to the game masters for hauling all their stuff the library so that the rest of us could have a good time. Looking forward to next year's Game Day.

*Coral Sea.*

## The Games

**Borodino:** *Command and Colors*  
Napoleonics

**The Chase of Iman Shamel:** *Bolt Action* Colonial 1870

*The Chase.*

**Panthers in the Mist:** *Battlefront* WW2 December 1944

**Open Range Cattle Drive:** *Ruthless* Wild West

**Assault at Liewenberg;** *TSATF* German SW Africa, 1904

**Ariete Advances on Tobruk:** *Panzer Kids* April 1942

**Battle of the Coral Sea:** *Flattops and Floating Fortresses*

**Deathrace 2023:** *Gaslands* Post-Apocalyptic

**Lord of the Underworld:** *Of Gods and Mortals* Mythos

*Some of the photos from Fred's AAR. Visit the NOVAG website for more information about these clubs.—RL.*





# I've Been Raabed: *Command and Colors Napoleonics*

by Russ Lockwood

Dan's positive experience with a multiplayer Seven Years War *Command and Colors* (C&C) game at Fall In 2022 (see the 12/01/2022 AAR for his write-up of the event) inspired him to try and set up a Napoleonic one.

He chose the 1809 Battle of Raab. I took the Austrians and Dan took the French.

C&C divides a battlefield into left, right, and center sectors. You play a card and do what it says, usually move a number of units in one or more sectors. Everything is on a hex map. Infantry fire two hexes, artillery three hexes, and melee attacks are into adjacent hexes. I do not believe there is any facing for movement or combat (unlike some board wargames like the old *Great Battles of Alexander* series).

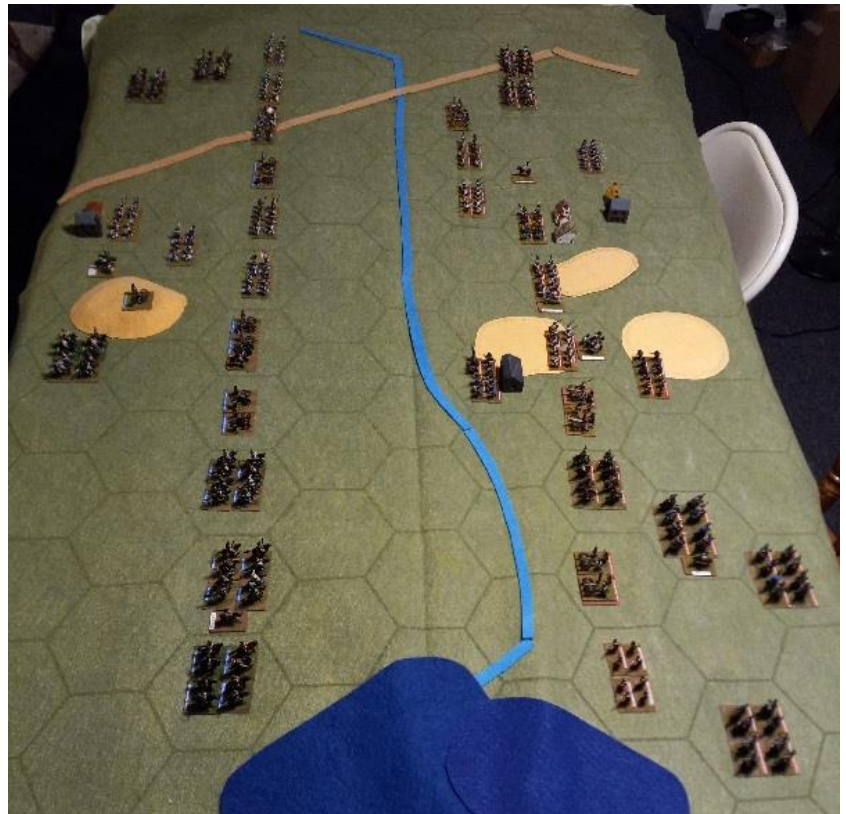
*At start. Dan and the French are to the left of the stream and me and my Austrians are to the right.*

## Fun Fact: Borg Prototype

About 20 years ago, I playtested (or played the debut version of) Richard's *Ancients C&C* version at one of the Origins conventions. I played Alexander the Great at the Battle of Granicus. So I did what Alex did -- charge across and aim for the enemy commander. Alas, the movement cards proved fickle and abandoned Alex in the middle of Persians, who slaughtered him and his Companion cavalry.

We reset and I tried again. Same plan. Same result. Hmmm. Tactics are rather dependent on the card draw. IGO-UGO can quickly turn into I CAN'T GO-UGO because none of my cards are usable in that sector. Hmmm. It's not like you can choose a card -- you play what you're dealt.

*The center of the Austrian line at start.*



## Wrinkle in the Cards

In the 2022 Fall-In 7YW game, the C-in-C handed one card to one of his commanders, drew a card to hand to another of his commanders, and left the third commander to roll two dice in the hope that last commander can do something. In Dan's Napoleonic game, you assign one card to a sector and roll two dice for each of the other two sectors. If you roll the unit type, one unit of that type gets to move.

The idea is that you get at least a chance to do something else in other sectors. It often doesn't work, but at times lets you move a unit.



## Let the Shuffling Begin

What happened in my Napoleonics game? Well, the first turn was OK. Dan began a turning move on my right and a demonstration on my left. I bombarded with artillery and stayed on defense. One French cavalry unit was sent packing on the left, but I was doing little on the right. Indeed, his infantry shot up my artillery battery. My activation cards on the right seemed a bit sparse.

*My artillery (left) took some hits, but dished out some to the French infantry (top left corner). The rest of my right flank command awaited the French.*

## Combat Dice

A d6 die is a d6 die is a d6 die and contains the following icons (for hits): infantry (two icons), artillery (one icon), and cavalry (one icon), along with a flag (retreat), and a wild icon (good for a hit on any of the three types).

For those of us used to miniatures, it proved a die-awakening realization that one shot by a unit is just as good as a shot by any other unit. The difference is the number of dice tossed. Move two infantry units up and that's 4d6 followed by another 4d6. Good for a couple of hits or more. That's how my arty got demolished.

Later on, I moved two of my infantry to contest a stream crossing. Dan played an interrupt card and fired first. Holy Yahtzee, Batman! Four hits obliterated an infantry unit. It was a great time to play that card and a great die roll.

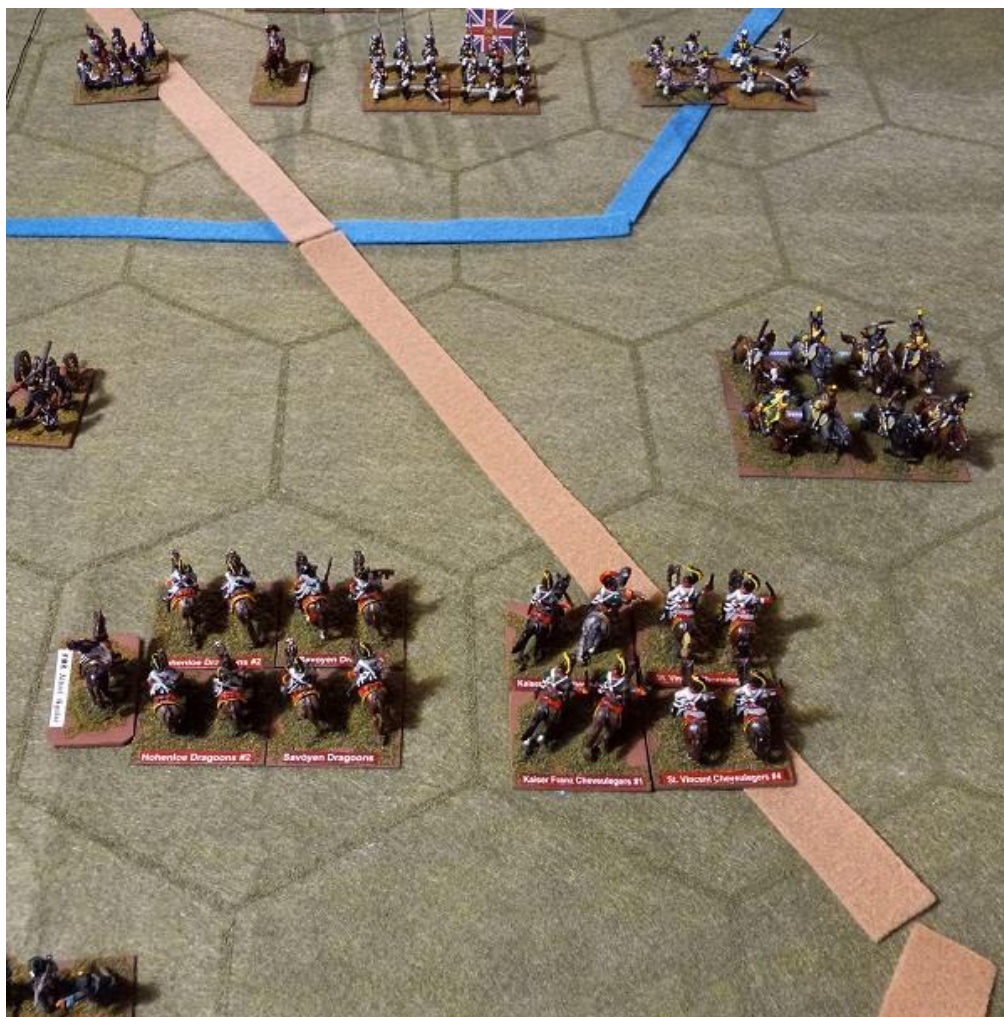
*Dan gets rid of my artillery unit and retreats his infantry. The dark line (thread) represents the dividing line between the center and right sectors.*

## There Stands Archduke John Like a Stone Wall

I was able to move a few units on my crumbling right, but ran out of right-sector movement cards. Hmmm.... This situation sure seems familiar, doesn't it?

As for the two dice roll for a non-card sector, on occasion we'd activate a unit, but more often than not, not. The right sector was where the action was and glommed all the cards... if you had a card for the right sector.

The other thing I began to realize is that you only should move closer when you could get a shot in. Prepping a line of defense as you'd do in miniatures isn't as effective as getting into range and shooting, because only the unit that was targeted would be able to fire back, even if you had multiple units in range.





## Rally Card

An interesting card is what I call the Rally Card. Units adjacent to a leader roll get to restore lost troops stands with a die roll. It's not a given, which is perfectly understandable, but you do give up your turn for firing or meleeing against the enemy. I used Rally once during the game to good effect.

*Sure, I'm still all smiles...but as you can see, my right sector forces (left side of photo) seem a little thin...*  
*Photo by Dan.*

## A Cavalry Observation

While I understand that activated units fire first (and if the enemy doesn't die off or retreat, surviving defenders fire back), I'm less sure about cavalry not countercharging an attack. Again, I'm imposing miniatures memes on a boardgame.

I do like the breakthrough idea where if a cavalry eliminates or retreats the enemy, it can take a breakthrough hex and possibly attack again. This is similar to the old mechanized movement mechanic of board wargames and fitting for a tactical game.

## VPs: Not Even Close

I managed to eliminate one French unit for a VP. Dan had already turned eight of my units into VP toast. I threw in the towel -- thankfully I didn't need a card for that.

*My right sector shattered (top of photo), we call it a game...*

## Deal 'Em Again?

I should like to play *NC&C* again. A change of cards should offer a change in activations. Otherwise, I'd like to try it again with the idea of assigning one card per sector. At least the cards will rotate in and out faster.

You'd probably need a proviso that a unit can't be activated twice in a turn, as some cards allow multiple sectors to activate units. Hmm. Or maybe allow it -- after all, if you can hamstring a sector with no movement, you can balance that out with some double movement.





# Dominion: Another Pair of Card Games

by Russ Lockwood

Played a couple of *Dominion* card games. Dan has a list of about 500 or so layouts accumulated over the years from the web. Instead of our usual rolling, I just picked one that sounded interesting: A Bargain.

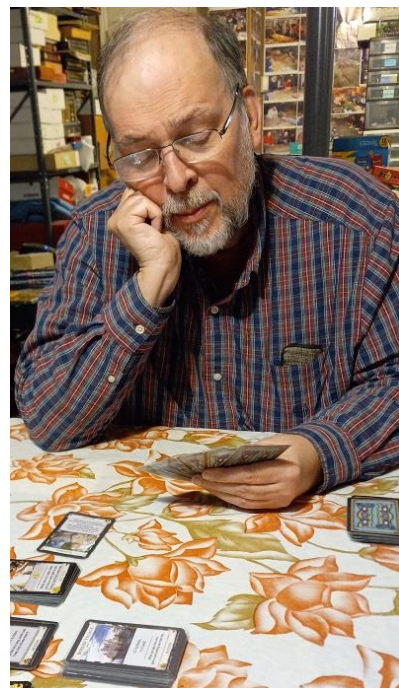
Dan checks his hand to see if can find any bargains. Bargain Kingdom cards below.

I should also point out that Dan often pastes pop culture images on the regular cards. Thus, you'll see Monty Python or *Game of Thrones* images instead of the *Dominion* artwork. The text is the same.

If you've never played Dominion, know that this is a deck-building card game where every player starts out with the same hand and buys cards from the same common pile as well as money cards and victory cards. None of the nonsense about rare, ultra rare, or the insanely rare card that cost how much?

Nope, the shuffling of cards provides the variety of each hand, but everyone starts equal. How you figure out the best card pairings is up to you. Everyone starts with 10 cards: Seven 1 coin cards and three Estate victory cards. The lower left number on the common cards indicates how many coins are needed to buy it. You start a hand with five cards.

The game ends with the purchase of all of one type of VP card, or, buying all cards in three Kingdom card types. The former is more likely than the latter.



## Bargains ?



## A Bargain

The common cards to buy, Kingdom cards in the game's vernacular, offer a lot of placement options, including trashing cards and maneuvering them to be in your next hand by placing cards on the top of your draw deck.

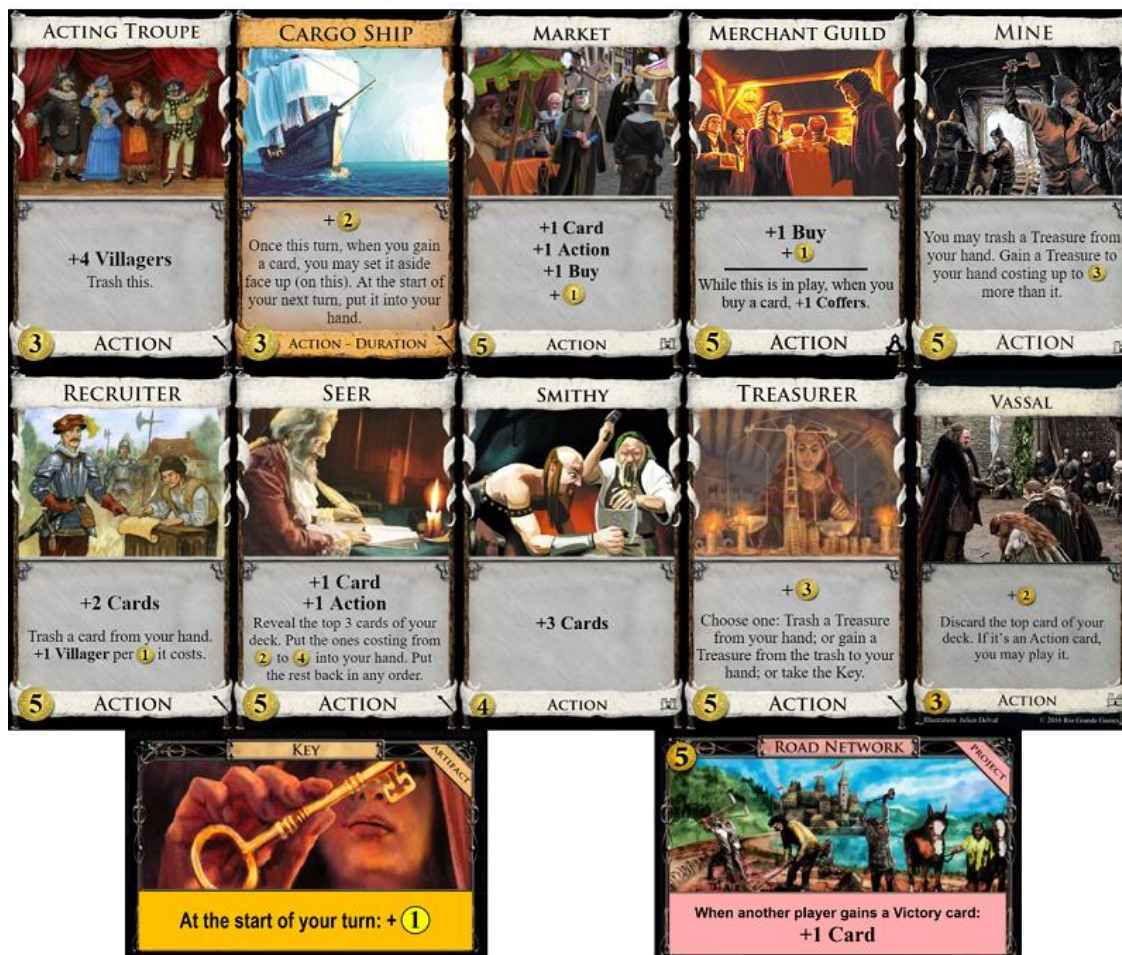


Turns went by quickly as they usually do in a one-on-one game, although as you gain more coins to spend, the thought factor increases. Does a card you already have in your deck need a pairing for better outcomes? Will the pairing occur if the deck is increasing in size. Should you trash a card (remove from your hand)?

This is an interesting scenario. I have to say that when I faced a dilemma mid game, I blurted, "This is no bargain!"

Later in the game, I also cooed, "Oooo. This is a bargain." In the end, Dan's deck drove the better bargain by a victory card or two. Another close game, as most are.

## It Takes a Villager



Dan compiled the images of the cards. As you can see, some feature artwork other than the original imagery.

## It Takes a Villager

A lot of high-cost cards in this scenario make this a money game. Plus, the Kingdom cards don't have a lot of "+ Action" cards -- which means play another card.

The counterweight is the Acting Troupe card that gains you +4 Villagers -- each villager is the equivalent of a +1 Action.

Why is this important? Say you play the Smithy and draw three cards. If you don't have any villagers, that's the end of your action phase, even if you draw three action cards. But if you have villagers from a previous turn, you could spend one to get +1 action and play an action card.

See what I mean about card pairings?

I must admit I played a dumb game by forgetting about using the Village People on more than one hand and not paying attention to some card options during other hands. It usually came with the equivalent of "Doh!" Only, I also admit I didn't say "Doh!"

The game wasn't even close...

Win or lose, I still find this a clever game.



# Cold Shower: *Command Decision* Operation Typhoon 1941

by Russ Lockwood

Newly minted Major von Lockwood, fresh from his Iron-Cross worthy performance in Operation Ouzo down in Greece (see the 6/26/2022 AAR), arrived at the headquarters of the 86th Motorized Rifle Regiment somewhere west of Moscow.

*The battlefield (looking south) prior to Soviet set up. Germans just entering from right. Gray road is the main road. Almost all terrain beyond the RR line (top edge of photo) was dry, but between RR and mid-photo stream was muck and mire.*

The view from the car proved as disappointing as the road network. The dreary autumn weather cast a gloom over a desolate countryside comprised of mud and wilderness. He already missed the sun of Athens.

His driver, Feldwebel Hans Hohemann, alit from the driver's seat and opened the door for him. Ordinarily, he'd do it himself, but for first impressions, clever Hans figured out that an initial formal approach worked best.

The guards straightened to attention, eyes staring off into the distance, as he approached. The door to the ramshackle house opened before him. Inside, a soldaten braced to attention, let him pass, and closed the door behind him in one smooth motion.

As he moved deeper into the house, the interior proved immaculate. Headquarters staff criss-crossed the hallways amidst the cacophony of phone and radio conversations. Von Lockwood considered that his initial opinion may have been hasty.

*The long road ahead for the detachment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer.*

As he unbuttoned his great coat, a Leutnant rose and locked to attention. The soldaten at the door helped von Lockwood shrug out of the coat and took his gloves and cap as well.

Von Lockwood saluted and handed orders to the Leutnant. "Major von Lockwood reporting. I am here to see Colonel Jentzen."





"Yes, sir. This way, sir." The Leutnant led him deeper into the house, turned at an opening, and walked up a flight of stairs. At the top landing, he rapped twice on the door opposite before opening it. He paused at the threshold and announced von Lockwood.

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Btn, 86th Motorized Rifle Regiment await their turn to enter the battle.*

"Come," Jentzen replied, a paper in his hand and his eyes searching a map.

With a nod to the Leutnant, Von Lockwood entered, stood two paces away from the desk, and saluted. "Major von Lockwood reporting."

The Colonel glanced up, waved a salute, and put the paper down. "I swear every village has the same unpronounceable name. And we have to take every damn one until we get to the one we can pronounce -- Moscow."

## Operation Typhoon

Host and GM Marc had set up a three-player *Command Decision* scenario pitting a reinforced battalion of German motorized troops against the entire Soviet army. Wait...I mean it just looked like the entire Soviet army was against me. Every enemy platoon was either snug in foxholes or buildings. There was infantry as far as the eye could see, and that was pretty far despite the line-of-sight blocking woods, rolling rises, and wheat fields.

An unfordable stream on the left flank squeezed the frontage. Worse, the lowlands were muck and mire except on the roads, mandating a 20% chance of bogging down if vehicles strayed from the one main road, one minor road, and one railroad track. At least on the higher elevation right flank, I wouldn't suffer any bog-down rolls among the woods, but wheeled vehicles, including halftracks, only had a quarter move through the trees.

The German task was simple: grab three of four objectives: a crossroads, a bridge on the main road, a hill, and an exit point.

## A Near-Fatal Thought

So, it occurred to me that being outnumbered may not be such a bad situation. This is 1941. Only weather and logistics woes stopped the Germans. What's needed here a bold stroke, not the set-piece deployment you normally use (and is rewarded) in such a situation. Time to put the blitz back in Blitzkrieg.

After all, I'm told I get the 10th Panzer Division.

Er....not as such.

## German Forces

I looked around. Wow, not much at start: The promised 10th Panzer forces consisted of one engineering company with four combat engineer platoons (one command, one heavy weapons, and two engineers) and four halftrack transports armed with MGs; a PzJager I company with two platoons of vehicles; two off-board 105mm howitzer batteries; and a regimental HQ company. A Stuka could be called in (die roll).

For reinforcements, I could count on three companies of motorized infantry (one command, one heavy weapons, and two regular soldaten stands per company); the HQ platoon; an on-board 105mm howitzer battery; an AT gun company; and one infantry gun platoon.





What? No tanks? Just a couple of Panzerjager platoons?

Überkickengepicken! You know, Frederick the Great used to use that exact word whenever outnumbered and his cavalry were somewhere else. Of course it's true. You just read it off the internet.

## Soviet Forces

The Soviets presented at least 230 infantry and MG platoons, some with HMGs; a 120mm mortar; a few Anti-Tank guns, a regimental HQ company, and a T-26 tank company of three platoons. Well, maybe it was more like 30 ground pounder platoons.

Everyone was dug in. Even the Commie commander and the horse he rode in on were dug in. You needed an infantry stand to get within two inches of an enemy stand to spot it, or, a halftrack or armored vehicle stand to touch (close assault) an enemy to spot it. Stands that move are spotted if within a certain distance.

You can't shoot what you can't spot. The German are on the attack, so the onus on getting up close and personal is on me.

*Dan (left) and Rich set up the Soviets in entrenchments.*



## A Second Near-Fatal Thought

It's basically a 1:2 attack on a narrow front with hidden enemy. Wunderbar!

But these can't all be good Soviet troops. I'm veterans. I figure the Commies should be at least one morale level down, and likely many units would be two levels down. They should also be just as green when firing. Right?

## A Third Near-Fatal Thought

The bridge on the main road was a key objective to continue the attack towards Moscow. Obviously, I had to use it, the parallel secondary road, and the parallel railroad. If not, and I had to go cross-country, it would take half the game to reach the other side of the table even if no Soviet troops were on the table and all my troops moved out double time.

And I've seen the clever umpire put dummy troops on the table that delay advances. Some of these Commies, especially those nearest to the start line, have to be dummies. It's in the little red book *Commies for Dummies*. Many of the infantry on my right flank in the woods and out of the muck and mire are probably dummy troops.

Right?

## The Sitz in the Blitz

I moved out with the pitiful 10th Panzer engineers up the main road to the collective farm and had them hop out and attack. The opportunity fire took out one of my lads, but my fire took out both the Soviet platoons in the one building, but failed to make a mark on the other platoon in the other building. The Panzerjagers moved up for a shot, but missed. The Soviets made all their morale rolls.



Yet something was starting to go wrong from the outset. The Soviets didn't run. They may have hugged the ground of their earthen emplacements a tad more, but they stayed put.

Worse, both my veteran units failed their morale rolls (a d10 roll of 9 will do that to "oh veterans my veterans," and I rolled a pair of nines)! Acht! Nein. Neun und doppleneun!

*Q: Why didn't the Germans advance down the road?*

*A: They were pinned to a dead chicken.*

Then the Soviet artillery rained down on my stalled parade. Poof went a halftrack platoon. Poof-Poof went an open-topped Panzerjager platoon.

I'm already behind schedule and it's just the start of the great attack. I looked sideways at the northern road on my left flank. If Commies came screaming down that road right now, it's either a prisoner cage or a grave for me.

*End of Turn 2. Looks a lot like the end of turn 1 due to pin results.*

Fortunately, nothing arrived.

Why fortunately? Because while I was able to unpin my engineering company, my Panzerjager platoon remained terrified and stuck in place. Another artillery attack caused it to flee westward to the safety of the woods. My engineering company got lucky and suffered no hits.

## The Blitzkrieg Begins

I received a 105mm artillery platoon, which I placed on the lone hill to my flank. It couldn't see much, but it could fire if called in. Unfortunately, my commanders saw very little while wallowing in the muck and mire and its fire did even less. Soviet artillery, including a big 120mm mortar, chased away its gunners. The engineering company continued to be pounded, but Soviet shells only picked off one platoon.





I sent two halftracks into the fields and over a slight ridgerise to attack dug-in Soviet infantry. The third halftrack and the new company command stand headed to the last block of houses in the collective farm, supported by the heavy weapons platoon and the remaining Panzerjager.

*And then the Soviet artillery rain came. We slaughtered the Soviets holding one building of the collective farm (bottom left of photo), but the other Soviet platoon (top middle) held out.*



The halftracks braved the curtain of opportunity fire without a scratch and gunned down two of the defending platoons. Finally, some traction here.

Alas, the platoon in the collective farm held out again. Somebody became a Hero of the Soviet Union in there!

### ***A Command Decision Understanding***

Being hebetudinous (you're welcome for the word of the day), Marc was at pains to drill through my head that morale and quality were two different numbers. I always thought they were the same, so veterans were 9s, regulars were 8s, trained conscripts were 7s, and so on.

Not so. These were newbie Commies with few skills but heightened morale. So, they shot like Trained, but used Veteran morale (in my way of thinking). I couldn't understand why they kept missing shooting, but why they kept making morale.

It's enough to make you cry. Oh, not me crying. It was Marc who was crying from banging his head on the table in frustration trying to get that concept across to me.

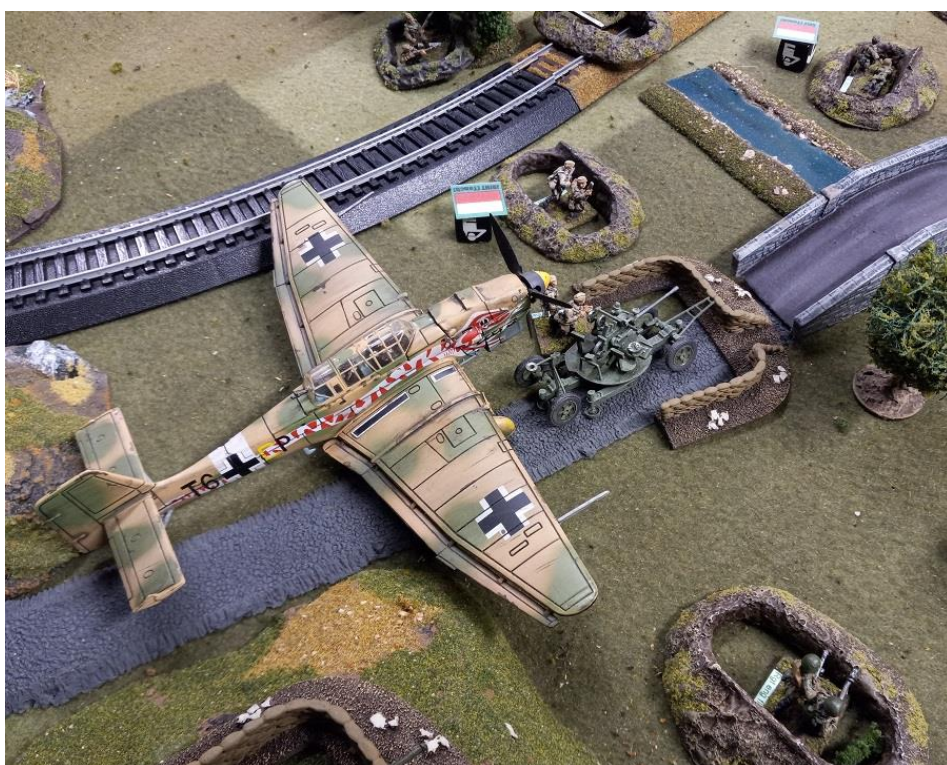
Well, now I get it in 20-20 hindsight...

*Reinhard von Thofen tries to sneak up on the AA/AT gun, but Ivan was better.*

### **Stuka On The Prowl**

About this time, Marc prodded me about calling in (die roll) the Stuka. As the d10 bounced to a stop, it rolled the magic number and in came Reinhard von Thofen, who brought his DAK JU-87D with him. Alas, I had no commander with a line of sight to anything, so von Thofen went on a hunt and pounced on the 120mm mortar. Alas, his aim wavered and the bombs and strafing runs missed.

What I did learn was that a Stuka dive bombing triggered morale checks within a foot of the





aiming point (or the impact point, I forget).

Oh-ho!

Boo-hoo! Hardly anything was near that point, but I tucked that nugget away for another drop.

That got me to thinking why plastering a 2-inch by 2-inch area with 105mm barrages does nothing outside the blast radius, but a dive bombing attack does. A Stuka attack must represent a squadron (nine planes) screaming down from the sky and heaven knows where it will drop the bombs.

So, the next time I called in von Thofen, I had it aim for the AT gun on the main road with lots of infantry around it. Whattaya know, the AT gun is also an AA gun and it shot off part of the Stuka's tail and chased it away without dropping any bombs.

*End of Turn 4. Along came the 86th.*

### **German Reinforcements Arrive**

The Soviets stayed in their entrenchments. I don't think a single platoon moved. Every platoon I hit either died or stayed intact.

Well, I wasn't about to send trucks down the main road with all that Soviet artillery, so I sent them up onto the rising ground and into the woods. The landsers disembarked, but it would take next turn to organize them into some sort of firing line.



### **Back In Halftrack Country**

My two engineering halftracks, fresh from overrunning two Soviet platoons last turn, went after a MG platoon and NKVD platoon. The third half track tried for force its way down the road. Once again, they braved artillery and opportunity fire.

*Marc (right) keeps an eye on Rich's defense. My halftracks (left edge) crest the rising ridge and deal out death and destruction to Soviet infantry.*





The road halftrack took so much fire, it turned about and fled back into the high wheat fields of the collective farm. The other two evaded death and overran the MG, but only sent the NKVD fleeing into the woods.

I snuck my heavy weapons engineers into the collective farm building closest to one end of the crossroads and then advanced it next to the slight rising ridge.

The platoon in the other building of the collective farm held out again despite my best firing efforts. As I do the numbers in my head, it's about an 80% chance of passing morale.

## **Only You Can Cause Forest Fires**

I advanced my infantry through the woods to the only platoon I could see. Opportunity fire caused one of my platoons to retreat, but concentrated fire from the other two eliminated Smokey the Commie Bear.

*End of Turn 5.*

## **And That's Where We Called It**

That was the end of Turn 5, or one-third of the way through the scenario. I've barely made a dent in the

Soviet line. Then again, I was expecting green troops to melt away. I only realized they were veterans after a bit, albeit conscript-level shooting veterans. At least I made progress near the stream overrunning a few platoons. Much depends on the push through the woods and the renewed attack with minimal reinforcements along the main road.

I do need to get my commanders in better locations for spotting for artillery. I'm not sure where -- the Soviets hold the high ground.

I'm also not sure how long Soviet "luck" in doing damage -- make that not doing damage -- will last.

Perhaps we can finish the game next month, or, more likely, Marc will need his table for something else. In any case, thanks Marc for hosting an entertaining challenge of a scenario.



## **Abington Wargame Flea Market: March 19, 2023**

*by Alex*

A bunch of us have talked about selling off old figures, games and game projects. Unfortunately, the best ways are pretty time-intensive or take a significant cut of the profits, and involve the mail which has become prohibitively expensive for many smaller items. Convention flea markets involve both time and money.

I have secured permission to use some hall space at a church in Abington on Sunday, March 19th, 12 noon until 6pm (sale times would be 1pm to 5pm to allow setup and cleanup).

The address is 1501 Huntingdon Rd., Abington, PA 19001

A donation of \$10 for 4 feet [a half table] and \$20 for a full 8-foot table will be asked to defray the cost of utilities, cleanup, etc. for the church. A donation of \$5 will be asked of those who just want to check things out but not sell anything.

Light refreshments will be available for sale.



## Books I've Read

by Russ Lockwood

**Rome to the Po River: The 362nd Infantry Division 1944-45.** by Heinz Greiner. Translated by Linden Lyons. Hardback (6.2x9.3 inches). 198 pages. 2023 reprint of 1968 book.

Subtitle: *Die Wehrmacht im Kampf*

Another fascinating reprint of the German side of WWII, this one by the General of the 362nd Division in Italy from the Anzio landings to war's end. Although Allied air force attacks are mostly glossed over save for oft-repeated commentary about planes shooting up everything during the day, he often comments on US artillery, starting with the observation that US artillery attacks cost him 25 casualties (half KIA) per day while doing nothing but holding a defensive line at Anzio (p11).

During the Feb 29, 1944 counterattack against the beachhead, his own artillery, which he also praises quite often during the entire book, only launches a 10-minute barrage (p17). The I Battalion of the 955th Regiment did well, but an uncleared minefield hinders the II Battalion's advance. When a US shell struck the II Bttn command post and killed all within, the attack went no further. Mud soon bogs everything down. Overall losses to his division were 30% (p21), including 50 who drowned (p21), from about 1,500 men (p22). The details from his perspective, including sketch maps, are quite revealing.

The continuing attrition was bad, with his regiments' battalions down to about 120 men each (p54). As the Germans retreated, he formed ad-hoc counterattack *kampfgruppen* of about 80 men made up of artillery gunners, telephone operators, ammo carriers, drivers, and other stragglers (p59) in an effort to check Allied advances.

By June, his 956th Regt *kampfgruppe* was 100 men and 5 LMGs -- until the retreat brought him to an ordnance depot and it picked up 17 HMGs and ammo (p86). It got worse as the division retreated past Rome and absorbed the 1059 and 1060 Regts from the disbanded 92nd Division. By Oct 2, the 1059/I Bttn was down to 64 men and 1059/II Bttn down to 29 men and no MGs, the 1060/I Bttn was down to 120 men and 1060/II Bttn down to 70 men, and the 956/II Bttn was down to 70 men (p118-119). And if you can believe it, manpower levels fell even more. By Oct 19, one Bttn was down to 14 troops (p136). Greiner departed division command on Jan 10, 1945 to attend a command course for prospective corp commanders.

The book contains 24 sketch maps of battles and marches of the 362nd. Only the major terrain is on the map and the scales vary depending on whether it's a march or a tactical battle.

Those US Army 'Green books' offer considerable detail, but it's always good to see things from the other commanders' perspective. Numbers were not always available to him, and he concentrated on the tactical situation of the 362nd. I wish this had more numerical and terrain information, but remember that this is from a division commander's viewpoint -- and memory as he did not have copies of the division's war diary. Page 93 contains an OOB for the division down to battalion level, but you'll need to extrapolate numbers if you can from the text.

Yet, the overall impressions about the ability to hold ground and even launch counterattacks with minimal numbers of organized troops will make you think twice about WWII rules for the tabletop.

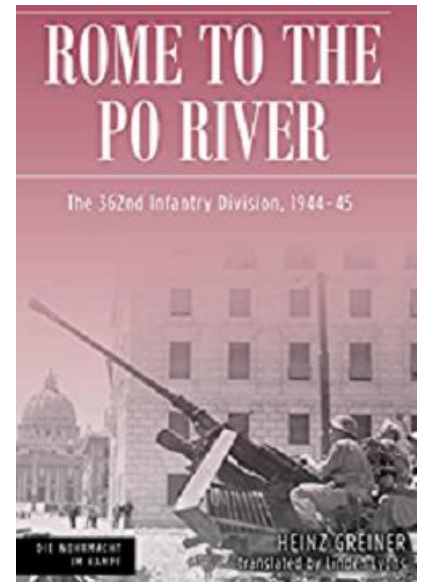
Enjoyed it.

**Tac Recon: US Air Force Tactical Reconnaissance.** by Terry M. Mays. Hardback (7.4x10.3 inches). 188 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Combat Operations from WWI to the Gulf War*

Here's a topic that often gets shortchanged, if not overlooked, in most histories of military operations: Tactical Reconnaissance in support of ground operations. Fighters and bombers get all the coverage, but recon helps show what needs to be hit and how effective a strike might be.

This survey of aerial recon missions runs from WWI through the Gulf War. Much of the information comes from interviews the author did with the pilots of such missions -- at least the modern ones. The rest are plucked from the archives.





Most center on the photography of various sites, including enemy positions, bridges, defensive terrain, and anything else that would offer tactical information to US ground forces.

The best chapters are those covering the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Besides the oft hair-raising first-person accounts, they offer considerable analysis of what was required of pilots and why it would be important.

The WWI chapter was a close third, including some confirmations of events recounted in *A Pair of Aces and a Trey*. I guess both authors used the same sources.

The book contains 90 black and white photos, eight black and white maps, one black and white illustration, and one black and white chart.

We don't do much recon for the tabletop, although if you read this AAR often enough, some GMs offer Play by E-mail spy and recon set-ups before the tabletop game. It's always a nice touch.

Enjoyed it.

**A Pair of Aces and a Trey.** by Alan L. Roesler. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 214 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *1st Lieutenants William P. Erwin, Arthur E. Easterbrook, and Byrne V. Baucom -- America's Top-Scoring World War I Observation Pilot and Observers*

An 'ace' is a pilot who shot down five enemy aircraft. Fighter pilots, also referred to as pursuit pilots in WWI, had the most opportunity, but imagine my amazement to discover a two-seater observation plane pilot -- Bill Erwin -- scored eight aerial victories. His observer, Arthur Easterbrook, scored five kills from the back seat, and his other observer, Byrne Baucom, scored three confirmed kills from the back seat.

They did this in the final months of the war: July to November 1918. Their personalities show considerable daring during the war. Erwin flew twice as many hours as any other pilot in his unit and proved very aggressive against aerial and ground targets. These were not just photo recon missions, but included ground strafing and maintaining contact with lead elements of US infantry divisions -- missions that flew in the face of German MG anti-aircraft fire.

While WWI exploits fill half the book, their post-war careers are discussed in the other half, with Erwin and Baucom starting and performing various aerial ventures while Easterbrook stayed in what would eventually become the US Air Force.

The book contains 69 black and white photos, seven black and white maps, and five color WWI aircraft profiles.

The day-by-day details offer an enlightening, if sometimes repetitious, look at what observation planes did in WWI and what these three did in particular.

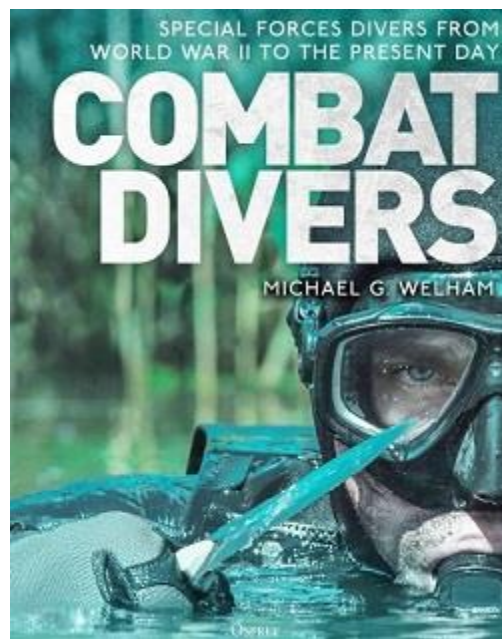
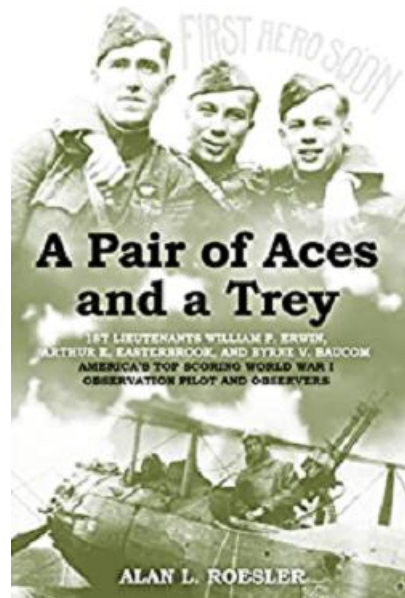
Enjoyed it.

**Combat Divers: An Illustrated History of Special Forces Divers.** by Michael G. Welham. Hardback (Horizontal: 7.8x9.8 inches). 304 pages. 2023.

A cornucopia of organizational and equipment details discuss the training and combat operations of the modern combat diver, or 'frogman' in WWII lingo.

The first few chapters chronicle Italian, US, and British WWII operations via mini-sub, frogmen, and 'chariot' riders. Oddly enough, no Soviet or German exploits are mentioned, even though there's a comprehensive book *Soviet Combat Divers: In World War II* (see my review in the 2/21/2020 AAR or up on hmg.org).

Modern special forces from US, NATO, Australia, and Russia get a good overview, including a whole chapter on Scandinavia ops. Animals, female military divers, and training get entire chapters.





Of note is a photo showing the placement of an explosive device on a pipeline (p210) -- 2022 Nord Stream pipeline explosion ring a bell? However, nothing on China...

The book contains 261 color photos, 24 black and white photos, three black and white illustrations and three color illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

**The Shogun's Soldiers: Volume 1 - Century of the Soldier No. 88.** by Michael Fredholm von Essen. Softcover (7.1x9.75 inches). 347 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The Daily Life of Samurai and Soldiers in Edo Period Japan 1603-1721*

Another volume in the *Century* series impresses me with an abundance of detail. Granted, I'm not as well read about Renaissance-era samurai as I am in other periods, but this book offers more than the subtitle indicates.

Sure, you get details of samurai and ashigaru uniforms, armor, weaponry, training, and tactics, but you also get the same level of information about civilian life. Culture, customs, dress, and commercial pursuits -- it's all here. Don't forget a bit about weather, typical prices, and a marvelous overview of the city of Edo and its various neighborhoods.

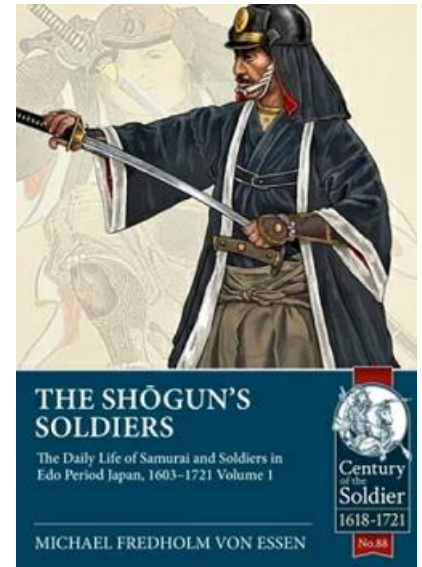
It does not contain any military campaigns or battles. The closest thing to warfare is how a special police unit can capture a top-end samurai swordsmen using ladders and some special polearms.

Volume 2 will cover social interactions between civilian and samurai, including the decline of martial prowess and ultimate integration of samurai into civilian society. Can't wait.

The book contains 161 black and white illustrations, four black and white photos, 97 color photos, 17 color illustrations, eight color samurai uniform illustrations, one black and white map, and two color maps.

If you ever wanted the military and civilian side of samurai life, here's your book. This is also a great reference volume for anyone considering doing a samurai RPG.

Enjoyed it.



**Leading Like the Swamp Fox.** by Kevin Dougherty and Steven D. Smith. Hardback (6.3x9.2 inches). 240 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The Leadership Lessons of Francis Marion*

During the American Revolution, Francis "The Swamp Fox" Marion led a guerilla force in and around the low country of South Carolina, engaging in small-unit raids and skirmishes as well as participating in some of the larger 'named' battles in the state.

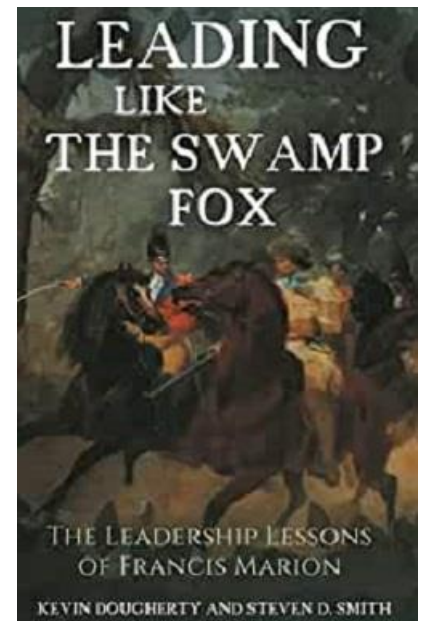
Dougherty is the Assistant Commandant for Leadership program at The Citadel, essentially a four-year college for military officers in SC. In the book, after an overview of the AWI in SC, he examines eight main aspects of leadership, plus a variety of subsets for each aspect, pairing the idea to one of Marion's actions.

As history buffs, we revel in the quantitative information for our periods of interest. Yet to understand a period's battles and campaigns, we need to know the "why" just as much. This book uses covers the "why."

The book contains 16 color photos (mostly portraits) and two black and white illustrations.

Inspiring analysis paired with clear prose make this an interesting book for the officer-to-be as well as AWI history buffs. I'm not sure how much will translate to tabletop games, but I can see players at large multi-player, multi-table wargames benefitting from some of the advice.

Enjoyed it.





**The Soviet High Commands: Peace and War 1941-1992.** by Richard W. Harrison. Hardback (6.3x9.25 inches). 452 pages. 2022.

A history of the creation and operation of five Soviet High Commands in WWII that sat in between Stavka and several Fronts -- essentially what we would call an Army Group. Four were created in 1941-1942 and a fifth in the Far East in 1945. The post-WWII commands receive only limited discussion (p353-380).

In theory, High Commands were responsible for coordinating Fronts, but in practice, they were often bypassed or marginalized by Stavka. The High Commands also added another layer of approval for attacks and withdrawals, as no commander was prepared to act without orders from Stavka, and by extension, Stalin. Indeed, many Front and High Command commanders and chiefs of staffs were arrested in the early 1941 days of German Blitzkrieg and executed for failures on the battlefield.

The main chapters cover each High Command's activities against the German attack. From lack of initiative to incompetent handling of planning and operations, you get an in-depth look at the Soviet command structure. It's absolutely fascinating, primarily because you know what's coming and can see how they reacted -- while you have wonderful 20-20 hindsight.

Did I mention the arrests and executions? Try playing a wargame when failure results in a hanging or bullet or however the Soviets executed high-ranking officers. Hmmm. Maybe just melt your lead or plastic leader figure in front of you? The author excels at describing the paper trails or lack thereof.

The book contains 22 black and white photos, mostly head shots of the commanders, plus seven black and white maps. I realize that this is not a tactical recap of the armies' movements and battles, but I'd prefer a lot more small-scale maps offering arrows of attack and defense around obscure (to me) Russian towns than the few large-scale maps.

Decades ago, I played in a Play-By-Mail game of *Europa Fire in the East* as a Soviet "Front" commander in charge of about 20 front-line hexes in the Valdai Hills. I shuffled my units across the hex grid, writing down the starting hex, movement, and final hex of each unit. Other players across the entire Eastern Front did the same, as did the German players. I submitted my moves to Stavka and got back the results of combats, German moves, and anything else I could see in my area of responsibility.

It was great at first, in part because I didn't know what was going on with other Fronts -- just like the wartime Soviet command structure. Alas, as the turns went by, Stavka's fingers increasingly poked and then scooped at my pie, moving my own units while taking some units for other fronts -- just like the wartime Soviet command structure.

I understand the motivation, but what's the point of me as a game commander doing anything if it's all going to be rearranged? And that's how the High Command commanders must have felt.

Enjoyed it.

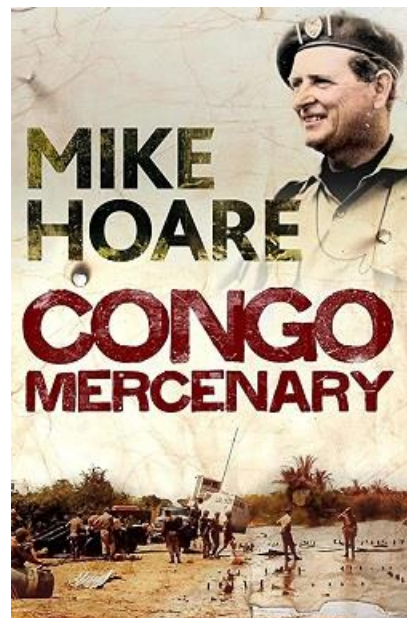
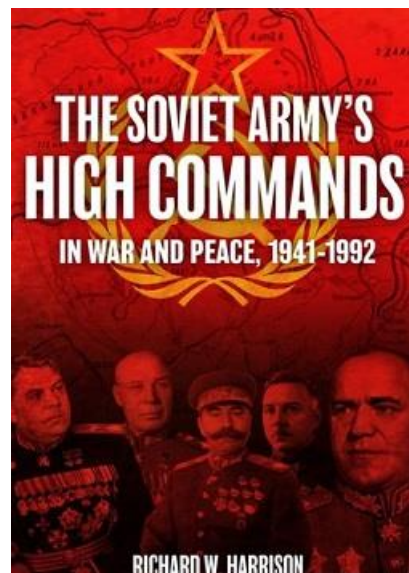
**Congo Mercenary.** by Mike Hoare. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 318 pages. 2022 reprint of 2017 reprint of 2008 reprint of 1967 book.

The author recruited and led a mercenary group -- 5 Commando -- from 1964 to 1965 against murderous and communist-backed rebels in the Congo shortly after the country's independence from Belgium. This deals with the fast-paced military operations through the bush and jungles of the Congo. That the Congolese leadership later became just as murderous after he helped secure the country is a different book.

Ultimately, 5 Commando grew from less than 100 men to about battalion size. The initial raid with 30 or so mercenaries against rebels holding hostages would make for a good scenario with a small, relatively well-trained force against a large, untrained force.

Brutality existed on both sides, with execution of hostages and prisoners at an alarming rate. 5 Commando thwarted many an execution by speed and audacity -- although occasionally getting caught in ambushes. The planning and tactical accomplishments seem a little too pat, but success triumphs over skepticism in a memoir.

The book contains seven operational maps, two facsimiles of letters





and 20 black and white photos.

The ongoing descriptions of running a mercenary unit proves fascinating and you can pull a number of scenarios from the pages (although you'll need to extrapolate the terrain and rebel forces). The gritty details leave nothing to the imagination.

Enjoyed it.

**The Meuse Heights to the Armistice: Meuse-Argonne 1918.** by Maarten Otte. Softcover (5.5x8.5 inches). 264 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *Battleground: The Americans 1918*

Subtitle: *The American Expeditionary Forces in the Great War*

Half this book (p1 - p109) consists of an overview of the lead-up to US entry into WWI and the American efforts in WWI, with a concentration on the divisions that participated in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The other half of the book consists of four car tours that bring you to the places mentioned in the battle descriptions.

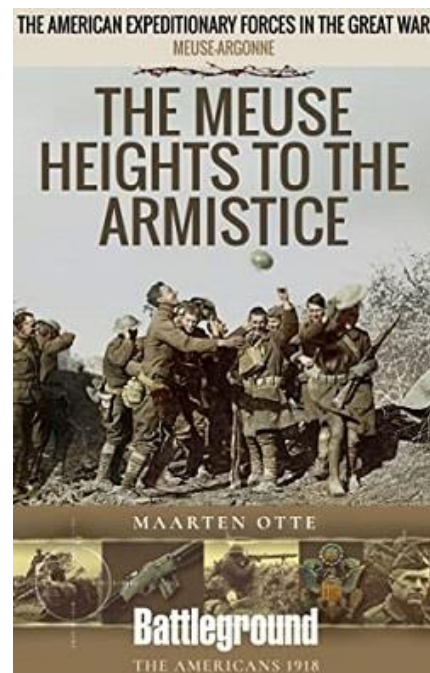
The battles from Sep 26, 1918 to Nov 11, 1918 receive a nice encapsulation on a day-by-day, unit by unit basis. Thankfully, a goodly number of period and modern maps (most with scales) highlight the terrain and villages, so you can follow along with the American advances.

The book contains 244 black and white photos, two black and white illustrations, and 28 black and white maps.

The car tours make me want to book a flight, as I am astounded that WWI German bunkers and other constructions still exist. I guess I shouldn't be -- I visited the area around Ypres and Hill 60 back in 1998 and found preserved and reconstructed trenches in a park, but these constructions don't seem to be part of anything that organized, although trails exist in and around the bunkers.

According to the back cover, Pen & Sword Books published 160 of these *Battleground* history/travel books. Nice addition to the series.

Enjoyed it.



**Blood & Broken Glass: Northern Ireland's Violent Countdown Towards Peace 1991-93.** by Ken Wharton. Hardback (6.3x9.6 inches). 350 pages. 2019.

From what I can deduce, this is part of an 11-volume series that chronicles every one of the 1,400 deaths in Northern Ireland caused by Irish Republican Army and related terrorist attacks.

As a former soldier, the author does not pretend to offer a balanced view of The Troubles. Indeed, his vitriol at the barbarity of it all comes through on every page with every bombing, shooting, and mortar attack. Newspaper accounts, personal interviews, and official records provide every gory detail.

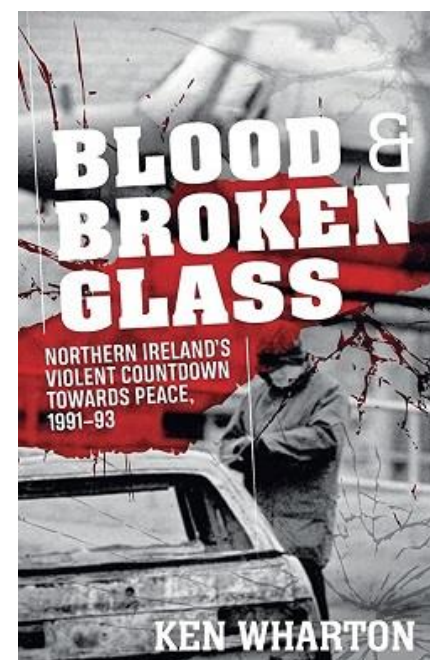
The British called their military efforts in Northern Ireland Operation Banner. Success and failure rose and fell with the number of terrorist attacks.

The book contains 20 black and white photos of some of the victims and the places of attacks.

This is tough reading, but shows what can happen when a minority of people remain determined to conduct terrorist attacks in pursuit of a political purpose. Soldiers, paramilitary, civilians, and terrorists die, get maimed, or suffer psychological trauma within the pages.

Alas, the attacks become repetitious and so does the reading. I admit I only read the first year, 1991, of the three. I spot scanned 1992 and 1993 and it all seemed the same gruesome rinse and repeat.

The book, and presumably the series, remembers the losses during the terrorist attacks. I can't say I enjoyed reading the third of the book, but even that performs a valuable service in explaining how 20+ years of terrorist attacks resulted in a trail of bodies, woe, and unmet expectations.





**New Pompeii: Pulled Through Time.** by Daniel Godfrey. Paperback (4.2x6.8 inches). 456 pages. 2017.

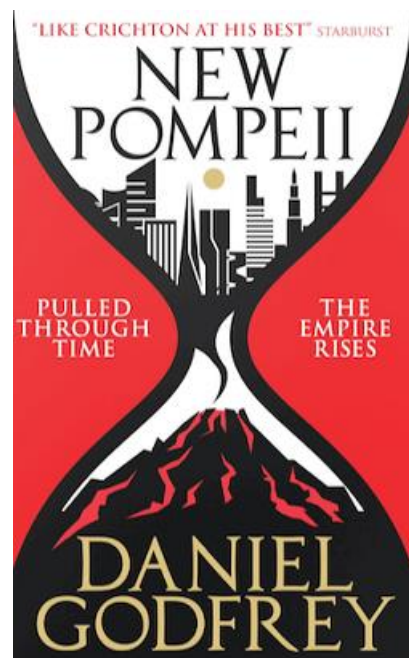
Somebody was inspired by *WestWorld*, or its offshoot *RomeWorld*. A company builds a replica of Pompeii, but instead of populating it with advanced robots, the company uses a time-travel device to teleport original Romans that had died in the ashes through time. The result: An authentic Roman city with authentic Romans.

Enter our hero, PhD candidate historian Nick Houghton who is to replace the original historian and look for historical anomalies while hobnobbing with the ancient Romans. Of course, something goes wrong with someone who seems to be a ghost slowly materializing in various places. Then the Romans get suspicious that they can't travel beyond the city limits...

The set up and explanation on how you build a Roman city is absolutely marvelous. The real reason this Roman test run was created requires careful reading and the outcome at the end of the book required me to read and re-read it several times to get the gist of it. I kept feeling I missed something and would go back...and back again. The buildup was great. The payoff seemed equal parts hard to fathom and meh.

It was only in the final pages of acknowledgements that I found a "thanks" to his agent for helping him to "nail the ending" (p455). Ah-ha. Er, maybe a little less nailed and a little more band-aided.

The run-up was still great. Enjoyed it.



**Jedburghs: Set Europe Ablaze 2.** by Richard Camp. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 227 pages. 2022.

This historical novel is the sequel to *Commandos* (see the review in the 6/29/2021 AAR or up on hmgs.org). US Marine Capt. Jim Cain is sent into occupied France in September 1942 to help organize the French resistance and conduct sabotage attacks. The Germans have other ideas.

This follows previous format of training in the first half of the book and mission in the second half as the first book. Likewise, the same choppiness of reading occurs as most chapters contain multiple subchapters. It's as if the author banged out a couple hundred words when he had a spare 10 minutes.

I still find the training to be the star of the show, although the combat descriptions offer intensity and interest, even if somewhat a tad predictable.

One nice and unpredictable touch was using French militia (collaborators) as an anti-partisan unit. Although sketchily defined, it also served to move a plot point. Nicely done.

That said, I'm reminded of a James Cagney movie that in itself seems a reference to *Operation Jericho* in 1944 (see the book review in the 5/27/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org). It seems an inspiration for this book's plot in any case.

A couple squiggles: Sept. 1942 is the third year of the war (Sep 1939 to 1940 is one year, to 1941 is two years, and to 1942 is three years), not "four years of wartime neglect" (p. viii). The B-24D (p180) is a little quick in time -- the first D model rolled off assembly lines in May 1942, sez the web -- but possible. Ditto with "duct tape" (p184). "Duck" tape was in use for decades sez the web, but I didn't find a specific date other than WWII for the introduction of "Duct" tape. Quibbles, sure, but everything else rang true to my eyes.

If you liked the first book, you're going to like the second book, probably even more than the first book because the writing shows progress. So, what's next for Capt. Cain? He's been transferred back to the Marine Corps in the US. Pacific, anyone?

Enjoyed it.





**Baghdad Blues.** by Paul M Kendel. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 258 pages. 2022.

Sgt. K lost his job as a high school English literature teacher, learned his wife filed for divorce, and discovered his National Guard unit was activated for duty in Iraq. All he needed was a run away dog and a smashed pickup and he'd be in a country western song.

Nonetheless, he toughs out patrols, IEDs, shootouts, and other hostilities in Iraq with a quiet stoicism that masks inner anger, a penchant for quoting lines from books, and discussions about life, religion, purpose, and philosophy with an unemployed Iraqi professor and a US Army psychologist. It's all as surreal as it is depressing to do an almost no-win job against terrorism.

The ending is a bit co-incidental regarding a number of events, including what seems to be a bolted-on made-for-TV movie happy ending. Still, the details inside and outside the Green Zone make for gritty reading. "Enjoyed" isn't exactly the right word, but just as post-WWII fiction offered foxhole-level observations, so this book offers Humvee-window-level observations.



**Lavochkin La-7: Monographs 88.** by Dariusz Paduch. Softcover (8.3x11.7 inches). 80 pages. 2022.

Another fine addition to the Monograph series of aircraft profiles. This one tackles the LA-7, which was an improved LA-5 and also called "Pattern 1944" and "LA-120." Special production started in May 1944 and ultimately 3,977 were produced (p20).

Alas, it suffered teething pains, including engine problems and high temperatures in the cockpit, that were not stamped out until after WWII ended. Indeed, by 1945, the Soviets registered 882 cases of problems, including five crashes, 188 engine failures, and 672 unspecified "stops and loss of combat readiness" (p31).

Still, it was considered comparable to ME-109 and FW-190 fighters up to 5,000m, with a slight advantage in speed and climb (p25).

Other versions include the LA-7UTI two-seater and the LA-7R with a rocket engine installed in the tail.

The booklet contains 122 black and white photos, 36 black and white illustrations, and 10 color aircraft profiles.

If you are into technical details of this aircraft, here's your book. Enjoyed it.



**The Mighty Eighth: Masters of the Air Over Europe 1942-45.** by Donald Nijboer. Hardback (7.8x9.8 inches). 320 pages. 2019.

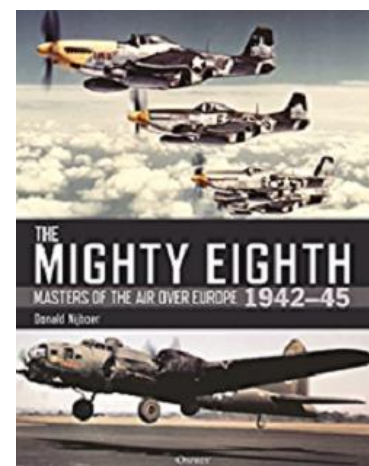
This Osprey book is a compilation of 35 Osprey booklets, condensed to provide an overview of the US 8th Air Force's campaign against Germany in WWII. As such, it is comprehensive in identifying the men and machines, along with training, operations, organization, and so on that you'd expect from such a summary.

One quite interesting stat that seems a bit off: During WWII, the US built 12,371 B-17s, of which about 9,000 flew out of the UK and about "8,300 were destroyed or damaged beyond repair" from enemy action. On average, "crews completed just eight missions before being shot down" (p28). Now, 8,300 out of 9,000 is about a 92% hit rate. I suppose you could patch up only so many bullet and cannon holes before something is unrepairable in a B-17, but 92% seems high.

The book contains 64 black and white photos, 59 color photos, one black and white illustration, 31 color illustrations, eight color maps, nine two-page color action illustrations, and 23 color aircraft profiles.

The book also covers a little bit of the Luftwaffe (p255 to p281). As for the main part, it all reads well as most Ospreys do and you can revel in the cornucopia of imagery that accompanies the text. It's a nice introduction to WWII air warfare over Europe.

Enjoyed it.





**America's Few: Marine Aces of the South Pacific.** by Bill Yenne. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 350 pages. 2019.

This is a compilation book of WWII anecdotes covering US Marine fighter pilots and their dogfights. This seems to mostly use official after action reports and associated unit reports to tell the victorious story of Marine Corps successes in the Pacific. Add in a scouring for interviews in books and magazines plus some dramatic prose and you have the essence of the book.

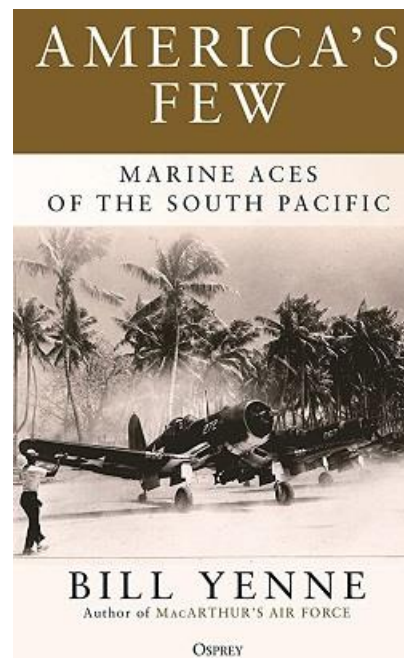
I found it does get a bit repetitious if you sit down and try to read it from cover to cover. I read the first quarter of the book, put it down for a month or so, read the next quarter, put it down for a long time, and then the next quarter. As for the last quarter, I skimmed the combat accounts but did read what happened to some of the pilots in the post-war period.

You won't find any balancing accounts from Japanese pilots or even confirmations of victories. Claringbould books shed considerable light on claims versus reality if you're interested in a more accurate look at the numbers.

The book contains 55 black and white photos, three black and white maps, and five black and white photos of aerial victory forms.

The most famous of the Marine pilots, thanks to a TV show called *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, is Greg 'Pappy' Boyington. This book describes the sometimes tenuous connections of the TV show to reality.

It also consolidates the very real achievements of Marine pilots in the South Pacific. Enjoyed it.

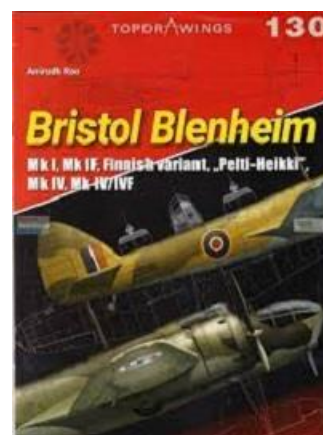


**Bristol Blenheim: TopDrawings 130.** by Anirudh Rao. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 20 pages. 2022.

The number of scale drawings changes, but the format stays pretty much the same. The *TopDrawings* series offers minimal text and maximum scale plans. This had one-quarter page of history (in English and in Polish).

It contains 50 1/72 scale black and white drawings of side, top, bottom, head-on, and tail-on views of the plane with various highlighted subsystems. The two 23.5x15.75-inch pull-out sheets contain 33 black and white drawings, but in 1/48 scale. It also contains eight color profiles.

If you use scale drawings, you probably already know about the *TopDrawings* series. The color profiles offer a quick painting reference for those, like me, who do not use such drawings.



**Fiat G.55 Centauro: TopDrawings 131.** by Anirudh Rao. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 20 pages. 2022.

This booklet follows the usual *TopDrawings* format, with a half page or so of text (in English and in Polish), a multitude of scale drawings, and color profiles.

The text states only 55 G.55 high-altitude interceptors were produced in WWII, but additional ones were built after the war.

The booklet contains seven 1/72 scale black and white drawings, 32 1/48 scale black and white drawings, eight 1/32 scale black and white drawings, one 1/24 scale black and white drawing, three 1/16 scale black and white drawings (of MGs), and 10 color profiles.

The single 27.0x18.75-inch pull-out sheet contains 12 1/32 scale black and white drawings.

As noted before, if you use scale drawings, you probably already know about the *TopDrawings* series. The color profiles offer a quick painting reference for those, like me, who do not use such drawings.





**Lockheed F-104 Starfighter: Kit Build 8.** by Sebastian Piechowiak. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 50 pages. 2022.

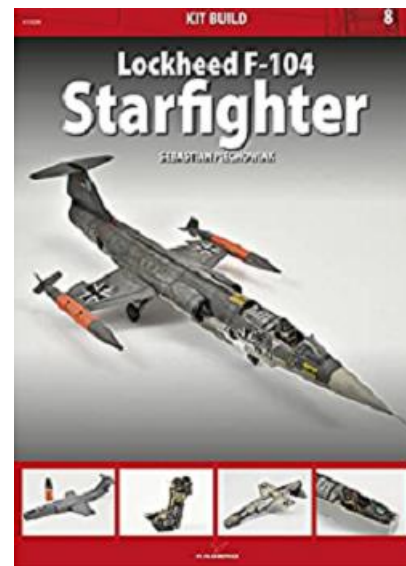
My plastic kit modeling days are long behind me, but I can appreciate the artistry of turning mono-colored parts into museum-quality display aircraft. The text is in English and Polish.

This is for the advanced modeler who thinks nothing of sawing apart the main body to position flaps and open up panels as well as use aftermarket detail kits to embellish subsystems. Two models (one 1/72 scale and one 1/48 scale) were used as well as a number of aftermarket kits.

The booklet contains 58 color photos and one black and white photo for the 1/48 scale model and 69 color photos for the 1/72 scale model. Six color aircraft profiles offer camouflage details.

In some places, you get detailed techniques to duplicate the effect shown in a photo. The instructions for "burning" the engine nozzles on the 1/48 scale kit were excellent. Other aspects seem to miss steps: the instructions for the 'slightly rebuilt' seat (p32) on the 1/48 model assumes you know how to rebuild it using the aftermarket parts. It may be that the aftermarket kit has the instructions. Dunno.

Like I said, I haven't put together a model kit in many a decade, but if you do, and you're advanced enough to use aftermarket kits to customize the basic plastic kit, then *Kit Build* booklets offer inspiration.



**Panzerwaffe on the Battlefield 3: WWII Photobook 23.** by Peter Barnaky. Hardback (Horizontal 11.8x8.5 inches). 110 pages. 2022.

The latest in the series brings together 105 black and white WWII photos -- one per page -- so you can scrutinize every detail of German panzers and other armored vehicles. Includes Pz I to Pz VI; STuG III, Marder II, JagdTiger, and other tank destroyers; half tracks; and armored cars. Many photos are of wrecks gathered in maintenance yards, which I find rather interesting.

Most of the shots are fairly clear. Indeed, some (like the cover photo of a Panther) are Photoshop sharp, while others could use more Photoshop magic to alter the exposure or clean up the blurriness.

All but a half dozen photos come from the publisher's "collection," which could be from anywhere, including retouched public domain photos. Given that some of the photos include US Army soldiers, that may or may not be the case. Peko Publishing is in Hungary and I haven't seen these photos before, so maybe they come from a Hungarian archive. Wherever they come from, you can draw some diorama inspiration if you like to chop up some plastic models.

Enjoyed it.

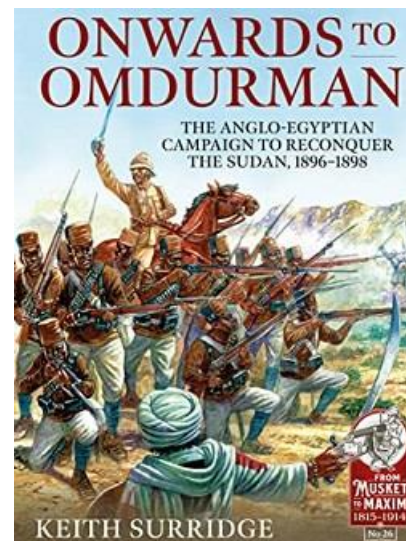


**Onwards to Omdurman: 1896-98 - Musket to Maxim 26.** by Keith Surridge. Softcover (7.2x9.8 inches). 155 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The Anglo-Egyptian Campaign to Reconquer the Sudan 1896-1898*

Although the Kitchener campaign up the Nile River to clean out the Mahdists is well covered by a multitude of books, this particular book quickly gets to the heart of the expedition.

After a succinct background to the situation in Egypt and why Britain decided to mount such an operation, the exploits of the expedition unfold in a series of marches and battles. A thorough examination of the weaponry, organization, uniforms, and leadership of the two opposing armies -- Mahdists on one side and the Anglo-Egyptian Army on the other -- the marches and battles began. British haste did not go to waste in bringing isolated detachments of the Mahdists to battle until the big showdown at Omdurman. Let's not forget the





attention paid to logistics, including building a railroad behind the advance.

The book contains eight black and white photos, 32 black and white illustrations (most from the period), nine color illustrations, and most important of all to us tabletop warriors, 13 black and white maps -- most of them of tactical battles.

You can pull an OOB with rough numbers as well as extensive terrain notes from the text. Put the associated map and your favorite rules set together and Bob's your uncle, you have a scenario.

This is an excellent, one-volume encapsulation of the expedition and various battles. It's also well written. Well done, indeed. *TSATF* anyone?

Enjoyed it.

**The King in the North: Pictish Realms of Fortriu and Ce.** by Gordon Noble and Nicholas Evans. Softcover (7.5x9.7 inches). 209 pages. 2022 reprint of 2019 book.

This is an academic work of eight essays, an intro, and a summary with all the benefits and detriments of academic prose. It delves into Pictish society through extensive analysis of archeological finds in Scotland. The book covers roughly from Roman times through the early medieval era.

The kingdom of Fortriu came about after a successful Battle of Nechtanesmere against the Saxons in 685 AD. Alas, the book neglects to describe the battle. Ce seemed to be later -- 10th and 11th centuries.

The most useful chapter is the examination of hill forts and other fortified settlements. You can follow archeologists' extrapolations about how they were constructed if you seek to make one of your own.

The book contains 38 black and white photos, 11 black and white illustrations (often of multiple objects), 23 black and white maps, 16 color photos, and one color illustration. The aerial shots of the hill forts are the most interesting to the military historian. But military wise, that's about it.

If you're seeking a social history of the Picts, this book is for you. If you're seeking a military history, you'll find little beyond the hill fort chapter.

**Hitler's Air War in Spain: The Rise of the Luftwaffe.** by Norman Ridley. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 214 pages. 2022.

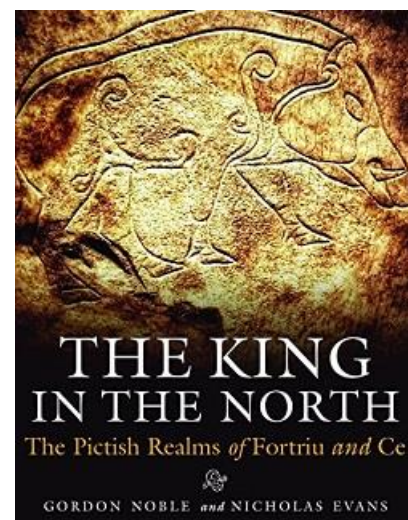
This well-written account of the air war during the Spanish Civil War examines the doctrine, evolution, tactics, and operations of the Republican and Nationalist sides, especially once the influence of the German Condor Legion, Italian air contingent, and Soviet air units began to impact the ground battles.

The deployment of aircraft, pilots, and ground crew provided the Luftwaffe with invaluable combat experience. More importantly, it also created the opportunity to experiment with tactical deployments of fighters and bombers. The fighter arm benefitted with the switch from a three-plane V formation to a four-plane schwarm (finger four in English parlance). Bombers learned to group together in ever larger formations for mutual protection and then with fighter escorts for even more protection. Ground support bombing became more and more refined while strategic bombing, such as it was, became less and less emphasized.

Yet these were lessons learned after a couple years of biplane battles and unescorted penny packets of bombers. Especially interesting was the hodgepodge of aircraft types that were purchased or sent to Spain. Sure the Bf-109, JU-87, and HE-111 battled in the skies, but HE-51s formed the bulk of the Condor fighter arm while HE-46 and JU-52 formed the bomber units.

Of note was the capitalist tendencies of the USSR. The Republican government sold the gold reserves and placed the money in France. The Soviets didn't ship aircraft until the money was in hand...and the USSR charged outrageous markups on aircraft that didn't perform well. Cheeky commies.

Of other note was the idea that terror air raids would break the civilian morale and force the Republican government to capitulate. It never worked. Indeed, civilians that were bombed often took out their frustration on captured prisoners, often executing them in reprisal for bombing runs on cities and towns. Indeed, when a JU-52 hit





the ship Jaime I with a bomb that killed 47, the Spanish sailors executed all their officer prisoners that had tried to join Franco's Nationalists (p20).

The book contains 16 black and white photos bought from Alamy that are of limited interest. It would have been nice to include photos of less well-known aircraft like the HE-46 and HE-51. A map of the country would be nice to include as well.

A couple juxtapositions of "Nationalist" and "Republican" terms mar the text. For example, "Nationalists in Madrid with their heavy Soviet tanks" (p85) should be "Republicans," for the Republican side held Madrid at that time. Another is on page 103 and there may be a few others, but I'm sometimes not exactly sure if it should be switched or not -- just not clear on rare occasions.

Overall, you gain a greater understanding of Luftwaffe operations within the SCW and how air power affected ground power. The emphasis is on the Luftwaffe, but the analysis also includes Soviet, Italian, and Spanish aerial efforts.

Enjoyed it.

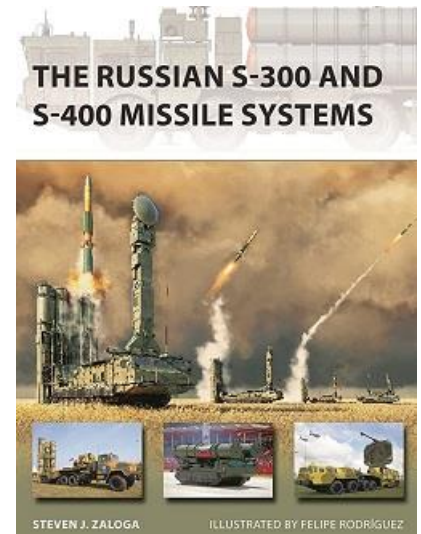
**The Russian S-300 and S-400 Missile Systems: New Vanguard 315.** by Steven J. Zaloga. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 48 pages. 2023.

The S-300 began life in 1969 after an internecine debate within the Soviet military about missile defenses. That it prospered is testament to dogged determination to find a way to stop projected US airpower. The S-400 built upon the progress of the S-300.

Design, development, and deployment are all covered within the booklet in the usual Osprey New Vanguard format.

The booklet contains 40 color photos, four black and white photos, 1 black and white illustration, 1 color illustration, eight color vehicle (launcher) profiles, six color missile profiles, one one-page color action illustration, and one two-page color action illustration.

All the technical details of all their versions, including the export versions, are there, and I admit most of that made my eyes roll back in my head. Sorry, I'm just not an ultramodern missile enthusiast. But if you are, here's your book.



**Mongol Warrior vs European Knight: Combat Men 70.** by Stephen Turnbull. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Eastern Europe 1237-1242*

Turnbull is probably better known as the samurai expert, but Mongols seem to be a second love with a couple of books under his belt and visits to the battlefields listed in this booklet.

The *Combat Men* format is followed, starting with a discussion of the featured warriors and their organization, weapons, armor, and tactics and ending with excellent descriptions of three battles: Liegnitz 1241, Muhi 1241, and Esztergom and Szekesfehervar 1242. The first two were field battles and the last two were sieges.

During this timeframe, the Mongols stretched from, well, Mongolia to Europe. In the context of Eastern Europe, they reached the Adriatic Sea before following the Danube River back across the Balkans to the Black Sea and north. A northern diversionary pincer reached Silesia and Moravia before turning back.

The battle descriptions deliver clear and concise recaps of the strategy and tactics behind deployments and combats. Or, at least as well as the surviving documentation allows. It's great to see a bibliography packed with primary sources along with the secondary sources. That makes the analysis all the more sharper as Turnbull weighs one history against the others. Excellent analysis.

The book contains 41 color photos, six black and white illustrations, five color illustrations, four color uniform profiles, two two-page color action illustrations, and four color maps.

A comment on the maps: They could be better at providing terrain such as ridges, gullies, and other height elevations. I see a photo of the battlefield showing such, but the map is like the old 1960s maps with minimal terrain and no contours. Granted, my ideal map ends up at the intersection of unit movements and translations to the tabletop.





2D contour maps offer the best depictions of terrain available without a computer screen. Try to include contours in 2023, please...pretty please.

Nevertheless, Osprey booklets offer consistent quality if you want to explore a topic. Turnbull's prose is especially smooth and *Mongol Warrior* is another winner in the Combat Men series.

Enjoyed it.

**Soviet Naval Infantry 1917-91: Elite 249.** by David Greentree. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2023.

I didn't think I would enjoy this booklet as much as I did, for I didn't know much about Soviet Marines because I didn't think they did much for a Navy that didn't battle beyond its coast.

From humble beginnings in WWI, the WWII naval infantry organization reached 389,975 troops by 1943 and added 100,000 more by the end of the war in 1945 (p13). I had no idea of these numbers. Note that most troops were committed on land alongside the Red Army, but many also partook of plenty of amphibious assaults in the Arctic, Baltic, and Black Seas throughout WWII.

Granted, early ones were poorly thought out. An April 1942 amphibious assault at Litsa River in the Arctic put six battalions ashore without winter gear. Sure enough, a storm blew in and 1,000 suffered weather-related injuries. The Germans counter-attacked and the force retreated after losing 4,992 casualties (p18).

An assault on Sep 5, 1942 by the 1st Naval Brigade at Krasnoye Selo near Leningrad landed three battalions without ammunition. A bayonet charge took heavy casualties enough to force consolidation into one battalion -- and that was disbanded in November (p19).

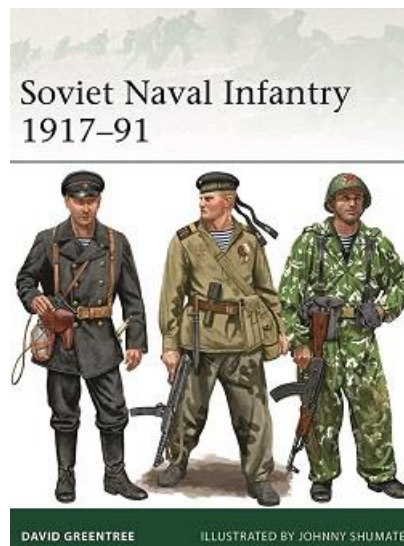
As the war went on, the assaults became better prepared and executed. Some of these more balanced battles would make for a sweet tabletop scenario -- although you'd need to ferret out terrain and German formations' OOBs.

The information extends into Cold War reorganization and discusses various amphibious exercises.

The booklet contains 31 black and white illustrations, 12 color photos, one color illustration, eight color plates (24 uniform profiles).

Nicely done with new information, or at least new to me, about Soviet Naval Infantry.

Enjoyed it.



**Naval Battle of Crete 1941: Campaign 388.** by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Royal Navy at Breaking Point*

Another fine *Campaign* booklet offers a nice encapsulation of the British naval campaign around Crete and the efforts of the Luftwaffe, with Italian Air Force help, to sink the Royal Navy.

The Royal Navy ran the aerial gauntlet many times to bring supplies and then evacuate troops from Greece to Egypt and Crete, and later from Crete to Egypt.

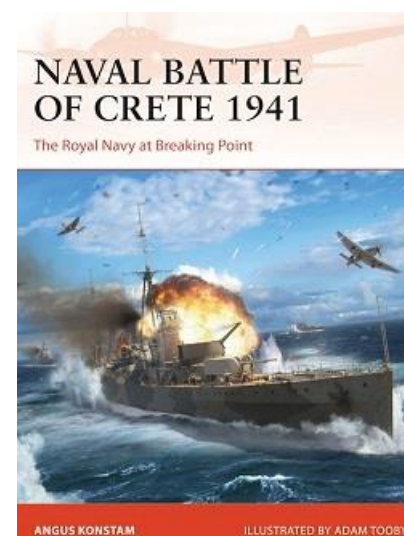
I found it amazing that level bombing ever came close to any ship, much less hit one and sink it, but the Germans and Italians did so on more than one occasion. For example, an Italian Z.1007bis Alcione bomber dropped a stick of 250kg bombs from 3,000 meters that hit and sank the destroyer Juno (p41).

More expected, but still somewhat rare, a ME-109 dropped a single 250kg bomb on the light cruiser Fiji, slowing the ship's speed to about half. A second ME-109 then hit the ship with a 250kg bomb and started fires and a list.

A JU-88 dropped a stick of four 250kg bombs, of which two hit and finished off the cruiser (p67).

Speaking of rarity, this volume contained a typo -- "In reached Alexandria..." The "In" should be "It" (p31). Typos in Ospreys are as rare as a Bigfoot sighting in the Pacific Northwest -- happens, but rare.

The booklet contains 64 black and white illustrations, nine color maps, three color illustrations, two black and white illustrations, three two-page color action illustrations.





The British Royal Navy took some sharp losses in the waters around Crete, but ultimately accomplished its mission to evacuate most troops to fight another day. It's all well explained within the classic *Campaign* format and reads well, too.

Enjoyed it.

**F-4 Phantom II Wild Weasel Units: Combat Aircraft 147.** by Peter E. Davis. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *In Combat*

Wild Weasels specialized in SAM and AAA suppression, starting out in Vietnam and carrying through to Operation Desert Storm.

Using first-person accounts and operational analysis, you receive a fine explanation of aircraft capabilities from F-4 IIC to IIG, tactical evolution in the face of upgraded surface-to-air missiles, and technical developments of US Shrike and HARM missiles.

The booklet contains six black and white illustrations, 52 color photos, and 24 color aircraft profiles.

Wild Weasel pilots must be especially good, or crazy, or both to purposely bait and bomb enemy SAM sites. This booklet helps explain how it was done.

Enjoyed it.



**Afghanistan 1979-88: Air Campaign 35.** by Mark Galeotti. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Soviet Air Power Against the Mujahideen*

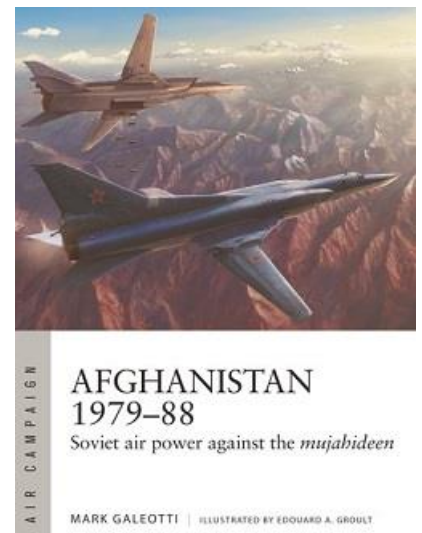
Hard to believe time is closing in on almost 50 years since the USSR invaded Afghanistan. Air power, especially helicopter strikes, aided their efforts, but the Afghans learned the art of camouflage and ambush pretty quick with HMGs as well as an increasing array of man-portable surface-to-air missiles. The 12.7mm and 14.5mm HMGs proved to be the stars of the mountaintop ambush, aided by "bait" in the valleys.

Conventional wisdom asserts the Stinger missile systems supplied by the US made all the difference. It certainly helped. The claim was 340 firings resulted in 270 aircraft and helicopters destroyed, or about a 79% hit rate. Using records after the USSR split apart, a declassified CIA report noted the reality proved to be about a 10% hit rate (p33).

The booklet contains 18 black and white illustrations, six color maps, 48 color photos, one color illustration, and three two-page color action illustrations.

Soviet air operations were not as bad as portrayed by Western sources, but neither were they as successful as portrayed by Soviet propaganda. Air power can certainly aid ground operations, but as the Soviets and US/NATO found out, installing a friendly government is easy, but winning over the population is difficult.

Enjoyed it.



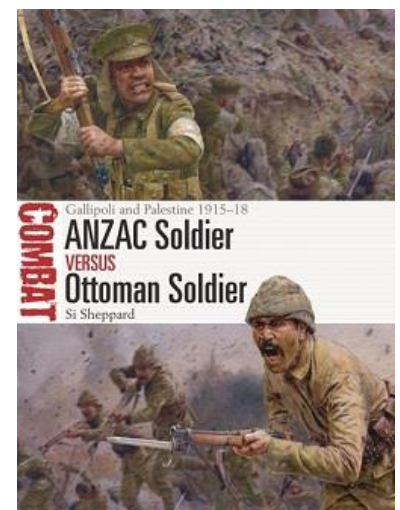
**ANZAC Soldier vs. Ottoman Soldier: Combat 68.** by Si Sheppard. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Gallipoli and Palestine 1915-17*

Follows the usual series format of examining uniform, weapons, and training of the soldiers and then how they performed in three battles. In this case, it's Lone Pine (Gallipoli August 6-10, 1915), Chunuk Bair (Gallipoli August 7-10, 1915), and Beersheba (Palestine, October 31, 1917).

Front and back uniform illustrations for each soldier, as partially shown on the cover, detail typical battle accoutrements. Explanations of weapons and variations lead into training, along with leadership and organization details.

Yet the core of the book is the three battle descriptions, complete with map and salient actions. Both sides took considerable casualties, especially in Gallipoli, as ANZAC forces came close to breaking the Ottoman line, but desperate defense





and timely counterattacks kept the Allies forces hemmed in.

Although the cavalry charge at Beersheba garners the headlines, infantry advances pinned the Ottomans in place as the ANZAC cavalry swung around. The battle also proved the Ottomans were capable of withdrawing under fire in good order to fight another day.

The booklet contains 47 black and white photos, five color maps, seven color photos, one color illustration, three two-page color action illustrations, and four color uniform illustrations.

From trenches to cavalry, this booklet offers the info for a trio of scenarios using the Ottomans and ANZACs. Enjoyed it.

**Waffen-SS Soldier vs Soviet Rifleman: Combat 71.** by Chris McNab.

Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Rostov-on-Don and Kharkov 1942-43*

Follows the usual series format of examining uniform, weapons, leadership, organization, and training of the soldiers and then how they performed in three battles. In this case, it's Rostov-on-Don July 20-25, 1942), Third Battle of Kharkov (February 1 - March 18, 1943), and Fourth Battle of Kharkov (August 6-12, 1943).

This offers more of a grand tactical to operational view of the battles noted, although the soldier' foxhole-level views are interspersed within the divisional movements.

The booklet contains 54 black and white photos, six color maps, three two-page color action illustrations, and four color uniform illustrations.

You can gin up some tabletop battles, but at a larger scale and with some additional research. But if you're looking for a concise look into these types of soldiers, this Osprey offers nice coverage.

Enjoyed it.



**H6K Mavis/H8K Emily vs PB4Y-1/2 Liberator/Privateer: Duel 126.** by

Edward M Young. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Pacific Theater 1943-45*

You don't often read about four-engine patrol aircraft dogfighting other four-engine patrol aircraft. Fighters vs patrol aircraft, sure, but B-24s against H8Ks? Surprise. It happened. Not often, but it happened.

The US Army Air Force was rather offensive minded and patrol aircraft pilots would chase after Japanese patrol aircraft. The PB4Y-1/2 were essentially redesignated B-24 Liberators -- you can read about alterations within these pages. They had full armament of 50-cal guns.

The H6Ks and H8Ks sported some 20mm guns, but far fewer, and US gunners soon learned to take gunners out first and then go after vulnerable engines. Some of the Japanese aircraft were transports and didn't have any guns.

Not that the Japanese gunners were any good -- the impression given is they hardly ever hit the PB4Ys. Only one dogfight detailed any shots doing more than superficial damage to the PB4Ys. Not a single PB4Y was shot down within these pages, but plenty of H6Ks and H8Ks fell flaming into the Pacific Ocean.

The booklet contains 50 black and white photos (including some spectacular shots of Japanese aircraft dodging and ablaze), two color photos, five color illustrations, one color map, one two-page color action illustration, and seven color aircraft profiles.

One odd part: The author uses the word "tuition" instead of a more common word like "instruction." For example: "assigned to technical training school for four and a half months of tuition in a specialty" (p43) and "enlisted men received tuition in their respective specialties" (p44). Is it an autocorrect gaffe, an actual if arcane definition for instruction, or just an editorial oversight? Whichever, it's a rare miss for Osprey text.

Nonetheless, fire up a one-on-one patrol aircraft vs patrol aircraft dogfight on the tabletop. Many descriptions give height, speed, and distance to get you started.

Enjoyed it.





**12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend: From Operation Goodwood to April 1945.** by Massimiliano Afiero. Softcover (7.0x10.0 inches). 128 pages. 2023 translation and reprint of 2020 book.

This *Casemate Illustrated* volume covers the title division's actions from July 1944 to April 1945. This primarily includes Normandy against the British Operation Goodwood, Operation Totalize, battles for Falaise and the retreat across France, the Ardennes offensive, and the counterattacks in Hungary in early 1945.

As you can imagine, this overview does not go into tremendous depth, although the short bios of various soldiers helps with the tactical viewpoint. What you do get is a nicely encapsulated history of those operations, along with short explanations of equipment, weaponry, and changing tactics along with the changing war situation.

The book contains 129 black and white photos (many new to me), three color maps, two color vehicle profiles (Panther tank and Wespe self-propelled artillery), and one black and white map.

A couple typos: "had transferred at three divisions" (p98) looks like it's missing the word "least" and Kraas assumed command of Hitlerjugend on "November 13, 1994" (p114) that is obviously "1944."

Odd that the cover shows the front half of a Jagdpanzer IV in color, but no vehicle profile inside. Has a black and white photo, though.

I would have liked OOBs of the division as it evolved during the last years of the war. Aggregate numbers are included in the text at the beginning of major operations, but you know wargamers: we want an OOB with detailed numbers so we can create a tabletop scenario. You'll need other references for something like that.

Still, it's a good, concise division history.

Enjoyed it.

**The Soviet Destruction of Army Group South: Ukraine and Southern Poland 1943-45.** by Ian Baxter. Softcover (7.0x10.0 inches). 128 pages. 2023.

This *Casemate Illustrated* volume covers operations in the USSR that saw the Red Army advance from roughly the Dnieper River to the Vistula River and including the Crimea. Along the way, it decimated the German Army in battles worthy of a thousand tabletop scenarios.

How you create these scenarios depends on your rules. Most of the events describe operational level actions. Fortunately, OOBs are included for both sides: 1943, 1944, Crimea 1944, and 1944 Operation Bagration. These vary between drilling down to division level, but mostly at army/corps levels.

The action rolls across the steppe with enough detail to understand river crossings, counter-attacks, and the often frantic efforts to avoid being caught in a pocket by Soviet armored pincers. And yet the Germans continued to put up tactical victories amidst operational defeats. To put that all into perspective, the Germans lost 1.1 million killed and wounded between August 1943 and February 1945 while the Soviets lost 3.6 million (p123).

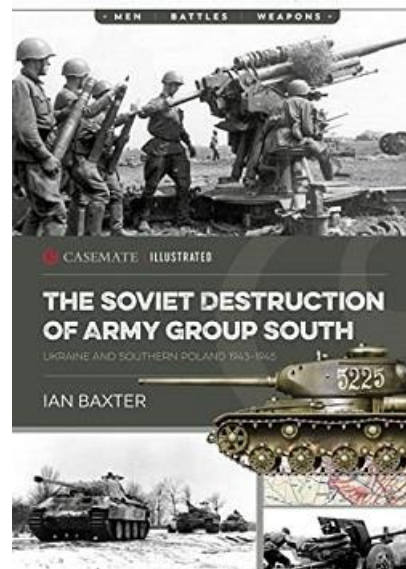
The book contains 142 black and white photos, five color maps, and 20 color vehicle profiles.

One off-kilter line change to a larger font (p65), but otherwise clean of typos. One odd factoid: "some [1944 German] divisions there [in Crimea] were only 200 men capable of combat, a tenth of the 1941 strength" (p74). I suspect the 1941 strength of a German division had more than 2,000 soldiers on the pointy end of the spear, but I guess that depends when in 1941 -- at start or in the depth of winter.

There seems to be another bit of mathematical effervescence regarding "the first and only time during the war...that six Soviet armies and elite mechanized armored formations would be used together in a single battle" (p47). This was just after mentioning five Soviet Fronts (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Ukrainian Fronts and 2nd Belorussian Front). I'm not quite sure of the sixth and how they fit together, if at all.

Nonetheless, you still receive a good, concise overview of the southern Soviet offensive that cleared the Germans out of the Soviet Union and then some.

Enjoyed it.





**World War II Snipers: The Men, Their Guns, Their Stories.** by Gary Yee. Hardback (8.2x10.3 inches). 352 pages. 2022.

Everything the tabletop warrior would want to know about snipers is likely in this book. Roughly divided into three main sections: Selection and Training, Wartime Sniping, and Weapons. This covers snipers from all the major armies on all the major fronts.

In between all the shots and camouflage and tactics of the sniper was one aspect that proved new and interesting: when a unit was under fire from a sniper, it would, presumably if it could, call in mortar and artillery fire on the suspected sniper position. You don't see that in movies...or wargames. This also didn't sit well with troops surrounding the sniper's position.

As for the rest of the book, it is a thorough compilation of sniping during the war. It also became somewhat cut-and-paste repetitious within the multiple excerpts per page.

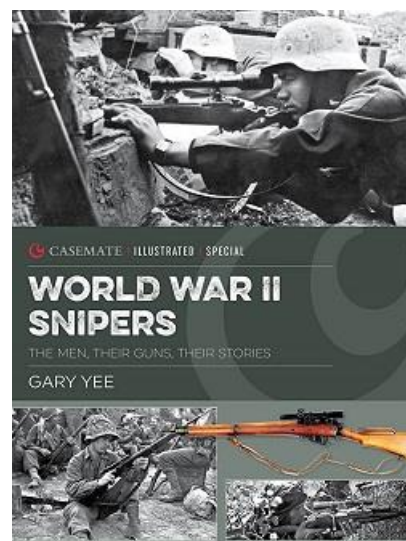
The bibliography is most interesting. Most of the information was pulled from newspaper and magazine articles, letters, e-mails, books and some primary sources. Yet it also includes an internet web site section and a YouTube section. Sign of the times, I guess.

One typo that I found: "had never fired a gun his life" (p38) likely should be "in his life."

The book contains 242 black and white photos, 185 color photos, 28 black and white illustrations, 14 color illustrations, four black and white maps, and six color maps.

I expect most WWII skirmish games include sniper rules. If your rule set doesn't, here's a *Casemate Illustrated Special* to help you write your own rules.

Enjoyed it.



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