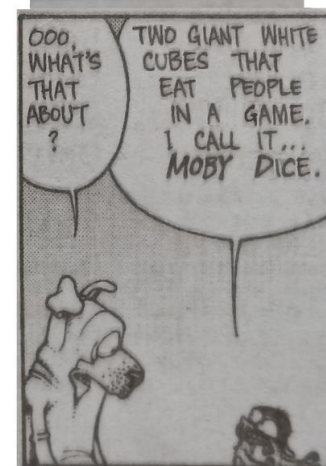
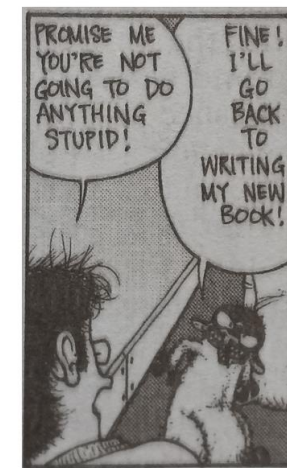


Runnin' With The Devil: ACW Regiments
Historical Vacation: A CT and MA Week
Brax Rests Up: *Traveller* Space Battle
Simple Fields of Glory: Fantasy Battle
Gateway Game Day: June 24 - Abington, PA
Aerocatures: Jet Card Game and WWII Book
Lost in Translation: *Hengist*
WingSpan: Hello, Hello, Birdie
Ukraine Wargame: First Look
Battle of Ginnis: The Dice Who Would Be Kings

Books I've Read:

Carthage At War: Punic Armies c814-146 BC
Japanese War Fantasy 1933: Future US-Japan War
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A Photo History of Amphibious Warfare: 1939-1945
Warship 2023
Dragoons and Dragoon Operations 1638-1653 (CenSol 99)



Runnin' With The Devil: ACW Regiments

by Russ Lockwood

Confederate Brigadier General Russ looked over the wreckage strewn across the field of battle. It was a tough day, no doubt about it. He started singing...

Sometimes the simple rules,
Are too simple.
When I jumped off,
Down that road.
I got no luck,
No luck and much whiskeys.
Ain't got objectives,
Jus' casualties.

Metal for the Devil
(ow, ow-ee)
Metal for the Devil
(ow, ow-ee)

At start. Umpire and Union player Jake (left) and Confederate Marc prepare to do battle. Barlow's Knoll in center. My brigade split by the stream. My arty at lower right.



But To Start At The Beginning

Jake umpired a *Devil To Pay* American Civil War game based on an action west of Gettysburg on a small hillock called Barlow's Knoll. It's appeal was that it's the highest spot for miles around.

My arty batteries: Three deployed and one limbered coming in on road.

A Union brigade occupied the knoll with two regiments and a battery with the idea of slowing down the Rebel march on Gettysburg. Three other regiments were in reserve near one of the crossroads. However, the knoll just begged to be bagged on two sides.

How convenient: Two brigades of Confederates engaged the Yanks with the objective of controlling the knoll and two crossroads further eastwards. Reinforcements were coming on both sides.

The knoll. My confederates are to left and below photo. Marc's troops are to right. Union crossroads are above photo. The rings are activations, not damage. We have red rings for damage.

Rules Summary

I was amazed that we had last played this three years ago (see the recap of the Battle for the Peach Orchard in the 2/21/2020 AAR). As I recall, it was a generally simple set of rules with



chits drawn from a bag (cards can be used as a substitute) with move, fire, rally, and such functions, with two chits per function.

The advance upon the knoll. My loose formation confronts Union cannon while two formed regiments took on the lead Union infantry, which skedaddled back towards the main Union line that stretched between the two crossroad objectives.

Each regiment had two activations, the brigade commander had one to three activations that could be applied to units under his command and in range, and the artillery batteries had three activations. Activations are renewed at the start of each turn.

A function is randomly drawn. If you want to use it, you spend an activation and perform the function. If you want to keep your options open, you don't spend the activation and wait for the next one.

The wrinkle is that when the first "Whiskey" function is drawn, nothing happens. But when the second one is drawn, the turn ends. If you have functions left, too bad.

Each turn is a half an hour.

Another wrinkle is the Carpe Diem chit -- this is a function chosen by the winner of a die roll. He can pick any function except Whiskey.

As you can figure out, there's a lot of nice decision making with each drawn chit, with more and more tension the more chits are drawn. Sometimes, you want the second Whiskey to appear because you've spent all your activations. Sometimes, you're waiting for a specific function.

One free function is available that doesn't cost any activations: Voluntary Skedaddle. A random die roll move to the rear to get out of the line of fire. This is quite important if a regiment is filled up with hits and more hits will lose stands. Of course, if you absolutely have to hold the ground... that's also when you start taking real losses.

Closing in on the Barlow guns. My loose regiment ran for the rear at bottom right corner. My artillery was going to ford the stream when Jake noted they had to cross at the bridge. Marc's troops advance to bypass the knoll while peeling off one regiment to help me with firepower.

I charge the guns. Each of us has two red rings. But the supporting Union regiment countercharges me and makes it one big melee. We tied. Ties go to the defender.



Units and Dice

Combat is a number of dice equal to the number of stands, with some adjustments depending on range and cover. Sometimes, infantry can't shoot at all. Simultaneous. Fire. Artillery can always toss one die.

The latter point is important and one I did not fully grasp.

Hits (a 4-5-6 on a d6) put a marker on a stand -- it can't shoot. A second marker kills the stand.

Most regiments were five stands, some with four, and Rebel arty batteries were two stands while Union batteries were three stands.

A couple of fire phases later and the knoll is cleared. I have one regiment with a couple of casualties, but the other (left) is wracked. It is disordered as every stand has damage. If the Union had not skedaddled, I would have sent that regiment to the rear.



Advances Take Time

In the last game, I played defense. The good thing about defense is that you don't particularly need to spend activations to move, especially if you're sitting behind a fence (cover: -1 die to the enemy if you're actually behind the fence) or a stone wall (cover: -2 dice). So, you shoot and rally as needed.

This game, I was on the attack, so you have to balance movement with firing. That gives an advantage to the defense and I think that is appropriate.

The wrinkle are those two Carpe Diem chits. It is possible to win the die roll and pick more movement functions. It is also possible for the defense to win the die roll and pick more firing functions.

The loose regiment (left) reforms and gets one measly stand to rally. The three Georgia regiments are ready to enter on the road.

Rebel Advance

I had a big artillery park of four batteries sitting in the rear, so I limbered up three and moved forward to the stream while keeping one to occupy the Union battery on the knoll.

I spread out one regiment facing the Union battery into loose order to lessen the firepower while moving my other two regiments towards the knoll.

The other Rebel brigade, under General Marc, sent some shells and a regiment towards the knoll, while attempting to



bypass the knoll and take the crossroads.

I soon re-learned the defense advantage. My lead regiment took a pounding from General Jake's Union infantry and my loose regiment took a pounding from the battery.

I had to sidestep my lead regiment to allow my fresh regiment space to fire. The boys in blue atop the knoll soon felt the wrath of firepower. When they voluntarily skedaddled, I turned attention to the artillery. I soon silenced the battery, but it was able to rally with a good dose of luck, fire a few more rounds, and skedaddle itself. The second Union regiment also skedaddled rather than lose stands.

So Far, So Good... Sort Of

I had two wracked regiments that needed rallying. Rallying stands is via die roll (50% chance) with 2D6 and up to 4D6 if the unit was far enough away from the enemy. I got the knoll lads rallied up soon enough, but the loose lads couldn't find the unit's colors. They spent the rest of the game trying to rally. Such are the vagaries of luck.

I don't want to speculate about Marc's rally rolls. It seemed he had one surge, took lots of hits, skedaddled, and spent the rest of the game rallying. What was that? He stood there like a stone wall? Oooo. Cruel.

The rally function has the odd aspect of the possibility that units never take permanent casualties, so they can come back to full strength time and time again.

Jake proved a master of skedaddling at the right time and rallying his stands. You can do that with a defense in depth. For the attackers, a pause in the advance allows the defenders to also reform, rally, and add firepower.

Union reinforcements (upper left corner) extend the line and give Marc pause. I have the Georgians on the road, but my arty has been decimated. My two regiments on the knoll are in fine fighting spirit – brand new, so to speak.

Across The Stream



My cannons could only go over the stream at the bridge, which was a choke point. It also takes a full move to limber and a full move to unlimber. So, moving a battery is at least one function to limber, one or more to move, and one to unlimber.

Frustrated by only getting one die per shot, I moved one battery to support and two batteries across the bridge. Well, tried to. The infantry fire (24-inch range) decimated the cannons. By the end of the game, I lost all but one battery.

A good part of this reason is that Jake managed to outroll us Rebs during the Carpe Diem function. Once in firing range, Jake picked "Fire!" Even a couple of dice per unit firing, plus artillery counterbattery fire, soon wiped out my batteries. My own shots did some damage, but Jake stayed in place, rallied, and shot anew with the Carpe Diem.

It was even worse... Our 3-hour game lasted six turns of the scenario's 12. Two of the turns were literally one or two chits. Jake drew a Whiskey, a chit, and another Whiskey.

That prevented us Rebs from unlimbering artillery, or advancing infantry, or rallying for that matter. It was just fire function after fire function.

And yes, you bet I'd do exactly as Jake did and pick "Fire!"

But those non-turns also meant Union brigades were marching to the sound of the guns, and they had a shorter distance to travel from the edge of the table to the two crossroads.

Infantry Reinforcements

Finally, I was able to march my brigade of infantry reinforcements down the road, across the bridge, and shake out into line. My two regiments came over the top of the knoll to add their firepower.

Jake's firing put hits on four of five stands of the reinforcement unit and three on one of my knoll units. I did two back to two of his regiments. I skedaddled the lead regiment.

The lead Georgian regiments lose the race to get to the Union line. The first two shake out, but look behind the building – Union troops are on the move.

Jake shot up the second reinforcement unit as well as one of the knoll infantry units. I skedaddled them.

At this point, turn 6 ended and we called it a game.

We agreed that the Confederates were too shot up and needed too many movement functions to reform, spread out, and come in again. The Union had gotten its two reinforcement brigades into line and the original brigade, too.



I get closer to the crossroads objective and Marc's reinforcement is coming up fast, but my troops are being hammered. Marc's original brigade is a quivering mass of failed rallies in top left.

Perfect Storm

In retrospect, it would have been far smarter for me to use the 1 die per battery fire on the knoll to see if I could pick off units, or at least skedaddle them back instead of setting up the attack on the crossroads. It also would have been smarter, after one 18-inch move down the road, to spread out the reinforcement infantry into line and move up.

So, bad tactics on my part combined with much luck on Jake's part and poor luck on ours turned this into a Union victory and a pretty decisive one at that.

The historical battle. Image from web.

Some Modifications

We felt that artillery needed some movement modifications, specifically allowing a half move and unlimber/limber. It is way too vulnerable to infantry fire that reaches out two feet (on a six-foot wide table).

We also feel that 24 inches for infantry fire is a bit too far. It cuts the table down too much, so we'll try 18 inches.

I should point out that the *Original Fire & Fury* (OFF) where an infantry unit equals a brigade, musketry range is 8 inches with a 12-inch infantry move. At regimental level, *Devil to Pay* is 24-inch firing range and 6-inch infantry move in line (12 inches in a march column).

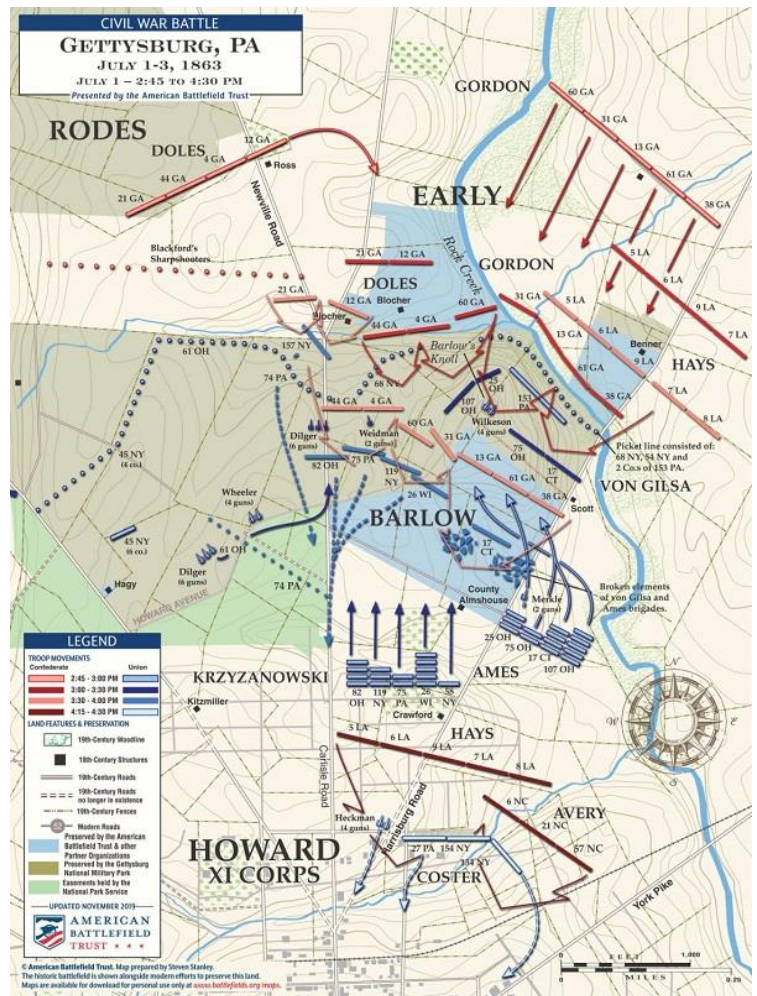
Yes, it's a bit of apples and oranges comparison, but from a time and space point of view, you get more leeway on a six-foot table with OFF. *Regimental Fire & Fury* would be a better comparison to *Devil to Pay*.

We also thought about making extra distance between the crossroads, but Marc wasn't sure that would do much because of Union numbers and distance. We also thought about making the knoll, bridge, and one crossroad the three objectives – that would force the Union to come out and fight instead of sit behind the fence. And we thought about eliminating the fence, for it gave the Union extra protection. We'll see.

Scenario design is such a balancing act.

Thanks, Marc for hosting and Jake for umpiring. This was only our second playing of *Devil to Pay*, but from an experimental point of view, it's good to see how extremes play out. In my case, it was many metal men gone to the Devil.

End of Turn 6 and End of game. Most of my regiments skedaddle and it will take a few turns to shake out the Rebs.



Historical Vacation: A CT and MA Week

by Russ Lockwood

I was channel flipping one night when I came upon a show called *Strange Inheritance*, which seeks to find a buyer for esoteric collections after the owner had died.

Strange Inheritance still. Image from web.

What caught my eye was shelf upon shelf of toy soldiers -- the expensive collectible kind and the regular 25mm miniatures. The wife didn't know what to do, but a buyer was eventually found.

I can't say I followed the show, but tuned in from time to time. One show had a fellow who collected tanks and other armored vehicles. I mean the real ones. Like you see in museums. Only most of them ran. I think it was a hundred, but don't quote me. The guy's name was Littlefield and his family didn't know what to do with the WWII and Cold War era tanks.

Mystic Seaport model is 12x40-feet!

So they held an auction. I forget how much they made, but some tanks went for hundreds of thousands of dollars, including a bunch bought by a museum in Massachusetts. I tucked that factoid in the back of my mind.

The most unusual shop in Mystic Village shopping village.

Seeing Spots

Fast forward to fall of 2022 -- our first vacation since before the pandemic. Where to go? The thought of getting on an airplane didn't thrill us, but after decades of driving vacations, we've covered lots of places within a 12-hour radius.

Don't get me wrong, there are plenty of places we haven't gone, but we look for a combo battlefield, historical museum, a state or national park, and a quilting shop kicker. That narrows it a bit.



We looked over an atlas. Yep, a plain, paper atlas that put little red squares on the map to indicate tourist spots. So, we started seeing spots. Then, and only then, do we look online, in part to see hours of operation (post-pandemic, lots of museums do not open on Mondays and Tuesdays...or have closed) and so on.

A plan began to form...

Start in Connecticut

I hadn't been to Mystic Seaport, a 19th century seaport turned tourist attraction, since I was a kid. That's next to an aquarium, a "quaint" shopping village with restaurants, and five minutes from hotels. The US Submarine Museum was 10 minutes away. An easy half-day drive to Mystic area and a perfect start.

But we still needed a quilt stop. Lowell, MA, had the New England Quilt Museum and a National Historic Site of an old textile mill. Not close, but better than a shop. In between: New England Botanical Garden and a butterfly preserve.

Stay with me...I'm building up husband points here.

Who is training who? Feeding time at the Mystic Aquarium.

That TV show with the Massachusetts museum that bought the tanks must be somewhere. I poked around the internet. The American Heritage Museum in Hudson, MA. That doesn't sound like a tank museum, but...

Aha! Found it. The internet site showed it did house many of the auctioned tanks. And it was on the way back from Lowell.

That oughtta do for the five days with attractions inside and outside. Sure, there are more museums and sites in the general area, but we've been to a fair number. We lucked out on weather for the week we picked -- nice fall weather, sunny and in the 70s for the first three days, then rain for a day, and then back to sun.

Underwater drone at Mystic Aquarium used to survey the sea floor.

Mystic Aquarium

We entered the Aquarium just as it opened at 10am. It's nicely laid out with walkways and tanks, both indoors and outdoors. Lots of fish, penguins, seals, and so on. As it was a Tuesday in the fall, hardly any tourists were there, so we had the place almost to ourselves.

We took in the live seal show, which is much better than the dead seal show, where nothing much happens.



Apparently, training is all about the fish. I expect that if the seals didn't do a trick, they didn't get fed. I wonder what happens if the seals go on strike. I bet they still get fed.

It's not a large aquarium. We spent about two hours there, then drove the five minutes to Mystic Seaport.

Mystic Seaport

This more or less preserved 19th century seaport has multiple museums, preserved ships, boathouses, and restored period shops with all the services seafarers might use -- wood working, rope making, blacksmithing, and much more. One building contained a massive diorama of the seaport and another contained the magnificent efforts of the local model making club.

We spent an afternoon wandering around, watching craftsmen, visiting the small museums, and boarding the ships. We spent a very pleasant half hour sitting underneath a tree canopy with a local beer and giant soft pretzel watching the harbor.

The whaler Charles Morgan.

Oh yeah. Vacation. I remember those... it's a lot like sitting around with nothing to do and all day to do it.



Left: Figure heads in museum.

Right: Model of whaler Clara Bell

Below: Model makers shed. U-47 bottom middle of photo.

We left and drove the five minutes back to Mystic Village for an early dinner, a post-dinner stroll, and a little shopping.

I found a most unusual shop that sold wands, potions, and mystical and magical stuff. The video "paintings" were pretty cool as they transitioned from a normal



scene to one out of a horror movie. No, I didn't buy one, but it's a nice touch for a Halloween House decoration. They had four different ones about the shop.

The US Navy Submarine Museum



Entrance to the submarine museum in Groton, CT. Notice the rings to left, mini-sub to right.

The next day we drove the 10 minutes to the Submarine Museum, entering when it first opened. It takes about two hours to tour the museum, a highlight being able to board the *USS Nautilus*.

USS Nautilus: World's first nuclear-powered sub.

We went inside the sub first to take advantage of the light crowd. I'm not claustrophobic per se, but the sub is only so big. Even empty, it's a tight fit at times. It's more spacious than the WWII submarines I've toured, but not that much when you're squeezing around some corner. The fewer tourists the better, I think.

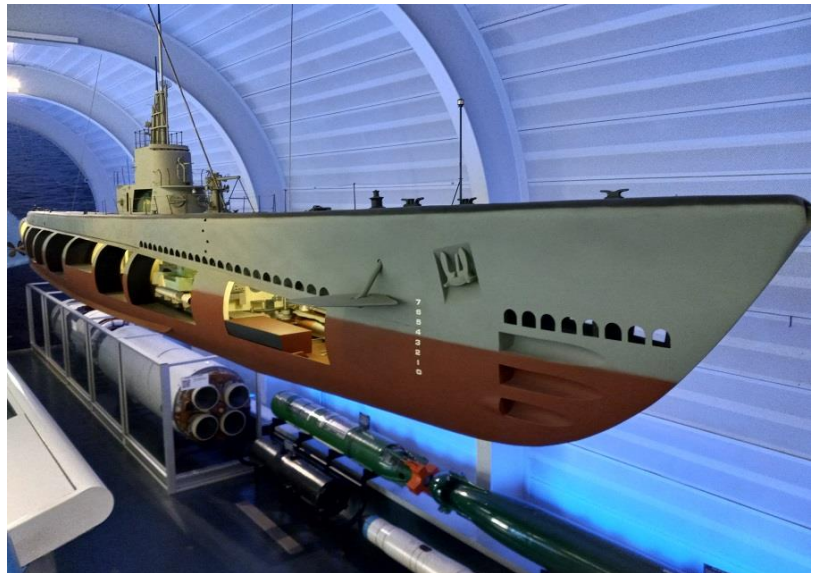


*Left: Japanese Type A mini-sub.
Right: USS Nautilus bridge.*

The museum entrance has a couple of rings -- the small one being the circumference of the *USS Holland* and the larger being the circumference of the *USS Ohio*.

Right: *USS Gato*: 1/6 scale model.

Left: *USS Albuquerque* 'No Beer' flag after one too many missed shore leaves...



Right: *The Turtle* recreation.

Also outside is a Japanese Type A mini-sub and some other hardware. Inside is a life-size recreation of the *Turtle* from the American Revolution as well as a 1/6-scale model of the *USS Gato* from WWII.

The halls are stuffed with torpedoes, hardware, flags, memorabilia, and photos of the history of US submarines.

I quite enjoyed it.

Clara Barton Birthplace

On the way from the Connecticut coast to the middlin' to eastern part of Massachusetts, we diverted to see Clara Barton's Birthplace museum. It was one of those spots on the map.

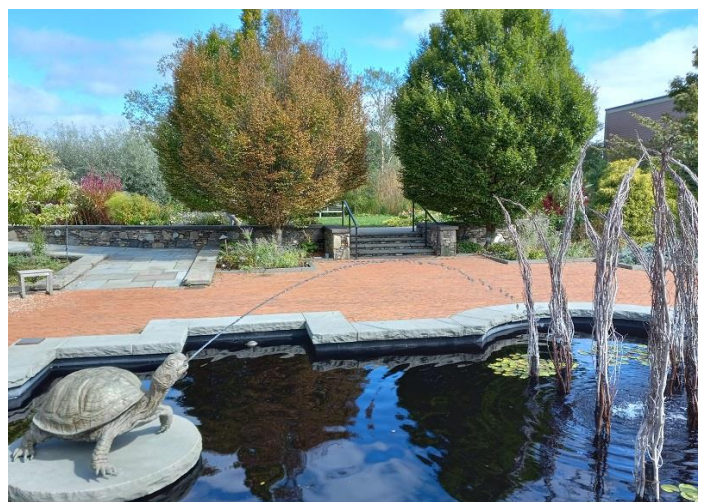
Alas, it was closed on a Wednesday.



Right: NE Botanical Garden turtle fountain.

Below: Fairy Stonehenge.

New England Botanical Garden



What a delightful place for a few hours of strolling along the pathways through the gardens. The main buildings housed more delicate plants.

As it was a gloriously sunny day, we meandered along the pathways, making sure to walk the special

display of Fairy Houses. Then we headed onto the unpaved paths into the woods to visit the follies.

A folly, at least as I understand it, is an outbuilding built for no other reason than to have someplace to walk to, or maybe picnic on or near, on British estates. They usually appear in British murder mysteries where a clue is revealed. For us, it was a neat place to rest after a couple hours of walking.

Top: NE Botanical Garden Folly.

Bottom: Fairy house.

Digression: Lockwoods Folly -- Pirates?

That said, the most famous folly, to me, is Lockwoods Folly. I wish I could go there, but I have no idea about it ...

Hey! I heard that! This AAR is not an electronic Lockwood's folly. Well, maybe a little. Or a lot. I guess it depends if you find the info within entertaining. Or my puns make you want to murder me...

Anyway, years ago I was watching this PBS show called *Genealogy Roadshow*, a spin-off of *Antiques Roadshow*, where people would pose questions about some famous event or link to a famous person in their line. The experts would answer.

In one clip, for a second or so, the lady who thought she was a descendent of Blackbeard was getting a backgrounder on piracy in North Carolina and Virginia. The image of an old map scrolled across the screen and a dotted circle appeared on the map off the coast with a label "Lockwoods Folly."

Now, if a folly is a building, putting one in the ocean sounds like something a Lockwood would do. I googled.

Apparently, in NC is a place called Lockwoods Folly River (no apostrophe), which drains a 150-square mile watershed in southeast Brunswick County. Its point is a spot for spectacular sunsets. But how did the river get its name?

According to *Coastal Review* website:

"What is not so certain, though, is the origin of the river's name — which appears on a map dated as early as 1671.

The most familiar story goes that a Mr. Lockwood built a big ship up the river. Unfortunately, it was too big to pass through the inlet to the ocean. Thus, Lockwoods Folly.

A second version claims that Lockwood attempted to establish a colony by the river, but had to abandon the site because of 'issues' with local Indians. Hence, the Lockwoods Folly.

A third version, according to *The North Carolina Gazetteer*, suggests that the name harkens to a time when landowners added 'Folly' to the names of their manors — from the French word *folie*, meaning 'delight.' Thus, Lockwoods Folly would translate as Lockwood's Delight."

Personally, I vote for the big ship blunder. That kinda makes sense to me. Both my dad and his brother built their own houses with quirky aspects. NC Lockwood was obviously a forerunner. I guess the map that PBS showed was the 1671 map, which makes sense if connected with a pirate story.



One day, it might be worth satisfying my curiosity about whether or not there's a roadside sign? Hmmmm.... Maybe next vacation...

Quilt display at the NE Quilt Museum in Lowell, MA.

Lowell Parking Problems

Back on vacation, a rainy day greeted us on the way to the New England Quilt Museum. Nothing like trying to find a museum in the historic district of Lowell through a number of construction zones, or maybe just one big one, and with one-way streets to boot. But find it I did as well as a parking spot on the street outside the museum.



Oh joy...electronic parking meters. Whoever decided that these were a smart idea never actually had to use one in Lowell. It seemed simple enough. Go to a pay station, punch in your parking space number, insert dollar bills, get a receipt.

In Lowell, not so much. Never mind that I never saw a sign about the price of parking on the meter or pay station.

The first pay station refused to take my dollar bills. Or change.

Oh double joy...they only take credit cards. But it worked -- except the parking spot number I punched in did not match the receipt. What kind of fraud is this? I punched in my parking number again. The pay station took the charge and spit out a different, but still wrong, number on the receipt.

Hey, there's another pay station over there. That just didn't work at all. And there's another. Nope. Do any of these pay stations work? Is this some sort of Lowell plot to hand out parking tickets?

We walked into the museum to the desk. Two ladies were ahead of us complained about the pay stations. Oho! It isn't just me. They said they finally found one pay station that would accept change, not bills or credit cards.

So, I went out, punched in my number, fed in all the quarters I had, and finally got a proper receipt good for a couple hours. Umbrella or no, I was a tad soggy and wee bit peeved, too.



More quilts.

Husband Points: Quilt Museum

Nonetheless, we were in the museum. It's not that large of a museum: two floors at the end of a brick building, maybe a half dozen good sized rooms on the main second-floor display area. The ground floor is mostly a gift shop. I made two circuits, appreciated the artistry of many of the quilts, and settled into a chair. I've been trained like a seal to be patient about quilt displays. I don't even need a fish any more.

The Steampunk quilt display in the gift shop.



Boott Textile Mill Historic Site

I noticed on a map that a parking garage was near the National Historic Site Boott Cotton Mills. Enough of this on-street parking. We drove in, parked in the garage, and walked the few blocks to the site.

The building was huge. Nicely done with placards describing the operation, but huge. They even ran a number of machines for a demonstration. We watched for a bit as one of the machines wove some cloth.

The second floor, as big as the ground floor, contained lots of exhibits, including some interesting video recollections by some of the last (20th century) employees about working conditions.

As we left, we got our parking ticket validated at the National Historic Site desk.

That's a lot of machinery in a huge hall. Initial construction began in 1835.



More Lowell Parking Woes

Upon leaving the parking garage, the ticket machine didn't accept the ticket. In it went. Out it came. The video screen didn't say paid or thank you or come again. In. Out. In. Out. This gizmo is either a robot in training as a Lamaze breathing instructor or a prank show prop to see how you keep a moron busy for hours.

Nobody in the booth, either. No signs. Nothing.

What is it with the Lowell parking authority?

Again, is this some sort of ticketing scam? People leave and you grab the license plate for a violation? Yeah, I'm from Jersey. Naturally suspicious.

After five minutes, someone came out of the office and said to go on and I was fine.

I protested that I had no indication all was well. Back came the reply. It's broken. Just go.

Right.

A tourist who doesn't mind paying for parking just slipped away with Lowell Parking Authority blessing? Not paying for use of a parking garage? That's a first for me. Makes up for the triple charge at the quilt museum.

Validation or no validation, it's unlikely I'll ever go back to Lowell and deal with parking.

Some of the hundreds of free-flying butterflies at Butterfly Place.

Butterflies Flutter By

As it was early afternoon, we headed to another spot on the map: Butterfly Place. It was relatively on our way back to the hotel. Construction diverted us a bit and the rain slowed everything down, but arrive we did to an almost empty parking lot (no meters).

It was open and we spent an hour or so wandering the exhibits learning about butterflies. I'm afraid I didn't retain much, but I did enjoy walking through the open area where exotic butterflies fly free and you have to watch your step at times. The management takes a dim view of squashing their main attractions.

The next day, a military museum beckoned.

American Heritage Museum

We arrived just at opening time to another empty parking lot. They're open, right? Yes!

We were met by Lars, a docent, whose other effort was a 1/6-scale hand-made Leonardo da Vinci tank crafted of real wood and following whatever designs he could find. As he pointed out, the hardest part was making a hollow model so that theoretical 1/6-scale GI Joe-sized crew could operate the cannons. It was magnificent.

As we entered the main hall to a breathtaking display of tanks, armored vehicles, and planes, all I could think of is what a magnificent museum -- if you like 20th century warfare, that is. If you like quilts, well, not so much.



Lars and his real Da Vinci Tank Model.



The WWII side of the museum. Don't forget to look up for the V-1. Docent Marshall (right) in view at bottom of stairs. Panther faces off against T-34/85.

A SdKfz 222 Armored Car from the Afrika Korps.

We descended the stairs and met another docent, Marshall, who proved to be an enthusiastic fount of knowledge.

The museum is roughly split in two with the WWII side generally to the right and the mostly post-WWII side generally to the left. We started with North Africa and continued in roughly chronological order.

Note: Most of the tanks and aircraft are in running condition. The outbuildings contain additional vehicles and aircraft, but are closed except on a half-dozen or so special weekends -- see the website for details when they go all out with a vehicle "parade" and aircraft fly-bys.

Schwimmwagen, 20mm AA, and Kubelwagen.

WWII Big Iron

US, British, and German tanks and vehicles were on display. That segued into a Schwimmwagen and Kubelwagen display and a Sherman under "repair."

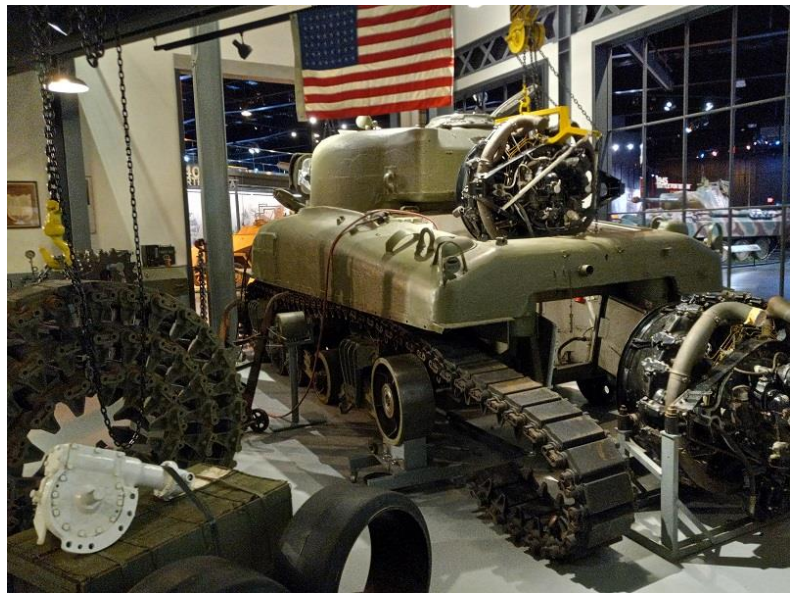




Left: STuG III G.

Right: Sherman under repair.

Below: T-34/85 that faces off against the Panther in the hourly show.



A Panther and T-34/85 faced off in the center of the WWII section. The museum put on a little sound, lighting, and pyrotechnical show on the hour that explained how the two fought each other on the Eastern front. A little kitschy, but entertaining enough for the 10 minutes or so it runs every hour.

As you walk the perimeter, the usual suspects pop into view like a STuG IIIG, Cromwell VIII, M8, and so on.

I'd argue that the Churchill Mk VII Crocodile flame thrower tank deserves a special mention, although it does not have the trailer. Can't have it all...



Left: Cromwell Mk VIII.

Right: Churchill Mk VII Crocodile.

The Dirty Dozen

Nearby is the Prime Mover used in the movie *The Dirty Dozen*. You'd think that would be the star of the museum, but no ... at least not to me.

The star of the movie, foreground, and the star of the hourly show just beyond it.

IS-2 From Berlin 1945

The US captured or was given an IS-2 tank that had been in the Battle of Berlin. It still sports the damage.

I bet you think that's the star of the museum, but you think wrong.

Next to it is a ME-109 in Erich Hartman markings. That doesn't fly -- no drip pan -- but is immaculate aircraft.



Top: IS-2. Right: Higgins boat.

D-Day Higgins Boat

A Higgins Boat landing craft that is documented as landing troops on D-Day is in the collection and on display. OK, that item probably isn't operable, but it's not as big as I thought. I recall the USMC museum had one that you walk through to get to the Iwo Jima room.

You'd think that would be the star of the museum, but no.



P-40 at Pearl Harbor

The museum displays a flying condition P-40 that was at Pearl Harbor. It needs a drip pan to prevent oil from flowing across the floor. No, Ben Affleck did not fly this plane in the movie.

Now, you'd think that would be the star of the museum, but no, no, no.

P-40.



Japanese Ho-Ro

The Ho-Ro sports a 150mm gun. Japan didn't produce many of these during WWII, but one of them is here on display, if a little worse for wear. That one doesn't run, but it's here.

Nope. Not the star of the museum, although real close...

Ho-Ro no go.



The Star of the Museum

Check out the photo.

I'll wait.

Got a guess?

I never thought to ever see one of these live and in person. It wasn't sexy like a Tiger or Panther. Or even a Panzer I.

It was a remote-controlled vehicle that rolled up and dumped explosives in an effort to blow up bunkers.

Borgward IV.

I've read about Borgwards and have seen period photos, but a real one? Granted, I've not seen a lot of models of WWII tanks and vehicles, but read about them in other museums around the world. But a Borgward? It stopped me in my tracks.

I don't know if it runs. I should have asked, but I was too enamored to ask.

Maybe I'm easily star struck, but that, to me, is the Star of the Museum.

ME-109 in Hartman markings.



On the Modern Side

Technically, the WWII displays stretch into this half of the museum, but close enough. Probably the most out of place exhibit is a WWI Nieuport 28 biplane. That flies, too, as evidenced by the drip pan.





Top: Modern side overview. F6F on left.

Bottom: More of the modern side. F6F on right.



The WWI trench exhibit was under construction when I visited, but photos of the website show it completed.

There's also a F6F Hellcat. That has a drip pan and must be able to fly, too.

Nieuport 28.

A Vietnam War gallery stretches along the wall with a variety of tanks and armored vehicles.

The most colorful tank is a Sherman that was



supposed to be used in a Year of the Tiger offensive. The South Vietnamese Army repainted a company of them with a Tiger Face camouflage scheme. The idea was that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were superstitious and would flee in terror when seeing tigers roar out of the jungle and attack them. Alas, the offensive kept getting postponed and they were never used as intended.

A PT-76 is in a nice display as part of the wall of armor. A M-48 is behind it.



Right: Year of the Tiger Sherman. Visitor searching for quilts.
Left: PT-76.



Above: SCUD launcher and missile.

A Ton Of Bricks

If I was a psychic medium from a TV show, I probably would have screamed when docent Marshall handed me a brick. It looks like any other brick, but this particular brick and the thousands of others on the pallets were from prison cells in the Hanoi Hilton prison camp in North Vietnam.

Hanoi Hilton exhibit. Image from web.

Apparently, these came from North Vietnam and were supposed to be used for a museum exhibit in Communist Czechoslovakia, but that never happened and everything remained in storage. The Iron Curtain fell and in the 1990s, someone figured out four cells were in now open Czechoslovakia and purchased them for the museum.

The Hanoi Hilton exhibit was under construction when I visited, but from the photos on the website, it is now complete.



SCUD

The most dominating vehicle in the section is a SCUD launcher complete with missile. This Iraqi package was grabbed during Desert Storm.

Interesting enough, the firer of the missile sat in his own cockpit halfway back of the vehicle and isolated from the driver's compartment.

M-1 Abrams



And now one from the good guys: An Abrams M-1, which is supposed to be the only M-1 in a private museum. A nearby video plays the crew's reminiscences about the tank commander.

Somebody must have signed a magic chit for this...

Wanna Ride in a Sherman Tank?

From the website:

"This M4 Sherman is also a movie star, being the star of the 1982 movie *Tank* with James Garner.

Tank rides on the M4 Sherman are a donation of \$595.00 for two (2) persons aboard the tank. One seat is in the hull gunner position and the other is a standing position in the turret. The ride experience is 10 minutes on the tank driving grounds at the American Heritage Museum."

Wanna Drive a Sherman Tank?

Same tank. From the website:

"Tank driving programs on the M4 Sherman are a donation of \$1495.00 per driving participant aboard the tank for a one hour training experience that includes ground instruction, startup, driving instruction with our instructor, and YOU drive the M4 Sherman for 20 minutes on our tank driving grounds at the American Heritage Museum.

If you would like to add an additional rider in the turret during your driving experience, please add a \$195 donation to your booking. Most of the cost of the driving program is considered a tax-deductible contribution."

Wanna Fire the 75mm Gun of a Sherman Tank?

Funny, that. The website is mum on firing the main gun.

Not even a blank?

Nope.

How about the MGs?

No mention of them, either.

I wonder if they fire 'em on the parades?

I bet the neighbors love that.

Outstanding Museum

Warning: Be prepared for neck injuries as your head swivels this way and that as exhibits vie for your attention. We spent about three and a half leisurely hours gawking in the main hall, all the time with docent Marshall offering up fascinating anecdotes.

Our magnificent docent, Marshall, near a M-48.

There's far more than what I included in this short overview. Visit the website for more complete information.

<https://www.americanheritagemuseum.org>

Better yet, visit. I can also recommend Springfield, but that's another museum visit.

What a truly magnificent museum for those seeking out tanks and other vehicles. Enjoyed it is an understatement. And I hope you enjoyed this short overview of a week-long trip from 2022. Next time you're looking for a place to go, consider any one of those spots, especially the American Heritage Museum.



Brax Rests Up: Traveller Space Battle

by Russ Lockwood



We meet again for another Crimson Permanent Assurance Company adventure. Counterclockwise from bottom left corner: GM Sean, Dylan (Watchtower), Fred (Wendell), Ed (Gaines), Dan (Anton), and John (Karlsbad). Brax is taking the photo.

The Vault at Viverito had not yet given up all its secrets. A second foray, thanks in part to Git'erdone Co representative Arno River, found the Fellowship of the Stars in a meeting with corporate higher ups. They confirmed the previous deal and offered support in a variety of star systems.

All we had to do was select some of them to the tune of 16 levels (favorable 3D6 roll!!). The company would put in a good word, and more than likely a few credits, with the local system government.

As we had a few systems that we could call Havens, we sorted out other systems that would not ask too many questions about cargo sales, repairs, and other perfectly, totally, honest, legal enterprises that evolve from piracy. Turning systems into Havens also advanced the idea of a Drinax Empire.

Map of Good Feelings

This was all based on *Traveller's* law levels. The map showed law levels -- the number before the dash. The lower the number, the fewer questions asked and the more favorable to us.

The systems statuses ranged along this arc: Hostile, Unfriendly, Suspicious, Neutral, Tolerated, Friendly, and Haven. For example, if you look at TechWorld, the number is a 4: Neutral. We had 16 levels to distribute, with one level bumping up our status at a system. If we spend one of our 16 levels, it increases to Tolerated.



We break out the fancy green markers to signify Havens and potential Havens. From left: John (Karlsbad), Russ (Brax), GM Sean, Dylan (Watchtower), and Fred (Wendell). Ed (Gaines) has the electronic version of the map up. Photo by Dan.

We put three into TechWorld because that was the only high-tech place besides Drinax that could fix our Harrier. Thus, TechWorld went from original Neutral to Tolerated, Friendly, and then Haven. It's good to have a place to repair ships -- assuming our jump drive wasn't the thing that needed repairing.

One level turned Viverito into a Haven. We also put one each into Marduk, Clarke, and Paale to turn all of them into Havens.

We poured four into Corden nearer the Imperium. We're thinking "bolt hole" if the whole Aslan invasion overwhelms the frontier.

We looked farther afield, figuring that the pickings at the less developed end of the trade routes might be good and needing a Haven or two to offload Cat cargo.

We put two levels into Janus and one into Thebus to make them both Havens. That left us with two levels -- both into Acis to get them to Tolerated. We hemmed and hawed over this last one, wondering if we should rob Peter to pay Paul to make this a Friendly system. In the end, we left it at Tolerated.

One Last Benefit

Git'erdone Co agreed to upgrade the defenses of Drinax at no cost to King Obladee-Obladah, who was rather appreciative. It certainly made us look good in his eyes. I'm thinking we can each get a Barony out of him.

Studies Completed And Ongoing

Brax finished a few studies by the time Hari met Crimson, but only two of the three were successful. He picked up another level of Laser Firearm skill and a level of Slug firearm skill. But what to do next?

Having long ago read *Investigate for Dummies*, he decided to enhance this skill and began the holographic course *Private Eye Essentials*.

GainesMail

Gaines came up with a clever idea. Previously, in trying to determine how fast messages can be sent across the galaxy, the only thing we could find is an Imperial Xboat service along well-marked trade routes, or, ala 19th century, hand a message over to a captain that will hopefully get it to where it needs to be.

Ed considers GainesMail distribution in the area. Photo by Dan.

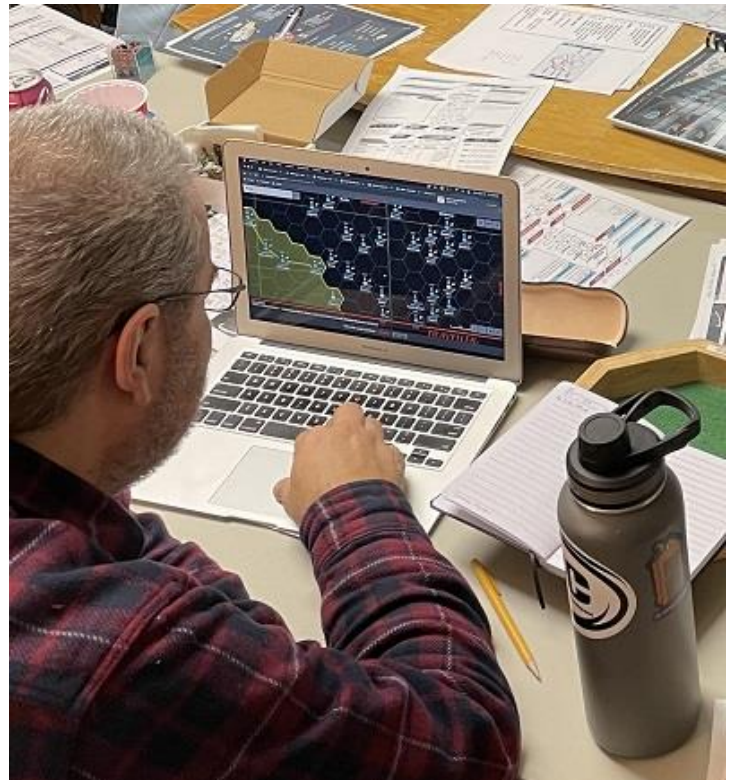
So, Gaines started up Technistellar Communications Provider, LLC (TCP) and researched a 'Mail Barrel' that can be installed on every trader.

When a ship with one of these drops into a system, it offloads and loads messages to the system Mail Barrel. For a fee, a message uses a distributed system of all trader ships to make its way to systems off the beaten path. Redundant messages that show up are automatically deleted.

All ships that pick up the message get a small slice of the message cost pie, but the ship that delivers it first gets a big cut. TCP keeps the rest.

Naturally, considerable efforts must be made for message security. Prototypes are being made with aid from Git'erdone Co. There's quite a bit more to it, but it's a start on his retirement plan.

All this is because Gaines wanted to send a letter back to Tobia in the Imperium and was told "you have to give it to a ship captain heading that way and hope for the best." That, by the way, is the same response I got when Brax wanted to send a package back inside the Imperium.



Ruby Hunting

We headed back to Paale, now a Haven for us, and started scanning from orbit. We located lots of ruby mines, but focused on the ones with lots of radiation. If you're looking for monsters, it makes sense that feral Aslan will be in radiation zones.

A spectacular find (die roll) by Karlsbad narrowed the list to exactly one -- a partially mined mine in a radiation zone that required radiation suits. Better yet, only about half the rubies seemed to have been mined, leaving about 200 million credits' worth just waiting to be scooped up.

Ripe for the picking... Image from web.



Actually, we were figuring that the majority would still be in dirt, but perhaps the monsters interrupted the digging and plenty would be hanging around.

We took the *Harrier* down in stealth mode and used it for top cover as we bundled into the aircar. We parked at the entrance of the mine and found dozens of human skeletons about the entrance and maybe hundreds in the nearby town. Not a soul was on our screens. Not monsters, nor humans.

We edged into the shafts, finding plenty more human remains. We followed the radiation that appeared to be coming from deeper within the mine. At last we found the source of the radiation -- a chamber that the miners had inadvertently entered.

Oooh. Shiny, but deadly. Image from web.



We enlarged the hole to find an underground complex of six missiles. Five of them were fine, but the sixth leaked radiation like crazy. We looked 'em up and down.

Five were ICBMs with nuclear warheads. One of them leaked. The other was a similar missile, but scanning found a biological warhead.

Brax watched the team in action. With the mysterious Watchtower in the lead, they soon had the computers online, the warhead disconnected from the rocket, and the radiation leak locked down. Anton used his fabricator to create lead-lined boxes to house all the warheads, although the one holding the bioweapon warhead probably wouldn't do much.

A Little Shuffle

As noted before, we had the *Harrier*, *SharkTuna*, and *Mad Medic* repaired, so we sent them on a couple trade runs. We needed to hire a few folks, even after we promoted to gunner Krrush the Variant -- remember him? We rescued him way back when but never actually used him except to help guard the ship.

After much investigation, the Crimson Permanent Assurance Co (CPACO) hired Little Leo the engineer, who at six foot four wasn't actually little but turned out to be a good engineer, even if he only had one good hand and one mechanical hand. Then there was Carlos the Gunner. We also added Scar the Engineer, who would work for half pay if we attacked the kitties. He had a pronounced scar across his face from an Aslan slash and revenge was uppermost in his mind.

Thanks to friends in low places, we also hired Bullit the Tat, an engineer of prodigious tattoos and quality who came to CPACO via various prisons.

We divided up the Fellowship of the Stars as follows:

Hatchet: Anton hated the *SharkTuna* name, so he said if he was going to be a pilot and astrogator, he'd be the pilot of the *Hatchet*. So the name changed. Krrush the Variant manned the guns, Bullit the Tat as engineer, and Coleman for anything else.

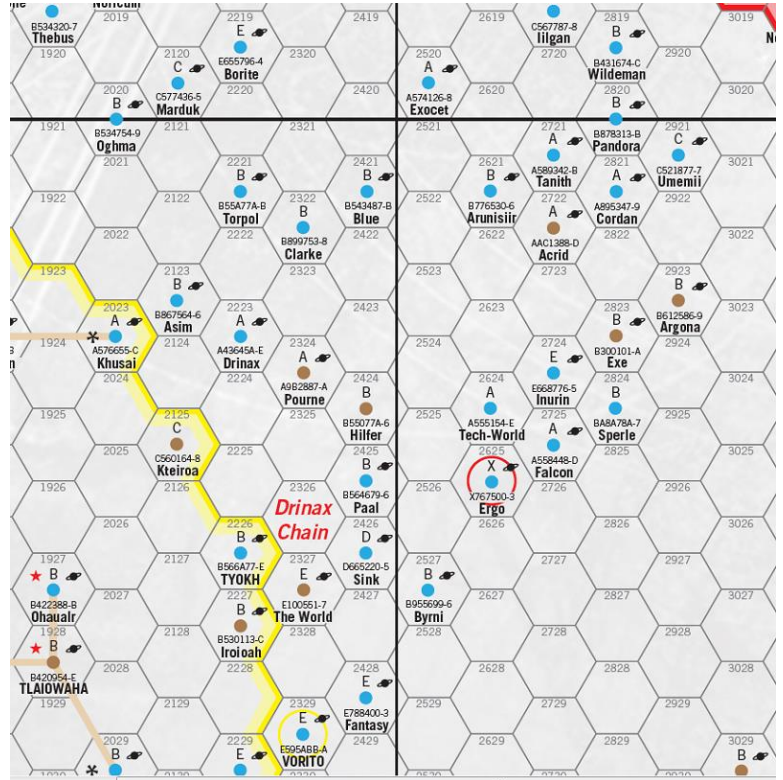
Mad Medic: Dr. Sparks was, as always, the pilot, with Karlsbad as astrogator and Carlos as gunner. Little Leo slid into the engineering seat and Cormac and Hardcastle rounded out the crew.

Harrier: Wendell as Pilot, Gaines the Gunner, Watchtower on Sensors, Scar the Engineer, and Brax on Xylophone. Seriously, Brax has absolutely no naval skills at all. He can barely operate the galley, but he can lay down a mean beat using spoons. He offered up a Ruttles tune to see our three-ship fleet off.

Come together,
Right now,
Piracy.

The map. Viverito at the bottom and Thebus at the top. The yellow is the Aslan Empire. The red (upper right) is the Imperium.

A Little Trade



We did training cruises with the new crew on pure trading missions. This actually went quite well, generating another 13 million credits thanks to our large holds and clever administrative efforts to match goods with scarcity. The rumors we picked up were less than exciting.

It was good that we did, for Brax, who could look upon naval nuances with new viewpoints, wondered why the missiles were so expensive. As it turned out, the naval noodles didn't realize that the price paid was for a dozen missiles, not just one. That was good news -- we had lots and lots of reloads of multiple missile types: 108 Advanced missiles, 12 Jump Breaker missiles, 12 Fragmentation missiles, and 36 multi-warhead missiles.

Finally, much to the joy of all, Anton finished repairing Robbie the Robot. He still has only one shotgun, but that could be remedied in the future. Brax still suggested a mini-gun, but he seemed in the distinct minority of one vote. Or maybe a changeable weapon system: Gatling shotgun for space and minigun for more planetside visits.

Shakedown Cruise

We ended up in the Thebus system, granting a much deserved shore leave to the crew. When we reconvened, we set off to see what we could steal, er, see.

We let a heavily escorted Aslan three-ship convoy, possibly with human slaves, by because we didn't think we had the firepower. We let another by because its escort was even larger than the slaver convoy.



Hmmm. Where to go next? Russ closes his eyes and points. This ain't no way to run a fleet... Photo by Dan.

Finally, we ran across another three-ship convoy, this one of humans. We were wondering whether or not to tackle it when the two warships -- a 600-ton Corsair and a 400-ton Destroyer Escort left the 400-ton merchant behind and opened up a hailing frequency demanding our surrender. Freakin' pirates! We work this side of the space lane.

Somebody get some miniatures! Well, it is a RPG. Black and blue markers at "0" are the bad guys. Green, red, and purple are the good guy ships -- note the distance from the bad guys. The yellow marker marks jettisoned warheads. The die is a missile homing in on the bad guys.



Prisoners of Pirates

Wendell was all for making them walk the airlock plank and space them, but others said we can always do that later, so let's think about it. Who were they?

The 34 crew we took as Prisoners of Pirates (POPs) were mostly true Imperial Navy personnel working as pirates under Admiral Darrylen. They admitted to pirating us but didn't know exactly who we were. They will now...

Brax suggested offering them asylum on Paale, but no one liked that idea. Another suggested paroling them for ransom and we discovered that if we drop the 34 POPs off in the Cordan system, we'll get 4 million credits. That sounds like a plan.

If they were Imperial Navy, that might mean that Admiral Darrylen and his other brother Darrylen are in on the plan to create and backstab a Drinax Empire. Otherwise, why would the Imperium Navy be pirates?

First, The Ships

We had quite a bit of cash around, so taking advantage of a Git'erdone Co discount on our Haven spacedock, we repaired the Mad Medic, Hatchet, Harrier, and the Destroyer Escort.

We voted on a name for it. With two long-range particle turrets and shorter-range laser turrets, I suggested *Triceratops*. Others were: *Tripartite*, *Striker*, *Ripper*, *Parrot*, *x2F01*, *Daedalus*, and *Stand and Deliver*. 1 vote each!

As for the Corsair, it needs 50 million credits of repair. The kind folks at Git'erdone Co will guarantee a 4.4% loan for 30 years that works out to 250,000 credits a month.

That's pricey, but the advantage of a 600-ton warship outweighs the cash outlay. We'll have to raid a lot of Aslan cargo ships to make good. We awaited word on how long it would take to repair the ship.

Construction Rule

Construction time = 1 day per million credits. As the Corsair needs 50 million, that's 50 days. The Corsair is a Tech Level 15 ship, like our *Harrier*.

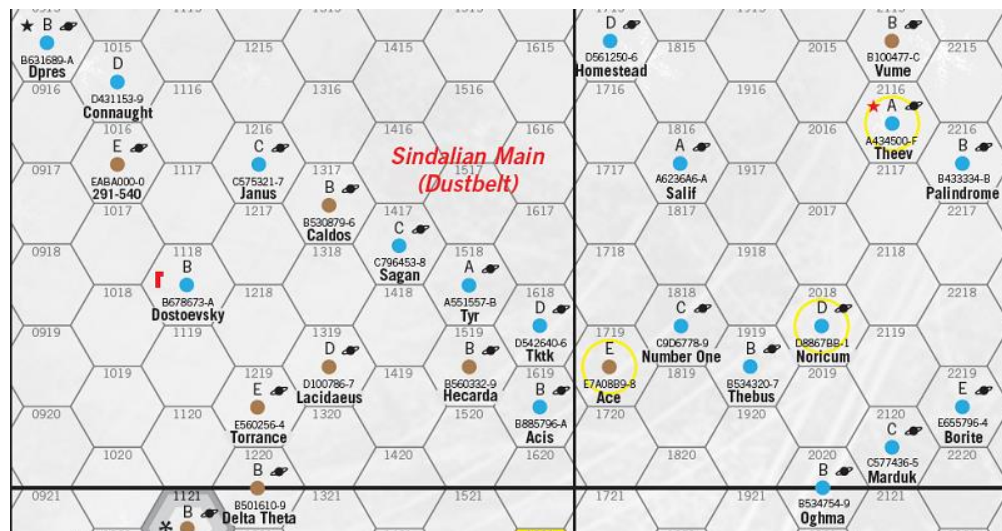
However, the higher the tech level, the quicker ships and ship parts get built: TL 12 = 90% construction time; TL 13 = 80%; TL 14 = 70%; and TL 15 = 60%.

The slightly good news is that you only need to find tech level 11 (code B) to be able to build a jump drive of 2 that can get back to Drinax in three (two-hex) hops.

A Jump 2 Drive needs 35 tons of cargo space, so we can theoretically grab one somewhere and bring it back for temporary installation until we can get the Corsair back to Drinax. We looked into lower tech jump drives, but they all seem to cost the same. So the only difference will be the modifier added when making a jump. So, higher tech level seems safer, 2d6-wise.

Our other option is get a TL 14 drive at Drinax or Tech World. It will also take approximately 50 days of work, with 20 days to build the drive, and 30 days to install it. At least we'll have an extra jump drive for the future.

Another fine session in our ongoing saga.... Thanks, Sean, for GMing and Fred for hosting.



The Sindalian Main, where we hope to start a pirating after dropping off POPs and making repairs.

Simple Fields of Glory: Fantasy Battle

by Dan Burkley

Simple Fields of Glory (FoG) does away with the die rolls for complex moves in favor of an automatic successful complex move with a corresponding reduction in movement. It's faster, easier, and keeps the game moving. It also adapts FoG to conform to Russ' Rule # 1. The Fantasy version also adds magic spells. -- RL

The Forces

The sides were about 1100 points. I supplemented Keith's force with some units that Steve Brandes painted, commanded by a FC, TC, and Magician TC.

Fred had the Goblin/Ork command, but smaller than the one he played last time.

I played a "Duchy of Tenh" command with two lance-armed cavalry units, two units of spearmen, three units of archers, two units of savages, and one unit of swordsmen with javelins, commanded by a FC, TC, and Magician TC.

Turn 3: Keith moves into the central woods. Photo by Dan.

The Battle: Chicken Run

Keith reinforced his right and used a delaying force of two LF slingers and two "Chicken Rider" lance/bow-armed cavalry to hold off nine units (I marched one unit to re-inforce Fred's command).

The LF slingers did a fine job weathering the hail of arrows without flinching, but couldn't run fast enough when charged. That finished their role in the battle.

A well-timed Goad spell forced one "Chicken Rider" unit to vainly charge the enemy flanking force (which it couldn't reach) and get "feathered" by archery fire, disrupting them. They suffered another round of archery fire that fragmented them, and couldn't get out of there fast enough before a third volley sent them running for the edge of the board.

The 2nd "Chicken Rider" unit was looking to run down some savages, but the bad news prompted Keith to reconsider the attack and they fell back to resume the delaying role.

The sacrifices on Keith's left were compensated for with some success on his right. The 8-stand goblin pikes were repeatedly shot at and reduced to half their numbers by the time they broke - prompting the Goblin chariot to charge to avenge their brethren. For one stand, this unit ended up fighting three units (Hobbits, an Ent, and an Elemental) for a few turns before falling in battle.

Goblin and Ork archers peppered their attackers while they did some maneuvering about to re-align their battleline before advancing to engage. The arrows had no effect on the Heroes, but the Giant and Dragonne did suffer some. When they finally closed, it wasn't a blow-out, but it was destined to be bad for the greenskins - being a matter of time.

In the center woods, Dwarven handgunners engaged three smaller units. The monster among them was expected to tip the scales, but proved to be ineffective for woodland fighting (never scoring a hit). The aptly named "Wood Goblins" eventually showed the Dwarves they had no business being in the woods, but it was evenly matched for several turns.

The manticore obliterates his sixth unit. Photo by Keith.



An artillery duel between Dwarven artillery and a rock-throwing Giant kept up lively fire for most of the game, and while each scored a hit on the other several times, both survived the exchanges at the end of the battle.

Wolf Riders vs. Levies

Keith's far right flank had several units forcing their way around Fred's left flank, with one three-stand unit of wolf-riders in their way. With 16 stands of infantry in columns forging ahead, Fred considering turning to run, but realized he had a favorable match-up -- so the wolf-riders were set upon what turned out to be levies of poorly-armed infantry.

At one point, it looked like the levies could be "herded" back where they came from, but Fred's dice turned cold one melee round and the levies held on just long enough for a Dragonne to furrow its way through the woods to get behind the wolf-riders. Then in their moment of glory, the wolf-riders broke both levies as they, in-turn were consumed by the Dragonne, firmly latched on their rear.

One command on each side reached Break-point, Keith's delaying command and Fred's Orks. With the two intact commands far from contacting each other, the game was called for the night. While technically a draw, Keith pointed out that the remaining intact command had some losses, while the Duchy of Tenh had lost no units - suggesting that Keith's army would eventually yield the field of battle had the conflict continued.

Gateway Game Day: June 24 - Abington, PA

by Alex

A Game Day will be held on Saturday, June 24th, from 9am to 7pm, at the Fellowship Hall of Abington Baptist Church, 1501 Huntingdon Rd., Abington PA 19038.

Entry will be \$5 per person, except children 13 and under will be free.

There's enough room for 12-15 flea market tables and about 18 game tables. A total of 43 tables and 180 chairs are available.

The Game Day will be held in the basement, which has handicap access -- including an elevator.

The Theme

At least half of the games will be aimed at new gamers -- relatively quick to teach, learn, and play. The other half can be more advanced wargames.

Miniatures, RPGs, and board games are expected, including euro boardgames, *Risk*, and *Axis and Allies* to broaden people's game horizons. The idea is to generate crossover players, whereby board gamers and RPGers try miniature games.

FYI: This is the third Game Day this year Alex has held at the location. The last one drew more than 50 gamers and he hopes this will be ever larger. -- RL

Aerocatures: Jet Card Game and WWII Book

by Russ Lockwood

Dana Lombardy got in touch again with news about a new card game based on the release of the *Aerocatures* book. *Aerocatures* is the brainchild of artist Hank Caruso, who started putting faces to WWII airplanes. Think of it as the Pixar movie *Planes* with guns.

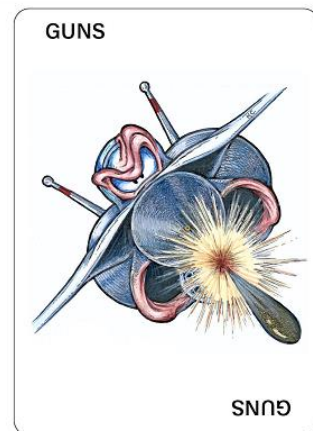
The color illustrations in the book cover WWII *Aerocatures*. A WWII card game based on *Aerocatures* will be released late in 2023, but the first card game will be a reworking of a 1981 *Aerocatures* card game set in the Cold War jet age (not WWII).

The jet cards will be in color this time around instead of the original black and white.

The post-Kickstarter (KS) BackerKit store will open in May for those who missed the KS.

Original KS link: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/danalombardy/aerocaturestm>

The KS page says 155 backers pledged \$5,789 to help bring this project to life.



Lost in Translation: *Hengist*

by Russ Lockwood

I had this card game from 2015 for about a year and finally cracked the shrink wrap. Looked good. Cutesy cardboard Viking ship, a trio of lands to plunder, a deck of 60 cards, and six wooden pawns (three red and three blue). I followed the set up instructions and Dennis and I got down to trying this out.

Rules? They sure baffled us. Some of that was on us. Most of it was on the rules.

The problem? This was an English-language edition of a German game with an English translation of the German rules. Much was evidently lost in translation.

The short version is that you need a number of cards with the right terrain symbols to go down one of four paths and plunder a village. The wrinkle is that the last mile to the village has an upside down terrain tile where the paths often deviate from the straight and narrow to a different village. The villages give up from 4 VPs to 10 VPs, so guessing right or using an Explorer card to sneak a peek at the terrain tile helps.

So there are straightforward resource allotment and path picking mechanics. The problem starts with the cards.



Setup: The blue indentations are bays. The boat holds up to three pawns (raiding parties) for each player. The dotted lines are the paths your pawn takes. The colored icons are the cards needed for your pawns to pass. The orange-ish tiles often change the path route to the VPs (numbered gold tokens). Cards supply the icons. The shields are markers.

Not Just One

The thing we missed is that EACH of your three pawns (raiding parties in the game's vernacular) can do one action per turn. We thought it was ONE pawn per turn. Actions are basically move or play cards.

Dennis considers the cards he will play. Middle first game.

That led to drawing half a deck each, because you draw from two to five cards. If you play only one card, and draw five, you can see how each of us can start to glom onto most of the deck -- which makes the terrain symbols superfluous since we have so many of them.

No mention of a hand limitation. This can't be right...

Then the ship sails along the coast with the play of every Explorer card. As there are only three big sections of coast, when the ship sails off the edge, you dump everything on the initial section, flip it over, and drop the section ahead of the ship. What was on that initial section is dumped into the sea.

At one point, we each had two-thirds of our force swimming.

What gets them back on the ship? An Explorer card, which triggers another bay move and more dumping into the sea.

This can't be right...

To The Internet

We halted the game. It made little sense.

On BGG, we found a long discussion about the rules. The takeaway was that each of the pawns do something, including spending cards to match the terrain on the path to get to the village. At two or three cards per path, that should cut back on the emptying of the deck into our hands.

The other was that each big section had TWO "Bays" not one, so it takes twice as many Explorer cards to start leapfrogging the sections.

There's a bit more nuance, but apparently the English translation dropped paragraphs, did away with bold face text, and changed something about game play.

Game Two: Try This Again

Our second game went much smoother and made a lot more sense. Our hand size, at times, was big, but less than our first effort.

We did come up with a question about the hinterland. We ruled, based on the BGG thread, that when three pawns (raiding parties of either side or both) occupied the three-space hinterland, it blocked all other pawns. But we also ruled that if you paid the appropriate cards, you can divert down to the beach and go around the three blockers.

That wasn't mentioned in the thread I read.

You see, the use of Explorer cards propels the boat along the beach and you really don't want your pawns to be caught on the last board. The pawns are dumped in the water and the tile is flipped and placed at the far end. Then you need Explorer cards to put them back into the boat.

We were neck and neck throughout most of the game, but Dennis figured out how to put three blocking pawns in place while he grabbed the VP tokens. I waited and drew cards.

That, however, turned out to be helpful when I finally was able to do an end around and land on the next-to-last tile and grabbed high VP tokens.

In the end, I sneaked by 112 to 97, or about two VP tokens.

We had an interesting game. Enjoyed it.

Dennis considers the cards he will play. Early second game.



WingSpan: Hello, Hello, Birdie

by Russ Lockwood

Dropped by Steve and Doreen's for a Friday night game of *WingSpan*, a euro game for birding enthusiasts. It's fairly standard for a eurogame: resources (food) gain birds, which are put on one of three tracks: woodlands (to gain more food), fields (to gain eggs), or marsh (to gain more bird cards). Each bird delivers up victory points (VPs), as does each egg placed on a bird card.

Steve points out a bird card placement option to Sue as Doreen looks on. My habitat (lower right corner) has four birds on it. The brown and blue colored stripes indicate special functions. The small colored cubes represent actions available in a round.



Now, there's more spreadsheet accounting to it than that, as some birds provide extra benefits and special goal cards provide extra VPs at the end of the game, but it's a resource management game. There is not much interaction between players -- it's almost a solo game, with the exception that food dice are rolled and chosen, so you might choose a food resource that the other players can't until the dice are re-rolled.

This seemed awful familiar to me, although I never played the game before...but I sorta did. Last, year, Dan created a Spanish Civil War card game that used the same basic three-track, resource-management mechanics, but with more interaction because players could steal resources from one another (see the 3/3/2022, 4/2/2022, and 4/27/2022 AARs for the SCW game recaps).

Wingspan is quite colorful and is easily learned in about half a game. Mastering the resource gain and allocation for maximum effect takes more time. All quite enjoyable and it took us about two hours to finish the game. For the record, Steve won with 87 VPs, Doreen and I tied with 83 VPs, and new-to-the-game Sue came in at 71 VPs.

Ukraine Wargame: First Look

by Russ Lockwood

Steve's new prototype wargame for *Against the Odds* magazine is about the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine. Per usual, the game will take a year before it is a finished product, but my initial impression is quite favorable. It was easy to understand, easy to play the first "battle," and contained some rather clever mechanics to reflect Russian audacity and overconfidence and Ukrainian determination and home field advantages.

While I can't say very much about it, the ATO publisher posted a photo of sample prototype cards up on CSW (message 57584):

<http://talk.consimworld.com/WebX/?8@@.ee6df75>

Here in my AAR, I'll be content to post people photos from the ATO posting on CSW...



Left: Designer Steve

Right: Developer Russ

Photos by Publisher Steve.



Battle of Ginnis: The Dice Who Would Be Kings

by Russ Lockwood



The last time I played a British Colonial scenario was using *Shako* (see the recap Hide and Sikh in the 06/23/2018 AAR), which is a little odd considering *Shako* is for the Napoleonic era. This time, GMs Dave M. and Mike used the Osprey rules *The Men Who Would Be Kings* (TMWWBK), which is for the British colonial era. The scenario was of the Battle of Ginnis.

Tally Ho! I already packed my VC...

...which I had earned in the Sikh game for a quite surprising but decisive smashing of the Indian flank.

At start: Brits at right. Dervishes in town on left. This photo and the one above by Dave Mills.

Ginnis on the Nile

The town of Ginnis wasn't very large -- a two built-up plazas, a park, and a series of tents -- but was gorgeous. No wonder the Dervishes wanted to keep it and the British wanted the Dervishes gone. Next door stood a British fort with a battalion of Brits and a battalion of Egyptians as garrison.

The rest was pretty much desert save for a couple of fields and a pivotal hill by the fort with a Dervish artillery battery.

Left to right: British Chris, and Dervishes Sam, Marc, and Dave W. Great looking game!

Except for the gun, the Dervishes infested the town.

The main British brigade of infantry, cavalry, and a gun battery faced the southern part of the town. The secondary British force, commanded by Brigadier Gen. Lockwood, VC, had a battalion of infantry and gun battery facing the northern part of the town, plus the Brits and Egyptians in the fort, and a paddlewheel gunboat (with machine gun) on the Nile.



The goal for us British was to hold and grab the fort, hill, two plazas, and the tents while routing six Dervish units off table. The Dervish goal was the same except they only needed to rout three British units off the table.

The Dervish cannon on the hill. Photo by Dave M.

TMWWBK Command And Control

Before the game starts, we toss a d6 for each unit. The higher the toss, the lower the "Leadership Value" (LV) of the unit. For example, I tossed a number of 6s, which translated via a table to a LV of "5." I also tossed 5s, which translated to a LV of "6." Other tosses by my co-British player Chris resulted in a number of LVs of "7." Some may reach "8." During the game, each unit needs to roll 2d6 and roll equal to or higher than its LV level in order to do an action (move, fire, rally, etc.).

Early Dervish moves by Marc (left) and Dave W. Photo by Dave M.

TMWWBK Moving

Assuming you pass the LV roll, the British move 8 inches. The Dervishes move 12 inches. Both can move double time with d6 inches added. There may be nuances to moving with the extra d6 in inches, but if so, we ignored them.

British Paddlewheel outflanks the Dervishes and takes out a Dervish battery in the town. The troops in the fort stand firm.

TMWWBK Formations

British Open Order is the norm, but if formed into Closed Order, firing is more lethal with 4, 5, and 6 hitting. Movement in closed order is half, or 4 inches.

Skirmishing, for some reason is half move (4 inches) and half firepower (only half the figures fire). If fired upon, targets in skirmish need an extra hit to eliminate a figure, just as if they are in cover or at long range. I don't know why they are slower in skirmish formation.



TMWWBK Firing

This is simple. Toss a die per figure, usually with 5s and 6s hitting. One hit removes one enemy figure. Very Featherstonian.

The wrinkle is that you may need to score multiple hits to remove an enemy figure if the enemy target is in cover, and/or long range, and so on. It took us all a while to constantly remind ourselves that it often took three hits to remove an enemy figure.

Cannons fire two dice per figure, and each cannon had four figures. My paddlewheeler boat MG only had two figures, but tossed four dice.

At start: The MG on the paddlewheeler. The Dervish cannon on the hill is out of range.
Photo by Dave M.

TMWWBK Melee

This is basically like firing, although I believe there is more to it than that -- I never was in a melee. I should have paid more attention.

TMWWBK Rally

The real gem of a mechanic for the system. When a unit takes a loss, it does a LV roll. If pass (and the number of casualties acts as a negative die modifier), all is well. If fail, the unit is pinned. It can do nothing but fall back.

It has to wait for its next action to make another LV roll to unpin.

I really like this morale mechanic. Simple. Effective. Logical.

The Shako Wrinkle

Umpires Dave M and Mike borrowed a *Shako* mechanic where each unit rolls a d6 for initiative, with 6s going first, then 5s, and so on. In case of ties, the Dervishes go first.

This is an alternative to the rule set's Igo Ugo by side.

Gen. Lockwood (right) deploys British infantry into skirmish formation.
Photo by Dave M.

To Ginnis And Beyond!

The Dervish gun battery on that hill opened up at long range on my one British infantry and scored one two hits, which would remove one figure because the long-range shot requires two hits to get rid of one figure.

Then I learned about the leader roll. The firer rolls 2d6 and if it's snake-eyes, the leader is killed and the LV becomes 8. Sure enough, Dave W's first shot took out my leader. The LV immediately changed to "8." I passed the LV roll and didn't pin.

Dervish Sam (left) plots to isolate and destroy the scattered British forces as Dervish Marc awaits his moment.



Pah! That just made them mad. My LV rolls were 9s, 10s, and 11s the entire game for this unit. They briskly set out across the desert to bring those Dervish gunners to account.

Besides I wanted to capture the gun for a display in the regimental museum.

Gen. Lockwood (right) strikes a heroic pose to stare down destiny as Dervishes boil out of the town. 'Tis a thin British line that awaits the inevitable charge. Photo by Dave M.

The gun never got off another hit. My return shot killed half the gun crew and rifle fire from the Brits who marched out of the fort killed the other half. Bob's yer uncle, I got the gun.

The museum placed a nice plaque about the capture by Gen. Lockwood, VC. The *London Illustrated Times* printed a crackerjack illustration of Gen. Lockwood storming the hill, sword in one hand, revolver in the other, leading his troops to victory.

Truly inspiring.

The gunboat MG drilled the other Dervish gun battery into oblivion, despite needing three hits to kill off one figure.

Marc's dervishes wave their orange flag in a charge out to melee Chris' British. Meanwhile, Sam's green flag dervishes suffered from British fire, but they are ready to support Marc.

Bringing a Picnic Basket to a Fist Fight

Meanwhile, the Dervishes emptied out of the North and South sections of the town heading for Brig. Gen. Chris, who could not seem to get his gun battery in operation despite being perfectly set up and ready at the beginning of the battle.

Chris couldn't pass a LV roll with the gun and failed to do anything for turn after turn.

Sgt Shell asked, "Looks like a clear shot. Are we going to fire, sir?"

Lt. Dieroll replied, "No, let's recheck the cannon again."

Minutes later, Sgt. Shell noted, "All in perfect order, sir. Shall we fire?"

Lt. Dieroll replied, "No, I don't think it would be sporting."

Minutes later, Sgt. Shell saw more targets.

"How about now, sir? Loose a shot at the dervishes?"

Lt. Dieroll replied, "No. Too much wind. Too little wind. Sun's not in the right spot. We need to polish the sand off the wheel hub. Perhaps a picnic is in order."

Sgt. Shell prodded, "This is an artillery battery, sir, isn't it?"

Lt. Dieroll replied, "Finest in the army."

Let's not even go there about his cavalry...or infantry...

Slaughter of the dervishes. Close order British troops volley fire into two dervish units while open order British troops on the hill provide additional firepower..



Now, I don't want to cast aspersions on my fellow commander, but fate did not do him any favors this game.

Eventually, his nice line of infantry drifted down the hill in haphazard fashion, one randomly rooted to the ground while another fleet of feet.

A Dervish surge at the far end. Near the fort, the Brits have everything in hand. Even the Egyptians deigned to leave the fort. Notice the lack of Dervish units in front of the formed Brits? Left to right: Umpire Dave M., Chris, Sam, Umpire Mike, Marc, and Dave W.



Dervish Ploy

Meanwhile, the Dervish Sam, Marc, and Dave W halted and faded back into Ginnis. They were trying to draw the British off the hill and succeeded. Then again, the victory points were in the town, so where else was a Brit to go?

Chris needed to dress his lines, but his rolls were so bad, he figured he better move when he had the odd chance to do so.

That's when Dervish Marc charged out to trigger the full ambush. Dervish Sam kept up a lively fire and turned about as well.

Chris' units were hammered. Two shots from Sam and the British cavalry was down to a single figure. I think it was Churchill. Chris' infantry units fared poorly as well and tumbled backwards.



Chris (left) boldly moves his cavalry, which finally managed to figure out how to move, in an anticipated charge against Sam's dervishes. The dervishes struck first and the cavalry died to a horse...

The Dervish took losses, too, but they screamed louder than the cries of their wounded. No doubt about it, Dervish blood lust was up into the stratosphere.

Dave's Dance of Death

Meanwhile Dervish Dave W. boiled out of the town and raced to attack Gen. Lockwood's troops. Alas, Dave W. could roll nothing but 1s for initiative, allowing me to form a close-packed line and launch volley after volley that pinned him in place and turned the sand red with dead. Then the dervishes broke and ran.

I could roll no wrong with the Brits. For the Egyptians, I could hardly roll right. They finally got out of the fort. Then they had a picnic for several turns. Then they moved. Then picnicked again. Then finally got next to the town. Then admired the architecture. Then finally got into town. They never fired a shot or got shot.

Apparently, the British were stealing all the good die rolls.

Gen. Lockwood's advance. The Egyptians admire the architecture of the town while British units roll forward. Notice the missing figure in the unit on the hill? That was my only casualty, but was the leader.



That went for the paddlewheel, too. Dead-Eye Dickie manned the MG and sprayed any and all dervishes with bullets. Even though needing three hits to fell one figure, the MG consistently shot down a figure at a time, which triggered a pin check, which Dervish Dave usually failed...

Whaddaya know...the Egyptians finally entered the town and captured the tower. On the river, the paddlewheel steam forward, its expert MG crew continuing its reign of death. The "5" by the gun is the 2d6 leadership roll need to do something. The infantry missing was a "5," but when the lieutenant was killed on the first turn from a dervish artillery shell, the unit became an "8." No matter, it rolled far better than the Egyptian "6."

Game Called

Alas, our Friday night gaming time came to an end after just under three hours and Dave M and Mike tallied the VPs.

For us Brits, we had taken one of the three town VPs and held the fort and hill for two more VPs. We only eliminated five (not six) Dervish units, so no VPs. That tallied 3 VPs.

The Dervishes held two of three town VPs and eliminated more than three British units for another VP. That tallied 3 VPs.

So, it was a hard-fought draw.

After Marc's ambush but before the loss of Chris' cavalry. A lot of Dervishes and fewer British. Photo by Mike.

Game Thoughts

While the marketing hypes "derring-do," that must be the advanced game. I recall Mike noting some leader "skills" that can be applied, so maybe that's for the next game.

Otherwise, it is a relatively straightforward move, combat, and morale (pin/unpin) system. The biggest problem is the command and control system.

Russ' Rule #1 Violation

Russ' Rule #1: If there is no movement, there is no game, and I came to game, not sit.

I realize I may be a lone voice that believes the "roll to do something" mechanic is the worst mechanic you can put in a game. I have sat through enough random roll to do something games to discover that sitting is what's often done in those types of games. *Black Powder* and *Hail Caesar* come to mind as the worst offenders, with *Field of Glory* and *Fire & Fury* hard on their heels.

Sure, I can see a roll if you're out of command range, or if it is some special scenario rule -- a unit lurking in ambush or the target of an ambush, for example. But for units in fine order, untouched by enemy shot, units that a turn ago marched with confidence now roll a "Sit down and picnic" result?

You can add *TMWWBK* to the list.

To be fair, I had an exemplary game because I was able to do what I wanted due to 2d6 rolling of 9s, 10, and 11s to beat leader value (LV) numbers. Well, except for the Egyptians, who despite a "6+" managed to fail two of every three LV rolls. My co-British player Chris was not fortunate with LV rolls.





Plenty of random rolls for combat and morale to introduce advantages and disadvantages to the situation. You don't get much of a game if your pristine units don't move.

Simple Command and Control Fix

Unpinned units are considered in good command and control and automatically perform one action without a LV roll. Pinned units roll "morale" to unpin and **if** they unpin, may use their "Free Action" (which differentiates units).

Yes, you are very welcome...

Now, let's play this again with the fix in place. I'm game!

*British Chris' command at start, including movement bases.
Photo by Dave M.*

Beer n' Pretzel: Heroic Adventure

by Mike

TMWWBK rules are truly Beer n' Pretzel and the author, Daniel Mersey, lists as his "Essential Research" 15 movies (many from the 1930s!), and define his game as "intentionally simple and cinematic more focused on fun, heroic adventure as portrayed in movies rather than serious historical warfare. I think he has succeeded in that.

Scale? I too see a *TMWWBK* unit as a company or small group of men. The rules' very, very, very lax treatment of formation and facing makes it impossible to pretend there is anything left of what the drills, military manuals etc. aimed to create of the periods "lines and squares". Even "close order" has 180 degrees shooting arc.

The battle of Ginnis involved 3,500 British and Egyptians soldiers, so the 12 *TMWWBK* units on the table Friday would equate battalion sized formations. Battle of Ginnis - Wikipedia Mills correctly portrayed the game as

loosely inspired by the battle. The colonial period is full of small unit actions, most likely never written about in all the wargaming literature available today, so getting inspired by the battles large enough for historians to bother about them is one approach. Another is to just cook up something that fits the rules. Both approaches work for what the author intended.

Somebody, I believe it was Dave W, told me *TMWWBK* is heavily inspired by *Black Powder*. I wouldn't know. I only played the one game in which Mills stood still seven turns doing nothing.

(That was Hail Caesar, a derivative of Black Powder.--RL)

And as far as I am concerned, I have played enough *Black Powder* games. There are enough better rules out there.

Dave W. is correct in saying the *TMWWBK* is poorly written, and he has already three pages of clarifications, most of which I agree with. I have my own additional amendments in mind, one of which is to "enable" more action for fresh units under command, but there is a fine balance that needs to be observed, of course. Would I think *TMWWBK* would be the right rules for trying to play a historical small action between two European forces? Nope, but for gaming Harry Flashman fighting tribal forces they are a good option.

Mersey has used two D6s and thus Bell curve probability for the leadership rolls and handfuls of dices for combat, so the law of averages is in play, but *TMWWBK* involves a lot of standing for individual units, not least because of the pinning mechanics, which is center to the rules. And based on the few games I have played, one has to be prepared to see what one thought was a unit "almost fresh" suddenly removed from the table. *TMWWBK* games are quick and bloody. I think it is "fun" and keeps the players involved, but the rules as written, or amended, may not be for everyone.

Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

Carthage At War: Punic Armies c814-146 BC. by Joshua R. Holl. Hardback (6.5x9.5). 323 pages. 2023.

I initially thought this book was going to be another Hannibal against Rome book, but I was delightfully wrong. This concentrates on the pre-Punic War area of Sicily against Syracuse and the First Punic War with brilliant prose and as much detail as the historical record -- or in many cases, speculation -- would allow. You also get a little bit of the Second Punic War, thankfully terse, and a bit about the Third Punic War. In between, the history of local revolts and subjugations receive a fair bit of detail.

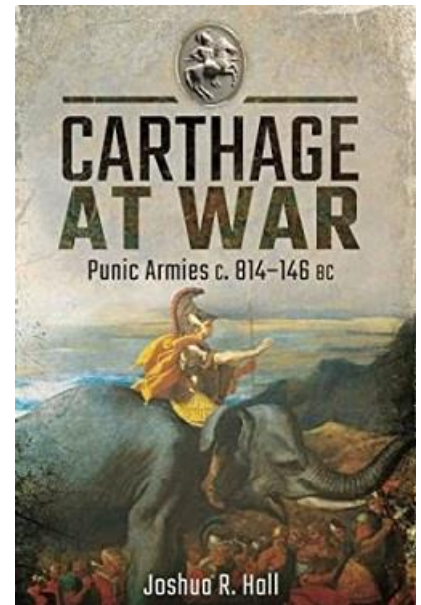
Alas, almost nothing survives that was written by Carthaginians. As I recall, a great fire during the Roman siege burned most of the library of Carthage (not to be confused with the burning of the Library of Alexandria). So, historians relied on Roman and Greek histories that may have used some Carthaginian records.

Of course, the book starts with the founding of a Phoenician colony called "New City" and goes on from there. Great chapter on the 50-year war with Syracuse. First Punic War is also excellent.

My biggest complaint is that the book has no maps. Indeed, the book contains no illustrations at all. I don't mind no illustrations, but when discussing this ancient city or that in Sicily that was captured or burned or fortified, it'd be nice to know where it was ... wargames are all about time and distance. It's a serious omission for us tabletop enthusiasts.

A couple of minor dings with reference to the Messina "Straight" (p115, 116, 121, and elsewhere), which should be "Strait."

Otherwise, this is a fantastic book on the lesser known of the Punic Wars. Enjoyed it.



Japanese War Fantasy 1933: Future US-Japan War. by Kyosuke Fukunaga. Softcover (6.1x9.0 inches). 208 pages. 2023.

This is a translated 1933 book of fiction published in Japan called *Account of the Future US-Japan War*. Schiffer probably thought the title needed more punch in 2023, and so changed it.

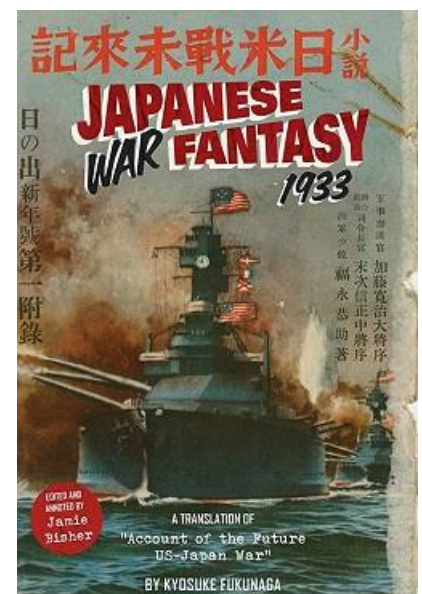
The book describes a war between the US and Japan in 1936. I base that on the fictional court martial testimony of the Japanese officer who started the war, which had the phrase "in the all of last year (1935)..." (p59). There is no other year in the text except a historical reference in 1925 (p144).

The prose is written like a thriller, with different points of view among the ever-enlarging cast of characters. There's probably a lot that's lost in the translation, but it moves along just fine for a 1930s book, albeit the ending needs close reading.

Amid rising US-Japan tensions, the war starts when a Japanese Lieutenant Maki on a destroyer fired two torpedoes at the USS Houston, flagship of US Asiatic fleet. The ship sunk, 400 lives were lost, and the US soon declared war. Meanwhile, Lt. Maki's execution by firing squad went awry in a somewhat surreal supernatural intervention.

US author Jamie Bisher starts off the book with a description of the political and military situation in the early 1930s. He then inserts helpful sidebars within the text that describe events mentioned by Fukunaga. He unfortunately inserts a variety of photos of ships and people that constantly 'supplement' the text. I guess you're either going to like or dislike the photographic interruptions. I wasn't thrilled. Just imagine a Tom Clancy novel filled with photos of submarines, ships, planes, helicopters, personnel, and so on.

Oddly enough, the big battle that would resolve the war comes and goes quickly. I had to re-read the chapter to figure out the phases of the battle.



Apparently, a multitude of such future war in the Pacific books came out in the 1920s and 1930s in Japan, US, and other countries. This book gained notoriety after US Customs seized two shipments of the book into Hawaii. It didn't quash the sales.

While I've read about the US' 1930s War Plan Orange, this is the first Japanese viewpoint I've read about a 'future war' in the Pacific. Although much of it is character based, and the Maki execution scene is indeed pure fantasy (as opposed to the rifles firing blanks), one Japanese author's idea of how one big battle will decide a Pacific Ocean war proved interesting.

Enjoyed it.

A Tiger Loose on an Ice Floe. by David Snape. Softcover (6.1x9.2 inches). 209 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Ferozepore Brigade on the Western Front 1914-1915*

What a neat unit history that focuses on an Indian brigade sent by the British to the Western Front in an effort to fill a hole in the line and try to take back lost territory.

The brigade was formed in 1904, although some units trace back to 1872. By 1914, it was placed in the Lahore Division. Remember that what today is Pakistan was part of India in WWI (and WWII, too). Per the time, one battalion was British (Connaught Rangers) and three were Indian -- 9th Bhopal, 57th (Wilde's) Rifles, and 129th (Duke of Connaught's) Baluchis.

Of note, the British, with long memories of the 1857 Indian Mutiny, issued older rifles and only 200 rounds of ammunition per soldier to Indian troops while the Brits had the newer rifles and 300 rounds of ammo (p27). In true snafu bungling, when the Ferozepore Brigade reached the trenches in France, the Brits swapped out their old weapons for the new -- and the troops needed time to adjust. The Indian battalions also had eight-companies when the left India, but were given a full re-organization to four-company battalions.

The book goes through an almost casualty by casualty recap of the brigade's efforts. As losses mounted, the vaunted courage of the units seemed to ebb. Apparently, 62% of the soldiers in the Lahore Division suffered wounds that were hand wounds, which the British thought of as self-inflicted (p112). The British court-martialed two soldiers, but they were both acquitted. Still, that dropped the number of hand wounds down to 15% of the total numbers of wounds (p113). The Indian Corps suffered a number of court martials, of which five soldiers were executed for self-inflicted gunshots (p115).

The book contains 41 black and white photos, nine black and white maps, and six black and white illustrations. The text suffers from a number of typos: Missing periods (p22 and p62), extra period (p82), misplaced single quotes (p25), missing single quote (p68), "marched passed" should be "marched past" (p56), "comment is racists" should be "racist" (p70), missing a space in "a,a" (p136), "deserters would to be taken the Middle East" should be "deserters would be taken to the Middle East" (p123). Given the number, there may be others I missed.

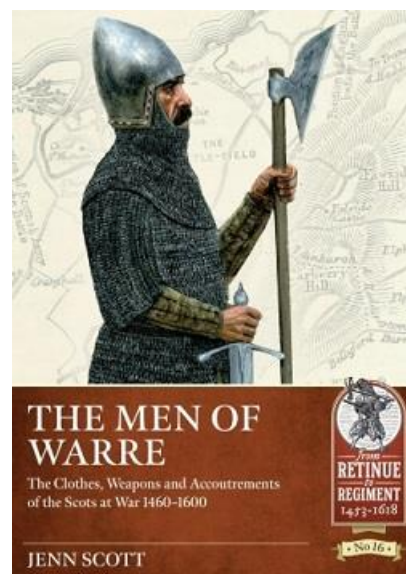
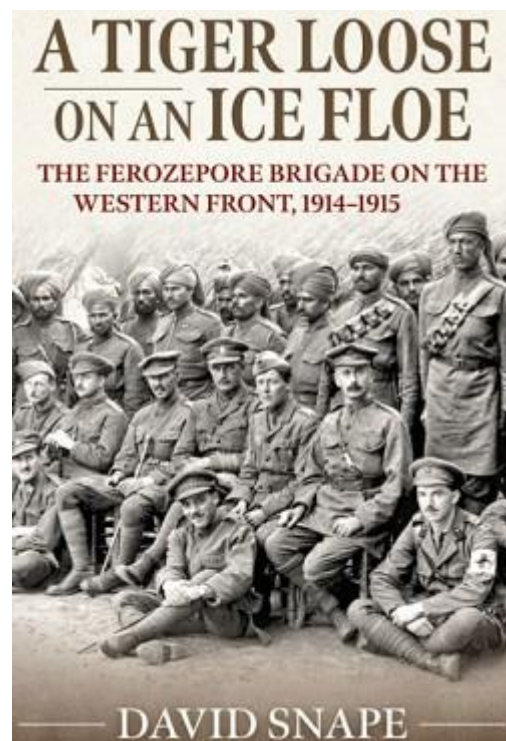
It drifts a bit away from the Ferozepore Brigade and becomes more about the Indian Corps as the brigade is divided up after the 1915 Battle of Loos and sent mostly to Egypt and Mesopotamia. Still, it's a good look into a virtually unknown, or at least unknown to me, brigade from India that served in the trenches of France.

Enjoyed it.

The Men of Warre: Retinue to Regiment # 16. by Jenn Scott. Softcover (7.2x9.8 inches). 122 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Clothes, Weapons and Accoutrements of the Scots at War 1460-1600*

This is a tough book to read with all the period excerpts. Don't get me wrong, there's a lot of information about the medieval to renaissance clothes



worn by the Scots, mostly arms and "war raiment" (armor and associated gear) but also clothes for social occasions. The first mention of a tartan is 1532 (p92).

It's just difficult to pick through the multitude of old texts.

For example: "Thir rillings are ane kynde of schone rowch of raw vnbarkeit leddir, quhare with Scottis (conforme to the ald fasson of Romanis) visit to pas in weris and hunting" (p47). Rillings are shoes made from rawhide. I can pick my way through the sentence, or at least most of it, but I really must concentrate to do so. Maybe you read this italics text faster than I can.

The text is full of these details. It's the strength of the book. But sometimes, I don't even know what the text means, even after consulting the glossary. For example: "Sallet was worn with a bevor" (p28). A sallet is a helmet, but a bevor? I went onto the internet: "sallets were often worn with a separate scoop-shaped plate gorget, called a bevor, that extended from the upper chest to just below the nose and protected the wearer's lower face and throat."

Ah. Learn something new every day.

The book contains 13 black and white photos, mostly carvings and museum pieces, and eight color uniform plates of various Scottish warriors.

Interesting bibliography. Someone did their homework...or more likely turned a dissertation into a book. No matter. The information is in there, just sometimes hard to unlock.

Enjoyed it.

Hellenistic Naval Warfare and Warships 336-30 BC. by Michael Pitassi.
Hardback (7.0x10.0). 300 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *War at Sea From Alexander to Actium*

Besides the usual Greek, Persian, Carthaginian, and Roman sea battles, this book examines rowers, rowing positions, and crew strength to figure out how oars were arranged and crewed and how warships needed to be built to accommodate the crews.

It's absolutely fascinating with the level of detail within the pages, all accompanied by 77 black and white illustrations that show oar arrangements and row assignments.

I'm also sure plenty of you will find this too hyper-detailed of an examination, but this exhaustive mix of drawings, descriptions, and analysis dissects ancient shipbuilding like no other text I've read recently.

For example, tests during the Renaissance found that one oar can support a maximum of eight rowers due to the angles of oar movement versus arm and body movement (p100). Other experiments found that pushing an oar is only 75% as effective at pulling it towards you. Other analysis figured that the large ships mentioned in ancient texts, like 20emes, 30emes, and 40emes, had to be some sort of catamaran by calculating tonnage versus, er, "humanpower" for lack of a better word as "horsepower" doesn't fit).

The chapters are roughly in chronological order and immerse you in the rowing details and technology. As you progress through the years, ship technologies and capabilities increase.

Besides the 77 drawings, the book contains 14 black and white photos, 43 black and white maps, and 93 color photos, including models of ships that the author built. Give that man a miniature wargame to play!

Good list of primary source material, although of the 55 secondary sources listed, only 19 are from 2000-2016. No scholarly magazines or publications are noted. History is a moving target, but nothing new under the publication sun for the last seven years? Yet the analysis is so detailed, it's probably nothing more was needed to be included.

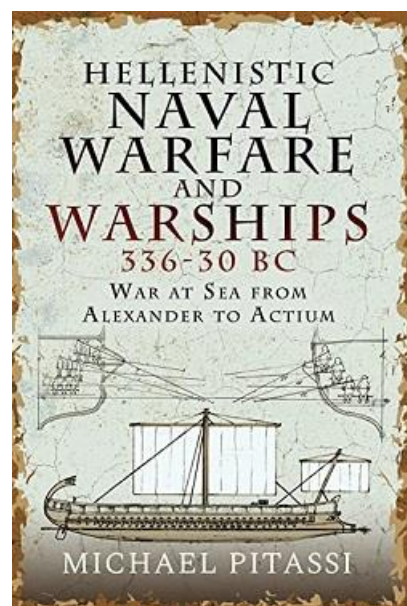
Excellent.

Enjoyed it.

British Coastal Weapons vs German Coastal Weapons: Duel 125. by Neil Short. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Dover Strait 1940-1944*

Intellectually, I knew the English Channel is about 20 or 25 miles (about 35km or so) wide between the city of Calais (France) and Dover (UK). I



might be off a couple miles, but they were close.

I also knew Great War (WWI) artillery like Big Bertha could lob shells 75 or so miles, so WWII artillery should be able to do the same.

But I never read much about an artillery duel across the Channel -- until now.

This is a perfect Osprey booklet -- an overview about something I knew nothing about covered in enough detail for me to understand the situation, weaponry, and strategies behind bombardments.

Germany had the advantage in range, with older fixed guns capable of sending a shell 56km while the newer K12 railroad guns were capable of firing a shell 115km. Both sides had radar.

The duel began in 1940, but it was never particularly intense, although damage to ports occurred on both sides. Against shipping, the British proved the smarter, sinking 28 German vessels of various sizes versus only a couple British ships lost (p74).

The booklet contains 17 color photos, six color maps, 25 black and white photos, and nine color illustrations.

Germany went on to develop V-1 and V-2 rocketry. The Canadian Army swept up the coast in 1944 to put an end to German cross-Channel artillery shots.

Just when you think there's nothing new to WWII, along comes a booklet to explore and explain a little-known topic.

2 CM FLAK 38 & Flakvierling 38: Camera On 29. by Alan Ranger. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 72 pages. 2023.

This volume in the photo-intensive series is a bit of a follow-up to Camera On 28: 2 CM FLAK 28 & 30 (see the 1/21/2023 AAR for the review or up on hmg.org).

The 57 black and white photos concentrate on pre-war and early-war single-barrel 20mm FLAK 38 while 55 black and white photos cover the quad 20mm Flakvierling 38. A variety of staged and casual photos offer a great selection of equipment shots, including some close-ups, as well as uniform shots from mostly undressed gun crew to parade-ground perfection. The shots are in the field, on rooftops, on half-tracks, and on railroad cars. The gun shields are off, partially up, and totally up, from the side and front. One thing I didn't realize that was part of the equipment was a net to hold the spent casings.

A couple typos: "gun pi" should be "gun pit" (p20), "little know" should be "little known" (p36), and "to hid aircraft" should be "to hide aircraft" (p61).

The most interesting photo to me was the full gun with casing net (p34), with runner up being a staged photo of a 12-year-old's birthday photo of him in the gunner's seat of a quad with the gun crew all around (p56).

Enjoyed it.



British Light Infantryman vs. Patriot Rifleman: Combat Men 72. by Robbie MacNiven. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *American Revolution 1775-83*

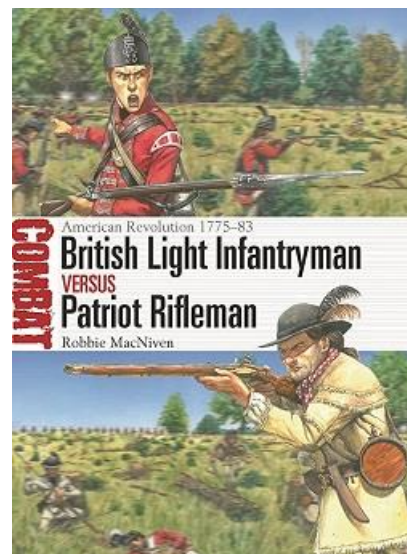
The British Light Infantrymen deserve more credit than usually given, being expert shots and armed with a bayonet. The American Riflemen were also expert shots, but lacked a bayonet. As the booklet describes, that makes a world of difference on whether or not to engage in melee.

The Americans had more riflemen than the British, and the British couldn't get replacements very often.

Apparently, the view that Riflemen sniped British officers is a bit of a myth. The British officer corps did not suffer appreciable higher casualties during the American Revolution versus other wars in the 18th century (p14). However, night sniping was a favorite American tactic. As for command and control, American riflemen used horns while the British used whistles (p25-26).

The three battles covered are: Harlem Heights (Sep. 16, 1776), Freeman's Farm (Sep. 19, 1777), and Hanging Rock (Aug. 6, 1780).

The booklet contains 12 color photos, 11 color maps, four black and white photos, four color uniform illustrations, three two-page color action illustrations, 10 other color illustrations, and 22 black and white illustrations.



Good maps, supplemented by period maps, can help to turn these paper battles into tabletop battles. Enjoyed it.

Nakajima Ki-49 'Helen' Units: Combat Aircraft 148. by George Eleftherious. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Aircraft profile covers the design and development of the Helen, which really faced a no-win situation as US air superiority extended over the Pacific. That any Japanese pilots survived may be overstating air combat results, but constant attacks on airfields and attrition in air battles slaughtered the Ki-49s.

A total of 748 Ki-49s were produced, with 128 delivered by August 1942 and more than 600 between 1942 and 1945. It didn't carry that much of a bomb load -- 1000kg -- and its engines got a bad reputation for reliability.

The booklet contains 57 black and white photos, 14 color photos, four color illustrations of tail insignia, and 14 color camouflage profiles.

Missions over Burma, Papua & New Guinea, and Philippines receive lots of first-person accounts. The most impressive Japanese tactical victory occurred on a paratrooper drop on a US airfield in the Philippines, although at great cost to the Japanese.

Enjoyed it.

Henschel HS 126: Camera On 30. by Robert Panek. Softcover (8.25x11.7 inches). 72 pages. 2023.

The HS 126 probably had its heyday in the Spanish Civil War as part of the Condor Legion, but it also flew in the Polish, French, Balkan, and USSR campaigns -- although the last one it was obsolescent. High losses during the French campaign convinced the Germans to end production in 1940. Between 500 and 900 were produced, depending on the source consulted (p4).

The 134 black and white photos show this light bomber and recon plane in these locations, although many of the shots are of aircraft that had accidents or were shot down. Two photos (p17) show the one single plane, B-1 Trop version, that was kitted out for the tropics and shipped to North Africa.

However, my favorite photo clearly shows what I believe are bomb aiming lines painted on the outside of the fuselage -- I'm guessing the numbers are height in meters: 50, 100, 500, and 1,000. There must be a standard speed when dropping a bomb if the pilot would use the lines?

Enjoyed it.

Fighting Ships of the U.S. Navy 1883-2019: Volume Four Part One. by Venner F. Milewski. Hardback (8.5x12.0 inches). 221 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *Torpedo Boats and Destroyers*

The march of Milewski's project continues with a compilation of Torpedo Boats and Destroyers. This series will have three more volumes before it is done.

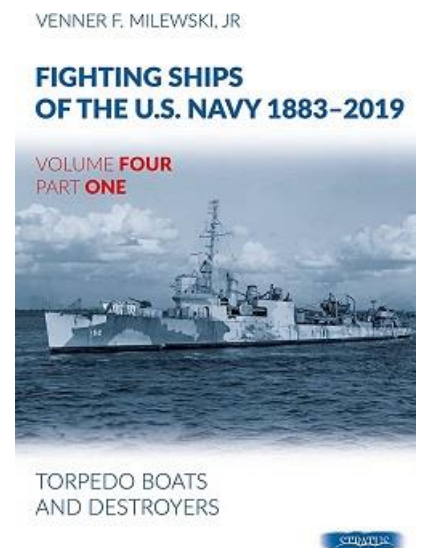
Individual ship by ship entries provide specs, terse career history, fate, and often a photograph. If no photo for an individual ship, you can always find photos of ships within the class. The book contains 328 black and white photos.

Interesting tidbits abound. The USS Stiletto was Wooden Torpedo Boat #1, launched in 1885, while USS Cushing was Torpedo Boat #1 with an 1890 launch.

Destroyer #1 is listed as the USS Bainbridge, launched August 27, 1901, but not because it was first in the water, but it was first of 16 in alphabetical order. USS Decatur, DD#5, actually launched first on September 26, 1900 (p48).

USS Truxton was converted to a banana boat, which hauled bananas (p56). The USS Williams was converted to a fire-fighting training hulk from 1944-1945 (p126).

The USS Twiggs had a most interesting career. Launched September 28, 1918, it missed WWI but was given to the British for WWII on October 23, 1940 and subsequently given to the Soviet Union on July 16, 1944. The USSR



returned the ship to the UK on November 15, 1950 and in 1951 had a background role in the movie *The Gift Horse*. Despite its stardom, it was scrapped on December 3, 1951 (p148).

While it doesn't exactly qualify as an aircraft carrier, the USS Sterett photo from 1913 shows a seaplane on the aft section of the ship (p73).

And you have to love the "Dazzle" camouflage patterns on the hull from WWI (p65, p72, and p90 to start) and WWII. The book contains 12 black and white camouflage patterns (p208 to p217) for WWII that can help modelers and miniature painters.

Once again, nicely done.

Enjoyed it.

Battles of the Wars of the Roses. by David Cohen. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 237 pages. 2022.

This readable account covers the internecine politics of the multitude of nobles, royalty, and foreign interlopers that fueled the War of the Roses. You can thank Shakespeare for the catchy title to these civil wars. The red and white roses were but one of many symbols used by both sides (p2).

Many battles are covered, but not with a great deal of detail. While you will get the broad numbers per side, or sometimes even per noble, you'll need to look elsewhere for OOBs. About half the 11 black and white maps are useful for recreating a tabletop.

Another 39 black and white photos and 48 black and white illustrations populate the text to offer some visual support to the numerous personalities mentioned. Alas, all those paintings, tapestries, and medieval text illustrations should be in color to be fully appreciated, but are not.

So, great examination of political intrigue, but not as much on the battles as the title suggests.

Enjoyed it.

Boeing F-15 E/K/SG Strike Eagle: Duke Hawkins 26. by R. Pied and N. Deboeck. Softcover (9.4x9.4 inches). 194 pages. 2022.

The *Duke Hawkins* series continues with an in-depth photographic look of the Boeing F-15 fighter. The book has 433 color photos that crawl all over the plane, including the cockpit and inside maintenance bays, with views far and close-up.

I will say that the Israelis have a far cooler camouflage scheme -- desert brown patterns -- than the basic US one-color scheme.

I noticed that two colonels, Col. Evan Pettus (p79) and Col. Lamar Pettus (p93) both fly the F-15, although not the exact same aircraft. I wonder if they are related...

One interesting point: The backseat weapon officer can fly the aircraft, although landing is a bit tricky (p84).

I counted three "awesomes" within the captions. More in the next *Duke Hawkins* review about that.

Photographic brilliance.

Enjoyed it.

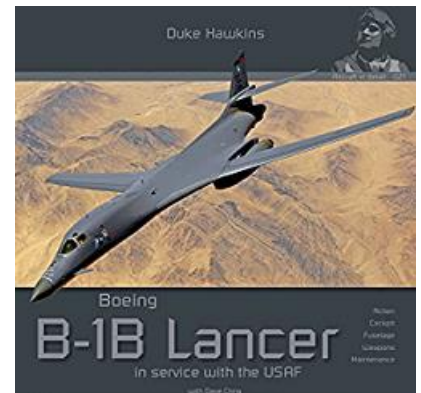
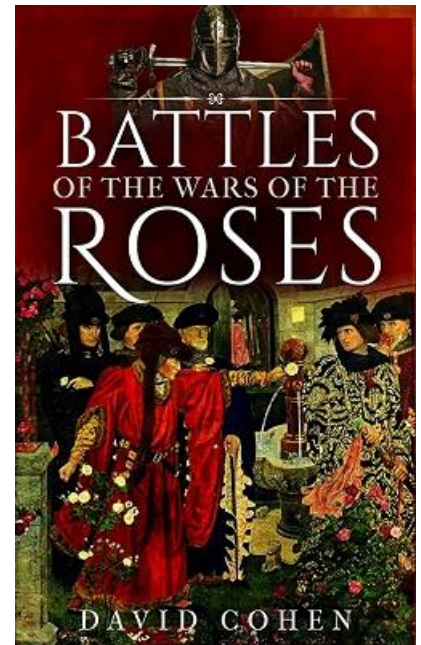
Boeing B-1B Lancer: Duke Hawkins 27. by R. Pied and N. Deboeck. Softcover (9.4x9.4 inches). 178 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *In Service with the USAF*

The photo-copia of the *Duke Hawkins* series continues with a look at the Boeing B-1B bomber. Now, you don't buy the book for the captions, but I counted nine "awesomes" that get a bit too overenthusiastic. It's as if RP or ND were writing captions while watching the Lego movie and humming the theme song Everything Is Awesome...

They missed a couple typos: "fatigue teste" should be "test" (p133) and "sharpest hoto" should be "photo" (p173).

I was a bit confused with the caption about the aircraft using a portable



air conditioning unit on "a cold winter morning" to prevent the electronics from overheating (p33). I don't recall reading that in the book *The Supersonic Bone: B-1 Bomber* (see the 11/03/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org for the review), but I suppose it must be mentioned somewhere.

Another tidbit: the radar reflection of the B-1 is 1/100th that of a B-52.

Anyway, the 369 color photos cover the airplane with details modelers appreciate. My favorite is a one of a morning flight over water and scattered clouds (p52-53) that is quite artistic and looks like it would be on a motivational poster.

The monochrome color means not much variation on the camouflage front, but if you are building a scale model of the plane, this *Duke Hawkins* volume makes for a wonderful resource.

Enjoyed it.

Byzantine Cavalryman vs. Vandal Warrior: Combat Men 73. by Murry Dahm. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *North Africa AD 533-36.*

This covers the Byzantine Empire's reconquest of the lands the Vandals conquered in North Africa -- mostly Tunisia. Per the usual format, you get the organization, weaponry, armor, and tactics used by the featured fellows.

This is followed by the analysis of three battles. In this case: Ad Decimum (Sep. 13, 533), Tricamarum (Dec. 15, 533), and Bagraas River and Scalae Veteres (536). This is where theory meets historical battle -- the text summarizes the locale and battle, including OOB information when available.

The booklet contains 55 color photos (many contemporary mosaics to showcase armor and weaponry), one black and white photo, four color uniform illustrations, three two-page color action illustrations, and seven color maps of varying degrees of usefulness -- some are operational, while the tactical maps are devoid of terrain (which may indeed be the case in Tunisia).

The maps are pretty sparse for a tabletop refight, but the information is useful for an overview of the campaign.

Enjoyed it.

Republic P-47C-5-RE: Single No. 43. by Dariusz Karnas and Artur Juszcak. Softcover (8.5x11.75 inches). 24 pages. 2022.

The *Single* series has very little to no text except for photo captions. It does contain scale drawings of the featured aircraft. In this case, it's a P-47 variation.

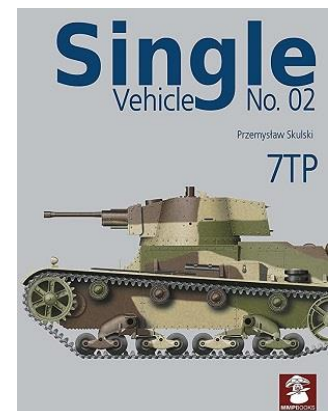
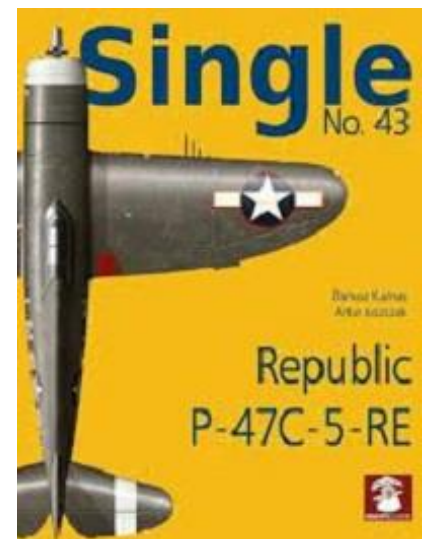
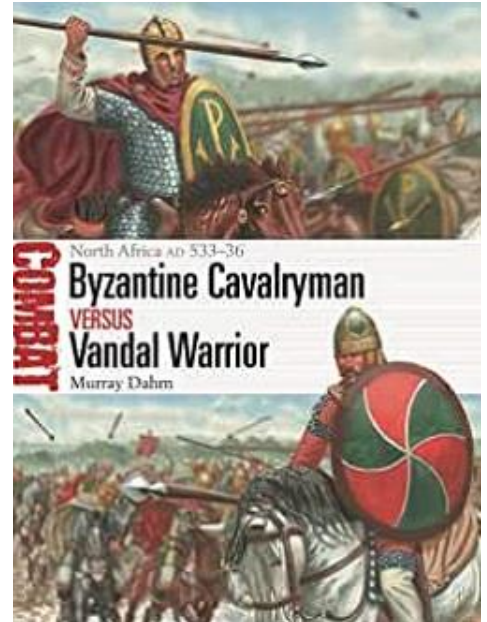
The booklet contains five 1/72 black and white drawings, 13 cross section and other 1/72 drawings, five 1/48 black and white drawings, 13 cross section and other 1/48 drawings (no scales listed), 11 black and white photos, 34 black and white illustrations from a technical manual, two color cockpit instrument panel illustrations, and four color aircraft profiles.

If you need P-47 scale drawings, here's your booklet.

7TP: Vehicle Single No. 02. by Przemyslaw Skulski. Softcover (8.5x11.75 inches). 28 pages. 2022.

The 7TP tanks gets the *Single* series treatment with little text save for photo captions, but seven 1/35 scale black and white drawings, three other 1/35 scale black and white drawings, one color camouflage illustration, 48 historical black and white photos, and 42 black and white photos, often close-ups, of 7TP tanks in museums.

For modelers, especially for those that use scale drawings, this is a fine resource.



PzKpfw VI Ausf E Tiger I (Late): Vehicle Single No. 06. by Przemyslaw Skulski. Softcover (8.5x11.75 inches). 24 pages. 2022.

The Tiger I also gets the *Single* series treatment with little text save for photo captions, but four 1/35 scale black and white drawings (top, front, side, rear), nine color photos of museum Tigers, three color camouflage illustrations, 16 historical black and white photos, and 60 black and white photos, often close-ups, of Tiger tanks in museums.

Again, for modelers, especially for those that use scale drawings, this is a fine resource.

Armies of the Roman Republic: 264 - 30 BC. by Gabriele Esposito. Hardback (7.1x10.0 inches). 237 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *History, Organization & Equipment*

Subtitle: *Armies of the Past*

Another Esposito uniform analysis goes color photo heavy this time instead of illustrations. Obviously, this is a well-covered topic. The short history contains nothing special to those that have read such many times, but the twist is using re-enactment groups to showcase the uniforms over a couple hundred years.

The 105 color photos are sharp, covering soldiers generally from the Samnite War to the loss of Crassus. A few opponents are included as well. Most photos are a full page.

The last chapter covers the re-enactment groups across the globe in case you have a hankering to toss a pilum or stab with a gladius. Or maybe just go to watch one of their re-enactments.

A couple typos: "route the Romans" should likely be "rout" (p19) and an extra space " , " (p39). There may be more. I read about a third of the history and spot checked the rest. I lingered over the uniform photos.

Most ancient gamers have a number of books about Roman Empire history in more detail than presented here. This is a uniform guide and places the uniform within the historical context. It's a pleasant enough read with fantastic photos. If you are just starting out with the period and the miniatures armies, this is a great place to start.

Enjoyed it.

Bf 109 Jabo Units in the West: Combat Aircraft 149. by Malcolm V. Lowe. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

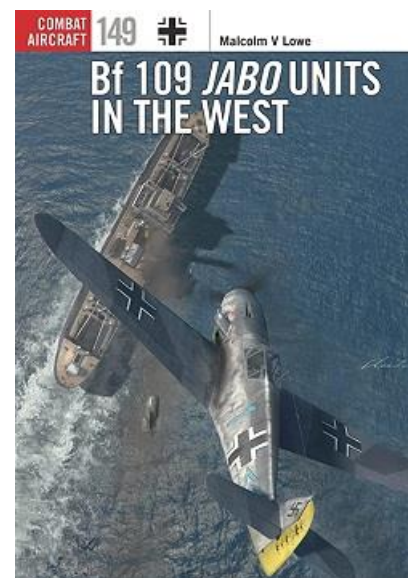
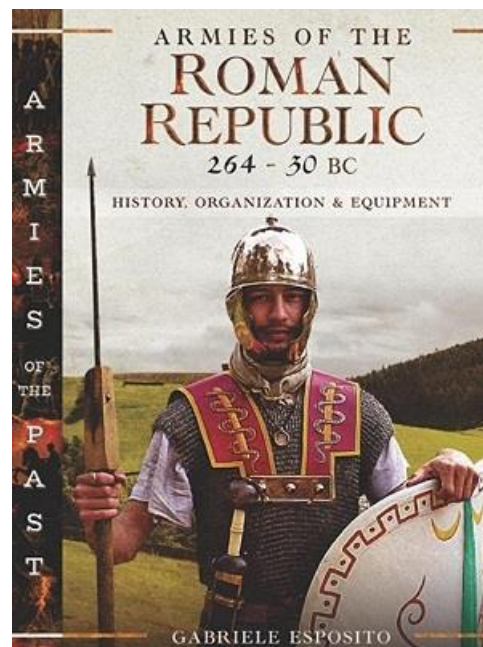
The fighter-bomber (German "Jabo") concept started small in the Luftwaffe but soon grew as tactics became refined and results increased in lethality. This booklet covers anti-shipping operations on the Channel Coast 1940-1942 and ends with Operation Bodenplatte on January 1, 1945.

By all accounts, OberLt Frank Liesendahl was especially proficient in attacking ground targets and ships -- sort of like an early version of Rudel. From these accounts, give that plane a +1 when attacking ground and ship targets. He lasted about half the war before dying in combat.

The booklet contains 57 black and white photos, one color photo, and 24 color camouflage profiles. Most of the latter use the gray splinter pattern, but the various markings can help modelers. Liesendahl's 'Blue 1' is one of the profiles, as is a 109 in RAF markings.

After 1942, most 109 Jabo runs ended in favor of using the FW-190. The middle to late war years contain few details because so few coastal and ground attack missions were flown by 109s in 1943, 1944, and 1945. The exception is the aforementioned Operation Bodenplatte, which is covered in some detail.

Enjoyed it.



The Dacians and Getae at War: Men-at-Arms 549. by Andrei Pogacias.

Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *4th Century BC-2nd Century AD*

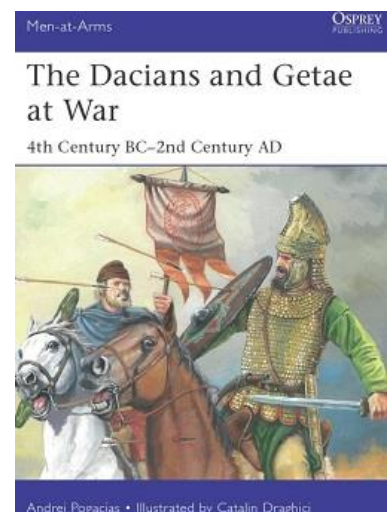
There's not a lot of information about these two tribes, although Trajan's column offers a remarkable record of their armor and weaponry. Unfortunately, Trajan's written account of the wars he fought against these two in 101-102 and 105-106 are lost. Pity.

On the plus side, the Roman poet Ovid was exiled and lived in close proximity to the Getae in the town of Tomis on the Black Sea. You can at least get a hint of the culture, although initial Roman defeats also give a hint of the martial prowess of these 'barbarians' in their mountain towns and fortresses. Archeology also offers up some clues to their equipment.

The booklet contains one black and white photo, 37 color photos, one black and white map, one black and white illustration, and nine color uniform plates containing 21 illustrations of various warriors.

Trajan was ultimately successful in conquering the Dacians and creating a new Roman province. This booklet helps explain what he and the Romans faced.

Enjoyed it.



The Meadowlands. by Robert Sullivan. Softcover (5.2x8.0 inches). 220 pages. 1998.

Subtitle: *Wilderness Adventure on the Edge of a City*

A little discount used book bin hunting sometimes unearths a gem, not that the author wants to believe his hard work was only worth \$1.

This book is an exploration of a New Jersey place called the Meadowlands, which is a bucolic-sounding name for a swamp filled with 100 years of garbage and industrial waste dumping, both legal and illegal. It also is the reported burying spot of Jimmy Hoffa. Enough bodies have been dumped in the place to make it a reasonable assumption.

Most folks might know the Meadowlands as the home to MetLife Stadium, home of the NFL football teams NY Giants and NY Jets. It is also going to be one of the venues of soccer's 2026 FIFA World Cup.

But this book is about the wetlands as the author rents a canoe and paddles all around the place looking for more history of the place. It started with Snake Hill in Secaucus.

It's a pleasant read about a place I saw from a train window on the way to Penn Station in NYC or a car window from the NJ Turnpike. Oh, I can say I visited a visitor's center of the Hackensack Meadowlands and walked the boardwalks and trails around the place.

He interviews all sorts of folks, from trashmen to road workers to former mayors to detectives, and checks their stories with extensive research in local libraries. Did you know that the Kearny Public Library has the world's largest collection of *Gone With The Wind* translations? Me neither.

Apparently, the Meadowlands hid numerous pirates that plagued the area in post-American Revolution USA. Sheriffs banded together, got a massive posse together, put cannons on small ships, and swept the marsh. One party of 18 went after the pirates' main base and was wiped out. The massive posse retreated and they later generally surrounded the pirate base and burned half the swamp down (p133-134). Presumably in a dry season.

A WWII connection occurred when US ships needed ballast for return voyages and used bombed out London (UK) debris, which was subsequently called "London Hills" (p154). A red lichen atop a green stack grows in the place and is nicknamed "British Soldier" (p153). The author finds the resting place of at least a couple fragments of the old circa 1910 Penn Station, which was demolished and the debris dumped into the Meadowlands. He brags that he had a photo taken of him and the columns, and notarized at that, but this paperback edition had no photos. Pity.

He explores official and unofficial dumps, ruins of the industrial age, pathways and waterways, and lots of foul smelling areas. He even bought a camping water filtration system to try and drink the water -- which he immediately spit out. Courageous, crazy, and compelling.

Enjoyed it.

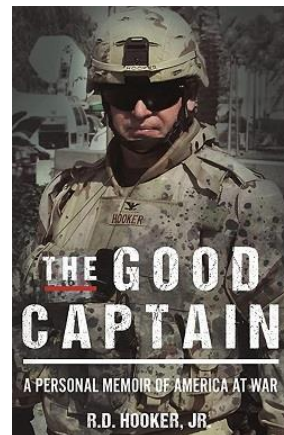


The Good Captain: Personal Memoir of America at War. by R D Hooker, jr. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 288 pages. 2022.

This is indeed a memoir of the author's 32 years of service in the US Army, which started with basic training in 1975. He became a paratrooper and then went to and graduated from West Point. From there, he hit a number of hot spots around the world, including Rwanda, Bosnia, Sinai, Iraq, Afghanistan, and various US postings, including teaching at West Point.

Some of this is laugh out loud funny and some concerns unbelievable attitudes within the US Army and genocidal intent of foreign combatants. As he rises up the ranks, the author learns lessons in diplomacy, solving problems with creativity, and how progress is often a slow process.

Enjoyed it.



HALO: The Flood. by William C. Dietz. Paperback (4.2x6.9 inches). 341 pages. 2003.

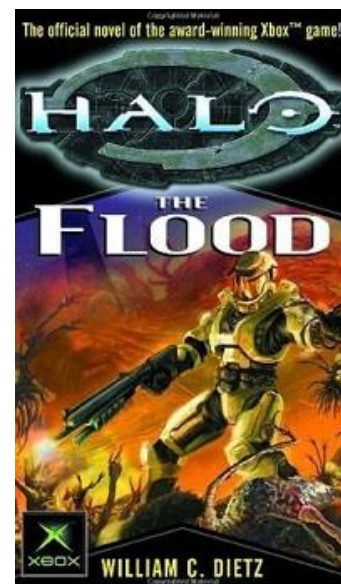
Years ago, I played the *Halo* series on an old Xbox 360, so I know exactly what the Flood was. If you must know, I completed the game on easy, then medium, and hard mode. Superhard mode -- forget it. My fingers don't move that fast.

While this novel roughly follows the Master Chief protagonist, it also includes bits and pieces about the supporting characters in the game. They're little more than cardboard cutouts, but my guess this was done superquick. Certainly, the Master Chief doesn't die multiple times like I did in the game, but on occasion comes close to dying as his shield comes close to failure. One time he's wounded. Hero in book vs. game!

The path he takes in the novel isn't exactly like that in the game, but pretty close. If you never played the game, this mimics it fairly well.

It's a milled novel. It's a gig. Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Tales of Urath: Book 1 Of Dragons and Drakes. by Arthur J Dorety III. 186 pages. 2022.

The Oscar-Winning movie *Everything Everywhere All At Once* is as good an explanation of the multiple dimensions and alternate realities that form the foundation of Urath. Theorists posit that Urath is the original world in all the multiverse. Earth, for example, has 52 different variations. Tales of Urath: Book 1 concerns this original planet.

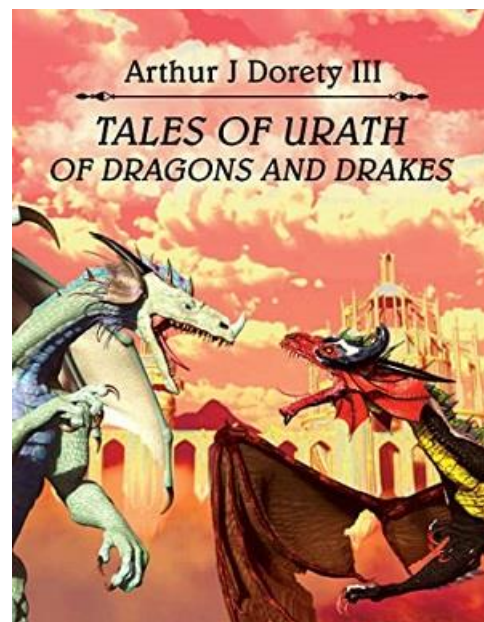
Of all the "Divines" that interact in the multiple universes, the dragons and drakes proved to be the most powerful and the most contentious. As the dragons and drakes meddled in the affairs of men, they accumulated treasures and followed their own logic and goals.

Enter the greed for the Pearls of Wisdom, which house magic and wisdom and allow the bearer to control a dragon or drake. In the hierarchy of dragons and drakes, each "color" possesses specific powers and each individual a greater or lesser manipulation of these powers.

This self-published book starts off with a series of vignettes about the various schemers and caretakers of the pearls. Eventually, these merge to form a view of the world and the multi-faceted efforts of wizards and thieves to track down clues and obtain the pearls.

The imagination and creativity is quite impressive. There's a full RPG-worthy world within the pages. Alas, the prose is more recap than active writing -- more tell than show, so to speak. Ideally, events unfold through the senses of the characters, not the omniscience of the author. It's always a tough balance for an author to introduce characters and associated backstories versus advancing the plot. The more story arcs, the more has to be transferred to the reader. Urath has a lot of characters to track.

Yet "show" anecdotes do percolate through the "tell" prose every once in a while. Guardians of the Copper Desert (Chapter 4) proved interesting, if a bit perplexing about the "twist" at the end. The Forest Dragon Inn / Lair of the Forest Lord (Chapter 5 and 6). Indeed, that's where the book began to take better shape.



Equally superb are the 65 color and 23 black and white illustrations of the dragons, persons, and locales plus eight color maps that complement the text. Dorety is quite the talent using the half dozen programs listed as being used for the illustrations. Fair warning for the under 18 years old crowd: one color image is a NC 17 "leaves nothing to the imagination" bath scene of one of the wizardresses. The rest are all G and PG-13.

Elsewhere on the web, he has a full portfolio of dinosaur illustrations well worth a visit.

So, uneven prose, creative world, and killer illustrations. Self-published, so is available on Amazon. Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Bazooka Charlie. by James P Busha with Carol (Carpenter) Apacki. Hardback (6.5x9.4). 248 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Unbelievable Story of Major Charles Carpenter and Rosie the Rocketeer*

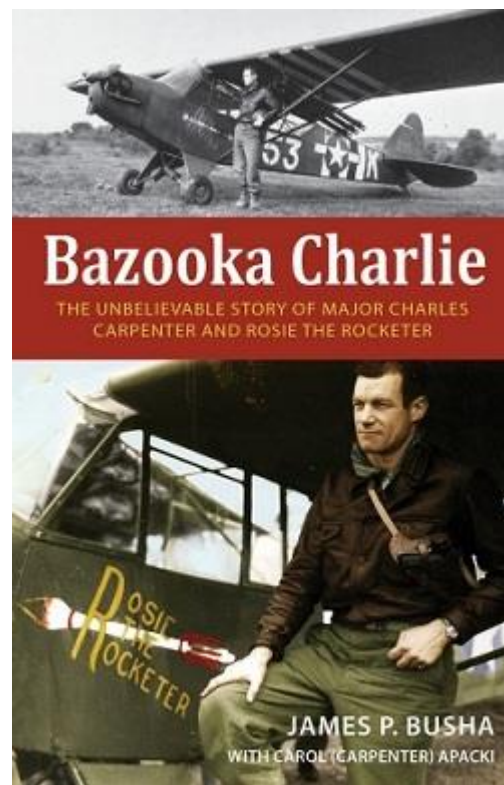
It's hard to believe a book about a US piper cub pilot who strapped bazookas to his wings in WWII and went hunting German tanks could be so interesting. Major Charles Carpenter wasn't the only one to try it, but he was the most determined and seemed to have had some success. He certainly had some good PR, not only about earning the nickname 'Bazooka Charlie' but also by commandeering a tank and pressing an assault on German lines. That is something to read -- you wouldn't believe it in a Hollywood movie. What hero rule can portray this on a tabletop?

What is truly interesting is the collection of letters he wrote home, reproduced within these pages, during training and combat that captures his emotions of the time.

As the war goes on and he is shifted around from job to job, including being a glider pilot trainee and ferrying generals around training battles in the US, his naiveté starts to erode. By the time he is in combat as an artillery observer turned part-time tank hunter and full-time flyer of corps commanders, he becomes melancholy. His luck finally ran out and he was wounded and spent the rest of the war in the hospital.

This is an effectively written biography that captures the nuances of someone sent off to war and came back different. You can read it in the letters and the surrounding prose that fills in events in between the letters.

Enjoyed it.



A Photographic History of Amphibious Warfare: 1939-1945. by Simon and Jonathan Forty. Hardback (7.0x10.0). 240 pages. 2023.

I like the scope of this book. It covers WWII raids, evacuations, massive invasions, weapons, and even what might have been (Seelowe, Hercules, etc.). The photographs are indeed comprehensive and the text reads well -- well, the text that I could read.

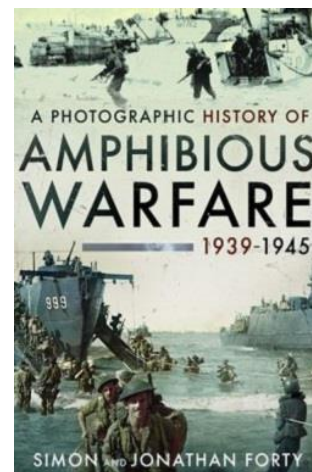
Sheesh. Does anyone actually look at a printed proof before the file is sent off to the printers? Sidebar sections of this book use teeny tiny text, like pages 20-23, pages 28-31, and plenty more throughout the book.

I have no idea what the size is, but what graphic genius crams the small type into tinted pages and then, in double genius mode, put vast swathes of text in italic?

The captions are in a large enough font and readable, and I can get by with the entries that provide a short Wikipedia-style entry, but a lot of this book is too difficult and painful to read. On the plus side, this is a quick book to read because I just gave up reading and looked at the photos.

The book contains 270 black and white photos, 63 black and white maps, and 40 black and white illustrations. The entries seem comprehensive and can offer plenty of inspiration for small-scale scenarios.

My eyes may not be the greatest, but the reading glasses I use suffice for the vast majority of books. This one's in the minority. Pity. Before I stopped squinting, some good info within the sidebars.



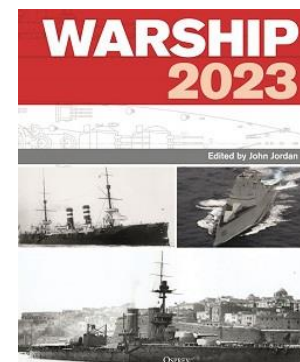
Warship 2023. Edited by John Jordan. Hardback (7.8x10.8). 248 pages. 2023.

These annuals delivers a wide range of naval articles, in this case about a dozen. Last year's *Warship 2022* was reviewed in the 12/01/2022 AAR and up on hmgs.org)

I enjoyed the articles that are WWII and earlier, for I am not a modern buff per se. I admit I only skimmed the highly technical Postwar Electronic Warfare Systems in the Royal Navy (p94-p111), but did relish many other articles. The 1914 loss of the HMS Audacious to a German mine while on a training mission, German flak ships of WWII, the development of the Yokosuka Naval Yard in Japan, and the WWII tracking of the 12-inch guns of the Russian battleship *Gen. Alekseev* (some went from Russia to Finland to Germany to German-occupied Jersey Islands) proved interesting.

If you have even a minor interest in naval subjects, there are at least a half dozen within that will fascinate.

Enjoyed it.



Dragoons and Dragoon Operations in the British Civil Wars 1638-1653: Century Soldier 99. by Andrew Abram. Softcover (7.2x9.8 inches). 334 pages. 2023.

English Civil Wars dragoons were adaptations of mounted infantry incorporating lessons learned in Germany, Sweden, and Netherlands. They were meant to advance and seize locations, such as bridges, although they often fought alongside pike and other infantry.

Lots of small skirmish and small actions can be the basis for tabletop battles -- tax collection guard duty and interception, attacking small garrisons, and raiding supply convoys to name a few.

Although a tad skimpy on organizational detail, it's mostly because units didn't seem to have much common unit sizes. You do get an abundance of pay and other numerical cost information of everything a dragoon would need, difficulties in recruitment as the wars went on, and in some cases, regiment by regiment details. Separate chapters cover the armies of Oxford, Essex, Eastern Association, and New Model.

Uniform and equipment details include the Earl of Essex ordering "orange tawney" scarves and ribbons for his troops in 1642 in an effort to identify who was who, but this varied considerably. Apparently, the Royalists wore red, pink, and blue scarves and ribbons (p141). The Earl of Manchester issued green coats lined with red, but later had to issue red coats lined with green (p162).

The book contains 37 black and white period illustrations.

About the only thing I would add is use of more subheads within chapters to break up the text a bit. Otherwise, ECW fans will find this examination of all things dragoon fascinating.

Enjoyed it.

