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Antietam and the Cornfield: Photos
Road to Independence: AWI Wargame
Hussite War Wargame: *Blind Faith* Map

Books I've Read

German Fighters of the Great War: Vol. 1
Retreat Through the Rhone Valley: Aug-Sep 1944
Mysteries of the Norman Conquest: Events of 1066
The Tagus Campaign of 1809: Alliance in Jeopardy
The Talavera Campaign: 1809
The Second World War Illustrated: Fourth Year
The Second World War Illustrated: Fifth Year
Operation Allied Force: Air War Serbia 1999 V.2
The Winter War: 1939-40
Roman Mail and Scale Armour: Elite 252
Military Dogs of World War II
90 Years of the Indian Air Force: Asia at War 30
Sturmgeschutz-Abt. 226: WWII Photobook 24
WW2 Vehicles: Through the Lens 1
Operation Black Buck 1982: Air Campaign 37
The Air War at Sea in the Second World War
Black Tulip: Life and Myth of Erich Hartmann
Villers-Bocage: Operation Perch 1944
Minutegirls (Sci-fi novel)
El Salvador: Vol 2 1984-1992 (LatinAmer War 34)
Basic Guide to Modelling
Single Model 02: Stalinetz S-65 City Tractor
Single Model 03: Sazabi Custom (Mecha)
Solomons Air War: Vol 1 - Guadalcanal 1942
Pacific Profiles: Vol 9 - P-38s 1942-1944
1805: Tsar Alexander's First War w/ Napoleon
Dropping the Atomic Bomb on Hirohito and Hitler
The First Atomic Bomb: Alternate History WWII
British Interwar Aircraft
First Bridge Too Far: Primosole Bridge 1943
Ottoman Armies 1820-1914: Men At Arms 551
The Cimbrian War 113-101BC: Campaign 393
Nazi UFOs: Legends and Myths of Flying Saucers



Spawned Ambition: American Revolution

by Russ Lockwood

Give GameMaster Mike credit for creating an ambitious scenario designed to introduce some fog of war onto a single tabletop. Of course, he had not figured on the gang of usual suspects botching his best-laid plans.

I, of course, exempt myself from the case of botch-olism. Of all the gamers, I alone performed my role -- as American Col. Roosevelt Black -- to perfection. Yes, perfection: I stayed true to the plan, moved nary an inch, and fired with gusto and accuracy.

As for the others, well, well, well, therein lies a tale of too much fog.

The table. The American wagon train will come in upper right corner and exit lower right corner. British come in from the left.



From Georgie, With Love

First, a missive regarding the importance of our mission from General George himself:

The map. Photo by Mike.

*New Liberty,
March 23rd, 1779*

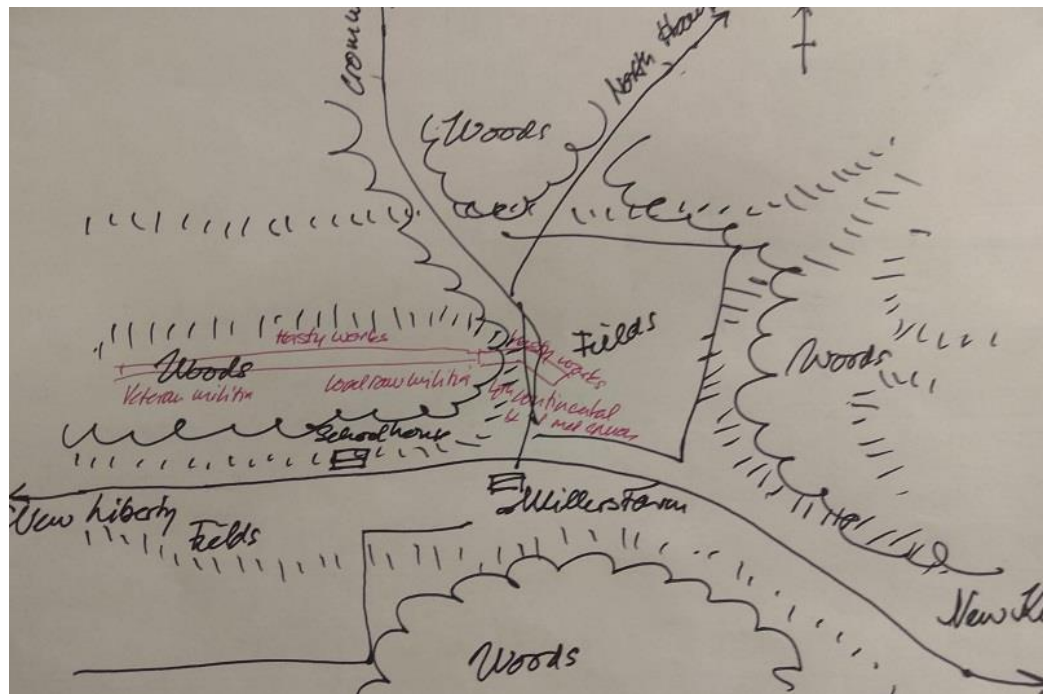
*To Major General, Sir
Charleston Phillips,*

*We have an Army,
but it is clad in rags,
barefooted, and armed with
little but sticks and stones.
We are in desperate need
of the supplies sent us from
the King of France.*

*We have your
report on the engagement
in the surrounds North of
New Kingstowne, and we
compliment you for your
gallant delaying actions
and successful disengagement.*

We have learned that the British force you engaged, under command of General Stonehouse Jayson, secured local intelligence from loyalists and is now marching, unimpeded by cannon and train, to New Liberty at Millers Farm with the aim to interrupt your progress. Other British forces are moving south from Cromwell and North Hampton. We are awaiting intelligence on the forces and their exact whereabouts. Until such information is on hand, we are obliged to favor the defense of New Liberty.

We have dispatched the 4th Continental under command of Col. Roosevelt Black to prepare whatever screening is possible of the New Kingstowne-New Liberty road at Millers Farm. We are attempting to muster local militia units to add numbers to his command.



We emphasize; the supplies you carry are critical to our survival as an Army and Freedom as a Nation. You must succeed! Colonel Rosevelt Black's command can offer little but a delaying action against the British forces. Engage the British with your own command, if you must, but avoid to the greatest possible extent a general action. Fight and Disengage as you did so well at New Kingstowne. We need the supplies and your army at New Liberty!

Col. Rosevelt Black is under order to keep you informed of his preparations, and whatever intelligence he may gather on the British.

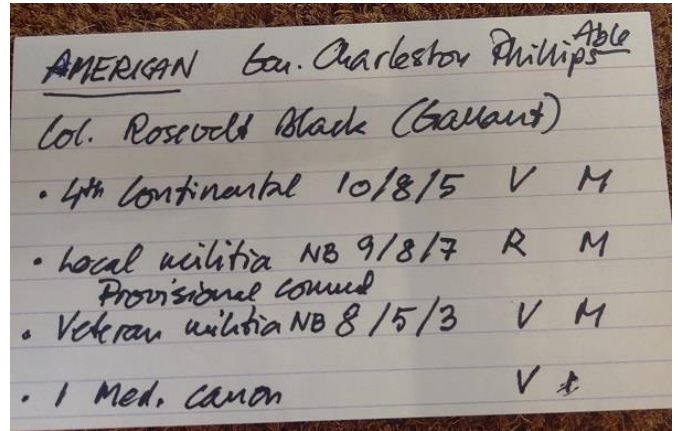
-- General George Washington

I read that and thought -- whaddaya mean "can offer little but a delaying action?" I'm using my pinky to give the stink-eye to ol' G.W. I plan to do more than just delay the lobsterbacks. Never fear, I'll hold the road open for the supplies, but I also plan to give the redcoats a big, red, bloody nose, too!

My roster. Photo by Mike.

GM's Pre-Game Instructions

Mike e-mailed me instructions regarding my command. I assume he sent instructions to all commanders.



A handwritten roster on lined paper. At the top, it says "AMERICAN Gen. Charleston Phillips" with "Able" written above Phillips. Below that, it says "Col. Rosevelt Black (Gallant)". The roster lists four units with their dates and unit types:

- 4th Continental 10/8/5 V M
- local militia NB 9/8/7 R M
- Provisional Council
- Veteran militia NB 8/5/3 V M
- 1 Med. Canon V t

The outcome of the battle of New Kingstowne was deemed a minor victory to the British because they held the battlefield. However, at a strategic level, it was a success for the Americans, as General Charleston Phillips managed to extract most of his army and all the crucial supplies offloaded by the French in the port of New Kingstowne. His army and the supplies are now enroute to New Liberty. Col. Rosevelt Black was in George Washington's tent when the General penned the letter to General Charleston Phillips. It conveyed Black's instructions.

OK. Got it. Hold the British to allow the American supplies to get through, but try not to lose your command over it.

Mike e-mailed me instructions regarding my command. I assume he sent instructions to all commanders, but I was not privy to them. For all I know, ol' G.W. was about to toss me into the privy so his supplies can get through.

I have attached the roster of your command. The "V" stands for Veteran, "R" for Raw, and "M" for Musket. "NB" for No Bayonets. This variant of Regimental Fire & Fury rules starts with only one unit on the table: your 4th Continentals. This unit and a cannon will be positioned behind hasty works overlooking the junction of Cromwell and North Hampton roads. The hasty works inside the woods with the militia unit (in Open Order) and the veteran unit will not be on the table, but will be placed when I determine the British commanders/players will gain that knowledge. Movement of units on the table, but out of sight of the opponent, will be done by way of markers with their respective unit names and sizes. Again, when I decide, the opponent will learn enemy unit positions. I believe that will be after a turn or two for the most part.

The map does not reflect a stream and swamp in the valley in front of your positions.

The stream between the British entry left and American positions right. Photo by Mike.



As you can see, I start on the defensive. The trick will be to hold long enough for the wagon train to scoot behind me and then perform a fighting withdrawal back to New Liberty. Hasty works are a big advantage. I plan to stick around in them for far longer than ol' G.W. might believe possible.

Columns of Brits

Upon reaching the battlefield, I noted a small difference between the map and my hasty works. On the map, my hasty works extended across the road. On the tabletop, my hasty works ended at the top of the hill, leaving the road clear.

Hmmm. I wondered if that would be important. Guess I'll find out.

Like clockwork, the first British troops appeared on the table using gray treasure chest markers. Or maybe they were gray barns. I spotted them right away, mostly because moving gray treasure chests show up pretty well against green foliage.

Oh yeah, I also sat on a hill with a clear line of sight for all British treasure chests except one that trickled in through the woods to my far left.

Now, I knew that I had hasty works in the woods, but British commander Rich didn't. Boy, will he be surprised in a few turns.

My American lads in hasty works at bottom sight in on British columns.



Fire and Fury Regimental

Mike was using his adaptation of ACW *Fire and Fury Regimental (F&FR)* rules, which played pretty much like ACW *F&FR* rules except the 28mm troops were different. He had a few changes, but darned if I can think of 'em.

I think that's the job of my aide de camp, but it was me all alone. Except for my aerial "sketching" of the battle, which looks photo realistic.

First Blood

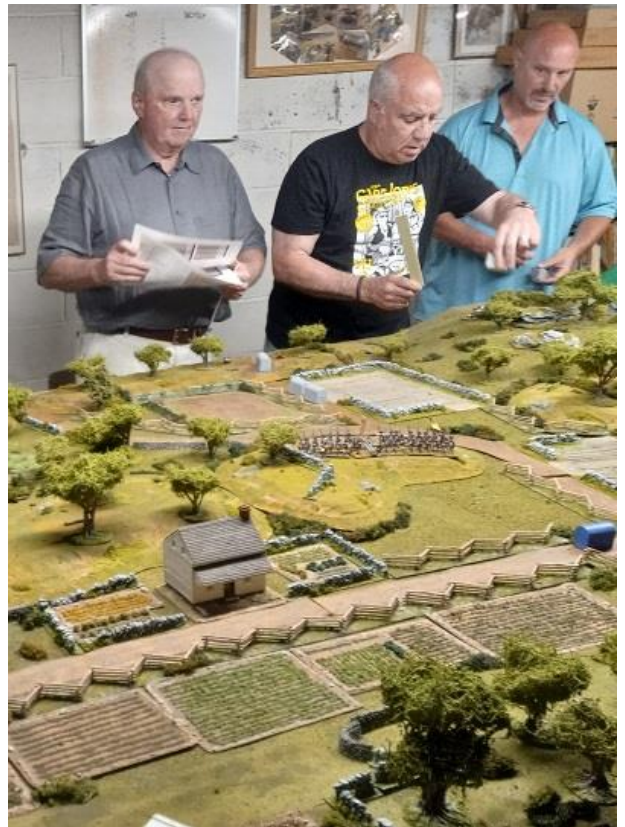
My cannon boomed at the British columns. Troops under British commander Sam felt the first inklings of doom as his first column was hit. He rallied from his disorder and continued coming at me. My cannons boomed again, along with a little musket fire, and his column halted anew with more casualties.

By this time, British commander Jay was inching through the fields and woods on the other side of the road, his gray treasure chests becoming known. British commander Chris came down the road, but again, my troops overlooked the open road and fields, so his columns were revealed, too.

British commanders (l to r): Same, Jay, and Chris.

On our end, Phil pushed the American wagon train as fast as possible down the road. Dave peeled off two artillery sections to cover the road where the British were likely to approach. Later, he deployed a militia unit as a rearguard for the train.

Meanwhile, two American blue treasure chest markers marched over hill and dale to confront Jay's British. I'm not sure if these were controlled by Dave or Phil, but whichever



thought better of going toe-to-toe, he faded back into the woods and up the hill, never seen by the British in the tangled terrain.

Shifting Into Overdrive

After about an hour of gaming, we all started to see a problem. The American wagon train seemed to be unconcerned with the British advance. The lead wagon was already off board and "safe" at New Liberty before the British had a chance to interrupt the movement.

We thought about this a few moments, shrugged and kept playing.

The other British commander, Rich (left) confers with Jay. Photo by Dave.

British commander Chris noticed it and in desperation to do something, anything, to disrupt the lightning conga line of wagons, kept his troops in column instead of deploying into line. He marched them down the road under the guns and muskets of my troops and into the sights of Dave's cannon. It was slaughter city. Between me and Dave, Chris lost half his troops in one turn (two fire phases).

But what could he do? He had at least a tiny chance that the Americans would suffer bad die rolls and miss. He had to get a move on if he was to sever at least the tail end of the wagon train. I'll ponder on his obvious desperate effort in a moment.

British commander Rich continued through the woods until his gray treasure chest marker contacted the American militia's hasty works. I put out the works and my troops, only to learn that Rich's marker was a dummy marker. It obviously was a scout.

American commanders Phil (left) and Dave (center) consider the pace of the wagon train while GM Mike (right) looks on.

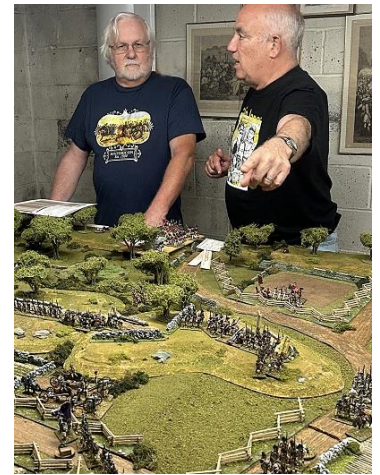
No matter. British commander Sam thought he had outflanked my 4th Continentals, but ran into the militia behind hasty works. Stalemate for the moment.

Another marker from Rich pushed through the woods, stopping to cross a stream. He believed he had outflanked my militia, but ran into my veteran troops behind more hasty works. He charged anyway.

Turn 4 says my notes. Note Chris' desperate charge down the road (upper middle of photo). The American wagon train heads for safety (bottom of photo). Note the blue treasure chest markers that indicate American units.

Brilliant Plan

I want to state that my brilliant plan was working. The GM set up my troops there and I moved nary an inch.



Wait! Let me amend that. I refused the flank of the regiment nearest Chris' troops marching in column down the road. I guess that's movement.

Two GM Miscues

The first miscue was the movement rate of the American wagon train. Mike said it was 12 inches. Phil looked at the chart and saw that road movement was doubled. Dave has a big table, but two feet per turn means the wagon train scooted down the road at warp speed.

What Mike had planned was a 12-inch road move for the wagon train that was not doubled. That inadvertent doubling left only air for the British to hit.

Sam's column thinks it outflanked the 4th Continentals, only to run into my militia in hasty works. Photo by Dave.

The second miscue concerned the British objective, and here we had a wee bit of miscommunication. The intended goal was to "intercept the wagon train." This was heard by Rich.

However, Jay and Chris both heard "control the crossroads by the end of the game." I don't recall what Sam heard, but his mission was to tie up the 4th Continentals and capture the works. Or at least that looks like the plan he had -- Dance around in a frontal pinning and sweep around the flank.

A third point, but not a miscue, was that British units needed a die roll to enter the table. That could only delay the British efforts to intercept the American wagon train.

In any case, the scenario was in a bit of a flux. We thought and thought and reasoned and squinted and tried to figure out how to turn back time like an Al Stewart country in *Year of the Cat*, or a Nektar *Bluebird*, or Cher. Hey, your choice. This is a judgement-free AAR about your musical preferences.

Alas, we settled on seeing if Rich's elite troops could break my veteran troops and head towards the wagon train. So, Rich and I played out the firing and melee. I picked a great time to roll high. I killed off two stands and repulsed the attack. No melee. Return fire did nothing.

Game over, man, we all agreed.

Rich's unit charged, but lucky American fire killed two stands, disordered the unit, and repulsed the assault. Game Over.



Perfection Plus

It was only 9:30pm on a Friday and only an hour and a half since we started. We did the only thing possible: we retired to the pub to consider the ambitious plans of GM Mike.

Give him credit for trying something other than line 'em up and charge. It didn't work as expected, so notch this one up to experience. This may not go down in the AAR chronicles as a great, tight, down to the wire game, but any game on Friday night is a good game.

As for me, and as you have read, I played my part perfectly. I stayed true to the plan, moved nary an inch, and fired with gusto and accuracy. Did I mention rolling well?

Hmmm. I can smell a promotion from colonel to brigadier general...

The best aspect of wargaming: the pub.

Top: 2023 photo. Clockwise from bottom left: Dave, Chris, Phil, Rich, Jay (standing), Mike, and Sam. Russ took photo. "Not bad for a five-year difference," we all fibbed after seeing the 2018 photo...

Bottom: 2018 photo. From left: Jay, Sam, Dave, Phil, Russ, Rich, and Chris. Mike took the photo.



Crisis on the Danube, March/April 1809: A Snappy Nappy Campaign-in-a-Day Event

By Peter

Where: The Portal, Manchester, CT **When:** Saturday, October 7, 2023 10 AM – 5 PM

Rules: *Snappy Nappy*, by Russ Lockwood

GM: Peter Anderson – contact Gonsalvo@aol.com

If interested in playing, let me know with preference for side (French/Rhine Confederation), if any, and especially any players interested in being the C-in-C (Charles or Napoleon/Berthier).

The event will be played with hundreds of 28 mm miniatures across 15 four by 6 foot tables, with multiple players. Each player will be commanding roughly half to a full Corp of troops. There will be 8 French/Allied Commands plus Napoleon/Berthier as C-in-C, and 7 -8 Austrian Commands, plus Archduke Charles as C-in-C. Event is free, but we encourage you to make some gaming purchases while you attend to support our host, The Portal.

Monmouth Battlefield: An American Revolution Visit

by Russ Lockwood

I hadn't been to Monmouth battlefield near Freehold, NJ, in a couple decades. So, one hot, sunny July day, when the temperature reached into the 90s (Fahrenheit) and the dew point was high enough for the air to coat you in humidity with each alternate step, we drove down to the battlefield.

Monmouth Battlefield Visitor Center.



The draw was the relatively new to me, as in 10 years old, visitor center that replaced the original.

Von Steuban statue. Better than a Charles Lee statue.

Historical Overview

The British were heading back to New York City, with a portion of the American army under General Lee in general pursuit. An effort to trap the British rearguard failed and the British turned the tables on the Americans. It was a hot day back then, too.

The Americans were being tumbled back when a furious General George Washington arrived on the scene, relieved Lee, and set about creating a defensive line.

The line held, in part because American artillery swung into action and brought fire upon the Brits. A stiffening American line and cannon fire convinced the Brit rearguard to grudgingly move along. A British Grenadier counter-attack was stopped, in part by flanking artillery fire from Combs Hill (where the visitor center is located)

Oh yeah. Somewhere in there the legend of Molly Pitcher, a woman (gasp) who was in the thick of the fighting bringing water to the American artillerymen, or more likely helping "woman the gun." The pitcher may have been a bucket and the water used on the sponge to extinguish embers in the barrel. My theory, anyway.

Either way, the legend makes a good story.



Cannon at the entrance to the Visitor's Center, which sits on Combs Hill.

Museum Walkaround

One big strike against the museum: No photos allowed. No flash I get. No photos? Bah! It's not like they have George Washington's hat that might be ruined. I am desperately trying to remember if the museum contains any original uniforms or flags, but I'm drawing a blank.



Still, the small museum has a decent selection of weaponry and such plus lots of drawings and photos. It took me about a half hour to make the circuit, including reading the chronological mural of the battle. Nice touch, that.

Not exactly the lighted map, but a map from the web. First part of the battle: Lee's attack gets stuffed. Map from web.

The big draw for me is the lighted map -- a 10 foot by 10 foot or so terrain board with lights that brighten and dim to a recorded narration of how the battle unfolded.

Alas, it was on the fritz. It was on the fritz 20 years ago. Disappointing. I wish I could show you a photo, but "No photo for you!"

I did chat with the head park ranger about the (un)lighted map. It turns out he's the fellow who is supposed to maintain it. It was working earlier in the year, but it also loses alignment.

What you don't know is the lighted map is a combo of computerized lights and old-fashioned gears with holes in them. As the narration plays, the gears turn underneath like a giant clockwork. This sounds like the insides of a pinball machine where digital and analog meet.

The map is old and was the last one done by the creator (who did other lighted maps, like in Gettysburg). The park ranger, who was celebrating his 40th year, had spoken to the original creator for a bit on how the clockwork mechanism worked and through trial and error, traced the wiring and timed the gears and got it working and kept it working.

Alas, the years have caught up with clockwork and his body. The map is only a couple feet off the floor, so getting under it takes a bit of youthful enthusiasm - and today's youth tend to push a button on a phone, not shimmy under tables to learn clockwork skills.

Second part of the battle: Washington organizes a line and cannons ply their trade on British infantry. Map from the web.

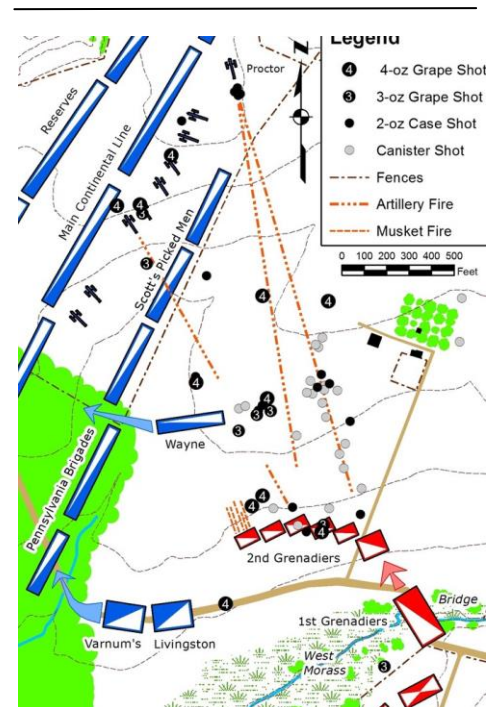
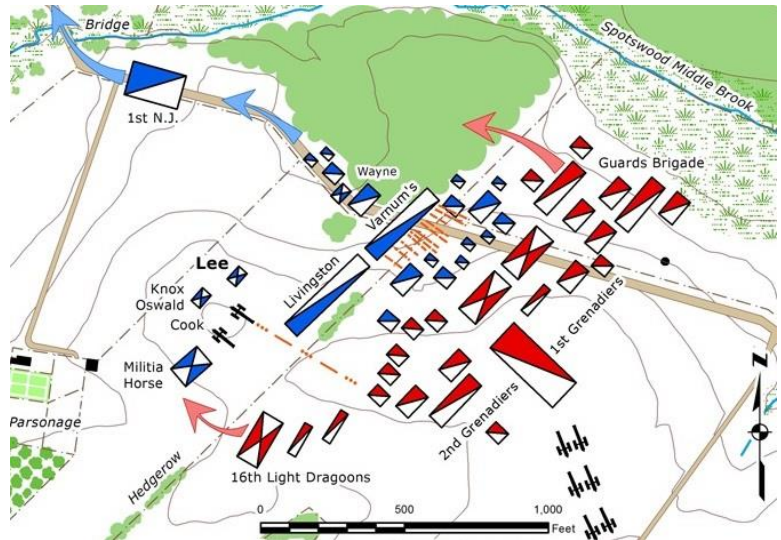
Battlefield Walkabout

The visitor center sits atop Combs Hill that was used by the flanking cannon. The trails around the battlefield start here, descending under trees to a bridge that crosses a stream and into what is now an orchard.

We ventured out into the blast furnace of the shadeless orchard, heat stroke plaguing every step. Sweat pooled on brow with nary a breeze to relieve the oppressive heat. Vultures circled overhead, or maybe they were just blackbirds. Are hallucinations the start of dehydration?

The Hedgerow is the first stop (officially stop 3 on the grand tour). A fence marks the course of the first American effort to stem the first British counterattack.

Post 3 marks the start of the hedgerow that stretches into the distance.



The wide trail among the apple trees stretched into the distance, its end point obscured by the shimmering vision of an ice cream truck at the entrance to a water park. Our mouths turned dry. Our tongues felt like sandpaper. As we trod closer, the illusion vanished. I'm thinking mirages are the midpoint of dehydration.

We staggered to the first intersection and headed left to Parsonage Farm, or at least where the info panel says it used to be. Here, at different times in the battle, the Americans put up another fight. We put up a fight, too, against bugs that scented baking skin cells.

The panel says the Parsonage was here.



That was enough for the moment. We turned back, knees buckling under the weight of a billion solar rays and a trillion dew points of humidity. We reeled across the bridge, clutching at hand rails to drag ourselves along.

We edged into the partial relief of shade and trudged up the hill to the visitor's center. Arms leaden with fatigue reached out and creaked open the door. We lurched into the welcome coolness of air conditioning.

The Sutfin House in the middle of a cornfield.



Short Drive

Revived and restored, we opened the car doors to be met by super-heated air worthy of the inside of the sun. Opening the windows helped. Plastering our faces against the air conditioning vent helped more.

Being gluttons for punishment, we drove the roundabout route to the other side of the battlefield, where the British attacked over the stream and GW and the Americans made a stand on Perrine Hill. We parked the car in the shade and ventured once more into the heat, my friends.

The flat terrain by the stream is currently a cornfield. It's just as open, shadeless, and oppressive as the orchard. Cornstalks to the left of us. Cornstalks to the right of us. Onward we brave two marched towards the Sutfin House. It's closed and has seen better days.

Sutfin House looking towards Perrine Hill.



We slunk along the path through the shadeless cornfield to the base of Perrine Hill. Washington rallied the troops here. We rallied not and headed back along the edge of the cornfield and to our car.

Bottom of Perrine Hill looking towards Sutfin House.



I suppose we were there about a couple hours in total. Battlefields are great places to walk, but my tolerance for stumbling around drenched in sweat is declining as the years pass.

We didn't even attempt to visit the Monmouth County Historical Museum, in Freehold. I don't know if they changed anything in the last 20 years or so.

Monmouth battlefield is well worth a walkabout, but try and pick a time other than high summer. NJ weather in late July and August is often a humid misery. You'll enjoy the battlefield more with pleasant weather..

Right: Combs Hill position overlooking hedgerow (generally on right side of photo beyond trees) and Parsonage (left side of photo beyond trees).

The Park's GPS address is:
16 Highway 33-BR, Manalapan, NJ 07726
Park Office: 732-462-9616



New Wargame: The Battle of Stoney Creek - June 6, 1813

By Russ Lockwood

This news item about a new game, *A Feeble and Negligent Action*, came into my e-mail. From the website:

British prospects in Canada were rather gloomy in the Spring of 1813 as American forces began invading that British colony once again, with their main efforts concentrating on wresting control of the Niagara Peninsula away from the Crown. On May 27th British forces near the north end of the Niagara River were forced to retreat into the sanctuary of Fort George by an American force led by Generals Henry Dearborn and William Winder.

After successfully withdrawing nearly all of the other outposts along the river following the American invasion of the Niagara Peninsula, Brigadier General John Vincent began planning for ways to strike back at the Americans, whose force was joined by another led by General John Chandler. Local informants, along with a daring night-time reconnoitering by Colonel John Harvey of the American encampment at Stoney Creek near what is today Hamilton, Ontario, disclosed the lackadaisical nature of the American deployment.

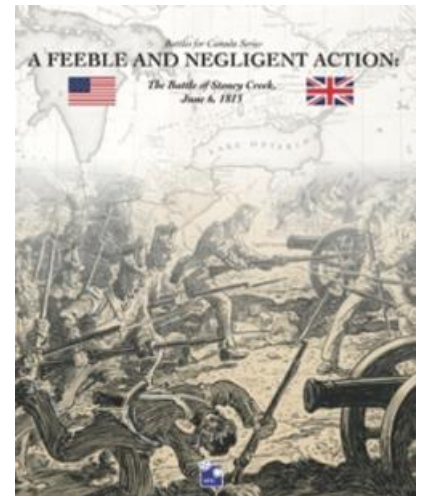
Although outnumbered by nearly a five-to-one margin, General Vincent ordered a risky night assault, counting upon superior knowledge of the local terrain, surprise, as well as training with his regulars. The battle that resulted was one of the most intense and lop-sided battles fought in Upper Canada.

Game: \$15.95 plus shipping.

Contains: One 11x17-inch map, 100 double-sided counters you need to mount yourself, and eight pages of rules. Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

View samples of the game's components:

www.hfdgames.com/stoney.html



Fields of Glory: Fantasy Campaign Rules and Test Battle

By Keith

Keith, whose painting of fantasy miniatures (hobbits mounted on chickens!?) graced prior AARs, sent me a recap of his campaign rules and test game for a campaign using an adaptation of Fields of Glory (FoG) rules. The evil side has orcs and ogres and the usual evil suspects, while many troops on the good side are Seleucids. The adaptations are below and can be incorporated into most campaigns using stand-based units. -- RL

Defense waiting on the river crossing. Photo by Keith.

Campaign Mechanics

For all rules below, a major battle is defined as a game where both Harak and The Imperial Successor are present, and there are at least four players total present. A minor battle is any game that is not a major battle.

Campaign Victory

The campaign will follow a ladder format, with each side's victory moving a tracker up or down a ladder towards that side winning the campaign.

The Great Evil Army aims to drive as far south into enemy territory as possible before the weather forces them into a winter camp. They lose if they are ever driven past the top end of the ladder.

If the Great Evil Army loses two battles in a row, the campaign immediately ends, and victory points are scored.

The Successors need to halt Harak's army for the season, giving them time to cement their position in the Imperial succession struggles and gain the strength to deal with Harak in another season. They lose if the tracker is driven past the bottom space of the ladder.

River crossings are tough. Photo by Keith.

Victory points are scored as follows:

Each major battle won: +3 for major victory, +2 for moderate victory, +1 for marginal victory

Campaign momentum at the end of the game: + x

Each space past top most: +2(x) to the Great Evil Army

Total points value of troops permanently lost (not allies): -1/100th total

To determine the winning player, score as follows:

Per game participated in: +1

Per battle you fought in where you were not on the losing side (draw or victory): +1



Mechanics

Momentum

Momentum is an abstraction of each side's dominance, both on the field and politically, throughout the campaign. Momentum cannot be less than 0. Momentum offers bonuses to rolls throughout the campaign.

Post Battle Casualties

The winner of a battle rolls 1d10 for each base that is killed or routs off table, including leaders.

1-3: The base is scattered and is removed from the game.

4-10: The base is able to reform.

The loser of a battle also rolls 1d10, but has worse odds, as they do not hold the field to save their wounded:

1-5: The base is scattered and is removed from the game.

6-10: The base is able to reform.

If the battle was a draw, both sides roll for post battle casualties as if they were the winner of the battle.

Allies

All scenarios except the first game allow each army to try to call in local allies. Allies can be distributed among players' commands as they see fit. Players can buy up to one Allied TC (20 points) each. All allied troops return home after the battle and do not remain with the armies.

Roll 1d10

1-3: No allies arrive for the battle.

4-7: 80 points of allies per player arrive.

8-10: 120 points of allies per player arrive.

Add the following modifiers to this roll:

Campaign Momentum: +X

2/3 of allied bases destroyed or routed in the last battle: -3

The Great Evil Army in a main battle immediately following a loss: +3 to roll

Replacements and Reinforcements

Players may consolidate units of the same type at their discretion between games. Reinforcements and replacements are determined by campaign events, but generally each player will receive 1d10x10 points they may spend on new battle groups or to replace losses. Units that are composed entirely of new battle groups must be average or poor quality.

Harak The Berserker

When Harak is attached to a unit in melee or impact combat, he must lead from the front. Harak is always accompanied by his personal warband (represented by Harak's FC base), which allows any unit Harak is attached to roll one additional die in melee or impact combat.

The Imperial Successor

One of the players on the Imperial side must be nominated as the Successor. They have additional resources and personal clout within the Empire's fractured political structure. The Successor may add +2 to their reinforcement rolls, and +1 to their army's ally roll in games that they are present in.

The Campaign Background

One year ago, during negotiations for the ending of a long lasting feud, the Mad Emperor Aelle threw King Lodbrok into a pit of snakes after promising safe conduct. While this solved Aelle's northern raider problems for the short term, Lodbrok's many children swore revenge. Chief among them is Harak the Berserker.

Harak has assembled a Great Evil Army out of a confederacy of his siblings, northern peoples, aggrieved Imperial frontier subjects, and anyone seeking plunder or revenge against the Empire. He marches south, as an Empire fractured by internal wars and power contests struggles to respond.

Not long after the execution of Lodbrok, Emperor Aelle was killed by his bodyguards in a coup, which quickly devolved into a brief but intense civil war. With the governance of the Empire still unstable, a coalition backing the strongest contender heads north, hoping to establish their candidates legitimacy by dealing with the crisis.

The defenders pounce. Photo by Keith.

Briefing

It is late summer. The Great Evil Army has already smashed the frontier duke's forces, and drives southward. Harak hopes to press as far south as he can before winter sets in, so he can placate his army with a winter camp to base their raids out of. To do so, he must cross the Siris River. The river is wide, but shallow and slow flowing at this time of year. In order to bypass Imperial forts, Harak intends to force a crossing at known fords in lieu of the bridges.

The Imperial Successors' forces have made contact with the remnants of the local army, who are fighting a rear-guard action as their wounded and civilian refugees flee just ahead of the Great Evil Army. The Successors' army makes camp, and prepares to meet Harak in battle.

Order of Battle

Great Evil Army:

All players share a pool of points equal to (# of players*600) from which to build their commands.
No more than half of the total battle groups can be Superior or Elite.

Imperial Successors:

All players share a pool of points equal to (# of players*500) from which to build their commands.
No more than half of the total battle groups can be Superior or Elite.

The players may distribute (# of players*25) of allied troops, which must all consist of cavalry, light horse, flyers, or light foot battle groups. These troops can be allocated to each player's command as they see fit, but an allied TC (30 points) must be purchased if the units are combined into a separate command. Alternatively or in addition, these points can be spent to purchase a fortified camp or temporary fortifications (up to 15 MUs from their long table edge, or 12 MUs if not within the central third of the table).

The Successors receive two four base mob units for free, representing refugees and wounded fleeing the invaders.

Deployment

Successors

May deploy up to 1/3 of their troops no closer than 12 MUs south of the river. These troops may not be heavy foot, artillery, or shock troops.

Of this 1/3, any bases that are cavalry, flyers, or light troops may be designated as being off board delaying the enemy. Units that are delaying the enemy off board deploy either through the method described under Great Evil Army deployment, or may move onto the board from the northern long table edge. They must make an immediate cohesion check after the completion of their move. If they deploy closer than 12 MU to any on board enemy units, they make this cohesion test with a -1 penalty.

The mobs deploy on each of the northern in a single element column, entirely on the table.

The remainder of their forces move onto the table from their long edge on the first turn.

The Successors must place a camp within 3 MUs of the Emperor's Road, and between 6 and 12 MUs from their long table edge. .



Great Evil Army

All units start off board.

Cannot order any flank marches.

Units marching on board must start behind the river.

Any unit (may be a single unit or a Battle Line) must make a 2d6 Command Test (CMT) to move on board, as the army pushes through local forces and is slowed by opportunities for plunder. This CMT is modified as follows:

+1 if a leader is attached (+2 if the leader is Inspired)

+1 if the unit is superior (or if the majority of the Battle Line is superior)

+2 if the unit is elite (or if the majority of the Battle Line is elite)

Any unit the Successors designated as delaying during their deployment may be assigned to a unit or Battle Line making this check. Up to one unit can be assigned to each roll, imposing a -1 to the CMT. If the Heathen unit passes the CMT, the delaying Successor unit is deployed 6 MUs directly in front of them, facing the enemy, and must make an immediate cohesion test.

Game Victory

Both armies must break their enemies' commands. Either side may declare they are withdrawing from the field at any time. Use page 94 of FOG to rout an army and tally attrition points.

A side that inflicted at least 4 more attrition points than the enemy and $\geq 3:1$ gains a Major Victory.

A side that inflicted at least 3 more attrition points than the enemy and $\geq 2:1$ gains a Moderate Victory.

A side that inflicted at least 2 more attrition points than the enemy gains a Marginal Victory.

If none of the above apply, the battle is a Draw.

The Great Evil Army's margin of victory is upgraded by one level if they succeed in looting the Successor's camp.

The pike advance into melee. Photo by Keith.

Special Rules

Refugees

The refugee column is treated as a mob that makes a variable move as MF during the Joint Action Phase. They must follow a road, unless doing so brings them closer to enemy bases, in which case they can make reasonable deviations (determined by consensus of all players). If a leader is attached, they may move as 'normal' MF without any other restrictions. They must attempt to exit off the Successor's long table edge.

They may also be guided by a commander to the Successor's camp only if it is fortified, where they will remain unless escorted out by a commander.

If contacted, the refugees are treated as routed troops. If a leader is present, they may fight as a MF mob as normal.

If half or more of the refugee bases die, the Great Evil Army gains +1 Campaign Momentum. If all of the refugees die, the Great Evil Army gains +1 Campaign Momentum and the Successors receive a -2 on their allies roll for the next game.



Movement

The river is considered Rough going, except at the fords, where it is treated as Open.

If a unit moves entirely on the Emperor's Road in a one element wide column, it may add +1 MU to its movement.

The Battle

Erik's command was formed mostly of hobbits, all aggrieved Imperial subjects, accompanied by a few colorfully dressed mercenary ogres and allied ents. Fred, playing Harak, had a mass of orcs and goblins, the famous balloon, and barbarian troops. I played the Successors and plundered Fred's Selucids for figures, leading to lots of Poor grade pike and elephants to park on a ridgeline and dare the other side to charge.

Barnyard heroes. Photo by Keith.

The Successors won initiative, and marched onto the field from the south. Per the scenario, I left all of the light cavalry and the one flying monster off board, delaying The Great Evil Army's entry. The column of refugees moved slowly towards the central ford.

Harak's army came on piecemeal -- each unit had to make a Complex Move Test to bypass delaying troops, local resistance, and the chances for plunder in order to deploy onto the board. The large block of the Galatian warriors were frustrated while they tried to cross the river away from the fords by Cretan archers, who shot them up at every chance and totally avoided any reprisals for now.

The peltast medium foot unit was less excited than the skirmishers about their chances, but having Companions at their back helped.

Elephants charge the bugbears. Photo by Keith.

One of the units of delaying Successors light cavalry came onto the board, failed the required cohesion test, but narrowly escaped being run down by a pair of manticores accompanied by Harak himself.

The rebellious hobbits were more successful in their deployment, and even ran out of space to move on troops. They quickly crossed the river at western ford and got stuck in against superior elements of the Successors army as quickly as they could.

A courageous two stand unit of Light Barnyard Animals shot the gap that was left between the two Successors commands, and proceeded to cause havoc with total impunity for the remainder of the game.

Meanwhile in the center, a series of down-rolls on charge pursuits lead to the refugees totally eluding pursuing bugbears, successfully escaping behind the lines of pike on the rising ground in front of Harak's command.

Wrath of the hobbits. Photo by Keith.



Hoping a hard charge would break the 12-element block of Citizen Levy (i.e. Poor Quality) pike in their path, the Thracians charged out of the river with the support of the Goblin Balloon and a creature I can only remember calling the Jolly Green Giant. However a series of bad rolls and the help of a Successor troop commander lead to the Thracians breaking in melee, and being driven back across the river.

The hypaspists hurl themselves into battle. Photo by Keith.

The bugbears and a unit of elephants, lead by one of the Successor force commanders, smashed into each other, killing a stand of the bugbears but failing to drive them back. The giant ignored their plight and stomped steadily onwards to the next pike block, killing a stand with a thrown rock. He will eventually wade into them with great effect.

Meanwhile on the hobbit's end of the assault, the remaining delaying forces have come onto the field to threaten their flank. Harak dispatched a unit of orc archers to cover them. Though they prevent the hobbits from being flanked, they are slowly ground down by skirmishing light cavalry, and eventually fragmented and broken by a charge.

You can't keep a good porker unit down. Photo by Keith.

None of this happens in time to save the ill-fated hypaspists. Assuming they could easily stomp a few hobbit militia into the dirt, they eagerly charged into combat.

The hobbits roll a yahtzee on 1s, all of which are converted to 6s. This drives the hypaspists back, disordered. Their peltast friends fail to come to their aid, as they're rattled by their own encounter with a big group of hobbit slingers. A charge into their rear by the Barnyard Battalion leads to their rout.

The line of expensive armored hoplites weren't pleased by these results, and faced down a Superior band of hobbit spears. Those previously confident Cretans on Harak's flank were finally caught by a lucky pairing of evade-pursuit moves. They decided to call it quits.

The last melees of the battle. Photo by Keith.

At this point almost all of my units were disrupted, fragmented, or broken. I decided to go all in in the center to try to break something and hope for a cohesion test cascade.

We managed to kill one stand of ogres, but failed to cause anyone to flee. At this point it was late, and I conceded. Harak takes the crossing, and continues his march south.

After this test I have some better ideas about the mechanics and points/troop types interactions. If we were to start the campaign, I would refight this scenario with whoever wanted to kick things off, and adjust the ladder from there.



Waterloo: The Lucky French Star

by Russ Lockwood

Waterloo is arguably the most famous battle in history, spawning more "met his Waterloo" lines than any other battle. I mean, who says "met his Gettysburg," "met his Yorktown," or "met his Little Big Horn?" Folks equate failure, or at least a definitive ending, with Waterloo, which seems a bit of a disservice to Wellington and Blucher. Their triumph that ended the Napoleonic wars is less celebrated 200+ years later than Napoleon's loss.

Let's face it, ABBA didn't write a song called Stalingrad, although you can substitute the name without breaking the rhyming patter too much.

At Stalingrad,
Von Paulus did surrender.
Oh, yeah.
And I have met my destiny in quite a similar way.
The history book on the shelf,
Is always repeating itself.

Stalingrad.
I was defeated, it turned the war.
Stalingrad.
Promise to plague you forevermore...

Hmmm... It's just not quite the same thing, is it? The syllables are the same, but not the implied flavor in the name.

Anyway, a dozen of us gamers met at Allen's to refight this most famous battle using the *Age of Eagles* (AoE) rules set, which is based heavily on *Fire & Fury* (F&F). Given that most of the players didn't seem to know AoE or F&F, Allen gave a stirring summary of the main rules slugged to a quick reference sheet. There are differences of course, but I figured as I played enough F&F over the years, I'd pick it up.

The French side (l to r): Nick (VI Corp), Joe (half Cavalry Corps), Phil (half I Corp), Jay (Imperial Guard), and Joe (II Corp and also Napoleon).



He also noted the special scenario rules. For example, as the rain had been heavy that day in history, the first turn would be movement at half speed and no road bonus. The second turn would be 2/3 speed and road bonus restored. The third and subsequent turns would be at full speed. The French could form a Grand Battery for a 50% increase in fire factors, but it only lasted four fire phases and then had to retire to replenish supply. After that, it became a collection of mere mortal batteries.

The British (l to r): Marc, Dan (in background), Dennis (Wellington), Allen (GM in background); Vince, Alie, and Chuck (Actually French, half Cavalry Corps – maybe he's a royalist).

The Battlefield and Troops

Allen has a big "6.5x15-foot, high resolution,



high quality (terrain) mat, printed on a single piece of premium dense weave wrinkle-free fabric... Scale is 1 foot = 100 yards scale. The roads are approximately 1-inch wide and the streams are approximately 1-inch wide." At least that's what Box Mats' description says. Seems right. The ridges were styrofoam hills placed under the mat and the main buildings placed on the mat.

My French troops (foreground) looking at the Allied reception committee (top of photo). La Haye Saint is just over the intervening ridge and Mont St. Jean is beyond (top middle of photo).



The troops were 15mm, with most stands placed on movement trays. A small info label of specs was attached to one stand of each unit. *F&F* and *AoE* use a stand-removal system to represent casualties, so the label includes the unit name, commander, and the three-number sequence that represents the number of stands for the unit to be Fresh, Worn, or Spent. As you roll a 10-sided die per unit for movement, the die modifiers for those three status states matter quite a bit.

Dennis was Wellington, Lee was Blucher, and Joe was Napoleon. Joe got "elected" as the big boss because he was wearing a T-shirt with Napoleon's picture on it.

French Turn 2: The French advance.

As for me, I split the French I Corp with Phil. My half was headed right



down the main road towards La Haye Saint with Phil to my right. Jay was to my left between the main road and Hougoumont with the Imperial Guard and the Grand Battery. II Corp under Joe would swing wide left around Hougoumont and try to outflank the British line. VI Corp under Nick was far right of Placenoit and the Cavalry reserve was in between I Corp and VI Corp.

French Turn 4. Notice the British cavalry under ? (holding red tape measure) advancing to meet the French at Placenoit.



With the initial rain delay penalties, Phil and I would hold back and let Jay's Grand Battery play a bit with the Brits, Dutch, and Brunswickers. Then, the II Corp would sweep in from the left, the Imperial Guard would attack in concert, and then the I Corp would smash anything in the center near the road. The idea was to crunch one flank and shove troops up the road (big VPs). The VI Corp would threaten the other British flank while awaiting the Prussians, and would dance with the aid of the Cavalry Corps.

Such was the French plan.

British Turn 4 (l to r): Dan, Marc, Dennis, Alie, Vince (obscured), Andrew (mostly obscured), GM Allen, and French VI Corp Nick.



The British plan seemed to be much the same as historical -- await the French, keep the troops on the reverse slope to avoid the Grand Battery and other artillery fire, and then counterattack when the French came over the ridge. Blucher would deliver the flanking coup de gras.

Such, it seemed, was the Allied plan.

The First Few Turns

I must say, I was wondering how Phil raced ahead of me so much to get in position to surmount an intervening ridge. I was rolling OK, but the rain-drenched ground halved and two-thirded movement.

Later in the game, I found out. I thought that infantry moved 6 inches in line, so half movement was 3 inches and then 4.5 inches on turn two.

Imagine my surprise when Phil was assaulting the main British ridge and told me that the actual basic movement rate was 9 inches.

Holy Movement Moron, Batman! Maybe I should have listened more to the pre-game rules explanation and spent less time admiring the troops and terrain.



French Turn 5: II Corp (bottom right corner) swings around Hougomont), The Grand Battery pounds the Brits, half of I Corp advanced on La Haye Saint while Phil's half of I Corp races ahead, and Chuck pushes the cavalry forward to counter the bold British cavalry. Meanwhile, British Vince (left) considers possibility that I Corp will hit the seam between him and Dennis. Nick ponders an attack.

Still, it just looked like I was sticking with the plan to go slow. I reached the ridge and prepared to prolong my guns forward when I discovered that AoE had no prolong mechanic.

Holy Muzzle Moron, Batman! I probably should have listened more to the pre-game rules explanation and spent less time admiring the troops and terrain. I left the guns limbered.

As II Corp slowly swung around Hougomont in long columns, the British (Dan and Marc) on that flank shifted cavalry and artillery to deal with the threat. Marc proved especially proficient at counter-battery fire as Jay unlimbered the Guard Grand Battery atop the ridge.

My big charge at La Haye Saint while another brigade charges up the ridge to melee the lone British artillery battery. My Petit Battery is at right bottom corner of photo.

I moved normally atop the intervening ridge and unlimbered my artillery batteries. They can't fire for one fire phase, so I just took it. Fortunately for me, Dennis had miserable luck potting me and I had just as miserable fortune potting the British in La Haye Saint. I shifted fire to other British troops.

The Grand Battery put a load of hurt on one British unit atop the ridge. Dennis pulled that and other infantry units back to the reverse slope. The British artillery then played havoc with the Grand Battery. Dennis may have missed my troops, but visited considerable destruction on the Grand Battery. In response, Jay switched from infantry to counter-battery.

Meanwhile, Phil charges the Allied-held ridge. My Petit Battery is at lower left corner of photo.

On The Right Flank

I wasn't involved on the right flank, but Nick's VI Corp was somewhat surprised by the emergence of British cavalry from behind the ridge to the green fields beyond. VI Corp maneuvering also had to account for woods and a small stream.

The cavalry melee went to and fro, as the two sides seemed evenly matched. If the goal was to disrupt any French attack on that flank, it was working.

The French cavalry commander shifted his horse to the right to help VI Corp and numbers helped the French here.

The British artillery repulse my brigade (left), but I chase the lone British stand out of La Haye Saint.



La Haye Saint

The farm contained a British one-stand garrison (all that the place could hold). No worries. I'll wrap around the place with three brigades and storm it.

Not so fast, Allen said, only two can attack La Haye Saint at once.

Two?

Two.

But there's no Brits on the sides.

Two.

Two it was, so I sent two brigades against La Haye Saint.

Alas, Allen meant two *stands*.

Holy Melee Moron, Batman! I definitely should have listened more to the pre-game rules explanation and spent less time admiring the troops and terrain.

French Turn 6: The II Corp flank attack develops, Grand Battery fires, French center pushes on, and VI Corp presses forward.

Well, it was too late for me to change, so in the two stands went. A separate brigade headed up the British ridge to charge a lone artillery battery.

Dennis obliged me with a miserable artillery defensive fire roll of 1 -- no casualties. Not even a

disorder. In the melee, he then rolled the opposite and despite my big advantages, guns tossed my brigade back as I rolled a miserable 2.

However, I stormed La Haye Saint and chased the British stand away, taking possession of this important farm complex.

Phil (right) and I (left) assault the center of the British line on Turn 7. I position a pair of cavalry units to exploit the expected hole in the center and exit on the road to Brussels.

On The Left Flank

II Corp apparently suffered a case of the slows and trudged forward, taking artillery fire. The disorders probably cut the speed in half. The units were intact, or maybe lost a stand here or there, but the advance was slow.

In *F&F/AoE*, Disordered units roll to move on a different table. It is quite possible to suffer a disorder, go back into a fine formation but not move, and suffer another disorder. With two fire phases per turn for each side, but only one movement phase, you can see how this can create a static formation.



Jay pulled the Grand Battery back behind the ridge to resupply. With that and my capture of La Haye Saint and charge up the ridge, Dennis was encouraged to return his troops to the ridge.

On The Right Flank

The cavalry battle swirled, with the French reserve cavalry sent in to hit the exposed British cavalry. I'm not quite sure exactly what happened, but it seemed mostly like a draw, albeit one with a minor French advantage. But what do I know? My attention was focused on the center of the British line.

End of Turn 7: II Corp (bottom) continues to stretch the British line. The Guard cavalry begins to threaten the ridge as I Corp presses into the center of the line. On the far right (top of photo), the scrum intensifies. Better photo of Andrew (white shirt).



Back In The Center

Next to me, Phil attacked the ridge with vigor, which is when I learned that I should be moving 9 inches, not 6 inches. "Doh!" doesn't quite capture that moment in my head.

I moved a brigade to support his attack and positioned the Petit Battery to the right of the main road. Opposite Phil, British Vince and Alie positioned infantry to receive the attack and then cavalry to counterattack.

Turn 8: The Young Guard (one stand) occupies La Haye Saint with one of my artillery batteries in support. The British mass on the ridge (left of road), but my lads who took La Haye Saint tumble the lone British brigade backwards through Mont St. Jean. Phil sets up for another charge. The cavalry storm the center through the conscripts. The Petit Battery gains two horse battery companies for next turn.



My cavalry charged up the hill, captured two batteries and took a breakthrough charge into supporting Allied foot. The conscripts couldn't stand up to French regulars, especially with a decided mismatch of die rolls. Two Allied Brigades fled.

Vince and Alie's Allied counterattacks concentrated on Phil and tossed some of his troops off the ridge, but he remained a force in being. He would be able to hold at least another turn and likely two.

My Petit Battery plastered Dennis' British infantry on the main road and my newly motorized 9-inch speed infantry swept up from La Haye Saint into their depleted ranks.

The Brits buckled and fled and my units got the coveted breakthrough charge into the next unit. That infantry brigade took a beating and retreated behind Mont St. Jean. Between Phil and me, I Corp had punched a hole in the center of the Allied line. The road to Brussels beckoned.

It was about 4pm real time, and likely about that in game time (each game turn represents 30 minutes and I figured we played 9 turns, or 4.5 "hours" of a scenario that started at "11:00" -- so close to 4pm). British morale

collapsed once they realized they could not turn a brigade 90 degrees or 180 degrees and charge. By general Allied acclaim, Wellington conceded the battle.

Blucher had not yet made it to the battlefield, but was due next turn.

French Victory

So our tabletop Napoleon changed history. He likely would have met his demise elsewhere in Europe, ruining a future popular ABBA song, but that's for another game.

It was one of the rare "all-day" games that I can attend and thanks to Allen for hosting. It was great meeting gamers known and unknown.

Turn 9: End positions. British Marc and Andrew chuckle about what went wrong. VI Corp Nick (head of table) hears that the Prussians are coming, but the French Cavalry Corps under Joe and Chuck (right) are confident.

As for the key to victory, it was not so much that one side outrolled the other as the outrolling came in waves. I bet if you recorded all the die rolls, the 10-sided dice did

randomness proud. But, if you look at when the big disparities occurred, the French lucked out more than usual. British defensive fire in melees often was low and the actual melee dice often favored the French. Or at least that seemed to be my case -- my 9s and 10s came at just the right time and my 1s and 2s didn't hurt as much as they hurt the British.



A Rule of Law

A British plan to charge cavalry from behind the ridge to hit French in front of the ridge ran into a rules conundrum about a 5-inch path. That 5 inches is a magic number because a cavalry charge that travels 5 inches or less against infantry gains the cavalry a nice modifier while the same combat with the charge moving 5 inches or more generates a nice modifier for the infantry. There is no "rolling for hasty square" in *AoE*.

In the game, Allen ruled the 3-inch penalty for cavalry charging through infantry applied to that 5-inch magic length. The British positioned cavalry on the reverse slope, it charged the French, and it was 5 inches plus the 3 inches for 8 inches.

The Allies asserted the rules said the length was only measured beginning to end, regardless of who charged through who. GM Allen ruled that the charge distance should include the 3-inch penalty for maneuvering among the battalions of foot.

Call it a scenario rule. The French infantry, benefitting from the bonus die modifier, hung on from the charging British cavalry.

In a post-game phone call, *AoE* author Bill Gray sided with the British assertion -- intervening infantry penalties did not apply to the 5 inches.

However, Gray also noted that chargers needed line of sight to the target. Sweeping up and over a ridge is not allowed. So, the charge couldn't be made, but if it could, the 3-inch penalty for interpenetration of lines does not apply.

In addition, chargers can only charge a target within a 45 degree arc in front at the start of the turn -- no 90-degree or 180-degree rotation and charge. We did that right.

We'll have to remember that 5-inch rule for the next game.

The Guard Speaks: Waterloo

by Jay

Amazingly, the battle was effectively over in 5 1/2 hours real time -- just as the Prussians showed up. Indeed, that side of the British line was now collapsing with too many French VI Corp and Cavalry Reserve in front and the Prussians too far away to rectify the situation.

The British center had been shattered, Le Haye Saint captured, and the road to Brussels secured as I had released the Young Guard and Guard Cavalry to help secure the penetration and pursuit.

On the French left, Joe's II Corp had beaten off Marc's delaying efforts to be in a position to fall on the now bent British/Dutch line.

My Grand Battery had by now won the both the artillery duel to its front (between Hougomont and La Haye Saint) and destroyed an Anglo/Dutch formation. The unbloodied French Guard, having acted as a pinning force while safely staying behind a ridge the entire game, had advanced the previous turn and was now in a position to attack the now angled and somewhat denuded Allied line. The writing was on the wall.

I must say that considering how few of us were familiar with the rules, the game went remarkably well. The French plan was predicated on the knowledge that sooner or later the Prussians would arrive. Thus speed was of the essence. The double envelopment was made possible by a slight superiority in numbers and a decision to bypass Hougomont.

The attack on the Allied left was somewhat tardy due to Dennis' (Wellington) reinforcement of this flank. Success in the center was by a combination of weaker allied units, good die rolling, an initial desire for commanders to do their own thing, and flank support (unlike D'Erlon's unfortunate foray).

The French command structure was somewhat bizarre as no one really wanted to be Napoleon and coordination following our initial plan was maintained simply by consulting our neighbors to the left and right (thus my lack of detail on the right flank of the French line).

Kudos to Allen for running such a large, beautiful, and complex game so smoothly.

Waterloo Redeux: 208 Years Later

by Phil

We refought the Battle of Waterloo at Al's basement. He has a specially-made tarp of the battlefield, some 16 feet long.

My full report is on my blog:

<https://phil-bythenumbers.blogspot.com/2023/08/waterloo-redeux-208-years-later.html>

One of the photos from Phil's blog, showing his half of I Corp: 4th Division and cavalry. The Cavalry Corps are behind and VI Corp is to the right. Photo by Phil.



Space Base: **Triple the Light Fantastic**

by Russ Lockwood

I've already extolled the cleverness of the game *Space Base* with two players (see the 06/30/2023 AAR for the recap and analysis), so it was interesting to try it with three players: Dan, Mike, and me.

Dan (left) and Mike in the three-player version. Different style of play.

The game plays exactly the same, except competition for the best cards intensifies because of the third player.

The one change we noticed was the extra emphasis on the resources collected from the other players' turns. In a two-player game, what you deploy to grab resources on the other player's turn is not as important as what you grab on your turn. In a three-player game, there's an extra round of collecting resources during the other players' turns.

It started off subtle, but we all got hip to the effect.

Mike (left) and me in the three-player version. Photo by Dan.

Space Base: **Five for Fighting**

by Daniel

First time playing with five players (with expansions, the game can play up to seven players). The four turns between your own makes deployed ships a bit more important than those on station.

After Sean took an early lead with his deployed VP ships picking up VPs a few at a time, I was able to catch up by buying Colonies (helped by an Income of 16). Game 1 ended initially with a 45-45 tie between Sean and me.

The 5-player version. From l to r: Ed, Sean, Dylan, and Fred. Photo by Dan.

When Dylan asked "What happens with a tie?" the rules actually address this with an additional round to end the tie -- so we played an extra round and I purchased the most expensive Colony to break the tie.

Game 2 saw Sean take the early lead again with a similar strategy as he used in the first game. That proved insurmountable, and he won with 53 VPs.



Space Base: Make The Jump to Light Speed

by Daniel

Mike called me today after discovering he has *Space Base* in his closet among games he recently acquired. He noted the game had a "light-speed" variant that shortens the game:

Each player begins the game with 15 credits and 1 income.

Each player draws four level 1 cards and two level 2 cards.

Players may spend their 15 credits to buy as many of these cards as they wish and can afford.

These ships are placed on their command console and the starting ships in those sectors are deployed behind the board.

Any unspent credits are kept to start the game.

Any unbought cards are placed at the bottom of their respective decks.

The player who kept the most credits goes first.

In the case of a tie, the player with the highest sector card goes first, and if still tied, roll to see who goes first.

Starting bonuses for 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th positions still apply.

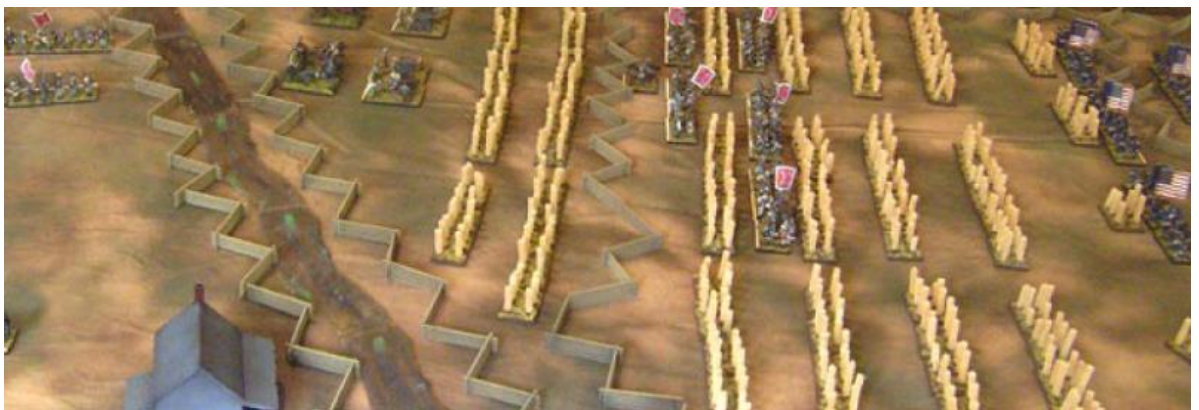
We've tried the light speed version with two players and up to 5 credits to buy one card. It works just fine. How much it shortens the game, I'm not sure, but it's nice to start with a card. -- RL

Antietam and the Cornfield: Photos

By Fred

Fred sends along AARs from the Potomac Wargamers group down DC/Virginia way. He gave permission to pull a couple photos from the Sept. 2020 28mm Antietam game. --RL

A view of part of the board, Johnny Rebs to the left and Billy Yanks to the right.



A cool ambulance diorama stand. I have no idea if it affected game play, but it is fantastic eye candy.



Road to Independence: AWI Wargame

by Russ Lockwood

This game of the American Revolution contains a lot of custom dice, a few counters, a map of areas, and a rather clever area combat system. *Road to Independence* is indeed an introductory strategic wargame as the box cover proclaims.

The box cover and map.

Instead of pushing armies around, say counters in a traditional hex wargame or little cubes like Academy Games' *1776*, your "army" consists of those custom dice and the opposing army consists of a sequence of icons organized into rows. Roll your army dice, match all the printed icons, and the area is yours.



The Combat Twist

You can only fill one line per roll. Even if you manage to roll every icon needed, you can only fill one line. When you fill a line, you place the dice needed on the line to signify success and roll again. Fill, roll. Fill roll. Fill all rows and capture the area.

However, if you fail to fill a row, you lose one die and roll again. If you keep failing, you will eventually lose all dice, or, find yourself with only a couple dice and no way to roll the icons needed.

The map divides into Eastern (coastal) and Wilderness (Western frontier) halves.

The Icons and the Dice

The British get red dice representing regular British troops, black dice representing Hessians, and yellow dice representing Indians. If I recall, the British get three red, two black, and two yellow dice when attacking the Eastern areas and three red and four yellow dice when attacking the Wilderness areas.

The Americans get three blue (Continental) and four yellow (militia) dice at start. After Steuben performs his drill training, the American gets four blue dice and three yellow dice. However, when the French come in, two French dice are used instead of two militia dice. When the Spanish enter the game, they get three regular dice and four militia dice.

The icons are infantry (from one to three points worth depending on the face of the six-sided die), cavalry, artillery, fortress, and Indians. The cavalry, artillery, and fortress each have one side. Thus, when you need one artillery icon, you have a one-in-six chance of rolling the artillery icon.

Altering The Odds

Each area requires a specific number of specific icons for the capture. Most rows of icons are separated by type. The trick comes when you need to consider whether to use that one-in-six artillery roll to fill in the artillery row, or the big 2- and 3-point infantry rolls to fill the high-number infantry row.

Even better, to vary the odds of filling a row, sometimes two one-in-six icons are in the same row: for example, an artillery and cavalry icon. Now you really need a lucky roll to get those two icons.

That's rather clever.

I'm sure there must be a spreadsheet behind all the background calculations used to figure out which icon belongs on which row.

Each player gets a base of attacking three area per turn, although an event card drawn at the start of a turn may provide extra attacks, fewer attacks, or some other benefit or detriment.

The British also have a 1/3 chance (die roll) of a naval movement for one of their attacks on the coast. Otherwise, road, stream, or lake, must connect an existing friendly area to the enemy area to be attacked.

It's pretty simple to understand how the game works, but figuring out which areas are important is going to take a little bit of study.

The Game

Dennis gave me the Brits and I was confronted with half a map of opportunities.

I chose Concord, Wyoming Valley, Maine, and thanks to a lucky event card draw for an additional attack, Savannah (naval) for my three attacks.

Dennis pulled the American card that shows the rows of icons needed for capture: one cavalry, three infantry, and three infantry. So I rolled the dice and soon found myself filling one row, then the next, and finally the third. The British had captured Concord.

Concord captured. Notice the rows and icons needed.

I then captured Maine and Wyoming Valley. Alas, I could not roll the icons to grab Savannah. But three outta four ain't bad.

Each area was worth a number of victory points and I don't recall the number needed for the British to win, but there are also mandatory VP cities (New York, Charleston, New Orleans, Boston, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Yorktown) the British must hold: something like four of seven.

When done, the British place Garrison counters in any of his friendly controlled areas. These one- and two-strength point counters add to the icon total needed for a row. It's a way to add a little variety to the printed map.

Then it was the American turn. Same results: win some, lose some.

We stopped after a couple turns. With explanation and rules reading, I suppose it was about an hour altogether for four turns. The next game will be faster.

Dennis considers the possibilities.



Eurogame Mechanics

The IGo-UGo mechanics means the non-phasing player does not roll dice in combat and the combat in any given area, barring a garrison, is identical to both sides. Such is the trade off for simplicity.

The dice and event cards offer variety enough that each battle and turn is not a foregone conclusion. For example, while I drew an "extra attack" card on the first turn, I drew a "lose two attacks" card on a later turn. Each side gets 15 event cards for a 10-turn game, so you gain a little more variety.

Since this was a first game, I had no idea which was the best or most critical area to attack and capture. I'm sure if you play enough, you'll learn them.

I imagine that if you want a superfast game, you can optionally fill in as many rows as you can from a single roll. You'd lose the tension of needing to get a specific icon as the number of dice dwindles with each failed roll.

Worth Another Try

Matching icons is as old as *Yahtzee*, but I liked the icon row/area idea. It was quick to learn and as we all know, the dice proved fickle. Yet you have choices to make with every roll. Nothing like having three dice needing an artillery icon...then only two dice...and then only one...

Enjoyed it.

Hussite War Wargame: *Blind Faith* Playtest Map

By Russ Lockwood

Putting the finishing touches on *Blind Faith: The Hussite War 1420-1437*, a hex wargame covering the Hussite War in Central Europe. Both Hussite and Holy Roman Empire players have a myriad of options at the start of the game. They can try for a quick blitz in capturing specific towns or play the long game of maneuvering and looting.

For full disclosure, I was the Staff Developer for this Jason Juneau design to be published by *Against the Odds* magazine in the next few months.

Thought you might like to see a rough playtest map and playtest counter set up. Note that I printed the map at less than full size on a laser printer (hence the seams and tape), so the counters appear huge against the pint-sized hex grid. Rest assured, everything will fit properly come release time. For a game discussion on ConSimWorld: <http://talk.consimworld.com/WebX?14@@.1de4336a/0>



Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

German Fighters of the Great War: Volume 1. by Ronny Bar. Hardback (horizontal 12.0x8.5 inches). 241 pages. 2023.

After his triumphant illustrated study of *British Two Seaters of the Great War* (see the review in the 05/27/2021 AAR or up on hmgs.org), the brilliant artistic touch of Bar returns with WWI German fighter planes.

From what I can tell, he studies photos of various aircraft, consults other sources, and creates color profiles (mostly side, but some top and bottom) that offer the camouflage schemes, markings, and nuances of these famous fighters and their famous pilots.

For example, Max Immelman's Fokker Eindecker E-II shows the mapboards located mounted on the wing roots outside the cockpit (p26), Ernst Udet's Eindecker E-III shows his luger pistol in a holster mounted outside the cockpit (p32), and Kurt Student's Eindecker E-IV shows a rather unusual headrest mounted at the back of the cockpit.

There's more: Teeth and eyes painted on the engine cowling of Fritz Grunzweig's Fokker D-II (p76) is the earliest I've run across such a paint scheme, Ernst Udet mounted a tin cutout of an observer behind the cockpit of his Fokker D-III (p81) to fool Allied pilots that he was a two-seater, Manfred von Richthofen's Albatross D-II (p113) was not painted red, but yellowish like other D-IIs of 1916 while his D-V (p141) was painted all red in 1917, and Lothar von Richthofen's Albatross D-III (p148) was painted yellow with a broad red stripe behind the cockpit in 1917. And the book contains plenty more interesting profiles as well as the more 'standard' color schemes.

One other tidbit: the Pfalz E-I (p59) was also an 'eindecker' aircraft that looked much like a Fokker. Learn something new every day...

The book contains 376 color profiles and each one is a gem. My guess is that once he draws the general outline of a model, he copies the basic version and then meticulously alters each to include the unique markings, items, and camouflage. It's all fantastic. Modelers should have a towel close by -- drooling over your painting table is a distinct possibility.

Enjoyed it.

Retreat Through the Rhone Valley. by Jorg Staiger. Translated by Linden Lyons. Hardback (6.25x9.25 inches). 98 pages. 2023 reprint of 1965 book.

Subtitle: *Defensive Battles of the Nineteenth Army: August-September 1944.*

This is a reprint from the marvelous *Die Wehrmacht im Kampf* series.

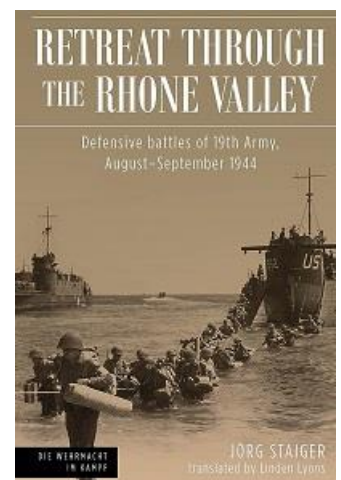
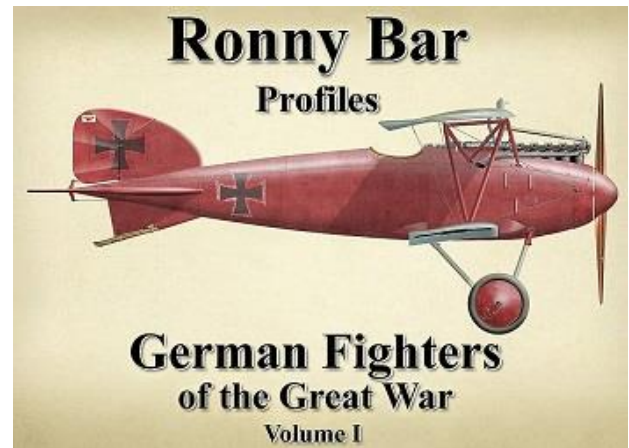
This covers the Anvil-Dragoon landings through to the German 19th Army's linkup with the rest of the German Army near the Swiss border. The 19th was soon depleted from units pulled for the Normandy battles. In terms of battles, the best it could do was delay the US Army's 3rd, 36th, and 45th divisions plus a French contingent and the US 509th Parachute Btn.

The American advance was swifter than the German retreat at times, forcing some small unit counterattacks that might make for a good tabletop battle. The Germans had to run the gauntlet up the Rhone River valley, mostly from US artillery that fired from the surrounding hills.

This is a fine recap as other books in the series offers, although I would wish for larger, thus clearer reprinted, maps. Squinting helps. The book contains eight black and white maps and no other illustrations.

One odd factoid that needs an editorial verification: From June 1944 onwards, the French resistance (FFI) caused 1,000 German casualties per day (p6). As the 19th Army had only 59,000 men at the time (p3 OOB, but not including the 11th Panzer Division), it would seem that a couple months before the Aug 14 landing would have eliminated pretty much the entire Army. So, there seems a disconnect here -- the book notes that Normandy got the lion's share of reinforcements and replacements. The casualty number seems odd.

That's the danger of a straight reprint -- 50+ years between printings means a lot of data should be able to be confirmed or refuted. Of course, once you find something to question in the beginning of the book, you start to think about what else should be questioned in the rest of the book.



Still, the German view of the campaign is a welcome addition to understanding the sweep of the Allied attacks. Pair this with the *Rome to the Po River: German 362nd Inf. Division 1944-45* reprint (see the book review in the 03/02/2023 AAR or up on hmgs.org) for a side-by-side look at the Mediterranean front.

Enjoyed it.

Mysteries of the Norman Conquest. by Robert Allred. Hardback (6.5x9.4 inches). 220 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Unravelling the Truth of the Battle of Hastings and the Events of 1066*

This rather unnecessarily dramatic title and subtitle masks a new examination of medieval sources and a walkabout of the areas of the 1066 battles of Fulford, Stamford Bridge, and Hastings.

Allred spent a semester in the UK at the University of Sussex, about an hour from the battlefield at Hastings. He took five trips there and other trips northward to walk (on roads and via public paths) all around the area, coming to the geographic conclusion that the battle was fought a few hundred yards from the "official" battlefield near the Abbey.

Specifically, his version occurred near the second roundabout on Powdermill Lane. Unfortunately, I have no idea where that is because you'd think that a book that recounts the ins and outs of walking all over the area would include a map -- and I certainly don't count that refrigerator art opposite page 79.

I understand the author is required to provide art, but really, the four color Hastings "maps" look like a beginner used Microsoft Paint. Let's not even go there about a lack of a scale. The text does a masterful job of analyzing contours and locations, but could he not find an official British government source for a real map?

The only reason I grumble about such a lack of supporting cartography is that it seems reasonable to shift the battlefield a bit -- assuming that the general terrain is as it was in 1066. Hills are likely similar except where a railroad now sits, and his scant forest research only dates back to an 1895 map.

I will point to the book *Crecy: Battle of Five Kings* (see the book review in the 6/29/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org) that argues the actual battle is not where it is currently 'officially' located. Same modus operandi: literature search, area walkabout, but with nicely done maps showing both places -- including a fragment of a 1709 map that also shows a different spot.

It's been decades since I visited the Battle Abbey, the overlook of the battle, and the path with information panels about the battle. I applaud his vigor at sleuthing out public paths to get to places off the official tourist route.

The book also contains 13 color photos of his walks, including an old apple tree in a grove that may have been where King Harold was slain -- not by an arrow to the eye but by William and a trio of men-at-arms -- and the Fulford and Stamford Bridge sites. One Microsoft Paint "map" each of Fulford and Stamford Bridge are of equal finger-painting quality as the Hastings "maps."

Part travelogue, part battle recap, and part literature survey, the mysteries are far less mysterious than you might expect, and yet, possibly contribute to greater accuracy about battle locations and how they unfolded. I'd like to see a greater emphasis on battlefield archeology -- find metal in some of these out of the way places and you've got compelling evidence.

As I noted in the *Crecy* review, much is speculation, even when backed up by thought-provoking detective work.

Enjoyed it.

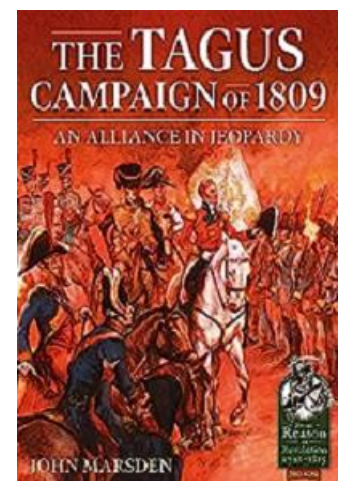
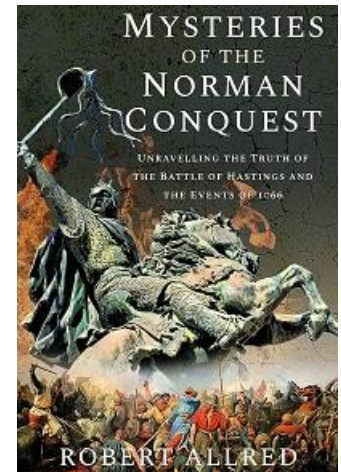
The Tagus Campaign of 1809: Alliance in Jeopardy. by John Marsden. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 251 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *From Reason to Revolution 1721-1815 No. 109*

This operational recap and analysis covers the British and Spanish campaign along the Tagus River, especially maneuvers by Spanish Generals Cuesta and Venegas and the political jockeying among the Spanish leadership.

Indeed, this book could serve for inspiration for a *Snappy Nappy* Campaign in a Day except for the lack of an OOB and that maps lack a scale -- rectified if you pair this with *The Talavera Campaign: 1809*.

On the plus side, it contains 27 black and white maps. On the negative side, how can you provide maps without a scale? Not that the maps contain much detail, but



mapmaker Mark (sez the credits) needs to up his game in the scale department so I can get an idea of how far the armies marched during a given timeframe.

That said, at least the maps contain the arrows of basic operational maneuvers. Some of the maps offer tactical layouts for specific battles -- Medina de Rioseco and Medellin, for example. Sometimes, the text contains snippets of scale and OOB information. For example, Venegas mostly had five divisions and they are named, but you really have to dig through the text to find individual regiments' names that would make a wargamer's day.

There's even analysis of a grand Allied 1809 strategy where Austria launches its attack as Britain and Spain launch their attack as Britain lands a Walcheran expedition and as Britain launches an attack from Sicily. Communication being what it was back then, the efforts -- if they were supposed to be coordinated -- were rather disjointed.

So, great information about pre-campaign, campaign, and post-campaign operations at the army level, with especially good analysis of Spanish political maneuvers (or shenanigans) that affected battlefield moves. However, the book needs more map and OOB details -- as you can find in *The Talavera Campaign* (see next review) -- for a truly complete package. Still...

Enjoyed it.

The Talavera Campaign: 1809. by Tim Saunders. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 258 pages. 2023.

In many ways, *The Tagus Campaign of 1809* and *The Talavera Campaign: 1809* make a great pair. Tagus provides all the political skullduggery and incentives/disincentives for movements, especially Spanish, while Talavera provides a plentiful supply of maps with scales and a detailed tactical account of the main battle at Talavera.

Best of all, Talavera includes a British OOB with regimental numbers and Spanish and French OOBs with number of battalions but only total numbers per division.

Talk about a close-run affair! Both sides had opportunities and errors and the British just hung on long enough for the hard-fought victory. This was mitigated somewhat by the subsequent withdrawal back to Spanish-Portuguese border.

I should note that the book begins with the Douro Campaign that set up the campaign to Talavera.

The text contains plenty of British excerpts from memoirs and journals and such, perhaps a bit too much and too one-sided as French and Spanish excerpts are minimal. Still, you certainly gain an appreciation for the British perspective on the general situation, the battle, and the overall miserable logistics.

Typos: "was forced marching" should be "force marching" and "policy of flitching sugar islands" is likely "filching."

The book contains 59 black and white photos, 35 black and white maps (vast majority with scales), and 68 black and white illustrations. It is very well illustrated.

Pair these two books and you really do have a compact *Snappy Nappy* Campaign in a Day scenario. Inspiring.

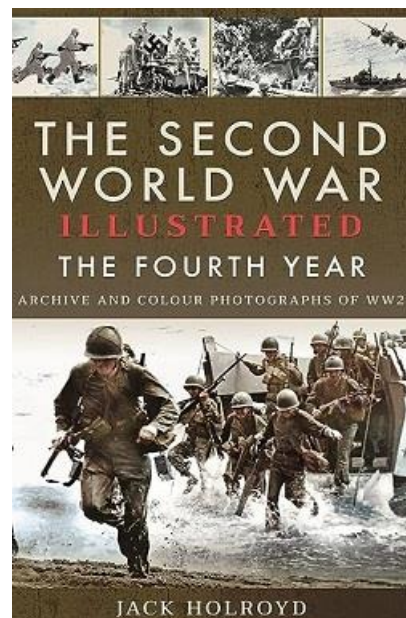
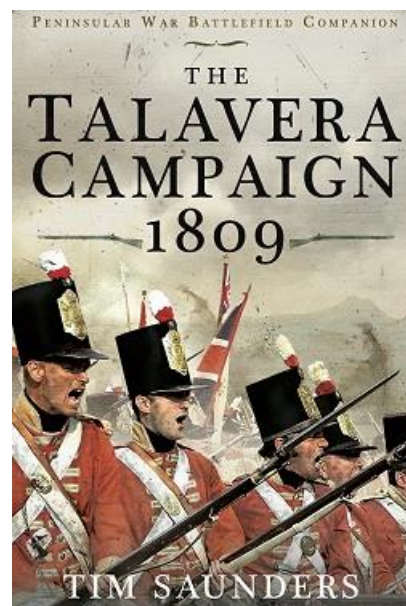
Enjoyed it.

The Second World War: The Fourth Year. by Jack Holroyd. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 280 pages. 2022.

The series continues with this volume generally covering the fall of 1942 to fall of 1943. All the hits are on parade from all the famous battlefields: Guadalcanal, Stalingrad, Yugoslavia, North Africa, Sicily, Kursk, and the Chindits. You also get air war and U-boat war photos, too.

In all, the book contains 768 black and white photos, 44 color photos, 19 black and white maps, eight black and white illustrations, and two color illustrations.

Lots of good ones, but my favorite was the German bridge rebuilding team dealing with the front wheels of a truck on the remains of a bridge and the



tail end sitting on the remains of the bridge in the stream (p71).

One typo: "fash light" (p62) should be "flashlight."

A good selection of photos, although my main complaint is that some of the text is mighty, mighty small for my grognard eyes. It's squintin' time!

Enjoyed it.

See the book review of *The First Year* in the 11/20/2019 AAR, *The Second Year* in the 12/21/2020 AAR, and *The Third Year* in the 08/21/2022 AAR or all of them up on hmgs.org .

The Second World War Illustrated: Fifth Year. by Jack Holroyd. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 320 pages. 2023.

Another volume in the series offers a cornucopia of photos from May 1943 to August 1944. How many? The book says over 1,000 illustrations... Ummm.. Close enough.

I counted 926 black and white photos, 34 black and white maps, and 17 black and white illustrations, or 977 in total. That said, I may have missed a few trying to juggle the three numbers (photos, maps, and illustrations) in my head as I turned page after page.

Although you've likely seen many of them before in other books and publications, the sheer number means you'll be overwhelmed with new material. The photos are generally good quality. Some photos (especially commander head shots) are postage-stamp sized or smaller, yet quite clear.

I wish the font size for the vast, vast majority of the captions would be larger. My eyesight is about typical for grognard-aged history buffs, but this seems as if an 8.5x11-inch book was shrunk to a smaller form factor. As this was likely done on a computer, the layout folks at FactionPress (sez the credits) need a primer on doing a test print in actual size and a focus group on font sizing.

I know paper and printing costs are up, but if you can offer this book for \$34.95 retail, how about charging \$5 more (1/7 of the price) \$39.95 and adding 45 pages (1/7 of 320 pages)? More pages would hold the same number of photos, but an extra point of font size goes a long way. Grognard eyes will thank you.

Nonetheless, enjoyed it.

See the book review of *The First Year* in the 11/20/2019 AAR, *The Second Year* in the 12/21/2020 AAR, and *The Third Year* in the 08/21/2022 AAR or all of them up on hmgs.org .

Operation Allied Force: Air War Over Serbia 1999 Volume 2. by Bojan Dimitrijevic and Lt. Gen. Jovica Draganic. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 104 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Europe at War No. 18*

See the book review of *Volume 1 (Europe at War No. 11)* in the 12/01/2021 AAR or up on hmgs.org.

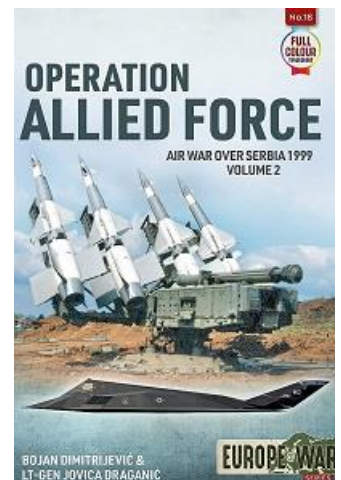
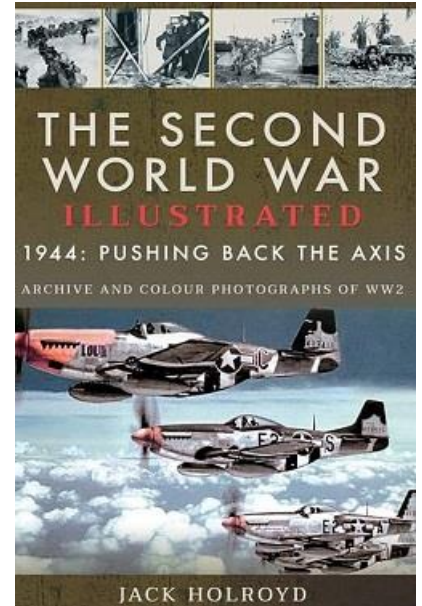
The NATO air strikes against Serbia were governed less by tactics and more by trying to avoid collateral damage (i.e. civilian casualties) and took three days to okay targets. The book noted NATO performed 23,614 strikes, which was mostly US, with 99.6% accuracy. Of course, the biggest collateral damage of the campaign was the strikes against the Chinese embassy. Each strike group consisted of 10-20 aircraft.

The Serbians shot down two NATO aircraft: A F-16 and a F-117 (see the book review *Shooting Down the Stealth Fighter* in the 05/27/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org for an extremely detailed examination of Serbian radar and anti-aircraft defenses that shot down the F-117). The Serbians really upped their game in monitoring signals and figuring out where NATO aircraft were located.

Interesting factoid: B-2 bombers required four to seven days of maintenance between missions (p30).

The book contains 11 black and white photos, 129 color photos, four color illustrations, 24 color aircraft profiles, four color helicopter profiles, 10 color vehicle profiles, and one color map. Kudos for Helion for printing modern warfare photos in color -- it really helps the present modern warfare with a modern format.

Enjoyed it.



The Winter War: 1939-40. by Philip Jowett. Softcover (7.0x10.0 inches). 128 pages. 2023.

This volume in the *Casemate Illustrated* series continues the photo-rich and recap smart text of previous volumes. As usual, you get a good overview, bios of commanders, weaponry, and tactics of the subject.

Out-numbered, out-gunned, and out-reinforced, the Finns put up a heckuva defense that slaughtered Soviets on the Mannerheim Line and with famed ski troops. An accounting of losses (p123) is all over the place, but Nikita Khrushchev noted that Soviet losses equaled about a million -- but that may be too pat. Other studies calculated far less.

Beyond numbers, the book examines how the Finns defended their country for so long against such long odds. It contains 135 black and white photos, seven color illustrations, two color maps, five color aircraft profiles, and four color vehicle profiles. Wax up those skis.

Enjoyed it.

Roman Mail and Scale Armour: Elite 252. by M C Bishop. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2023.

This detailed examination of Roman armor concentrates on chainmail, scale, and lamellar types of armor from construction to wearing. It uses a wide variety of archeological finds, sculpture, and paintings to illustrate various aspects, as well as the usual excellent illustrations for those seeking color information for their miniatures.

The book contains 54 color photos, three black and white photos, 12 black and white illustrations, and 19 color illustrations.

The workmanlike prose provides the analysis and the booklet is suited for those seeking to understand Roman armor at a hyper-detailed level.

Enjoyed it.

Military Dogs of World War II. by Susan Bulanda. Softcover (7.0x10.0 inches). 128 pages. 2023.

As usual, this volume in the *Casemate Illustrated* series continues the photo-rich and recap smart text of previous volumes. What's different is the format: a country-by-country examination of training (mostly in US) coupled with extensive anecdotes of dogs doing heroic things -- messenger dogs, mine-detection dogs, casualty-finding dogs, sniper-finding dogs, and guard dogs.

An odd point made concerning Soviet dogs trained to run under tanks and detonate a mine. The book noted the dogs "could not run away fast enough and were wounded or killed. The Soviet high command stopped using anti-tank dogs" (p110). I had read that the program had been discontinued because the Soviet dogs mostly ran underneath Soviet tanks, not German tanks.

Some minor typos within, including "around around" (p93) which put a Beach Boys song in my head. Also, the photo of the "St. Bernard" (p105) doesn't look like a typical St. Bernard to me -- maybe it's a real skinny variety.

The book contains 150 black and white photos, two color illustrations, and five color photos.

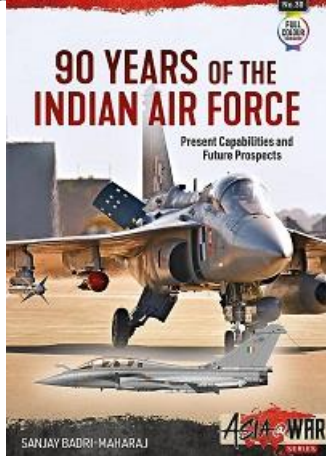
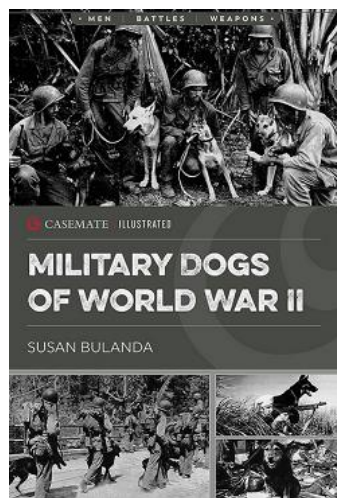
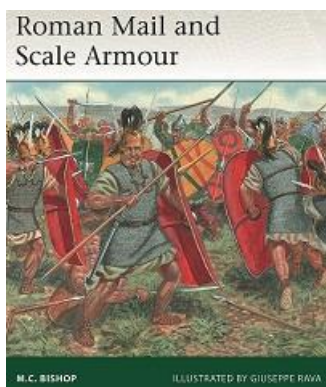
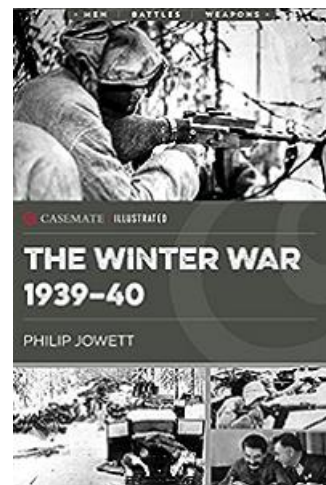
If you like dog anecdotes, you'll love this book, especially if the named dogs receive medals. All sorts of breeds are covered.

Enjoyed it.

90 Years of the Indian Air Force: Asia at War 30. by Sanjay Badri-Maharaj. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 78 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Present Capabilities and Future Prospects*

The retrospective of the Indian Air Force concentrates on present-day aircraft and capabilities, including jets, helicopters, munitions, missiles, and ground-based air defenses. It also contains some information on India's nuclear arsenal and space programs.



Credit Helion for using color throughout on this modern topic. The book contains 70 color photos, one color map, one black and white map, and 15 color aircraft profiles.

I can't say I read this cover to cover, as information about modern munitions and forces tends to roll my eyes back into my head, but I can follow along with the photos and captions. Every so often, these will spur me to delve into the text. With India and China bumping heads in the Himalayas and the ongoing contention with Pakistan, this volume will help define the Indian Air Force in any upcoming conflict.

Enjoyed it.

Sturmgeschütz-Abt. 226: WWII Photobook 24. by Tom Cockle. Hardback (Horizontal: 8.4x11.8 inches). 138 pages. 2023.

This Hungarian publisher offers a photo-heavy look at STuG III assault guns, from the B to G models, ranging from spring 1941 to winter of early 1943. The book also includes a variety of support vehicles: cars, motorcycles, halftracks, and trucks. The vast majority of photos take up an entire page, although some are two-thirds of a page.

The book contains 131 black and white photos. A couple favorites of mine: STuG IIIB disembarks from a ferry (p58) would make a nice addition to the tabletop or a modeling piece, and, a pair of STuG IIIEs that broke through the ice of a small pond and are awaiting a tow (p94). The key here is that the terrain has a coating of snow and the drivers apparently couldn't tell the difference -- makes for an unusual tabletop hazard in a scenario.

Text and captions are half in English and half in Hungarian.

Enjoyed it.



WW2 Vehicles: Through the Lens 1. by Tom Cockle. Hardback (Horizontal: 8.4x11.8 inches). 123 pages. 2023.

Another Cockle trapeze through a photo archive finds 120 black and white photos covering a wide array of vehicles: STuGs, Tiger tanks, PzIVs, Lend-Lease tanks (mostly destroyed), Marder IIs, and a chapter of miscellaneous vehicles: cars, halftracks, armored cars, and trucks.

Each page contains one photo, most are sharp, and just about all offer front-line details that can be a boon for modelers. The larger the scale, the more appreciative you will be for the photos.

A few favorites of mine: A Tiger tank with a horseshoe on the front and a couple hits that didn't penetrate (p34) -- although I thought horseshoes were supposed to be hung with the open end up (not down as in the photo) so that the luck didn't run out; the end result of a KV-1 that rammed a PzIV (p69); and a Mercedes Benz L4500 Flak Truck mounting a 20mm AA gun and towing a generator (p116).

The captions are all in English.

Enjoyed it.

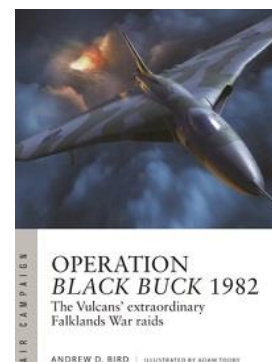


Operation Black Buck 1982: Air Campaign 37. by Andrew D. Bird. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Vulcans' Extraordinary Falklands War Raids*

The Vulcan bombers were about to be retired when the Falklands War required their use for a first strike against the Argentine-captured airfield. Upgraded and modified, including new pylons made from material from a hardware store (p21) and navigation equipment scavenged from VC-10 commercial jets (p22), and supported by a significant number of aerial refueling tankers, seven missions were ultimately flown.

The entire Falklands air campaign was a scramble from the start. Without massive US aid, especially of jet fuel, most flights from Ascension Island likely would not have taken place. Even so, plenty of snags hindered operations. The British had to overcome the ill-prepared state of their bombers.



The booklet contains a good OOB of Argentine defenses and covers some successful Argentine air attacks against the fleet as Harriers made up for lack of long-range bombers.

You'll find 20 black and white photos, 44 color photos, nine color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and one black and white diagram of Vulcan aerial refueling plans.

My biggest knock is the formatting. More specifically, the small font size. The type size in the *Roman Mail and Scale Armour* booklet is fine, but shoehorning the text into a set number of pages required smaller and smaller fonts. Then you run into a half a page that's blank (p30). Worse, the format has two inches of margin on one side of the text that is mostly blank throughout the book.

Either you need tighter editing or you need to change the format to aid us grognard-eyes folks. I would much rather eschew the two inches per page (minus photo captions) for an increase in the font size to something more readable. I've noted this trend before, but it seems to be getting worse. *Air Campaign 38: The Blitz 1940-41* suffers the exact same font size malady.

And before anyone suggests glasses, I already have 'em. If this trend continues, I'm going to need a microscope. Maybe it's just a plan to do away with paper and make everyone read PDFs.

So, interesting look at a little-known topic, but difficult to read without squinting.

Enjoyed it.

The Air War at Sea in the Second World War. by Martin W. Bowman.
Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 285 pages. 2023.

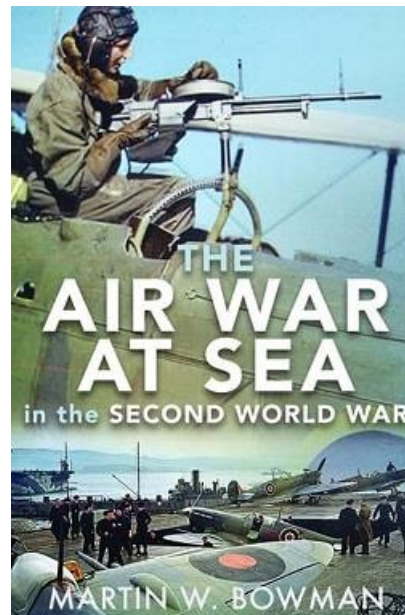
This book offers an anecdotal collection of aircraft attacks on warships in WWII. As such, in some ways it is a throwback to the 1960s-style and is perfectly fine as such.

My 'problem' is that it covers all the usual suspects: Bismarck, Taranto, Scharnhorst, Tirpitz, U-boats, Pearl Harbor, Coral Sea, Midway, Solomons, Philippine Sea and Kamikazes. These should be covered, of course, but I've read about these enough times over the past decades as to be more than familiar.

That's not to say some anecdotes aren't new to me, but that they were not enough to overcome my tendency to skip pages to try and find something new.

The book contains 66 black and white photos.

So, the more well-read you are about those actions and battles listed above, the less you'll be compelled to pore over every page. The less well-read you are, the more you will appreciate this compilation of air-sea actions.



Black Tulip: The Life and Myth of Erich Hartmann. by Erik Schmidt.
Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 212 pages. 2023 reprint of a 2020 book.

Subtitle: *The World's Top Fighter Ace*

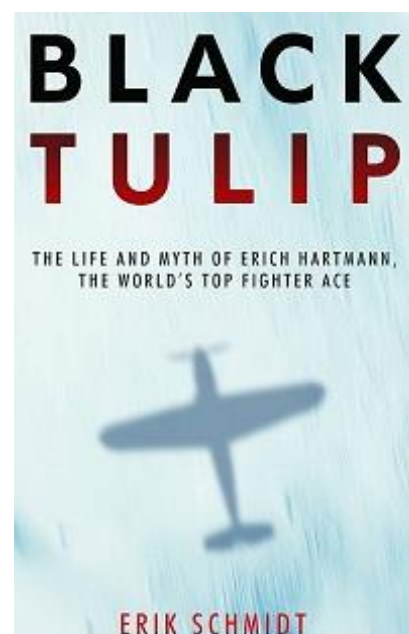
This bio of WWII German pilot Erich Hartmann considers his life within a broader context of propaganda making a legend for the war effort. Thus, the biographical details get compared and contrasted against adherence to the ideology of the era.

Hartmann's boyhood consisted of being a member of the Hitler Youth and attending glider school. In October 1940, he enrolled in the Luftwaffe and the rest becomes part of his history. Sure, you read about barrel rolls and kills during the war, but especially fascinating was his 10-year prison sentence in the USSR and his semi-resurrection as German ace when the Cold War deepened in the mid-1950s and he became commander of JG-71.

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

Again, his bio interweaves political and social commentary with day-to-day operations of the era. Eventually, he is shunted aside for less martial endeavors, but the transition is interesting how idols rise and fall and rise and fall.

Enjoyed it.



Villers-Bocage: Operation Perch The Complete Account. by Daniel Taylor. Hardback (8.5x12.0 inches). 168 pages. 2023.

This book sounded really familiar. It took me a moment, but I realized I had reviewed a book called *Villers-Bocage: Through the Lens* (see the review in the 11/03/2022 AAR or up on hmgs.org) by, wait for it ... Daniel Taylor. That was a 2021 reprint of a 1999 book -- you'd think that any updates or new information since 1999 would have been included. I don't know -- maybe he couldn't add any new info. Maybe the publisher didn't give him the opportunity to update that fantastic book. Well, now he has the chance with this new book.

To be fair, this new book is twice the length of the old, although I remember many of the same maps and photos are printed in the new book. However, Taylor notes that this new book contains many newly unearthed photos from 1944 archives that allow him to precisely place individuals and vehicles during the battle.

The book contains 16 black and white illustrations, 185 black and white photos, three black and white maps, and 16 color maps.

It's an almost minute-by-minute recap of the movements of the various tanks and infantry teams. It contains a number of individual profiles as well as a visual OOB of six battalions and regiments (p142-149). Particular care is taken in recounting German tank ace Michael Wittmann's actions, noting the differences between German propaganda claims and actual results, in part based on Wittmann's radio interview almost immediately after the battle.

As it's been a couple decades from initial publication, the updated info and photos are welcome. If you're looking for a tactical WWII battle in a French village, this provides a top-rate resource.

Enjoyed it...again.

The Blitz 1940-41: Air Campaign 38. by Julian Hale. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Luftwaffe's Biggest Strategic Bombing Campaign*

A thorough overview of the German air attacks, famously against London but also against other cities in Britain. The usual *Air Campaign* format of equipment, strategy, and campaign recap provide all the necessary information. The analysis at the end, especially when tying together objectives to capabilities, is on the mark.

The book contains 61 black and white photos, three color photos, eight color maps, four color illustrations, three color two-page action illustrations, and two two-page "3D" bomber route illustrations. Per usual, the 3D illustrations are weak and fairly unnecessary -- better to use the pages for increasing the font size.

Yes, I'm back on my soapbox about small font sizes. Publishers need to rethink static formats when text becomes too small to read comfortably. This format has two inches of margin on one side of the text that is mostly blank throughout the book.

To repeat: Either you need tighter editing or you need to change the format to aid us grognard-eyes folks. I would much rather eschew the two inches per page (minus photo captions) for an increase in the font size to something more readable. I've noted this trend before, but it seems to be getting worse. *Air Campaign 37: Operation Black Buck 1982* also suffers the exact same font malady.

My enjoyment level diminishes as the font size diminishes, but still...

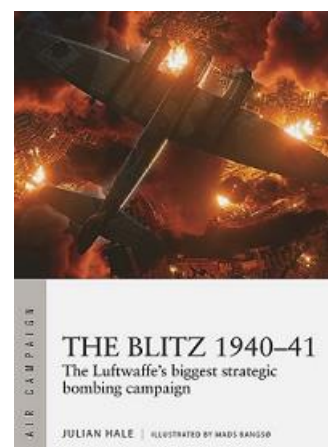
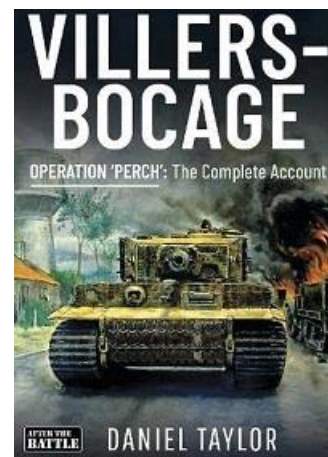
Enjoyed it.

MinuteGirls. by George Phillies. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 487 pages. 2017.

In the year 2174, the MinuteGirls form the militia of the American Stellar Republic (ASR) with the colony of Lincoln in Alpha Centauri. Think anime-style teenage and young women with combat ferocity, hidden knives, and power armor that loosely follow the historical precedent of the American Revolution Minutemen.

Indeed, in this universe, ASR also contains MinuteBoys, MinuteMoms, and MinuteDads, too, in descending order of competence. The ASR also fields a space fleet smaller than its main Franco-German European socialist rivals. Indeed, the book starts off with a Euro-invasion of Lincoln in a Pearl Harbor sort of narrative.

Ah, but the perfidious Europeans have secret extraterrestrial allies who will help the Euros take Lincoln if the Euros help them in their interstellar war with other aliens. Meanwhile, the much smaller Chinese empire performs border infiltrations



against American positions "manned" by Girl Guides -- the special forces equivalent within the MinuteGirls. Yet all these Minute organizations are privately funded (p43), which has to be some sort of civilized utopia instead of the equivalent of the Wild West.

It's an interesting libertarian versus socialism universe as battles covert and overt range throughout the text. The plot rolled along and kept me reading, even if the prose had ups and downs. That's typical of a self-published novel.

Non-fatal typos, such as missing spaces, are within, for example, "TheAdmiral" (p79). Others are a bit more intrusive: "taped a sequence on his keypad" (p19) is likely either "typed" or "tapped." The MinuteGirls are officially referred to as "Shields of the Republic" (p43 and p64), but also as "Glorious Shields of the Republic" (p60).

Phillies likes to introduce something, then explain the concept later. You often get it in the end, but sometimes you wonder. For example, there's a throwaway comment (p22) that one-third of ships entering warp never arrive. Apparently worm holes are safe, free warp is not. The Supreme Lord of the Hexagon (p95) is some sort of co-head of a secret strategic society that ultimately plays a larger part in ASR defense. I have no idea about the Guild of Spam Assassins (p101), which may be some sort of signals hacking group?

While the space battles pose interesting concepts, I'm sometimes not entirely sure how these concepts let the smaller ASR fleet to victory -- like at the Pearl Harbor opening. The MinuteGirls' contributions against the Chinese are clear cut.

I'm also not sure why the ASR didn't sweep the space area for wreckage earlier. Only later did they sweep and discover aliens still alive in a ship's compartment. If you run up against massive ships without a corresponding entry in the *Janes Ships* equivalent.

Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.

El Salvador: Volume 2 Conflagration 1984-1992. by David Francois. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 92 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Latin America at War 34*

Volume 2 is every bit as good as *Volume 1* (see the review of *El Salvador: Volume 1 Latin America at War 32* in the 08/04/2023 AAR or up on hmgs.org) and continues the guerrilla war through to peace treaty near the present day.

For those interested in the period, you can pull numerous scenarios from the text, although you'll have to extrapolate terrain as small numbers of soldiers fought over villages and infrastructure. Yet, the big combined November 1989 guerrilla attack on San Salvador plays out like a Central American version of the Tet Offensive.

The text explains the difficulties faced by government forces, backed by US aid, in trying to extinguish armed opposition in the jungles of rural areas. Move and countermove, changes in tactics, and weaponry escalation all play a part in government successes and failures.

Some odd word choices within, which may or may not be a translation issue. "The FMLN offensive searched several objectives. The most modest was to support the fight..." (p47). "Searched" seems correct, but the context of finding something is off. Maybe "secured" or "captured" is better?

Or: "security detail that repelled guerrillas who animated a block in the Colonia Maquilishuat" (p49). Animated? "Attacked" or "infiltrated" perhaps? Odd.

The book contains 99 black and white photos, one black and white map, 11 color aircraft profiles, seven color helicopter profiles, three color vehicles profiles, six color uniform illustrations, and three color maps.

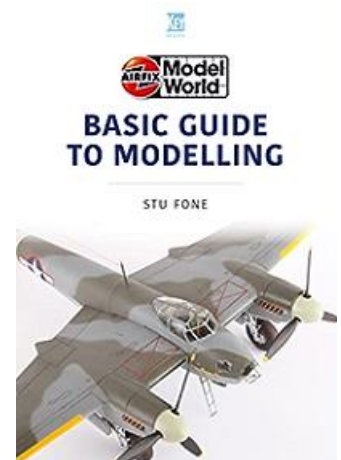
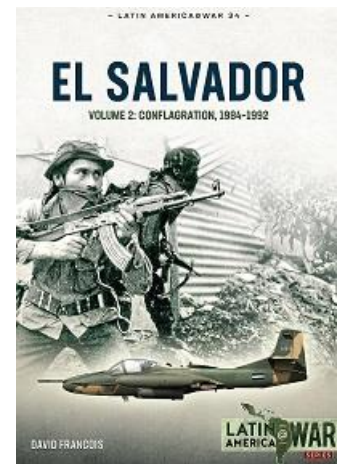
A nicely done pair of books.

Enjoyed it.

Basic Guide to Modelling. by Stu Fone. Softcover (6.7x9.5 inches). 124 pages. 2022 reprint of magazine articles.

This collection of article reprints from *AirFix Model World* magazine (years not specified) contains use tips and techniques applicable to today as they were whenever these articles were printed. The UK products used on the model kits may or may not be still available in a store -- my knowledge of UK hobby store inventory is nil -- but the final results show what can be achieved by the beginning modeler.

It explains how to prepare the model, when to paint (sprue or parts or



assembled), and most importantly how to paint: light to dark, thin layers, and so on. It touches on weathering effects, air brushing, and aftermarket items. It even includes gluing advice.

The book contains 177 color photos, including a multitude of close-ups that showcase some of the intricacies of building a model kit.

Clear photos, step-by-step instructions, and explanatory text make this a winner for beginners and for those who might want to return to modeling.

Enjoyed it.

Single Model 02: Stalinetz S-65 City Tractor. by Mike Renaldi.

Softcover (6.5x7.5 inches). 128 pages. 2021 reprint of 2016 book.

What a fantastic painting guide filled with tips and techniques for beginner and veteran modelers. Not only do the 186 color photos, many with super close-up clarity, show you the effects of his work, but the text goes into the how and why of performing some step.

This covers a 1/35 scale caterpillar tractor, but treads are treads and weathering metal is weathering metal. The information is transferable to tanks and other armored vehicles.

Now, his steps sound good to me, but understand I haven't put together a plastic kit in decades. I don't know if the Windex Removal Technique (with Tamiya paints) to create worn-away paint spots really works. Based on watching My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Windex is good for everything.

So, prime, hair spray, "chipping," thin build ups of layered oil paints, and so on seem OK, but I can't say I've tried 'em. I'm lucky to prime, base coat, wash coat, and highlight coat and not have the figure come out in a single drab color.

His are works of art.

Enjoyed it.

Single Model 03: Sazabi Custom (Mecha). by Mike Renaldi. Softcover (6.5x7.5 inches). 128 pages. 2021 reprint of 2016 book.

Many of the same ideas used in SM02 are used here as well, bit perhaps with a little more explanation. When he talks about priming and painting the model, he goes into whether to start with individual parts or subassemblies.

Oddly enough, he started with a test model to see if his techniques would work in the mecha world -- so you get two "classes" for the price of one. That's why this volume explains the acrylic base and the layered oil paint process a little better than SM02. His English sometimes results in awkward phrasings, but his 181 color photos, many with clear close-ups, are worth a thousand words each.

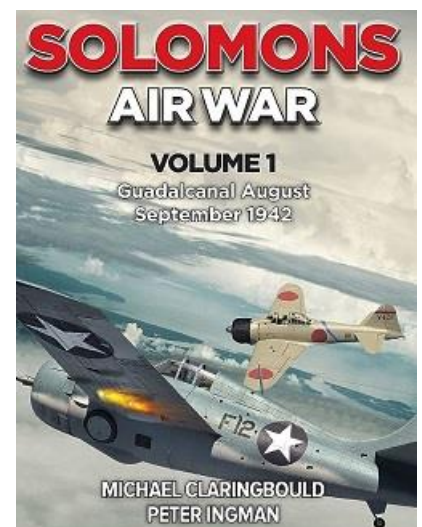
His works of modeling art show what happens when you combine talent and experience. This book may allow a little of his magic to rub off on your efforts.

Enjoyed it.

Solomons Air War: Volume 1 - Guadalcanal August-September 1942. by Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman. Softcover (6.9x9.8 inches). 248 pages. 2023.

These "air campaign" books from Claringbould are always a pleasure to read, packed with minute details and comparisons of both the Allied and Japanese air forces. This one is no different.

Set at Guadalcanal, this explains how the Japanese focus on Port Moresby made Guadalcanal a secondary show -- to their detriment. From the carrier-based air support to long-distance air support from island airstrips, the move and counter-move of air attack and defense plays out among the pages.



Although the focus is on the air campaign, the ground and sea supply campaigns also fit into the narrative, as they drove some of the air battles. Indeed, since Claringbould and Ingman use Allied and Japanese sources, they can correlate the two to get a true picture of numbers and losses. You will be surprised at the differences of claimed and reality.

The book contains 60 black and white photos, two color maps, 18 color aircraft profiles, 18 color action illustrations, and six color maps.

Chapters cover almost week by week and the accounts are virtually day by day. Indeed, it can get repetitive at times reading a continuous narrative of dogfighting accounts, but you get the feeling this is a complete account of all the air battles. You can pull lots of scenarios from these pages.

Overall, the book covers events on Guadalcanal from August 7 to September 30. Presumably, *Volume 2* will continue the coverage. I can't wait.

Enjoyed it.

Pacific Profiles: Volume 9 - Allied Fighters: P-38 Series. by Michael John Claringbould. Softcover (6.9x9.8 inches). 124 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *South and Southwest Pacific 1942-1944*

For those with the urge to create airplane models with unique markings, this one covers P-38s, *Pacific Profiles* is just the resource. But it's more than that as facts and anecdotes populate the histories of individual aircraft.

The 9th Fighter Squadron needed 25 P-38s to be considered at full strength due to attrition and it was supported by a reserve pool of aircraft for replacements and maintenance (p51).

When they talk about refueling, you think a tanker truck, but the photo (p57) of refueling at Dobodura airfield shows a tractor pulling a wagon filled with 12 (?) 55-gallon drums.

Lots of aircraft had nose art, and the book shows plenty, but Capt. Richard Bong had a 20x24-inch photograph of his fiancé Marge glued and varnished to his P-38J. Alas, on March 24, 1944, another pilot flew his plane into bad weather and bailed out. "Marge" the P-38 crashed (p117 and 119).

It just goes on in a cornucopia of information. Sure, most plane entries are one or two sentences, but you are always going to come across some detail that is intriguing.

This book contains 65 black and white photos, 12 color photos, 100 color aircraft profiles, 108 color nose art illustrations, two color maps, 21 color unit logos, and eight other color illustrations.

That's what I like about Claringbould books. He goes into details and more importantly, cross-checks American and Japanese records. Both sides will claim 20 enemy shot down and the number is really like two or three a side, with double that damaged. His "campaign" books, like the above *Solomons Air War*, are even better, but there's plenty of that in the *Pacific Profiles* series, too. Well done.

Enjoyed it.

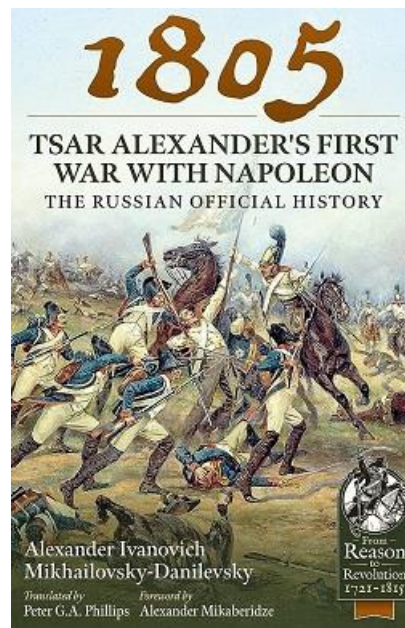
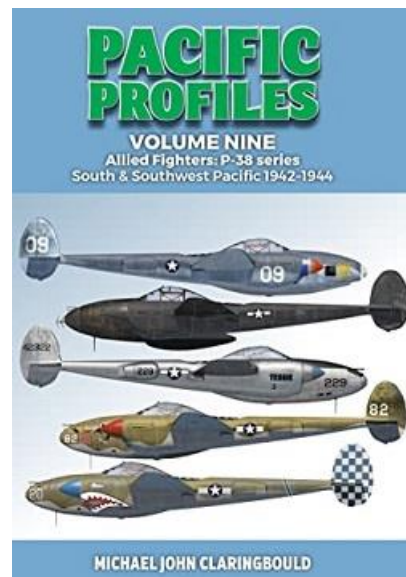
1805: Tsar Alexander's First War with Napoleon. by Alexander Ivanovich Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky. Softcover (6.1x9.3 inches). 124 pages. 2022 reprint of 1844 book.

Subtitle: *The Russian Official History*

Subtitle: *From Reason to Regiment 1721-1815 No. 96*

Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky rose through the ranks of tsarist court life, volunteering for the militia and was at the Battle of Borodino and other major Napoleonic battles. His pen proved even mightier than his sword and he went to the Quartermaster Corps and then to be head of the General Staff library. By the 1830s, with a rank of Lt. Gen, he wrote the official Russian government histories, including this one for the 1805 campaign that ended at Austerlitz.

It should be noted that Tsar Nicolas edited his drafts and M-D was apparently smart enough to write favorably about the various Tsars' contributions to Russian military prowess, whether or not that was true. So, this official history isn't exactly unbiased, especially when it comes to Austerlitz. Reading between the lines, so to speak, helps.



But what it does contain are insights into the thought processes of the Russian leadership as events in 1805 unfolded. Russian OOBs for 1805 Army mobilization and the Battle of Austerlitz are included, including losses and other returns after the battle. French and Austrian OOBs are in less precise form.

The book contains eight black and white maps. One typo "Alexander appreciate his service" (p. ix) should be "appreciated."

Although history buffs new to the 1805 campaign are probably better off reading a more general history for a more neutral tone, those looking to dig into more esoteric sources will find this official history of interest.

Enjoyed it.

Dropping the Atomic Bomb on Hirohito and Hitler. by Jim Mangi. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 284 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *What Might Have Happened If The A-Bomb Had Been Ready Early*

Given the buzz about the movie *Oppenheimer*, I figured reading this alternative history book that posits the manufacturing and delivery of atom bombers earlier in the war would be interesting. I also didn't have an alternative history of Barbie, so nuclear weaponry would have to do.

The conjecture is based on a number of decision points that would have delivered the atomic bomb six months early. A few months were wasted trying to get Einstein to write FDR a letter in favor of researching the A-bomb, the Army Corps of Engineering delayed building infrastructure, and one personnel change replacing a methodical scientist with a more pragmatic general would have saved another few months. Each twist and turn reveals an incremental savings in time that add up.

Of course, then comes a discussion on where the first bombs get dropped. The speculation is both Germany and Japan: Dresden, Hanover, Leipzig, Yokohoma, Kobe, and Kokura win the nuclear lottery in this what-if book.

The war ends in February 1945. Events beyond that date, including deGaulle offering French Indochina independence and a seat at the SEATO alliance that defends against a Chinese invasion and the USSR attacking Japan on February 8, 1945, become more and more speculative. The book goes through 1963.

The book contains 10 black and white maps and 34 black and white photos.

I liked the speculation and the reasoning behind them. I may not agree with every one of them, but I applaud the author for applying what-if to sound historical research.

Enjoyed it.



The First Atomic Bomb: An Alternate History of the Ending of WW2. by Jim Mangi. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 304 pages. 2022.

Same author as *Dropping the Atomic Bomb on Hirohito and Hitler*, but instead of the atomic bomb becoming available six months early than the historical date, the book posits a few changes, including the July 1945 test being a "dud" and only partially working, that delayed the manufacture and delivery of the atomic bomb to August 19 and August 22.

The USSR rolls into Mongolia along as per history on August 8, but also rolls into northern Japan and sets up the Japanese Communist Party. Korea falls to the communists without the US making too much of a big deal about the original agreement that Stalin broke, but so the US told the USSR to keep their communist hands off the rest of Japan.

Meanwhile, the historical US effort to thwart the communists in Korea takes place in Vietnam. US Army, Navy, and Air Force assets back the Vietnamese army's efforts to expel the Chinese, which are mostly successful, but part of northern Vietnam remains under Communist control.

The book contains 17 black and white maps and 30 black and white photos.

Again, I liked the speculation and the reasoning behind them. And again, I may not agree with every one of them, but I applaud the author for applying what-if to sound historical research.

And again: Enjoyed it.



British Interwar Aircraft. by Lee Chapman. Softcover (horizontal 9.7x6.7 inches). 128 pages. 2022.

This photo-heavy book details the remaining flying versions of British aircraft from the 1920s and 1930s. That people, organizations, and companies devote time and effort to keep such aircraft flying deserves praise. It's one thing to see an aircraft in a museum, but another to see it soar past.

The book contains 192 color photos and nine black and white photos of such aircraft. Some photos are close-ups of markings.

You have to pay attention to the text, for the majority of photos lack captions. Instead, identifications are embedded in the text. Pay attention if you want the details about markings and so on.

If you need an aircraft for an interwar game or RPG, here's a good source to consult and then look for an actual model.

Enjoyed it.



The First Bridge Too Far: The Battle of Primosole Bridge 1943. by Mark Saliger. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 248 pages. 2023 reprint of 2018 book.

Primosole Bridge, a key bridge in Sicily, was the target of two paratroops: one Allied and one German, and both at the same time. That alone makes it interesting, but the see-saw battle for the span proved an interesting read.

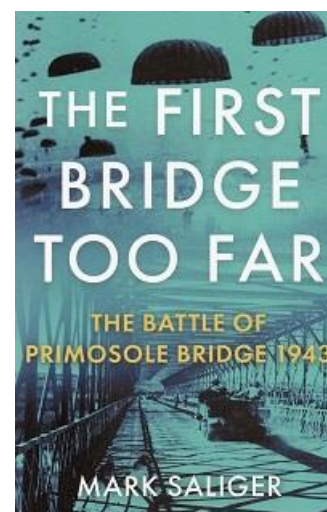
The book covers the Operation Husky landings in Sicily up to page 80. After that comes the Luftwaffe and Allied preparation for dropping the paratroopers.

It's an excellent, well-written account, often following individual officers and small groups of men who persevere in the face of escalating obstacles in trying to secure Primosole Bridge. There's a full British OOB, but you'll have to parse the text for the German OOB.

The book contains 54 black and white photos, five black and white maps, and one black and white illustration.

This makes for a cracking good tabletop scenario, with enough "what-if this force made it" to provide a number of variations.

Enjoyed it.



Ottoman Armies 1820-1914: Men At Arms 551. by Gabriele Esposito. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2023.

The transition of the Ottoman Army between the Napoleonic Wars and WWI takes center stage with a concise distillation of the organizational and weaponry changes -- literally over the Janissaries' dead bodies.

Sultan Selim III first tried to form a "New Army" based on Napoleonic organization, but the Janissaries felt threatened, rebelled, defeated the relatively untrained New Army, and assassinated Selim III in 1807 (p6).

Tough crowd.

Sultan Mahmud II tried again in 1826. Once again, the Janissaries felt threatened, but this time, the New Army ambushed and killed off most of the Janissaries (p10).

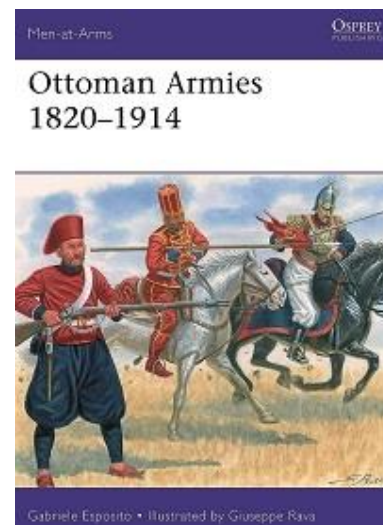
Tougher boss.

More sultans, more westernization, and the Ottoman Army went to war against Russia during the Crimean War, the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78), and WWI.

The changes to weaponry and organization, including OOBs, are well covered, including overviews of Ottoman vassal states of Egypt, Tunisia, Serbia, Montenegro, Moldavia, and Wallachia.

The book contains 13 black and white photos, 31 black and white illustrations, one color map, and eight color uniform plates (24 uniform illustrations in total). It's another solid *M-A-A* effort.

Enjoyed it.



The Cimbrian War 113-101BC: Campaign 393. by Nic Fields. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Rise of Caius Marius*

Marius made his military name in the Jugurthine War, but cemented his place in Roman history by leading armies against the Cimbrians and Teutones tribes that had plagued Gaul and northern Italy. After several Roman consular armies were crushed by these tribes, Marius revamped training and equipment (aka "Marius' Mules") and marched against the tribes. When the tribes split into Cimbrian and Teutonic armies, Marius defeated the Teutones in 102BC and the Cimbrians in 101BC.

As the subtitle indicates, much of the story centers around Marius, elected as consul for an unprecedented six times. This included five times in a row (104BC-100BC) contrary to existing Roman law, but who says no to a hero backed by an experienced army who gained lots of loot?

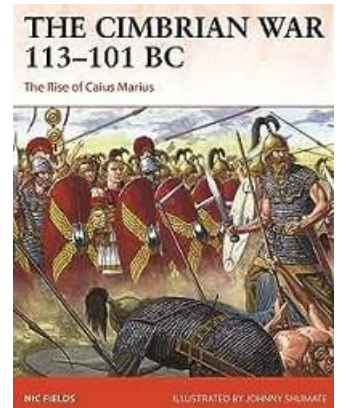
The battles of Aquae Sextiae (102BC) and Vercellae (101BC) are well covered, with the previous Roman defeats gaining lesser detail as historical sources allow.

One odd part: the discussion of the pilum (throwing spear) appears after his victories and not with the rest of the uniform, armor, and weaponry info. It's as if some accidentally moved it to the back of the book or forgot to move it to the front of the book.

The book contains 65 color photos, three color illustrations, five color maps, two of those less-than-useful 3D canted battlefield maps, and three color two-page action illustrations (including the one on the cover). The photos of archeological finds and re-enactors are welcome.

Another solid *Campaign* volume.

Enjoyed it.



Nazi UFOs: Legends and Myths of Flying Saucers. by S. D. Tucker.

Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 209 pages. 2023.

You can hear the wheels turning inside the marketing department's brainbox at the acquisitions meeting: "Do you think we should publish a book on Nazi UFOs?"

"Oh, man! You had me at Nazi!"

"Nazis AND flying saucers? I'm drooling!"

"The only way it could be better is if the title was Hitler's Nazi UFOs."

"No. No. No. How about Hitler's Nazi SS UFOs?"

"Genius! Sheer genius!"

"Do we need a subtitle?"

"Oh yeah. Umm. Hitler's Nazi SS UFOs: Bigfoot Rides Again."

"Needs more. How about Hitler's Nazi SS UFOs: Butch Bigfoot and the Yeti Kid."

"Call 9-1-1! Papa's gonna need a new defibrillator."

"Hey, new guy! You haven't said anything. Whatcha think?"

"Well..."

"C'mon. C'mon!"

"Wouldn't this be the stupidest thing ever published?"

Silence descended in the room.

Everyone glared at the new guy.

The second hand on the wall clock seemed to hover in mid-tick. The harmonic convergence of marketing minds coalescing around a concept erupted into a barrage of umbrage.

"Keel-haul him!"

"Make him dance on air!"

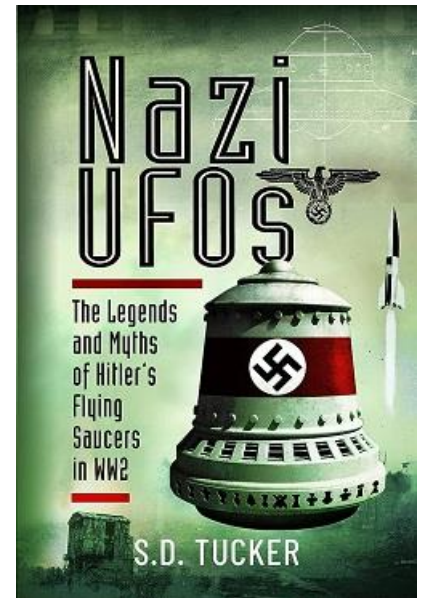
"I'm using the coffee maker to heat up the tar!"

"Tear up a chair seat. It ain't feathers, but close enough!"

"Break off a table leg for a rail!"

The head of marketing rapped his knuckles on the table for silence. The shouting quieted to murmurs of distaste. "Explain yourself."

"Well. All this nonsense has been disproved long ago. Not even supposed 'History' Channel programs show anything new. Foo fighters? Flying saucers shooting lightning bolts? The 1945 time-traveling bell to 1963



Pennsylvania? If all that was true, Germany would have swept the skies of Allied planes and fried everything on the ground. Nothing even close. It's all propaganda myths fueled by desperation. Rinse and repeat ad nauseum."

Gasps all around. A mid-level marketer fainted.

The head of marketing rapped anew. "Is that so, New Guy?"

"Yes, but..."

"But what?"

"But ... that's only because I was playing evil Captain Kirk from Star Trek's *Mirror Mirror* episode. You know, where a transporter fluke switches Kirk and party with their evil counterparts in a parallel universe? Boy did I have you all going! Nazi UFOs will be great!"

Conference room tensions ebbed away and into nervous laughter. The New Guy gained a reputation for being an inspired prankster...

Such was my first thought upon seeing the book. But you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. So, I read it.

The focus is showing all these secret programs to be paper legends, and the minimal documentation available proved the Luftwaffe and SS had no flying saucers or super weapons beyond the rockets and jets we already know. Sure, some bits and pieces of the book proved interesting and even plausible -- more V-2 versions or even the next large developmental step of a rocket-powered space plane.

Some aspects of the history of selling the public on German UFOs also prove interesting in a debunking sort of way.

The book contains four black and white illustrations, eight black and white photos, and four color photos.

That's the book: Nazi UFOs and other purported super Wunderwaffen gizmos were not real. But we already knew that.

Fall-In 2023 Is Coming!



The graphic features a collage of historical military images within hexagonal frames. The images include a battleship, a submarine, and a large naval vessel. To the right is the HMGS logo, which consists of three stylized figures in a hexagon and the text 'HMGS HISTORICAL MINIATURES GAMING SOCIETY'. The main text 'FALL IN!® 2023' is in large blue letters, with 'November 3-5, 2023' below it. At the bottom, it says 'Wyndham Resort and Convention Center, Lancaster, PA'. A dark blue bar at the very bottom contains the hashtag '#FALLIN2023'.

FALL IN!® 2023
November 3-5, 2023
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#FALLIN2023

Southern Front Convention: Sept. 15-17, 2023

Hosted by the Triangle Simulation Society, the convention will be held Sept. 15-17, 2023 at the Four Points Sheraton, 1200 Claren Circle, Morrisville, NC 27560. Phone: 919-380-1221. Web: www.trianglesimsociety.org Email: herzogbrian@earthlink.net

