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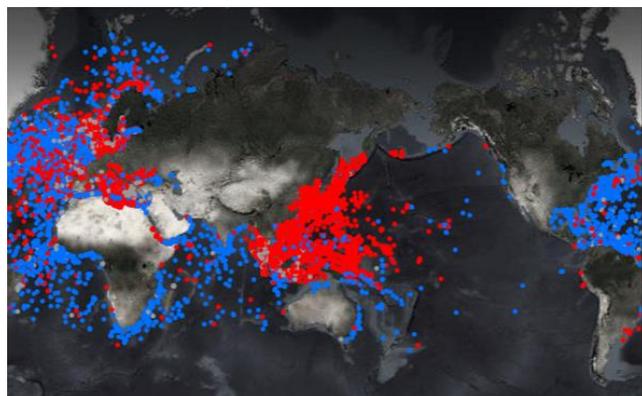
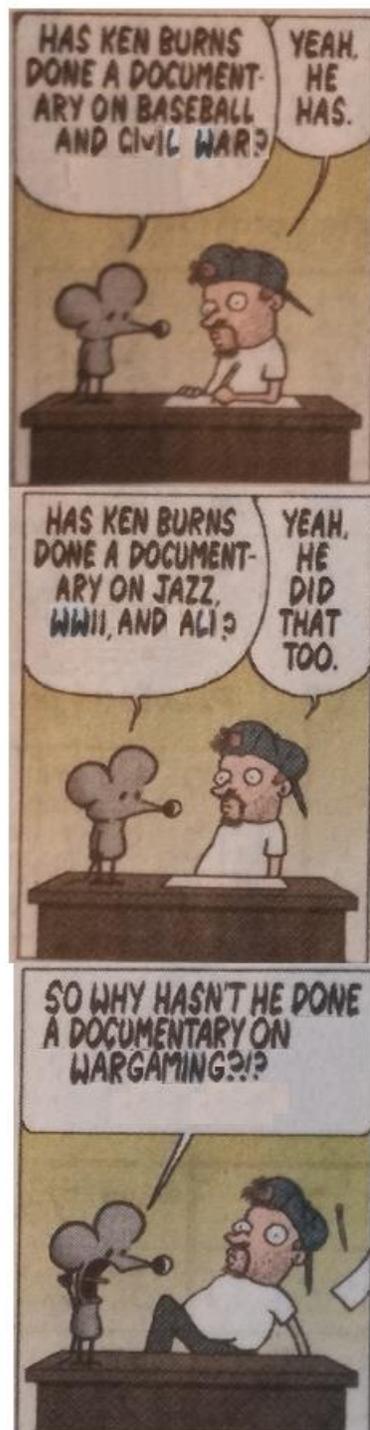
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## Books I've Read

**Operation C3:** Plan to Invade Malta  
**To Conquer and to Keep:** Volume 1 Suchet Spain (RtR 107)  
**Damned Hunchbacks:** WWII Italy S.79  
**The German Liberation War of 1813:** Volume 2  
**Anzio-Nettuno:** Die Wehrmacht im Kampf 32  
**Allied Victory Over Japan 1945** (Images Of War)  
**Infantry Attacks:** WWI  
**Ripped Apart:** Cyprus 1963 Vol 1 (Europe At War 34)  
**Panzerwaffe Battlefield 4:** WWII Photobook  
**When Brothers Fight:** Sino-Soviet Border 1969  
**Cape Matapan 1941:** Mediterranean (Campaign 397)  
**Japan's Indian Ocean Raid 1942:** Campaign 396  
**Throwing Thunderbolts:** Guide to 1792-1797 War  
**The Ones Who Got Away:** WWII US Airmen Escapes  
**Snow, Ice and Sacrifice:** Italy in Russia 1941-3  
**Aussie Rules for Dummies:** 2nd Edition  
**Games of Command** (sci-fi novel)  
**Mass Effect: Revelation** (sci-fi novel)  
**Non-Stop** (sci-fi novel)  
**The Armageddon Inheritance** (sci-fi novel)  
**Guderian 1941:** The Barbarossa Campaign  
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**Pacific Profiles:** Volume 10 - P47 Fighters  
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**Britain's Plot to Kill Hitler:** Operation Foxley  
**Hungarian Arms and Armour of World War Two**  
**AMARG:** America's Strategic Mil. Aircraft Reserve  
**Hawker Typhoon:** RAF Fighter-Bomber  
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# Holiday Gaming: Five for Fighting

by Russ Lockwood

Being away for most of the holidays puts a damper on the gaming schedule, even if I enjoyed the break. I was able to game but one day, but what a wonderfully long 11-hour day of playing five, count 'em five, games. Woo-hoo!

Ed (left), Dan, and I start a game of *Catan Hawaii*.



## Aloha: *Catan Hawaii*

Unlike regular *Settlers of Catan*, *Catan Hawaii* uses a fixed map of hexes, not a map with randomly assigned hexes. The resource trading card aspect is the same: wheat, sheep, etc., but some of the sea hexsides are fishing grounds that allow you to randomly draw fish counters that you can amass and trade in for cards, roads, and ships. To remind us about the fishing grounds, Dan brought out little plastic fish he got somewhere. It helped us remember.

I've played this variant before (see the 01/23/2022 AAR), but if you've played original *Catan*, you'll pick this up easily.

I rolled highest and so placed a town and road first (green markers). Then Dan (white) and Ed (red) placed a town and road each, then Ed and Dan placed, and finally I placed twice in a row and then Ed and Dan placed. So, each of us started with three towns and three roads/ships.

*About mid game. I would soon connect the two separate green colonies.*

I went for the odds and was able to place next to two 8s, but wouldn't ya know it, our dice rolls were awfully short of 8s. Sheesh! 2d6 rolls are 2d6 rolls.

In any case, we hoarded and traded bricks, wheat, sheep, etc., to grow our empires. Of course there were 'Go Fish' moments when no one had a particular resource.

Unlike regular *Settlers of Catan*, you can't build towns on every intersection -- seems like half are VP intersections. First one there gets the 1 VP counter. That shifts your strategy a bit as you plan builds based on slightly longer paths towards higher odds hexes or specific resources.

I managed to build the longest "road" (2 VPs and ships and fish count), but Dan and Ed were able to upgrade their towns (1 VP ea.) and build lots of cities (2 VPs each). They also went after discovery cards, which allowed Dan to build the biggest army (2 VPs). We all went after fish, but I had more as I concentrated on expanding my shipping.

It all came down to the wire. We were looking for 15 VPs for the win, which Dan attained, narrowly beating me (14 VPs, but I had drawn the "boot" instead of a fish token and so needed 16 VPs to win (wah-wah), and Ed, 13 VPs. Dano booked us.



## Race Pace: *Space Base*

Oh yes, we enjoy this game a lot (see the 10/26/2023 for the latest game recap). Quick to learn and so random in set up and play, no two games are the same. Indeed, we've tried different strategies and haven't found a sure-fire winner yet, although building low gives a boost in the early game. A little luck and some low-odds cards offer some spectacular resource gathering, too. It also depends on the number of players. The more players, the more your "tucked" cards get in play.

*Early in the game. Notice the three big piles of random spaceship cards that get picked to fill in the middle spaceship lot. Yep. Jabba's Used Spaceships. Only flown on the Kessel Run by little old wookies with Imperial permission.*

Dan, Ed, and I played standard *Space Base*, not the Lightspeed variation. We rolled, we consulted our gold-generating cards, and we built more and more ships to expand our trading empire. Every once in a while, an opponent's die roll generated some low-odds but welcome bennies.

I fell behind in the VP race, which was eventually won by Dan.

Still a clever game.



## Squad Leader: Stalingrad

In honor of winter, we played a small Stalingrad scenario of *Squad Leader*. I had played this before (see the 10/26/2021 AAR), where Germans were trying to take the bread factory.

I insisted Ed take the Soviets. I had played the Soviets and they have the more interesting proposition. They hold the two VP buildings and have to deploy first with the restriction of only one squad per hex. The Germans on the edge have no such limitation.

*The map. The bread factory consists of the two buildings in upper right corner with dots. Germans deploy in upper right corner.*



Both sides possess dummy markers, which is just as important for the Soviets as the Germans, even with the one squad per hex maximum limit at start. The Soviets also get a trench marker and an AT gun to place anywhere and these is important. Ed would also get Soviet reinforcements, as Dan and I would gain German reinforcements.

*Squad Leader* mostly consists of leader and squad counters along with weapon counters. I had a number of MGs plus a panzerfaust that I scattered among my troops.

*Game at start. My Germans along bottom edge. Dan's troops in one big stack to the right. Ed's Soviets scattered. The irregular darker gray lines are railroads on elevated beds. The lighter gray lines are rock walls. The dashed line is the tunnel that leads to the gully. Brown houses are wooden. Gray houses are stone. Brown spots are shellholes. Brown criss-crossed lines are rubble wooden houses. Gray criss-crossed lines are rubble stone houses.*



Each counter has a morale level. If hit, you roll morale for all troops in the hex, starting with the leader. I had a pretty good "-2" die modifier leader and a mediocre "-0" leader. When you roll 2d6 for morale you want to roll low. Most German troops were rated as 7s and 8s. Most Soviet troops were 7s.

Ed made the decision not to defend the two VP buildings, electing to wait and concentrate for a counter-attack. Dan quickly took advantage of this by having his German engineer squad pop a smoke grenade in an open hex. Most of his troops scuttled through the smoke into one building while one sacrificial squad grabbed the second, more exposed building.

## Flanking Fire

I swept around the flank on the "other" side of a gully that you can only cross at certain spots. Ed had placed a Soviet squad in the gully that included a tunnel underneath the railroad tracks. I didn't know what to do about that, so I stacked a few German dummy counters on my side of the tunnel. Of course, Ed didn't know they were dummies, but I hoped that it would prevent his squad from using the tunnel and popping up behind the Germans. That part of my tactical deployment worked as did my flanking movement.

*I flank on the left. My "-0" leader finally gets close to the nearest Soviet building. Dan already occupies one of the two bread factory buildings.*



Alas, my "-0" newbie leader lived up to his mediocrity, for I wandered in and around the railroad embankments trying to get to the bread factory. He was lost. He hemmed. He hawed. It took me a couple turns to figure out how to use the terrain. Here's where miniatures battlefield terrain would have been clearer. Live and learn. I eventually moved the stack adjacent to one of the supporting Soviet houses. Adjacent hexes offer double firepower,

Meanwhile, my two stacks of flanking troops hammered the Soviet building nearest the bread factory. Combined with Dan's fire, we eventually forced enough morale checks to break the closest defenders. My "-0" leader was smart enough to occupy the end of the building as other fire chased the Soviets away. The Soviet AT gun crew fled as well. The Germans can put down an impressive amount of suppressive fire.

### **In The Land of Small Arms, The Tank Is King**

That's when Ed brought out the big T-26 light tank reinforcement along with a number of infantry squads. Dan brought out an armored car with 20mm gun plus a few squads. Uh-oh.

The T-26 tore down the road on the flank, making directly for the house holding my squads along with the "-2" leader. The tank parked next to the house, providing me with defensive fire. Ah, but lo and behold, my "-2" leader was on the ball because he had an early version of the panzerfaust with a range of exactly one hex (later models are able to shoot up to four hexes). I took aim, rolled the dice and scored a hit, and then rolled again and scored multi-mega-impressive damage! The T-26 brewed up into a ball of flame belching thick black smoke into the sky. Cheers all around, including from Ed.

*Score one for the panzerfaust. Tank badge and Iron Cross second class to all soldaten, especially to their sharp eyes and lucky die roll! The T-26 flips to become a Wreck.*



With his original troops broken and fleeing and his tank in flames, Ed conceded that he would likely be unable to mount a successful counterattack to retake the bread factory.

### **Four Nations: Building History**

Mike joined us for a four-player game of *Nations*. This is another dice resource allocation game (see the 06/29/2022 AAR for a broader recap and game analysis). You roll a number of dice and spend the icons to buy historic sites and hire personalities that provide more dice, re-rolls, victory points, or other special benefits. Using a number of dice for War (swords) and Peace (laurels) generates additional victory points. Literacy (book icons) generate more victory points, but not for the player with the fewest books. Most VPs at the end of the game wins.

*Nations in play. Mike (left), Ed (center) and Russ (that's me) ponder the resource allocations. Photo by Dan.*

Everyone starts with the same number and type (color) of dice. What you roll and how you spend the icons determines what you can do. The historic sites and personalities cost from one to three gold each and these are random and different each game. So, a good historic site might cost one but a so-so site



might cost three. That's kinda the Achilles heel of logic for the game, but that's the way the tiles randomly appear.

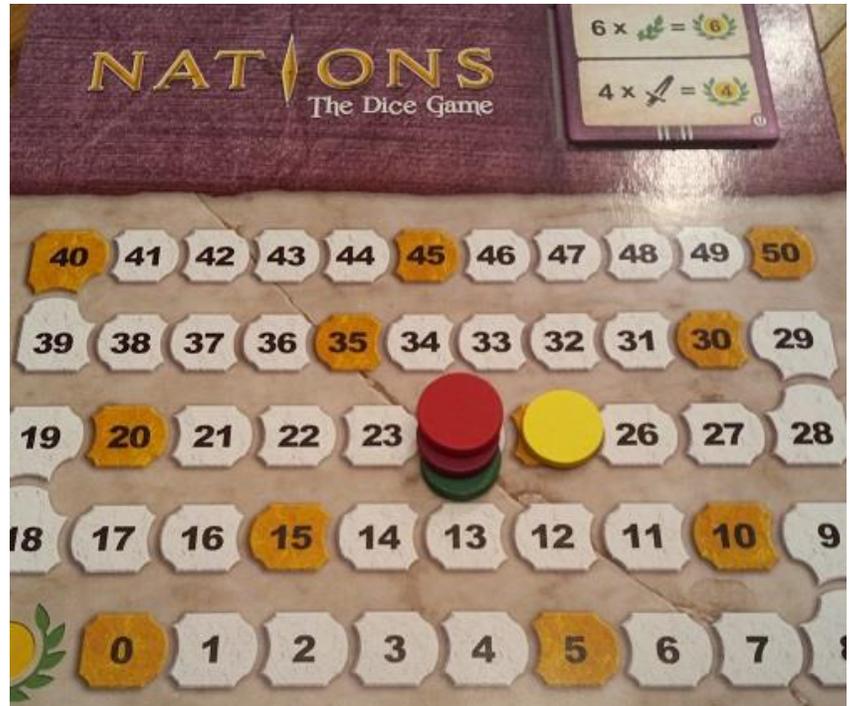
Anyway, I was Persia (purple) and rolled and bought and schemed about what resources to buy. I never did get many of the sites with different colored dice -- I seemed to have cornered the market on green dice. My eco-empire prospered.

*My mid-game mat. I've bought six tiles in total: Marie Antoinette (2 VPs), sites Silk Road, Knights Templar, and Coffee House (dice), built Stonehenge (3 VPs), and conquered (sword) Brazil (1 VP). The green and white dice up top satisfy both the War and Peace options (10 VPs). I was the second player in the round and I have done all I could and so "Passed." I have one book, one re-roll, and one gold (circular counters) left.*



My book learning was absolutely pitiful. Dan (Greece - yellow), Ed (Egypt - green), and Mike (Rome - red) pulled far away in books, but I snatched a VP tile here and there, and often made sure I had enough icons for War and Peace to drive up my VP total.

At the end of four rounds (epochs? ages?), we tallied up the VPs per person. Egyptian Ed scored 24 VPs, but Greek Dan pulled ahead by one to 25. Then with some amusement, my total also clocked in as 24. Then it came to Roman Mike. He was far behind after the third round, but he had built some spectacular sites. To our utter amazement and with a little bit of hootin' and hollerin', Mike also scored 24 points! Man, you can't get much closer than that!



*The final tally! Oh so close!*

## Spanish Civil War: Spreading Our Wings

As one of Dan's interests is Spanish Civil War, he designed a block game a decade or two ago that we've played from time to time. He also came up with a dice resource allocation game a few years ago that we've played (see the 03/03/2022, 04/02/2022, and 04/27/2022 AARs for development of the prototype).

*Round 1 of Dan's Spanish Civil War game. L to r: Dan, Mike, and Ed.*

The idea is to build up your force using resource dice rolls common to all players as well as resources generated by specific unit and personality cards.



Each player's mat has three rows: land, sea, and air. Each unit card is slugged to one or more of these three. You cannot, for example, play a tank unit (land card) in the sea row. Each card has a VP amount.

Furthermore, some cards allow you to "tuck" a card underneath for 1 VP and others let you obtain resources from opponents. These represent abstract tactical battle victories.

*A relaxing game of dice and resource manipulation. L to r: Mike, Ed, and Russ. Photo by Dan.*



We played a team game. The two Republican players (Mike and Ed) can only play Republican cards and the two Nationalist players (me and Dan) can only play Nationalist cards. The respective identity is marked on each card. VPs from both players are added together at the end for the winning side.

The game lasts four rounds, with eight actions in the first round, seven in the second round, six in the third round, and five in the last round. This timing mechanism generates a bit of card tension as the game goes on. You know that it takes a number of actions to buy a card, so you start hoarding resources to buy those big VP cards. The mat only holds five cards per row. Tick-tock. Tick-tock. Pay now for low VPs or pay later for high VPs. Tick-tock.

## Let's Go Franco

With that in mind, we were off to the resource races. I managed to concentrate on land cards, mostly because I couldn't pull a random sea or air card for ages. The good news is that the specific types of land cards included those that allow you to tuck a card for a VP. Being a Nationalist, I almost always tucked a drawn Republican card. Francisco Franco is not dead when playing this game, but he buries his enemies.

Indeed, there came a time when Ed noticed that if all I did was play one land action, I would generate 3 "tuck" VPs per turn, which is about what the average VP amount is on a card -- except you usually need to spend multiple actions to grab enough resources to play a card.

Aha! He's right! It's not much fun to do that, but you pile up the VPs. I split my actions, but by the fourth round, I had few resources, few cards, and even fewer options for VPs. I piled on the land points.

Oddly enough, I was just ahead of Ed in VP totals, but Dan had managed his resources wisely and pulled ahead in points from Mike. As we added our team VPs together, Dan and I won the game.

If you think this home brew game worth a try, you can always try the euro game *Wingspan* (see the 05/20/2023 AAR). Dan duplicated some of the same mechanics -- notably the cards and three rows. He added some unique touches to represent battles, but *Wingspan* is similar in play -- but a bird motif.

## Great Day of Gaming

Now that's what I call a great day of gaming. Thanks, Dan, for hosting.

*One more photo: Nations gyrrations. L to r: Mike, Ed, and Dan.*





*The British set up.*

## **Bismarck: Double Blind Naval Wargame**

by Bruce

I streamlined the intermediate sequence of the Avalon Hill game *Bismarck* for ease of play in this Double Blind, Operational/Tactical, Air/Naval encounter.

*And the German set up.*



We used the *Bismarck* search and movement boards for air and naval units. When contacts were made, we moved to the table for *A&A War At Sea* games with aircraft, surface, and submarine miniatures.

Forces involved include the total Kriegsmarine, (located in Norway, France, U-boats at sea, as well as Bismarck and Prinz Eugen) and the Royal Navy, (Home Fleet, Force H, subs at sea, and 10 convoys at sea) as they all stood on May 22, 1941.

### **The First Day: May 22**

Fog shrouded Bergen, the Denmark Strait, the Faroes, and the Shetlands, lifting in the afternoon. The Kriegsmarine sent numerous surface elements to sea from France and Norway. The U-boats prowled, the convoys lumbered East, West, North and South.



*The Bismarck. Photo from web.*

*Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were discovered in the Bay of Biscay, having left the French port of Brest. They were shadowed by *HMS Neptune* to the coast of Spain. The two battlecruisers then turned upon *Neptune* as well as calling for land-based Luftwaffe support. *HMS Neptune* made smoke and escaped with slight damage after being chased by the battlecruisers and attacked by 60 HE-111s and JU-88s.

Alerted by the departure of the raiders, the Admiralty mobilized its forces to defend the 10 convoys now at sea.

A Coastal Command Hudson discovered the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* trying to make passage to the southwest, between the Faroes and Shetlands. The RAF shadowed the behemoth and her consort, vectoring in elements of the Home Fleet. The Royal Navy converged from North and South with the Home Fleet's *HMS Prince Of*

*Wales*, *HMS Hood*, and *HMS King George V*, supported by six DDs and the cruiser *HMS Galatea*. A strike by five Swordfish torpedo bombers was shot down with no hits on *Bismarck*. The Home Fleet gave chase but was outpaced by the Germans to the Southwest as darkness moved in.

Meanwhile, an Allied convoy was discovered proceeding between Spain and the Azores.  
 Current Score – RN: 0, KM: 10.

### Shadow Force

Following the air attack, the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* escaped but the Royal Navy can opt to pursue. This way, they will have the opportunity to shadow with, say, *HMS Galatea* (only one ship may be designated to shadow), during the upcoming 2400 Turn. If the shadow is successful, then the RN will be able to resume the fight if they choose on that turn. If the shadow fails, then the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* will be able to break contact and get away. If I did not allow this, it would be unfair and unrealistic to the British to allow the Germans an “artificial” one-zone lead on their pursuers.

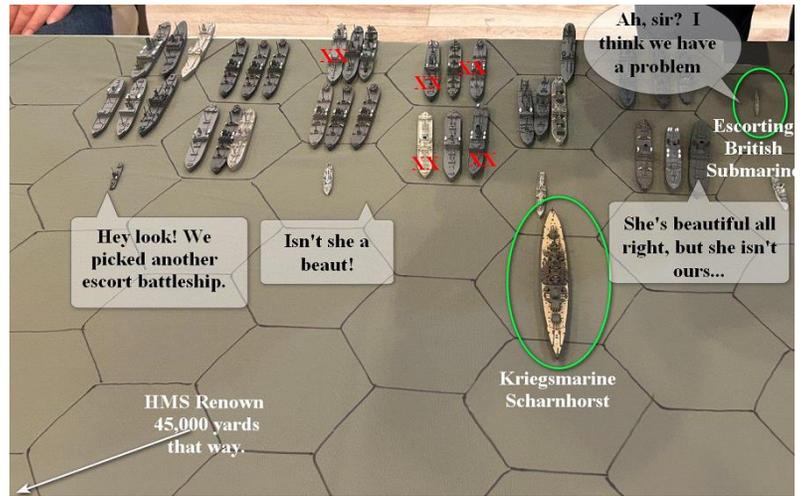
### The Second Day: May 23

During the 22/23 May night, *HMS Galatea* lost contact with *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen*.

However, a German Task Force of a pocket battleship and three cruisers was spotted and shadowed making passage southwest between the Faroes and Iceland.

In the south, between the Azores and Spain, there was plenty of action.

*The Scharnhorst finds Convoy OG 62. Photo by Phil.*



As the sun rose, *HMS Neptune*, previously shadowing *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, was discovered and pounced upon by 20 JU-88s. The *Neptune* went down smothered by bombs.



*Convoy scatters. Photo by Phil.*

Three Type VII U-boats were discovered traveling on the surface and one was attacked by Swordfish aircraft. It was able to crash dive and escape the depth charges.

*Scharnhorst* found British southbound Convoy OG 62 and engaged it. The convoy scattered but *Scharnhorst* sank five ships and crippled two out of the 34 merchantmen. *HMS Renown* and *HMS Sheffield* arrived on the scene and cut short the slaughter. *Scharnhorst* deciding to run to the north, damaging *Sheffield* while being pursued.



*The Scharnhorst picks on the cargo ships. Photo by Phil.*

Meanwhile, *Gneisenau* fought her shadowing cruiser, *HMS Edinburgh*, and 10 Swordfish torpedo bombers. The Swordfish failed to hit the battlecruiser while she sank the *HMS Edinburgh*.

Finally, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* engaged northbound Convoy HG 62. Admiral Somerville in *HMS Renown*, along with damaged *HMS Sheffield* and the sole convoy escort, sloop *HMS Deptford*, valiantly tried to protect the 18 merchantmen. Alas, by the time the action ended, only the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* (with two hits) were afloat to pick up survivors.

Current Score – RN: 0, KM: 157

## GM Observation

As a GM, it is rewarding to witness the players experiencing the stress and excitement generated by the game.

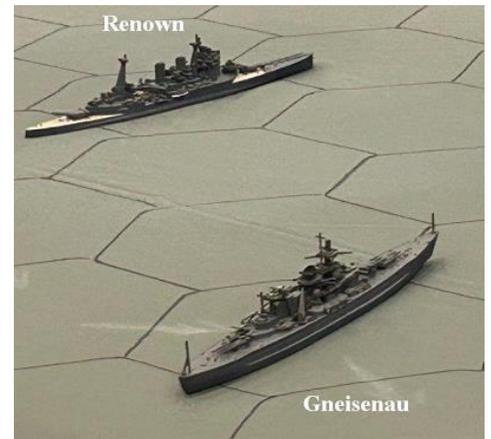
The Germans are now experiencing “Teutonic Glee,” while the British suffered from frustration. The Royal Navy has a far more difficult mission trying to control the sea lanes while the Kriegsmarine has the luxury of being able to pick the times and places of sea denial. In the future, the British will be racking up points as their convoys arrive at their destinations.

Also, historically and simultaneously with the *Bismarck* chase, the Royal Navy’s Mediterranean Fleet was fighting for its life around Crete. Britain lost numerous cruisers and destroyers sunk, along with battleships, cruisers, and destroyers damaged at the hands of the Luftwaffe and the Italian air force.

British Admiral Cunningham remained steadfast: “You have said that it will take three years to build a new fleet. I will tell you that it will take 300 years to build a new tradition. If, gentlemen, you now order the army in Crete to surrender, the fleet will still go there to bring off the Marines.”

Quite Nelsonian. It is tough to imagine the stress levels at the Admiralty in late May 1941. No wonder that the start of Operation Barbarossa the next month was such a relief for Britain.

*Gneisenau* and *Renown* meet. Photo by Phil.



## The Last Day: May 24

The action began at 1600 hrs., 23 May 1941.

Six U-boats were found in a patrol line on the surface south of Iceland by a PBY from Londonderry. One sub was attacked, but crash dived and escaped the depth charge attack.

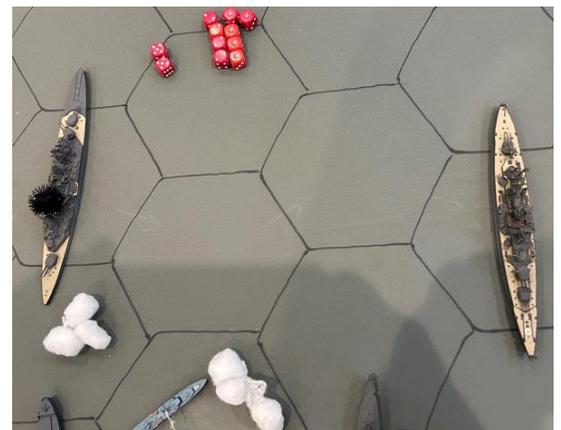
Meanwhile to the south, off the Spanish coast, a flotilla of five Type 1 Torpedo Boats was found by Swordfish aircraft from *HMS Ark Royal*. The Swordfish, armed with torpedoes, were driven off by highly accurate AA fire before they could press home their attack.

*Scharnhorst* once again found convoy OG 62. This time, *Gneisenau* was in accompaniment. The convoy again scattered but could not be saved by *HMS Renown*. 29 merchantmen went down along with the gallant escort of two Flower class corvettes and a trawler. The sole survivor, the Dutch submarine *O-24*, was able to torpedo the *Gneisenau*, upping damage level to 3 out of 5.

*Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* exchange pleasantries. Photo by Phil.

Tribal class destroyer *HMS Ashanti*, part of the Britannic convoy escort, had to return to Liverpool with engine trouble. The day before, battleship *HMS Ramillies* -- escorting Convoy HX 127 in the mid-Atlantic -- had to put about and set course for Norfolk, VA for repairs.

At 2000 hrs. it became night in the south and abysmal weather closed in above 55 degrees N latitude. Neither foe spotted the enemy, but HFDF picked up *Bismarck* west of Land’s End and Brittany, heading south. It was the first indication since Galatea had lost contact the night before. The *Bismarck* had passed through the Home Fleet undetected and was now out of range of RAF bombers based in Cornwall.



At midnight and 0800, *Scharnhorst* revealed that she was still lurking in her hunting grounds between Spain and the Azores. The HFDF detected transmissions were probably the reporting of the destruction of convoy OG 62 the day before. Was the damaged *Gneisenau* still in company?

*The convoy. Photo by Phil.*

### Convoy SC 31

Also at 0800, in the main East-West convoy lane south of Iceland, despite poor visibility, fog and squalls, a U-Boat wolfpack and several surface units intercepted Liverpool-bound Convoy SC 31.

In addition to its mid-ocean escort, the convoy of 34 merchantmen includes an escort of battleship *HMS King George V* (*KGV*) and two light cruisers: *HMS Galatea* and *HMS Arethusa*.

The Kriegsmarine had a patrol line of six Type VII U-boats backed by the pocket battleship *Scheer*, heavy cruiser *Hipper*, and light cruisers *Koln* and *Nurnberg*.

*Attackers and defenders. Photo by Phil.*

The action opened with a close-range duel between *Scheer* and *KGV*. *Scheer* got a hit on *KGV* before being crippled by return salvos. *HMS Galatea* administered the coup de gras on *Scheer*.

With *Hipper* as bait emerging from a squall, *KGV* and *Galatea* were lured onto a U-boat ambush. With *KGV*'s damage, *Hipper*'s 8-inch guns actually outranged both RN ships and engaged *Galatea*, causing damage without fear of retaliation.

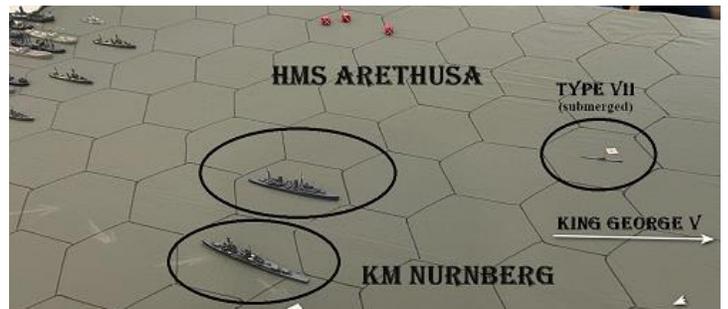
*The mighty King George V defends the convoy. Photo by Phil.*

Meanwhile three boats fired torpedo salvos at *KGV*. One torpedo bounced off the underwater armored belt while another struck home, causing a second level out of five. Keen on the tactic, the two RN ships withdrew toward the convoy. The U-boats followed, with *Hipper* first crippling, then sinking *HMS Galatea*.

Meanwhile, back at the convoy of zigging and zagging merchantmen, the two Kriegsmarine light cruisers began engaging the escorts and *HMS Arethusa*. A wild melee ensued on the south flank of the convoy as the raiding cruisers exchanged gunfire and torpedoes with British destroyers, corvettes, and *HMS Arethusa*.

*Hipper* broke off to the south as the surface action ended with both German light cruisers sinking, one by destroyer and the other by *KGV*, but not

*The Hipper retires. Photo by Phil.*



before crippling *Arethusa*, sinking a destroyer and a sloop, and sinking and crippling several cargo ships.

The U-boats then joined in the convoy attack, sinking, and crippling several merchantmen and another destroyer. Of the six U-boats, two were sunk and three expended all torpedoes as the battle ended. The total merchant loss was eight sunk and three crippled out of 34.

*The Germans are everywhere. Photo by Phil.*

## Game Called

At this point we called the game, turn beginning of 1200 hrs. 24 May.

Final Score – RN: 62, KM: 295

Once again, thanks to those that participated. We decided to end the exercise after the epic “Battle of Convoy SC 31” on the morning of 24 May. With the Royal Navy getting some serious licks in after 12 turns, I am truly inquisitive as to the outcome after another 27 turns, i.e., the full game timeline. Anyway, it was great fun for me, and I hope for you also.

*The Scheer trades broadsides with KGV while Galatea is a hex away. Photo by Phil.*

## GM Observations

If the game continued:

Half the U-boats at sea are out of action, either destroyed or having to return to port, St Nazaire, or Brest to replenish.

German remaining capital raiders are *Bismarck*, *Prinz Eugen*, *Hipper*, *Scharnhorst*, and heavily damaged *Gneisenau*, largely west of the Bay of Biscay.

*Damage accumulates on the Scheer and KGV. Photo by Phil.*

The British Royal Navy is converging on German concentration west of the Bay of Biscay with heavy units, submarines, and carriers.

There are currently 253 Victory Points in convoys at sea that will accrue upon arrival in Liverpool, traveling off West or South map edges.

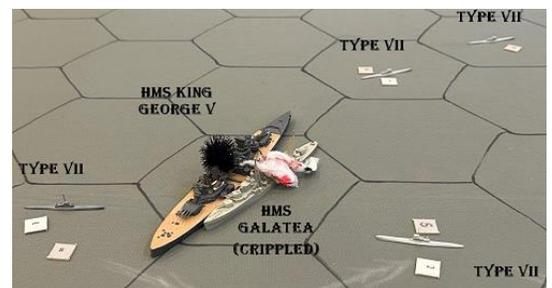
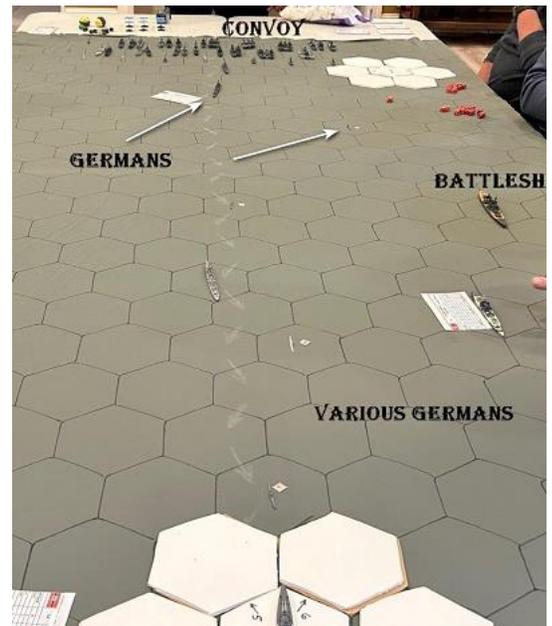
The attached spreadsheet is “the big reveal” of the starting positions of each side (minus land-based air). The land-based air for each side is from the Avalon Hill game *Bismarck*.

The Kriegsmarine starting positions are modified from the game, and with the addition of Destroyer and Torpedo Flotillas based upon my research in books and internet.

*Did someone call for U-boats? Photo by Phil.*

The Royal Navy was a bit more involved – as stated earlier, each of the ten convoys at sea, locations, makeup, escorts, etc., is from the Convoy Web site, a most excellent resource! The warship locations are modified from the game based upon my research in books and internet.

For those interested, the convoy website: <http://www.convoyweb.org.uk>



# The Price of Admiralty

By Bruce

I took a photo of all ships and aircraft lost.

*The fate of a tabletop watery grave for ships of both sides. Photo by Bruce.*

## British Royal Navy losses:

- 60 Merchantmen and Tankers
- 1 Battlecruiser
- 4 Light Cruisers
- 1 Destroyer
- 2 Sloops
- 1 Trawler
- 2 Corvettes
- 5 Fairey Swordfish aircraft
- 1 Battleship and 1 Destroyer

return to port – mechanical failures, no victory points.



## German Kriegsmarine losses:

- 1 Pocket Battleship
- 2 Light Cruisers
- 2 Type VII U-boats

The name of the game was The Epic Bismarck Chase, but as events unfolded, maybe it should be called The Hunt for KMS Scharnhorst (My Precious).

## Bismarck: Battle of Convoy OG 62

by Phil

Somewhere near Iceland, *Scharnhorst* found southbound Convoy OG 62 and engaged it.

The deployment on the 24 x 12 hex board is random. The *HMS Renown* and the *Gneisenau* started in range at 15,000 yards.

The *Scharnhorst* started at long range from the convoy itself and closed fast. Destroying the *HMS Sheffield* along the way.

The *Gneisenau's* gunnery was not effective, and after a couple of turns, had suffered two hits while the *HMS Renown* was untouched. The *Gneisenau* then hid behind the smoke laid to protect the fleeing merchants, while the radar-equipped *Scharnhorst* was able to shoot through the smoke and managed to cause minor damage.

The *HMS Renown* closed to 15,000 yards and traded shots with the *Scharnhorst*, but only bracketed the German, See the dice: 4s and 5s count as one hit while 6s count as two hits. The *Renown* needed a total of 7 out of 11 dice to score a hit.

Both German battle cruisers found their range and caused two more hits, taking the *Renown* to 3 of 5 needed to sink her.

The final round found the *Renown* trying to hide in the smoke, but the *Scharnhorst* found her, and blew the spots off the dice for a score 13, enough to cause a catastrophic explosion, which will be written up by Johnny Horton and Tillman Franks in a 1960 song: *Sink the Scharnhorst* and not *Sink the Bismarck*.

Taking advantage of an initiative roll, the *Scharnhorst* decided to run to the north, damaging *HMS Sheffield* while being pursued.

Finally, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* engaged a different, but, northbound Convoy HG 62. Admiral Somerville in *Renown*, a damaged *HMS Sheffield*, and the sole convoy escort sloop *HMS Deptford*. They valiantly tried to protect the 18 merchantmen, to no avail.

# Hood Sunk, But Not By Bismarck?

By Phil

An interesting item popped up online about how the *HMS Hood* was sunk by a catastrophic mechanical failure and not from a salvo by the *Bismarck*.

<https://historyfirst.com/hms-hood-sunk-by-mechanical-failure-not-bismarck/>

# Bismarck: Ending Locations of Ships in Game

By Bruce

<b>OPERATION RHEINBUNUNG - KRIEGSMARINE DISPOSITIONS</b>			
<b>BERGEN</b>	<b>BREST</b>	<b>NARVIK</b>	<b>ON PATROL</b>
<b>F20 OR G21</b>	<b>P23</b>	<b>A18</b>	<b>R20</b>
BISMARCK (R)	SCHARNHORST (R)	<b>DD FLOT 8</b>	3 TYPE VII
PRINZ EUGEN (R)	GNEISENAU (R)	Z4	
SCHEER (R)	<b>TB FLOT 3</b>	Z14	<b>Q17</b>
HIPPER (R)	TB1	Z15	3 TYPE VII
KOLN	TB2	Z16	
NURNBERG	TB3	Z23	<b>H5</b>
<b>DD FLOT 6</b>	TB4	Z24	3 TYPE VII
Z5	TB5		
Z6			<b>I6</b>
Z7			3 TYPE VII
Z8			
Z10			
Z20			

<b>OPERATION RHEINBUNUNG - ROYAL NAVY DISPOSITIONS</b>							
<b>HX126</b>	<b>HX127</b>	<b>SC31</b>	<b>WS8B</b>	<b>OB324</b>	<b>OB325</b>	<b>OB326</b>	<b>BRITANNIC</b>
<b>G-10 (F &gt;)</b>	<b>S-7 (F &gt;)</b>	<b>G-7 (S &gt;)</b>	<b>K-19 (F V)</b>	<b>H-9 (S &lt;)</b>	<b>I-14 (S &lt;)</b>	<b>J-17 (S &lt;)</b>	<b>K-18 (F &lt;)</b>
16 MERCHANT	57 MERCHANT	34 MERCHANT	7 TRANSPORT	32 MERCHANT	20 MERCHANT	47 MERCHANT	BRITANNIC
5 FLOWER	2 FLOWER	4 FLOWER	CAIRO CLAA	6 FLOWER	2 FLOWER	3 FLOWER	RODNEY BB
3 TRAWLER	1 HUNT I DD	1 TRAWLER	EXETER CA	2 V/W DD	1 TOWN DD	1 C DD	<b>DD FLOT 5</b>
1 SCOTT DD	1 BITTERN	1 SLOOP	ARGUS CV	1 TOWN DD	1 TRAWLER	1 TOWN DD	-4 TRIBAL DD
2 V/W DD	2 TOWN DD	2 A&B DD	1 HUNT II DD	2 SLOOP	1 OLD S DD	1 TRAWLER	
1 TOWN DD	1 TRAWLER	1 TOWN	2 C/G DD			1 OLD S DD	
2 OLD S DD	RAMILLIES BB	1 MS SLOOP	<b>DD FLOT 4</b>			1 SLOOP	
1 AMC/FIGHTER	<b>S-7, TURN 2</b>		-4 TRIBAL DD				
(SPRINGBANK)			-1 JKN DD				
TRIBUNE SS			<b>DEPART TURN 3</b>				
<b>SCAPA FLOW</b>	<b>GIBRALTAR</b>	<b>HALIFAX</b>	<b>ICELAND</b>	<b>CLYDE</b>	<b>ON PATROL</b>	<b>HG62</b>	<b>OG62</b>
KG V BB	RENOWN BC	REVENGE BB	<b>D9</b>	REPULSE BC	ARETHUSA CL	<b>Y-22 (S ^)</b>	<b>S-19 (F V)</b>
POW BB	ARK ROYAL CV	<b>L-3, TURN 17</b>	SUFFOLK CA	HERMIONE CLAA	MANCHESTER CL	18 MERCHANT	34 MERCHANT
HOOD BC	-24 FULMARS			<b>DD FLOT 6</b>	BIRMINGHAM CL	1 SLOOP	2 FLOWER
VICTORIOUS CV	-30 SWORFISH			-2 L DD	NORFOLK CA		1 TRAWLER
-6 FULMARS	SHEFFIELD CL			-1 TOWN DD	EDINBURGH CL		O-24 DUTCH SS
-9 SWORDFISH	<b>DD FLOT 3</b>	<b>S. ATLANTIC</b>		-1 V/W DD	MINERVA SS		
GALATEA CL	-6 GHI DD (1L)	DORSETSHIRE CA		-1 TRIBAL DD	SEALION SS		
AURORA CL		<b>Z-20, TURN 23</b>		TIGRIS SS	SEAWOLF SS		
KENYA CL				H-44 SS	STURGEON SS		
NEPTUNE CL		LONDON CA			PANDORA SS		
<b>DD FLOT 1</b>		<b>Z-10-17, TURN 24</b>					
-4 GHI DD							
-2 JKN DD		NELSON BB					
<b>DD FLOT 2</b>		EAGLE CV					
-6 GHI DD (1L)		-18 SWORFISH					
P-31 SS		<b>Z-10-17, TURN 36</b>					

# Fantasy FoG: Campaign Rules

by Keith

*The campaign continues... -- RL*

*A unit on the march. Photo by Keith.*

## Scenario

Harak and his allies (Great Heathen Army -- GHA) scored a Major Victory at the Siris River crossing, driving the Successor's army back in disorder (Moderate Victory, scored 2 team VP, 2 player VP to Erik and Fred, +1 momentum to GHA). The invaders pressed further south, where the country opens up and many targets present themselves.



## GHA Objectives

- 1) The town of Sergius has no walls, and if captured, could serve as excellent winter quarters for further operations.
- 2) Clementine Abbey, though fortified, is a plunder rich target. It was also supported directly by Emperor Aelle, and its capture would be a significant insult to his legacy in addition to the loot held within.
- 3) The Successor's army escaped immediate reach and is rallying to the south. Its pursuit or destruction would give Harak's forces room to operate freely.

## Forces

Each side consists of a 700-point command under each player. Fred commanded the GHA and Keith commanded the Successor Army. Each side gathered allies and reinforcements. Each can purchase a number of battle groups and troop commanders that are unassigned. The GHA had 90 points per player to spend on additional units. The Successors had 120 points per player to spend.

## Deployments

Each team decides which player's force, if any, will deploy on each board. Not all boards must be played on, and players can choose to concentrate their forces or disperse them to achieve multiple objectives.

## More Objectives and Victory Points

Accomplishing the following objectives give additional team campaign VP:

- 1) Capturing the town of Sergius by either driving back all enemies or having more points of troops in the town when the game concludes. +2 VP
- 2) Capturing Clementine Abbey by either driving back all enemies or having more points of troops in the abbey when the game concludes. +1 VP, and +1 on next reinforcements and Allies roll.
- 3) Holding the Successor's mustering camp by holding the field at the end of the game. +2 campaign momentum.

At any point, by mutual consensus, a team can concede defeat on a board. Attrition points are immediately scored to determine victory. Both teams place all their remaining units in Reserve and can redeploy as normal. If the team that conceded has fewer bases of mounted units than their opponents, they must nominate units to take "hits" equal to the difference before redeploying, making cohesion checks and death checks as normal.

## **Special Rules**

### **A) Single Element Units**

Giants, Dragons, and some other units are fielded as single element (base) units. A single element unit behaves as any other unit, except that when routed, they make one variable distance move and are then removed from the table. They are considered too wounded or demoralized to continue fighting, or is unwilling to take further risk.

### **B) Giants**

A Giant's shooting maximum range is 6 MU. Effective range is unchanged from original rules.

### **C) Polearm**

A new capability, Polearm, can be purchased for 2 points per base. A polearm unit uses the Light Spear column in Impact, and the Heavy Weapon column in melee. It ignores one level of "better armor" POA in melee.

Example: A unit of Protected billmen are in melee against a unit of Armored knights and a unit of Heavily Armored knights. The Armored knights would not receive any "better armor" POA against the billmen, while the Heavily Armored knights would receive only one POA.

### **D) Battle Group Auto Break**

When a battle group takes enough casualties, it will immediately break and rout. The break levels are:

Elite: More than 60% losses

Superior: More than 50% losses

Average: More than 40% losses

Poor: More than 30% losses

### **E) Boats**

The scenario includes boats. The quantity and capacity are secret and will be provided to each side. Boats move 5 MU, and can make a second "match" move if they meet the requirements for such a move. Boats can be targeted with shooting from Artillery and Giants. Boats do not check for cohesion loss but do make Death Checks (at +1). If a boat is sunk (killed) by shooting, roll a D6 for each embarked base of troops. On a 1, the base is destroyed. Otherwise, the bases deploy in their battle groups on the closest shore, and are Disrupted.

### **F) Reserve**

Each side may place starting units in reserve, keeping them off all tables. Units are deployed from reserves by the team's commander in chief and arrive on a table as if arriving from a flank march.

Units can also move between boards by moving off a table, then begin dicing for arrival as if on a flank march. In both cases, if the unit is arriving in their side's initial deployment zone, it gets +2 to its arrival check.

### **G) Player Communications**

In order to communicate, players must either have their army commanders in base to base contact or dispatch messengers with written notes. Messengers are placed on the table and move as of Light Horse, and deliver their message when they make base to base contact with the recipient. Every wizard may, instead of casting a spell card on their turn, use the spell Message. There is no limit on how many times a wizard may use this spell.

#### **Message Spell**

The wizard may send a spoken or written message of any length to any other friendly commander. The target can make a brief (no more than a short sentence) response. If the target is a wizard, they can have a two-way conversation of any length.

# Fantasy FoG: A Hobbit's Tale

by Erik

*Be it so known that the Grand County of the Mootland has brokered an alliance with Harak the Berserker, rightful heir of the Northern Kingdom and son of the late King Lodbrok. The Moot has declared its secession from the Empire, and joined Harak's Northern Confederacy as a member kingdom, led by the Elder of the Moot, Hisme Stoutheart. As her first action as wartime leader, the Elder has set aside funds to hire the Argent Blades, a mercenary company led by Captain Kadavan Thorne, who will supplement our brave Mootland Fieldwardens in a campaign alongside Harak's Heathen Army against the oppressive and faithless Southern Empire.*

*-- Announcement posted in the Moot Capital City of Eiches Schatten*



The Successor camp in the middle. Photo by Erik.

After the successful crossing of the River Siris, owing to a successful flanking charge led by Sergeant Otto and his Barnyard Boys, the Great Heathen Army continued its march across the Southern Empire's border. While elements of the army splintered off to raise a ruckus to the east and west, three groups - Harak's Horde, the Mootland Army, and the dwarven contingent of Low-King Orii -- conspired to keep their invasion's momentum by forming a spearhead to strike at the town of Sergius.

The Mootland army would raid the Successors' nearby mustering camp, while Low-King Orii and Harak arrayed their forces against the town of Sergius. Despite being a plunder rich target, the nearby Clementine Abbey was to be ignored - the Great Heathen Army needed a place to winter for the upcoming cold season, and there would be plenty of time for raiding the Abbey later.

And so the Mootland contingent broke off from the greater horde, marching separately to earn some spoils -- after all, an army half composed of littlefolk consumes quite a bit more supplies than expected.

Unexpectedly, our forces arrived at a nearly empty field, and discovered that the Successor's camp had been left relatively undefended. A single griffin was present, which promptly fled to alert the forces at the Abbey of our invading troops.

Sacking the camp. Photo by Erik.



With control of the field quickly established, the army promptly set about the camp, looting and sacking it.

The Captain then sent off Lieutenant Karaz-a-Krak and his Ogre Landsknechts aboard a boat to quickly sail to Sergius and support the main thrust of the attack with a flanking amphibious landing. Unfortunately, they would be interdicted by Elvish naval vessels and would return in a later turn rather than risk the chance of a watery grave.

*Sailing beats marching for some. Photo by Erik.*



As the army marched towards the main road leading further off into the Southern Empire, they noticed an approaching cloud of dust accompanied by the smell of cooked bacon and other delicious foodstuffs -- no doubt the defending force of Emperor-loving Royalist hobbits that had been evicted from the Moot at spearpoint.

The Royalists were accompanied by three giants, a mounted division of Rooster cavalry, and a Blue Dragon, substantially outnumbering the forces of the Moot along their right flank, which was sure to collapse if the Captain's block of pikemen were unable to burst through the center line in time.

*A massive melee. Photo by Erik.*



Along the left flank the Moot-land skirmishers quickly dispatched their Royalist counterparts, and the returning Ogres' firearms chased off the dragon. The Fieldwarden block of pike was unfortunately not able to engage with the Hoplite mercenaries hiding in the woods bordering the main road, and endured boulder after boulder being thrown by the cloud giantess taking refuge in the dense terrain before slowly withdrawing to support the Swamp Ent, who was attacking an armored giantess alongside the Stag Lord and his griffin.

*Some pikes are better than others. Photo by Erik.*



In the main, the Captain's band took on two groups of Royalist pikes, breaking the morale of one and forcing it from the field, while causing heavy casualties on the other.

Unfortunately, it would not be enough. Back on the right flank, our gallant Sir Ambrose was captured after his griffin was slain beneath him by the Royalist Rooster cavalry, and our allies from the Lion's Head mercenaries were routed from the field. Following this fowl onslaught, a Cloud Giant cut down the Ent Grove, and the dryad Drycha was carved up by traitorous Halflings while attempting to hold the line.

*To Sir With Hate. Photo by Erik.*



The Swamp Ent was likewise attacked and driven off by an armored giantess, who also injured the Stag Lord's griffin mount and crushed Sergeant Otto under her feet.

Despite our momentum in the center line and success in the campaign goal of ransacking the camp, the forces of the Moot were driven off the table due to their low break point of 9, although they caused enough damage to only offer up a hollow minor victory to the Royalists.

*Rout away today to fight another day. Photo by Erik.*

## **Fantasy FoG: Elven Last Words**

*by Ed*

The elves got beat like a drum in a parade!

## **Fantasy FoG: GHA Sez...**

*by Fred*

Elven Ed did better than he indicated against the Goblin Horde lead by the Jolly Green Giant, Harak the Berserker, and his faithful warg Drooler. The elves held the goblins to a standstill, although I know they were wavering with around 50% losses in the two 12-stand infantry units.

Late in the game the skeleton army got onto my flank due to limited area to deploy large units of Goblin Pike and Roman (human) heavy infantry. The column of Goblin Pike on the road was in trouble, however the Romans and a Goblin bow unit behind were completely fresh.

The Goblin Balloon did very little, albeit it's hard to do much when it only counts as two stands of bowman. Best part is nobody could reach them, though I heard rumors of a wizard with a fireball.

Although Keith planned for battles on three tables, somehow we all ended up on two.

The giant bear I summoned was one of my best combatants along with the manticore. They ate many elves.

## **IS-2 Photo: Minis in Town**

*By Russ Lockwood*

Mike R. sent along a photo of his latest project: IS-2s rumbling through a village.

The IS-2 tank first saw combat in early 1944, equipping elite Red Army Guards Heavy Tank Regiments. A regiment had 21 IS-2 tanks in four companies of five tanks each and one being used by the regimental commander. The special tank regiments were reserved for important attacks, often to spearhead attempts to break through fortified German positions like anti-tank defense lines and bunkers. – *From Wikipedia*



## Wargaming News

### Book Tree: London

By Karen

Here's a picture of a Christmas tree made up of books in the St. Pancras station in London. It not only looks festive, but it also resonates with me since my life is so full of books these days too. In retirement, I am on public library boards, writing book reviews, being in book clubs, etc. So this image seemed fitting that way too.



### The Mechanical Turk: Chess Machine

by Russ Lockwood

In response to my On My Mind article about AI in the book industry, my chess enthusiast buddy Shahram sent a link to a Big Think article about the so-called Mechanical Turk, a chess automaton developed by Hungarian inventor Wolfgang von Kempelen in 1770. From the article:

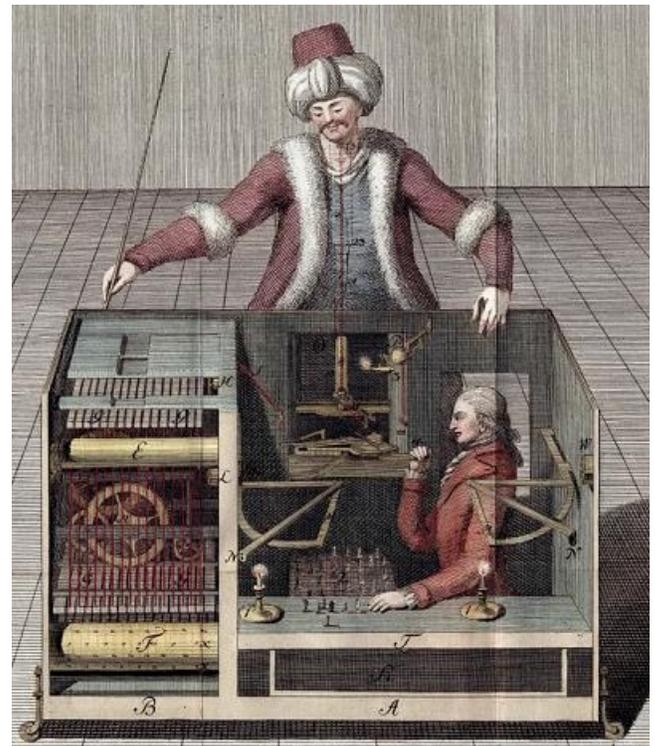
"It looked like a wooden box with a life-sized mannequin placed on the top. The mustached mannequin had the attire and looks of an Ottoman magician, complete with a turban, robe, and classic smoking pipe in one hand.

The Turk was so good at playing chess that, not only did it defeat most of the humans it played, it could also point out if someone cheated during a game. If the mannequin noticed a human player cheating, it demonstrated its objection by either reversing its opponent's move or heavily thumping on the chess board and ending the game.

The latter happened once when the Turk played against Napoleon Bonaparte in 1809. Napoleon played two games against the Turk. In the first, he made three illegal moves. The Turk objected and ended the game by wiping all the chess pieces off the board using its arm. In the second game, Napoleon lost against the machine.

The Mechanical Turk also played two chess games with Charles Babbage, the famous inventor who developed the first computer. It emerged victorious in both games."

It was a hoax exposed by Edgar Allen Poe, but for a while, astounded audiences with its 'ability' to defeat most players. Now we have "AI" programs that play chess and wargames, but the idea started in the 18th century.



Big Think article link:

<https://bigthink.com/the-past/mechanical-turk/>

While on the subject of chess, here's an interesting article of factoids on how chess pieces got their names:

<https://bigthink.com/strange-maps/names-of-chess-pieces/>

### WWII Ships Sunk: Online Map

By Russ Lockwood

Thanks to Bruce for this website that maps out 15,380 ships sunk in WWII.

<https://mapsterman.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/fe88b5e18c6443c7afaf6e32f8432687>

# Washington's Lieutenants: American Revolution You Tube Lecture Video

by Russ Lockwood

William M. Welsch gave the December 2023 lecture to the Washington Crossing American Revolution Round Table called *Washington's Lieutenants: The Generals of the Continental Army*.

He's a retired administrator at Montclair State University in New Jersey, is the current and founding president of the American Revolution Round Table of Richmond, and co-founder of the Congress of American Revolution Round Tables. He is a tour guide of Revolutionary War battlefields, frequent presenter and author of multiple articles on the Revolution.

Here's a YouTube video of his lecture for those interested:



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3yN-8h\\_ZLw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3yN-8h_ZLw)

And here's Welsch's article on the Top 10 Continental Army generals:

<https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/08/top-10-continental-army-generals/>

And here's an old article on the Worst 10 Continental Army generals:

<https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/10/10-worst-continental-army-generals/>

Tip of the tricorn to the Swan Historical Foundation's Washington Crossing Revolutionary War Round Table:

<https://www.swanhistoricalfoundation.org/washington-crossing-revolutionary-war-round-table.html>

**Next lecture:** Steve Yacik on March 11, 2024, 7:30pm via Zoom. Historian Steve Yacik, trustee of the Washington Camp Ground Association in Bound Brook and guide for the Historical Society of Princeton, will speak about influential thinker Dr. Benjamin Rush, who seemed to know and to impact almost all of the important people on the American side during the Revolution.

## New Hex Wargame: *Fall of Saigon April 1975*

by Russ Lockwood

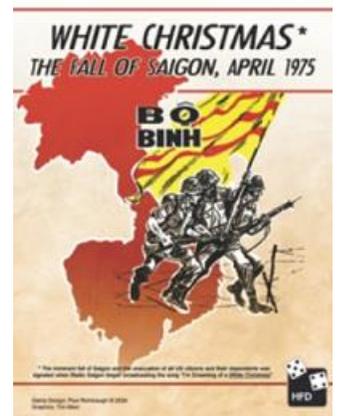
*Adapted from the press release:*

The song *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*, sung by Tennessee Ernie Ford, was played on Radio Saigon to signal Americans to assemble for an evacuation of South Vietnam.

After President Nixon's sudden resignation in August 1974 the leaders of North Vietnam realized that the timetable and "Blooming Lotus" plan set for late 1976 or early 1977 for invading South Vietnam to reunite all of Vietnam could be advanced.

The invasion began with a series of Communist attacks in the Central Highlands on March 8, 1975. This led to the capture of several ARVN positions that prompted South Vietnamese President, Nguyen Van Thieu to order an evacuation, which was soon countermanded and then reordered again. The South Vietnamese command indecision led to confusion and then panic when Communist forces crossed the DMZ (demilitarized zone) that separated North and South Vietnam a week later with a massive conventional invasion bolstered by tanks, artillery, and mobile anti-aircraft batteries.

The northern-most city in South Vietnam of Quang Tri fell quickly in a night time assault with Communist troops and tanks, with head lights blazing, herded more than attacked their foes into flight and captivity. The Imperial City of Hue was soon cut off from direct communications with Saigon to the south, and this prompted a complete breakdown of ARVN troops in I Corps (northern most command in



South Vietnam) with many fleeing to Danang and any other ports or roads south to escape the Communist onslaught.

Viewing their foe's growing collapse, the North Vietnamese High Command issued new orders to capture Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, by the anniversary of Ho Chi Minh's birth on May 9th. The final battle of the 30-year long war was now set.

## The Game

*White Christmas* is moderate-level complexity game on the battle for Saigon in April 1975. Units represent divisions, brigades, regiments, and battalions. Each hex equals eight miles across. A turn represents three days.

Includes: Two 11x17-inch maps with game tracks and tables, 176 double-sided counters, and 16 pages of rules including variants and charts. \$22.95 plus shipping (a boxed version is available for an additional \$6.00). Mounted counters can be had for an additional \$8.00.

More info: <https://www.hfdgames.com/saigon.html>



## New Hex Wargame: *Armageddon War* by Russ Lockwood

*Adapted from the press release:*

Reprint of 2017 dystopia game is due out in March. The first module of *Armageddon War* is a platoon-level game that focuses on the Mid-East, pitting Israelis, Russians, and Americans against age-old adversaries.

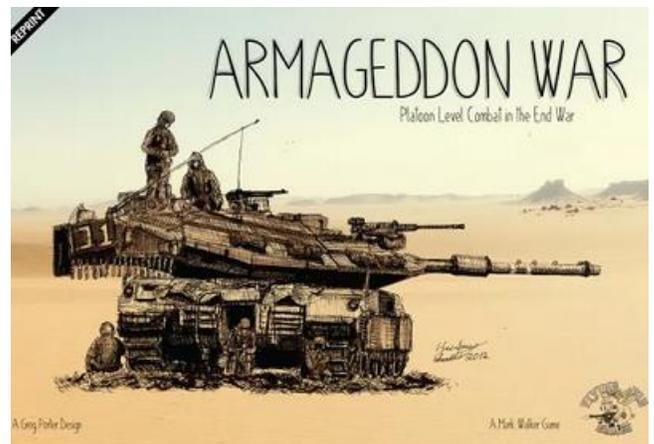
Formations are activated by chit draw (nothing new there), but returned to the draw cup not at the end of a turn, but rather in a continuous manner. When chosen, a formation marker is placed on the activation track, to the right of the last-drawn formation. When only one chit remains in the cup, the two leftmost chits are returned to the draw cup. Simple, continuous.

Game includes: Two mounted, 22x33-inch full color game boards, four sheets of 1-inch die-cut counters, full-color rule and scenario book (16 scenarios), Player Aid Cards, and 18 colored dice.

Formations are activated by chit draw (nothing new there), but returned to the draw cup not at the end of a turn, but rather in a continuous manner.

The intensity of a unit's close combat modifier is determined not only by its weapons but also by the tactics you choose to use for the assault or defense, and when you fire on a unit, it has the option of taking cover, or returning fire. The number of dice and the color of dice rolled, determine the number of hits. \$135.00

Website: <https://flyingpiggames.com/products/armageddon-war>



## New Hex Wargame: *Leipzig Pocket Battle Game Pack* by Russ Lockwood

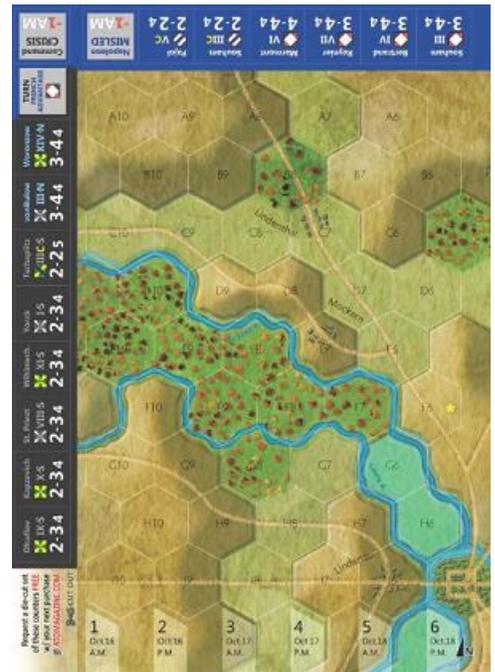
Adapted from the press release:

This is a four-pack covering the Battle of Leipzig 1813. The four battles are: *Marschall Vorwärts!* (Blücher ("Marshal Forwards") drove into Napoleon's rear at Mockern), *A Matter of Honor, Sire* (battle to the northeast of Leipzig), *The Nations Assemble* (battle to the southeast of Leipzig), and *Trapping the Ogre* (battle to the southwest of Leipzig). Also included are rules and extra counters to combine these four PBGs into one large game covering all three days of the battle.

The *Leipzig PBG Pack* includes: Four postcard-sized maps, 80 full color 1/2-inch die-cut counters, five extra color 1/2-inch die-cut counters for use in the Campaign Game, one page of rules for each individual game, one page of rules for the Campaign Game, and one deck of playing cards. Complexity is Low, Average solitaire play, and playing time of up to one hour for the individual games and up to four hours for the linked campaign game. Designer: Paul Rohrbaugh. \$21.95 (includes USA shipping).

Note: I am the Staff Developer for *ATO*, but Steve Rawling was the developer for this game.

Website: <https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=184&category=11>



## New Hex Wargame: *Operation Roundup 1943* by Russ Lockwood

Adapted from the press release:

Operation Roundup was the code name for a plan prepared by Allied forces to invade Northern France in 1943 in the Pas de Calais area. *Operation Roundup*, a two-player hex wargame, explores the first month of this never-run plan, set in September 1943 (instead of the historical landings at Salerno in Italy).

The game is scaled at 2 miles (3.25 km) per hex, with 10 three-day game turns, and uses regiments and brigades (and a few battalions) as units of maneuver.

Contains: Magazine in (ziplock) format, one full-color 22x34-inch hex mapsheet, 176 full color 5/8-inch die-cut counters, 14-page rule book plus two pages of charts. Complexity is Medium, playing time is three to four hours, and average solitaire capability. Designer: Ty Bomba. \$44.95 includes USA shipping.

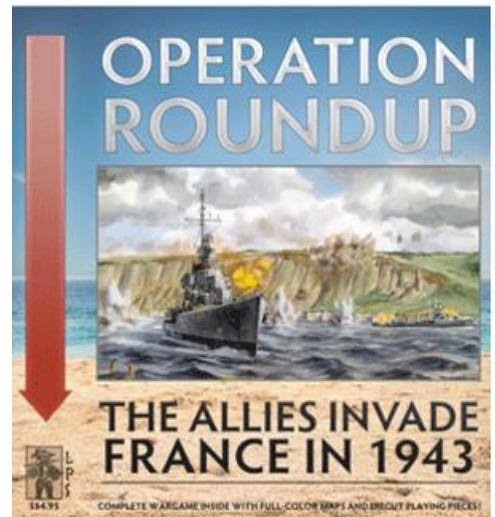
Note: I am the Staff Developer for *ATO* and was the developer for this game.

Note: Bonus What-If Game Inside -- *A Cornered Wolf*. This is a hypothetical assault on Hitler's "Wolfsschanze" HQ by Soviet airborne forces.

Website:

<https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=189&category=9>

**AGAINST THE ODDS** | ANNUAL 2021  
A JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND SIMULATION | "WHAT IFs"



## Hex Wargame Reprint: *Stalingrad: Verdun on the Volga* by Russ Lockwood

*Adapted from the press release:*

Originally from Last Stand Games, this *ATO* reprint of *Stalingrad: Verdun on the Volga* brings the game back in the *ATO Annual Magazine* (ziplock) format. *ATO* successfully used Kickstarter to generate about \$29,000 from a goal of \$6,000, so it is fully funded and will be printed and distributed around August.

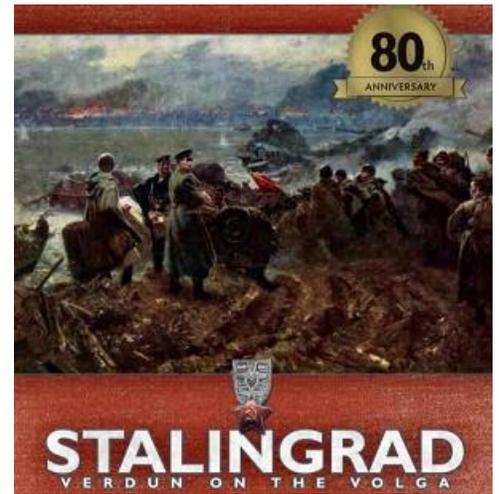
Note: The reprint does **not** contain a box or mounted map as in the LSG original packaging. As per usual *ATO* format, the map is a mapsheet and all components will be packaged in a ziplock bag.

**Contains:** Full color 17x44-inch map, 346 full color 5/8-inch counters, four Set-up and Reinforcement Play Aids, 24-page rulebook, 16-page campaign analysis, and four dice.  
Designer: Michael Rinella. \$64.95

Note: I am the Staff Developer for *ATO*, but Donald B. Johnson was the developer for this game.

Note: The successful Kickstarter campaign closed in mid-January, but the website info is still available.

Website (Kickstarter): <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/waybeyondwaterloo2/stalingrad-verdun-on-the-volga-2/description>



## Dark Ages: Mounted Carolingian Warriors With Spears by Russ Lockwood

From the Chris Parker website comes more of his 3D printed figures available in 28mm, 40mm, and 54mm sizes. Despite the photo, the set comes with three assorted miniatures and horses. Miniatures are a single piece and unpainted.

28mm: \$16.00 per set.

40mm: \$22.00 per set.

54mm: \$36.00 per set.

If you order two or three sets, there's a 10% discount. Ordering four or more sets gets a 15% discount. There's also a 50 cent packing fee.

Also available: Mounted Carolingian Hearthguard, Ghostly Gaul's With Sword And Shield, Ghostly Gaul's With Spears, Ghostly Gaul's With Spears And Shield, and Ghostly Gaul's With Axe And Shield. These are also \$16.00 to \$36.00 per set, but foot troop sets come with six figures.

Website: <https://www.chrisparkergames.com>



## Chadwick's 194x Trio Returns: Repackaged

by Russ Lockwood

I own the original 120-series game *1941* from, um, decades and decades ago. Played it many a time back in the day, although not recently.

Apparently, Compass Games is Kickstarter-ing a reprint of the trio of Frank Chadwick-designed games: *1940* (France), *1941* (Barbarossa), and *1942* (Japan Campaign: Malaya, Java, Philippines). The KS ends January 30.

Based on the KS info, looks a lot like a graphically upgraded version. You can read all three rule booklets on line. I dove into the 1941 one. Units are division/corps/groups, one month per game turn, and hexes represent 65km (41 miles). Unusual aspect: Sequence of play provides each player with two consecutive ground segments per turn -- i.e. move and combat, then move again and combat again. Armor can ignore ZOCs of non-armor, so when you pair that with the double move/combat, you can perhaps visualize pocketing enemy units.

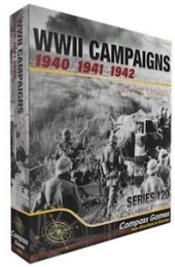
Three maps, three rulebooks, two countersheets (352 counters), three player aids, and three six-sided dice are in a boxed package.

The three games are retail \$69. KS price is \$54. No bonus rewards to unlock.

KS website:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/compass-games/wwii-campaigns/description>

Components. Image from KS site.



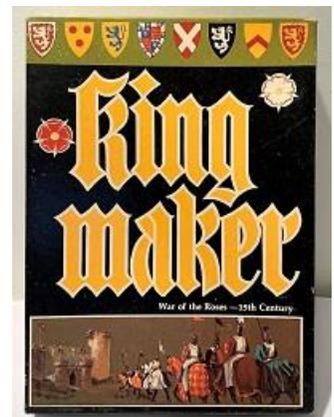
## Kingmaker: Version II

by Matt

After my recap of our Kingmaker game (see the 12/13/2023 AAR), I received these notes. --RL

You need to try the new version of *Kingmaker* that has the classic version on one side and the new KII version on the other. The KII version is 45 minutes plus 30 minutes per player for game length, so even a 5 player game is over in about 3 hours and 15 minutes. They added what is called a "prestige" victory, so if you control enough towns, offices, have won several battles, etc., it doesn't matter if someone runs off and hides with the last royal for several hours! It makes the game much more enjoyable and the new components are a huge improvement (well, except for the tiny control markers).

The new KII version is only for 2-5 players and there are faction set-up cards that are pretty balanced if you don't want to go the route of randomly handing out cards before play begins. There is still the teleporting around the board, but it seemed to us that the game was a bit more focused than the classic version and things start to shake themselves out a bit more quickly. It's probably worth your time to try a game of it and even if that doesn't work for you, the Classic game is on the other side! For the Classic version they included all of the cards and changed rules from *The General* over the decades.



## Kingmaker Memories

By Ned

*Kingmaker.* I bought a copy when it first came out, many decades ago. At the time I don't think I could find more than 1 or 2 others to play the game. And I don't think I ever got more than 1, 2, or 3 games played. Certainly, I never did understand all of the rules, trying to learn them as I played and never played it enough to do that. A game that I admired, I thought the subject so interesting and all the playing counters looked so cool. So as a game it was a failure for me. However, when I took a trip to England, I visited many of the towns that were in the game (like Rye) that were not big tourist sites in those days, but I enjoyed them because of my mental associations of the history and the game when I visited!



*I also visited Rye decades ago, including the Landgate (photo from Wikipedia), but on a dreary rainy day in Oct. I still remember sipping a pint of Whitbread next to the fireplace in a pub watching snooker on the telly.—RL.*

## Mrs. Wilson's War: The Wytheville Connection

by Russ Lockwood

Over the holidays, I found myself in Wytheville, VA, down near the NC border at the intersection of Interstates 81 and 77. It's a small town and as I walked around, it occurred to me that I had been there on vacation a while back, probably coming back from SC. There's an old 1776 log cabin turned into a restaurant that bashed a couple of my memory cells together. Well, that and the quilt shop next door – my wife never forgets a quilt shop.

Instead of the usual Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, chain hotel inn, we stayed at the Bolling Wilson Hotel on Main Street. This 1920s hotel used to be *the* spot in the town, although as with many of these grand hotels, it lost luster and was turned into commercial space – a bank, said the placard inside. Yet a local couple bought it and renovated it into a boutique hotel. It was nicely decorated for the holidays, complete with a “gingerbread hotel” in the lobby.

Carols played on outdoor speakers strung along Main Street. We had time, so we walked loops around town, finding the “Love” sign, on the next street over. According to the explanatory sign, the “L” represents the railroads, the “O” represents hot air balloons during the Chautauqua Festival, the “V” represents the intersection of the interstates, and the “E” represents the history of baseball (now Wither's Park). The park includes a monument to veterans and another for illustrious citizens through the ages.

Several historic house museums dot the town and we had visited most in our previous visit. The new one we visited was the Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace Museum across the street from the hotel. Bolling was her maiden name. Wilson was her married name and her husband became President Woodrow Wilson. She was born in this house, which now hosts a number of shops at the street level. In its current state, the museum is basically one room as shown in the above photo with display cases and an 8-minute biography video about Mrs. Wilson. The highlights include her Red Cross uniform during WWI and her driver's license for an electric car (gift from her first husband) from the turn of the century. Other period furnishings and memorabilia throughout. The entire second floor, which extends over all those shops, is gutted and under renovation. If you are in Wytheville, worth a quick stop.



# Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

**Operation C3: Hitler's Plan to Invade Malta 1942.** by John Burt. Hardback (9.2x11.25 inches). 282 pages. 2023.

The Italians called the plan Operation C3, although you may also know it as Operation Hercules. The idea was to invade Malta and was first discussed as Italy went to war in June 1940. At the time, the Italians didn't think much of the island, figuring that if Britain didn't turn it into a major military base, Italy wouldn't invade.

As Britain beefed up the base, including submarines to attack the Italian North Africa sea supply line, the Italians and Germans thought about invading in 1941. But it came down to Crete or Malta, and Crete was closer to Ploesti oil fields, so Hitler decided on Crete. Besides, the invasion of the USSR beckoned for German resources.

That led to the 1942 plan C3 to conquer this thorn in Italy's side. It never occurred, but this book examines the plans versus the actual forces available on both sides. It considers the logistics of the invasion, including the surprising factoid that in June 1940, Italy possessed only a seven-month supply of oil for its Navy, which had dwindled to a 1.5-month supply by November 1941 (p50).

Back in Historicon 2022 (see the 8/11/2022 AAR), GM Bruce hosted a Malta 1942 invasion wargame using 3mm figures atop a color period-altered contoured map of the island. Spectacular.

The second half of this book considers the possible course of the invasion if it had been launched in mid-August 1942. It speculates down to platoon level what would happen with a paratroop and seaborne invasion while maintaining an operational view of the whole. The prose propels you along as John highlights skirmishes and battles that you could recreate on a tabletop.

The book contains four black and white photos, four black and white TO&Es, and 19 black and white maps.

One typo: "loss ofover" lacks a space between of and over.

The big question I asked of the author was how he determined the outcome of the invasion. John replied:

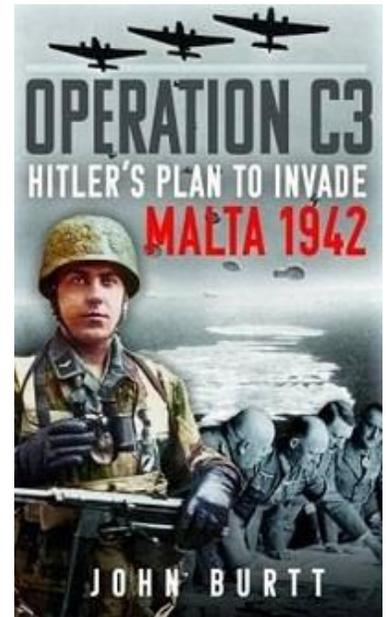
"Yes, we gamed out the invasion using a version of Vance's game system, with some added features. The primary addition -- which proved to us to be the most important -- was the condition of the defending troops and their lack of training to do multi-battalion operations.

A starvation diet for two years, then an adrenaline rush at the start of the battle would have soon exhausted the British. They basically ran out of steam in their uncoordinated counterattack, and we judged Gort would not have fought to the last man because of the effects on the Maltese people.

I hadn't heard about the Historicon game. We used the actual defense plan the British had come up with in May 1942, along with the Axis plan of attack we found in the Italian archives."

This is all very well presented and the conclusions offer valid outcomes. And if you don't agree with the conclusion, you can always try it for yourself -- the book includes a big, glorious OOB of the land, air, and sea forces. Well done.

Enjoyed it.



**To Conquer and to Keep: Volume 1 Reason to Revolution 107.** by Yuhan Kim. Softcover (6.7x9.7 inches). 238 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Suchet and the War for Eastern Spain 1809-1814*

Subtitle: *Volume 1: 1809-1811*

If all volumes of military history possessed the same sparkling prose, plentiful maps, OOBs with numbers, and insightful analysis as this book, you wouldn't need book reviews -- every book would be as brilliant as this one.

As the subtitle notes, the book analyzes efforts by General, later Marshal, Suchet to conquer and pacify Aragon in Spain, and later neighboring Navarre and Catalonia. He earned his marshal's baton for his efforts at sieging and taking cities and other strongholds while simultaneously playing Whack a Guerrilla in the countryside. His use of military raids and political incentives limited the guerrilla damage to French interests while enhancing the economic development of the province.

I was astounded to read that Kim is a class of 2024 undergraduate at Yale University. No one writes this clearly in college and I've read plenty of recycled and repurposed masters and doctorate theses and dry academic tomes. Most professional historians don't write this well.

Online, I found a Sept. 19, 2023 article in the *Yale Daily News (YDN)* about Kim and his work. He was a Napoleonic buff from an early age, took a year off to do the book thanks to the covid pandemic, and "studies political science and history and he leads the Military History Society."

"Kim told the *News* that he received guidance from professional historians, including José Arcón, an expert on the 1811-12 Valencia campaign, as well as Jonas de Neef, who has authored history books on the Napoleonic wars."

"[Arcón] went out of his way to help edit [the book] ... and provide me with new information," Kim said. "He really gave me a new perspective ... It was really thanks to him and Jonas [de Neef] that my research was able to expand a lot."

Well, I guess that helped, but I suspect the underlying prose rests either on Kim's talent or the editor's touch.

The book contains 15 black and white illustrations, 10 color illustrations (mostly by Pierre Albert Leroux), and 11 color maps.

Also included: a number of OOBs -- almost all entries with numbers of soldiers. I haven't seen so many numbers since Nafziger and Gill and that's mighty good company to keep.

More from the *YDN* article:

"The two-volume book was originally meant to be a single volume at 200 to 300 pages, according to Kim. However, as Kim researched further, he said the page count approached 500."

"The editor, according to Kim, wanted to refrain from cutting down quality information for the sake of maintaining a more slim page count, so they recommended the book be broken into two volumes."

"Also, my editor figured people were more likely to buy two cheaper volumes than one really expensive one," he said. "That was the logic behind it."

There you have it. However Kim got there, the result is an astounding bit of research and writing, and, a promising future for a historian who already passed the 'publish or perish' test. Here's hoping he keeps researching and writing with the style and detail he's already developed. Well done.

Enjoyed it. And looking forward to *Volume 2*.

Here's the link to the *YDN* article:

<https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2023/09/19/it-feels-like-detective-work-yuhan-kim-24-publishes-book-on-napoleonic-wars/>

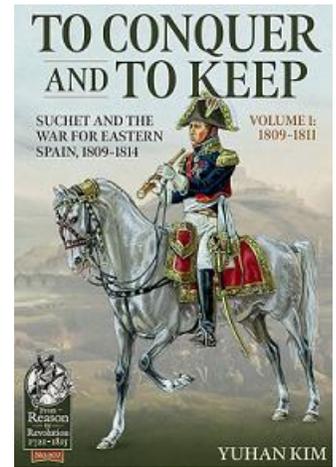
**Damned Hunchbacks.** by Paolo Morisi. Softcover (6.7x9.7 inches). 312 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Italy's Torpedo Bomber Units of the Second World War (1940-1943)*

If any country should have stayed neutral in WWII, it should have been Italy: Under-prepared, under-industrialized, under-resourced, and under the impression that it had a powerful military.

The subtitle does more than just chronicle the specialist torpedo bomber units of mostly S.79 tri-motor aircraft to include an overview of the Italian Air Force and its industrial base.

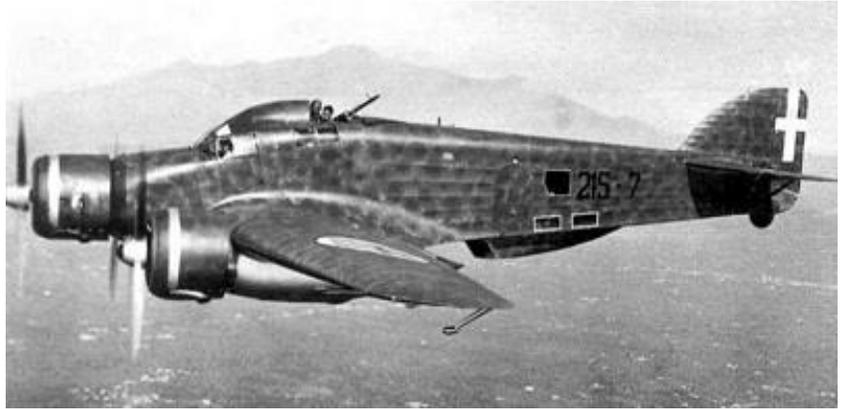
The aviation industry personified inefficiency. The artisanal nature of production by small companies meant few aircraft were built compared to other countries. For



example, Italian companies produced about 1,800 planes of all types in 1939, 3,250 in 1940, 3,500 in 1941, 2,800 in 1942, and 2,900 in 1943. The Germans produced 15,600 aircraft in 1942 while the US built 23,672 in 1942 (p101-102). It took the Germans about 4,500 man hours to build one ME-109. It took the Italians 21,000 man hours to build one C.200 (p27).

As for the torpedo bombers, much of the S.79 was built out of wood and crews were told not to drop torpedoes unless they had a good chance of a hit because torpedo production was only 15 per month (p107). Had Mussolini been as smart as Franco and sat out the war, Benito would join Francisco with *Saturday Night Live* jokes.

Torpedo attacks were done by specialized units and the hit rate was pretty small, although a hit on a British cruiser would put the ship out of action for about a



year. There were many successes, but not enough to stem the flow of supplies into Malta or prevent the transfer of troops and material across the Mediterranean Sea. The attacks were often delivered by two or three S.79s or other Italian aircraft, although some attacks counted up to a dozen planes.

One interesting attack was by four S.84 (*sic*) bombers on Oct. 18, 1940 that flew from Rhodes to Bahrain, bombed a British oil refinery, and landed in Italian East Africa (p97). Torpedo attacks occurred in Alexandria Harbor and the harbor at Gibraltar -- sort of an attempt at a reverse Taranto.

The book contains 62 black and white photos, two black and white illustrations, and 11 sidebars with pilot bios and special events.

It suffers from a glaring number of typos, more than the usual one or two I've come to expect. Some are just poor English skills: "aircraft has past the dam" should be "passed" (p82); "half fainted attack" should be either "hearted" or "feinted" (p120); "took flight and drowned towards" is likely "droned" (p130 and p293); "shriveled with bullets" is probably "shredded" (p131); "two S.79s...where returning" should be "were" (p147), "5,649-tons vessel" should be "ton" (p148); "109\*" should have the asterisk character as a degree character to match the rest of the book (p138); "emergency turn of 60 1/4" is likely 60 degrees (p137); "Force C was thus unarmed by the torpedo bombers" likely should be "unharmed" (p150); and so on. Some editor either had too much of a workload...or had been replaced with inept artificial intelligence.

WWII Italian forces receive much abuse, but as the decades have rolled by, more and more I learn that while individual military soldiers and some units proved extremely capable on par with any other army, the upper leadership levels proved dysfunctional. Fiefdom defense over budgets makes you shake your head and lack of coordination among the services makes you glad Italy was a member of the Axis.

This book contains a multitude of scenario ideas with few planes using something other than 109s and Spitfires. It's well researched with all sorts of tactical tidbits and also discusses torpedo bombers' efforts amid the evolving war strategies on the Mediterranean Front.

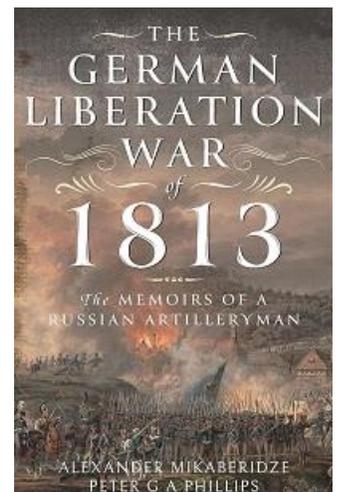
Enjoyed it.

**The German Liberation War of 1813: Volume 2.** Translated and edited by Alexander Mikaberidze and Peter G A Phillips. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 230 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Memoirs of a Russian Artilleryman*

The second volume of three translates the memoirs of Ilya Timofeyevich Radozhitskii, a Russian artilleryman who was in charge of two cannons of the 3rd Light Artillery battery at a number of 1813 battles, including Dresden, Lutzen, Bautzen, and Leipzig, plus a number of skirmish-style engagements in the advance across Poland and Germany. It's all from his personal viewpoint, so don't expect much commentary about the battles beyond what he experienced.

A considerable amount of text is devoted to campaign observations, such as the route he marched, the hospitality (or not) of various places he stayed, the pretty Polish and German young ladies, the food, and so on. It all reads fairly quickly, although the line of march provides an idea at the speed at which an army crosses the land.



Of note is the ebb and flow of movement while battling rearguards, especially when they turn to fight, as well as during the larger battles. Quite often, his battery will be up front, and then be hammered and forced to retreat several miles or even longer distances. Then it will rally and go back. If you want to know why *Snappy Nappy* rules have such ebb and flow to them, read this first-hand account.

The book contains nine somewhat plain black and white maps (or more likely one big map chopped into smaller sections and inserted where applicable) and 40 black and white illustrations of officers and battle scenes.

This second volume ends in mid-January 1814, so I'm guessing the third and final volume will take up the six days campaign and through to Napoleon's abdication and perhaps reaction to the 100 Days.

Enjoyed it.

The first volume, *Russian Campaign of 1812*, is reviewed in the 09/28/2023 AAR and up on hmgs.org.

**Anzio-Nettuno: Die Wehrmacht im Kampf 32.** by Jorg Staiger and translated by Lynden Lyons. Hardback (6.2x9.2 inches). 134 pages. 2024 translation of 1962 book.

Subtitle: *A Battle of Leadership Mistakes*

Jorg Staiger was the commander of II battalion, 26th Panzer Regiment at the battle of Anzio, so he has a better than average idea of combat conditions during the battle. Using contemporary German combat reports and studies written just after the war, he pieces together a succinct account of the Allied invasion and German response with details generally down to battalion level.

The leadership mistakes of the Allied command are pretty well known: timidity when boldness was called for relegated the invasion to an enlarged beachhead that was only relieved when the allies advanced up the peninsula. The German side is more subtle and regards counter-attacking the beachhead with inadequate and ill-trained forces on too narrow a frontage and with little in the way of accurate intelligence of enemy forces.

There is more to it than this, but you get a real tactical and operational view of the battle, including that German supply lines were in shambles from air attacks and the 14th Army's main supply depot was 300km from Anzio (p54).

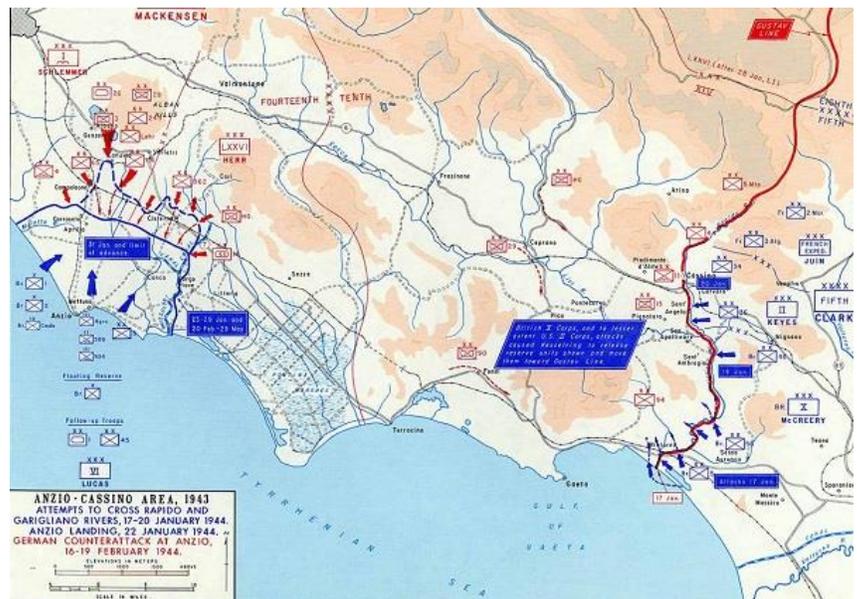
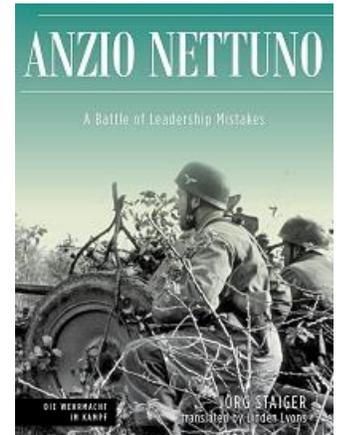
You get nice descriptions down to regimental and battalion level of the Allies' superiority, including artillery, naval gunfire, air superiority, converting two LSTs with flight decks for artillery observation planes (p18), and the horrendous weather and terrain that forced tanks to use roads and slowed movement. Even the Goliath demolition tanks bogged down in the fields and failed to make attacks (p94).

The book contains nine black and white maps of the Anzio area with tactical dispositions. I wish they were larger in size, but you can figure out where most units are. The OOB goes down to division level, with subunits and numbers embedded in the text. A trio of appendices offers contemporary reports of operations by the British 24th Infantry Brigade, German 129th Panzer Recon battalion, and Battlegroup Graser.

Of note was the German Army Group C HQ realization that despite the quick response in directing forces to the beachhead, the German armed forces were incapable of launching an offensive in the face of Allied air and sea superiority -- and sent a blunt report to the supreme command urging "an end to the war be sought" (p115). I would have liked to see the exact quote from that exact report to see if it was as direct as the famous "make peace, you fools" comment by von Rundstedt in 1944.

Reprints like this make for good analysis of the battle from a tabletop perspective, especially on a more tactical level. Pair this with the US Army *Green Book* narrative and you'll have both sides of the Anzio battle.

Enjoyed it.



**Allied Victory Over Japan 1945: Images At War.** by Jon Diamond. Softcover (7.4x9.7 inches). 231 pages. 2023.

Most of the photos cover 1945, but the book starts in 1937 with the Japanese in China, then to Pearl Harbor, and so on up until the Japanese war crimes trial. Also, the second chapter (p85-114) covers generals, commanders, and other personalities.

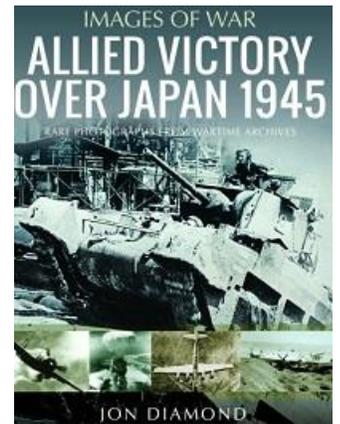
Some of the photos I've seen before, but the majority of them are new to me. The text describes overall operations while the captions zero in on pertinent information about the photo. It's all nicely done.

One interesting factoid: Japan launched about 2,000 kamikaze attacks on US ships during three months of the Okinawa invasion and sunk 25 ships and damaged 250 for about a 15% efficiency rate. Japan had about 11,000 planes ready for an invasion of the home islands, with about half designated as kamikazes. Extrapolated from Okinawa data, that would mean expecting about 100 ships sunk and about 800 damaged (p83).

The book contains 361 black and white photos, usually a half page in size each and pretty sharp. Modelers can certainly pick out uniform details and the bric-a-brac of war to make their dioramas shine.

My favorite: US OSS Maj. Thomas stands in the center of a group photo with Ho Chi Minh on one side and Vo Nguyen Giap on the other. Other OSS and Vietnamese soldiers are around them (p225). How times changed after the French wanted back into Indochina.

Enjoyed it.



**Infantry Attacks.** by Erwin Rommel. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 285 pages. 2023 reprint of 2013 reprint of 2006 reprint of translation of 1937 book.

This is one of those books I've always heard about but never actually read. Originally published in 1937, the first English edition appeared in 1944. This contains the 1990 introduction by son Manfred Rommel, but this is basically an autobiography of Erwin Rommel's WWI battles.

He fought on the Western, Eastern, and Italian fronts during WWI. He started in the trenches and showed some aptitude for small-unit tactics, sneaking across no-man's land for trench raiding and prisoner grabbing. He continued to do so until wounded, then after recovery was sent to join the Bavarian Mountain Battalion on the Eastern front against Romania. After that, the battalion was sent to the Italian front.

The bulk of the work consists of recounting infiltration tactics, pinning the front of the enemy, and then launching flank and rear assaults. Ideally, he brings machine guns with his platoon or company or companies to increase firepower. If all else failed and when confronted by superior enemy numbers, he resorted to either guile or all-out attack. He constantly pressed the attack against the rear areas as much as possible, keeping the enemy off balance and convincing often superior forces to surrender. These predilections, which almost always worked, carried over into WWII and the desert. You can start to understand why he was always at the front directing tactical maneuvers -- he achieved his greatest success doing so and for a long while, WWII mimicked WWI.

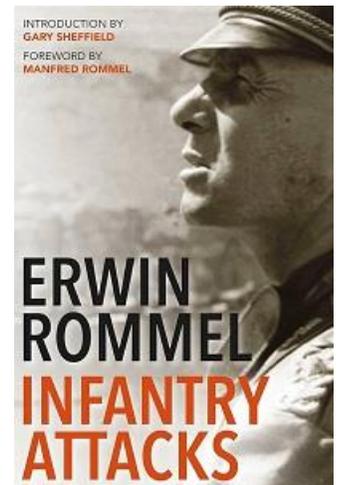
He was rather fortunate that he suffered only a few wounds despite years of front-line combat.

For WWI buffs, this is a gold mine of small-unit tactics. He first commanded squads and as the years passed, commanded platoons, companies, and then multiple companies. The confusion when attacking through woods and losing contact with flanking units is well described. Time and time again, he explains use of terrain as a way of sheltering from fire and especially moving undetected.

Of surprise to me was he always delegated some squads and sometimes even platoons to be trench diggers. Once a spot was grabbed and he didn't have enough troops to press on, out came the shovels and entrenchment began, including communication trenches back to the jumping off point. He noted the digging in saved a lot of casualties, including from friendly fire.

Of bigger surprise was a passing mention of "electrified barbed wire" (p75).

At the end of every chapter, he lists "Observations" with a number of tactical tips for officers. Within the chapters he often asks questions about what should be done next. He answers, of course, but it's an interesting viewpoint about



crucial decision points during an attack or defense.

His three days of attacking the Italians at what we know as Caporetto makes for fascinating reading. At a couple points, he had maybe a platoon of soldiers with a MG or two and forced entire Italian regiments to surrender. If you can believe it, some Italian soldiers refused orders to defend and at one point hoisted Rommel on their shoulders in celebration of their surrendering. This sounds like something out of a Hollywood movie.

The book contains 68 small black and white sketch maps that explain the tactical dispositions and attacks in the text plus one black and white map and one black and white illustration. It also has 55 black and white photos in a center section, although most seem to show Rommel in WWII, which is beyond the scope of the book.

One typo: "path along the woods game me an idea" (p176) should be "gave." Otherwise, the translation flows pretty well.

Enjoyed it.

**Ripped Apart: Volume 1 (Europe At War 34).** by Tom Cooper, Dave Watson & Dimitris Vassilopoulos. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 80 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Cyprus Crisis 1963-1964*

The Greeks and Turks squabbled over Cyprus during the Cold War as both sides claimed sovereignty over an island that had an independence movement in 1960.

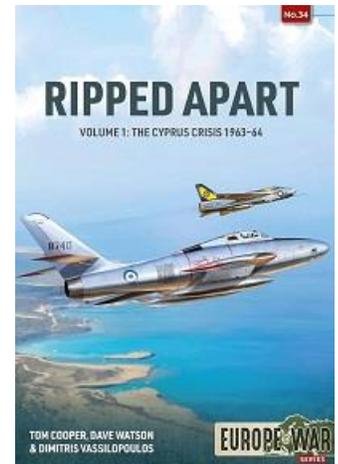
However, the booklet starts with a first chapter (to page 13) offering an overview the island from ancient times onward, which I find as unnecessary padding. It then settles into a nice analysis of Greek and Turkish military units and capabilities before heading into the skirmishes on air, sea, and land. But then it veers back into the unnecessary (p37-41) with generic terrain and weather information.

Yet the political considerations of both sides, plus US, UK, and UN concerns, are skillfully interwoven in the remainder of the book.

The booklet contains 67 black and white photos, two black and white maps, one color map, three color vehicle profiles, and 18 color aircraft profiles.

There just doesn't seem enough for a two-volume effort here, but you may find enough for a nice what-if scenario. Ties go to the authors.

Enjoyed it.



**Panzerwaffe on the Battlefield 4: WWII Photobook.**

by Jon Feenstra. Hardback (horizontal: 12.0x8.5 inches). 110 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Volume 25*

This is the 25th volume in this photo-intensive series featuring a wide variety of German armored and soft-skinned vehicles. As with previous volumes, the vast majority of photos take up one full oversize page, with some at half page or so. The vast majority are also pretty clear, either because the original photo was clear or someone worked some wonders with Photoshop. Some are a tad light and a couple appear in a soft focus.

The images cover from Panzer I through Tiger I, with the various STuG and Jagd versions interspersed. There's even some repurposed French tanks and vehicles included.

The book contains 101 black and white photos, with many showing damaged and destroyed tanks and vehicles. Images cover the entire war 1939-1945.

Favorites? Six SdKfz 9s tow a damaged Panzer V Panther onto a railroad flatcar (p68). Necessity and invention, I suppose.

Also: a PzIV in North Africa (p47) is loaded and then some with boxes, crates, cans, and other equipment -- it looks like a tank version of the Beverly Hillbillies' car. All you need is Rommel in a rocking chair.

The introduction contains a massive chart (p7) of German tank production (including repurposed French tanks) by variant. For example, Pz I A,B (1,589), C (40), F (30), command (184), driver training (442), munitions carrier (173), PzJager I (202), 150mm self-propelled gun (38), and Flakpz (24). Then, PzII, III, IV, etc. Also includes repurposed French tanks. The author notes sources are conflicting, so this is his best compilation of data.



FYI: The Germans built 54,147 tanks and self-propelled guns, but the US produced 120,740 tanks and self-propelled guns (p8). Wikipedia reports the USSR built over 100,000 tanks and the British about 27,000. You can only do so much with quality if you're outnumbered 5:1.

There are no specs or first-person accounts -- it's all photos with a caption that identifies the vehicle and what makes that variant different from other variants. It's a modeler's delight.

Enjoyed it.

**When Brothers Fight: Asia at War No. 48.** by Benjamin Lai and Zhang Yiming. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 86 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Sino-Soviet Border Battles 1969*

The first two *At War* volumes covering this topic -- *The Sino-Soviet Border War 1969 (Volume 1): Asia at War 21* (see the 06/29/2021 AAR) and *The Sino-Soviet Border War of 1969 (Volume 2): Asia at War 23* (see the 10/26/2021 AAR) -- cover the skirmishes between Chinese and Soviet troops from the Soviet perspective using Soviet sources. This volume *Asia at War 48* covers the same main border skirmishes from the Chinese viewpoint using Chinese sources.

From October 1964 to March 1969, the two countries had 4,189 'border incidents' (p14). That means in 54 months, the two averaged about 78 such incidents per month, or more than two a day. The Chinese plotted the border using the principle of "thalweg" -- a new word for me -- which is defined as the center of the border river (p13). That would grant most islands to the Chinese. The USSR rejected such a definition of the border and insisted they owned the islands.

The Chinese laid an ambush on Zhenbao Island for a Russian patrol that reconned across a frozen Amur River to sweep the island. The Chinese were under orders to use sticks to beat the Soviets unless fired upon. As you can imagine, gunfire rapidly came into play. The Soviets later sent in APCs. After that, the Soviets brought in tanks and artillery while the Chinese brought in AT guns and artillery.

Interesting tidbits: the Chinese could not drill or dig into the frozen tundra, so they laid mines encased in white pillow cases and a dusting of snow (p36). The captured T-62 tank yielded significant finds for Chinese reverse engineers, including infrared, gun stabilizer, and armor design technologies (p53). The tank now sits in a Chinese military museum.

The booklet contains 103 black and white photos, nine black and white maps, eight black and white illustrations, five color maps, four color photos, three color uniform illustrations, and two color gun profiles.

Some typos: "pollicisation" (p11) is probably better known as politicization; "grabbed [his] collar with my right hand and with my right, punched him in the face" (p25) is likely that he either grabbed or punched with his left hand; and "stepped on a gas paddle" (p39) might actually be a paddle, but is probably better known as a gas pedal.

By the time you finish with all three volumes, you'll have a pretty good idea of the actual skirmishes to create an accurate tabletop battle or three because you'll have both sides' OOBs, locations, and timing. The terrain is fairly flat on the island, with some trees and bushes, while the hills around provide observation and firing locations. For those with aspirations of a Far East Cold War skirmish, these three volumes provide the details you need.

Enjoyed it.

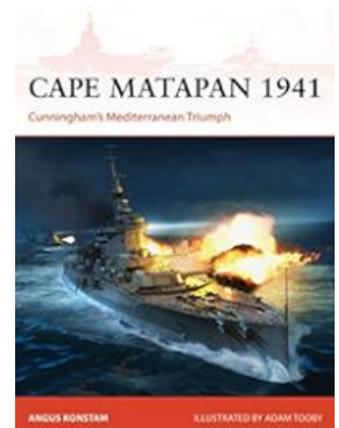
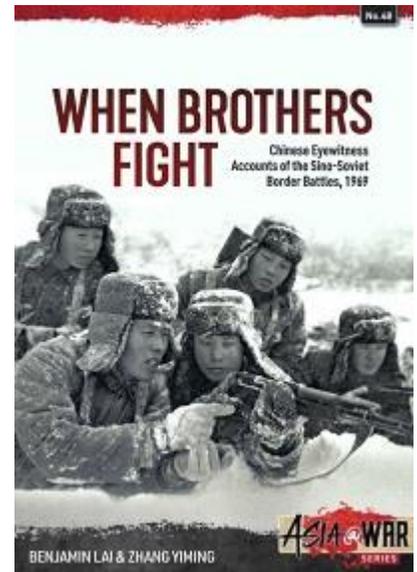
**Cape Matapan 1941: Campaign 397.** by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Cunningham's Mediterranean Triumph*

The Italian Navy performed poorly in this extended effort to intercept British ships. Add in the British aircraft carrier and aircraft, lack of Italian Air Force support, and the distinction of the British managing to ambush an Italian cruiser and destroyer force at night and you end up with a considerable British victory. How this all occurred gets the full treatment in this *Campaign* volume.

This would have to be a double blind type of wargame for a tabletop battle to work since the Italians are outnumbered in battleships and aircraft. OOBs for both sides are offered and the maps show relative positions and timings.

The lead-up and various British air attacks are well handled. The Italians would've made a clean getaway with loss of a cruiser, but turning around and sending



a small task force of two cruisers and four destroyers in an effort to tow away a immobile cruiser proved fatal. The British night ambush sunk all but two destroyers.

In the text, this action is well described on the British side (p79-87), but curiously, the Italians never seemed to have fired a shot and only one destroyer is credited with launching torpedoes. The British had three battleships that smashed the Italian heavy cruisers, presumably before they could fire a shot.

The booklet contains 55 black and white photos, nine color maps, five black and white illustrations, one color photo, three color two-page action illustrations, and two color illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

**Japan's Indian Ocean Raid 1942: Campaign 396.** by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Allies' Lowest Ebb*

Take an expert on US WWII Pacific War and merge his knowledge into a *Campaign* series format and you get another marvelous overview. This one covers Operation C, Japan's carrier-based raid into the India Ocean to protect their strategic flank along with invading a few islands on the way.

The booklet follows the usual *Campaign* format, starting with opposing commanders, plans, and forces, detailing the sailors, ships, subs, and aircraft that carried out the raid and those that defended against it. The Japanese aimed to destroy the British fleet, disrupt supply convoys, and bomb infrastructure in Ceylon and India.

The British had two fast aircraft carriers and one slow one, plus a variety of supporting ships from battleships down to armed merchant cruisers in the Indian Ocean. The Japanese had five main carriers and a light carrier. It was a mismatch, but events did not turn out as the Japanese had expected.

All the main actions are covered, from airstrikes against British ships to ports and airbases, submarine patrols and attacks, and Japanese infantry landings on islands. It's all well told and would make for an interesting scenario.

Indeed, Stille had the 2023 naval carrier wargame *Clash of Carriers* published by *Against the Odds* magazine about the Battle of the Philippine Sea in 1944. Full disclosure: I was the Staff Developer on the game.

The booklet contains 65 black and white photos, eight color maps, one color photo, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it,

**Throwing Thunderbolts.** by Garry David Wills. Softcover (8.2x11.7 inches). 301 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *A Wargamer's Guide to War of the First Coalition 1792-1797*

Subtitle: *Helion Wargames 11*

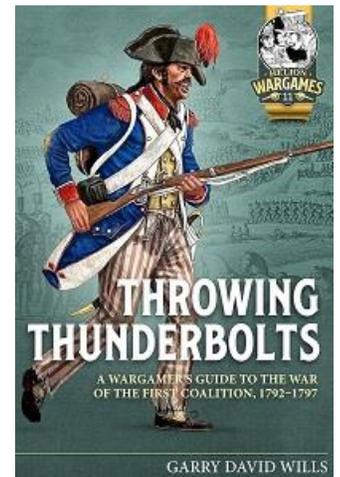
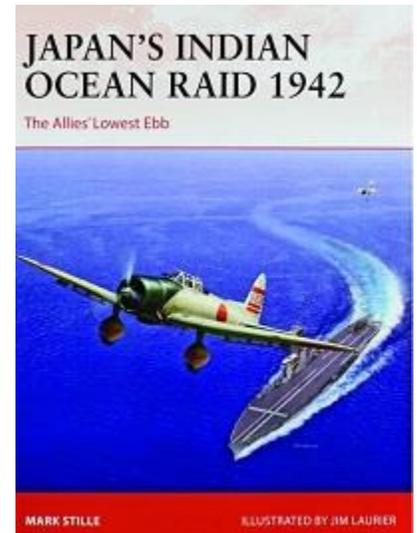
If you are getting into wargaming this particular period, this book is an excellent place to start. I rather enjoyed the year-by-year recap of the war (p14-p113), as most of the information was new to me. I tend to skip the early battles and head directly into the Napoleonic Empire battles.

Of note is that in 1793, nine French generals of the Republic, after losing battles, were sent to the guillotine (p29). Imagine putting that into effect on the tabletop. Lose a wargame as the French C-in-C and you're banned from all subsequent wargames of that period for eternity!

Mapping needs more help -- telling people to use Google maps is like telling them to use Wikipedia to get a summary of the First Coalition. The text references lots of towns that are not on the small maps of France.

Next comes a summary of the major and minor powers that were part of the war (p114-174), with good explanations of general organization and units in specific. You'll find differences with the Empire period, although only purists will worry about uniform differences on the tabletop.

*Pick your Napoleon de jour: Phoenix. Steiger in Table of Contents up top. Images from web.*



The wargaming info comes next (p175-191), with notes about figures, organizations, painting, and rules. This author is a *Black Powder* rules fan, so there is considerable myopia about other rules, although he mentions a few.

*Or how about Brando? Image from web.*

Obviously, we gamers can't play every Napoleonic rule set, but limiting a rules discussion does a disservice -- and not just because he never mentions *Snappy Nappy* for the large-scale battles/campaigns. There was a relatively recent article in, um, er, *Wargames Illustrated* or *Miniature Wargames*, that listed a plethora of Napoleonic rules, divided by scale. He would have been better securing reprint rights to that.

On the plus side, I liked the reprint of Featherstone's chart of ratings for armies of the First Coalition (p179) and another chart rating commanders (p181). Granted, I have quibbles, but these two charts are a great place to start extrapolating.

Next comes 10 scenarios -- seven land and three naval. The latter scenarios are easy to convert to any naval rules set because each ship is individually listed.

As the author plays *Black Powder*, if you don't play those rules, you'll need to do some extrapolation to convert the land scenarios to other rules. All the unit stats are *Black Powder* stats.

*Or how about Burke? Image from web.*

The groups I game with mostly use *Shako II* (unit equals a battalion) or *Snappy Nappy* (unit equals a brigade although it has been used with unit equals a regiment), with the rare *Empire II* (unit equals a battalion) for hyper-detailed gaming. Side note: We tried *Black Powder*, but after three straight games of ever-growing dissatisfaction with the pace and oddball random die roll effects in each one, we dumped it.

*Or how about Camilleri? Bill and Ted think so... Image from Web.*

To be fair, he does note (p176): "some are less happy to play games where the movement of units is driven by random factors or even prevented by an unlucky die roll." Count me as a gamer who thinks firing, melee, and morale die rolls offer enough randomness. Rolling for movement? Only in limited occasions, not every turn for every unit (or every brigade if you are felling lucky).

As for "unlucky die roll," *Black Powder* has about a 1/3 chance of units or groups of units standing still to enjoy a picnic. The "unlucky" die roll actually sends them doing things units never did -- like on turn 1 turning my entire brigade (five regiments) of cavalry 90 degrees to the left and plowing them into woods...which they cannot enter. Our GM had to think fast about that one. Other units failed to move and ended turns parked in place. The games never got any better.

*Or how about Chabat? Belongs in a museum, eh? ... Image from Web.*

Russ' Rule #1: Without movement, you have no game. I came to game, not sit. Now, if you choose not to move, that's your prerogative. For anything else, I came to game.

Anyway, the book ends with listings of figures and terrain plus online sources and bibliography. It's illustrated with color photos of gorgeous 25mm figures, period maps and illustrations, and scenario maps.

*Or how about Hopper? Was it an easy ride? ... Image from Web.*

Except for the rules section, which needs to be as encyclopedic as the figure section, there's plenty here to start you off on a new subset of the Napoleonic wars. *Black Powder* fans will especially rejoice.

Enjoyed it.



**The Ones Who Got Away.** by Bill Yenne. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 320 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Mighty Eighth Airmen on the Run in Occupied Europe*

The US Air Force lost a lot of bombers and fighters over German-occupied Europe during WWII. Most airmen who survived were sent off to POW camps. This book chronicles the stories of successful escapes and evasions that generally crossed France and ended in Spain.

The surprise to me is that just about all the escape routes went through Paris, where the airmen received forged documents and headed by train to south France. They then walked over the Pyrenees to Spain and thence to Gibraltar for a trip home.

Most tales offer nail-biting escapades of running as fast and as far away from any aircraft and then hiding. Eventually, the US airman would contact a random Frenchman or Frenchwoman and be ushered to the Resistance, which would help him escape.

The book contains plenty of harrowing escapes, but the one that sticks with me is of Joel McPherson. The French underground hid him in the Hotel Moderne in Boulogne-sur-Gesse. The only problem is that the Gestapo used the hotel as a HQ and billet, so eating in the restaurant and drinking at the bar was always among Gestapo agents (p194).

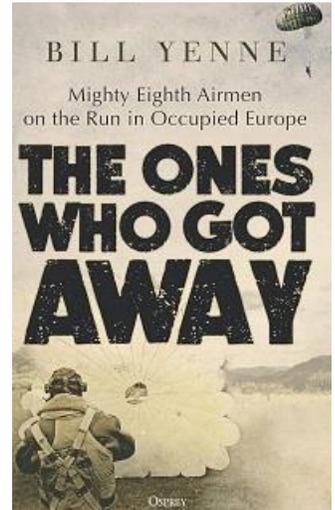
In another, Bud Mahurin managed to escape into Spain and back to England, but wasn't so lucky in the Korean War when he was shot down and captured by the North Koreans at the end of the war (p245-249).

The main surprise? Spanish border guards captured airmen and tossed them in jail with the ordinary smugglers. It would take a while for word to get to the US or British embassy and secure their release.

The book contains 23 black and white photos and four black and white maps.

Most of the information came from US Escape and Evasion reports the airmen wrote for a debrief. Some are rather short, but some are exceptionally long and detailed, which I suppose are the ones used here.

Enjoyed it.



**Snow, Ice and Sacrifice.** by Ralph Riccio and Massimiliano Afiero. Hardback (6.9x9.9 inches). 320 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Italian Army in Russia 1941-1943*

About a decade ago, I read a book entitled: *Sacrifice on the Steppe: The Italian Alpine Corps in the Stalingrad Campaign 1942-1943* by Hope Hamilton that covered much of the same ground as this book. I even recognized some of the same photos.

This book covers the entire Italian Eighth Army from its arrival in July 1941 to its withdrawal from March through May 1943. It's an operational history of maneuvers and combat down to about the battalion level and quite well paced.

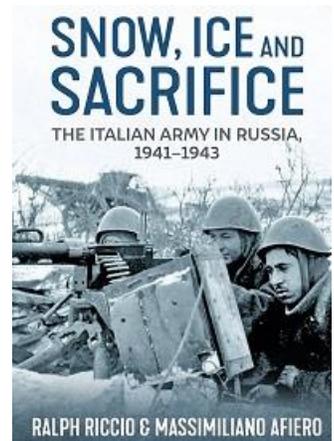
The initial 1941 attacks, generally successful, gave way to defensive struggles in August-September 1942 on the Don River. Oddly enough, airpower is only mentioned a few times. I guess the air battles around Stalingrad occupied the Luftwaffe and Red Air Force more than the battles fought by the Italians. Soviet losses generally outpaced Italian losses by three or four to one.

Of note are a couple Italian cavalry charges, such as the 100-man 2nd Squadron of the Lancieri di Novara against a Soviet infantry "battalion" (p128). Yes, it's sabers versus guns that saw the Soviets killed and routed, but at an Italian cost of 11 killed, 24 wounded, 12 horses killed, and 39 horses wounded.

Later on, the Savoia Cavalleria 2nd Squadron charged the flank of a retreating Soviet infantry battalion (p134) -- sabers versus guns again with a second charge using hand grenades. The 4th Squadron dismounted and frontally attacked, in part to pin the Soviets in place. The 3rd Squadron and the HQ Squadron charged, but was caught by machine gun fire, but convinced the Soviets to keep retreating. All totaled, it was 650 cavalry versus 2,000 infantry.

Attritional battles led to the November-December 1942 Soviet offensive that shattered the front line and pushed the Italians back. December 19 was the first time panic set in. Italian rearguards held out and small units that were surrounded broke out from time to time. Of note is that the lack of heavy anti-tank guns forced Italian infantry to close assault tanks -- with some success, but with heavy casualties.

The book contains 166 black and white photos of generally exceptional quality (a boon to modelers), nine black and white maps, four black and white illustrations, eight color uniform illustrations, six color vehicle profiles, and two color artillery gun profiles.



I (of course) would have liked to see more tactical maps that identified all those towns and hills mentioned in the text to get an idea of how large or small the battles were and the terrain fought over. Also, sometimes the towns on the map used different spellings. For example: Novo Orlovka in text is Malo Orlowka on the map (p80); Michailovka in the text is Michajlowka on the map; and Ivanovskiy in the text is Iwanowokij on the map. A quibble, sure, but when reading about unfamiliar towns, it would be nice for the two to match.

A couple minor typos: "counterattacked again stide the..." (p117) is likely "astride" and "'Julia'and " needs a space between the ' and the 'and' (p205).

I want to compliment the authors for an appendix with extensive August 1, 1941 OOB in some cases down to the company level. Another appendix offers an 8th Army OOB down to the regiment level. I would have liked some numerical info, but that's the detail a wargamer can live with -- books often end at the divisional level. The Air Force gets an OOB down to squadron level and the Italian Navy gets a small OOB (mostly torpedo boats, but including at least one mini-submarine).

About 114,500 Italians out of 229,000 returned to Italy in 1943 (p219). As for Italian POWs in Soviet care, only 14% returned to Italy after the war. Corresponding Italian POW numbers: 99.8% returned from US captivity, 98.4% returned from British camps, and 94.4% returned from German camps.

It's good to get another perspective about the Italians on the Eastern Front. So often, histories just say the Soviets rolled over them in 1942 and that's it. There's far more to their story than that and this book excels and explaining how the Italians fought on the Russian front.

Enjoyed it.

**Aussie Rules for Dummies: 2nd Edition.** by Jim Main. Softcover (7.5x9.3 inches). 339 pages. 2008.

A decade ago, an obscure cable channel had "Monday Night Footie" and showed one or two of the previous week's Australian Rules Football games. I rather enjoyed the game, although I readily admit learning the rules proved a bit elusive. Still, it was quite the spectacle. Better yet, it only had one commercial at halftime: for Foster's Beer. Now, it's supposedly available via Fox paid subscription -- have to investigate that.

As for the book, it's a bit over long for those of us looking for a little more info about the rules. Indeed, the book hardly mentions the rules, except for a few pages on referee gestures/calls. I had figured out most except for one particular instance where sometimes a contested mark (both sides try to catch a kicked ball) is perfectly legal and sometimes it draws a penalty.

Page 87 notes the "high mark" (catch) allows you to "sometimes using the back or rump of an opponent" as part of leveraging the leap, but also notes that using hands on back and shoulders is illegal. My guess is penalties were called when someone used their hands to boost off an opponent's shoulder. What it doesn't tell me is the "sometimes" options. Can you use a knee to push off the opponent's back? How about a calf? Can you spike the guy's hip as part of your leap? I was no wiser after watching years of footie and still no wiser after reading this book.

Otherwise, the book had a bit of history on each team, basic positions, and some other interesting info. Unlike US football, playoff teams are determined by the best records. There are no divisions, just one long ladder (standings list).

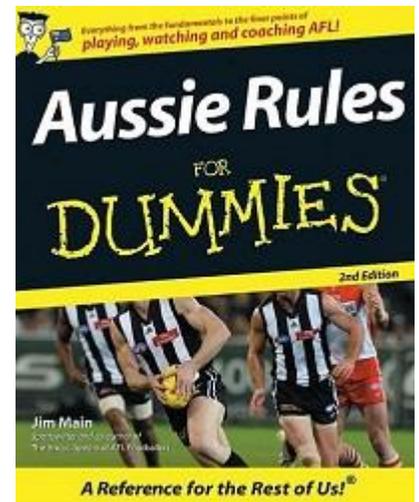
On the other hand, half the book was useless to me -- training, coaching, injuries, betting pools, stadiums, working your way up to the big league via grade school organizations, how to be a spectator, and media coverage. Most of that is too generic and too out of date. Top 10 games, players, etc. didn't mean anything to me.

My confusion was the title: *Aussie Rules*. To me, that means a discussion of the rules and play. Apparently not. Most of this book was fairly useless padding for me.

My guess is that my initial web searches need to be better honed to find that answer.

**Games of Command.** by Linnea Sinclair. Paperback (4.2x6.8 inches). 525 pages. 2007.

Picked up in a discount bin, this is apparently the fourth book in the series pitting human Capt. Tasha Sebastien against computer- and biomechanical-augmented human Admiral Branden Kel-Paten in a race to retrieve the rebel Jace Serafino, who has some sort of chip in his head with valuable information. Ultimately, they team together while fighting mutual enemies that opened up a portal into the void and brought in extradimensional ugly fuglies.



Now, without knowing about the first three books that I didn't read, I guess this romantic sci-fi book is the culmination of two enemies becoming star-crossed lovers. Pity that bio-boy has an emotion suppression chip that apparently short circuits half way through the book.

Did I mention cats? Specifically teleportation-capable furzels that kill extradimensional ugly fuglies. The problem with inserting such plot twists is that the reader is bound to ask: Why didn't furzels beam Sebastien et al out of danger or beam Serafino to the spaceship in the first place? Would have saved about 400 pages...

**Mass Effect: Revelation.** by Drew Karpysyn. Paperback (4.2x6.8 inches). 323 pages. 2007.

*Mass Effect* is apparently a video game and this is a novelization prequel to the game. As I have never played the game, I have no idea what's in it, but as a sci-fi novel, this follows our human hero Lt. David Anderson as he investigates the obliteration of a once-secret scientific base studying artificial intelligence in violation of galactic law. He finds there was a survivor and must track her down, too.

Meanwhile, the Galactic Council sends its own double-o-seven agent, ironically called a Spectre, after the girl and the base as well. Meanwhile, the bad guys want to exploit the AI research found at the base, setting up a three-way battle for forbidden knowledge.

The pace moves right along, the Spectre agent performs 007 mayhem, and the bad guys hire their own muscle. It's a quick read. You don't have to think too hard, just enjoy the mayhem.

Enjoyed it.

**Non-Stop.** by Brian Aldiss. Paperback (5.1x7.8 inches). 241 pages. 2000 reprint of 1958 novel.

Our hero, Roy Complain, was a hunter for a tribe that perpetually moved down a corridor clogged with 'ponics' plants that made for subsistence eating. He would range ahead picking off an occasional wild pig, but grew increasingly dissatisfied with his lot in life. When he's ambushed by a rival tribe and his wife killed, he heads out with a small band seeking a better location.

As you read along, you start to realize that they are in some sort of tunnel system and following maps in an old book. Then they run into the "giants" and our hero is temporarily kidnapped. Then he runs into the "Forwards" whose tunnels are not clogged with ponics and wear regular clothes instead of patched up remnants.

I don't want to spoil the rationale for the tunnels and overall situation, which start to play out in the last third of the novel thanks in part to flashback text in another old book. It's all well written and proves a quick read.

Enjoyed it.

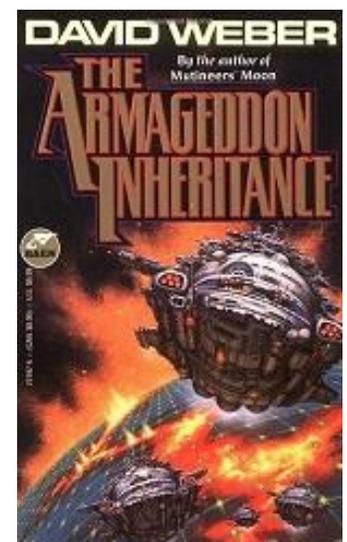
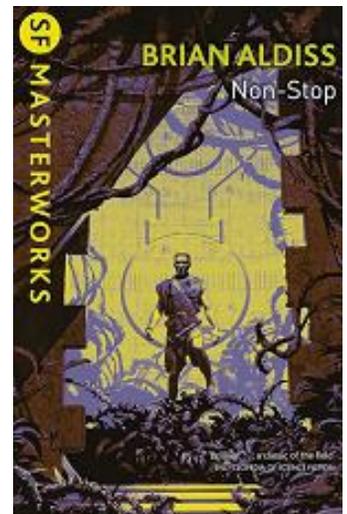
**The Armageddon Inheritance.** by David Weber. Paperback (4.2x6.7 inches). 344 pages. 1993.

A neat space war story back when Weber was writing relatively tight, when his better-known *Honor Harrington* series was only two books (out of 10) and pre-bloated.

An advanced AI-powered spaceship takes our hero Colin into space to try and re-establish contact with the Imperium. As our hero figures out the Imperium had been whacked by a bigger, badder alien race with a kill-everything mentality, the race is on to do something before the aliens continue their genocidal advance against Earth.

Missiles, lasers, bug-like evil aliens, and some massive space battles -- what's not to like? It's wobbles a bit when contact is made with the remnant of the Imperium and Colin tries to convince the Imperium to send ships, but the twist at the end provides a reason.

Enjoyed it.



**Guderian 1941: The Barbarossa Campaign.** by David R. Higgins. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 287 pages. 2023.

This dives deep into German archives focuses on the Second Panzer Group under Gen. Heinz Guderian during the initial months of Operation Barbarossa. All the primary sources except one are German. Granted, the secondary sources include lots of Glantz and other interesting sounding titles, but be advised that information about Soviet movements and counter-attacks are rather limited.

Indeed, a shift occurs about halfway through the text from an objective-based focus to a unit-based focus. I don't know if a deadline loomed or the author intended to make the shift as the German offensive diffused and became less cohesive.

That said, you'll get a good dose of day-to-day German movements down to battalion and regiment level from this town or city to that town or city. It's all quite detailed, if a bit baffling for those of us not familiar with every urban area in the USSR. The book contains 11 maps that seem to have been produced in color but printed in a muddled black and white. You can, if you flip back and forth between text and map, follow some units in their advance eastward, but I must admit my initial enthusiasm ended just about the halfway point with the shift.

Along the way you pick up factoids that contributed to slowing momentum. For example, German logistics were generally good for 300km (roughly the start line to Minsk), OK if a bit of a scramble for the next 300 km (roughly Minsk to Smolensk), and catch as catch can for the next 300km (roughly Smolensk to Moscow) (p219). You learn that from June 22 to July 1, the Germans converted about 200km of wide Soviet rail gauge to narrower German gauge (p93). As the Minsk pocket closed at roughly the same time, the panzer spearheads were 100km beyond the rail line, and the supply gap distance only got longer.

Furthermore, Soviet trains averaged 120 axles per train and could haul about 650 tons per train. German locomotives were less powerful and hauled about 90 axles per train, or about 450 tons (p86). You can start to see how logistics became tougher and tougher, especially with undeveloped roads that turned into the muddy tracks when the rains fell. Indeed, by the time September rolled around, the 3rd Panzer Division was down to 20%, the 4th Panzer to 29%, the 17th Panzer to 21%, and the 18th Panzer to 31% of operational tanks, with the rest lost or under repair (p177).

Of note: Germany's leading meteorologist, Franz Bauer, predicted the 1941 winter would be milder than normal based on his gut that noted the last three winters had been unusually cold (p167). I knew about the extra rain in the spring, but that tidbit was new to me. Not that I think the attack would have been postponed if he said it would be the worst winter in a century or something like that.

The book also contains 40 black and white photos and an extensive OOB of Second Panzer Group on June 22, 1941 down to battalion (and some companies) level. I gave a rough count and it totaled 83+ battalions of all types. The aircraft OOB is separate but lists individual planes per type. Nice.

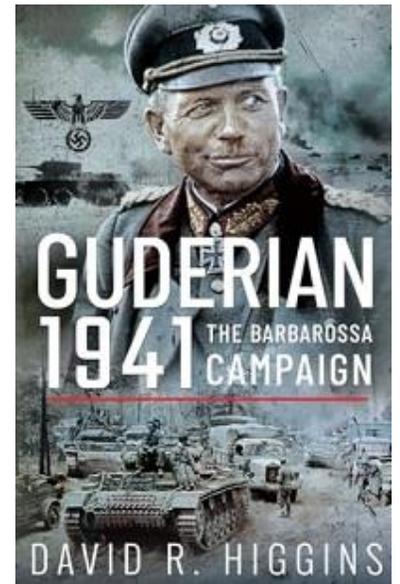
*Heinz inspecting a Tiger tank. Image from web.*

A typo: sandy roads exhausted "men and houses," which is probably "horses" (p55). Maybe another: text refers to Soviet 55th division but map (p49) has "155" division, but that doesn't mean it was the same division.

So, I have mixed feelings. On the one hand, the detail is impressive in tracing divisions, regiments, and sometimes battalions across the USSR. On the other hand, the second half of the book becomes more of a data dump than a cohesive recap and analysis.

Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



**Napoleon's Hussars & Chasseurs: Uniforms and Equipment.** by Paul L. Dawson. Hardback (7.0x9.9 inches). 246 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Of the Grande Armee 1805-1815*

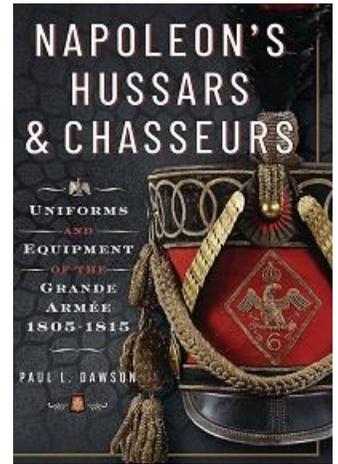
I've already extolled the virtues of Dawson's previous uniform guide -- see *Napoleon's Imperial Guard Uniforms and Equipment: Volume 2: The Cavalry* (11/20/2019 AAR or up on hmgs.org). FYI: *Volume 1* was the Infantry (not reviewed).

This book covers Napoleon's light cavalry -- Hussars and Chasseurs -- in unit by unit detail, complete with the color illustrations by the usual 19th century artists as well as a range of new color illustrations. The illustrations are postage-stamp sized, detracting from the effort, but there are 362 of them to see, plus 88 color photos of museum uniforms and one black and white illustration. As the uniforms changed over the years, so do the illustrations reflect the changes. Excellent visual reference.

Unit by unit, item by item, chart by chart, you get an exhaustive analysis of uniform items and colors. If you are a Napoleonic modeler, and the larger the scale the better, this is superb. I can't say I read beyond the 1st Chasseurs, because I'm not a painter and the details were wonderful, but repetitive. I can certainly appreciate the research effort that went into each unit.

One interesting factoid: French soldiers were (supposedly) paid weekly, but uniform costs, including repairs, were taken from their pay. Each item was supposed to last for a certain period of time. If it was used up before then, the replacement came out of their pay. No wonder they often looked rather tatty on campaign.

Enjoyed it.



**Pacific Profiles: Volume 10.** by Michael John Claringbould. Softcover (6.9x9.8 inches). 108 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Allied Fighters: P-47D Thunderbolt Series - Southwest Pacific 1943-1945*

For the aircraft modelers, the *Pacific Profile* volumes offer a considerable reference source for markings and nose art. Squadron by squadron, the illustrations of selected aircraft show color and nose art options. This is an illustration booklet and contains very little in terms of dogfights and the like. You get a short recap of the squadron movements and usually a line or two per airframe. Some are pretty interesting.

One pilot named his P-47D "Munchkin" which was his nickname for his girlfriend. After he received a Dear John breakup letter, he changed the name to My "San Antonio Rose" (p59).

The P-47 Fiery Ginger IV in the USAF National Museum has the wrong national insignia on the fuselage, although it is debatable whether or not someone in the field repainted it (p98).

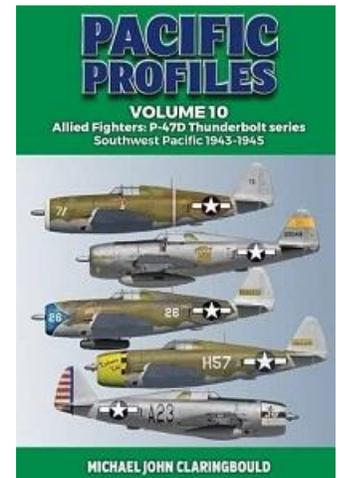
Factoid: Cowlings with nose art were often changed from the old fighter to a new fighter. Sleepy Time is an example (p50 black and white photo, p52 color aircraft profiles, and p53 text).

One thing mentioned is that the P-47 was a poor fighter compared to Japanese Zeros, especially at lower levels. Yet more P-47s were lost to weather and accidents than enemy action. For example, 310 Fighter Squadron lost 13 P-47s in New Guinea due to non-combat causes (p55) and none to being shot down.

The booklet contains 65 black and white photos, 10 color photos, one color map, 94 color aircraft profiles, 51 color nose art close-up illustrations, and 23 markings and other color illustrations.

It's another fine volume in the series.

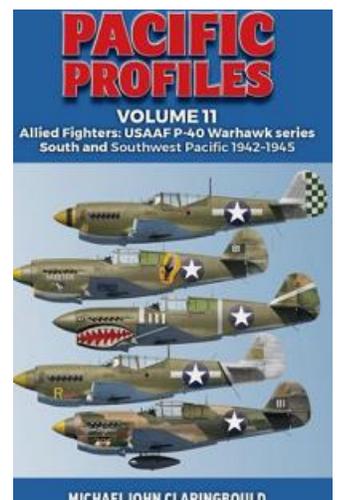
Enjoyed it.



**Pacific Profiles: Volume 11.** by Michael John Claringbould. Softcover (6.9x9.8 inches). 108 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *Allied Fighters: P-40 Warhawk Series - South and Southwest Pacific 1943-1945*

This volume's format follows the series' format. Squadron by squadron, the illustrations of selected aircraft offer color and nose art options. This is an illustration booklet and contains very little in terms of dogfights and the like. You get a short recap of the squadron movements and usually a line or two per airframe. Some are pretty



interesting. Yes, I copied the text from the above *Volume 10* review.

The difference here is that P-40s were shuffled around so much, markings were changed constantly and the color profiles indicate as such.

One curiosity: the first 800 P-40E-1s had serial numbers from ET100 to ET999 (p13). That would be 899 serial numbers, not 800, and may or may not mean other P-40E-1s were included in the batch and went elsewhere. Don't know. Maybe just a typo.

Interesting factoid for aircraft transport by ship: The transport SS Polk delivered 55 P-40E-1s and the SS *Mormacsun* delivered 67 aircraft (p23).

The 8th Fighter Squadron was called the "Blacksheep" squadron, not to be confused with the USMC squadron.

The booklet contains 67 black and white photos, two color photos, three color maps, 118 color aircraft profiles, 86 color nose art close-up illustrations, and 22 markings and other color illustrations.

It's another fine volume in the series. Copied that conclusion, too.

Enjoyed it.

You can find my reviews of the *Pacific Profile* volumes up on HMGS.org, or in the following AARs: *Volume 1* (AAR 1/31/2021), *Volume 2* (AAR 3/02/2021), *Volume 3* (AAR 5/03/2021), *Volume 4 and 5* (AAR 1/31/2022), *Volume 6* (AAR 9/26/2022), *Volume 7 and 8* (AAR 10/26/2023), and *Volume 9* (AAR 8/23/2023).

**Britain's Plot to Kill Hitler.** by Eric Lee. Hardback (6.4x9.4 inches). 201 pages. 2022.

Subtitle: *The True Story of Operation Foxley and SOE*

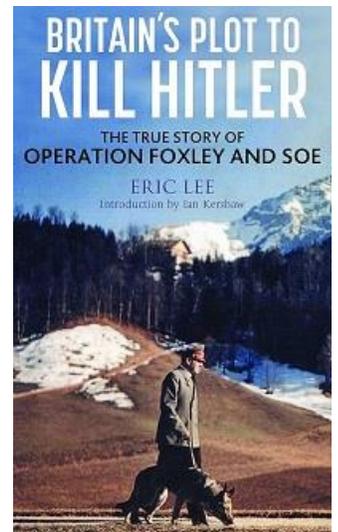
The British Special Operations Executive (SOE) envisioned all sorts of Hitler assassination ideas during WWII: carpet bombing raid on Berchtesgaden, dropping a parachute battalion on Berchtesgaden, infiltrating a sniper at Berchtesgaden, poisoning the water supply of his train, and even (I kid you not) hypnotizing Rudolf Hess into becoming an assassin. US and USSR assassination ideas are also discussed.

There was even a US OSS idea of injecting female hormones into Hitler's vegetables to alter his hormone levels and feminise him -- obviously creating a real femi-nazi.

Pa dum dum. Thank you very much. That pun was as clever as it was awful. And yes, that hormone plot was in the book (p55).

However, the bulk of the book (p64-p188) reproduces the typewritten report for Operation Foxley, which is the Berchtesgaden sniper scenario. The photocopied pages are a bit hard to read, and I can't say I read all of it, but I read here and there and paged through the images. I must say, if you ever want to do an assassination scenario, this book has all the details, from blueprint-like drawings of major buildings to photos to habits of individuals to terrain to weather. Although I didn't count, the report is full of photos and drawings.

Enjoyed it.



**Hungarian Arms and Armour of World War Two.** by Peter Mujzer. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2021.

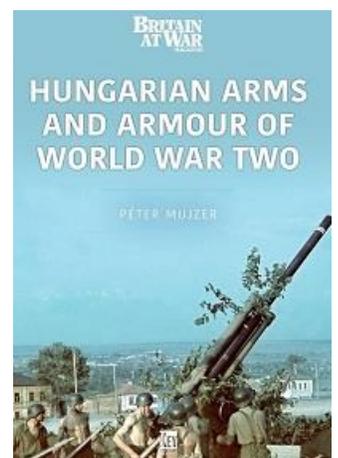
This reasonable overview of the Hungarian armed forces and defense industry during WWII provides a look at all the Army's weaponry -- tanks, armored cars, artillery, small arms, MGs, and so on. No ships or aircraft, but German-supplied weaponry included.

Short paragraphs for each item explain some specs and uses. No operations or battle reports. It's enough to get you started on understanding the Hungarian Army.

It's packed with 135 black and white photos, 21 color photos, one color map, one black and white map, and 17 color vehicle profiles showing camouflage patterns.

A little Wikipedia-ish, but an interesting enough read.

Enjoyed it.



**AMARG: America's Strategic Military Aircraft Reserve.** by Jim Dunn and Nicholas A. Veronico. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2021.

The 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG) is probably better known as the Boneyard where USAF aircraft are stored away near Tucson, AZ. This book explains what that entails, and it's a lot more than parking an aircraft in the desert.

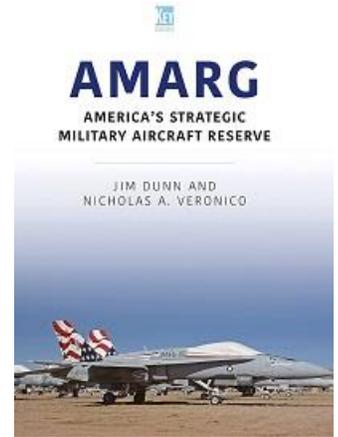
In 1973, AMARG had 6,080 aircraft stored. In 2021, it was 3,200 aircraft, which includes drones and helicopters (p6). Its prime purpose is storage, where each aircraft is sealed against the elements and then receives two coats of "Spraylet."

Each aircraft can be in one of several states, from fully flyable condition and awaiting transfer to a foreign government, to stripped of all usable parts and awaiting the scrappers. The aircraft you see in museums, for example nearby Pima Air & Space Museum (400 aircraft), travel through AMARG. A F-15C took about 8,000 man hours and \$50,000 to bring to museum-quality condition (p49). The boneyard boasted a celebrity row of aircraft as you entered.

And if you ever wondered what happened to the USAF 747 that mounted and tested an aerial laser weapon circa 2010, it eventually ended up in the Boneyard, with the laser part removed and safely stored.

The booklet contains 185 color photos of the aircraft in various conditions, three black and white photos, and one black and white illustration.

It's not much for wargaming, but it's a heckuva interesting look at the Boneyard.  
Enjoyed it.



**Hawker Typhoon.** by Tony Buttler. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 128 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *The RAF's Ground-Breaking Fighter-Bomber*

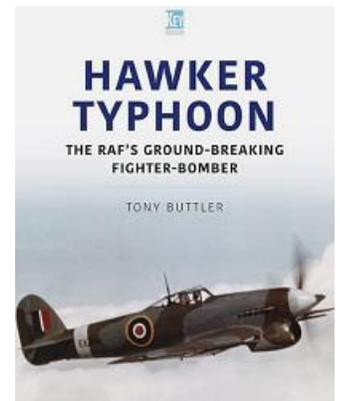
The Typhoon came out as a Hurricane successor as did its virtual twin the Tornado -- the difference being the engines used and the radiator positions. The Typhoon proved to have the better engine, and although delayed during the Battle of Britain years in favor of producing the Hurricane, came to be mass produced.

The development history unrolls with a series of successes and tragic failures -- the separation of tail from fuselage proved most vexing (p41) and never quite was fixed. The first squadron was equipped in 1941 and the first recorded combats were over Dieppe in 1942. It's known for ground attack mission, but also proved a competent fighter.

The Germans repaired two of them for testing, but one crashed in July 1944 and the other in August 1944.

The booklet contains 186 black and white photos, four color photos, six black and white illustrations, and specs. Combat actions might make for a scenario or two.

Nice concise overview.  
Enjoyed it.

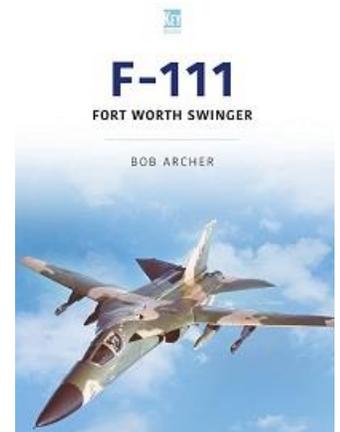


**F-111: Fort Worth Swinger.** by Bob Archer. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2021.

This concise development history details variant by variant (10 in total) in addition to postings and short mission recaps. The first prototype flew in December 1964 and the last in service mission was January 1998. Thus, the aircraft actions cover from the Vietnam War to Desert Storm and quite a few in between. Grist for the scenario mill if you wiggle some details from the text. Nicely written, too.

The 177 color photos and two black and white photos cover a wide variety of markings, although most of blue-gray and black-green-tan color schemes.

Enjoyed it.



**The Dieppe Raid: Images of War.** by John Grehan and Alexander Nicoll. Softcover (7.4x9.7 inches). 194 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Allies' Assault Upon Hitler's Fortress Europe - August 1942*

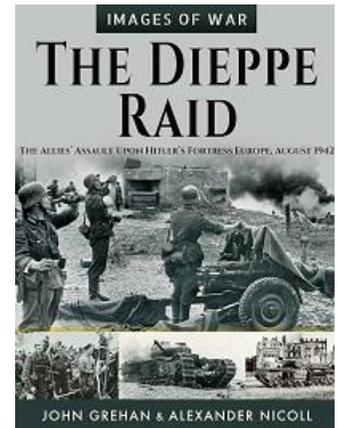
This volume in the series offers more text than usual, with a beach-by-beach account with associated photos. That the raid was a disaster is well-worn history, but the text explains what happened to specific units from landing to withdrawal.

Blue Beach seemed the worst of the bunch -- out of 556 soldiers of the Royal Regiment of Canada that landed, 464 were killed or captured (p57). Photos of the beach and surrounding bunkers and houses help explain why.

The book contains 170 black and white photos, two black and white maps, and one black and white illustration.

While most *Images of War* volumes follow the one or two photos per page and captions, this book offers more context due to the increased text. That's a plus in my book. Nicely written, too, bouncing between the tactical moves and the individual anecdotes.

Enjoyed it.



**Republic F-105 Thunderchief.** by Theo Van Geffen and Gerald Arruda. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2021.

Subtitle: *Peacetime Operations*

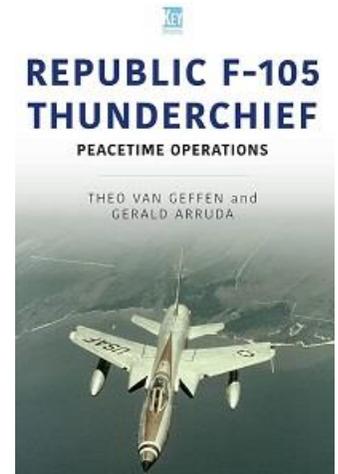
Development of this jet fighter emerged from the F-84F and was called the F-84X, which merged into the AP-63-FBX and ultimately became the F-105 -- 833 were built (p5).

The booklet outlines Tactical Air Command, deployments to Europe and Pacific, 'William Tell' competitive gunnery exercises, variants, and withdrawal from USAF inventory and use in Air National Guard units until its retirement. Its last active mission was flown January 1980 (p75) with the last flight as delivery to Illinois museum in March 1984.

The booklet contains 110 color photos and 50 black and white photos. Modelers can select from a multitude of markings.

I'm not much of a modern warfare buff, but this was a pleasant read and may be of use for a Cold War scenario.

Enjoyed it.



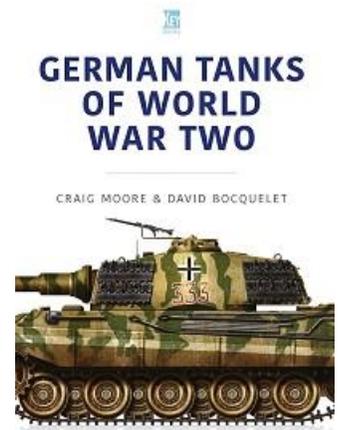
**German Tanks of World War Two.** by Craig Moore and David Bocquelet. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2020.

While the spec and minimal development history is well-worn territory, the color profiles provide the incentive for reading.

Tanks from the Panzer I through the Tiger II, plus the Maus and the Neubau Fahrzeug, receive color camouflage profiles. All the popular variants are covered. For example, the book contains 11 Panzer II variants with 22 color profiles (p14-p35).

The booklet contains 137 color tank profiles, two color illustrations, four black and white illustrations, and two Tiger II turret (only) illustrations.

If you're just starting out painting WWII German tanks, this is a great place to begin. Most are summer colors, but some winter camouflage illustrations are included.



**US Dept of Homeland Security Aviation.** by Tom Kaminski. Softcover (6.7x9.6 inches). 96 pages. 2021.

I admit I skipped through this booklet, reading here and there and only looking through some captions on the way from beginning to end. This is far too contemporary for my interests and you've probably seen the same aircraft, helicopters, aerostats, balloons, and drones on the news. Customs and Border Patrol aircraft are at the top of the list.

That said, coverage of an alphabet soup of agencies, air stations, and organizations offers some rational if you intend to create an ultra-modern *Miami Vice*-ish scenario or Felix's support for an ultra-modern 007 Bond caper.

The booklet contains 144 color photos.

If you're a Homeland Security Aviation buff, here a concise summary of the Department's aerial assets.



**M60 Tank: US Cold War MBT.** by David Doyle. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 144 pages. 2024.

The latest volume in the photo-heavy *Legends of Warfare* series continues David Doyle's plundering of archives for photos of aircraft, vehicles, and ships. This one covers the M-60 tank that were the mainstay of the US tank force during the Cold War and its variants, including bridgelayer AVLB and bulldozer/winch M728.

Doyle follows the usual format of development, variants, and field use -- all well-supported by photos throughout. The captions detail the equipment changes that the photos show. Most photos come from the National Archives and involve testing and training, but many come from photographer Chris Hughes, who shoots M-60s in museums and on outside display. In the back are photos from Florida's artificial reef program that lodged tanks on the ocean floor.

The book contains 73 black and white photos, 263 color photos, 17 black and white illustrations, two color illustrations, and one spec chart.

The *Legends of Warfare* series is a boon for modelers and *M-60* is another valuable addition. Enjoyed it.



**CH-47 Chinook.** by David Doyle. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 144 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Boeing's Tandem-Rotor Heavy Lifter*

Doyle continues to churn out these *Legends of Warfare* volumes filled with nice assortments of photos. I think he passed 200 books by now. This latest volume in the series covers the twin-rotor helicopter from development of the prototype through the various variants up through the CH-47F and special ops versions. There's even a one-off version, Model 347 (p38-39) that added a 45-foot wing to reduce the load on the rotors. Most of the new versions saw larger, more powerful engine, fuselage extensions, and other upgrade to improve performance and survivability.

Vietnam saw its first combat, with 577 sent and 141 lost to accident or enemy action (p47). There was a bit of recycling, so to speak, as CH-47As that were in Vietnam were upgraded to CH-47D models. Indeed, one CH-47A from Vietnam made the CH-47D upgrade and served in Afghanistan and then was upgraded to a CH-47F model (p57).

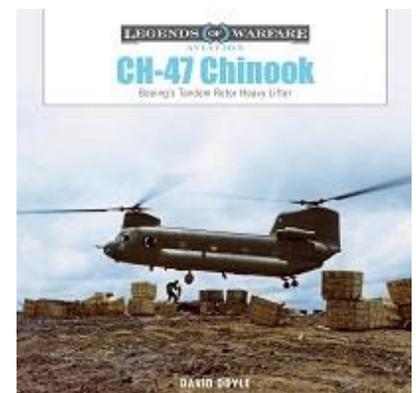
For those with shipping on the mind, an interesting aerial photo (p72) shows by my count 51 CH-47As on the flight deck of the carrier *USS Boxer* along with other helicopters. The caption does not say if the hanger deck contained more helicopters and material or it held aircraft.

The book contains 50 black and white photos, 216 color photos, 16 black and white illustrations, six color illustrations, and one spec chart.

Of note are photos showing the inside of the helicopter on display at the US Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Virginia. I was there about 20 years ago and it's well worth a couple hours if you are in the area. As it's on the Army base, you'll need ID (driver's license or passport) to enter and non-US citizens need to provide the museum with 45 days advance notice.

For modelers, these *Legends of Warfare* books offer considerable photographic evidence for dioramas. In this case, a CH-47A drop atop a hill in Vietnam (p88) to support search and destroy missions.

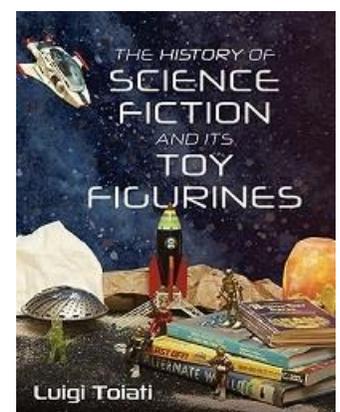
Enjoyed it.



**The History of Science Fiction and Its Toy Figurines.** by Luigi Toiati. Hardback (6.9x9.9 inches). 515 pages. 2023.

The author of *The History of Toy Soldiers* (see the 10/24/2019 AAR or hmg.org for the book review) is back with another tome. That's the good news. The bad news is that it tries to do too much and the 202-page Part One falls flat. Let me explain.

In the previous book, he outlines the history of collectible toy soldiers with production and marketing info snippets and photos. For the collector, it was fantastic.



For the wargamer who does not collect, less so, but still full of interesting tidbits and photos.

In this book, the 202-page Part One covers the history of science fiction literature -- essentially an overview of books with what seems an attempt at literary analysis and criticism that is too sketchy to be useful. The most interesting tidbits come from excerpts from Clute and Roberts.

You need far more effort to present and dissect the wide variety of themes in 500 years of sci-fi books. A listing of books, some I know, the vast majority I don't, has some value, but it's disjointed, doesn't read well, and worst of all, eminently forgettable. Chapters 1 and 2 devolve into etymology that reads like a high school essay from a student who started out with dictionary definitions. Deft it is not. I'm sorry, but the Pen and Sword editor should have chopped those 202 pages out of this book, or at least created another book, and left the figurine Part 2 as a standalone book.

The remaining 300+ pages recapture the glory of his previous book. He is on surer ground, populates the information with photos of toys, and shares collector concerns and expertise. This part is brilliant.

It's not an encyclopedia, but it sure covers enough toys to provide a sense of all-encompassing knowledge. I know it isn't because toy production is massive -- *Star Wars* alone would likely fill a book, but Toiati does a commendable job at highlighting the important, popular, and sometimes the weird. How I wish he had used the first 202 pages for more toy coverage.

I'm not a collector, but I did find references (p289 and p431) to my dimly remembered 1960s *Major Matt Mason* astronaut figure from Mattel. Not a set, just the *Major*. I'm guessing *Major Mason* is probably still on this earth -- in some landfill.

One caption typo: "1860s" robot figure is likely 1960s (p294).

The book contains 16 black and white photos, 506 color photos, four black and white illustrations, and five color illustrations. The book noted 470 photos and 330 brands -- I'll take their word for it on the brands covered.

So, I found a third of the book virtually useless and the remaining two-thirds absolutely fascinating.

Enjoyed it.

**McLaren: The Road Cars 2010-2024.** by Kyle Fortune. Hardback (9.2x12.4 inches). 320 pages. 2024.

This coffee table book is about as close as I will get to owning a McLaren or any other supercar. Check that. I could always get a Matchbox car.

You know, I once went to the Philadelphia Auto Show and spotted some high-end cars, but security kept out the riff-raff like me. Back to the Fords and Chevies you scruffy nerfherder.

The book contains magnificent photos of about two dozen models -- all sleek, all fast, all in limited numbers, and all expensive. From the text, McLaren produces as few as three cars of a model, sometimes 15, and mostly between 250 and 750 cars per model. They mostly sell out before they're made.

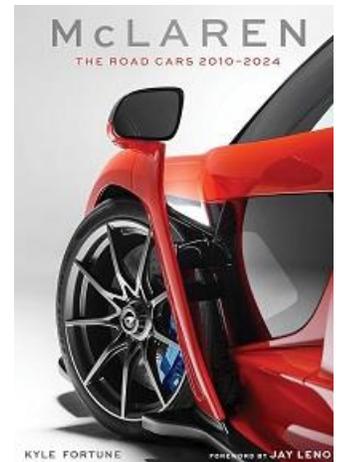
The text lovingly glorifies every part in the engine and explains how company engineers reduced weight to improve the power-to-weight ratio that helps these cars break every speed limit on US roads and highways.

Montana police used to write up a minimal "energy ticket" for interstate speeders. Given the general state of potholed roads here, you probably can't do over a 100 unless you want to bury the low front ends in the asphalt. You could head to the autobahn or Italian highways for no speed limit driving -- assuming the EU hasn't taken away that bit of automotive fun.

*McLaren P1. Image from web.*

They all seem to have maximum speeds of about 200 mph, with more than a few with acceleration from zero to 124 (one hundred twenty four) mph in 6.6 seconds. That would cut the time to drive to the grocery store by a bit. Don't take a passenger because you maybe only fit one bag in the trunk, er, boot. Of course, if you're driving a million dollar car, you have people to do shopping.

The book contains 291 color photos with cars shown from multiple angles, including inside and individual details. Each model comes with a spec sheet.



Auto coffee table books like this one are guilty pleasures to read. It's nice to see the sleek styling of the supercars. And yes, I miss the TV show *Top Gear*, which some streaming service must have sucked into its maw – US and British versions.

Enjoyed it.

**Fire and Stone: Fortress Warfare.** by Christopher Duffy. Hardback (6.9x9.9 inches). 165 pages. 2023 reprint of 1996 reprint of 1975 book.

Subtitle: *The Science of Fortress Warfare: 1660-1860*

Vauban was not the only fellow to design fortresses and then siege them. This book peels away the design layer by layer, explaining how a fortress took its angular shape and then explaining why those shapes and angles were important.

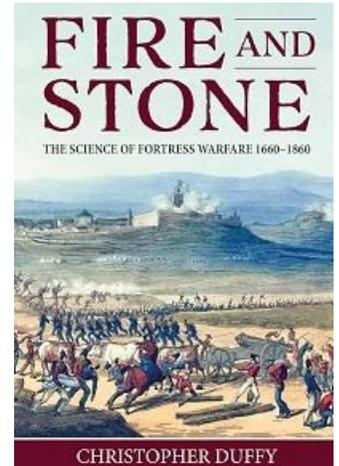
Then, on the flip side, comes an explanation about how to siege a fortress, from the start with opening a trench through various parallels and saps until the final storming -- if it had not surrendered first. In the prime of fortress warfare, achieving certain goals, like clearing the revetment, encouraged the garrison commander to surrender.

Artillery positions, mortar usage, defensive fire -- it's all explained in timeless detail and exceptional clarity. Duffy well earned his reputation as an exceptional historian.

The book contains 61 black and white illustrations (many period) of the various angles, shapes, and siege lines and 30 black and white photos (including three of a long ago wargame).

Some books are so good, they deserve multiple reprintings. This is one of them.

Enjoyed it.



*Example of Vauban fortress. Image from web.*

