

Lutzen 1632: A Swarm of Swedes
It's A Lutzen Living
Imperial Blessing

Captain Kirk: Future Birthplace

Remagen: Armored Actions Playtest

On a Pedestal:

The Umpire's View Of The Fourth Session

HMGS Next Generation Outreach: Battles

Space Base: Again?

Books I've Read

One-Hour Ancient & Medieval Skirmish Wargames

Painting: Armoured Vehicles Europe 1943-45

So Just and Glorious Cause: Portugal 1808

U.S. Battleships 1939-1945

MacArthur's Bloody Butchers: Co. G, 163 Infantry

Chrome Dome 1960-68: B-52 - Air Campaign 46

US Navy Pacific Fleet 1941: Fleet 7

Midway-Class CVs 1945-92: New Vanguard 331

WWI German Vs British Soldier: Combat 78

WWII Tank Spotter's Guide

French Colonial Troops: 1815-1914 (AAH 4)

Kawanishi H6K/H8K Mavis/Emily: Combat Air 153

Operation Barbarossa 1941: Air Campaign 47

British Tanks of the Red Army

The Teutonic Knights Strike East

Fury and Ice: WWII Greenland

Infantry's Armor: US Separate Tank Bttns

As They Were: France in Dark Days 1939-40

Wrecks & Relics: 29th Edition

1314: The Year of Bannockburn

The Luzon Campaign 1945: MacArthur Returns

Beutepanzers of World War II: New Vanguard 332

Pirates and Privateers: Compendium

Last War of the Superfortresses: Asia at War 52

Citizens to Arms! Uniforms French Rev 1792-99





Mid Turn 1 (l to r): Imperial Dave, Rich, and Jay. Umpire Troy. Swedes Mike, Larry, Patrick (cap), and Phil.

Lutzen 1632: A Swarm of Swedes

by Russ Lockwood

The town of Lutzen is so desirous, about 18,000 Swedes swarmed the place to wrest it from the 16,000 Imperials picnicking along the road. Swedish Gen. Gustavus Adolphus needed to get a move on while he had a slight troop advantage as thousands more Imperials were hoofing it to the town.

Start of the game: Swedes on left and Imperials on right.

Such was the setup from Umpire Troy, whose pike and shot armies eyed each other across a short stretch of relatively open ground. He used his own variation of the *Fire & Fury Brigade* ACW rules (the new one, not the 1980s version). Our group had last used the ACW rules in the Gaines Mill battle (see the Jul AAR for that recap), so we were familiar with the basic system, although, as noted, Troy altered some of the modifiers to reflect Thirty Years War troop types, weaponry, and a compact pike formation. Game mechanics-wise, the TYW played pretty much like the ACW version.

Swedish pike unit with attached small cannon that moved with pike block. Heavy cannon battery to right. Once emplaced, it did not move.

Pick a Side

Per usual, we each rolled a die to determine sides: high rolls were Swedes and low were Imperials. I rolled a glorious 3 on a d10 and so joined the Imperial side.

The town of Lutzen beyond the windmills. My four cannon batteries on the hill firing at faraway Swedes..



I had eyed the four-battery artillery on the hill and so laid claim to it and its parent pike and shot command. Our Imperial leader, "Wallenstein Dave," and his cavalry command was to my right and used Lutzen as a flank protector. He also had a few troops inside the town for sniping. To my left was Rich with another pike and shot command and to his left, against the river protecting the left flank, was Jay with a cavalry command.

The Swedes advance. Red markers indicate damaged cannon batteries. Note the Imperial skirmisher using the road ditch for cover.

Opposing us was Phil with a cavalry command facing Lutzen, then opposite me was Pat with a pike command. Opposite Rich was Larry with another pike command and opposite Jay was the Swedish cavalry command of "Gustavus Michael," the third most famous groundhog. For those not familiar with Pennsylvania lottery adverts, its spokesman Gus is the second most famous groundhog right behind the weather-predicting groundhog Pauxatawney Phil. Now that we have the groundhog pecking order fixed, it was time for battle.

The Swedish commander "Bernhard Phil" dies by the hand of Wallenstein Dave. The Grim Reaper comes to take Bernhard to the great tabletop in the sky.

The road had short sections of ditch that provided cover for skirmishers. Pike and shot could move across without a problem, but cavalry suffered a half total movement penalty. The river was impassable except at the two bridges, which forced units to cross in march column. Lutzen was loopholed and impassable to cavalry, although foot troops could try to scale the walls. Otherwise, the terrain was flat and open, save for my "Artillery Hill."

Pike Block

Each pike block consisted of a number of pike and shot stands (mostly from 12 to 18) as well as one small artillery stand. Each stand was on a magnet base that attached to a large steel stand. As long as the unit retained four pike stands, it functioned normally and could adopt that special compact pike formation. I'm not sure what happens if you drop to three pike stands, but I always made sure to have at least four pike stands in the unit -- losing shot stands primarily.



The small artillery piece moved with the unit and had to remain attached to the unit. It could fire at a different unit than the shot, but otherwise had to remain.

Historically, it was to provide a little extra firepower. Gamewise, it usually added a fire point or two over and above a regular shot stand.

The action builds from long-range shooting to close-in melees in Turn 4.



Game On

The artillery duel began immediately. I lined up my hill firing all my arty at one of Phil's cavalry units and whiffed big time. Uh-oh. Then I shot a single small cannon and rolled a 10 on a d10 and actually pinged a pike block with a disorder. If only I could have reversed my roll.

Swede Patrick charges uphill into my cannons as his pike block challenges mine.

In *F&FB*, you need 6 fire points not to suffer a negative die roll modifier. A measly 1 fire point generates a -4 die modifier and for most targeted troops, you need a 6+ to disorder. 10 minus 4 equaled 6 and thus my "first blood." Cannon fire rippled across the line.

Bernhard Phil reacts to being felled in tabletop cavalry combat and tries to strangle his die with its roll of 1. The Grim Reaper marks his demise.



Cavalry Clash Next To Lutzen

Nonetheless, on came Gustavus Michael and his lads. Phil squeezed between Lutzen and Pat's cavalry, engaging Dave in some pistol-range shooting. The fire went back and forth until Phil charged the cavalry next to Lutzen as well as a couple of skirmisher stands in the ditch by the road.

As for the cavalry on cavalry clash with both sides' sleeves brushing the town wall, Wallenstein Dave outrolled Phil and sent the Swedish cavalry reeling. Better yet, or at least from the viewpoint of us Imperials, Dave rolled a golden BB die and took out the Swedish leader who had been attached and personally led the cavalry charge. Dave was on fire and rolled the magic number. The grim reaper came to take "Bernhard Phil" from the saddle.

Loss of a leader means one full turn of being Out of Command. Since you roll to move, Out of Command is a different column on the movement table.



As for the charge against the skirmishers, my cannon on the hill fired away and I rolled quite well -- emptying many a saddle and halting the charge from even taking place. Two Swedish units crippled.

And even better yet, at least from the viewpoint of us Imperials, Dave's troops in the town finally realized they could shoot and unleashed fire into the flank of two more of Phil's cavalry.

Imperial cavalry reinforcements under Pappenheim arrive on our left flank.

The Middle Right

My mighty, mighty artillery battery sat on a hill next to the windmills, While it whiffed its first shot, the two heavy batteries, one medium battery, and one light battery sent a steady stream of cannonballs into Swedish lines, first at Phil's cavalry and then at Pat's advancing pike block. When that bunch of pikers got within range of my shot masters, we tore great big holes in the Swedish block.

Meanwhile, my other pike block, complete with small cannon, fired at more advancing Swedish pike blocks. The bigger problem I saw was the double line of Swedish pike blocks versus my single line. Sure, I had bigger blocks, but the first line might wear me down and the second line sweep me away.

In any case, firing was not a one-sided affair. The initial artillery exchange went Pat's way as his die was powerful at first. He even popped the long-range shot and rolled a 10 (minus 4 equals a 6 and a disorder on my pike). However, his die cooled and then ran ice cold.

Phil's die did the same, so the clever Norsemen swapped dice, figuring the evil spirits would be banished under new ownership. It kinda worked, or at least got them into average die rolls instead of abysmal ones. My die turned ugly at about the same time, when a crucial close-range fire scored no hits with consecutive rolls of 1 and 2 and 1 and 2. Maybe the die thought it was an exercise routine.

Action up and down the line. Photo by Mike.

The Middle Left and Far Left

Rich had quite the time against Larry and Mike, although I did not see very much, being rather involved with Pat and Phil. Larry's Swedish pike blocks ground forward into shot-swap range and Mike's Swedish cavalry pressed Jay's outclassed cavalry. Jay's die ran ice cold during a decisive moment with four, count 'em four, die rolls of 1 in melee. In case you hadn't noticed, rolling high is better.



Nonetheless, the Imperial line was in peril on the left when our fearless leader Wallenstein Dave had to make a command decision: The reinforcements (three Imperial cavalry units) that would have arrived behind him on Turn 3 could enter behind any of the players on Turn 4. When will they arrive, and if on Turn 4, where?

Wallenstein Dave looked over his situation. His cavalry was holding steady while half of Phil's command was either routing or shot up. My line also remained steady and intact. The one weak point, that is the artillery on the hill, was backed by my reserve pike block. Meanwhile, the moans and groans from the far left flank, no doubt emphasized by some doomsayer messenger, convinced Dave that the left flank needed shoring up. He sent the cavalry to the left.

Artillery Hill

Although my artillery was alternately raining death and firing blanks at Pat's pike block, the return fire, no matter how suppressed, took a toll on the artillery. First one heavy battery was damaged (half fire). Then the other heavy was damaged. Then a heavy battery was eliminated. Then the medium battery was damaged.



The Swedes draw closer. L to r: Swedes: Part of Larry, Patrick (cap), and Phil. Imperials Dave, Russ, Rich, and Jay. Photo by Mike.

Pat made his move: He charged up artillery hill. My cannons and some supporting shot fired in desperation. My artillerymen must have realized that it was a do or die roll and so blazed hell through Swedish ranks. The pike block faltered and fell back -- charge faltered and did not go in.

Undaunted by another round of fire, Pat hurled the renewed Jack and Jill pike up the hill again. And just like fairy tale Jack and Jill, my artillery fire broke a few more Swedish crowns and the rest of the Jills came tumbling down the hill, repulsed yet again without closing. Admittedly, later return fire hammered another battery into oblivion. Imperial bodies and barrels were getting rather thin on Artillery Hill.

This fury was matched by Pat's adjacent pike block, which charged into my block. This time, his dice were a tad better and my blocked inched backwards. When he tried it a second time, we actually tied and fought anew. Again, he bested me by a smidgen in a close run melee and I inched backwards yet again. That thin Imperial line was bending.

Fire Up The Town

Dave advanced the unit of skirmishers out of the town to threaten Phil's flank. Phil turned a pair of cavalry units to face, lessening any threat to Dave.

Dave's other cavalry unit, just to the right and at the bottom of Artillery Hill, stood still all game. Indeed, Phil placed a unit directly in range and peppered the Imperial cavalry with shot for turn after turn, even as Phil's cavalry bolted for the rear, leaving this unit exposed.

I was curious why, at certain times, Dave didn't take his elite cavalry unit and charge said Swedish infantry. Dave said he stayed there to hold the flank of the artillery. He had only one small unit in reserve, which he moved up when his big inexperienced unit fell back after a morale/movement roll fail. 'Tis a point in his favor.

As for the town, Dave ordered it burned to the ground to deny even the possibility that Swedish infantry might infiltrate now that the skirmish garrison unit had hopped the wall (well, gone through a gate) and left.

Middle Left

Alas, Rich's adjacent pike block had been taking a pounding from Pat and Larry, but it was Larry who delivered the coup d'grace. Rich held for the first charge, pushed back a little like me, but in the second charge, the disparity of the die rolls exacerbated the disparity on the field and Rich's pike block broke and fled. A hole opened up in the Imperial middle.

Rich's left, adjacent to Jay's cavalry, fared much better and put a world of hurt on Swedish Gustavus Mike's cavalry.

Pappenheim Arrives, Stage Left

Jay welcomed the reinforcement cavalry sent by Dave and charged them as fast as possible into Swedish Gustavus Mike's cavalry. Jay's luck turned good at just the right time. The Swedish cavalry fell back before the wrath of the Imperial cavalry, opening a hole in the left side.

And Pappenheim arrives with the cavalry.

Game Ends

We played five turns in a about three and a quarter hours. Troy looked over the field of battle. The Swedes had cracked the middle of the Imperial line, but lost the flank. Umpire Troy initially ruled it a slight Swedish victory, but then he checked casualties. Swedish losses were much higher. That turned it into a virtual draw, albeit with an Imperial moral victory.

Whatever the result, a wargame is a journey, not a destination, so thanks to Dave for hosting and Troy for putting on the game. And thanks all for an entertaining evening.

And Pappenheim charges into Gustavus Mike's previously successful cavalry.

Future Thought?

The rules have a strange Breakthrough process. In this last attack, Jay got two victories and two breakthroughs in two melees.

In the first melee, he dutifully followed up Mike's retreated cavalry. There didn't seem to be any advantage to do so, for they fought a second battle. Mike rolled enough to beat Jay, and now Jay pulled back a few inches.

In the second, one of Jay's cavalry hit Mike's cavalry from the front and a second unit hit the flank. Mike's cavalry lost the melee and retreated. Jay followed up and sure enough, found no benefit to following up a flank attack. A second combat inched Jay back a few inches.

The second seemed odder than the first, but then again, I didn't see the die rolls. It may have been that Mike rolled just enough to avoid being broken. When Jay immediately followed up with the breakthrough, Mike must have rolled just enough to win the resulting melee. Dunno, but I was a bit surprised at the staying power of units caught in the flank and chased.

Maybe worth a second thought or second modifier for a future game?



It's A Lutzen Living

by *Gustavus Mike*

As the commander of the Swedish right flank cavalry division, my plan for defeating Imperial Jay was to push very hard with everything I had and for Jay to roll a lot of 1s. It seemed to work brilliantly. But then Jay stopped cooperating when the Pappenheim reinforcements showed up. Who would have thought? Anyway, I had three good hours of gaming thanks to another gaming session at Dave's.

Many thanks to Troy for setting up and running his *Fire & Fury Brigade* TYW game on the the battle of Lutzen. I enjoyed it a lot. I thought Troy's adaptation of the *F&FB* rules worked very well.

Imperial Blessing

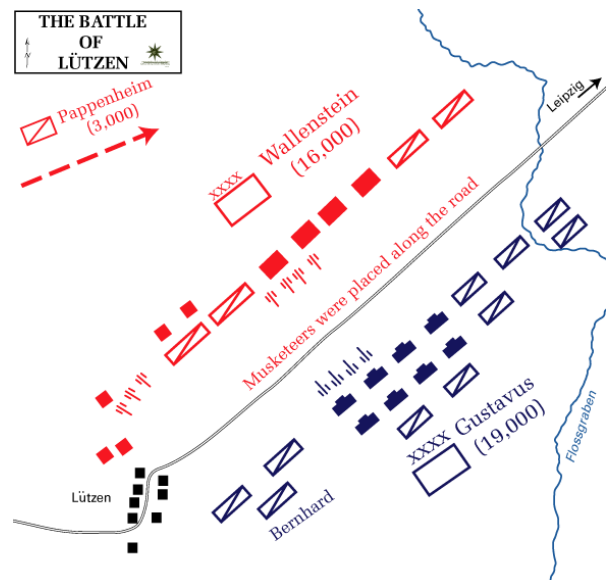
by *Rich*

I agree with Mike. It was a good game and a fun night. Kudos and thanks to Troy and Dave for everything they do so well.



The Imperial Line bends at the end of the game. Larry's Swedes pursue my decimated pike block (bottom left corner) as Patrick's Swedes push back my middle pike block. Yet my cannon still hold Artillery Hill, shooting up the lead Swedish pike block so much that it failed to charge home twice. My supporting pike block anticipates the cannon being unable to hold the hill.

The Battle of Lützen (1632) historical set up. Image from web. And a 1642 painting of the battle by Peter Snayers.



Captain Kirk: Future Birthplace

By Russ Lockwood

While driving through Iowa on vacation almost 20 years ago, my wife told me to take an exit on Interstate-80. To my increasing bafflement, for she spoke not a word, we rolled through farmland for about 20 minutes or so.

We entered the tiny town of Riverside, IA. In a triangular-shaped park stood a metal sculpture, about 15 to 20 feet long, of the Starship Enterprise. Then she showed me the map – “Future Birthplace of Captain James T. Kirk.”

Dimly I remembered one of the movies noting this factoid as we drove down the main street, which was all of about three or four blocks long. A grain silo was on one side and a series of small shops on the other. A sign with an arrow pointed to a “five and ten” store packed with lots of nostalgia items. For you youngsters, “five and ten” referred to a general store that sold a multitude of useful and handy items, with many costing five cents and ten cents (not \$5 or \$10). Think of ‘em as an old-time dollar store back when a nickel or a dime purchased items.

Anyway, we walked through the store, but found little about Kirk. On the way out, I remarked to the gal behind the counter that the birthplace sign was good marketing, although I kind of expected a room or something.

She replied, “But this isn’t the place. It’s next door at the end of the alley.”

I thanked her and we continued down the block. The next shop carved tombstones and other funerary monuments. Sure enough, down the alley between the two stores was the monument to Kirk.

I had been looking for this 2006 photo and finally found it. I thought I’d share it with you. Now, if I can only find the one with the sculpture...

I pulled up a Google Map. Apparently, Riverside underwent a few changes over the last 20 years. I see there is now a museum, a bronze statue, and the monument was relocated next to Town Hall.





Another playtest: Two US divisions try to breakout from the bridgehead as two German divisions defend. L to r: US Dennis; US player, Umpire, and Author Lee rolling a die; and German Allen awaiting the results of his counterattack.

Remagen: Armored Actions Playtest

by Russ Lockwood

I partook of another playtest of *Armored Actions* (AA), a WWII miniatures game where each stand is a battalion. In this 1945 scenario, the Germans throw everything they have at the bridgehead at Remagen. The Americans try to hold the bridgehead. Allen and I took the Germans and Dennis and Rules Designer Lee took the US.



Two German battalions are destroyed in close assault, although the US Divisional HQ (jeep removed into the river) was overrun.

We used 15mm figures and models, most of which were from the fantastic *Flames of War* line. The idea is to give each player a division to command. I believe three day turns and one night turn make up a full day. Ground scale

is about 500 yards per inch. If a model is about 2 inches by 2 inches, that makes it about a 1,000-yard frontage for a battalion, which is about right in my book. Your book may vary.

Individual stands have a certain number of strength points, which can be increased or decreased from the base number to accommodate battalion losses or attachments.

Zone of Control

The Zone of Control (ZOC) is now 4 inches, down from the 6 inches when I last played the beta version of the rules. Last time, we tested breakthroughs after Close Combat. This playtest was trying out a number of changes, most of which revolve around withdrawals from ZOCs and using ZOCs as a way of slowing down advancing enemy.

Upper right corner: Allen close assaults the US bridgehead with Tigers and Tiger IIs. The previous photo showed the result. At the bottom: My counterattack hits the 4-inch ZOC – one US halftrack and the Sherman left, leaving the other halftrack as rearguard. Backwards facing halftracks and trucks indicate deployed infantry



Much of this discussion revolved around the timing of withdrawals. With a long time frame per turn, the idea was that a withdrawal meant a rearguard held a position as the bulk of a battalion withdrew. Also discussed was the use of a quality test die roll to see if the rearguard made it out alive or was overrun and captured or otherwise eliminated.

This led to a greater discussion about the movement phases between both sides in an Igo-Ugo situation. The previous time I played, both players were dealt cards from a common deck and decided which card to place with which command. Then, the Ace card moved first, then the 2 card, and so on until all cards were displayed and all commands activated and moved. With one side performing a move all at once, there seemed to be an advantage to moving second in the event of a delaying force. We tried some alternate measures.

In the end, it was a good playtest of heading down a dead end. The use of staggered activations by random cards proved better than any of the Igo-Ugo iterations. Cards went back into the game and cured a number of timing problems.

That said, a game turn will take longer when rotating through a number of players versus one side goes and then the other. In this case, the cards support the *Armored Actions* mechanics better than the changes.

Obviously, if you have three commands and draw the Ace, 2, and 3, you're going first. Random card shuffling sometimes turns out that way. But usually, the cards will be staggered, so you as commander decide which command gets which card from your hand and thus decide which command is important to move first and which command is better to hold back and see what happens.

The Game

We Germans tried to bum rush the US on our right and had some success. A couple of breakthroughs proved less than successful (leading to a discussion about improving the benefits of a breakthrough).

On the left, I pushed forward trying to roll up the left, but Dennis took a more aggressive approach in the center, in part because we were trying to figure out the withdrawal mechanic. Dennis pulled back a bit even as I needed a recon battalion to patch a hole in my line.

My Panther attack tried to envelope the US flank, but I needed a recon battalion to keep a front line intact. I did nail the US divisional HQ just as Allen nailed the other HQ. For the next turn, the US would be leaderless.

Shooting was a fairly even affair, but close combat created some eliminated armored battalions on the German side. On the plus side, we Germans eliminated both US divisional HQs. I think that should be more traumatic for the owning player than it was in the rules. Granted, I only killed off the US Divisional HQ by a d6 roll of 6 from a Panther battalion shot, but that will teach Dennis to attach a HQ for a die modifier.

So, the US had lost both HQs in one turn. We talked about the loss of the Division HQ and suggested a number of penalties to the command and control functions of a division before a replacement HQ is set up.

Coming Along

Scenario design is going to be important. We only played a couple turns in a couple hours, mostly because we pointed out this and that and discussed what if you do this or that. This was a playtest with an emphasis on "test" and not necessarily "play."

Every time I play *Armored Actions*, I think about my own draft "Snappy" WWII rules that has been percolating for years. This playtest was no exception, triggering an idea about movement interactions. Make that about six beta rules sets. I get closer to a set that translates my own vision of WWII combat from my head and imagination to a tabletop. Your head may differ.

I'll also say that Lee has a points-based system figured out although how that applies in a tournament situation versus a scenario situation remains to be seen.

Keep going, Lee. *Armored Actions* has come a long way from its starting point.



US forces captured the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen after a botched German demolition attempt. The Germans tried everything to take down the bridge, including V-2s, artillery, air attacks, divers, and more. From its capture on March 7, 1945 the US funneled troops across the Rhine River while engineers built an adjacent pontoon bridge. The Ludendorff Bridge collapsed on March 17. On March 25, the US forces broke through the German defenders. The war ended a little over a month later.



On a Pedestal: The Umpire's View Of The Fourth Session

by Bruce

The first three sessions are recapped in the August 2024 AAR. -- RL

As the sun rose on the morning of August 12, Albacore Anti-Submarine Patrols were launched and the Pedestal convoy proceeded on a 120-degree course.

The convoy was sighted by the morning recce due south of Cagliari, Zone 1522. The orders went out from Commando Supremo to the aerodromes at Cagliari, Trapani, and Pantelleria for a maximum strike by all operational ready aircraft within range, except for those on search or CAP. Pedestal now faced its most deadly threat yet — 30 aircraft units and five Italian Regia Marina submarines.

As the three British Albacore ASW patrols approached, the three leading Italian subs submerged while Macchi fighters engaged. From top to bottom the subs are; *Serpente*, *Salpa*, *Alagi*, *Cobalto* and *Vallela*. One Albacore unit was shot down and one unit returned to the convoy. The remaining unit forced all the Italian subs to dive and remain underwater, slowing their approach to the convoy.

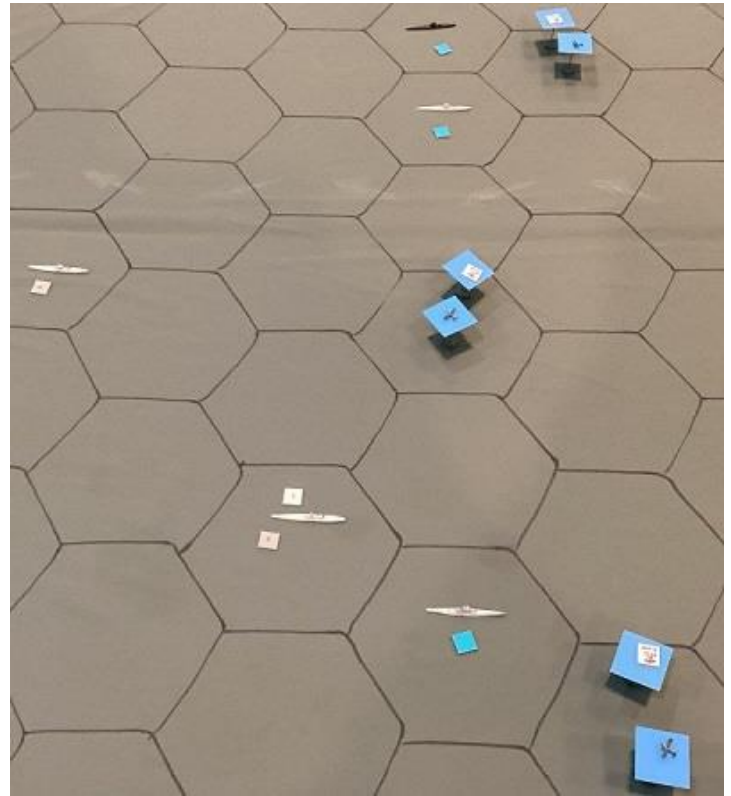
Simultaneously, the strikes launched from Cagliari, Trapani, and Pantelleria appeared over Pedestal. Only one Macchi fighter unit escorted six JU-88, two Stuka, three BR-20, two Z1007 and 13 SM-79 units and were met by Pedestal's full CAP of two Martlets, three Fulmars, and seven Hurricane units.

A primary effort was made by the aviators to reduce the destroyer screen for the incoming submarine attacks. After the CAP was penetrated and AAA avoided, SM-79s with torpedoes sunk DDs *HMS Venomous*, *HMS Zealand*, and *HMS Wilton*. JU-88s crippled DD *HMS Wrestler*. A stick of bombs from high altitude BR20 bombers sunk the already crippled *Waimarama*. Stukas dispatched the antiaircraft cruiser *HMS Cairo* and the *Empire Hope* with precision dive bombing. No loss to the raiders.

As Pedestal proceeded, the subs deployed to each flank of the convoy in order to avoid the advance ASW DD screen. The attack was pressed with the merchantmen being the primary targets.

First *Alagi* crippled the *Glenorchy*, then she in turn was sunk by *HMS Derwent*. *Salpa* then finished *Glenorchy* and crippled *HMS Lookout* with her spread of torpedoes. On the other flank, *Cobalto* and *Vallela* teamed up to sink *Clan Ferguson*. Revenge was served by *HMS Ledbury* and *HMS Intrepid* as they sank *Salpa* and *Cobalto*, respectively. *Serpente* penetrated the screen, fired a spread of torpedoes sinking *Port Chalmers* and hitting *HMS Eagle*, then made her escape. RM sub *Vallela* tried to do the same on the other flank by trying to get to *Deucalion* but was detected and sunk by *HMS Bicester*.

With the recent losses of *Waimarama*, *Empire Hope*, *Glenorchy*, *Clan Ferguson* and *Port Chalmers*, there now remained only *Ohio*, *Deucalion*, *Dorset*, *Melbourne Star*, (damaged), *Brisbane Star*, (crippled), and *Wairangi* with which to succor suffering Malta.



Air Strikes

During the rest of the morning, multiple air strikes took place.

The AOC Malta launched an air strike on the Axis Cagliari aerodrome complex, hoping to catch the raiders from last turn on the ground. A maximum effort of seven bomber units – three Wellington, one Marylands, and three Beaufort units were covered by three Beaufighter units. The Beaufighters stripped off the defending CAP and the bombers pressed on through the AAA. For the loss of a Wellington, one JU88 and two SM79 bomber units were destroyed on the ground.

The Kriegsmarine S-Boot Flotilla of four boats was spotted around noon patrolling off Cape Bon. All four boats were sunk by six Spitfire and two Albacore units from Malta. The raiders lost an Albacore.

HM submarines *P222* and *United* were spotted travelling on the surface off Bizerte and were chased by Z506Bs from Trapani and 4 MAS Boats of the 15th Squadrone. They submerged and escaped.

In the final act of the session six JU-88 units from Gela, Sicily, hit Pedestal off Bizerte, Zone 1622, at maximum range. All the raiders were deterred by CAP and AAA -- no harm, no foul.

Points On The Board

The point totals earned in the fourth session were:

The Axis earned 89 Points -- 50 points for the sinking of five Pedestal Merchantmen, (not to mention the loss of 100 potential Allied points if they made it to Malta), 8 points for the sinking of *HMS Cairo*, 18 points for the sinking of DDs *HMS Venomous*, *HMS Wilton*, and *HMS Zealand*, and 13 points for aircraft shot down: one Wellington and two Albacore units.

The subs close in for torpedo attacks.

The British earned 67 Points -- 17 points for Axis aircraft shot down, 14 points for four S-Boots destroyed, and 36 points for four submarines destroyed.

The point totals for the game so far are:

The Axis have 170 Points.

The Allies have 250 Points.

The current state of the 14 cargo ships that started in the convoy: 8 Sunk, 1 Crippled, and 1 Damaged.

The convoy is a little over 200nm from Malta.



The cargo ship Waimarama explodes.



HMGS Next Generation Outreach: Battles

by John Spiess

WWI Verdun in Greenwich

HMGS Next Generation hosted a WWI game in Greenwich, CT, based on the 1916 Verdun campaign.

The objectives for the French players, commanding infantry supported by tanks, were the capture of a church and small bombed-out village. The German players, with infantry, mortars, and off-board artillery, attempted to stop the offensive.

The gamers in Greenwich.



I was impressed with one of our regular players who read all about the battle before the game. Then again, that's pretty much that's our goal for the kids: learn history while playing with models and figures.

*Right: Trench warfare up close and personal.
Below: Sorting through strategies and tactics.*



As for the game itself, the French players crafted a good attack plan, but the German mortars finally started hitting the tanks as they got closer, and the Germans managed to hold the church and town.

Of note: The Greenwich Library signed a commitment for monthly events through June 2025.

Hobby U Painting Class in New Canaan

Jim Stanton and I hosted a Hobby U painting class in New Canaan, CT, with a full class of 12 kids and adults.

The older gentleman in the photo just moved here with his family from North Carolina. He actually brought some military figures to paint, but was more concerned with getting his wife and son to try their hands at painting. They had never heard of HMGS in North Carolina. Jim told them about our Fall-In Convention in Lancaster, PA, and they said





they will attend.

Jim, a full-time middle school teacher, did a great job running the class. I was the “rover,” walking around and helping with the details.

We gave five figures to each person and went over different techniques like washes and dry brushing. Some of the girls were pretty talented. A lot of the girls are also part the library's *Dungeons & Dragons* group, so hopefully we can get them to come to our events as well.

American Revolution in Darien

We held an American Revolution event at the Darien, CT, Library with a recreation of the Battle of Brandywine Creek. We had three British and three Continental players and focused on Howe's attack on the right flank of Washington's line near the Birmingham Meeting House.

Most of the participants are in 7th grade and on the younger side compared to other libraries. So you just have to exercise a little more patience if they get distracted during the game.

Overall, the Continental players put up a pretty good fight since they were paying attention when I explained the difference between column and line and taking cover behind fences when they could.

One British player proved a little too anxious and marched all his regiments into range while still in column. He paid a heavy price for that, so I'm sure he will remember for next time.



In this ruleset, the first three hits affect morale. A unit can suffer a maximum of three morale markers before it starts taking casualties. During the morale phase at the end of each turn, every unit with a yellow marker had to pass a morale check. If it passed, a marker comes off. If it failed, it could fall back or even run away completely. In the American Revolution, units (especially militia) sometimes began running away after not that many casualties.

The British close with the Americans.

The game ended with a historical result. The British pushed the Continentals backwards after a tough battle.

Siege of Harfleur in Rye

This was HMGS NG's first event at the Rye, NY, Library. It proved a bit different than other events.

The "Rye Free Reading Room" was established in 1884 right next to the school in an effort to keep kids out of the local saloon when school ended. That was indeed a different time.

These days, a lot of kids just hang out in the teen section after school waiting for parents to pick them up. So I had a lot of kids playing in the game, but some would have to leave early if a parent came. Then others would just hop in. It was pretty fluid.

The grade level ranged from 6th grade to a junior in high school. I complimented the older lad on his patience with the younger crowd.

The game was fun, but the best part was something that never happened before. Henry V stormed the castle and I started giving my 15-minute history lesson about the siege. Before I knew it, every person in the room started paying attention, including the parents coming to pick up kids. I basically gave a Hundred Years War lecture to over 50 people.

I ended with Joan of Arc, who no one ever heard of except for the high-school junior. One of the girls asked a question: "How many followers did Joan of Arc have?"



I actually didn't understand the context of the question, but I said, "Well, you could say she rallied all of France."

The girl offered the follow-up comment, "So probably not as many as Taylor Swift."

I had no comeback for that. In any case, it was pretty cool giving the history lesson. The parents all complimented the program, so we will definitely be back.

Aztecs vs. Mayans in Greenwich

We had a nice early start in Greenwich, CT with our contribution to the libraries' celebration of Hispanic History Month (actually the month runs from 9/15 to 10/15).

At this time of year, kids are busy with new school activities, so having a good core group of 12-15 kids means we will always have about seven or eight show up, which is pretty good. We also had a new student, Daniel, who came for the first time with his father specifically for this game.

Our scenario was set before the Spanish colonization period. It was an Aztec attack on a Maya village. We used a modified version of Sword and the Flame and tailored it to all the different types of Eagle Warriors, Jaguar Warriors, Maya Nobles and so on.

It worked out pretty well.

Thanks to Jon Lundberg for letting me borrow his terrain and figures.



Aztecs vs. Mayans in Queens NY

Our Aztec road show continued in Corona, Queens, NY, as part of a much larger community celebration of Hispanic History Month at the Langston Hughes Library branch.

Both Jim Stanton and Michael Pederson helped out. As you can somewhat see from the photos, we had our largest crowd with at least 14 kids playing that I knew about as well as other kids and parents who jumped in and out. The event was covered by the local press, so there were a lot of photographers taking pictures. I even got one of them to partake in a melee die roll, which was pretty funny.

Jim really helped by taking responsibility for all the really young kids that we grouped at one end of the table. Mike and I took the older kids. There were two girls who actually figured out



that shooting your bowmen and then running in the Jaguar warriors up for melee was a great plan.

I was nervous at first since when I walked into the library, I just heard everyone speaking Spanish. But the librarian said that while the parents might or might not speak English, that all the kids were bilingual and would understand me.

When I asked the photographer if he wanted to roll some dice, I was a little surprised at how much fun he seemed to be having. Combat is basically "high dice roll" wins, but the kid had Jaguar warriors that gave him a +1 on the roll. Nevertheless, with the odds against him, the photographer really got into it and started winning a lot of the rolls.

I said, "You sound like you should be going to Atlantic City!"

He responded, "Nope. I just got back and this is the best luck I've had all week. And besides, that's my nephew. And he's going down!"

The kid and his mother were laughing. A lot of the back and forth was in Spanish, so I don't know everything, but like the rest of the gamers, they were just having a great time.

The Library director definitely wants us back, so this worked out very well.

We have three more of these Aztec games set up in CT and we'll be starting our NJ events shortly. So stay tuned.



Space Base: Again?

by Russ Lockwood

I played a few *Space Base* games this month. It's difficult to encapsulate the play-by-play of the game without relating every card. So this time around, let me muse about why I find this a clever game.

Russ (left) and Mike enjoy a Space Base game. Egad, what hath the years wrought since the Kirk photo in 2006? My dark hair turned salt and pepper when I wasn't looking. Photo by Dan.



The Cards

Cards with actions form the heart of the game, with dice rolls triggering them. The cards are all the same for everyone -- none of this collectible deck stuff. In general with collectible card games, the better cards are the rarer cards. Thus, the more real-life bucks you spend for packs of unknown cards will in large part determine how many rare, ultra-rare, somewhat rare, and goofy rare cards will make up your deck. Nope. Everyone starts with the exact same cards and capabilities in the exact same 12 slots.

That said, the draw of the cards and what's available when your turn comes around to "buy" cards from the common deck area makes creating a winning strategy part of the puzzle process. The more players in a game, the more chance "your" card could be bought by another player. So, it forces you as a player to constantly adapt and shape your strategy.

Better yet, there is a layered process of buying and deploying cards. These layers not only provide benefits to players when they are active, but also provide benefits when other players are active. You can score big with every roll of the dice, not just your rolls. That's another part of the decision process.

Cards and 2D6

The clever bit about the dice is that you can use a 2D6 roll as either two separate 1D6 rolls or as a combined 2D6 roll. In general, the combined roll offers better card effects, but you can only activate one card with a 2D6 combined roll whereas you activate two cards by splitting the roll into two separate die rolls. Lower placed cards generally provide lesser benefits.

This is another decision point. Yes, quite often you won't have a choice, especially at the beginning of the game when few cards are deployed to take advantage of the opponent rolls. But you will eventually have to consider which to do. Clever.

Back to Cards

Now, that said, cards come with all sorts of effects, including the ability to swap places on your deployed mat. For example, if you trigger a card that says "swap your 1 and 12 cards" that means take the card in the 1 spot and put it in the 12 slot and put the 12 slot card in the 1 slot. Think about this. Now your 12 card, which usually has the best

effects at the lowest possibility of activation (1 in 36 chance), is now in your 1 slot. Thus, you have two chances (2D6) to roll a 1 and trigger its better effects.

Quite often, this swap effect and other really top effects require a power up cube or multiple cubes before it can be used. By power up I mean that instead of triggering an effect with a die roll, the die roll allows you to place a power-up cube on a card. When you have the requisite number of cubes, you can trigger the card effect on a future turn. Wanna use it again? You need more cubes.



Start of the three-player game. Mike (left) and Dan ponder the cards in the middle.

So, now you have to think in longer terms than just the current term. You can buy only one card per turn -- unless you have and trigger a "Buy Additional Card" effect, which may or may not require power-up cubes. Do you buy low in the 1 through 6 slots and trigger two cards per turn or do you buy high in the 7 through 12 slots for a one-card trigger? Do you load up on cards that require power-ups or ones that do not? When buying, do you keep a card in its slot, or buy a new one for that same slot and deploy the existing card to be triggered by opponents' die rolls instead of yours?

Arrow Cards

Special expansion set Arrow cards trigger effects on adjacent slots. The arrow cards can zig-zag you into adjacent slots or into slots of deployed cards normally reserved to activation during opponent rolls. These Arrow cards are cumulative. Chain a few of these arrow cards together and you can score big with cumulative effects.

In one of the games, every time I rolled a certain number, Dan's arrow cards zig-zagged him across his slot universe and gave him considerable cash and 8 VPs (you need 40 VPs to win). He had patiently stocked his slots with these interconnected cards. In this case, it worked. In other games, such a strategy didn't.

Dice are dice, you know. And that's why even if you somehow bought and deployed the exact same cards, different die rolls create a different game.

Game Time and Real Time

A game turn is relatively quick: roll 2D6, pick your appropriate card effects, record such, and buy a new card (or cards). Meanwhile, your opponent is checking his deployed cards to see if your die roll provides any effects, or as the game goes on, offers a choice of using a combined 2D6 or two separate 1D6 rolls.

In the expansion sets, you get additional small dice with a 1 in 6 chance of grabbing resources, cash, or VPs. Naturally, some expansion cards provide tokens to allow you to buy such dice.

Now your decision tree includes whether you buy these token cards to try and get extra small dice for extra benefits. It's a beautiful thing when you can yahtzee your large 2D6 and a number of small d6 dice.

Comes Down To...

Decisions, decisions. The die roll provides randomness about the cards in your slots and the cash you generate to buy cards, the common card draw from the deck provides more randomness, and barring a really horrendous roll, you will be able to buy at least one card per turn. It may not be a great card and it may not be a card you will use often, but you will get a chance to buy a card and build a "fleet" of cards to support your strategy.

Dan considers a card purchase. Fred will join us later. It's a great 3-player game.



A Negative

There is one Alien bug roaming among the space fleet: it's very hard to catch up. It's not impossible, but as you play more, you see which player's fleet is running hyperspace fast and which fleets are sputtering along on impulse power.

In such a one-sided game, we still keep playing because there's always that 1 in a 36 shot of turning the tables. However, you can often figure out who is most likely to win as mid game turns into the end game.

I suppose veteran players will know the cards better than newbies, but that's kinda true about every game. You get better at spotting effective card combos. Mostly.

Last Thought

Oh yeah -- it's simple to learn. Roll dice. Do card effects. Buy card. Check card effects of opponents' rolls. Rinse and repeat.

Sure, even now, every once in a while we need to stop and work through a series of interconnected card effects, but in general, after one game, you'll figure out the mechanics.

Set up is 5 minutes from box to first die roll. If you take the time to study the cards available to buy while your opponent is sorting through his die roll and card effects, turns can go by in under a minute.

There's no real story involved. *Space Base* is a clever euro-style mechanics game. It's a great 3-player game and it keeps its appeal after multiple playings. And I just explained why...

Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

One-Hour Ancient & Medieval Skirmish Wargames. by John Lamshead.
Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 104 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Fast-Play, Diceless Rules for the Age of Swords and Sandals*

I'm not sure the "Age of Swords and Sandals" applies to the Medieval period as much as the Ancient period, but I guess it depends on where you're standing at the time. In any case, the "Diceless" part intrigued me most of all.

Ah. Card draws. Each player has a deck of 52 cards and each draws a "to Hit" card. Aces are worth 1, Kings worth 13, and the rest are in between. High draw wins. Ties redraw cards.

If the attacker wins, then another opposing card draw by both players determines if the defender was hit enough to be "Shocked." Defender high card is no effect and Attacker high card lays the defender on its side to mark it as Shocked. Shock a figure twice in a Phase and it's dead. At the end of the turn, each shocked figure draws a card: red is dead and black is upright and alive.

There's more to it than that, mostly due to special traits, terrain, armor, and weaponry that allows multiple card draws to determine hits and casualties. Also, a Defender that was missed or Shocked gets a free card draw counterattack, with some card draw modifications.

In other words, combat is akin to *The Sword and the Flame* for those of you old enough to remember it, or maybe *Combat Patrol* for a more contemporary reference.

Most of the rest is fairly standard in terms of movement (infantry 6 inches, Cavalry 9), Line of Sight, and so on. Special rules for Elephants and "War Machines" (chariots et al).

The Initiative card draw determines who starts as the Phasing Player, who draws a card to determine how many Action Points (APs) he has for his phase. Everything costs 1 AP unless you want to move a figure a second time (3AP) or even a third time (5 AP). So, if you want to move an infantry figure three time for 18 inches, it'll cost 1 AP + 3 AP + 5 AP = 9 AP. Then you can shoot or melee for 1 AP. Only one swing, stab, or twang per Phase. Players alternate being the Phasing player.

That covers the first 32 pages. The next section covers a point system and building your own warband as well as providing sample warbands (p35-57).

Six scenarios of interest but with hideous maps not even worthy of clip art are next (p61-92). An appendix offer a Quick Rules Sheet that is less than useful because it is strung out over several pages instead of one-side of one 8.5x11-inch sheet as in most rules sets -- that's a format factor issue. The other appendix offers websites of various manufacturers, which would have been more helpful had it been divided into periods, not sizes (or better yet sizes and periods).

This is a complete solo wargaming system and quite easily understood by your average bright kid. Grogard wargamers might be a different story because it lacks rolling dice and thus true randomness. Here's my quick hit on card draws versus dice.

Unless the die is loaded, it is a random result each roll. In my gaming group, we get cold dice and we grin and bear it because we later may get hot dice and grin wider. "Later" may be the next game, but that's dice.

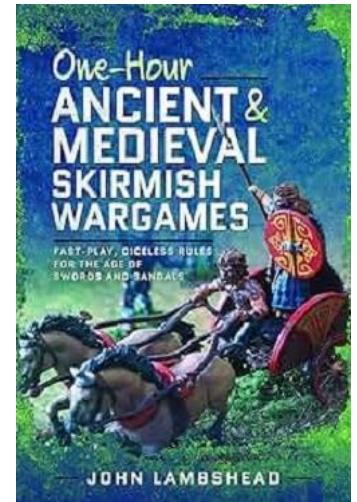
With a deck of cards, the first draw is completely random. After that, each draw decreases the randomness of the deck. Draw four aces or kings early and you'll never draw an ace or king for the rest of the deck. You can get hot cards, but that guarantees you will get cold cards later. That's why Jokers are often included as a sorta reshuffle remedy to try and bring back randomness. That and trying to disrupt card counting.

The "Method 1" default shuffle time in this game is when your deck is done so each player is guaranteed to use all 52 cards. The alternate "Method 2" is when a Joker is drawn and ends the turn. The new turn starts with a reshuffle.

Personally, I prefer die rolls. Sure, I've been stung by rolling 42 d6s during a WWII naval game with a 1 in 6 chance of a hit and not getting a single hit. I've been victimized by my gaming buddy rolling 24 d6s over the course of few turns with a 50-50 chance of getting a hit and seeing him roll 23 hits. I've also been the beneficiary of such incredible runs of fortune in a Napoleonic game where my good gaming buddy was so incredulous, he wanted to switch dice -- I did and continued my run of good fortune just as he continued his bad fortune. Way it goes.

Cards versus dice for grognards is likely a more personal taste. Yet this rules set is certainly worth trying and it's certainly simple enough to teach to a young wargaming paduan. Ties go to the author.

Enjoyed it.



Painting Wargaming Models: Armoured Vehicles in Europe 1943-1945. by Andy Singleton. Softcover (6.8x9.7 inches). 152 pages. 2024.

Here we have another in the series of painting guides and each one pretty much follows the same format with the same deceptive cover. Deceptive? Well, maybe that's a bit much, but if you look at the upper left photo on the cover, you see a nice close-up of a brush against a turret. You may figure that you'll see nice close-up photos of all sorts of techniques.

Er...no.

In fact, other than a photo on page 19, that's the only close-up photo involving a brush in the entire book. The bulk of the 298 color photos involve medium-range side by side photos of the tanks being put through a variety of painting technique paces.

The photos of finished models, only one across, should be the size of the technique photos. For example, compare the finished T-34 on page 71 with the four photos in the same space on page 70. I'm squinting to find differences among the four. The book should come with a magnifying glass.

I don't know why a book about painting techniques is so visually crippled. Crippled? Is that a bit much?

Er...no.

I've reviewed plenty of model painting books where the photos are spectacular. The text might be a bit terse, but you can see the results in glorious detail.

After savaging this series' step-by-step photography, I will praise the text that goes beyond the usual prime, base coat, wash, and drybrush instructions. It covers paint applied via brush and airbrush. It includes accessories like tarps, cans, and crates. It includes decal work. The weather effects such as mud and chipping and dust turn out to be spectacular. The book covers UK, US, USSR, and German vehicles.

I guess the series must sell well enough, or predictably enough, to keep on using the same format.

So, here's my suggestion: Turn to page 39 and look at the Dingo Scout Car. It's a half-page close-up photo. The Sherman Firefly below it is also a half page and will do for a tank example. Instead of four squinty photos in a half page, use one of these close-up photos in a half page with the opposite page detailing the steps involved for that particular technique. Rinse and repeat for all the steps.

Then us mere painting mortals can actually see as well as read how it's done. I go on so because the genius is there, just with a poorly executed format.

So Just and Glorious Cause: Reason to Revolution 131. by Robert Griffith. Hardback (7.0x10.0 inches). 515 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Britain and the Liberation of Portugal -- Rolica and Vimeiro 1808*

Covers Gen. Junot's swift invasion of Portugal and capture of Lisbon and includes his even loosening grip on the populace as his troops wither without much reinforcement. Then begins the British response at assembling an invasion force, landing, and after two battles -- Rolica and Vimeiro 1808 -- forcing the French to negotiate a truce and ultimate withdrawal from Portugal. The motivations, explanations, and details are quite good.

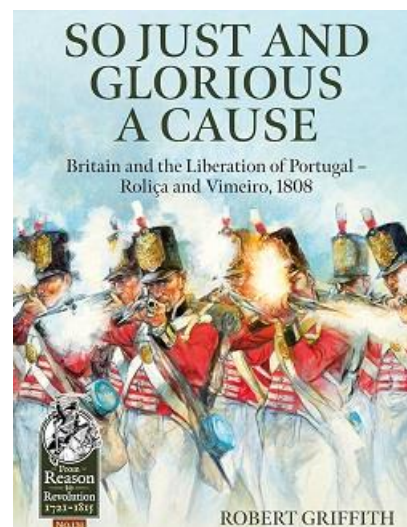
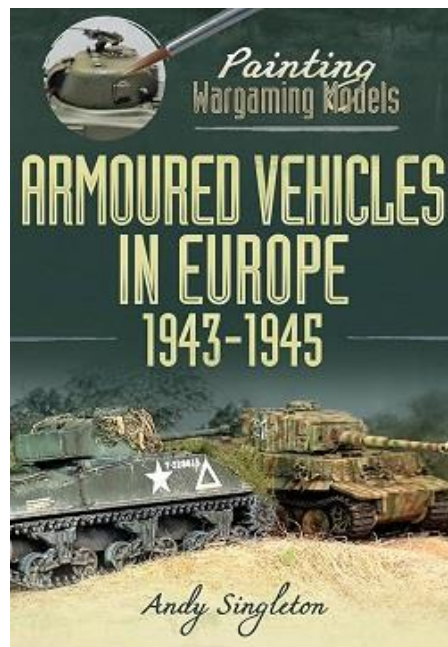
Of special interest to us wargamers are the detailed descriptions of the French and British OOBs in a regiment by regiment account of its qualities and capabilities. It's quite rare to get an analysis of the troop quality, factored by length of service, number of new conscripts, and the age of the troops. This isn't just gold, but platinum information for setting up Rolica and Vimeiro scenarios. Of course, the battle recap and analysis are first rate as well.

The maps are also good with scale, woods, contours, villages, and French and British positions. It even includes a Vimeiro map originally included in Oman and corrects discrepancies, or at least offers Griffith's version of the battle.

The book contains 30 black and white photos, 25 black and white illustrations, seven black and white political cartoons (illustrations), and 13 black and white maps.

Well done!

Enjoyed it.



U.S. Battleships 1939-1945. by Ingo Bauernfeind. Hardback (8.3x10.3 inches). 240 pages. 2024.

This *Casemate Illustrated Special* covers battleships as per the title as well as battlecruisers and large cruisers (*Alaska*-class). The history starts prior to WWII as many of the battleships were built in WWI and just after WWI, albeit modernized from time to time.

Each class receives a technical overview, including propulsion, weaponry, armor, and modifications as well as a short history of notable achievements. There's a special color section about diving on the *USS Arizona* and a chapter on the use of battleships in the Cold War era. Plenty of photos populate the pages.

A typo: allowed the *USS Massachusetts* "to supported operations..." (p143) reads better as "support operations..."

The booklet contains 221 black and white photos, 137 color photos, 63 black and white illustrations, four color illustrations, and one color map.

It's another fine *Casemate Illustrated Special*. FYI: You can visit the following "museum battleships" *Arizona*, *Utah*, and *Missouri* at Pearl Harbor, albeit that the first two are sunken memorials. Also available: *Alabama*, *Iowa*, *Massachusetts*, *New Jersey*, *North Carolina*, *Texas*, and *Wisconsin*, although not every BB is docked in its named state. Search the web for details.

Enjoyed it.



MacArthur's Bloody Butchers. by Brian Bruce. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 204 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Company G, 163rd Infantry Regiment, in the Pacific War*

This follows G Company through the lives of four soldiers who started in training and through their service in New Guinea, Philippines, Sulu Islands, and other islands. The four rotated back to the US after serving for three to three and a half years.

It's a gritty account of fighting the Japanese in the jungle, where it was hard to see the enemy troops until they sprung ambushes. The Bloody Butchers nickname stuck after the Company ran across a Japanese field hospital and the Japanese feigned surrender only to open fire on advancing GIs. The Japanese were slaughtered to the man, including those who were actually wounded.

The constant problem with the Japanese is that they would play dead or surrender and then attack -- so, no quarter given in most cases.

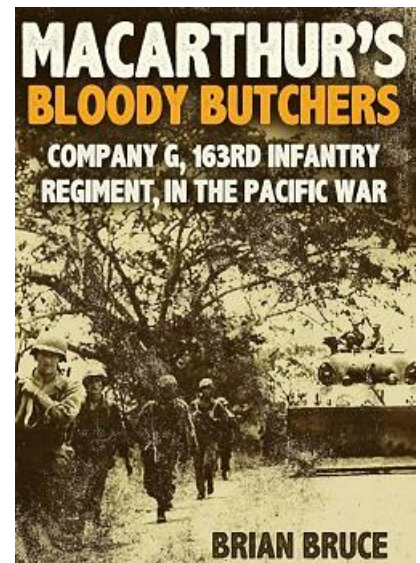
One typo: "I'm deleting/moving as essentially it's repeated in next line. He retrieved..." (p176). Methinks the editor forgot to delete his comment to the author.

Also, an odd factoid: US troops threw "flashbang grenades" to clear a stone building (p139)? The US supplied flashbangs to front-line troops? A quick internet search failed to turn up a US stun grenade, although the British had the No 69 stun grenade.

The book contains 34 black and white photos and 11 black and white maps.

Brutal combat in the jungles may help skirmish gamers visualize a different battle that usually portrayed.

Enjoyed it.

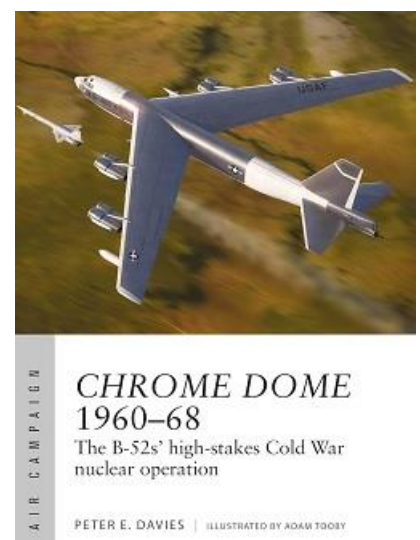


Chrome Dome 1960-68: Air Campaign 46. by Peter E. Davies. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The B-52's High-Stakes Cold War Nuclear Operation*

Chrome Dome refers to the USAF program that kept nuclear-bomb equipped B-52s airborne just in case the USSR launched a nuclear strike on the US. Missions, which included aerial refueling, usually lasted 24 hours, but some were as long as 36 hours.

The booklet follows the Air Campaign format with technical analysis of aircraft, training, equipment, and weaponry plus command and control



functions as well as enemy capabilities -- in this case Soviet radar, fighters, and surface-to-air missiles. Because the missions were so long in a bomber, the USAF developed the Human Reliability Program where the FBI and USAF investigated the mental character of crew (p47).

*First flight of the B-52 on April 15, 1952.
Image from web.*



The accident rate in keeping aircraft airborne could be high: the B-58 had an accident rate that "wiped out" a quarter of the 116 planes (p10), although the B-52 had a much lower rate and lower maintenance costs. Still, 16 accidents involving nuclear-carrying aircraft occurred since 1950 involving B-29s, B-36s, B-47s, B-58s, and B-52s (p83). Although one nuclear weapon came close to exploding during a crash, ultimately none went off.

Interesting that in the 1950s, the USAF received 67% of the defense budget from 1954-1958 (p10). The amount fell as the debate started between fielding aircraft vs cheaper missiles, especially around whether automated systems could abort strikes the way a manned aircraft could. Where there's a Mutual Assured Destruction policy involved, an accident is the last thing any country wanted.

The booklet contains 36 black and white photos, 31 color photos, two color illustrations, six color maps, and two color two-page action illustrations. To my chagrin, squinty font is also included.

It's a nice recap of the program.

Enjoyed it.

US Navy Pacific Fleet 1941: Fleet 7. by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *America's Mighty Last Battleship Fleet*

This offers a nice, succinct description of the US fleet just before Pearl Harbor. It's filled with technical overviews of aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and auxiliaries (oilers and transports).

Includes main, secondary, and AA guns, torpedoes, radar, and aircraft.

An informative section discusses aircraft search procedures -- just the thing to explain how search patterns were flown. Other fleet doctrine, training, and operations explain how a fleet operated, including short overviews of the pre-war Rainbow plans.

One possible typo: Battleships fired at "towed targets 17,000 feet away" (p47). Considering battleships' main guns could fire out to 30,000 or so yards, the distance seems a little short. It might be 17,000 yards, not 17,000 feet.

The booklet contains 38 black and white photos, two color photos, seven color illustrations, one color map, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Another fine fleet book.

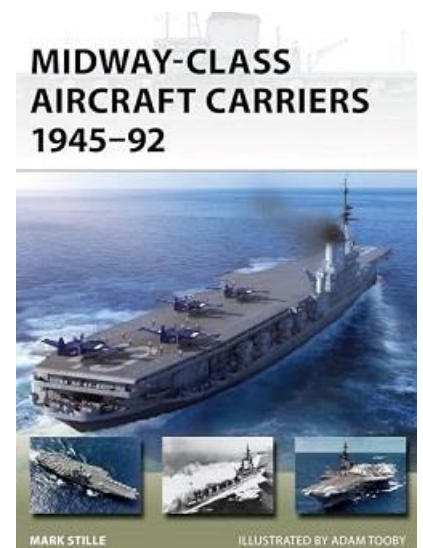
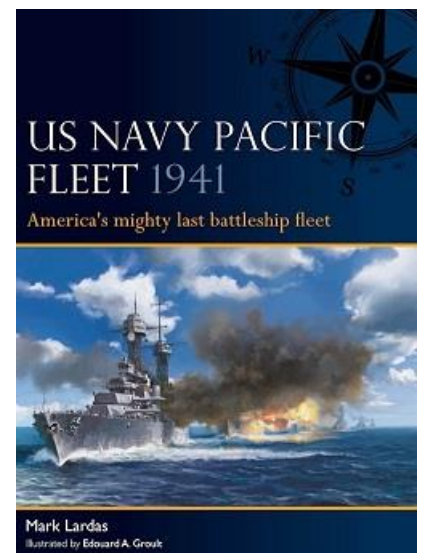
Enjoyed it.

Midway-Class Aircraft Carriers 1945-92: New Vanguard 331. by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 48 pages. 2024.

The US built three Midway-class aircraft carriers, but none were completed in time for WWII service.

USS Midway: keel laid Oct 1943, floated Mar 1945, and commissioned Sep 1945.

USS FDR: keel laid Dec 1943, floated Apr 1945, and commissioned Oct 1945.



USS Coral Sea: keel laid Jul 1944, floated Apr 1946, and commissioned Oct 1947.

As you can see, it takes about two years to build a CV and put her in service. All three were later modernized with the addition of an angled deck for better aircraft handling, reworked elevator doors, and more powerful catapults for more modern aircraft.

USS Midway in 1947 with a deck full of Helldivers. Image from web.



The booklet contains 24 black and white photos, 17 color photos, eight color carrier profiles, two one-page color action illustrations, and one color two-page action illustration.

The text offers a technical analysis of the various ship systems, including power plant, protection, radar, weaponry, and the aircraft carried. A short deployment history highlights their primarily Cold War operations until two were scrapped and the *USS Midway* became a museum ship in San Diego, CA.

Enjoyed it.

Children's Propaganda Games of the Second World War. by Nicholas Milton. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 222 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Playing and Collecting Nazi and Allied War Games*

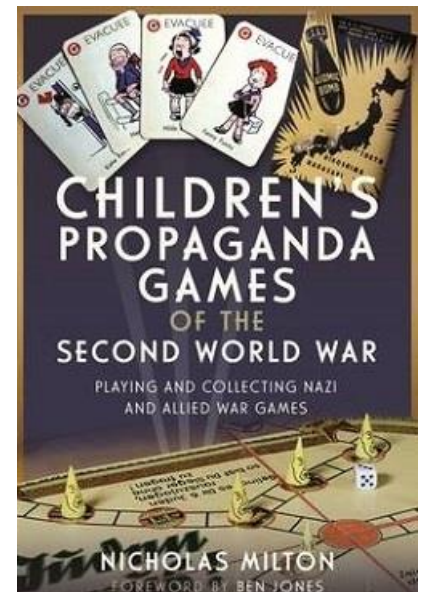
It's amazing, or at least to me, how many "war" games were produced over the centuries. This book narrows the subject to WWII kids games through the lens of propaganda aims. It's quite good at identifying board and card games and providing a little detail about each one, including a general take on the mechanics. It reminds me a lot of the book *War Games and Their History* by Christopher George Lewin from about 10 years ago. Indeed, some of the games are covered in both.

Now, for us veterans of miniatures and board wargames, these kids games are rather simplistic, but the goal is generating patriotic support for the war, not a challenging pastime. If you're a collector of such, this is an excellent reference, or at least a sound introduction, to the games. If not, then enjoy the quick reads of the games, which almost always include a photo of the box cover and game board, card, or other item.

The book contains 136 black and white photos.

And here is my biggest complaint -- it's in black and white. How could you not do this in color? Figure it won't sell well? I'd argue it would sell better with color throughout. Cheers for printing a book of this type. Boos for its black and white content. Ties go to the author and his impressive textual accounts.

Enjoyed it.



German Soldier Versus British Soldier: Combat 78. by Stephen Bull.

Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

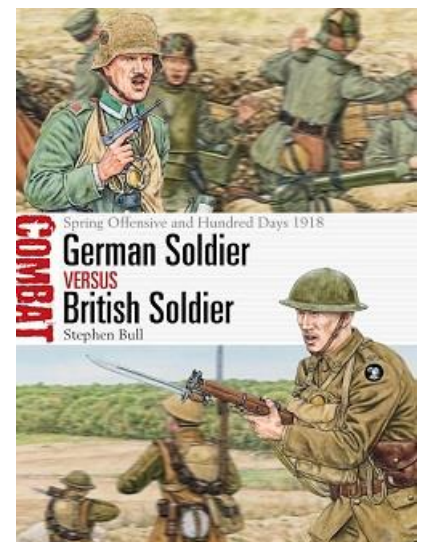
Subtitle: *Spring Offensive and Hundred Days 1918*

The usual *Combat* format describes the uniform, equipment, training, and tactics of the two title soldiers. The section on the German Stosstruppen is especially informative.

The three battles discussed are: Manchester Hill (Mar 21, 1918), Rifle Wood (Apr 1, 1918), and The Salle (Oct 20, 1918). Background, map, combat action, and thoughts about why the battle turned out the way it did are present in all three actions. A final analysis compares and contrasts the two adversaries and the units in which they served. Nicely done.

As always, the booklet is profusely illustrated. The booklet contains 47 black and white photos, three color photos, one black and white illustration, four color uniform illustrations (back and front of each soldier), four color maps, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.



Crusader vs M13/40: Duel 137. by David Greentree. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *North Africa 1941-42*

From this account, the British Crusader was a pretty horrible tank, or maybe more accurately, a pretty horribly manufactured tank. In and among the technical specifications and descriptions is a theme of unreliability. For example, the 7th Armoured Division received 134 Crusaders in Nov-Dec 1941, of which 39 had to be sent back to the base workshop for repairs and 95 had to be sent to a front-line workshop for repairs. Of those 95, the workshop identified 120 different problems that needed fixing, including leaks, axle fractures, fans, and other problems (p23). In 1942, the tank had to be overhauled every 1,200 miles, compared to 3,500 miles for a US M3 Stuart (p24).

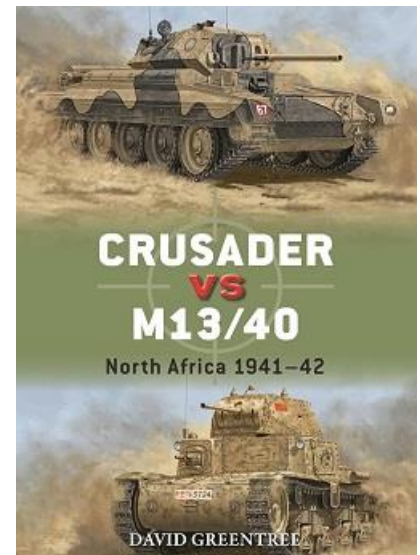
Fortunately for the British, the M13/40 and its slightly modified successor M14/41 were no better. Its engine wore out after 300 miles, had faulty batteries, and inadequate cooling system, and high fuel consumption (p24). While its 47mm main gun was better than the British 2 pounder, the M13/40's armor was brittle and likely to split when hit.

Tank training and doctrine receive ample coverage. I had little knowledge of Italian tactics, but learned that an Italian tank battalion consisted of three companies of 16 tanks each, and a company deploying with a 400-yard frontage or a two-company across formation with a 1,000-yard frontage (p41).

Three battles covered are: Operation Crusader, Gazala, and 2nd El Alamein. They're competently covered with a good mix of the treadhead technical details versus the softer details of leadership and training.

The booklet contains 49 black and white photos, two black and white illustrations, four color photos, two color maps, six color tank profiles, six color illustrations, and two color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.



World War II Tank Spotter's Guide. compiled by Chris McNab. Softcover (horizontal 7.5x5.2 inches). 128 pages. 2024.

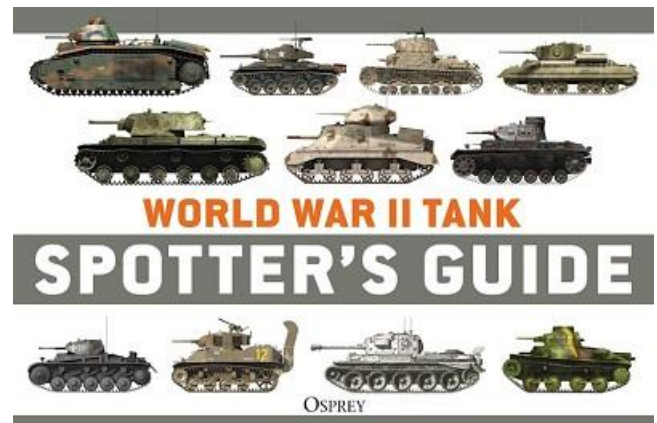
The info within was compiled from *Duel* and *New Vanguard* series booklets. Each of the 40 tanks receives a minimal discussion about its development, variants, and combat capabilities along with a spec list and two color camouflage illustrations.

I double-checked the M13/40 spec info in this guide against the *Crusader vs M14/41: Duel 137* booklet. Most categories matched, and were almost spot on. The wiggle was the speed. The *Guide's* M14/41 spec listed the road speed as 33kph and the off-road speed at 16kph (p58). The *Dual* booklet listed the M14/41's road speed as 35km/p and the off-road speed at 19km/h (p26). The *Dual* booklet listed the M13/40's road speed as 32km/h and the off-road speed at 19km/h (p26).

So...I compared the Crusader. The *Guide's* Crusader spec listed the maximum speed as 43kph without making any distinction between road and off-road. The *Dual* booklet listed the Crusader's road speed as 42km/p and the off-road speed at 24km/h (p23). The *Guide's* spec sheet did not list any armor thickness at all. The *Dual* booklet did for various parts of the tank.

The Crusader tank. Image from web.

I don't know what to tell you. I don't know which one is right or wrong. Sure, it's only a km/h or so off, but apparently, there's no cross-checking and the different spec lists in the *Guide* is a bit disturbing. You'd think that there would be one single spec list and it would be filled. I didn't double-check any other tanks -- that's the Osprey's editor's jobs. Maybe I'll find more. Maybe these are the only two



with discrepancies. Dunno. I just caught the discrepancy because I read the two booklets at roughly the same time and was curious.

I'll let the authors and their editors figure it out.

French Colonial Troops 1815-1914: Armies Across History 4. by Gabriele Esposito. Softcover (8.3x11.7 inches). 112 pages. 2024.

What a colorful collection of troops the French accumulated from their colonies across the globe: Zouaves, Spahis, Chasseurs d'Afrique, Tirailleurs, and others. Better yet, a cornucopia of color uniform illustrations populate the text -- often one soldier in a full page and quite often two soldiers per page. most of these are listed from the Anna S K Brown Library. I recognize quite a few, but the sheer number will make enthusiasts of the period treasure this reference book.

Plus, each troop type includes a discussion of their formation, organization, and combat history to go along with uniform evolutions and other details. If you choose your troop units wisely, you'll find plenty of 19th century wars across the globe where you can use such French troops on the tabletop.

One awkward phrasing: "and be enough intelligent to..." (p95) reads a little better as "be intelligent enough to..."

The book contains eight black and white photos, one color map, three black and white illustrations, and 107 color uniform illustrations (with 169 main figures plus innumerable background figures).

Enjoyed it.

Kawanishi H6K 'Mavis' and H8K 'Emily Units: Combat Aircraft 153. by Edward M Young. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

These were the most used Japanese four-engine seaplanes in WWII, initially meant for long-range recon, but also used at times for bombing and supply runs.

The text is chock full of combat with various Allied planes and the seaplanes often came out the worst for it. The Mavis didn't have self-sealing tanks. 'Nuff said. The Emily boasted upgraded armor and included self-sealing tanks, helping its survivability, even as its range extended to about 4,500 miles (p7).

Year by year, missions involving H6Ks and H8Ks grew more dangerous as Allied fighters -- and sometimes bombers -- grew more capable and more numerous.

New to me: The Japanese launched a long-range kamikaze attack on the Ulithi Atoll anchorage in Feb 1945 that was led by Emily seaplanes. Only two of the Frances bombers got through and one crashed into the aircraft carrier *USS Randolph* (p91). A second planned attack never got past Okinawa.

The booklet contains 57 black and white photos, 14 Mavis color camouflage profiles, and 10 Emily color camouflage profiles. Small font text included at no charge.

The seaplanes were used all over the Pacific, from the Aleutians Islands to Australia. This is a fine overview of the distinguished record of the long-range seaplanes.

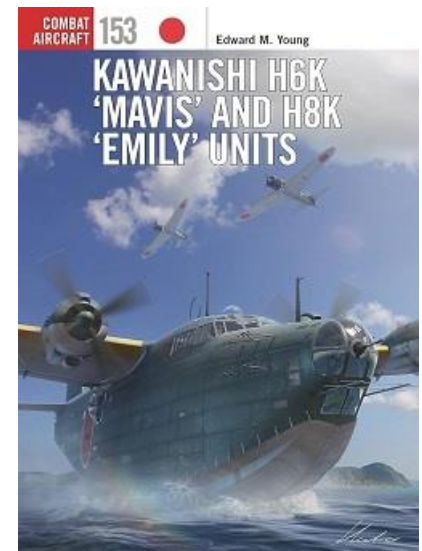
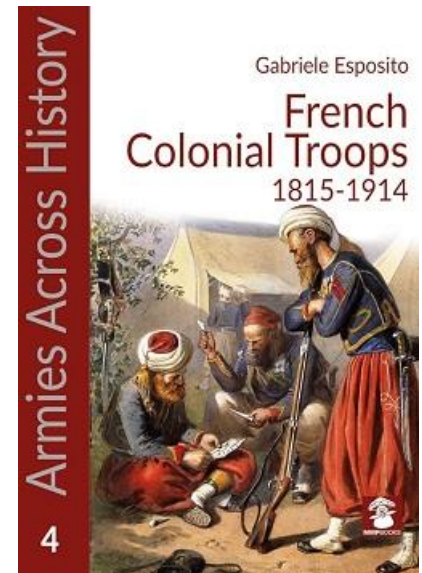
Enjoyed it.

Operation Barbarossa 1941: Air Campaign 47. by William E. Hiestand. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Luftwaffe Opens the Eastern Front Campaign*

My observations noted two aspects of the *Air Campaign* series: superb overviews of a usually complex subject and teeny, tiny small fonts compared to regular *Campaign* series volumes.

As for the first, the booklet covers the aircraft, training, experience, and



tactics that made the Luftwaffe so effective and also the flip side of that that made the Soviet Air Force so inept. The initial German surprise attack on June 22, 1941 destroyed 2,000 Soviet aircraft on the first day against a loss of only 68 aircraft (p38).

As the German offensive advanced further and further east, the logistics became more and more problematical and the text does a good job of efforts to maintain offensive actions while maintaining the aircraft available.

The German Operation Clara Zetkin, named after the founder of the German Communist Party, bombed Moscow for three nights with more than 100 bombers per night, but the damage proved minimal and the bombers were better employed elsewhere on the front (p65-66). This is one of those new wiggles that increases my knowledge about the war a wee bit.

Likewise, I had no idea the Soviets bombed Berlin on August 8 (five DB-3T bombers), August 9 (12 DB-3 bombers), August 11 (eight DB-3s), and August 18 (five DB-3s) (p66). Damage was minimal, but big for propaganda purposes. German advances in the Baltic Islands overran the airfields and put an end to Soviet raids on Berlin.

The booklet contains 61 black and white photos, one color photo, five color maps, five color diagrams, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

British Tanks of the Red Army. by Peter Samsonov. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 140 pages. 2024.

A nice encapsulation of USSR purchases of British tanks from the interwar years through WWII. The bulk of the book covers the Matilda, Valentine, and Churchill tanks. It also notes the imports of small numbers of testing models: Tetrach (bad performance), Cruiser Mk IV (bad engine), Cruiser Mk VI (bad engine), and Cromwell (bad armor and engine). These last four models were ultimately rejected, but the first three models filled a gap in the dark days of 1941 and 1942.

Each tank gets a technical overview that you'll find in any good tank book. What sets this text apart is how the Soviets regarded the tanks during testing and the modifications made to adapt them to the Eastern Front. As the war went on and Soviet tank production of T-34s increased, purchases of British tanks declined.

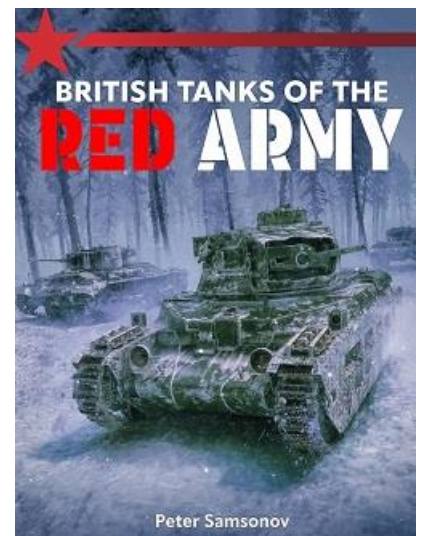
The book covers a number of armor actions (Moscow, Second Kharkov, Voronezh, Caucasus, Kursk, and Bagration) involving units with British tanks. It's not quite enough detail for a tabletop scenario, but it will point you in the direction you need to research to get an OOB for a battle.

One minor type of typo: the unit 48th Guards is referred to as a "HTR" (Heavy Tank Regiment) on page 55, then a "Heavy Tank Breakthrough Regiment" later on the same page, and then back to HTR on page 57 and then back to Heavy Tank Breakthrough Regiment on page 58. I don't know enough about Soviet nomenclature to know which one is right.

In total, the USSR received 927 Valentines with 6lber gun, 1,364 British-made Valentines with 2lber gun, 1,041 Canadian-made Valentines with 2lber gun, 916 Matildas, and 258 Churchills. That may not seem much considering USSR production during the war, but when you need tanks, any tank is appreciated.

The book contains 50 color photos of (mostly museum-displayed) tanks, 13 color maps, 12 black and white illustrations of German targeting vulnerabilities, and eight color camouflage profiles.

Most books mention British tanks in Soviet service in passing. This one offers details in depth. Enjoyed it.



The Teutonic Knights Strike East. by William Urban and Darius Baronas. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 222 pages. 2024.

I kept thinking I had read this book, but the 2024 date said no. So I dove into my library shelves -- Aha! A 2003 book called *The Teutonic Knights: A Military History* by William Urban.

So, I poked around the 2003 book and randomly compared it to the 2024 book. Quite a bit of it overlaps, even down to repeating 2003 sentences that have been altered by a word in 2024.

It seems to me that the 2024 book used the 2003 book as a starting point and then University of Vilnius Prof Baronas updated and tweaked the text to include more non-military aspects of the Teutonic Knights' crusading efforts in the east.

That said, the book proved interesting as the Knights performed raids into what we know as Lithuania, Poland, and points northward and eastward. The diplomatic contortions by all sides, depending on who was ahead in the battlefield realm, who died, and who married who, is utterly fascinating. Some grandmasters were better than others at balancing gain and loss.

The entire text could serve as a key resource for a detailed campaign where diplomacy would undo or cement military gains. The number of sieges and burned forts and towns could make for a nice tabletop scenario or three.

One severe detriment of the 2024 version: One less-than-helpful map. The 2003 version had 15 black and white maps showing all the little unfamiliar (unfamiliar to me, anyway) towns and cities so you can follow the various campaigns. I don't know why the maps weren't included in the 2024 version, but it would've helped keep track of progress and retreat.

The 2024 book has 12 color photos, four color illustrations, seven black and white photos, 15 black and white illustrations, and one half-page black and white map of Samogitia that would have been helpful if it was four or five times the size.

So, if you don't possess a copy of the 2003 book, this 2024 book will still have you fascinated by the manipulations and military prowess of the Knights -- at least up to 1410.

Enjoyed it.

Fury and Ice: Greenland, the United States and Germany in World War II. by Peter Harmsen. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 258 pages. 2024.

Much of this book covers the diplomatic wrangling between the US, Denmark, UK, Norway, and Canada about which country had jurisdiction over Greenland. Technically, it was Danish, but as Germany conquered Denmark, the Allies were not about to entrust a major land mass with base potential to a government that operated under German control.

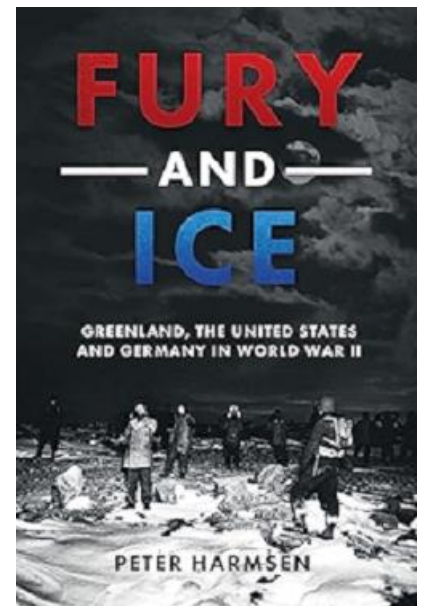
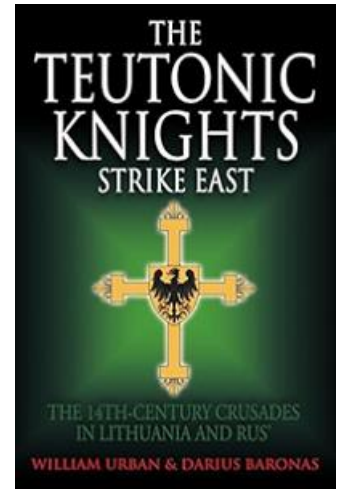
The British suggested they would assume responsibility, but the US and Denmark were cool to the idea, especially when the British were stretched thin as it was. Canada prepared a battalion to land at the world's best cryolite mine, but the US insisted not. FDR would like to have control, but was wary of expanding US military control in a country generally isolationist.

Norway claimed what I would call "Leif Ericson rights" and proposed a 50-50 split with Denmark, but without the backing of Germany, which didn't want to trigger US intervention, so that went nowhere. Denmark refused, citing a pact granting Greenland to Denmark. Indeed, an August 29, 1941 Norwegian expedition using the ship *Busko* landed Norwegian trappers in Greenland to assert its sovereignty, but US Coast Guard ships intercepted them and captured the trappers (p99-100).

US entry into WWII and Germany's subsequent declaration of war on the US ended the diplomatic squabble. The US took control, first by Coast Guard ships and later with troops and base construction personnel.

Something new I never knew: Cryolite is used in the production of aluminum and Canada was a major importer of Greenland cryolite. The Germans had long had created an artificial cryolite and so its need was nil. The Allies feared a German sabotage mission to destroy the mine, but that never happened. A March 31, 1941 recon overflight by a HE-111 accelerated the concern (p84).

What did happen was the Allies shut down their weather stations that could help predict European weather. The Germans sent troops and equipment to create its own weather station.



Of note: the German expeditions used Norwegian ships to sail from Norway to Greenland, but evacuated the troops from the two successful missions via seaplanes. I would have thought U-boats, but I would be wrong.

The book contains 38 black and white photos and eight black and white maps.

The Germans sent six weather station missions, of which two were successful for a while. This is a fascinating account of a footnote in WWII history that's quite well written.

Enjoyed it.

The Infantry's Armor: US Army's Separate Tank Battalions in World War II. by Harry Yeide. Softcover (6.4x9.5 inches). 408 pages. 2024.

By late 1944, the separate tank battalions outnumbered the armored division tank battalions 65 to 54 (p6). These separate divisions used the same TO&E as the armored division battalions, could be attached pretty much everywhere, although almost always to infantry divisions. Quite often, these separate battalions were divided up with a company attached to one formation and another company attached to a different formation. It seems rare, at least from the text, that the battalion was used as a whole independent battalion.

Appendix A offers a battalion-by-battalion unit profile with key dates as well as all the attachments performed by a unit. For example, the 191st Tank Battalion, which landed at Salerno (Italy) in 1943 ultimately was attached in whole or parts to the 3rd, 34th, 36th, 45th Infantry Divisions in Italy as well as the 36th, 42nd, 45th, 70th, 79th, and 103rd Infantry Divisions in the European Theater of Operations (p309).

Tank battalions in the European and Pacific theaters are covered, as are Amtrac battalions that invaded islands. The bulk of the book covers the actions in some detail with all the challenges of attaching to different units.

A goodly number of excerpts from Army records intrudes from time to time, which slows down the pace of reading, but otherwise, the prose provides an excellent account of battalion actions across the globe.

Typo: "sewed confusion" should be "sowed" (p55).

The book contains 33 black and white photos, six black and white diagrams, and 32 black and white maps.

The strongest part of the book covers the attachment and detachment process and how the tankers adapted to rapidly changing situations.

Enjoyed it.

As They Were: France in the Dark Days 1939-1940. by A Peter Dewey. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 212 pages. 2024 reprint of 1946 book.

This autobiography covers this US journalist's time in France during the Phony War from 1939 to 1940 and then the German attack that took France out of the war.

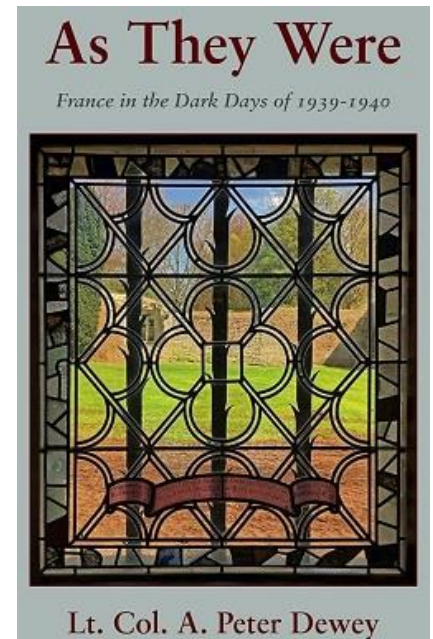
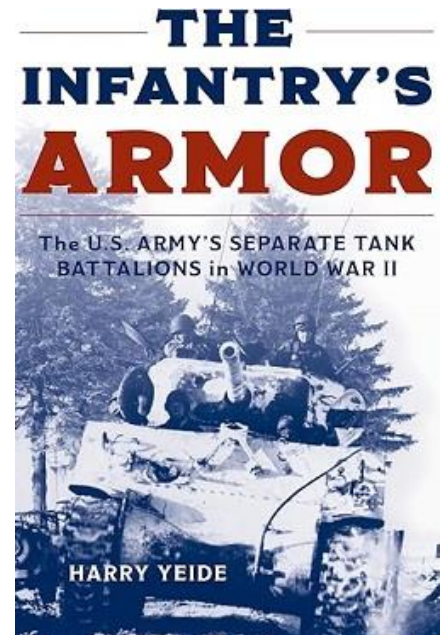
He apparently learned how to use his US passport, newspaper connection, growing up in France and Poland as a kid, and a snowballing number of introductions to meander through French society in a series of lunches, dinners, and parties. These are all told in crisp detail, including all the excesses and shortages war causes among civilians. You can feel the dread increase as the Germans launch their offensives.

Ultimately, Dewey joined the American Volunteer Ambulance Service for Poland's Army in exile. As the Germans came closer and closer to Paris, his ambulance runs became more dangerous. He eventually retreated with the Polish Army and French Army away from Paris and to the Spanish border, where he used his US passport to hop a train across the border and to Portugal.

The book contains 19 black and white photos, three color photos, six color maps, and one color illustration.

There's not much to wargame, but it's a breezy read about civilian life in Paris in the months after Poland fell and before France was invaded as well as the retreat from Paris.

Enjoyed it.



Wrecks & Relics: 29th Edition. by Ken Ellis. Hardback (6.1x8.5 inches). 349 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Indispensable Guide to Britain's Aviation Heritage*

Apparently, this series is 50 years old, now updated every two years. It allegedly lists every historical aircraft (planes and helicopters) on display in public museums and private collections -- the back of the book says more than 4,000 aircraft at over 500 locations. I'll take their word for it. Full contact details are included when available.

This also includes aircraft in storage, being restored, and displays that consist only of the cockpit, not the entire plane. It also has a short list of "submerged" aircraft you can sometimes see from shore and sometimes need diving equipment.

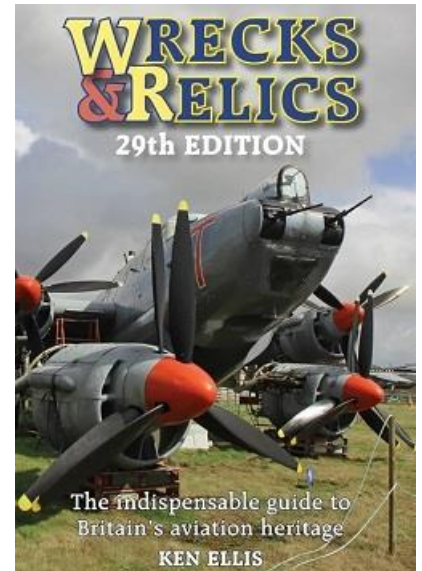
Let me warn you that the font is incredibly tiny -- even tinier than Osprey *Air Campaign* text. That's the price you pay for cramming all those aircraft, every one with a one-sentence background and other info, into one book. Longer descriptions of the museums are included. Note that private displays are often accessible only by appointment.

The book organizes the aircraft by county and province, with locations in alphabetical order. If you happen to visit Leicestershire, you pop to that section and pick a location. Or, if you seek to look at a specific aircraft, such as the last aircraft listed Zerowski ZP.1 (a helicopter), the index lists the page number (p170) and hence the location (Newark Air Museum in Nottinghamshire).

Black and white and color photos of aircraft are scattered throughout the pages. No, I didn't count them.

For aviation buffs, this is incredibly handy and comprehensive. I can't say I read this cover to cover, only skipped here and there, but what I saw was an impressive collection and publishing of aircraft info.

Enjoyed it.



1314: The Year of Bannockburn. by Callum Watson. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 274 pages. 2024.

Decades ago, I visited Bannockburn because we were passing by and I had heard of the battle. It was only a couple hours visit as I dimly recollect: museum and a quick traipse around the preserved battlefield. After reading *1314*, I wish I knew then what I know now.

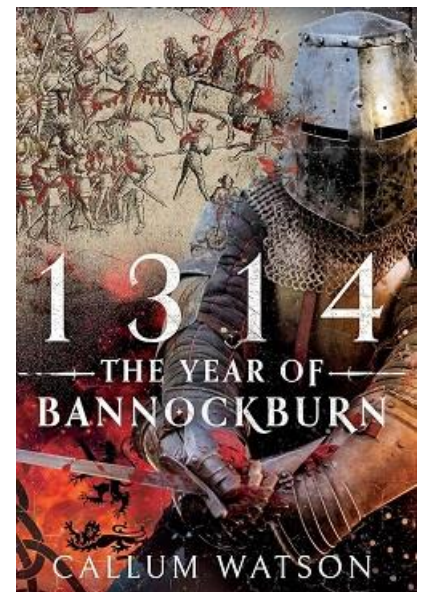
Most of the book consists of the political maneuverings on both sides of the border, as Robert the Bruce sought to be recognized as the King of Scotland and Edward II sought to stamp out those aspirations. A web of interconnected marriages contributed to shifting loyalties. This is all capably woven into a narrative that sets up the English invasion of Scotland in 1314.

At the time, the English had a few key garrisons in Scotland, which Scottish allies managed to overcome except for Stirling Castle. The sieging Scots made a deal with the English garrison commander that if an English army didn't show up within three leagues by a certain date, the English would surrender the castle. Edward II finally amassed an army at Berwick and marched northward to crush the Bruce and re-establish English hegemony over Scotland.

Pulling an OOB from the sources presents a challenge for the Scots. Historians rate the Bruce's force at between 3,500 and 25,000 depending on the historian (p101). Watson hedges at just under 5,000, although he lists nobles noted in the sources and troops they might have brought. There is no Scottish muster to draw from, but the Scots were trained in what we call schiltron tactics.

The English sources offer slightly better interpretations: about 20,000 with 2,500 to 3,000 heavy cavalry, 4,000 archers, and the rest a mix of infantry. The description of the initial clash is well done, with the Scots holding a walled enclosure supplemented with pits and stakes to narrow the frontage. The van of the English heavy cavalry performed a frontal charge that failed.

The second day found the English on the flank, but the Bruce placed his schiltrons atop a ridge and slowly had them advance, defeating yet another frontal charge. A reserve Scottish cavalry unit dispersed ill-formed archers and the whole mess collapsed into an English rout. It didn't help that a deep ravine and streams were enclosing the English position.



The rest of the book discusses the Bruce's political exploitation of the decisive battlefield victory.

The book contains 11 black and white photos, four black and white illustrations, and four black and white maps without a scale.

A commendable interpretation of the events leading up to the invasion, the battle, and the post-battle political advantages for the Bruce.

Enjoyed it.

The Luzon Campaign 1945: MacArthur Returns. by Nathan N. Prefer.
Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 315 pages. 2024.

In general, a good recap of the campaign to recapture Luzon in the Philippines down to the company level. It reminds me of the US Army 'Green' book series, in large part because the maps appear to be taken from the book on the Philippines and that the viewpoint is mostly US. My guess is the Green book was used as the basis for the text, with other information from other books inserted. What I don't see, or at least it wasn't included in the Bibliography, is research taken directly from US Army or Japanese Army archives.

Interwoven are various individual heroic US efforts to overcome Japanese blocking forces. Considerable artillery support outpounded the logistically-challenged Japanese. As you might expect in jungle warfare, sighting distances proved challenging and many an ambush and flanking movement went undiscovered until too late. The battle for Manila is urban grinding at its worst.

The US OOB in the back is odd -- the divisions are not placed under parent corps and the corps not placed under parent armies as you'd traditionally expect. The Japanese OOB is more traditional. Neither contain numbers, although you can ferret those from the text.

One part (p143-146) that was well done was following a 35-year-old Japanese conscript Shohei Ooka from induction to deployment to operations. Much of the Japanese Nishiya company suffered from disease and poor supply. Ooka managed to hang on through multiple retreats, but eventually could not move due to malaria, dysentery, and malnutrition. He awakened in the custody of US soldiers. As for the Nishiya company of 180 men, only 21 survived to be POWs (p148).

Of the 50,000 Japanese troops of Shimbun Group that defended the southern part of Luzon, 2,000 were POWs and 6,300 surrendered when the war was over. The rest were killed by disease and action (p148).

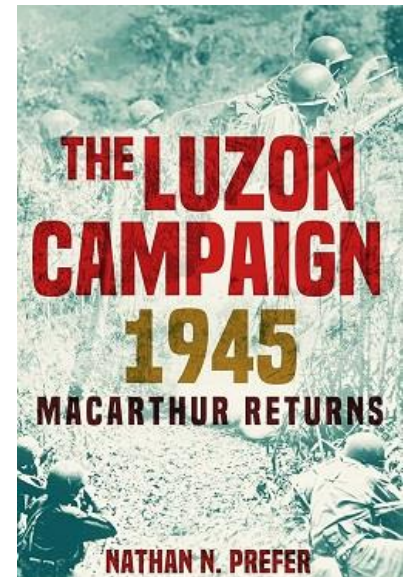
The book contains 30 black and white photos and 14 black and white maps.

One typo: "Privat First Class" (p97) should be "Private."

When you can pair up a map location with a text description, and this is often, you can create a decent wargame scenario. A typical 1944 Japanese battalion had a HQ, four 180-man Rifle companies, one MG company, one battalion gun company, and an AT company (p144). In comparison, a typical US battalion had a HQ, three rifle companies, and a heavy weapons company plus supporting recon and engineering units.

It's a good read about the hard fighting towards the end of the war. It gets a little repetitious about US continuous advance with a few setbacks by the Japanese defense because that's how the war went in late 1944 and 1945. Japanese counterattacks were small, tactical affairs to recapture a ridge or hill -- but that makes for a number of scenarios.

Enjoyed it.



Beutepanzers of World War II: New Vanguard 332. by Steve Zaloga. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 48 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Captured Tanks and AFVs in German Service*

Beutepanzers were tanks and armored fighting vehicles captured by Germany during WWII and either fixed up or repurposed for German use. Lifespan for such vehicles was limited, in part because spare parts often ran out. Only the French and Italian factories were captured and used by the Germans, so those Beutepanzers had longer use.

The booklet covers Polish, Dutch, French, Belgian, British, Italian, Soviet, and US vehicles. No specs are included, just use. For example, Germany captured 111 Polish tanks and tankettes in 1939, of which most were used in security forces and tank training schools.

The booklet contains 46 black and white photos, 15 color camouflage illustrations, and one color two-page action illustration.

This is a good introduction that can serve as a springboard to further research of captured Allied tanks in German service.

Enjoyed it.

Pirates and Privateers. by Charlotte Montague. Hardback (7.7x10.7 inches). 315 pages. 2017.

Subtitle: *A Swashbuckling Compendium of Seafaring Scoundrels*

This is more for teenagers than adults, as the sepia-toned pages have blood splatters on the edge. It looks to me like a RPG sourcebook, but it isn't, although it could be used as a reference for a pirate-themed adventure.

Most of the book contains short bios of 36 pirates and privateers, including all the famous ones like Blackbeard, Kidd, Morgan, Hawkins (John and Richard), and Frobisher as well as less famous (at least to me) such as Wright, Gow, O'Malley, and Ching Shih.

It also reprints a Pirate Code from the Golden Age of Piracy, punishments (usually hanging) for those convicted of piracy, modern piracy, popular culture, and a handy glossary.

The book contains 59 black and white photos, 14 color illustrations, and 7 color photos.

It's a breezy introductory read that hits the highlights of pirates, piracy, and privateering.

Enjoyed it.

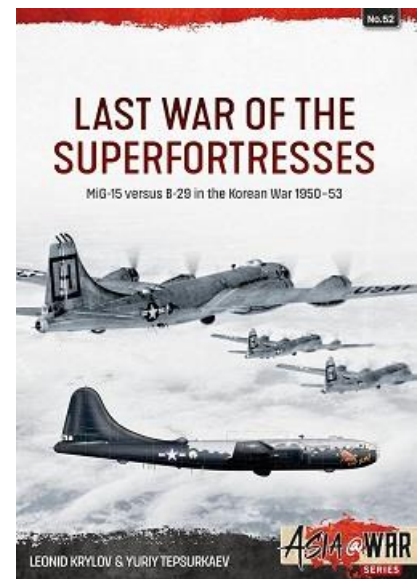
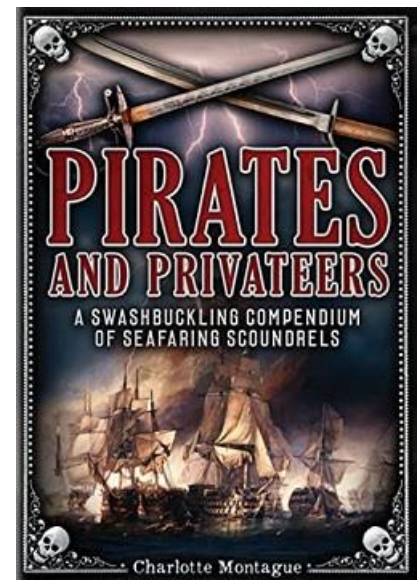
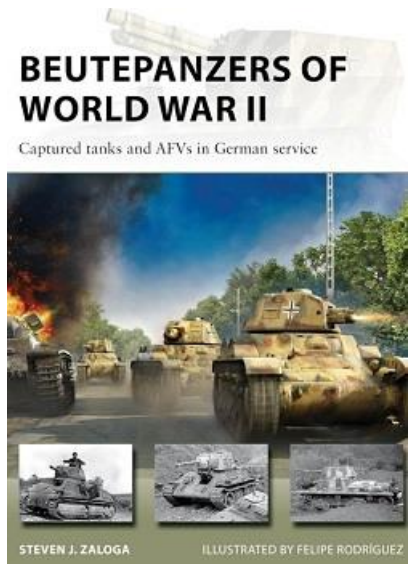
Last War of the Superfortresses: Asia at War 52. by Leonid Krylov and Yuriy Tepsurkaev. Softcover (8.3x11.8 inches). 108 pages. 2024 reprint of 2016 book.

Subtitle: *MiG-15 Versus B-29 in the Korean War 1950-53*

While the B-29 flew relatively uncontested over North Korea early in the Korean War, all that changed when China entered the war and the USSR added to the Communist force with the 64th Fighter Air Corp. Add in radar to vector in the MiGs and the bomber air war turned against the Allies.

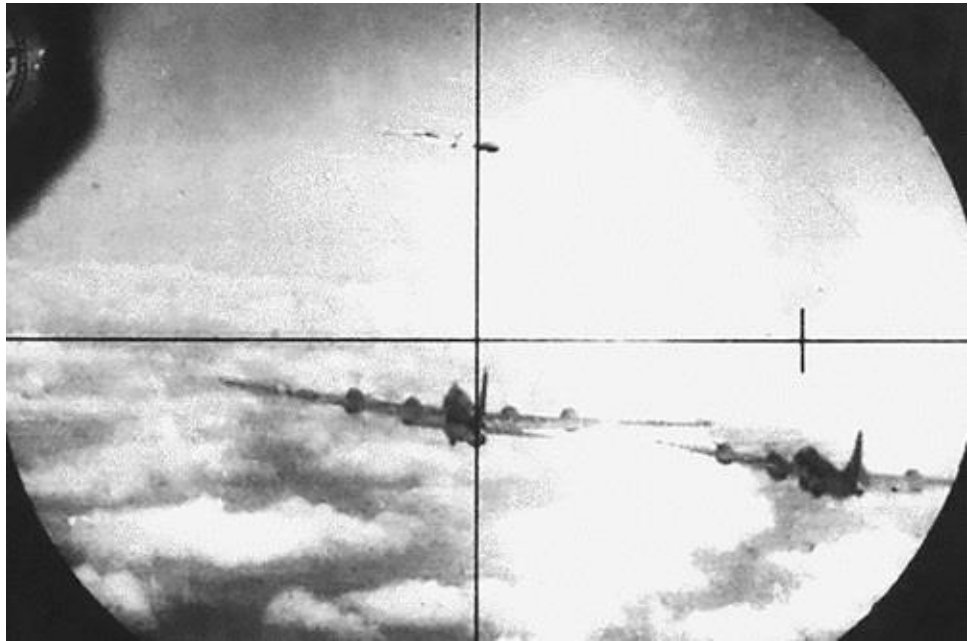
You know this is going to be a Communist-approved book when the South Koreans are blamed for starting the Korean War (p3). Nonetheless, Soviet archives cross-indexed with USAF archives furnish the semblance of balance. I say semblance because honesty in official military reports is not the strong suit of Communist governments. The US has its share of rosy reports, but its accuracy is higher.

Anyway, combat reports and excerpts form the bulk of the book, cross-checked when possible to try and figure out the actual results of combats. What surprised me is the number of B-29 missions with 21 or fewer bombers and handfuls of escorts and interceptors. I'm used to reading about thousand-plane



raids of WWII, whereas a hundred bombers on a mission is a rarity. The plus side of this is a cornucopia of tabletop scenarios that can be plucked from the pages.

MiG-15 gun camera footage captures attack on B-29s over Korea. Image from web.



Daylight bombing became so expensive in aircraft lost or damaged, especially in MiG Alley, the USAF switched mainly to night bombing. It didn't hurt that MiGs used airfields in China that were off-limits to USAF aircraft. The one time North Korea tried to set up an airfield on the Korean side of the Yalu River, the USAF bombed it into oblivion.

The booklet contains 125 black and white photos, two color maps, and 40 color aircraft camouflage profiles (27 MiG-15s and 13 B-29s).

The final tally (p74-75) according to Soviet records was 40 B-29s shot down or written off from damage (versus 69 credited during the war as shot down) and zero (yes, zero) MiG-15s shot down by B-29 gunners (versus 26 credited during the war).

One interesting sidelight was the British and US experiments with aerial refueling during combat missions. Boeing converted 92 B-29s (p73) into refueling tankers, which is far earlier than I thought.

Enjoyed it.

Citizens to Arms! Reason to Revolution No. 133. by Yves Martin. Softcover (7.1x9.8 inches). 150 pages. 2024

Subtitle: *Uniforms of the French Revolutionary Armies 1792-1799*

This uniform guide to French Revolutionary War soldiers relies on the gouache watercolor illustrations of Henry Boisselier from a 1943 publication.

The 56 full-page plates contain 105 figures that include infantry, cavalry, officers, musicians and others. The text describes the uniforms each figure in considerable detail and often includes an anecdote about one historical figure or another or maybe the unit that fielded the troops with a particular uniform.

Overall: Excellent and sharp reproductions. If the 1792-1799 period is your interest, I can see this propped on a painting table as source material.

Enjoyed it.

