

Springtime for Napoleon:

Snappy Nappy SnapCon X: Yorck
Battle of Wittenburg Recap: Eugene

On a Pedestal: Malta Convoy

Umpire's View Of The Fifth Session
Umpire's View Of The Sixth Session

Red Devils Ambush:

WWII One Hour Wargame

HMGS Next Generation Outreach: Battles

NEWS

Taylor Swift vs Joan of Arc: Followers
Against the Odds Magazine: 100th Game
New Wargame: *Britskrieg!*
2nd Edition: *One Page Bulge*
Cadwalader AWI Lecture: Princeton Battlefield
WWII Australian Heavy Mortar: 3D Printed
And Elves, Too: 3D Printed
New Wargame: Langport 1645

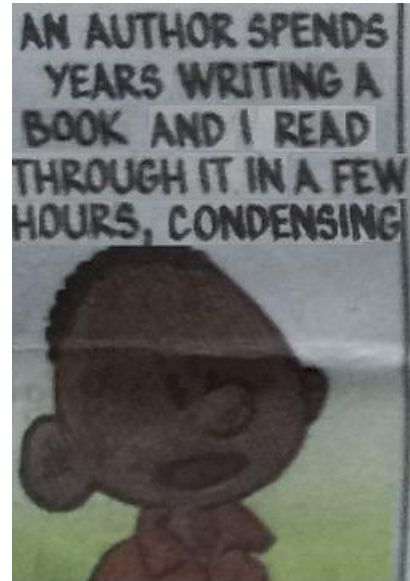
Maritime Dominion: Card Game

Mega Multi-Table D&D: Return of the Lich

Books I've Read

The Trojan War: As Military History
Brotherhood of the Flying Coffin: Glider WWII
Becoming Eisenhower: Between World Wars
Joan of Arc's Army: France 1415-53 (MAA 558)
Operation Dragoon: Southern France 1944
The End of August: Novel
Warships Komandorski Islands 1943 (NV 333)
Through Hell to Dunkirk: Evacuation
Mers El-Kebir 1940 (Campaign 405)
The CAC Boomerang: Australia's WWII Fighter
Japanese Combines Fleet 1942-43: Fleet 8
Romania 1944: Campaign 404
The Messerschmitt Bf 110 Story
The Fighting Fathers: South Vietnam
Perceptions of Battle: Washington at Monmouth
Borneo 1945: Campaign 406

Storm Clouds Over the Pacific: 1931-1941
Robert E. Lee's Reluctant Warrior: Wickham
Hitler's Last Chance: 1945 Movie Kolberg
Barbarossa 1941: OKH German Army Atlas
Captured at Arnhem: In Their Own Words
Roman Army Units West Provinces 3 (MAA 557)
The Union Army 1861-65 3 (MAA 559)
The Rif War: 1921-1926 (Elite 257)
Lockheed Constellation: Legends of Flight
US Air Power 1945-1990 (v1): Technology at War 2
8th Army Soldier versus Italian Soldier 1942
Sumatra 1944-45: Air Campaign 49
How Hitler Evolved Traditional Army Establishment
The House of War: Christendom and Caliphate
Yugoslavia and Greece 1940-41: Air Campaign 48





Briefing around the Transit Table prior to gaming. Photo by Peter.

Springtime for Napoleon: *Snappy Nappy* SnapCon X

by Russ Lockwood

The 10th anniversary of the SnapCon *Snappy Nappy* Campaign-in-a-Day convention proved a closely-fought battle across 1813 Germany. Napoleon and the French, reeling from 1812's catastrophic invasion of Russia, sought to stabilize the line and bring the Russian horde to a halt. Prussia declared for the Allies and marched with the Russians to crush the French. Meanwhile, Austria declared neutrality and withdrew its armies from the French side and the Saxons seemed on the edge of leaving the French.

GM Mike in blue shirt with cap briefs gamers around the Transit Table.



A big thanks to The Portal, the game store in Manchester, CT, that allowed us to use the back room and all its tables for all 10 of the SnapCons.

GM Mike (right background) sets up the tables with help from Assistant umpires Mark (left) and Peter (center).



Snappy Nappy Table Cred

While *Snappy Nappy* works well on a 2x2-foot or 3x3-foot table, it shines in large, swirling multi-player, multi-table “Campaigns-in-a-Day.” All the SnapCons featured between a dozen and 16 four-by-six-foot tables and between 15 and 20 players. The Portal has a back room with 18 tables. The GMs designed the campaigns and OOBs, researched the maps, and umpired the games.

A few of us, usually Mark, Peter, and James, pitch in to help the GM create the terrain for each table. In this game, we’re creating 15 4x6-foot tables. That’s 15 x 24 square feet of terrain, or 360 square feet of terrain. This is not museum-quality tabletop terrain. It’s mostly felt and fabric -- although I’ve noticed bits and pieces have evolved into better looking terrain. In this year’s 1813 campaign, Peter brought the bulk of the well-painted 25mm figures. James also provided the accoutrements, including name tags and 3D printed labels for keeping track of the turn sequence. GM Mike, Peter, Mark, Rich, James, Sean, and I set up the tables on Friday night.

Players can talk to their co-commanders if they are at the same table. If they want to communicate with others, including their C-in-C, they have to write a message on provided paper or cards and hand it to an umpire. It takes a number of real-time minutes for the umpire to deliver the messages. Part of the fun is getting a message ordering you to some town are just the most inopportune moment.

As in past SnapCons, the GM starts a briefing at 10am and James runs through a basic boot camp of movement and firing for new players as well as a refresher course for returning players. The campaign starts sometime between 11am and 11:15am with the first two turns coordinated among all tables. That means every player follows the Turn Sequence phases for the first two turns. This gives new players a sense of how a turn progresses and all players an opportunity to “scout” adjacent tables.

James (blue shirt and cap) runs through a Snappy Nappy boot camp of movement and combat mechanics.



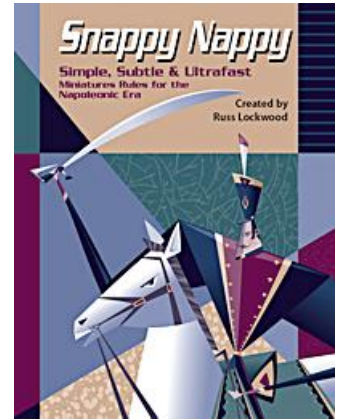
On the third turn, the GM cuts the players loose and players follow the turn sequence by table without any effort to coordinate among all tables.

When a player’s troops leave a table for another, the umpire escorts them from one “exiting” deployment zone on a table to an “entry” deployment zone on the other table. The player then adopts the turn sequence on the new table with an important caveat: the opposing player or players on the new table get at least one movement phase to respond. To give credit where credit’s due, James came up with this deployment zone idea and rule.

The Transit Table.

Campaign Wrinkle: Transit Tables

GM Mike pulled together the scenario. Besides the usual OOB balancing and terrain research, he decided to add a wrinkle to our usual Campaign-in-a-Day mechanics.



As noted, when you exited one table, the Umpire immediately escorted you and your troops to a linked table.

More briefing and the Dunkin Donuts table.



Umpire Mike set up one central "Transit Table" that added multiple "traveling" tables to the mix using an ingenious card system.

When you exited a table, the deployment zone (i.e. enter and exit point) had a number. You brought your troops to the central table and flipped over a 3x5 card with that number.

This card told you which transit table (in reality an 8.5x11-inch sheet of paper with historical info on one side and a map on the other – nice touch) you'd arrive on. It also noted if the transit was immediate or if you had to suffer a 5-minute delay.

And yes, Umpire Mike put a clock on the table and had a sign-up sheet that you would fill in. I'm guessing this would help Umpire Mike reconstruct who went where when.

Fortunately, Assistant Umpires Mark and Peter were there to iron out any confusion -- and I believe I can claim one of the first confusions.

I picked up the appropriate card, placed a marker on the appropriate transit table sheet, and proceeded to exit to the wrong table. Fortunately, Assistant Umpire Mark caught my error and directed me to the correct table. And I then did it once more, which Mark watched me plop on the wrong transit table sheet and corrected me again. He was certainly within his rights to call me some sort of Prussian term, Dummkopf or worse comes to mind, but he's a tolerant and patient umpire.

Campaign Wrinkle: Diplomacy

GM Mike gave a variety of city objectives that would affect the neutrality of Austria and perhaps bring it into play on one side or the other. In addition, Saxony had a chance to join the Allies.

Alas, Poor Yorck, What Will You Know?

Assigned to command Yorck's corp, my original orders stated I would go to Torgau and defend the river crossing. Alas, GM Mike decreed my initial position was in line formation near Wittenburg, which is across the six-foot table from the road that I needed to use.

General Yorck. Image from web.



So, the first turn was just getting onto the road and switching formation. With the bulk of my corp on the road heading to Torgau, I sent a cavalry unit through Wittenburg onto another table. We all just read how that transit table hop went...but the scouts continued on. Meanwhile, I received an order from my C-in-C to go to Halle via Wittenburg.

Argh. No plan survives contact with the enemy.

So, I reversed course and headed back to Wittenburg and then off table to Halle.

My cavalry continued to scout. Annd, we all just read how that second trip via the transit tables went...

Now, remember, the first two turns are synchronized across all tables. Then came the third turn. I ended up scouting a table with a lot of French corps...and in bouncing back, I finally figured out how to use the transit card/table system. Mark must have heaved a sigh of relief.

And also remember this all took time for Yorek's corp to go this way and that.

I remember thinking I was like Lobau at Waterloo -- ordered one way, then the other, and then back the original way. I wish I had taken better notes about the timing.

Meanwhile, my corps marched to the Halle table from the east.

My corp enters the Halle table and I peel off some troops to head off Eugene and MacDonald (off table to right), but his troops garrisoned Wettin (lower right corner). Meanwhile Gen. Bertrand (left) and Napoleon (right) show up.

Order. Counter Order. Disorder? Datorder?

I found Halle to be in French hands, a mere cavalry unit and leader hopping from town to town to disrupt Allied supply lines. Who is this French interloper? None other than Prince Eugene. He saw me and immediately started to head down the road to exit north towards Bernburg.

Behind Gen. Bertrand (white cap) is Gen Bessières (center), both joining Prince Eugene / Marshal MacDonald (right). My expression says it all as I reverse direction and scuttle for safety...

North? Bernburg? How did he get to Bernburg?

My guess is probably when I was reversing course to head to Halle.

Well, I'm having none of that. I started to peel units off the march to head Eugene off at the deployment zone to Bernburg.

Next thing I know, Eugene brings an infantry unit onto the table from Bernburg.

That's when another French corp showed up on the south side of the table coming from Lutzen.

Hmmm. Two against one, but I have the central position. Not impossible if I can crunch Eugene before this new French corp can march across the table.

Wait! Who's this new French commander?

What?! More French corps coming my way? That'll be three on one!

Then Napoleon showed up from Lutzen!

And that likely meant the Imperial Guard was following from Lutzen.

Hmmm. Four against one? That would be difficult normally, but when one of the four is the Imperial Guard, meinen goosen is cooked.

Prince Eugene / Marshal MacDonald brings his corp to the Halle table.

And that's when I received an order to turn around and head back to Wittenburg. It's a reversal order I heartily endorsed!

So, half movement to turn the road march column around and I headed back to Wittenburg. A slow rearguard withdrawal took a couple hits from Eugene's cannons that entered before I could exit.

I left one unit as a garrison in Halle. It would take time to winkle it out. The French eventually blew it out of the town and pummeled it with artillery fire



into oblivion, but it had bought time.

Back I went to the Duben transit table -- apparently my second favorite table in all Germany behind the Wittenburg table.

I also learned that another Prussian corp was with me at the Duben transit table also heading to Wittenburg.

Arriving at Wittenburg, I found a Russian corp chasing a French corp that was on its way to Berlin.

I re-cross the Elbe River and pass through Wittenburg to find a French corp heading towards Berlin.

How did a French corp slip behind? Ah, the mysteries of the multi-table campaign.

Indeed, when I arrived, the French corp commander was worried about his supply line.

Here I am, crossing the Elbe River at Wittenburg. The green chip represents Allied control of the town.

Supply Lines And Consequences

A word about the supply line mechanic. On the hour, Umpire Mike and Assistant Umpires Mark and Peter checked supply lines for each corp. If your supply line is cut, you take one Morale Check (maximum loss of only one Unit Status and NOT the usual MC roll until you pass or the unit routs).

Peter came up with this rule for his Iberian game years ago.

Back To The Action

The French commander knew he had a limited time to reopen the supply line, so he turned his command around and began to form a line.

How did this Frenchy (left) get between me and Berlin? Russian General Berg (right) threatens the French supply line.



My Russian ally, who had more cavalry than I did, swung up the road to outflank the French while I headed best I could off the march straight at the French.

Next thing we knew, two French infantry units and an artillery unit showed up, obviously recalled from their Berlin blitz. They swung around to meet the Russians.

*Yorck's Wittenburg Sandwich.
Eugene / MacDonald marches into Wittenburg while I form an outnumbered line. I had to pull back my horse artillery (bottom left corner) to help. Real time: 2:28pm.*



With a two on one advantage, we should be able to crush the French corp. And a Prussian corp was behind me to make it a three to one.

So I thought.

Only the next corp to arrive in Wittenburg was a French corp led by my old “friend” Prince Eugene. Fluffengankenpollen! Er, that may not be an exact German translation of what I said.

So where was the Prussian corp?

Eugene shrugged. “Wasn’t any when I got to the Duben transit table.”

I can only guess it was diverted.

A Word About Wittenburg

Unlike all other urban areas, Wittenburg was located inside the deployment zone. Umpire Mike was quite clear about that. This meant neither side could garrison it. I’m guessing he wanted it to be fought over outside of the urban area. If so, that certainly worked. It also meant I couldn’t garrison it the way I did in Halle and delay the arrival of any French onto the table.

Yorck's troops (left) repel the first French (right) charge. A hole appears in the French line. White rings represent lost morale levels.

The Wittenburg Sandwich I

If it is intentionally difficult to pull off a rearguard action, getting caught in an enemy sandwich is far worse. Now what?

I considered my options. I had difficult terrain in between me and the original French. I had open fields in between me and the new French under Eugene.

I spun most of my corp around to create a main line as best I could. It was not in a unit sequence I would have preferred, but you fight with what you have in the spot you have it.

I sent one infantry unit into a woods and a cavalry unit to cover an open gap in my rear. I pulled back the horse artillery to my main line.

Meanwhile, my Russian ally worked his forces into a



line to match the French line forming against him.

Eugene's line was far better organized by mine. He roared out of the deployment zone as soon as he could. My cannon fired. His cannon fired. Infantry took hits and lost morale levels. The lines became ragged. Some routed away. It was just the sort of pounding firefight you'd expect.

Then Eugene's infantry charged. My troops fired with effect, repulsing the first charge.

The original French corp advanced against me, sending a pair of units in column against my one unit in line in the woods. Once again, firefight gave way to charging and melee. Once again I prevailed, in part because my seasoned troops were holding the woods against lower-rated conscripts. One entire conscript brigade routed away as I kept a tenuous hold on the woods.



Two units of conscripts in column charged my troops holding a line in the woods because I didn't want to go anywhere near the French cannon (middle and bottom left corner). Accurate fire and many failed morale tests repelled one unit and sent the other packing. In the return fire, the conscripts did some damage to my seasoned troops.

The Russian commander played for time to deploy. At one point, on the hour, he was informed that his supply line was cut. He rolled morale checks for each unit and failed most of them. The Russian units sprouted markers testifying to their lack of supply. Uh-oh.

The Wittenburg Sandwich II

My troops and Eugene's troops continued their grim exchange of fire. I concentrated artillery fire on French troops. French cannon concentrated on my cannon. The French had a slight artillery advantage in quality, but otherwise, this was an even-up fight between veteran troops.

Gen. Berg (center) swings around the flank, but is met by countering French troops. Eugene / MacDonald (right) presses his attack.



Eugene did have one big advantage: He had a second leader, Marshal MacDonald, which helped with unit rallies.

He also snuck a cavalry brigade out the side of Wittenburg and headed around my own cavalry that was pre-occupied with the infantry in front of it. Eugene personally led the French cavalry.

Slowly my cannons succumbed to French fire. Slowly, his infantry succumbed to my cannon fire. But I could see which way the battle was progressing. I needed to do something bold or I would be timidly pounded into a pulp.

I yanked the cavalry brigade out of the gap and sent it after Eugene and his cavalry. They were out of my reach, but I was threatening. Then I swung the cavalry out of my main line and sent it after Eugene as well. It was perfectly positioned for a charge into the rear of Eugene's cavalry brigade -- if us Allies won the initiative.

Alas, the French held onto the initiative and Eugene slipped away enough to turn and face my cavalry.

Russian Charge

Give my Russian allied commander credit, he charged his cavalry against a line of infantry and cannon. He fared better than expected, but didn't break the French line and fell back.

He did swing an artillery unit to cover the now empty gap once held by my cavalry and pounded a Russian infantry unit.

He did great in keeping the original French menace at bay, especially because our original two-on-one battle turned into two one-on-one battles.

Cavalry Scrum

With a slight advantage, I charged my cavalry into Eugene's cavalry and luck was with me. I won and forced morale checks. Here, Eugene's luck ran out. The brigade became panicked as it failed morale check after morale check.

More importantly, Eugene rolled not one, not two, but three "1s" for MCs. Not only did that lower the unit's Morale Status, it also forced him to roll three times on the Leader Loss table. His three d10 rolls ended with one "no effect" and two "9s" -- wounded, remove from game. Eugene slumped off his horse and was lifted to safety by his staff, but his day was over.

My two veteran cavalry units charge Eugene and his one cavalry unit. The French unit was decimated and Eugene fell with two severe wounds. Here we see Eugene fall in the last triumph of Yorck's Corp.

In *Snappy Nappy* terms, loss of a leader means one turn without the leader and then a "0"-rated leader replaces the "+1" Eugene.

Now, if you don't have a leader, all units in your corp command must roll a Morale Check in order to move. So, that could have halted a theoretical half his attack force in its tracks.

But...Eugene had a second leader, Marshal MacDonald, with this corp. In effect there was no real effect from losing Eugene.

My main line disintegrated as my troops and cannon fled to the rear.

The Altenberg table.

Elsewhere

I don't know. That's the beauty of a

multi-player game across multiple tables. I have no idea how any other Allied corp fared. I know there was a big



battle on the Altenberg table because I saw lots of players and went over there to take a pic, but other than that, no idea.

End Game

Umpire Mike went around to each table and looked at supply status, routed units, and locations. At that time, to my mind, the game was over. It certainly was on our table. I only had four units left out of nine, and while the two cavalry were fine, the other two were in a precarious position.

Based on all the tables, here's GM Mike's decision: "It was a close call. At 4pm it was a draw...but by 4:30pm the French besieged Berlin to earn a minor victory."

The end of game position on the Wittenburg Table. Marshal MacDonald has swept most of Yorck's corp from the field as the other French general holds off Berg's troops. Ah, but one good scrappy battle amidst a multitude of battles across all the tables.

There you have it, another hard-fought *Snappy Nappy* Campaign-in-a-Day tabletop battle. Lots of maneuvering and battles from 11:30-ish to 4:30-ish.

Thanks to GM Mike for crafting the scenario and umpiring. Thanks to Assistant Umpires Mark and Peter for helping make it go smoothly, a double thanks to Peter for bringing the troops, a double thanks to Mark for buying pizza (oh, and the coffee, too), and a double thanks to James for the accoutrements. Add James, Rich, and Sean for helping set up on Friday night, too.

A big thanks to The Portal for allowing us to dominate the back room for a day and for opening two hours early on the Saturday so we can get the campaign in. As this is a full game store, our gang's purchases help the store stay open and available.

And finally, thanks to all the gamers for a marvelous day of Napoleonic gaming.

But Wait, There's More...

Go to Peter's Blunders on the Danube Blog for a full *Snappy Nappy* OOB, photos of each table, and initial instructions for a complete idea of the setup involved. <https://blundersonthedanube.blogspot.com/>



Battle of Wittenburg Recap: French Commander Eugene

by Steve Tarro

[Steve was the commander of French XI corp led by Marshal Étienne Jacques-Joseph-Alexandre Macdonald with an assist by Prince Eugène Rose de Beauharnais. I refer to Steve as Eugene as a Prince outranks a Marshal.]

Another year, another *Snappy Nappy* event hosted at the Portal in Manchester, CT. I believe this is my fourth consecutive event attended and I must say without embellishment that it has been a better experience every time!

Oh sure, Yorck (left) was all smiles when he thought it was only one Prussian corp versus two French corps at Halle... Photo by Peter.

This year the organizers, game masters, and everyone who had a hand involved in making the game happen put in significant effort and it was all to be appreciated. The inclusion of central cross roads as retaining pools made for a clearer traversal of the map and a simpler system of managing time penalties. I was very pleased to see the inclusion of a travel ledger and clock at the cross roads.

My action did not begin until after lunch time but that was neither a surprise nor a detractor from my enjoyment, *Snappy Nappy* is a game of long-term maneuvering and simple but brutal combat. This year delivered on that premise!

Robb wins the award for best-dressed player!

Enter XI Corp at Wittenburg

XI Corp entered Wittenburg close to the rear of the Prussian II Corp. Upon arrival the situation appeared to be that a large French Militia Force was about to be engaged by the II Corp and Russian Hussars (correct if this is wrong, I forgot to actually note the forces).

This was dumb luck but perfect timing on my part as the Prussian corp had to immediately turn 180-degrees to face me. Both my opponent and I have some experience with *Snappy Nappy*, my opponent possibly more so. Our lines held a tight formation for support, our cavalry both broke off to my right, leaving near equal infantry and guns to do the dirty work.

With little room between us I ordered charges which were repelled, to my luck this did not shatter my men. Denied the unlikely swift melee I opted for the next grisliest action, move my cannons into grape shot range.

Over the delightfully fast paced turns that followed our lines shredded each other. This event was *Snappy Nappy* at its best, multiple tables full of cheers and energy, the shouts of joy and groans of agony emanating from my own table and those around me. Truly this is what wargaming is about, and a privilege to be a part of. My ally at the other end of my field, locked in his own desperate fight with the Russian cavalry, exchanged words of encouragement and calls



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

by Bruce

The continuing saga of Operation Pedestal. See the August and September AARs for previous sessions.-- RL

On the afternoon of the 12th, Pedestal made for Cape Bon, hugging the Tunisian coast in order to avoid the minefields at Skerki Bank. In past convoys from Gibraltar to Malta the heavy units had turned back before entering "The Narrows."

U-73 jumped by an Albacore unit. Photo by Bruce.



Not so this time, although Axis recce did notice the absence of *HMS Eagle*. The convoy at this point, with only six cargo ships remaining out of fourteen, was escorted by two battleships, three carriers, six cruisers, twenty-five destroyers, two motor launches, and the trusty tug, *HMS Jaunty*.

First wave of the Axis air attack. Ships are making smoke, which helped defend against the aerial assault. Photo by Bruce.



Shadowing the convoy from the west along the Tunisian coast, three U-Boats were spotted traveling on the surface and attacked by three Albacore units. The attacks were so swift none of the boats were able to dive, so instead decided to fight it out. The AAA put up however was enough to hinder the aim of the biplanes, so no damage was sustained by either side.

Maximum Axis Air Effort

The next action was a maximum effort by the combination of Regia Aeronautica, Regia Marina, and the Luftwaffe. A massive air raid of over 240 aircraft from Cagliari, Pantelleria, Trapani, Gela, and Augusta came on in three waves. Admiral De Zara's combined cruiser/destroyer force along with the 15th and 18th MAS Squadrons arrived simultaneously from the north.



The second wave of Axis aircraft attack the convoy. Photo by Bruce.

The first wave consisted of eight fighter units to deal with Pedestal's substantial CAP, along with 11 SM-79 torpedo bombers. (See photo) Admiral Syfret ordered smoke and a 60 degree turn to port. The *Wairangi* and *Deucallion* were crippled while one Hurricane unit and one SM-79 unit were shot down as a result of this attack.

SM-79 aims for the convoy. Image from web.

Second Wave

As the second wave approached Pedestal continued on course to avoid the Italian fleet and to be cloaked by smoke. This wave, 11 JU-88, two HE-111, and four JU-87 units, was met by only one Hurricane CAP.

The *Brisbane Star* was sunk by Stukas while the crippled *Wairangi* was finished off by JU-88s. Likewise, the deadly JU-88s sunk CLAA *HMS Charybdis* and crippled *Dorset*. JU-88s would have sent the tanker *Ohio* to the bottom but for CPT Mason's lucky maneuver into smoke -- made a smoke-saving die roll of a "6". As it was, she subsequently suffered only one hit.



Third Wave

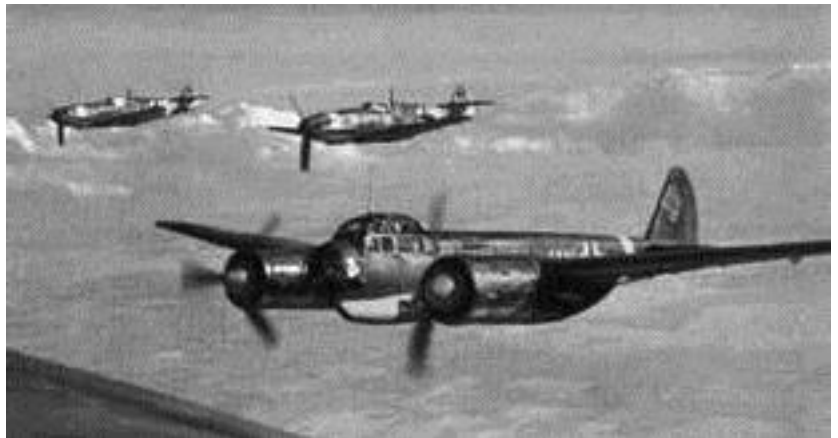
The third wave consisted of five BR20 and Z1007 high level bomber units attacking *HMS Indomitable*. With amazing accuracy, *Indomitable's* 4.5-inch batteries singlehandedly shot down three of her attackers while avoiding any bomb hits.

As the air raiders departed, Admiral De Zara realized that *HMS Nelson* and *HMS Rodney* were still with the convoy. Realizing that he was outgunned and outmatched, he wisely decided to turn about. His approach however had the effect of necessitating the reconfiguration of Pedestal in order to react and make smoke. These actions caused Pedestal to be more vulnerable to the incoming air attacks.

Malta Spitfire CAP

At 1700 the Pedestal convoy steamed south of Pantelleria, a little under 100 NM from Malta. Fighter direction from the fleet was in operation, enabling additional CAP over the convoy from Malta Spitfires. An inbound strike of one Machi fighter and six JU-88 units was handily met by the Spitfires. For the loss of a pair of JU-88 units, no hits were scored.

JU-88s with ME-109s. Image from web.



An Albacore unit on patrol spotted four MTBs of the 20th MAS Squadron off Cape Bon and attacked, sinking two.

Allied Bombing Blitz

After the earlier massive air raid by the Axis, AOC Malta decided to try to catch aircraft on the ground rearming. Two raids were launched to attack the Pantelleria and Trapani aerodromes.

At Pantelleria, four Spitfires cleared away the one CR42 unit on CAP and were followed by two Wellington and two Beaufighter units. One SM-79, one RE 2001 and two RO-43 units were destroyed on the ground.

At Trapani, four Spitfires cleared away the one RE2001 unit on CAP and were followed by one Beaufighter and three Beaufort units. Two ME-109 units were destroyed on the ground.

Pedestal Convoy

As the sun set behind them, the Pedestal convoy proceeded on course towards Malta. Out of 14 merchantmen, only four remain -- the crippled *Dorset* and *Deucalion* and the damaged *Melbourne Star* and *Ohio*.

The sunset survivors. Photo by Bruce.

Point Totals

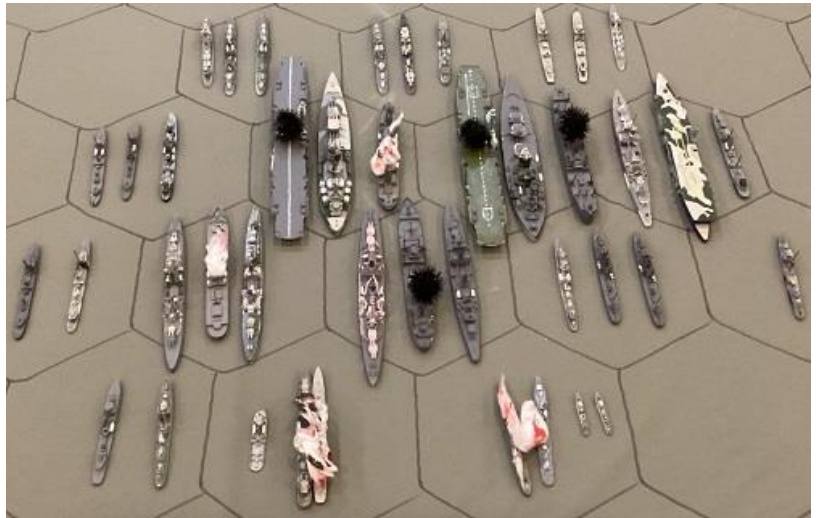
Axis earned 32 Points. (20 Points for the sinking of *Brisbane Star* and *Wairangi* (not to mention the loss of 40 potential Allied Points if they made it to Malta), 9 Points for the sinking of *HMS Charybdis*, and 3 Points for aircraft losses of a Hurricane unit.

Allied earned 59 Points (Axis aircraft losses - 52 Points, Two MAS-Boats – 7 Points.)

The point totals for the game so far are:

The Axis have 202 Points.

The Allies have 309 Points.



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

by Bruce

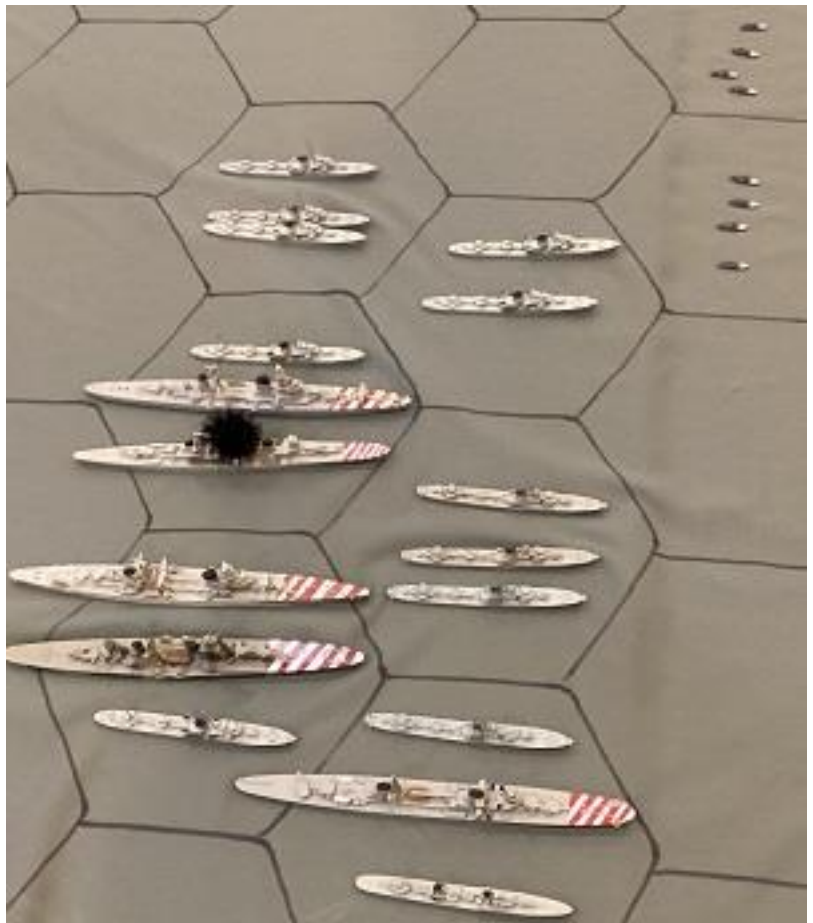
As darkness closed on 12 August, Force F split into Forces X and Z south of Pantelleria. Force X with Admirals Syfret and Burrough consisted of *HMS Rodney* and *HMS Nelson*, the four surviving convoy ships, three Hunt Class destroyers, four crippled destroyers, and the tug *HMS Jaunty*. Force X was met by the Malta minesweeping squadron in order to be guided safely in.

Zara's force steams to intercept. Photo by Bruce.

Admiral Lyster's Force Z of the three carriers, five cruisers, and 18 destroyers turned about and headed back towards Gibraltar at speed. Two reasons for the nature of the split: First the speed difference of the battleships, convoy, and cripples and the faster carriers, cruisers and destroyers; and Second the continued presence of strong Italian surface forces under Admiral De Zara.

British submarines *Unruffled*, *Utmost*, and *United* covered the splitting up of the Pedestal Force and suddenly found itself surrounded by Admiral De Zara's cruisers and destroyers along with the 20th MAS and 2nd MS MTB Squadrons.

Unruffled fired a full torpedo salvo at the cruiser *Gorizia* and missed! The Italian squadron immediately reacted by maneuver and the destroyers *Oriani*, *Gioberti*, and *Ascari* conducted ASW attacks.



Meanwhile on the right flank, *HMS Utmost* was spotted approaching on the surface and was attacked by torpedoes by MTBs. *Utmost* dove and tried to maneuver for attack but was detected by the destroyer *Malloccello*. Both subs were sunk while *HMS United* was outpaced and lost contact.

British submarines attack Zara's ships. Photo by Bruce.

De Zara's Search

Admiral De Zara continued his mission in search of the Pedestal convoy but missed the British forces that had split and moved southeast and northwest.

At midnight, Tenente di Vascello Gino Maveri in MAS 563 spotted Force X as it neared Malta. He recognized that this was the Axis' last chance to stop Pedestal and gallantly led the 18th MAS Squadron into the attack. Despite the moonless night and deployed smoke, he was unable to get past the Malta Motor Launch and battleship walls to attack the limping merchantmen. In a swirling gun battle, the four MAS were destroyed for a loss of four British MLs.

Outside Malta, the Italians engage in a desperate battle. Photo by Bruce.

Malta Safety

Just before dawn on 13 August, Force X maneuvered past the twin port sentinels of Forts St Elmo and Ricasoli and anchored safely in the Grand Harbour. Operation Ceres went into action immediately with the unloading of cargo ships *Melbourne Star*, *Dorset*, and *Deucalion* and most importantly, the tanker *Ohio*.

It had been a long, hard voyage from the Clyde and Force X escort decided to lie "doggo" in harbor for the remainder of the 13th while Pedestal unloaded. Meanwhile the Luftwaffe, Regia Aeronautica, and Regia Marina searched far and wide for the Royal Navy between Malta and Sardinia without luck. Admiral Lyster with Force Z patrolled south of the Balearics in order to cover the return of Force X.

AOC Malta launched two air raids against Trapani aerodromes in the afternoon and early evening. The first raid by one Maryland, four Spitfire, and three Beaufort units destroyed a Stuka unit on the ground after finding no CAP but 6 Beauforts aborted because of AAA. The second strike by one Wellington, four Spitfire, and three Beaufighter units encountered and fought through Regianne fighters on CAP and then AAA, destroying a Z1007 bomber unit on the ground.

The skies above Malta were free of combat the entire day — Spitfires being a powerful deterrent.

As night approached, Admiral Syfret made ready to sail Force X. *HMS Rodney* and *HMS Nelson* were sorely needed in the North Atlantic and Arctic sea zones.

Force X Sails From Malta

Force X, consisting of *Rodney*, *Nelson*, escorted by the Hunt class destroyers HMS' *Derwent*, *Bramham*, and *Bicester*, and led out by *HMS Hebe*, weighed anchor at dusk on the 13th of August and left Malta. Overnight they sailed northwest, negotiating the Pantelleria minefields. Dawn, and the Regia Aeronautica, found them off Cape Bon. The Axis held back to ensure Force X was out of Malta Spitfire cover range while assembling their air and naval forces.



In mid-morning, the Axis concentration was complete. Off Cape Bizerte over 100 aircraft from Cagliari and Trapani converged with five submarines and De Zara's cruisers and destroyers to try to stop Force X. The air attacks came on in four waves while a submarine picket line was formed behind which awaited De Zara.

The first wave of four SM-79 Torpedo Bomber units came in through the AAA and sunk *HMS Derwent*. The second wave of 24 SM-79s targeted *HMS Nelson*. One squadron turned away because of AAA, but the three others pressed the attack, each one achieving a hit. The third wave of one SM-79, one Stuka, and two JU-88 units crippled the *Nelson* while the fourth wave of JU-88s sunk her.

Nelson and Rodney under aerial attack. Photo by Bruce.

As the submarines took their picket positions, Italian subs *Barraca* and *Serpente* along with U-73 and U-331 submerged, but U-205 was still approaching. HMS Rodney picked up U-205 on radar on the surface at 20,000 yards and promptly blasted the boat with a 16-inch main battery salvo. What followed was a series of maneuvers where Force X avoided the subs while trying to bypass De Zara to the north and west. De Zara, with a speed advantage always moved to bar the way, so Admiral Syfret decided to fight his way straight through. (See fourth attached photo)

As both fleets came over the horizon, maximum gun range, the weight of broadsides, and radar gave the Royal Navy a great advantage over the Italian Navy. *HMS Rodney* blasted the heavy cruiser *Gorizia* and then the *Bolzano* to send both to the bottom. De Zara could only respond by trying to hit the only ship in range, *HMS Bicester*, but missed.

Realizing his disadvantages, De Zara decided to break off the action.

At this point we all decided to end the game
— Turn 26, 0900, 14 August 1942.

Zara's valiant effort. Photo by Bruce.

Sixth Session VP Totals

The point totals for the sixth session are:

The Axis earned 92 Points -- 58 Points for the sinking of *HMS Nelson*, 6 Points for the sinking of *HMS Derwent*, 16 Points for sinking HM Submarines *Unruffled* and *Utmost*, and 12 Points for sinking four motor launches.

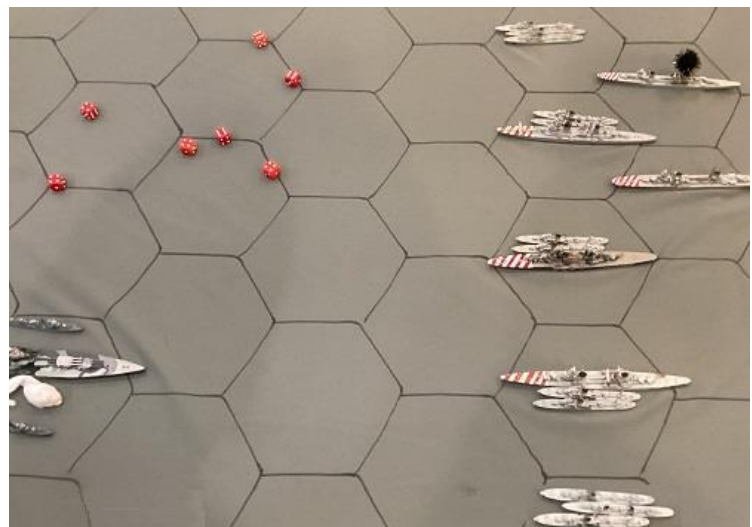
The British earned 139 Points -- 8 Points for Axis aircraft losses, 14 Points for sinking four MAS-Boats, 12 Points for sinking the *Gorizia*, 14 Points for sinking the *Bolzano*, 11 Points for sinking *U-205*, and 80 Points for the arrival of four Pedestal Convoy ships.

Final VP Total

The final point totals for the game are:

Axis: 294 Points (NOTE: Potential/probable additional 76 Points for Force X destruction by air attacks if the game continued)

British: 448 Points, including 110 Points for operational objectives.



Losses

Here are the losses for each side:

Axis: 2 Heavy Cruisers, 1 Light Cruiser, 1 Torpedo Boat, 14 Submarines, 4 E-Boats, 6 MAS Boats, 30 aircraft units.

British: 1 Battleship, 2 AA Light Cruisers, 8 Destroyers, 12 Merchant Ships, 3 Submarines, 4 Motor Launches, 7 aircraft units.

Final Umpire Thoughts

I wish to thank the participants of this game, Garth, Steve, Dan, Phil, John, and Russ. (*Bruce is too kind. Scheduling woes prevented me from attending all except the first session to my chagrin. -- RL*)

While the point totals show an allied victory, it was, like the real event, a very close-run thing. All through the six sessions, the cheerfulness, comradery, common sense, and competitiveness of the two teams shone. This project is something that I have wanted to do for years as the subject is very dear to me. I spent months researching the history and OOBs, generating, adapting, and modifying various game systems. I am frankly quite happy with the result. In game terms the battle results seemed to replicate historical results when certain actions and events occurred.

I again thank the players for your forbearance with me when questions arose, and we collectively made common sense decisions. I sincerely hope that it was engaging, challenging, entertaining, fun, and educational for you.

Truly a magnificent event. And the first session was challenging and enjoyable. As you can read, the end result was about as close to a historical result, even with all the strategies and maneuvers that players created. --RL

Battleships vs. Cruisers

by Phil

Imagine the battleships *HMS Rodney* and *HMS Nelson* emerging from the smoke screen and heading for the Italian task force of five cruisers and 12 destroyers. In game terms, at long range, their main batteries throw 13 dice, and will average eight "successes." If the light cruisers take eight hits, they just sink. The heavy cruisers need a bit more work.

The *Rodney* and *Nelson* will get at least a salvo each at range, possibly more. Then they get to two-hex range and the secondary guns kick in.

Italian Naval Maneuver

From Bruce

Plus the Royal Navy has radar. Italian Admiral Steve (Zara) made the right choice in withdrawing the Italian fleet from attacking the convoy.

Italian MAS boat. Image from web.

We Shot Down What?! 30 Units

by Phil

Whoa, the British destroyed 30 aircraft units? I had no idea we shot down, or bombed on the ground, so many, and in itself would have been a detriment to Rommel's desert campaign.



Yes You Did: 30 Units

by Bruce

Yes, 30 Axis units were destroyed with 16 on the ground at various airbases. AOC Malta, AVM Keith Park, should get a medal.

CR42: 3
ME109: 3
RE2001: 4
JU-88NF: 1
JU-88: 3
JU87: 4 (2 It, 2 Ger)
SM-79: 6
Z1007: 3
BR20: 2
RO43: 1

The types, number, and location of air units were kept confidential from opponents during the game. Each unit represented about six aircraft. During the game when units were eliminated, it does not necessarily mean that all six aircraft were shot down or blown to bits. It could also mean that some were damaged and not repairable within the game timeframe.

Royal Navy Air Coverage: Retreat

by Phil

As another note. The probable loss of the *HMS Rodney* is not a certainty. I was moving the carriers back and they would have joined the *Rodney* and escorts in time for the next raid. With the German ME-109s out of range, the Sea Hurricanes could abort many of the SM-79s. I think we could describe CR42s as "if it flies, it dies."



*Spitfires provide CAP over Royal Navy ships. The Spitfires ruled the air over Malta and the sea.
Photo by Bruce.*

Red Devils Ambush: WWII One Hour Wargame

by Russ Lockwood

After reviewing the skirmish rule set *One Hour Wargames: Ancients and Medieval* (see the 09/21/2024 AAR or up on hmgs.org), I was pleasantly surprised when Renaud laid out a playtest scenario for his WWII variation. Renaud gave me the Germans and he took the British.

Herr General and escort drive through hedgerow country.

OHW uses a card draw system, mostly opposing draws, to determine initiative, action points, and combat results. The use of a standard deck of cards would give a numerical range of 1 to 13. High card wins and if tied, the tiebreak is the suit -- Spades beat Hearts, which beat Diamonds, which beat Clubs. There's a mnemonic, but of course I can't remember. Best I can do is "SuperHeroes Deserve Cookies."

Renaud added an Overwatch Phase in between Initiative and the First Player Action Phase. Here you place a figure on Overwatch, which allows a figure to interrupt the other player's turn to react to an enemy figure. So, an Overwatch figure can fire on an enemy crossing within line of sight and distance. If fired upon, the Overwatch figure (if it survives) will fire back.

He also used a custom card deck that only went from 3 to 9. He flattened the extremes to avoid giving one side too much advantage over the other. As both players use their own deck, how the opposing cards compare will drive the game, but understand that each player's deck has the exact same cards. I suppose if you want to provide a qualitative advantage, say, veterans versus conscripts, you can shift or even substitute cards within the decks to give the veteran deck more high-value face cards and the conscript deck more numerical cards.

Combat is generally one firing card versus one defending card, but the number of cards changes depending on the circumstance. LMGs draw two firing cards and the Vehicle MGs draw three firing cards. Targets in light cover draw one extra card and in heavy cover two extra cards. High card wins.

As you can discern, the more cards you draw, the greater the chance to draw a card higher than the opponent.

When hit (firing card or cards are higher than defending card or cards), a figure is placed on its side. At the end of a turn (a card draw of a joker), each toppled figure draws a card: "Red is Dead. Black is Back." Yep, that was a mnemonic I remembered. Lose enough troops and you draw a card and add a leadership modifier. If the total is equal to or higher than your dead, you continue. If less than, game over.

As for moving and firing, a player draws a card for the number of Action Points (APs) and firing costs 1AP, moving 6 inches costs 1 AP, and so on.

There's more, but those are the basics.

The Scenario

Just after D-Day, a German general races to return to his unit in France. Ah, but the local maquis inform the British Red Devils paratroopers, who send a squad to ambush the general. The general must cross the board.

Germans: Car with one general and one driver (a "bruiser" in OHW parlance, who is good in melee). One Puma in the lead. One halftrack (including one driver) carries a NCO-led squad of one MG gunner, two-man LMG team, one sharpshooter, and five regular landsers.

Red Devils: NCO-led squad with two-man Bren team, two-man PIAT team, and five regular paratroopers.

French: One "crash car."

Terrain: Hedgerows line the winding road except where the Germans enter. Woods have little undergrowth, allowing troops to move freely and the Puma and Halftrack to crawl through the woods at 6 inches per Action instead of 12 inches per action on the road.



Troops: 6 inch move per movement action. The PIAT has an 18-inch range, and 18 inches constitutes a normal shot, while shots over 18 inches provide one extra card to the targeted figure.

The FFI block the road.

The Battle

I took a conservative move down the road. Just 'round that bend, the French shoved their burning car across the road, blocking my progress.

I could just use the Puma to push the car out of the way, but from past encounters, my clever troops knew the French often booby-trapped the car to blow up the car and the vehicle pushing it out of the way.

So I dismounted Private Fritz and sent him to investigate the car. As he made his way adjacent, a British PIAT team muscled into the hedgerow and loosed a shot at the Puma. It hit, but only did a couple of points of damage. The Puma shot back with its MG.

Vehicle MGs turn over three firing cards and have a trait called "ricochet," which means a good draw of cards can topple up to three enemy figures. I managed to topple the PIAT firer, but not his loader.

Fritz checks the car despite being fired upon by a pair of paratroopers (bottom right corner). Meanwhile, the Puma loses the duel with the PIAT team (upper right peeking out behind rock).

Meanwhile, five Red Devils blocked the road, although they soon dispersed. Two raced to the hedgerow closer to the general's car. I dismounted the LMG team and sent them across the hedgerow and behind a tree to bring enfilading fire on these two bold paratroopers.

Alas, one Brit had Overwatch, so as I crossed the field between hedgerow and tree, he fired, but fortunately missed. I set up the LMG in cover and fired at him and his buddy. I got the impertinent shooter, but no ricochets touched the other bloke.

Meanwhile, the Bren team and another lad filtered in on the other side of the road. I backed up the halftrack and went around the hedge. An exchange of firing did little.

I also filtered two landsers through the hedgerow to support the half track. They did nothing when firing, but the Bren gun barked and ricocheted both of them.

As the end of the turn, all of us stood back up.

The Car

With all the lead flying, Private Fritz never had a chance to examine the car. Two Red Devils raced up the road to be behind the car, so Fritz was on one side of the hood and the paratroopers were on the other.

Fritz pulled a potato masher from his belt, pulled the string, and pitched it over the hood. With the grenade at their feet, the Red Devils had no cover. The cards turned over and one was down.



The other shot across the hood, but Fritz ducked out of the way. Hah! Stupid Tommy! Bringing a gun to a grenade fight!

The Puma and PIAT traded shots and the Puma accumulated more damage. The MG knocked the gunner down again.

Back in the woods, the German LMG duelled with the two bold paratroopers, coming out the better and toppling one.

I moved the sharpshooter through the hedgerow and across the field to bring additional fire.

The turn ended and everybody stood back up.

The Bren team behind tree gun down two landsers with a ricochet shot. Only one stood back up. The green marker signifies an Overwatch action never used.

Firefight

A German event card was drawn, giving the Germans another squad. Then the British event card was drawn, giving the British another squad.

The grenade battle of the car hood continued with a paratrooper popping a grenade over the hood. Fritz went down.

The German LMG versus two bold Devils continued and the lead paratrooper went down again.

On the left, the halftrack proved effective and knocked the Bren gun gunner over.

In the center, the PIAT noted that the third hit was the charm and the Puma brewed up.

The turn card was drawn again and again, All the British stood up. One German failed to arise near the halftrack.

The RAF strafing result.

Typhoon Ground Attack

The British drew an event card, bringing in a Typhoon. The strafing attack proved deadly against the thin tin of the car. Both the General and the Driver fell to the pavement riddled with holes.

The halftrack and remaining German troops filtered away to fight another day.



Lessons

What a lovely fun-filled game. Most mechanics worked as written, although we noodled over a couple of card conundrums. But it all worked out.

The modified card deck kept things close. Indeed, that damned PIAT team won every initiative and won every shot. How different it would have been had the Puma shot first and toppled the gunner. Then, no PIAT shot at all.

And we were lucky that almost every 50-50 dead or alive card draw brought everyone (except one German) back to full strength. Even coming close to 50-50 would have changed the game. But to be fair, dice do the same lucky runs at times.

I didn't think the Overwatch worked as expected, or at least as I expected. Indeed, we started to realize that the player with Initiative is better off, action point-spending-wise, to ignore Overwatch. As the Initiative side goes first, placing a figure on Overwatch costs 1 AP, which is the same as firing it on the first place. If you fire it, the Overwatch comes off. As Overwatch fire responds to enemy fire, I'd rather spend the point to fire (assuming the figure has a legal target).

The end result was a post-game elimination of the Overwatch phase and the inclusion of something called Trigger Fire -- if shot at and survive, fire back without spending an AP.

Ah, but that's for another playtest.

Thanks, Renaud for the game.

The original Red Devil ambush placement.



HMGS Next Generation Outreach: Battles

Text and photos by John Spiess

Mayans in New Canaan, CT

We had 10 kids playing, but a few didn't stick around for the group photo when the game ended.

The kids playing the Maya won the game since they worked together and had a better plan. There were three objectives on the board. Two small villages and a temple. You had to control two of three to win the game.

The New Canaan gamers.

The Maya team basically just gave up one village and concentrated on the other two. All the Aztec troops on that end of the board had to run towards the temple, but the Maya used a few troops effectively to just slow them down so they couldn't affect the outcome.

Aztecs vs. Mayans in New Canaan.

One of our regulars, Oscar, pretty much got demolished but probably won the game for the Maya team.



Aztecs in Darien, CT

As school had started, a few of our regular gamers were busy. However, we greeted three new kids because our regular gamers do a great job telling their friends about our gaming. One new kid plays *D&D* and commented that he liked this as well and will be back.

Aztecs vs. Mayans with Darien gamers.



I used a simplified version of *Sword and the Flame* rules which they picked up right away.

After School in Stamford, CT

Good news: HMGS Next Gen replaced the YMCA as a Stamford School System partner. Stamford's after school program starts in October, and I also received a special request to run another Aztec game on October 15 in Stamford.

Simsbury gamers with the well-traveled Aztecs vs. Mayans game.

Aztecs in Simsbury, CT

This event helped the Simsbury Library celebrate its 150th Anniversary. Many donating patrons attended and stopped by the game to observe. They all commented on what a great program this was for the library. Since they are the people writing the checks to the library, this really helps us going forward.

These kids are mostly high school students at this point. A few regulars had lacrosse practice and couldn't make it. But we had one new boy named Finn who really liked it, so he will be back. He got dropped off at the same time that I arrived, so he helped me bring everything inside and helped set up.

Turn left at the temple and box 'em in.

The kids also picked up the rules quickly. After a few turns, I almost had nothing to do. Not bad. I spent the time talking to our library contact and found out a few interesting things. One of which is that this library makes a big deal about diversity and being a bully-free safe zone. Two of our regulars come specifically because of that. At pickup time, the mother came along with the grandmother and took me aside and thanked me. That has happened before, but now it made more sense to me. The librarian also said this program pretty much "checked all their boxes" and will definitely be included in next year's budget, so that's good news.

I pitched a Roman Chariot game for our next visit, so everyone was pretty excited for that.

Far Right: Simsbury gamers clearing a village.

Right: Darien gamers clearing the same village.



NEWS

Taylor Swift vs Joan of Arc: Followers

by Russ Lockwood

If you didn't read last issue's HMGS NextGen article, one of the young girls who played in the Joan of Arc game asked a question: "How many followers did Joan of Arc have?"

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

The girl responded, "So probably not as many as Taylor Swift."

AAR reader Marc picked up on that and in our e-mailed banter, he asked, "But how many followers did Joan of Arc have as expressed as a percentage of the world population?"

Good question. To the internet...

Taylor Swift has about 233 million followers out of a world population of 8 billion.

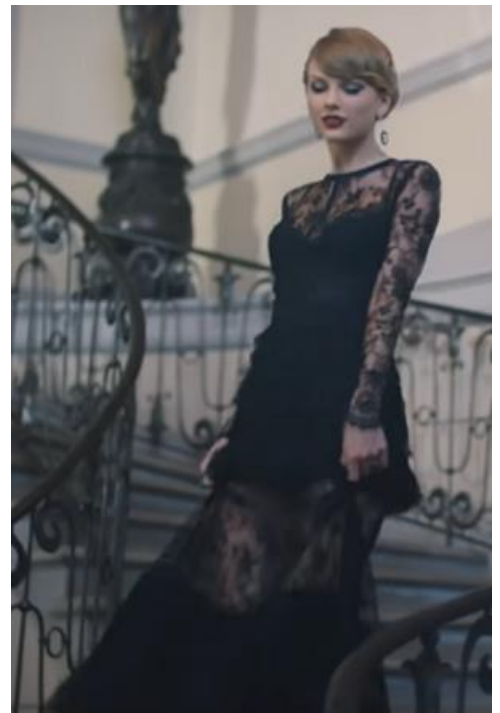
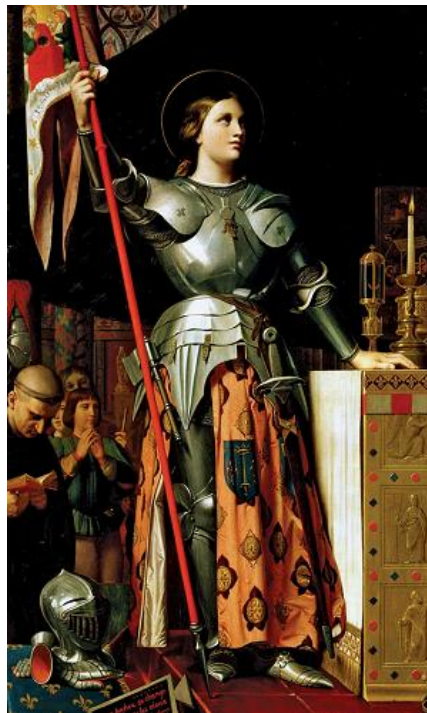
So, I googled and found two references for the year 1400 (OK, a tad early for Joan, but probably not that much off):

"With an estimated population of 11 million in 1400...France was the most populated country in Europe (twice the size of Britain...)"

"World Population by Year: 1400 -- 350,000,000"

So Taylor Swift apparently has two-thirds the number of followers as the world population in 1400.

As far as percentages go, Joan's 11 million of 350 million equals about 3.14% while Taylor's 233 million of 8 billion equals about 2.91%. Joan of Arc squeaks by with just a teensy bit more global influence...



Against the Odds Magazine: 100th Game

by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine announced that *Stalingrad: Verdun on the Volga* was its 100th major wargame release, which also includes the sister TPS line. Note that this milestone does not include the postcard games, mini-games, and game kits -- they estimate that would increase the tally to 175 games.

Info:

<https://www.atomagazine.com/Details.cfm?ProdID=194>

Stalingrad: Verdun on the Volga now shipping.



New Wargame: *Britskrieg!*

by Russ Lockwood

Against the Odds magazine released the wargame *Britskrieg!*, which recreates Operation Brevity, a WWII North African battle that happened May 15-16, 1941. Designed by Lembit Tohver, *Britskrieg!* comes with an 8.5x11-inch map, 54 mounted and die-cut 9/16-inch counters, and just two pages of rules (plus two more pages with optional rules, historical commentary, and notes). Small, but the game still factors in the gaps between tank and anti-tank abilities and the organizational approach to war between the two sides, plus the different AFV types. The game models the British art of war at that time. Includes plenty of options for replay.

From *ATO*: "For the month of October, or while supplies last, you'll score a free copy of *Britskrieg!* with any order. No codes. No special passwords. No hoops to jump through."

Buy an existing game (or games) from the website and *ATO* will include *Britskrieg!* at no extra charge. Some restrictions. See *ATO* website for more details: <https://www.atomagazine.com/>



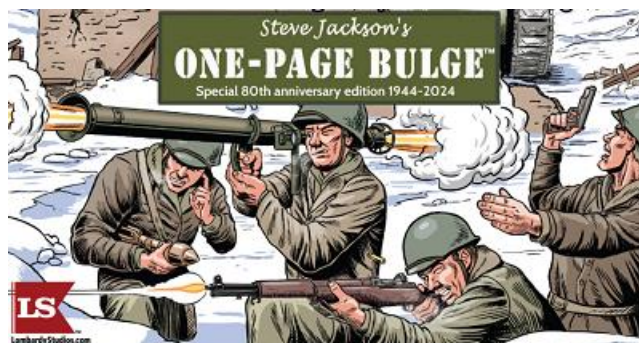
2nd Edition: *One Page Bulge*

by Russ Lockwood

Lombardy Studios will release an updated version of the 1980 wargame *One Page Bulge* featuring new graphics and presumably printing all the rules onto both sides of an 8.5x11-inch piece of paper. No other details -- just a pre-launch Kickstarter notice.

Info:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/danalombardy/one-page-bulgetm-2nd-edition>



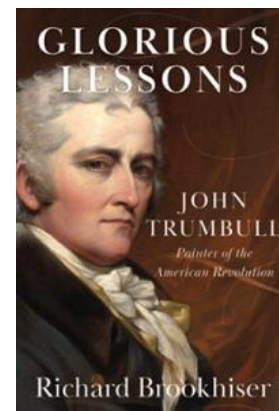
Cadwalader AWI Lecture Series: Princeton Battlefield

by Russ Lockwood

The Princeton Battlefield Society begins its inaugural Cadwalader Lecture Series with author Richard Brookhiser, who will speak about his book *Glorious Lessons: John Trumbull - Painter of the American Revolution*.

The lecture is on Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at the Nassau Club in Princeton, NJ. Tickets are \$50 per person and include wine, beer, and light hors d'oeuvres. The book is available for purchase for \$25 at the event.

Info: <https://pbs1777.org/cadwalader-lecture-series-with-richard-brookhiser/>



WWII Australian Heavy Mortar:

3D Printed

by Russ Lockwood

Chris Parker Games released a number of 3D-printed WWII Australian figures, including the Heavy Mortar and crew. Package includes one mortar and four crew figures. All miniatures are single pieces and all are unpainted plastic.

Available in 28mm (\$16), 40mm (\$22), and 54mm (\$36) plus 60 cents packing charge.

Also available: Australian troops and Australian Light Mortar.

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



And Elves, Too: 3D Printed

by Russ Lockwood

Chris Parker Games released a number of 3D-printed Elves, including Elven Militia. Package includes six figures. All miniatures are single pieces and all are unpainted plastic. Spears are not included.

Available in 28mm (\$16), 40mm (\$22), and 54mm (\$36) plus 60 cents packing charge.

Also available: Militia Commanders, Militia with bows, and Traveling Elves.

Info:

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



New Wargame: Langport 1645

by Russ Lockwood

High Flying Dice Games released a new wargame: *Fairfax's Revenge: The Battle of Langport* (July 10, 1645). This is game number nine in Roberto Chiavini's 10-game series of English Civil War battles. Langport, fought in the aftermath of Naseby between the King's forces under Goring and the Parliamentarian forces under Fairfax, confirmed the ascendancy of the Parliamentarians. Although losses were not that many, the morale loss was catastrophic.

The game contains One 11x17-inch hex map sheet, 168 unmounted single-sided counters, one Player's Aid Sheet, and five pages of rules. Designed by Roberto Chiavini, developed by Paul Rohrbaugh, and features graphics by Ilya Kudriashov. \$16.95 plus shipping. Mounted counters cost \$8.00.

Web: www.hfdgames.com/ecw9.html

Promotion: Any purchase of 4 or more HFD games and you get one mini-game for free (your choice of any that sell regularly for \$10.95). Alternative Bonus: Instead of a free mini-game, you can get a single-deck card set (any of those that sell regularly for \$11.00).

All HFD games: www.hfdgames.com



Maritime Dominion: Card Game

by Russ Lockwood

Dan set up a pirates- and mariners-oriented mass of *Dominion* cards and told me to pick 10 piles. As they were all face down, I picked the 10, added one event, and dove into a game.

Dominion is a clever deck-building card game. I think there's about 15 expansions and Dan seems to have them all. Each player starts with the same 10 cards, has access to buy cards from the same 10 piles, and has access to buy money and other cards. It may start out exactly even, but as players buy different cards and your deck gets reshuffled as you play, no two games are ever alike -- even if you have the same cards.

In both games, Dan proved the smarter at spotting action card-combos, although I narrowed the gap in Victory Points to one card's worth in the second game.

Each game took about an hour.

Game in progress. Mass of unknown card piles to right.





The gamers start to gather. You can see three tables from middle bottom of photo to upper right corner. The other two tables are behind all the gamers. Compared to gray hairs like me, this was a younger crowd.

Mega Multi-Table *D&D*: Return of the Lich

by Russ Lockwood

The second "StrattonCon" was another family and friends affair with a three-day extravaganza in their zebra-striped carpeted basement. I couldn't make Friday or Sunday, but I made sure to attend the Mega *Dungeons and Dragons* main event on Saturday. My guess was that 15 or so attended the five-, count 'em, five-table *D&D*

adventure. If any more people attended, they'd have to think about moving it to a hall. You could probably cram another half-dozen gamers into the basement, but believe me, it was loud enough at times -- what with all the cheering, die-roll moaning, and laughter.

Pre-gamers, the five-table stretch. Foreground to background of upper right corner: Outer Wall table, Dorn wall table, and Catacombs table. Upper left corner: two city tables.



Given all the gamers, this was more a melee game than a standard RPG adventure, and believe you me that Sean, Connor, Keith, and Fred had their hands full answering rules questions and nuances. They even had a chance to answer questions other than my own...

I am amazed at the encyclopedic knowledge loaded into their collective brain RAM. Have you even looked at the new manuals? They are thick tomes of minutiae, not the little booklets of yester-century or even the first boxed set with a blue manual cover and a set of dice inside.

I believe we used *D&D* version 5.0. Last version I played was 3.5 or some such. I have to give Connor a lot of credit for streamlining the character creation process for me -- I just asked for a Robin Hood-esque character and so he made one for me. Of course, I wasn't quite sure which Robin he would select...

Would the real Tazan Rell please stand up, please stand up, please stand up... The classic.



Tazan Rell

I named my character Tazan Rell, or Taz for short.

Apparently, my archer is a folk hero who is characterized as a sharpshooter -- ignores a target's half and three-quarters cover and a decent chance of getting a hit even with an aimed shot. In this melee system, you really need the sharpshooting damage. A regular arrow shot gives +9 to my d20 To Hit die roll and 1d8+4 damage. A sharpshooter shot is only +4 to my d20 To Hit roll, but 2d8+14 damage.



Maybe one of these Tazan Rells?

As an archer, I get two shots per attack action. But let's not be that impressed, a lot of ugly fuglies like giants possess between 80 and 140 hit points (HP) and you need something like 15+ to 17+ on the d20 to hit their tough hide. So, basically a 35% to 50% chance of rolling a hit with a higher damage sharpshooter shot.

For little things, like the dreaded kobolds, I only needed a 12 to hit and they only had 5 or so Hit points. A +9 to the d20 roll and at least 5 HP meant I had about a 90% chance of hitting. Of course, I only learned that from trial and error as I'm not that fluent in *D&D* -- new version, new rules, and new numbers made my years-earlier info obsolete.

Did I mention how impressive the GMs' knowledge of *D&Dese* was?

How about him?

A Little Campaign Background

Duke Charis Stirling used to be a stand-up noble until he got greedy for arcane knowledge of the dark arts. That led him to become a lich and terrorize the duchy. The peasants revolted, overthrew him, and locked him in the catacombs beneath the city of Sheffield.

Baron Clovis created The Gold Company to search the catacombs for a rumored big treasure horde. Sure enough, the Gold Company inadvertently broke Charis out of his imprisonment. Now someone, or someones, have to put Charis back in his prison...and if we manage to grab a little leftover loot from the catacombs, so much the better.

Oh, Rell no!



The Catacomb Table

Five of us were at the Catacomb Table: Steve (Crystof -- Wizard), Jared (Gorvin -- Ranger), Mike (Saruszko -- Wizard), John (Rufus -- Cleric), and Me (Tazan "Taz" Rell -- Archer). Connor was the GM. Each table had to elect a leader, so Steve pointed at me, I pointed at John, and the other three hadn't heard or reacted. Then I thought about it.

"Who has the highest charisma?" I asked. I knew that was the right question to ask when GM Connor nodded. We compared numbers and I proved to have the highest charisma. I suddenly wore a pendant blessed by the local Pelor bishop.

The pendant had two functions: Communications Device with other Leaders, and link to the Basilica of Pelor that would resurrect us should we perish in our quest.

"Comm check. Comm check," I said. "Uno, dos, tres, catorce..."

It's a beautiful day,
Oh so good for monster hunting.
It's a beautiful day,
Use their hides for castle bunting..."

That was also when I gave an inspired 10-minute speech, although GM Fred previously warned me just to say I'm giving a speech and not to actually speak for 10 minutes because I'd bore fellow gamers. Well, by Pelor's left nostril, I only made a 10-second speech, which I have completely forgotten except to seal it with a verbal emoji: "Go Team!"

Part of the A-Team: Gorvin the Ranger (Jared left) and Cristof the Wizard (Steve) scrutinize their abilities.

By the way, each round of action is only 6 seconds, or 10 per minute. If I really gave a 10-minute speech, that would be 100 rounds. I'd still be giving the speech long after the game ended, as we went through 25 rounds or maybe a couple more (sez my notes) and a dinner break during the six hours of gaming.

To Arms Elsewhere

Another table held the Outer Wall. This seemed to be a stop-gap wall to keep out low-level riff-raff. Alas for our co-defenders of Sheffield, more than riff-raff showed up, including the leader of the ugly fuglies: DracoLich.

A dracolich is an undead dragon that could fly and breathe some sort of plague-goo. Along with a Manticore that shot quills like a machine gun, this would thin the ranks of defenders and open the way for giants and riff-raff to exploit a breach.

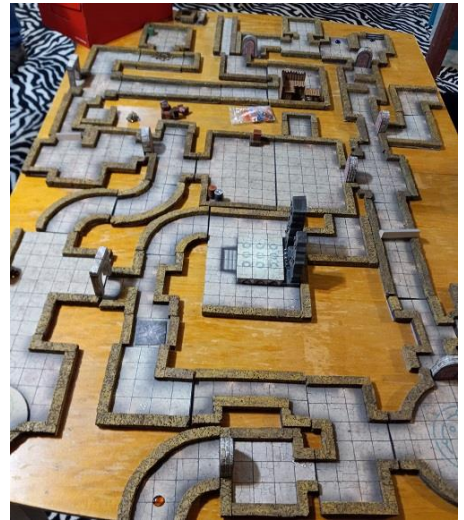
The other table held the village of Dorn with even less effective walls. The characters aiding the villagers were a sort of fire brigade that raced from one hot spot to another to stem the assault and counter-attack monsters that crossed over or through the wall.

Both defensive spots would face considerable challenges.

My full A-Team (l to r): Rufus the Cleric (John), GM Connor, Saruszko the Wizard (Mike), Gorvin the Ranger (Jared) and Cristof the Wizard (Steve). Down we go.

Down The Catacomb Stairs

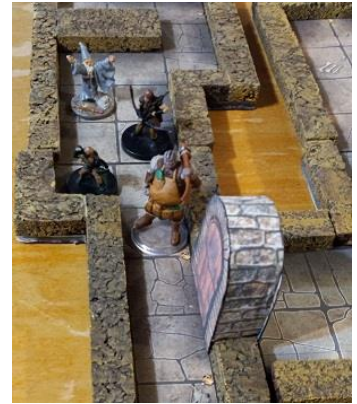
As for our five-adventurer group, we crept down the stairs to the catacombs with the mission to find and plug any stairs or openings to the city above.



Apparently, skeletons and evil riff-raff were trying to emerge at ground level.

With Tazan "Taz" Rell (that's me) leading the way, four of us pushed down a corridor. The fifth party member, Saruszo the Wizard, headed the opposite way and came to a door. Shuffling and scampering were heard behind it, just the same as those of us in the main party advancing down a long corridor heard on the other side of a different door.

Rufus in the lead, Taz covering the door, Gorvin following, and Cristof in the back. Saruszo was off trying to spike a door.



Saruszo was about to spike the door shut when the door reached out with a mouth and bit him. The door was a Mimic (shapeshifting monster disguised itself as a door). The resulting hit points were duly subtracted and Saruszo freed himself. The Mimic changed shape and slunk into the depths of the catacombs.

Spiders drop from the ceiling to ambush Gorvin while Taz shoots arrows into the spiders. Rufus avoided trap doors (orange chips), but is being pinged by kobold archers behind barrier (left). A kobold advances from the big room.



Meanwhile, Taz wanted nothing to do with any door and tried to bypass a side door found halfway down the corridor. Alas, as he zigged, the floor swung away to reveal a pit filled with stakes. Fortunately, Taz was agile enough to hang onto the edge and avoid dropping onto any stake.

Kobolds pour out of the big room (top), Rufus clears the barrier and smites kobold archers while more pepper him with arrows, and a bat-wing sorcerer (bottom) sends spells our way.

Rookie Mistake

Adventurers on point should always check for traps when invading an enemy lair. I did not, but with a Dexterity boost, I rolled high enough on the D20 saving roll to avoid damage. I hauled myself back into the corridor just in time to be ambushed by Kobold archers.

Kobolds are small, usually one-hit wonder monsters. They basically give a low-level hit or expire after taking just about any hit. Two arrow shots from me and two from Gorvin cut down the interlopers.

That's when the beefy Kobold sorcerer intervened and sent a beam heading our way. The beam missed, but more kobold archers and swordsmen joined the fray.

Crystoff conjured a magical fireball and flung it at the kobolds. He rolled so low, it misfired, exploding near Taz.

"Hey!" Taz yelled. "Watch where you're firing! You almost got me."

Just then, a pair of giant spiders dropped from the ceiling to doubleteam Gorvin, who parried with his rapier and stabbed with abandon, but these spiders were huge.

Now goblins showed up, with one of them flinging a pot of goo that broke over Rufus the cleric.

"I've been slimed!" our Cleric bemoaned, shortly before hammering the offending goblin into the stonework.

Christof, no fool he, cast the spell of Mage Armor on himself, which he



rightly figured would be more effective at repelling arrows and blades than a soft, fuzzy robe.

Even more kobolds showed up, flooding the area. A critical hit by a kobold arrow shafted me for a third of my hit points. I immediately used my one-shot Acme Healing Recitation to restore some of them.

It's the kobold jackpot: more in the large room and more Kobold the barricade (bottom right corner).

Oh sure, the recitation for healing takes but a second, but my inspirational speech needs 10 minutes...

That's when a bolt of fire zipped into the area from beyond the kobolds. Oh, great, a bat-winged kobold sorcerer. Rufus flung his own fireball at the miscreant, but it gestured the fireball away.

Hmmm. Surrounded by kobolds and a couple goblins led by a bat-winged kobold sorcerer? It could be worse. How could it be worse?

A kobold inventor carried a curved spear that was a "scorpion" poison stick and nailed Rufus for a single point, but it was a poison point. Rufus laughed. "I drink scorpion venom for breakfast," he taunted and clobbered the offending kobold.

Cristof saw an opening and conjured up a jet of acid that melted a few kobolds. Taz and Gorvin struck down a couple more kobolds, but they kept coming.

The Key To Skeletons

Meanwhile, back at the former mimic doorway, Saruszo the Savvy beat a hasty retreat from a trio of skeletons that proved to be just as agile as humans. The skeletons were just as smart, too, as they selected optimum paths of attack. Saruszo took hits as he fled towards us.

"By Pelor," Cristof exclaimed. "These skeletons move like Harryhausen skeletons!"

Taz stared down the hall. Skeletons be damned, that kobold sorcerer needed attention. He nocked and drew back an arrow, sighted carefully, and let fly. The arrow hit the kobold sorcerer. He again nocked, drew, and let fly an arrow. His aim was true once again and the evil sorcerer fell to the ground, twitching out the last of his ill-born life.

Taz moved doubletime as he could do. He twitched his bow around his back, brought his shield around front, and drew his rapier. One of the spiders looked about done, for seven of its legs had been hacked off. Taz swept away the eighth, dropping the horror to the floor in a pool of ichor.

"Apparently, it was on its last leg," Cristof deadpanned as Taz finished off the other spider.

Just then, a flight of four kobold arrows flashed by, with one penetrating the Mage Armor. It was but a nick. The skeletons chased Saruszo some more. A kobold nailed Rufus with an arrow.

A goblin snuck around and tossed a wasp nest at Taz, releasing a swarm that peppered the archer with stings. A fire bolt from Cristof misfired, again coming close to Taz.

"Dammit, Cristof!" he cried, swatting away. "I'm an archer, not a Bar-B-Que!"

At that moment, another Kobold wizard arrived on the scene and loosed a firebolt that hit Taz, who rolled a critical save and only lost a third of his HP instead of two-thirds. At least Rufus shifted some fire to the wasps and crisped them away along with a kobold or two.

Rufus was soon felled by a concentrated goblin and kobold attack, but Taz ran over to help revive him with healing stones. Saruszo finally hit a skeleton and ran away, stopping only to place an illusion spell of an intact floor



across the pit with spikes. Alas, the skeleton leapt the pit and hits Saruszo. They're even smarter than Harryhausen skeletons. We bashed 'em into bone dust.

That's when a message arrived recounting the desperation of the defenders on one of the city walls and requesting a fighter. Poof! Gorvin teleported away.

Just then, a horn pealed, its mournful tone echoing down the halls and into the rooms. With a mad dash, the remaining goblins and kobolds, including the wizard, fled through a door at the far end of the large room and a portcullis dropped.

A battered and bloody group of four adventurers celebrated holding the field of battle, stinking kobold and goblin corpses or no stinking corpses.

We cleared the kobolds, although most just fled to regroup. We searched and looted the large room, but then the portcullis creaked open.

Searching And Looting

The large room contained piles of boxes and barrels. We got down to scavenging, but none of us found anything. In fact, we were lucky to find the floor and walls of the room, for we rolled so pitifully. The GM took pity on us and we finally found a chest. Not a one of us could figure out how to open it, so we beat on it with rapiers and daggers.

Then I remembered. "Wait! I pack carpentry and woodworking tools! And the skills to use them."

Who knew they would come in handy in trying to open up a chest. In the end, we smashed it to find a healing potion each and other goodies. I found a Javelin of Lightning, which is like a lightning bolt spell for the unwizardly.

We did what we could to bind wounds, but it was no rest (short or long) for the weary... or the wicked.

The Portcullis Creaks Upwards

Just when we thought we could rest, the portcullis rose, the door creaked open, and out popped kobolds and another inventor. Then another door at the far end of the corridor opened and out popped more kobolds and a sorcerous leader.

We got to work: seven kobolds fell to our wrath as Rufus worked his way to the portcullis door. Cristof hugged the wall to cover Rufus.

Yet the kobold sorcerer hit Gorvin with a scorching ray and the inventor released a skunk.

"Er, are we seeing the north end of a north-facing skunk or the south end of a north-facing skunk?" Taz asked and looked closely. "Aha! It's the north end."

The south end of the skunk sprayed the inventor by mistake. The kobold inventor screams were music to our ears.



Two kobolds charged Taz, working in tandem to stab, albeit without effect. No problem, Taz thought, and knocked and shot two arrows -- missing twice. "Too close!" He twitched the shield around.

Saruszo eyed the sorcerer and loosed three rays of energy. One bounced off the wall, one hit the sorcerer, and the last caused Taz to duck.

"Not you too!" Taz yelled, truly fed up with wizards' inaccuracy. "Spray and pray is Cristof's shtick!"

The kobolds tag-teamed Taz for a quick stab that passed his shield. Taz swung his bow behind him and ripped his rapier from its scabbard. A twist, a lunge, a counter, and a slice dropped both kobolds to the ground.

Gorvin twanged away and hit the sorcerer, who turned around and laid a fire bolt into Gorvin. The ranger dropped to the floor.

Rufus guards the door as Skelly moves in. Apparently, the gate is larger than it appears to allow Skelly through.

Armored Skelly Makes Its Move

The giant armored skeleton moved through the portcullis door and laid Rufus low with a swing of its sword. The cleric suffered severe bleeding, although his shallow breathing showed he clung to life as he lay in a puddle of his own blood.

Gorvin was in even worse shape. His breathing became shallower and shallower.

Skelly advanced into the room as kobolds skittered from behind it.

Christof faced the skeleton alone. Summoning energy from the abyss of the magical realm, he loosed a continuous flow of lightning at the skeleton, who reeled from the assault, but remained standing.

Saruszo moved further into the hall and conjured a ray of his own that sliced through four kobold archers and impacted the sorcerer. Christof used his power of foresight to see that the sorcerer failed to evade the ray. The head kobold joined the archers in dismemberment death.

Kobolds fired arrows at Christof as well as Taz. The wizard was holding his own against Skelly, so Taz charged the kobolds, slicing open one, then pirouetting away to poke through the evil kin's throat. The archer was clever enough to place a third kobold between him and Skelly.

Skelly had enough. Fire shot from its eyes and enveloped Christof, who crumpled to the ground, his mage armor fading away and his robes charred and smoldering.

Then, slowly Skelly turned, step by step, its gaze fixed upon Taz. One giant foot lifted and squashed the intervening kobold. The sword lifted, thrust, and buried deep within Taz. When Skelly withdrew it, Taz slid off the end and dropped to the floor in a heap.

Saruszo, with the way clear to the stairs we had originally come down, sprinted away and took the stairs two at a time. Meanwhile, his companions slowly expired...

Delayed Rescue

A trio of allies, Keul, Sir Pete, and Kodan the Barbarian dropped down a ladder into the catacombs. They charged the kobolds from behind, beheaded a few, and moved towards the big battle they heard down the corridor.



Alas, they were too late. As they fried spiders and slaughtered kobolds, they realized the catacombs would be too much for them. They retreated the way they had entered, which I believe was from the Outer Wall table.

The Outer Wall table trying to fend off giants and other monsters. Fred (left) GMs.

The Light At The End Of The Tunnel

Tazan Rell awoke to darkness, or at least he felt as if he was awake. The last thing he remembered was an immense sword wielded by a giant armored skeleton thrusting through his midsection.

The Dorn table as they dealt with monsters. Sean (right) GMs.

Death seemed strange. Where were the angels? Or at least people he used to know? Or at least floating upwards from where he had been slain.

No, it was all darkness.

He gradually became aware of a cold, hard floor and a warm breeze blowing around him. He stretched, feeling his muscles respond without any pain or discomfort. Taz sat up, rolled to his knees, and stood up. He patted his chest and stomach.

Metal. He felt a metal breastplate. And clothes. He was wearing clothes. He couldn't see anything in the pitch blackness, but he did find his rapier in its scabbard, leather wristguard on his wrist, backpack with tools, and his bow, shield, and quiver around on his back.

It was if he was standing in the catacombs, only without light.

Taz sniffed and smelled nothing. He extended his arms in front of him and made a slow circle while standing in place. Nothing. Nothing except the breeze.

He shrugged off his bow and shield and dug into his backpack for a small box. He soon had flint and steel in hand and a torch on the floor in front of him. Seconds later, the torch flared with fire.

Light. What a concept, he thought. The breeze flickered the torch, making his shadow dance upon the walls. He kept glancing down for pit traps as he followed the breeze to its source.

The breeze flowed through an archway. He thrust the torch before him, but no blades dropped from the ceiling and no monsters chopped him from ambush. He peeked around the corner both ways. To the right, he saw nothing but darkness. To the left, he thought he saw a tiny bit of white light. He turned left. The longer he walked, the brighter the light became.

Squinting against the brightness, he came to a door with a fist-sized hole that allowed the light to shine into the hallway. He lifted up the latch and pushed. The door swung without a sound, releasing so much light he raised a hand to shade his squinting eyes.

"Welcome, Tazan Rell. Enter and be welcome."

Taz stopped, his hand dropping for his rapier.



"No need for alarm, you are safe here," the voice soothed. "We would hardly allow you to keep your weapons if we wished you harm."

"Where am I?"

"It goes by many names, but you are likely to know it as the Basilica of Pelor. You are in the Hall of AlphaOmega in the heart of the mountain that forms part of the city of Sheffield."

"And not beyond the mortal coil?"

"Hardly. That you are here is testament to your favor with Pelor."

Taz walked into the room, his eyes adjusting to the glare that was nothing more than sunlight streaming through a prism in the ceiling. Taz thought the man in front of him was not much older than him. "My thanks," Taz said as he offered a slight nod. "And who are you?"

"I, too, go by many names, but you may call me Acolyte Endi," he answered. "You won't need your torch. Allow me."

Endi flicked his fingers. The torch sputtered to glowing embers and then dark, cold wood. Taz reached out his hand to the end and found it cold to the touch, as if it had never been lit.

"Interesting sorcery." He replaced the torch in his backpack.

"The power of Pelor, I assure you," Endi replied. "Clever of you to light a torch. Most stumble around and then glimpse the pinpoint of light. Sometimes they run from it, but eventually they follow it to here."

Taz nodded. "Maybe they didn't have a torch to light," he suggested. He surveyed the room. It lacked adornment, although a variety of tables and chairs dotted the area. He considered his good fortune. "So... Now where?"

"Where, indeed? That you returned from near oblivion shows Pelor isn't finished with you." Endi gestured to a chair. "If you have any questions, you may sit and ask."

Taz hesitated, but soon sunk into a chair. A crystal goblet was on the table next to him, although he could swear it wasn't there but a minute ago. "How did I get in here?"

"The same power that transferred Gorvin between two places transferred you from the catacombs to here."

"But I was slain. I felt the blade sink and almost split me in two."

"Ah, that's the Power of Pelor," Endi reassured. "You had but the barest of spark left in your soul, but Pelor nurtured it back to a flame."

"I am whole?" Taz asked.

"You are whole."

"I am sane?"

"You are sane."

"I am alive?"

"You are alive."

Taz fell silent and considered his situation. "Am I under obligation?"

"Only to yourself."

"I can leave at any time?"

"Almost. You may leave at any time after your healing and before your time is up."

"When is my time up?"

"Only Pelor knows."

Taz smiled. "Of course. So, when does my healing begin?"

Endi inclined his head towards the table. "When you drink from the crystal goblet."

"What's in it?"

"It goes by many names, but it will help you heal."

"A lot of names go unmentioned around here. Can you give me one?"

The acolyte smiled as he replied, "Endi."

"I meant for what's in the goblet."

"You can try Water of Life, Ambrosia, Elixir of Life, Potion of Pelor, and quite a few more."

"All good, then."

Endi seemed amused. "We would hardly poison you if Pelor thought you worthwhile to bring to the Hall of AlphaOmega. You may alight on your path, either at the beginning or end or any time in the middle."

Taz nodded and plucked the goblet off the table. He regarded it for a moment, then drank the draught. "A bit sweet for my taste."

"Indeed. Now, it is after your healing and before your time," Endi said as he stood. "When would you like to arrive?"

"Now would be good."

"Now it is."

Taz rose as Endi gestured towards a door.

"Another door?"

"Consider it a metaphor."

"Where does it lead?"

"To now," Endi answered.

"Where is now?"

"Where you need to be." Endi stuck out his hand.

A bit bewildered, Tazan clasped it in farewell. "Thank you for your help."

Taz pushed open the door. To his left, the inner walls of the city and to his right, the city itself. He turned left.

Hold The Wall

To his amazement, he found himself among his fellow adventurers of the catacomb, all as healed as he and all with a similar story. They emerged from a tunnel and behind the stone walls of the city. They could hear sounds of battle outside, but only see a big blue goblin balloon floating towards the walls and goblin archers in the basket raining death upon the militia seeking to delay the giants, goblins, and other monsters from reaching the wall.

Our catacomb A-Team arrives late to the party, as revival from near death does have that effect. What do we find? Giants, monsters, and a goblin-crewed hot air balloon.



Taz pulled a special Walloping arrow from his quiver and fired. It hit the balloon square, but did little to the balloon. "Huh, I guess past results do not ensure future performance," he noted. The arrows must only be for creatures. He raced for the stairs up to the battlements.

Gorvin nocked an arrow and let fly at a rope that seemed to be taut, as if something was guiding the balloon. He hit it and it frayed, but the balloon continued on. So did Gorvin, taking the stairs as did the wizard Saruszo. All three made it to the top of the wall and looked out beyond the crenellations.

Rufus and Christof ignored the stairs and raced out the main gate and across the drawbridge. Cristof turned invisible and veered right along the edge of the moat. He had plans to cause chaos behind the monsters. Rufus raced to help a pair of barbarians, militia, and others who were battling a wave of giants, goblins, enlarged rats, and other monsters.

A wave of strength flowed through Taz and the others. Apparently, Keul issued forth some sort of vomiturgy that enhanced the staying power of the defenders, including Taz.

Taz gave his inspirational speech via his verbal emoji "Go Team!" and cranked up the defenders even more. Kodan the Barbarian and his barbarian ally raged into the rats and goblins, slaying them all.

Taz drew another special Walloping Arrow and fired at a giant. It struck dead center mass, but didn't knock it over as advertised. In fact, as Taz considered the premise of such arrows, it only has a 50-50 chance of knocking over a tiny kobold.

Taz shrugged. "Never buy magic arrows from a discount mage," he bemoaned. "How can we stop them?"

He needn't have worried overmuch. First one barbarian killed a two-headed giant. Then Kodan the Barbarian killed a two-headed giant. Then they slaughtered a troll together, although no one thought to torch the pieces that skittered and knitted together.

That attracted attention and rocks and arrows pounded the other barbarian to the ground. Kodan dragged him behind cover.

Meanwhile, the goblin balloon attracted so much fire, the balloon started to descend from loss of hot air.

John (left) has some hard luck with damage to Rufus, but Dylan's barbarian slaughters giants (left) with wild abandon. Taz's arrows and militia attacks convince the stone giant to crouch down (right) behind a building. A bat-wing Kobold shamen battles Cristof (off table to right).

Just when we thought we had neutralized air power, along came the DracoLich and breathed a fiery trail through the militia.

Stone Giant Blues

Taz targeted the Stone Giant. In rapid succession, he hit it three out of four times for 63 HP, with militia arrows adding another 9 HP. Rufus followed up with 27 more HP. Militia added another 14 for a grand total of 113. Mr. Stone Giant wobbled from the punctures and dropped prone to the ground out of sight behind a building.

Christof froze the goblin wizard, preventing any more spells or damage...until someone hit the wizard and shake him out of his statue mode. That also revealed Cristof. The two engaged in a dance contest to the death. Cristof won and retrieved a magic wand and a potion.

With the DracoLich flying off to the other side of the mountain, Keul blinked out to help hold the other part of the city.

A dracolich of sorts. Image from web.



The bad-uns brought in more air power with a Manticore that shoots quills. The Manticore dropped Kodan. Gorvin hit the Manticore. Taz followed with more arrows. The militia took turns pounding it and the beast wobbled away in haphazard flight.

About this time, an Earth Elemental arose from the ground. Saruszo fireballed goblins, driving a pack of them off, and also the Elemental, plinking it.

Rufus raced to heal Kodan, who jumped up and smashed the Elemental. The other barbarian and Gorvin went after the Earth Elemental and doled out enough damage to force it to retreat back underground.

Goblins herded monster frogs towards the walls.

More cries for help arrived via the pendant and another adventurer blinked out to arrive at the other end of the city.

Saruszo zapped the Stone Giant. Taz killed off Oliver Ogre. The rest healed or concentrated on yet another giant.

The attacking monsters' morale broke and two giants, goblins, the pair of monster frogs, and a regenerated troll fled. One adventurer checked the balloon wreckage and found a clay vessel filled with flammable liquid and plugged with a rag.

The Other Side Of The City

Taz had no idea what was occurring on the other side of the mountain. From post-battle reports by survivors, he learned a little.

The city's other side. GM Sean (in pink) charges someone.

The DracoLich continued to take damage until it was about two-thirds dead. The Manticore was also on the downward side of health and both flew off when they realized that the civilians had evacuated the city and entered the mountain fortress. Their army also left, but not before a considerable number of giants and other troops lay dead in the streets.



The Bell Tolls For Thee

The catacombs were still filled with monsters. Taz and his group had barely explored a quarter of the complex, although our tally was impressive: At least 29 regular kobolds, two kobold inventors, and two kobold sorcerers. Three skeletons. Skelly the armored skeleton also killed a kobold by stepping on it. You can add three regular skeletons, four giant spiders, and a wasp horde to the tally as well. We're not sure what happened to the skunk after the inventor died.

Kobolds and skunk. Image from web.

In return, Taz and three adventurers expired and had to be revived in the Basilica of Pelor. In addition, individual adventurers nearly perished and were revived by healing spells and potions.



We had just barely enough to accomplish our civilian evacuation mission, which is the sign of a balanced scenario. We adventurers will increase a level thanks to our success.

Some Post-Game Factoids

Giants are between 80 and 140 HP. Barbarians in the right mood can do between 50 and 100 HP. Let the barbarians fight the giants... I don't know about Skelly, but the fire eyes tipped the balance in the battle with Cristof.

The kobold sorcerers were fifth-level magic users, as were our wizards. That surprised me, but goes a long way towards understanding kobold sorcerer resiliency. At least the inventors were not super kobolds.

Kobolds have this swarming melee ability -- if you have two or more. Basically, they roll 2D20 and pick the highest number, looking for a hit on me at 16+ to 18+. That means they are meting out damage beyond their individual swings. And odds say a four-arrow kobold volley hits with at least one arrow.

We seemed to run mostly into small (kobold and goblin) monsters and large (giants) monsters. The three skeletons that chased Saruszo also were small -- I nailed one with a walloping arrow. It's a good thing we didn't run into small-to-mid-level monsters like orcs. From goblin results, orcs will not be one-hit wonders...

I've always wondered about pit traps. If the dungeon is meant to be used by the denizens of the dark, open pit traps seems counter-productive to the well being of the minions. Do they ever have a safe bridge across them? How many dead minions and riff-raff does it take to generate knowledge about the traps?

If it's some sort of magic control, doesn't the lich or sorcerer have anything better to do that remind minions not to fall into a pit?

In any case, what an entertaining melee. There was little role-playing per se, or using any of the various talents that were not shooting and swinging, but that may be for a future day.

In the meantime, thanks to the Strattons for an entertaining adventure, a magnificent dinner feast, and an entertaining day. 'Twas a great day of gaming.

Space Base: New Recruits

by Russ Lockwood

Matt (standing) and Jordan (right) joined Ed (left), Sean, and me for a five-player game of *Space Base*. They had not played, but it is simple enough to pick up for any gamer and they soon got the hang of it.

Post *D&D*, we played two games. Sean won the first and Matt the second. Jordan had a credit machine going in the first game, but just couldn't convert it to Victory Points. Quite entertaining.



Books I've Read

By Russ Lockwood

The Trojan War: As Military History. by Manousos E. Kambouris. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 270 pages. 2024.

This is history in an age of heroes assisted directly and indirectly by the often warring gods of Olympus. As noted in the introduction, speculation, inference, and educated guesses must suffice when Homeric tales lack specifics.

In the movie *Troy*, the gods are referenced, but mortal men and women make all the moves. In *Clash of the Titans*, the gods directly interfere with mortal men and women. This book treats the gods like the former, with religious inspiration, not direct action.

In all cases, actions involving gods are attributed to the mortal plane. For example, Hercules' labors are attributed to Mycenaean expansion where the monsters and animals are poetic euphemisms for political factions and shield icons (p21).

Likewise, all the heroes who seem to be direct descendants of gods and goddesses are explained by what can be described as selective breeding programs involving temple 'mysteries.' In other words, the priestesses and women of a temple bear children who acquire an association with that temple (p76). An interesting theory.

Another theory: Helen was abducted because she was in line to be queen of Sparta, not because of her beauty. Paris was Priam's adopted son who was Lord of the Host and led a political faction within the city that sought the "kingdom" of Sparta. Hector was Lord of the City, without a political faction, and doubt exists about which one was the actual heir of Priam.

A notable theory is that the Trojans used some sort of secret weapon that threw lightning bolts and caused explosions worthy of Zeus. This "Palladium artifact" almost turned the tide of the siege for an outright Trojan win, but the Greek used better tactics in open field battles. Its exact nature is unknown, but it may have been formulas for the mixture of chemical weaponry and explosives. The Greeks stole the Palladium using special forces (248).

As for the Trojan Horse, it could be a real hollow horse, a siege engine of some sort, or traitors opening the "Horse Gate" to the Greeks. The last option may have a lead on the other two because it explains Aeneas and company's departure from the city loaded with personal possessions.

A full description of the troops, weapons, and tactics of the armies will be familiar to ancient wargamers. Bios of the main heroes explain position, motivations, and actions. Of note is an analysis of the armor of Achilles, who apparently was an exceptionally big, fast lad clad in advanced armor. His invulnerability is less being dipped in the river than advanced metallurgy. Indeed, when Hector kills Patroclus (who wore Achilles' armor and used his weapons), Hector dons Achilles' armor himself for the one-on-one duel with Achilles, who targets vulnerable spots because he knows the armor's strength.

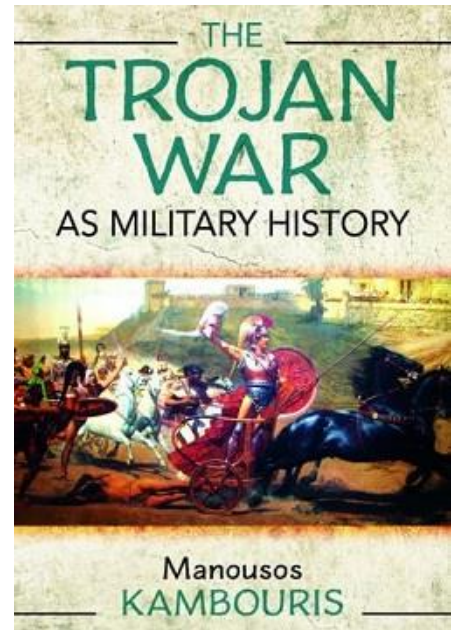
As for the rest, a dissection of the culture, armies, and campaign presents a dizzying array of names and places to keep straight.

The book contains 16 color photos, one color illustration, eight rudimentary black and white illustrations, and four so-so black and white maps. One typo: "mopping the mountain range" (p19) is likely mapping.

It's been decades since I read the *Iliad*, but here's a book that explains the era and posits fascinating theories about the personalities and actions surrounding the Trojan War.

Enjoyed it.

Fun wargaming lore: Rules author and wargamer Phil Viverito created a fantastic 25mm city of Troy that served as wonderful terrain for his siege games at conventions. He was hired to ship his terrain and figures to Hollywood to shoot a Geico commercial. It took three days to shoot a 30-second commercial -- about refighting the Siege of Troy or spending 15 minutes to save on car insurance. I watched the commercial on the web and presumably it's still available online. I also saw Phil's behind the scenes photos of the shoot.



Storm Clouds Over the Pacific: 1931-1941. by Peter Harmsen. Softcover (5.9x9.0 inches). 266 pages. 2024 reprint of 2018 book.

Subtitle: *War in the Far East*

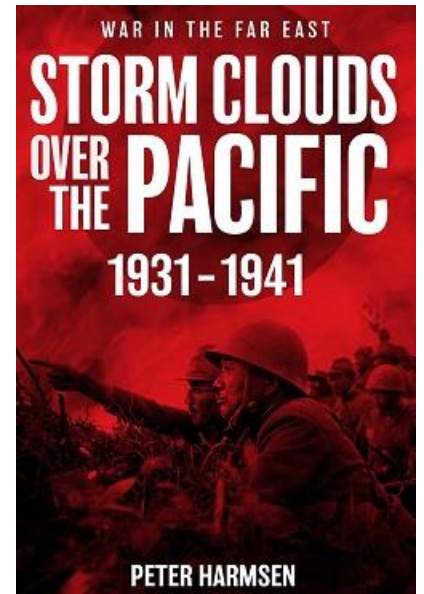
This is the first volume in the series. I had reviewed the second volume, *Japan Runs Wild 1942-1943: War in the Far East* in the 06/28/2024 AAR (also up on hmgs.org) and the first book is as good as the second.

This primarily covers the Japanese attack into Manchuria and then China in an Asian version of blitzkrieg. A lack of Chinese coordination and especially modern weaponry and training aided the Japanese offensive that conquered a large area of China. Chiang Kai-shek considered the Communists under Mao as the main enemy and reacted accordingly. As the Japanese ran out of troops, their attacks withered and allowed the Chinese to occasionally score defensive successes.

A Japanese attack against the Soviets at Khalkin-Gol (Nomonhon) in 1939 proved disastrous and led to a Non-Aggression Pact. The Japanese continued to push for a Germany-Italy-USSR-Japan "Axis" to counter the Western powers. June 22, 1941 ended that dream. Marching into Vichy-controlled French Indochina helped with position, but Western oil, metal, and other embargoes ended any dream other than a quick war and rapid negotiated peace.

The book contains 53 black and white photos, four black and white illustrations, and 10 black and white maps.

This is all well told and smoothly written.
Enjoyed it.



Brotherhood of the Flying Coffin. by Scott McGaugh. Softcover (5.9x9.2 inches). 304 pages. 2024 reprint of 2023 book.

Subtitle: *The Glider Pilots of World War II*

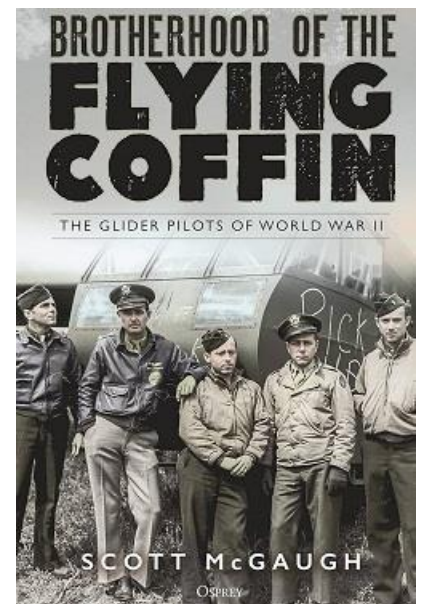
This traces the organization and training of the WWII US glider troops as well as the technical aspects of gliders and gliding. I never knew much about the glider troops other than they were an adjunct to many an operation.

The book covers landings in Sicily (although many never reached the shore), D-Day in Normandy, Operation Dragoon in Southern France (a real mess of a landing), Operation Market Garden in Netherlands, supply run into Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge, and across the Rhine River in Operation Varsity. I had no idea they were used in the Bulge to run supplies as well as medical personnel into Bastogne. Learn something new every day.

The book contains 29 black and white photos.

It's a nice quick read featuring cockpit-level combat. Interesting to note that after they landed, the glider pilots and copilots often had to find their own way back to England -- no plan for recovery. It was often hitch-hiking back to behind the lines, or, they were commandeered to guard German prisoners.

Enjoyed it.

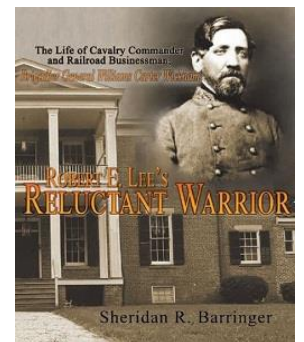


Robert E. Lee's Reluctant Warrior. by Sheridan R. Barringer. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 255 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Life of Cavalry Commander and Railroad Businessman Brigadier general Williams Carter Wickham*

This biography of Wickham is in desperate need of an editor. While the information from research appears solid, the actual prose is disjointed. It is as if the author wrote a paragraph one day, wrote another the next, and then another and so on and then tried to figure out how they should fit together. Tangential excerpts and quotes filter into the text. It's just a clumsily written book.

I'm also convinced no editor touched this book. Besides the repetition of facts, indeed sentences, within a few paragraphs of each other, the book is a bit schizophrenic -- is it a history of a cavalry unit or a biography of its commander. Sure, they are often one in the same, but long stretches of prose don't mention Wickham at all.



And finally, worst of all for a biography: When did Wickham die? It could be July 21, 1888 (p197). It could be July 23 (p201). Or it could be July 24 (p218). If the book was any longer, he might have lasted until August.

The "reluctant" aspect was that Wickham opposed the war and leaving the Union, but did so to serve Virginia. He tried to resign his commission multiple times, but was too valuable for the CSA to let him go. He won an election and used that to exempt himself from the Army.

The book contains 20 black and white images and eight black and white maps. A couple typos: "600 six-hunder" (p61) needs it to read "hundred" and "where...no the Confederates" (p94) probably needs the "no" deleted. Some formatting inconsistencies occur, the worst one being only boldfaces part of the full excerpt (p102).

This had considerable potential as a biography. This has all the hallmarks of a self-published book without editorial oversight.

Becoming Eisenhower. by Michael Lee Lanning. Hardback (6.2x9.3 inches). 273 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *How Ike Rose From Obscurity to Supreme Allied Commander*

When Dwight D. Eisenhower graduated from West Point in 1917, he expected to head to Europe as a front-line officer. Instead, he was retained in the US -- despite multiple efforts to get a transfer. Indeed, he was a staff officer par excellence, and a promising football coach as well, and both those reputations kept him stateside.

Between the world wars, he rotated among many staff positions but only a couple infantry commands and only as high as battalion commander. Yet he was well served by mentors who were impressed with his ability to get along with most officers and politicians and perform his staff function with dedication and excellence. The most influential was George C. Marshall. Multiple training commands, and football coaching jobs, consumed much of his career.

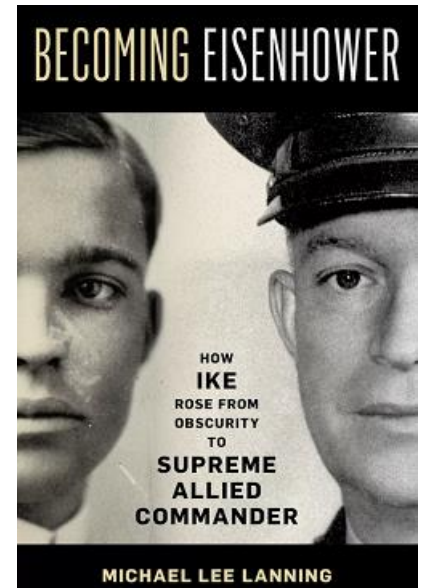
Indeed, I did not know that he became Gen. Douglas MacArthur's chief of staff in the Philippines during the 1930s, although the two fell out over planning and processes of creating a Philippine Army.

His breakthrough came as chief of staff during the pre-war maneuvers, when the press covered him with accolades. When it came time to appoint a Supreme Commander of the European Front, Marshall chose DDE.

The book contains 20 black and white photos.

This is a pleasant, fast-paced read about the rise of DDE between the wars and filled with perceived setbacks that ultimately secured him the top Army job in Europe.

Enjoyed it.



Hitler's Last Chance. by Kevin Prenger. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 193 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *The Propaganda Movie and the Rise and Fall of a German City*

The German film industry continued to make movies during the war, although at a slower pace than pre-war due to shortages of materials. During the Nazi era, Germany produced 1,150 movies, of which only 10% were propaganda films (p55).

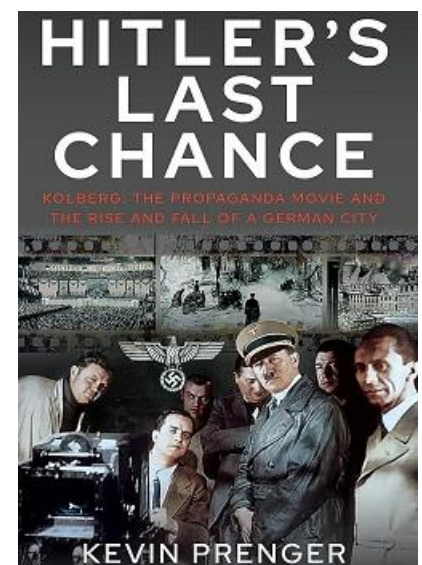
As the war turned against Germany in 1943, Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels put the Reich's entire resources into a movie about the outnumbered and outgunned citizens of Kolberg resisting a French siege during the Napoleonic Wars. The idea was that citizen militia can help the military stave off defeat.

The movie finally was released in January 1945 and few copies were made as chemical shortages were even worse than in 1943. It never quite gathered a following and it never quite had the effect Goebbels expected. The WWII Soviets, unlike the Napoleonic French, captured the city of Kolberg.

The book contains 28 black and white photos and two black and white maps.

A book about an obscure Nazi propaganda movie proved an entertaining diversion from the usual military history books.

Enjoyed it.



Joan of Arc's Army: France 1415-53 (Men At Arms 558). by Philippe Gaillard. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *French Armies Under Charles VII 1415-53*

In the wake of the French defeat at Agincourt, an obscure peasant girl claims visions and works her way up the nobility food chain to lead the French Army against the English. "Lead" might be a bit much, but carrying the standard and enhancing the morale with Divine aid still brought the French back from subjugation -- that and Henry V dying early and a flood of Scottish and Italian mercenaries.

As per the usual excellent *MAA* series, this volume concentrates on weapons and armor with all the other equipment included as well.

Besides a capsule history of the half century, the main selling point is the eight-page center color section of uniform illustrations (17 infantry, four cavalry, two cannons, and five triangular battle standards). Add in 20 color photos, 11 color illustrations, and one color map for a nice succinct illustrated guide to the soldiers of the period.

Enjoyed it.

Barbarossa 1941. by Kevin Boylan. Hardback (9.7x12.7 inches). 256 pages. 2023.

Subtitle: *An Atlas of German Army Situation Maps*

Divided into three sections: Army Group North, Army Group Center, and Army Group South, this big beautiful oversized atlas has just about the perfect format: text on the left-hand page that explains the full-page full-color map on the right-hand page.

Each map shows one day in time of the progress of the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union. A day or two is skipped between maps, sometimes as much as a week, depending on the situation. The maps start with June 22, 1941 and go through December 6, 1941.

It's a large scale, so it's down only to division level with a few regiments separated out. You can see the progress of individual German divisions as the days tick by and the front gets pushed back. Soviet units (known and supposed -- although German intelligence was abysmal (p9)) are also shown on the map. A glossary of place names lists cities, how the name is spelled on the map, modern city name, and maps it appears on (but not page numbers, which limits its usefulness).

The book contains 107 full-page maps taken from a 1942 book of OKH *Lage Ost* (Situation East) maps that were 'cleaned-up' from the original 1941 published book.

Indeed, photographing or scanning the book means that Army Group North's maps often show the middle spine crease. I wish it wasn't there, but a scanned book with AGN creased maps is better than no maps.

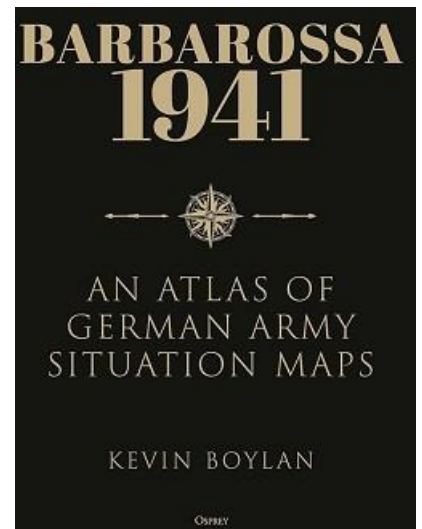
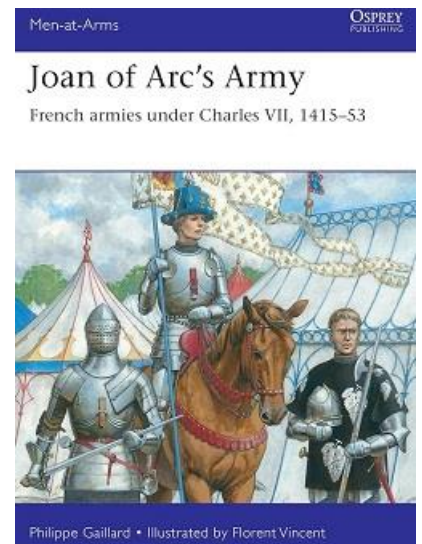
Another small nit is that the map key does not define all symbols on the map. Every once in a while, you run into one, but that's a minor issue and you can usually figure it out. A bigger nit is a lack of scale on the maps. I realize the scanned sections didn't have the map portion containing a scale, but a mention in the introduction would be helpful.

The text generally keeps up with the map, pointing out particular hot spots and situations. It reads well and if you want more analysis, a multitude of books on Barbarossa exist to delve deeper into operations.

One typo: "the fall Talinin" (p60) is better with "fall of Talinin."

It makes me want to break out and set up my old *Fire in the East* game from the *Europa* series.

Enjoyed it.



Operation Dragoon. by Anthony Tucker-Jones. Softcover (6.2x9.2 inches). 228 pages. 2024 reprint of 2009 book.

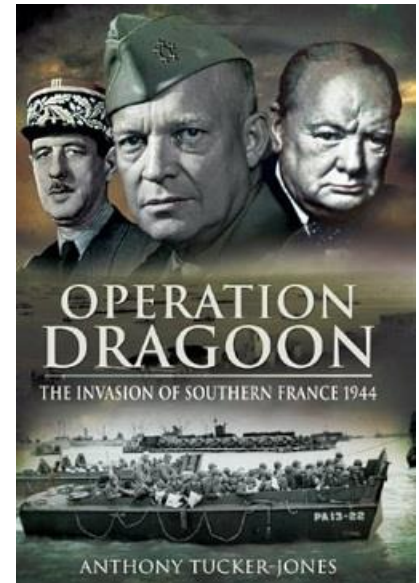
Subtitle: *The Liberation of Southern France 1944*

A fine encapsulation of the political maneuverings to launch an invasion of Southern France as a diversion for the main landing in Normandy and the drive up the Rhone River valley and to the German frontier. The push and pull was ultimately between Churchill and FDR, which filtered down to Eisenhower. The manipulations and exertions are especially interesting as the political promises to Stalin of a second front mixed with the military realities. It was mostly about resources, especially landing craft, that would need to be allocated to such a diversionary attack.

Once decided, the landing proved relatively straightforward with the usual problems of lost units and such. German forces had been siphoned off to the Normandy front, so the German defense was more of a delaying action than hard defense. The US breakout and Falaise Pocket accelerated the German withdrawal back to the German frontier.

The book contains 33 black and photos and five black and white maps. The Appendix contains OOBs generally down to division level as well as naval units and some air assets.

It's a smooth read on the lesser-covered invasion of France.
Enjoyed it.



Captured at Arnhem: Men's Experiences In Their Own Words. by Peter Green. Hardback (6.5x9.5 inches). 584 pages. 2022.

British troops returning home after spending time in German POW camps were given a form to fill out with a variety of questions about conditions, locations, work details as a POW, and so on. This book prints out the responses from 2,358 forms submitted by the 6,000 or so troops that surrendered at Arnhem.

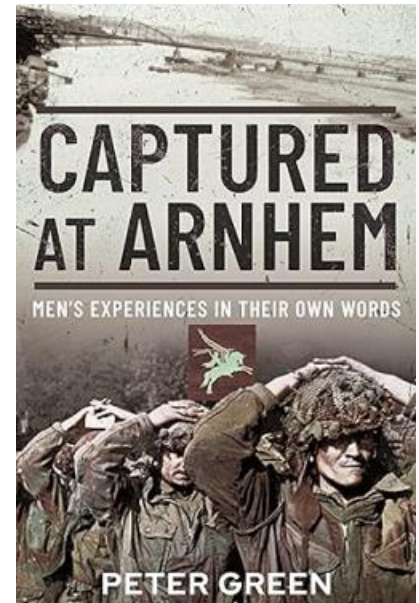
I suspect the questionnaires were typed into a spreadsheet as the answers are printed sideways in multiple long tables. The book is generally divided by topic: Camps, Interrogations, Sabotage, Collaboration, Assistance to other POWs, Evacuation Marches, and Escapes Attempted.

Much of it is repetitious, but, and this is probably the marketing angle, if you are tracking an ancestor, this book will be easier to work with than the originals stored in the British archive.

I looked up Lockwood, and lo and behold, Lance Corp. Joseph William Lockwood, gunner in the 156 Battalion, 1st Air Landing Light Royal Artillery shows up in the tables (p108 and p395). He is like many other entries, being housed in four Stalags and was worked in a coal mine. And that's about it.

The book contains 14 black and white photos and three black and white illustrations.

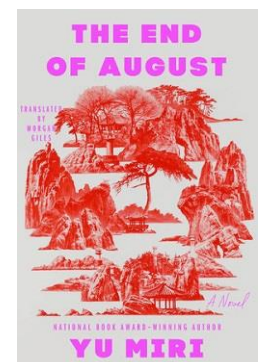
I can't say I read this cover to cover. I paged through it here and there, alighting on some entries at random. If you are looking for an ancestor who was taken prisoner at Arnhem by the Germans, this book may help you find him.



The End of August: Novel. by Yu Mari. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 710 pages. 2023 translation of 2003 book.

As far as I can tell, a modern day marathon runner wants to contact the spirit of her 1930s ancestor who just missed going to the 1936 Olympics and is training for the 1940 Olympics. The idea is to imbue herself with such spirit. I'm guessing that when you come across the "inhale exhale" passages, that's her communing with herself and the spirit.

The book starts with 20 pages of a spirit contacting ceremony that almost made me give up the book. I flicked through more pages until I could find something resembling a narrative. Bits and pieces of the ancestor's childhood and life and times of a Korean under Japanese rule proved a bit interesting, but the narrative kept breaking off to inhale and exhale -- a rapidly annoying aspect of the book.



I set the book aside for a few days to see if a fresh look would help. Nope. I lasted until page 342 and gave up. Maybe there's a good novel in there, maybe not. Maybe it's my cultural bias in literature, maybe not. All I know is that I wasn't enamored with any character and couldn't follow the narrative long enough to be interested in the inhale and exhale outcome. Just not my kind of novel, I guess.

Roman Army Units West Provinces 3: Men At Arms 557. by Raffaele D'Amato. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *4th-5th Centuries*

What an impressive OOB (p10-12) of Roman units and detachments (vexillationes) in particular province areas at particular years. It was enough for me to break out the magnifying glass to read the extra small font. I can just imagine a campaign game...

...although you'll need other sources to create one. Nonetheless, that OOB is as complete a one as I've run across. Granted, I'm not an expert on the twilight of Roman civilization and entry into the so-called Dark Ages. Legios, Cohors, Alaes, Equites, Numeri, and other categories are included.

The chapters divide into geographical province areas such as Hispania, Gaul, and so on. The extensive weapon, armor, and equipment information is tailored by area, which helps when you field units from the OOB.

The usual MAA eight-page color center section of uniform illustrations offers 24 figures in a mix of infantry and cavalry. The one wrinkle I ran across in the illustrations is the use of color on spear shafts -- not all, but many and a mix of solid colors and stripes. Food for thought for your painting.

The booklet also contains 45 color photos, 43 black and white illustrations, and one black and white photo.

Enjoyed it.

Warships Komandorski Islands 1943: New Vanguard 333. by Mark Lardas. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 48 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The USN and IJN Fight the Last Pure Surface Battle*

A nice, succinct recap of a relatively obscure WWII naval battle near the Alaskan Aleutian Islands between the USN and the IJN. This is eminently useful for creating a small scenario as the number of destroyers, light cruisers, and heavy cruisers ships are few and no airpower is used except for a Japanese float plane that did little. You can even add the three Japanese cargo ships bringing supplies to Attu and Kiska for tabletop color.

The ships receive a quick overview of weapons, armor, and other capabilities. The most striking aspects is the US ships had radar and the Japanese did not, although that was not a major issue in the battle, and, the US ships had superior damage control equipment and crew training, which did affect the battle.

The battle proves interesting because each sides' engineering crews made errors that crippled various ships at various times. You need some sort of random "oops" roll every so often to mimic that aspect of the battle.

The booklet contains 36 black and white photos, three black and white illustrations, three color photos, nine color ship profiles (top and side), and four one-page color action illustrations.

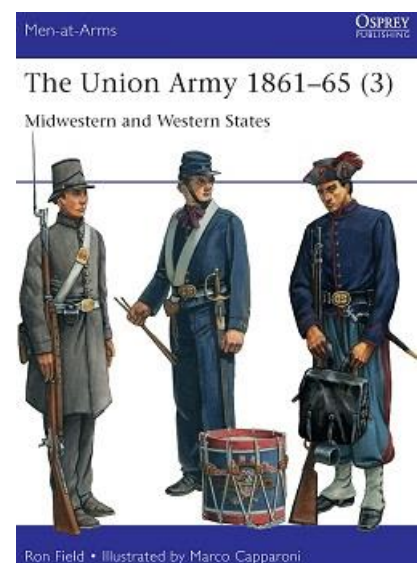
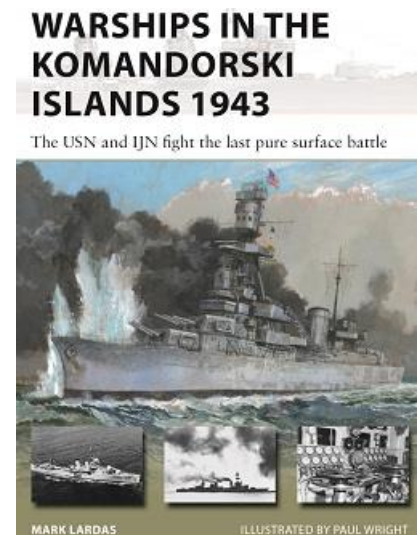
Nicely done.

Enjoyed it.

The Union Army 1861-65 (3): Men At Arms 559. by Ron Field. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 56 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Midwestern and Western States*

The third volume in the series covers IN, IL, WI, OH, IA, MN, MO, MI, KS, KY, TN, CA, OR, WV, AR, and TX. Certainly, there's a few states you don't think of for supplying troops for the Union side, but here they are.



Most state descriptions include total number of regiments, batteries, legions, and other units as well as overall battlefield and disease deaths.

The usual extensive MAA description of weapons, uniforms, and equipment fill the pages with text and photographic details. What surprised me was the extensive use of gray for uniforms in 1861, although after the US War Department mandated blue to avoid friendly fire, the regiments gradually shed their gray for blue uniforms. The cut and style varied from state to state, which may not matter if you're using 6mm figures, but can be entertaining at the 25mm and up scale.

The booklet contains 45 black and white photos, six black and white photos that were colorized, eight color photos, and the usual eight-page color center section uniform illustrations (24 figures).

This has been a great series. I hope Field does the same for the Confederate Army. Enjoyed it.

Through Hell to Dunkirk. by Henry de la Falaise. Softcover (6.0x9.0 inches). 166 pages. 2024 reprint of 1943 book.

Subtitle: *A Frontline Story of the Miraculous Evacuation of France in World War II*

Written by the French liaison to a British armored car regiment, this first-person memoir recounts the advance into Belgium in 1940 to meet the German invasion before being hastily withdrawn back into France and ultimately to Dunkirk for evacuation to Britain.

Along the way, skirmishes with German tanks, motorcycles, and infantry prove only temporary stop-gap measures to halt the German advance. And don't forget the German bombers -- plenty of passages describe bombing raids on positions. Hardly any AA is mentioned, except for some ineffective local MG fire.

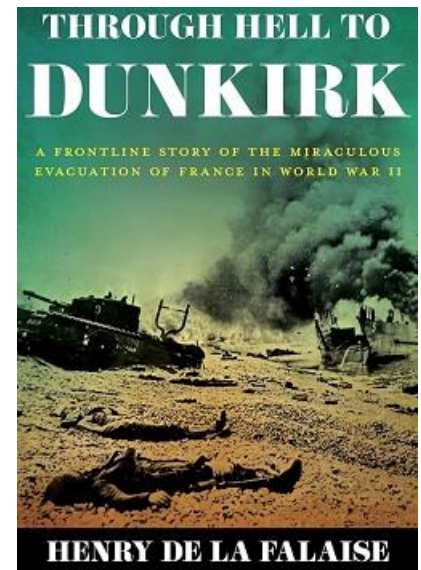
You can pull some skirmish scenarios from the pages, although oddly enough, the text does not mention the exact model of armored car in his troop. Nor does he mention the model of the staff car or "fighting lorry." Wartime censorship? Considering the Germans captured plenty of British vehicles, it wouldn't seem to be a state secret.

One typo: "at least three hundred yards in rack of us" (p73) is likely "in back of us."

No photos or other images. It really could use a map to show the route of constant retreat, hold, skirmish, retreat, hold, skirmish, and rinse and repeat.

Nonetheless, it's a smartly edited account of the constant withdrawal to Dunkirk.

Enjoyed it.



The Rif War: 1921-1926 (Elite 257). by Philip Jowett & Martin Windrow. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 64 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Morocco's Berber Uprising*

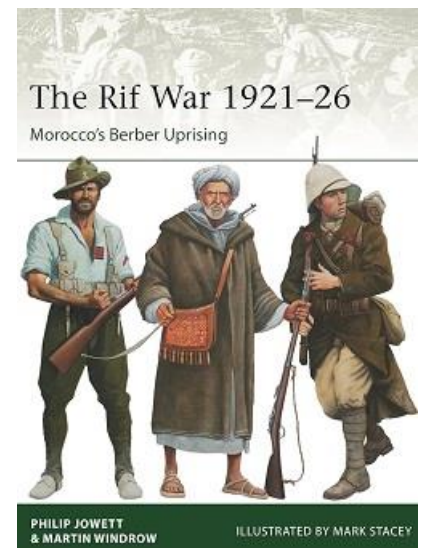
I'm not sure "Elite" would cover any of the troops in the Rif War, but this volume in the series offers a general overview of the war.

In essence, a poorly equipped and even worse trained Spanish army attempts to expand into the interior against scattered tribes with more or less success -- until the tribes unite under semi-competent leaders. Ultimately, one smart leader (Abd el Krim) puts all the tribal pieces together for a full-scale rebellion that knocks off outposts and defeats sizeable Spanish forces.

El Krim seeks independence, the Spanish refuse and pour in reinforcements to create a stalemate of sorts. With a growing number of tribes questioning the war, el Krim gambles that an attack on the French will generate more victories. Alas for him, it generates a more competent enemy.

The booklet contains 53 black and white photos, two black and white maps, and eight color plates (24 figure illustrations from all sides in total).

As I noted in reviews of Gabiola's *Rif War Vol. 1* (see the 03/03/2022 AAR for the review) and *Vol. 2* (see the 09/28/2023 AAR for the review or both up on hmgs.org), this would make for a pretty interesting post-WWI colonial campaign. It's got a wide variety of troops and quality, tanks, amphibious assaults, aircraft, and leadership ranging from incompetent to brilliant. Those two volumes offer far more information



for such an undertaking than this single volume, but if you are unsure about the setting, this *Elite* volume will help you make up your mind.

Enjoyed it.

Mers El-Kebir 1940: Campaign 405. by Ryan K. Noppen. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Operation Catapult*

Even before the French signed the armistice with the Germans, the British worried about the French fleet falling into German hands. As the German losses at Narvik could be made good by the addition of the French Navy, the German Navy wanted the ships. Hitler, however, wanted the French out of the war and did not worry overmuch about the French ships.

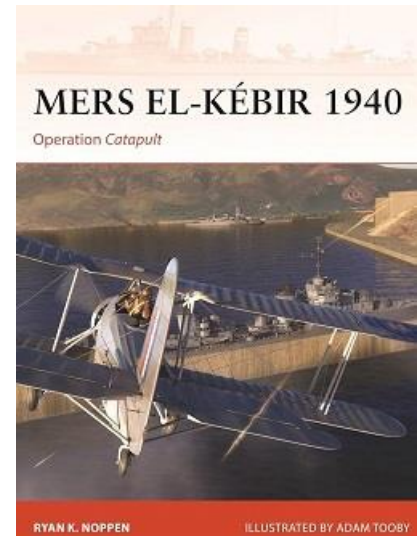
The French sailed most of the powerful ships to their colonies, including most of the battlecruisers and battleships to Mers El-Kebir. The British offered to intern the ships in Canada, but the French refused, albeit with a proviso that the Germans would never add the ships to the German Navy. It wasn't enough. The British sent the Royal Navy to bombard the French fleet in Algeria.

The usual *Campaign* series format with all the descriptions of ships, personalities, and a full OOB is in this volume. A full array of photos, maps, and illustrations complement the interesting and well-written account of the battle.

One oversight: the map (p38) uses symbols not defined in the Military Symbols box (p2) -- although the map text notes them as AA and gun batteries.

The booklet contains 58 black and white photos, two color photos, nine color maps, four color illustrations, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.



Lockheed Constellation: Legends of Flight. by Wolfgang Borgman. Hardback (Horizontal: 9.3x9.3 inches). 144 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *A Legends of Flight Illustrated History*

This prop-driven, triple-tail passenger airplane had its heyday in the 1950s, but the rise of the jet passenger plane soon made them obsolete. Nonetheless, this aircraft profile traces its beginning with an order from the mercurial Howard Hughes -- an order interrupted by WWII and its service in the US Army Air Corp starting in October 1944.

Post-war production resumed with a wide variety of airlines, including TWA, Pan-Am, and Eastern flying passenger routes with the "Connie."

The text is quite readable in describing the rise and fall of the aircraft. Of note is an enthusiastic 1980s effort to rescue three Constellations from Nicaragua and make one of them flyable. The planes were shipped to Florida, years of effort and cash were sunk into one plane, and a very limited flight of the restored plane did occur in short hops and emergency landings. Ultimately, one aircraft ended up as parts, the second as scrap, and the last with Lufthansa and then to a museum.

An accounting of aircraft, including model numbers, traces all use by airlines all over the world.

The book contains 120 color photos, 98 black and white photos, and two black and white illustrations.

One black mark against the book: some graphics "whiz" made all the captions in an itsy-bitsy, teenie-weenie font that can't be more than 5 or 6 size. I mean it is small.

How small is it?

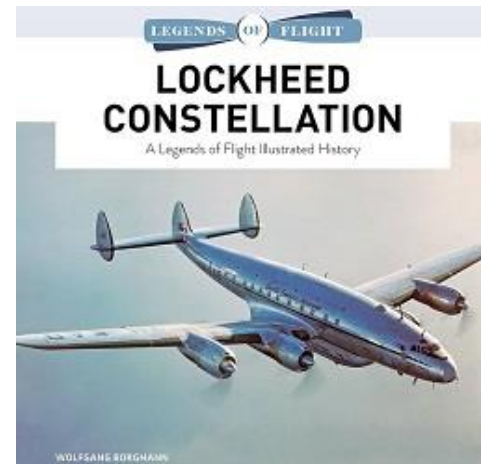
It's so small, even Osprey *Air Campaign* text looks huge.

It's so small, I just gave up reading them.

It's so small, you can cut out the letters and numbers for use as decals on 2mm models.

Yep...small. So, great text, great photos, great history, and unreadable captions. Three outta four ain't bad.

Enjoyed it.



The CAC Boomerang; Australia's Own WWII Fighter. by Don Williams. Softcover (7.0x9.8 inches). 104 pages. 2024.

I had never heard of the Boomerang, but this was a single-seat fighter designed and built in Australia by the Commonwealth Aircraft Corp (CAC) from the late 1930s to 1945.

The idea was to create a home-grown fighter to increase the number of Allied fighters against Japan. In the early part of the war, fighters were hard to come by, so it made sense to build one.

The good news was that it was an acceptable fighter for the late 1930s, but when WWII broke out, it was generally outclassed by the Zero, Spitfire, Hurricane, and P-40 fighters. The production delays, masterfully told, made the plane seem even worse as the 100th Boomerang was not delivered until mid-1943.

It saw little front-line fighter action and what few combats versus Japanese aircraft are detailed within. It did seem to find a niche as a recon aircraft and occasional ground support aircraft. All losses were from accidents and pilot errors, not from enemy action.

Each squadron's aircraft and actions are described and the text is supplemented by 43 black and white photos, seven color photos, eight color illustrations, two color maps, and two black and white illustrations.

I don't know if anyone makes a Boomerang model, but it might be interesting to add one to a tabletop battle as a surprise.

Enjoyed it.

US Air Power 1945-1990: Technology at War 2. by David Baker. Softcover (7.4x9.7 inches). 92 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Volume 1: US Fighters and Fighter Bombers 1945-1949*

This is the first of 15 (yes, fifteen) volumes covering US air power, which would make it a comprehensive, if expensive, tome of knowledge. That said, this first volume that traces the transition from piston engine to jet engine is fascinating, well-written, and full of analysis behind the procurements, cancellations, productions, and deployments of the various aircraft.

The initial chapter contains an incredible compilation of numerical data detailing the ramp-up of WWII production and subsequent post-war demobilization. I might have suggested putting the numbers into tables, which I find easier to read than sentence after sentence with numbers.

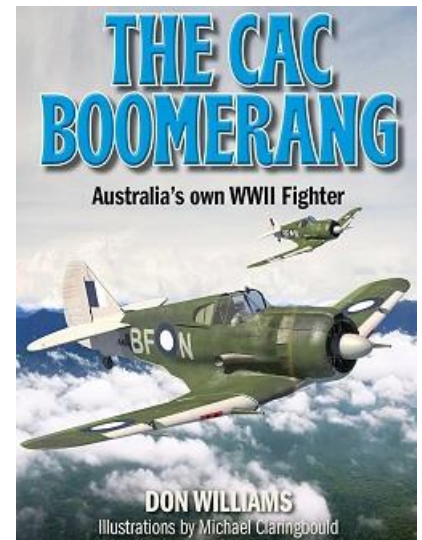
After that comes analysis of US-USSR strategic competition and then a technical overview of various prototypes and production model aircraft that arrive and disappear at the dawn of the Korean War. Depending on your tolerance for technical recitations and analysis, the aircraft spec section will drive you wild with details or wild with glazed-eye repetition.

Yet, some factoids impress: The Bell P-59 took the first US jet flight on Oct. 1, 1942, years behind the German HE-178 (Aug 27, 1939), but not so much behind the ME-262 (Jul 18, 1942), and also behind the British Gloster E28/39 (May 15, 1941) (p31). The P-59 performed poorly, but the Lockheed P-80 (first flight Jan 8, 1944) showed more promise (p33).

The US suffered a considerable amount of jet-engine development woe during these post-war years, all nicely presented, detailed, and understandable.

The book contains 60 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, 27 color photos, three color illustrations, and 27 aircraft profiles for the modelers out there.

Enjoyed it.



Japanese Combined Fleet 1942-43: Fleet 8. by Mark Stille. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *Guadalcanal to the Solomons Campaign*

The continuation of the *Fleet* series offers the next logical step with the post-Pearl Harbor, post-Indian Ocean Japanese fleet. As the subtitle indicates, the struggle with the US over Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands takes center stage. See the review for *Japanese Combined Fleet 1941-42: Fleet 1* in the 9/28/20233 AAR or up on hmgs.org.

Each ship type in the Japanese Navy receives a succinct analysis of strengths and weaknesses, in addition to an evaluation of the Japanese guns carried by the ships.

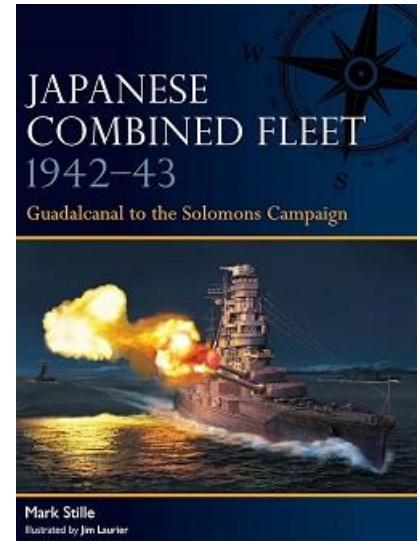
A short recap of the campaigns provides insight into strategies and tactics employed by the US and Japan in an effort to secure Guadalcanal and Solomon Islands. Sections on command, communications, logistics, and intelligence highlight aspects of Japanese naval warfare that contributed to the Navy's successes and failures.

Short recaps of notable battles are fine, but lack the OOB detail needed to lay out a scenario. At least it may inspire you to put ships on the tabletop.

The book contains 37 black and white photos, seven color maps, and three color two-page action illustrations.

The prose is quite good with a smooth read.

Enjoyed it.



Eighth Army Soldier versus Italian Soldier: Combat 70. by David Greentree. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 80 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *El Alamein 1942*

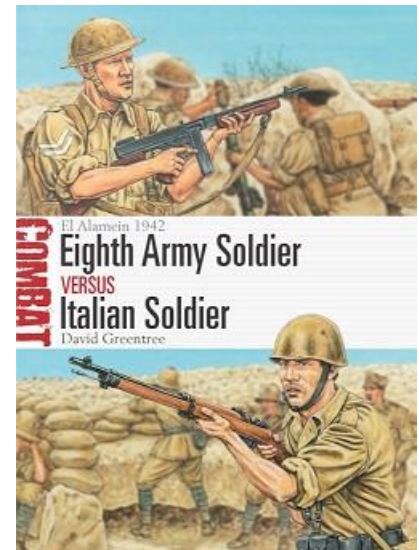
The Combat series is quickly becoming a nice little scenario generator, with three battles in each volume containing a map (you can pull an OOB from the deployed units), and battle description. In this volume, El Alamein is the focus with battles Ruweisat Ridge (July 15, 1942), Makh Khad Ridge (July 17, 1942), and Operation Lightfoot (Oct 24-25, 1942). Units are company and battalion, so these serve better for higher-scale miniatures battles, or, if you have the space and gamers, large multi-table battles.

The format is the same among the series' volumes, so you start with details about the soldiers on each side, including training, weaponry, morale, logistical support, tactics, and command and control. Then comes scenarios and the wrap up of analysis of performance and general unit organizations of a British battalion and Italian regiment.

The book contains 48 black and white photos, four color maps, two color photos, three color two-page action illustrations, two color British uniform illustrations, and two color Italian uniform illustrations.

Nice prose, nice info, and another nice job in presenting opposing combat troops.

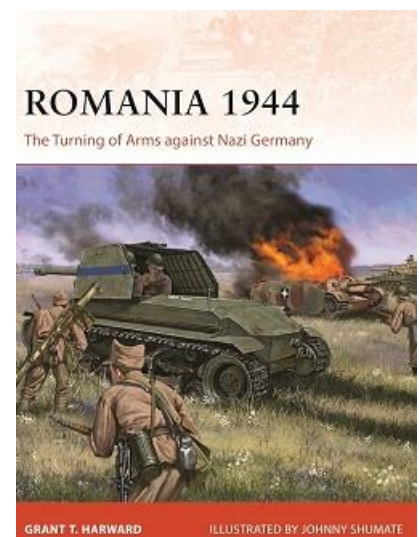
Enjoyed it.



Romania 1944: Campaign 404. by Grant T. Harward. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Turning Point of Arms Against Nazi Germany*

By 1944, Romania was trying to surrender to the Western Allies, which told Romanian leadership to talk to the Soviets. Eventually, as Soviet units overran the country, Romania switched sides. Technically, Romanian King Mihai I organized a coup to take the reins of government and took the armistice with the Soviets. He didn't get any better terms, was ignored by the Western Allies, and didn't last long as king in a post-war Soviet-controlled country, but he helped turn Romania from the Axis to Allied side. Now all those German-on-German tabletop battles in the Flames of War tournaments make sense as Romania used lots of German equipment. It also forced the



Germans to perform a counter-coup to occupy the country and the all-important Ploesti oilfield.

Meanwhile, the Soviet offensive ground through the Hungarian, Bulgarian, and German forces and pushed into the Balkans. By this stage, the Soviet steamroller, which controlled the now-Allied Romanian troops, ran out of steam at some point, but not before conquering most of the country.

The usual sweep of the division- and corp-level recap provides for an excellent summary of operations and results. The commanders, armies, and plans are well developed, and the OOB for August 19, 1944 is down to division level. I'll fault the volume for lack of specific numbers per unit, which to use wargamers is crucial to understanding how a campaign or battle resolved.

There is an interesting numerical factoid (p40). The 2nd Ukrainian Front had 771,200 troops, 11,000 guns/mortars, and 1,283 tanks and self-propelled guns in total, with half lined up in 25km width against the Germans. The 3rd Ukrainian Front had 523,000 troops, 8,000 guns/mortars, and 600 tanks and self-propelled guns in total, with three-quarters lined up in 11km width against the Germans. Maybe hub-to-hub tabletop deployments isn't so far-fetched.

The book contains 58 black and white photos, three color photos, seven color maps, three color two-page action illustrations, and two color two-page 3D maps of Soviet attacks on Isai and Transylvania fronts.

Enjoyed it.

Sumatra 1944-45: Air Campaign 49. by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The British Pacific Fleet's Oil Campaign in the Dutch East Indies*

Churchill made sure the British carrier fleet operated in the Pacific so Britain could have some influence in the post-war discussions, including hanging onto colonies. The problem was the British had little idea how to adapt to US fast carrier operations perfected in the drive across the Pacific Ocean. So, the US taught, the British learned, and then came the British carrier attacks on Japanese infrastructure, especially oil installations.

If you don't mind squinting at the small font, you'll find a wealth of information about carrier operations as well as the success of British air strikes against uneven Japanese fighter and AA defenses.

One typo (p58): "A second Corsair...had to ditch...The three-man crew..." US Corsair fighters were single seat, so my guess is that the aircraft was an Avenger bomber, not Corsair fighter. The Brits used US aircraft in addition to their own. The Fairey Firefly only carried two crew.

The book contains 66 black and white photos, seven color maps, one color diagram, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Watery eyes aside, enjoyed it.

The Messerschmitt Bf 110 Story. by John Forsgren. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 192 pages. 2024.

Germany and a number of other countries developed twin-engine fighters prior to WWII, with the Messerschmitt Bf 110 the most famous such fighter from Germany, rivalled only by the P-38 from the US.

The book starts with a technical overview of the 110 and its contemporaries such as FW 57, HS 124, Potez 630/631, and PZL 38 Wilk. Prototypes of the Messerschmitt Bf 161/162 and the ME-261 are also covered, as are a variety of variants.

Starting with Poland, in which three Gruppen of 110s were available (90 operational on Sep 1, 1939 out of 102 assigned), the plane's combat record is analyzed for its feats throughout the war. Short recaps, occasional first-person accounts, and losses in combat dominate the text as the 110 flies in Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Iraq, North Africa, the USSR, Western Europe, and Switzerland. Yes, the 110 fought over Switzerland says the book. Short bios of 110 aces are included.

The combat reports tend to get repetitious and the writing is rudimentary, but it gets the points across. Rudolf Hess' flight to Britain is also



covered, including pieces that remain in a museum, as well as other 110s on display. No 110s are in flying condition, notes the book (p12).

How many 110s were built? Hard to say. Depending on the source, it's 3,335, 6,650, 5,873, 4,974, 6,043, 5,930, 6,031, or 6,170 (p152-153). I guess this is a cautionary tale about researching numbers.

The book contains 72 black and white photos.

Aviation buffs will enjoy the aircraft history, including a thwarted French plan to bribe a disgraced German pilot to defect with a 110 (p29-30).

Enjoyed it.

How Hitler Evolved the Traditional Army Establishment. by Andrew Sangster and Pier Paolo Battistelli. Hardback (6.4x9.5 inches). 222 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *A Study Through Field Marshals Keitel, Paulus & Manstein*

In case you were wondering, the three marshals on the cover are (from left to right) Keitel, Manstein, and Paulus. Their roles within the WWII German military and their interactions with Hitler as supreme commander of said military receive an extensive recaps and analysis.

In broad strokes, Keitel proved a toady yes-man, Paulus had the best interests of his soldiers in mind but got into the Stalingrad pocket by refusing to disobey Hitler, and Manstein would occasionally disobey orders, but often got away with it because of his battlefield successes.

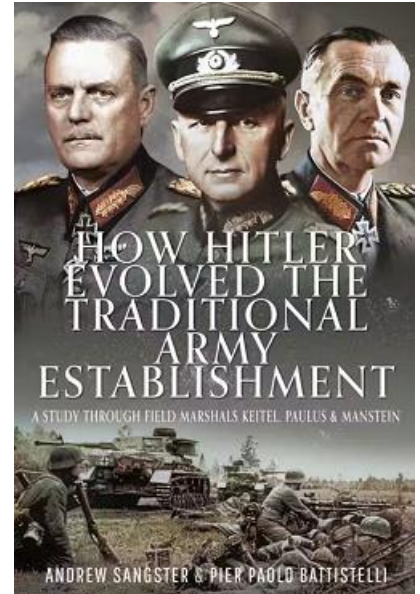
The underlying premise, especially for Keitel and Paulus, was the Prussian military's absolutely adherence to orders. You might question them or discuss them with your superior, but when the decision was made, you obeyed them. It probably didn't help that lots of dissenters ended up dismissed on spurious charges, never to be recalled to service again.

The book contains 32 black and white photos.

One typo (p60): "questioned on the 27 June 1945" should have the "the" deleted.

It's an easy read and illuminates the military-political interaction that brought Germany much success and ultimate failure.

Enjoyed it.



The Fighting Fathers. by Alessandro Giorgi. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 112 pages. 2024.

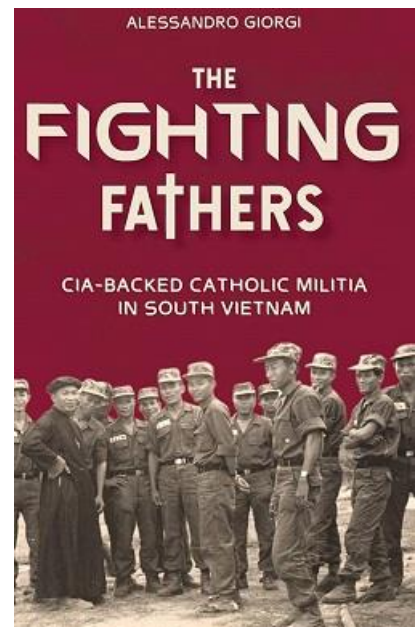
Subtitle: *CIA-Backed Catholic Militia in South Vietnam*

What an interesting topic -- Catholic priests raising militia units to battle the Viet Cong in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Alas, it is poorly edited, with consecutive paragraphs or every other paragraph duplicating the information.

Yet, there is a fantastic scenario about a 400-man Viet Cong attack against Binh Hu'ng village defended by a 90-man "Sea Swallows" militia unit led by Father Nguyen Lac Hoa. As it turns out, Nguyen Lac fought for the Chinese against the Japanese in WWII and was schooled in guerrilla tactics. From that victory, his reputation, area of control, and militia strength grew, aided by the CIA. By the end of 1962, he had 4,500 militia (p59). However, once the South Vietnam Army took command, the militia effectiveness decreased until little remained of its fighting prowess and Father Hoa left to go to Saigon for more priestly and less martial duties.

The book contains 32 black and white photos.

This is one of the few books on an obscure topic. It's not very well done, and editing is horrendous -- like a poor self-published book. But if this topic appeals to you, it may be the only book in wide distribution.



The House of War. by Simon Mayall. Hardback (6.3x9.5 inches). 222 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Struggle Between Christendom and the Caliphate*

This marvelous book highlights the campaigns and personalities of the wars between Christianity and Islam from 636 to 1917.

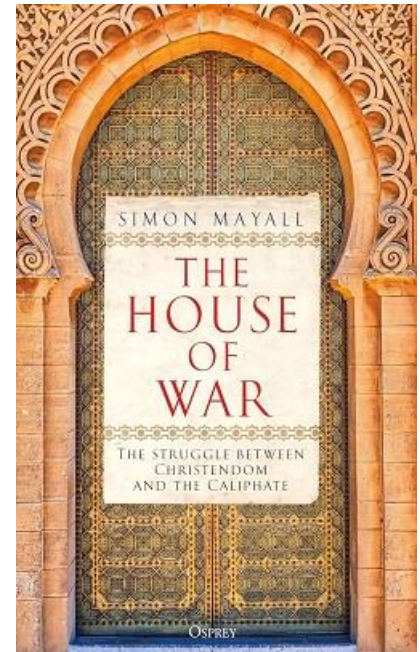
The Caliphate rose to challenge the Roman and Byzantine Empires in specific and Christendom in general. The medieval crusades receive ample treatment with recaps of selected battles and sieges, followed by Renaissance-era combats: Jerusalem 1099, Hattin 1187, Acre 1291, Constantinople 1413, Rhodes 1522, Malta 1565, Lepanto 1571, and Vienna 1683. The 1917 British capture of Jerusalem from the Ottomans is included at the end, although this was more a general challenge to colonialism than religion.

The OOBs are generic, but the well-written pre-battle maneuvers and forces through the battle and aftermath will inspire you to look for more comprehensive OOBs in other sources.

The book contains 20 color illustrations, one black and white photo, six black and white illustrations, four color photos, and 12 black and white maps.

As a bonus, you also gain some knowledge of the splits within Christendom and Islam. Nicely done.

Enjoyed it.-



Perceptions of Battle. by J R Dacus. Hardback (6.3x9.3 inches). 222 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *George Washington's Victory at Monmouth*

As the British abandoned Philadelphia and marched across NJ with loyalists and their belongings, the column stretched 12 miles long (p61). Gen. Washington figured he could pursue the British and cut off the rear guard if conditions were right.

Washington set off in pursuit, crossing the Delaware River at Coryell's Ferry (present day Lambertville, NJ) and securing Howell's Ferry (present day Stockton, NJ) (p57). The Continental Army camped on the NJ side, roughly where current State Hwy 202, County Rd 518, and Alexauken Creek Road (next to Alexauken Creek) meet at Lambertville.

The British took a southerly route from Philadelphia, PA, to Sandy Hook, NJ, passing through Haddonfield, Black Horse, Allentown, and Freehold (Monmouth Court House), NJ.

The Continentals took a northerly route through present day Hopewell, Kingston, and Cranbury NJ before reaching Englishtown and Freehold (Monmouth Court House), NJ. Here they met, the American vanguard under Gen. Charles Lee and the British rearguard under Gen. Charles Cornwallis, although overall commander Gen. Henry Clinton remained close by.

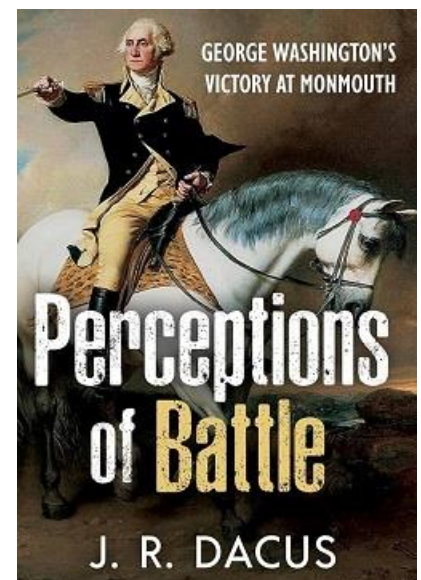
How Lee lost momentum and control of the developing battle as Washington learned of Continental stragglers makes for compelling reading, as does how Clinton almost pulled off a victory -- although victory is often measured by who's holding the ruler. And all this when a solar eclipse (p65) occurred.

The book contains 19 black and white illustrations, six black and white maps, and one black and white photo.

One typo (p122): referencing Washington sending battered units "east to English Town" for rest. Yet Monmouth battlefield is southeast of English Town, so so Washington would direct units west, not east.

The English and American OOBs are quite extensive, but one aspect bothers me. The entire book, including the OOBs, is remarkable devoid of numbers. Some are scattered in the text, but such a lack of data detracts from a quite well written account of the campaign and battle.

Nonetheless, enjoyed it.



Yugoslavia and Greece 1940-41: Air Campaign 48. by Basilio di Martino and Pier Paolo Battistelli. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Axis' Aerial Assault in the Balkans*

The Germans had to pivot quickly on the virtual eve of the invasion of the USSR. Yugoslavia and Greece became decidedly hostile and threatened the southern strategic flank of Operation Barbarossa. In the space of about a month and a half, Germany overran both countries, kicked the British out of Greece and Crete, and occupied a number of islands. In all things Balkans, the Luftwaffe led the way with recon, bombing, and air superiority.

As usual, the font in this *Air Campaign* volume is small. I find it hard to read, even though the info within is excellent. It offers two detailed OOBs (sans numbers) -- one for October 28, 1940 and the other for April 6, 1941.

The Italians come off poorly, concentrating almost solely on ground support for the Army while conducting some long-range bombing and supply missions.

The Germans do much better against either the Yugoslavian Air Force or Greek Air Force, although the British on occasion provide stiffer opposition. All the battles and combats you'd expect from this series is included, including lots of scenario ideas because battles were usually under 10 aircraft per side, and often just three bombers and a fighter or two escort versus a trio of intercepting fighters.

The book contains 64 black and white photos, one color photo, six color maps, two color illustrations, and three color two-page action illustrations.

The prose is workmanlike at best, but the scenario potential is excellent. Enjoyed it.

Borneo 1945: Campaign 406. by Angus Konstam. Softcover (7.25x9.75 inches). 96 pages. 2024.

Subtitle: *The Last Major Allied Campaign in the South-West Pacific*

It makes sense that Konstam would write this campaign book as he was already familiar with the area from his *Sumatra 1944-45: Air Campaign 49* book (reviewed above) about British carrier attacks on various oil facilities in Japanese hands. This *Campaign* volume concentrates on the Australian invasions of Borneo and various nearby islands to secure airfields and recapture oil facilities.

It's all small-scale warfare, with Australian invasions by a battalion or on occasion a regiment versus Japanese battalions. Much of the action is at the platoon- and company-level, so crank up your low-level scenarios.

Much of the fighting took place in hilly jungles with bunkers and dug in troops -- although quite often it was delaying action after delaying action until the Japanese had retreated to their main villages and towns. Then the Australians used armor, flamethrowers, naval bombardment, aerial bombardment, and infantry attacks to winkle the Japanese out of their defense lines.

The book contains 65 black and white photos, one black and white illustration, one color photo, nine color maps, three color 3D maps, and three color two-page action illustrations.

Enjoyed it.

