

The Kommandeur



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AHIKS President George Phillies

Greetings from Worcester, Massachusetts. I'm George Phillies, your new AHIKS President. Last summer, Bob Best announced that it was time for new blood here in the President's job, and that it was time for him to step down as President. I volunteered to take the job and to bring to it the new blood that Bob thought we needed.

At the same time, there have been several other changes in officer positions. Ken Oates announced that he is resigning as Vice President, effective November 30. The post is now vacant. If you would care to be appointed Vice President, as we are between elections, please contact me. Chris Hancock is stepping down as Secretary, with the changeover to occur on December 7. Duncan Rice stepped down as Match Coordinator. He is being succeeded by Chuck Tewksbury.

I'd like to thank all of the departing officers for their efforts on behalf of AHIKS. We are the oldest international board wargaming club in the world, with our fifty-fifth anniversary happening next year. The fact that we are still here, when many other international wargaming clubs, including the International Federation of Wargaming, Sparta International, and the Strategy Gaming Society, have dropped by the wayside is in significant part a tribute to their efforts.

It's reasonable to say that most of you know rather little about me, other than that I wrote this very long article on the old Avalon Hill game **Stalingrad**. In any event, I'm 73, retired, in good health, living in Worcester, Massachusetts, with my cat Pounce. I worked for many years as a university professor teaching physics and doing scientific research. I'm a published author with two dozen books, including a five-book series on game design and the play of the game **Stalingrad**, not to mention a half-dozen science fiction novels. You will probably not be surprised to learn that most of them are military science fiction with lots of battle scenes. Finally, I collect board wargames; my collection is now closing on 7,000 titles and around sixty shelf-feet of wargaming magazines.

So, what am I doing to bring new blood and new activity to AHIKS? We have a couple of gaps in the officer positions; I'm working to recruit replacements. Several of our members gave us an AHIKS group on Facebook; I've added an AHIKS group on MeWe.com. Do we really need two groups? There is a significant number of gamers who use one of these social networks and refuse to have anything to do with the other one. We're reaching all of them now. Several members started doing membership recruitment via social media. We're having an enormous rush of new members. You'll see evidence of that elsewhere in this issue. Membership recruitment puts a certain burden on Secretary Chris Hancock. It appears that there is a process that will automate collecting membership data and preparing it for transfer to our membership rolls; I've recruited an AHIKS member to set up the computer software.

Omar has lamented interesting difficulties with the emailing system for transmitting *The Kommandeur*. I set up and tested a backup emailing system. More or less all of you will have received two test messages from me, one with a back issue of *Kommandeur* to confirm that the attachment process works. I

gather from Omar that the email system he uses is currently working nicely, but, if something goes wrong with it, we're covered. You'll be hearing from me in the future, on occasion, using that system, to fill gaps between issues of our bi-monthly magazine.

I look forward to doing much more in the future for AHIKS. Much of that depends on you, the membership. We spent a long time in which a few wonderful officers and a few wonderful volunteers did great things for our Society. If we want to do better in the future, individual members around the world must stand up and do a bit more for the society.

Let me give a single example, an example which lets you stay at your keyboard. Many of you use Internet social groups. If you're in a social group that specializes in a particular game, why not ask your fellow social group members if they're looking for opponents. Many of them are. Point out to them that we have an opponent matching service, a bimonthly magazine, and we're free. You pay nothing to join AHIKS. All you have to do is fill out our membership application, which makes clear that we're a club for grown-ups who play board games. You can find the form at ahiks.com/AHIKS/New_Member_Application.html

From the Editor

This is an unusual year for AHIKS. Four of our long-standing officers are stepping down: Bob Best, Kenneth Oates, Duncan Rice, and Chris Hancock. Although they will be missed, we wish them well and thank them for their service. George Phillies is our new President. I've known George for a long time, and I am certain he will do an excellent job. Chuck Tewksbury is our new Match Coordinator, and Robert Granville will be our Secretary. Welcome, gentlemen. The office of Vice President is still open. If you are at all interested in helping out the Society, please let us know.

There are some problems with getting this newsletter out. We are using Sendinblue, who says 98% of the newsletters arrive at their designation. That means that around eight members do not receive the newsletter. Also, Sendinblue's records show that only about 75% of the delivered newsletters are opened. That could be because the receiver is not interested in the newsletter or that the newsletter was sent to the spam box.

I recently sent out email to all members explaining this problem. Fourteen members said they had received both issues. Six members said they had received one. Five said they had received neither. There were no other replies.

If you have not been receiving *The Kommandeur*, which has kept to its regular schedule—every two months—you can try to solve the delivery problem: you can download the newsletter from our site, or you can contact me.

Treasury Notes

Brian Stretcher



Men of Iron Tripack

My column is a little shorter than usual, perhaps, because my analysis of the **Men of Iron Tripack** is elsewhere in this issue. Enjoy.

Netflix for Wargamers

I have been reading fiction since last issue, so no new military history titles to tell you about. I am currently finishing up a pre-history of Westeros and the known world prior to the times depicted in the Game of Thrones books and show. Sort of like reading *The Story of Britain*, which I reviewed in these pages many years ago. Perhaps a review in a future issue, if I've got nothing else to offer.

Anyway, I have watched a few new releases of period pieces on Netflix of late that might be of interest to you, in case they don't pop up on the lists Netflix feeds you. First was *Barbaren*, or *Barbarians* in English. This is a German production about the events leading up to the battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 AD. It is a 6-episode limited series. If you watch it in its original language, the Germans speak German and the Romans speak Latin. Watch it that way, not in dubbed English. Each show is less than an hour, so it doesn't take long to get through the whole thing. Most of the show revolves around Arminius, the German raised as a Roman who defected to lead the German forces in an ambush of three legions under Varus in the Teutoburg Forest. If you know history, or ever played **Caesar's Legions**, you know the general outcome. As the scope of the story is limited, it isn't a sweeping historical epic, but I thought it was well done. Could have maybe used an extra episode for Arminius to vacillate a little longer, as that part seemed a bit rushed, but Roman uniforms were impressive, the CGI Roman Army was pretty good (formations and tactics!), and the final episode's battle was good as well. There was one scene that was borrowed from *Lion King*, involving the two main characters lying under the stars. If you know *Lion King* (well, the animated version, at least, having watched it numerous times while the children were growing up), you'll recognize the scene.

Next was *The Liberator*, a four-part animated series about Felix Sparks and his regiment in WW2. One or two of you may recall that I reviewed the book this series was based on earlier this year; I was pleased when I learned the book was to become a series. Excellent book, pretty good show. Could have used another episode or two, as it seemed a bit rushed. The main events in the book are recreated: the fighting at Anzio, Captain Sparks going AWOL to rejoin his unit after he was wounded, the landings in Southern France, the intense fighting in the Vosges (and the mercy shown by an SS officer), the liberation of Dachau, and the legal conundrum that followed. However, I think a few extra characters and events were thrown into the mix that may not have been in the book, to add to the drama, as I did not recognize them. There is much criticism on IMDB

about the animation. This style of animation films live actors and then uses an animated overlay so that they look animated as well, and then they are put on top of animated backgrounds. Then a filter is overlaid on top of everything to set certain moods, such as sparks during Anzio, snow in the Vosges, and that sort of thing. It is a somewhat similar process to that in the animated *Lord of the Rings* that came out in the late 1970s. The terrain depicted looks a bit stark and surreal, and so in some way it is a lot like watching theater rather than a live-action series like *Band of Brothers*, to which *The Liberator* can be compared. I liked it, but some do not. If you don't watch past the first episode, you miss a well-done story.

Finally, the wife and I just finished *The Queen's Gambit*. There are not too many shows that deal with a game, this one being Chess, but it was extremely well done. Although I know how to play Chess, I have never gotten into it to the extreme the characters do in this limited series. Knowing how to play the game certainly isn't necessary to enjoy the show. Of course, the show isn't really about Chess per se; it is more akin to a superhero movie than anything else: the main character has an ability to see the board in her head and play out entire matches in her mind, and ultimately she faces difficult trials and uses her abilities to prevail. Thing is, this superpower is real, and common to many masters of the game.

I was thinking about the ability to store a game in one's head and play it there instead of on a table or screen, working out moves, maybe several moves in advance of the current status of the board. I think many of us wargamers can do that, at least to some degree. For example, I can pull up the **Here I Stand** game in my head right now and pretty much see where all of the armies are, the status of the New World Display, and what areas are controlled by whom. I can move pieces in my head, flip units, review my cards, and make decisions about what I want to do several phases in advance. It is certainly easier when I can stare at the map, and at times I may not be sure of an important detail, but the point is I can do it for most games with which I am familiar. I can still recall the starting OOBs for the various powers in **Third Reich** and see the map in my head, even though it has now been a few years since I have played the game. I think many if not most of us wargamers have a similar ability, probably to varying degrees. But not everyone can do this, just like not everyone can read and understand a map. Anyway, as a wargamer, I thought that was an intriguing angle to the show. If you haven't watched it because it's a show about a woman playing Chess, you're missing out. Watch it.

Treasurer's Report

Passive activity and a small donation (thank you!) this time.

Total balance 9-29-20:	\$ 8,272.30
Donation:	\$ 10.00
Dividend 9-30-20:	\$ 1.70
Dividend 10-31-20:	\$ 1.76
Total balance 11-29-20:	\$ 8,285.76

Until next time!

As AHKS strives to keep costs and dues down, there is something you can do to help. Our Perpetual Fund, started by Bruce Monnin and Frederick Kraus, can always use more donations. The interest from the Fund helps the Society. A few dollars from you could help AHKS become totally self sustaining. Give it some thought. Send Brian Stretcher a couple of dollars. Especially since there are no dues this year.

Brian Stretcher, 117 Camellia Trail, Brevard, NC 28712

Book Review

A Higher Call

by Adam Makos

392 pages, photos, maps ©2012

Berkley Caliber

\$2 to \$16 on Amazon

Reviewed by Omar DeWitt

I found this book very interesting. It is essentially a biography of a German fighter pilot in WWII. I have read only a few books by the German military from that era. It covers Franz Stigler's life from being an aircraft instructor to becoming an ace in the Messerschmitt 109.

He started in North Africa, went to Sicily, and then to Germany, where he flew against the "four motors." He ended the war flying the Me-262 jet.

The German pilots in general did not like or support "The Party," the Nazis. Goering was not at all popular. The pilots continued to fly "for Germany," not The Party. The logic of this escaped me, but they believed it.

While Stigler was in Germany, there occurred the unique incident that is the reason for this book's existence.

Lt. Charlie Brown was piloting a B-17 on his first bombing mission. The plane got shot up badly, losing 1½ engines, the left horizontal rudder, tail gunner killed, waist gunners wounded, large holes in the fuselage. The plane, limping along, was approached by a Messerschmitt. Although he would have been shot if discovered, Stigler let the plane go. He even tried to motion that Brown should fly to Sweden rather than try to cross the English Channel with his plane in such poor condition.

Stigler returned to Germany. Brown did make it back to an English airfield, although the plane never flew again. Brown told their experience to the appropriate officer, who quashed it. He didn't want other pilots thinking that another German plane flying close might be friendly.

When the war ended, Stigler had trouble finding work. The Germans were hostile to fighter pilots for letting planes bomb them. Eventually he went to Canada to work on a new jet they were starting to build. It was labeled "Secret," so a former German airman was not allowed to work on it. He did find other work.

The second meeting of Brown and Stigler is an interesting story, which you may read in this book. I highly recommend it.



From *The Kommandeur*, Volume 5, Number 1. Spring 1970.
Written by the President, Richard Holcombe, #009.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The time - Summer, 1966; the place - the left half of the second page of new, one sheet publication; the purpose - to provide some identity to a handful of souls, most of whom would never meet one another, gathered together in an enterprise guaranteed to keep them apart; thus came the first President's Corner.

Fred Webster started by providing a spot of AHKS history which I would like to repeat. "While demolishing me in a game of Waterloo, Henry (Bodenstedt) wrote mentioning the difficulty he was having finding capable adult players.—One thing led to another, and so here we are."

So we have the first step of what I refer to as the AHKS ladder. Many have stumbled on this, the very first step. Others are faithfully sitting on it. What was Henry referring to with the adjectives "capable" and "adult"? Fred passed over this with a humorous aside that could be interpreted to emphasize playing skill. Naturally, a player of Henry's caliber requires a reasonably skillful opponent for a fully enjoyable match, however, this is only a part of what was in his mind. He also meant someone who could actually make his move, commit it to paper, and get it to the mailbox. This capacity has proven amazingly illusive.

Many readers may think that by "adult" Henry was referring to people over 21 (or AHKS' 25 year albatross). True, for face-to-face play, some community of vintage is desirable. One does feel a might peculiar when his opponent's mother (who could be younger than himself) excuses herself from the cocktail party to see if you need more milk and cookies. Happily, postal play obviates this form of embarrassment. What Henry meant was some one who was adult enough to play a game for what it is. Such a person would take it seriously enough to maintain promptness and do his best to win, yet never consider cheating, dragging out a game that is obviously lost, or worse yet, just dropping a game without the courtesy of notifying one's opponent. Furthermore, the truly adult gamesman returns or corrects his opponent's move when it contains an error so glaring as to take the fun out of the contest (such as the Russian leaving an unnecessary gap in his lines in *S'grad*). Even when he takes advantage of a lesser error he chides his opponent, for he wants a contest, not a cheap victory.

AHKS has tread a thorny road in seeking out these capable adult gamesmen. So many applicants appear so enthusiastic, and may start out just fine, only to suddenly disappear. Others fall into a rut of slow play, because their opponent is slow or doesn't apply enough pressure (which is available through our By-Laws) to make them fish or cut bait. In an effort to minimize these disappointments, we have tried to admit only persons who are fairly settled. By waiting until college and courtship are completed, we hope to find persons whose patterns are sufficiently settled to offer reasonable assurance they won't disappear. By keeping our dues reasonably high, we try to discourage the one or two game slow mover. While we have been fairly successful in distilling a satisfactory membership, it has, and will continue to be a never-ending process of testing new members, and re-testing the old.

Our reduction of the age limit to 21 (or lower at the R,D.'s discretion) is not intended to bring a large number of younger members. Its purpose is to open our doors to those deserving adults previously barred by the arbitrary 25 year old requirement.

As we complete AHKS' fourth year, permit me to request each member's assistance in maintaining prompt play. Please notify the ICRKMeister of erratic behavior on your opponent's part, and remember to utilize the services of the Judge when indicated. You do neither the Society nor your opponent any service by a failure to complain.

★★

Vice President's Chair

Kenneth Oates

This will be my last column as Interim President and an officer of AHIKS, as I step down at the end of this term. I committed to Bob Best to continue as his Vice President, however George has convinced me I am not able health-wise to assume a continued stint (a question of stamina not desire). I leave it in reasonably good shape even in the face of many recent unexpected turnovers in leadership positions (President, Secretary, Match Coordinator, and Multiplayer Coordinator). I was faced with an overwhelming 4:1 ... before modifiers! I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve AHIKS and its membership for the past nine years. That time really flew by, and I want to thank all the officers and membership for their generally courteous, cooperative, and friendly attitude towards each other and me during my tenure. It is my fervent wish that we keep AHIKS the kind of organization we want it to be.

Personally, this will give me the opportunity to enjoy more gaming time in AHIKS, which I have missed as an officer. I am also putting my main gaming focus on three series going forward. I look forward to many more years of gaming, especially pursuing that elusive French win in **Warriors of God**. I hope to once again perhaps serve AHIKS in some officer capacity—but not in the near future!

All that being said, there are a few issues I think should be addressed in no particular order.

1. Executive Committee Communication beyond email needs to be addressed. I said this my first day as President back in 2013. Skype, Zoom, Discord, there are others, all exist to provide a no cost to low cost way to hold a group meeting. Even if it is only quarterly, with face to face real time discussions regarding issues coming before the Executive Committee. An annual open "town hall" session including all members?
2. AHIKS is not a fiefdom "ruled" by any one person. Everyone has a say.
3. More input and participation is also needed by the general membership.
4. Officers are elected to perform expected duties; it should not fall on the shoulders of the President (I have seen this twice now). If you need help, ask, also, conversely, step up to the plate when help is requested, and more importantly, when it is not. Do not sit on the sidelines complaining and criticizing those who do.
5. The *K* is a good publication. But it could be better. In addition to voluntary articles, directly solicit members (some write for the game companies) on a regular basis. The Fassio Award failed to generate a significant increase in article submission despite incentives. Solicit directly interviews/submissions from designers, developers, VASSAL gurus, graphics artists, cartographers...you get the picture. They have to be asked! This hobby is still small enough that people know "luminaries." Make it a goal to win the Best Amateur Publication Charles S. Roberts Award in the next three years.
6. As was said in the last *K*, tournaments by correspondence are problematic (snail mail or PBEM), especially in the COVID era and with the increasingly interactive nature of game sequences (the days of IGO-UGO are over). I agree and support that a successful tournament in the future would be similar to **The Hunters** (maybe **Silent Victory?**) solitaire (which had turn deadlines) or playing the games live on VASSAL giving a strict timeline for quick play. My first SOA tournament game was completed in about 2 months with a VAS-

SAL session once a week. It was then frustrating to be waiting and trying to get other games off the ground for over a year after that. If you are involved in multiple games, carefully consider your time availability before signing up (**Case 13.13** - All new game turns will arrive on the same day; Murphy's Law applies as always). I realize that delay has become a viable strategy path to victory of late, but, strictly speaking, it does not fit and is at odds with the AHIKS philosophy of mature game play. And do you really want a plaque with a victory won without rolling the die?

7. It appears that the number of European gamers is on the rise. Recently a U.S. team defeated the current championship team from Spain which was defending its championship in the World Series championship for GCACW. There is also interest in the GBACW series in Spain. An opponent and I were "watched" during our game of GBACW by a Polish gamer. An ASL tournament was held in Rome. And, of course, there is the long history of gaming in France and the U.K. Is it time to reactivate the European branch of AHIKS?
8. Yes, I dislike completing surveys on a frequent basis, but it has been a number of years. I do recommend a survey conducted with Survey Monkey (it is the easiest and tabulates results) of our members to determine what they are expecting and want.

Finally, Congratulations and Good Luck to George Phillies upon his embarking on a new administration as President.

My last day in office is firm. If you have an interest in the VP position, PLEASE CONTACT me (email) or George Phillies ASAP! Kenneth

12.4 REINFORCEMENTS

Reinforcements may enter at any friendly North, South, East, or West mapboard edge. New units may arrive by ground, rail, sealift, or airlift and count against stacking limits. Reinforcements are fully combat-capable on Turn of entrance.

1993 Geoffrey Moores, Horsham UK
 1994 Travis Creek, Henderson NV
 1995 Walter Guseman, Detroit MI
 1996 Mark Daley, Orewa New Zealand
 1997 Bill Dickerson, Niskayuna NY
 1998 Andrew Cozzi, Cork, Carrigtwohill Ireland
 1999 Mark Goss, Lindsborg KS
 2000 Peter Connor, Upper Hutt New Zealand
 2001 Joey Sabin, Casa Grande AZ
 2002 John Beaty, West Allis WI
 2003 Jeff Gaul, Redondo Beach CA
 2004 Mike Ricotta, Virginia Beach VA
 2005 Raymond Starsman, Kitty Hawk NC
 2006 Alan Warren, Galapagar, Madrid Spain
 2007 Mark Burgess, Sterling VA
 2008 William Goranson, Corpus Christie TX
 2009 Justo Perez, Dallas TX
 2010 Dane Paterson, Gallatin TN
 2011 Martin Kerslake, Swansea UK
 2012 Gary Wroblewski, Ceredo WV
 2013 Charlie Roberts, Richmond CA
 2014 Jeremy Brubaker, Odenton MD
 2015 Rick Chollett, Copperas Cove TX

Panzerblitz Situation 45 rev. 1 from Art Dohrman

The Panzerblitz pbem tournament has entered the final, after two years. Steve Andriakos and Doug King are duking it out for the top honors. They've chosen to play Situation 45 R1. I hope to have a blow by blow of that contest in the next *Kommandeur*. In the interim, here's a brief description of the situation and some considerations.

PanzerBlitz
Situation # 45

BURNING TANKS (5/5/44) Elements of the 2nd Panzer Division are overrun by units of the 6th Guards Tank Army near Minsk. The morning sky was filled with black smoke.

3

Map Configuration

RUSSIAN FORCES

6th Guards set up first in Woods or Town hexes, north of row J

2nd Panzer division artillery set up in Opustochenia

2nd Panzer Grenadier Reg. set up in Woods or Town hexes, south of row X

SPECIAL RULES:

- 1) German units may not move on Turn 1
- 2) Vehicular units may not enter Streambed Hexes in hex rows V through Z inclusive. All units may enter the ford hex Z9 normally

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The side with the higher victory level wins. The German player wins ties.

Russian Levels

- Marginal - Destroy 11 German units
- Tactical - Destroy 14 German units
- Decisive - Destroy 17 German units

GERMAN FORCES

2nd Panzer division artillery set up in Opustochenia

2nd Panzer Grenadier Reg. set up in Woods or Town hexes, south of row X

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The side with the higher victory level wins. The German player wins ties.

German Levels

- Marginal - NEITHER SIDE ACHIEVES VCS
- Tactical - Destroy 8 Russian units
- Decisive - Control 2 Town hexes or Destroy 12 Russian units

German moves first	TURN	1	2	3	4	5	6
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REV. 1 - 2014

The handwritten annotations on the situation card reflect revisions made in 2014. This is the version of the situation currently played at the World Boardgaming Championships.

The Special Rules have a huge influence on the game: the prohibition of German movement on turn 1 effectively makes it a 5 1/2 turn game and makes it impossible for the divisional artillery in Opustochenia to escape. Meanwhile, the restriction against vehicles entering the streambed/gully at any time makes the ford at Z9 key terrain in the truest sense of the word.

Victory conditions: the Germans can win decisively by holding all three hexes of Zabvenia. Alternately, they can go for a tactical victory by destroying at least 8 Russian units and preventing the Russians from destroying 17 German units. Since the Germans win ties, matching the Russian victory levels give them the win. Conversely, the Russians have to wipe out the German garrison in Opustochenia and control at least one hex of Zabvenia, in addition to eliminating Germans.

Figure 1 shows a typical German setup (the Russian set up is off screen to the left; they are poised to assault Opustochenia

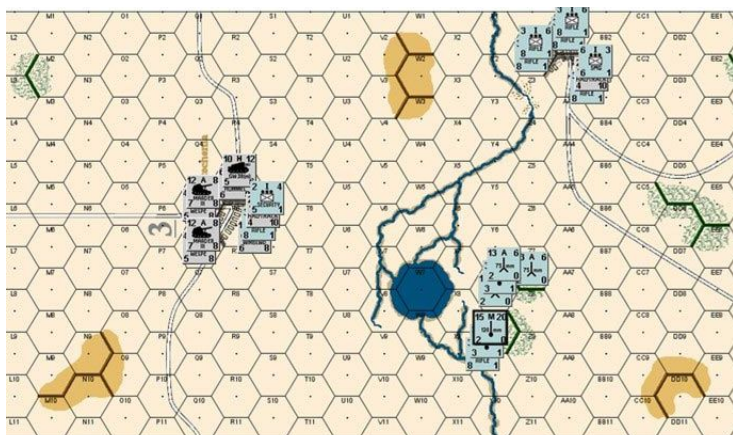


Figure 1 Typical German setup.

on turn 1). There are several considerations at play. First of all, only the halftrack in Opustochenia has the movement factors to make it back safely to Zabvenia – anyone else will end up

stranded in the open and likely eliminated by Russian direct fire without the opportunity to exact any revenge. So the halftrack starts out loaded with a rifle platoon; they will plan to beat feet to safety as soon as they can move in German turn 2. Second, notice the two hexes with the Marder-Wespe combinations. Each of these has enough firepower to achieve a 4:1 (automatic elimination versus a unit in the open) versus the most powerful Russian unit, the SU-152 “Conquering Beast.” Hummel is stacked with a GW-38 infantry support gun; this combo likewise can take out an SU-152. Behind the stream, the antitank guns and mortars are set up to support the Opustochenia garrison when the Russian onslaught breaks in turn 2. The downside of this is that they are poorly positioned to support Zabvenia when the Opustochenia garrison is overwhelmed. An alternate setup location for the guns, especially the 120mm mortar with a longer range, would be the woods at CC6 (labeled CC5 in this Vassal screenshot). This would improve their ability to defend Zabvenia in the second stage.

On turn 2, the Germans may have an opportunity to stymie the Russian advance by placing three dismounted rifle platoons in the ford hex. That would prevent Russian vehicles from crossing the gully and getting adjacent to Zabvenia. However, that will work only if the Russians bring their SU-152s up into clear terrain where the Germans can shoot at and eliminate one or both of them. If both SU-152s are in the mix after the Opustochenia garrison is eliminated, they can stand off out of range of most German weapons, and, in combination with other Russian armor, achieve a 4:1 automatic elimination against all three German rifle platoons. This would open the way for Russian armor to pour across the gully, attack Zabvenia, and hunt down the relatively weak German guns to rack up victory points. So, the Germans have a decision on turn 2: if they can take out one or both SU-152s, they can try the “block the ford with infantry” gambit. If not, they will have to garrison Zabvenia strongly so as to take out at least 8 Russians while attempting to limit their own losses to 16 or less.

So then, what about the Russians? They can almost certainly capture Opustochenia, although with losses. They would be wise to keep their SU-152s out of danger, perhaps in the woods at M9 where they can support the attack on Opustochenia by fire. That precludes the German ford-blocking option. The other big decision is how much infantry to commit to the assault on Opustochenia. Personally, I usually commit four infantry companies (riding on armored vehicles) to the assault and leave two mounted in halftracks to operate against Zabvenia. The Russian usually doesn't have enough time to remount any infantry and get it into action by game end. However, the Guards infantry with a range of 5, can move close enough to add their firepower against soft targets on the far side of the gully. The halftrack mounted infantry can dismount, enter the gully, and operate either against the town, or against the German gun positions in the woods at Y3/Y4.

This is a quick and exciting situation, and fairly well balanced. In my personal experience, I've played this 16 times, of which the Germans won 7 and the Russians 9 (not necessarily representative of my own won-lost record). In the tournament group play which ended last June, this situation was played 4 times with the honors being even at 2 German, 2 Russian. If you're looking for a fast playing, challenging scenario, I highly recommend this one.



Men of Iron Tripack: Analysis by Brian Stretcher

*Author's note: This is an expanded version of the first impressions article on this game that appeared in **Treasury Notes** in the July-August 2020 issue.*

Overview

Men of Iron Tripack is a re-issue of three individual titles in a single box, designed by the late Richard Berg. The individual games, which each feature several different battles, are **Men of Iron: The Rebirth of Infantry**, covering battles in Europe from 1298 to 1415; **Infidel: The Supremacy of Cavalry in the Crusader Era**, covering battles in the Crusader Kingdoms in the Middle East from 1097 to 1191; and **Blood and Roses: Battles in the Wars of the Roses** in England, 1455 to 1487. Those are the titles in the order originally released, hence the chronological discrepancy. The rules tell you how the games have been changed from their original editions, with the most rules changes made to **Men of Iron**, putting all the games into one unified system. There are no separate rulebooks for each title. The rules that distinguish the individual eras are built into the general rules. The charts and tables, which are unique to each separate game, including terrain effects, take care of the rest of the differences. Thus, while all games have similar charts and tables, unit abilities and results for a given die roll might be a little different from game to game depending on the time period. The scales are also a bit different, with units representing differing numbers of men, and with hexes more or less area, so similar types of missile units may have significantly different ranges in one game to another.

Components are top-notch, as one expects from GMT. Full color rulebooks, examples of play, cardstock charts and tables, and individual historical maps for each individual battle (well, except one, the St. Albans battles being fought over the same terrain). The maps are attractive, although as with many Medieval battles, many maps feature wide swathes of open terrain, and so may be relatively featureless. These maps are not mounted, and probably with good reason, as there are a lot of them. But, no generic battle maps here. No generic leaders either; all named with several different attributes and appropriate heraldry on the counters. The only modest surprise was seeing ½ inch pieces for all the battles except **Agincourt**, which features the larger counters to which I think many of us have become accustomed over the past several years. Perhaps I am getting old, but the ½ inch pieces look quite small these days, and the larger counters seem to be far more common these days. The **Agincourt** game is a bonus game that originally appeared in *C3i* magazine and has its own unique pieces and a half-map. A few of the larger markers are used in other scenarios. There are Vassal modules for several of the individual games on the GMT website: most of the **Infidel** battles, several of the **Men of Iron** battles, but none for **Blood and Roses**. I have not taken the time to study these modules, but I believe they were created from the original separate releases. I don't think the components were changed much from the original releases, however, so these should work for playing the games in the **Tripack**. I have looked at but not actually played any of the games by Vassal, and learning any new module usually takes a bit of left- and right-clicking to see everything it can do.

The Game System

The system is unique, or maybe not if you are used to Richard Berg games. Several years ago, I decided I did not much care for Berg's titles, since many of them introduced so many random factors and die roll modifiers that I came to believe that once the forces were put on the map, the games were decided

by an infinite number of die rolls with the players having little decision-making ability. I no longer prefer the "stack 'em up to 3-1 and roll a die" type of game, although they still have their place. Anyway, there are no turns. Instead, a player activates a Battle (formation), moves his Battle's units, both sides conduct missile fire, the active player conducts charge and shock combat, and then tries to rally his retired units. Everything is powered by a 10-sided die.

The interesting part comes after this, when the active player can pass play to the other player, or choose to try to continue and move another Battle. Most of the time one will want to try to continue moving one's own forces instead of passing to the opponent, hence the term "Continuation" if the continuity check succeeds. At this point the non-active player can attempt to "Seize Continuity" from the active player and move one of his battles, and die rolls ensue to see if that happens or if the active player gets to move again. Each player starts the game with only a certain number of Seizure counters they can use to try to steal a move. Even without a seizure attempt, Continuation is dependent on a die roll compared to the Battle commander's Activation rating, and as modified by the overall leader's Effectiveness (if in range, negative being good), and the number of times the active player attempts to Continue (+1 each successive attempt at Continuation). If you roll less than or equal to the Activation rating, the Battle gets a Continuation move. In **Blood and Roses**, players may attempt to activate the entire army under certain conditions instead of just a Battle, but these army activations only allow movement outside a certain range from enemy units, sort of like "strategic movement" in some other games.

The game continues in this manner until someone loses, usually by reaching a certain loss level: at the end of a completed Free Activation (not a Continuation Activation), both sides check their flight levels and roll the die, adding the result to the current recorded flight level. If the flight level exceeds the set-point, then that side loses immediately. But, sometimes the game will end when the clock runs out. One player will be "timed" in order to encourage him to attack, based on the historical situation. Every time the non-timed player passes when he has a Free Activation, the clock ticks down a pip. If the clock reaches zero before the opponent is defeated, the timed player loses. Therefore, the timed player cannot just sit there and do nothing.

Everything you might expect in a Medieval combat game is here. Units are differentiated by type, and there are a good number of types, from mounted Men-at-Arms, Knights, longbows, pikes, heavy, medium and light cavalry, crossbowmen, and even camp followers; I don't know of any other game where it is possible to attack a unit of prostitutes. Well, camp followers can't initiate shock combat, but I suppose one could commit them to the battle lines. So, in a twist of irony, camp followers cannot charge, but they can be charged.

Units are rated for movement and their defensive shock modifier (negative modifiers being good, positive bad). There are no attack values. Instead, there is a weapons system matrix where unit types are compared for their ability to make certain types of attacks against certain types of units, which is yet another die roll modifier, and it is the cumulative die roll modifier that makes or breaks an attack. For example, mounted Men-at-Arms get a +2 modifier in shock combat against longbows but a zero against pikes and other mounted Men-at-Arms. All rolls are made using a 0-9 ten-sided die. Thus, a longbow has a +3 fire modifier against mounted Men-at-Arms and an additional +1 at a range of 2 hexes. If we look to **Agincourt**, where all French

are disordered at the start of the game, only a roll of 0, 1, or 2 gives no effect, 3-7 forces the target to retire (flee to the Standard for potential future rally), and an 8 or above eliminates the unit. Hence, the ability of longbows to absolutely devastate an enemy.

Shock works pretty much the same way. Defensive modifiers are displayed on the counter. Offensive modifiers are determined by the Matrix. Some cavalry units may charge in order to roll on the charge table instead of the usual shock table, which produces less dramatic results against a defender than the charge table. Of course, opposing units might countercharge to disrupt a charge, and charging units are susceptible to reaction missile fire. A successful charge or shock combat might result in anything from disordering the defender, forcing a retreat, or outright elimination under certain circumstances, and a very successful shock/charge will allow the victorious unit to continue attacking another adjacent unit. Ordered units can withstand shock combat pretty well, with a disordered result and maybe a retreat being the worst result at the high end. Disordered units, however, have a tendency to melt away. Charge combat, if it can be achieved (i.e. a mounted unit can stay ordered long enough to make the charge, stay ordered from any reaction fire, and not be aborted by a counter-charge), is more effective offensively than regular shock combat.

There is a lot of chrome. Mounted archers can move, fire, and move again, and many light cavalry units can try to retreat before combat. Crusader Knights tend to be an impetuous bunch and can be required to charge a missile unit that fires upon them. In most games, horses may be reluctant to charge groups of men with a lot of long, pointy things sticking out, except those impetuous Englishmen during the War of the Roses. There may be bombards or other immobile artillery available and some handgun units during the War of the Roses. Gunpowder, however, has a nasty problem with premature explosion in this time period, and handgun units are missile units with no shock capability. Mounted Men-at-Arms can be unhorsed by missile fire. Some units can form a shield wall, or a Schiltron if Scottish, which is useless for the attack, nearly impenetrable to shock and charge combat, but vulnerable to missile fire. Alas, since there are no Vikings, no shield maidens here. Maybe in some future expansion. But this chrome isn't overwhelming, as most of it is built into the charts and tables, not so much exceptions to the rules.

Interestingly, units are not rated for morale. Instead, morale appears to be built into the die roll modifiers, as well as the class of unit. For example, some pike units will have somewhat better shock die roll modifiers than other pike units, even if otherwise identical. Levy Infantry in **Blood and Roses** cannot attack in any manner by themselves, and they have a poor shock modifier. Regular infantry can attack and has a moderately better shock modifier. Therefore, there is none of the "roll for casualties, then check morale" that you see in some other games. Units don't hold the line, slowly degrading, until they finally break and run. Combat is a bit more dramatic, with results of no effect, disordered, retired, or elimination. So, while there may be some pushing back and forth between the lines before someone breaks and runs, there is a bit more fun-factor built in here instead of die-rolling drudgery.

Units that are "retired" as a combat result are immediately moved to the Standard, which serves as a rallying point for retired units, which are otherwise useless and easy to destroy if caught. However, they are simply teleported to the standard when retired, even if all the way across the map. There is no "rout" movement producing streams of units running away, and no cascading sort of rout that spreads through the lines. The cascading rout situation is handled by the flight track, which tracks casualties; when an army goes, it goes. So, the game

avoids the clutter and tedium of moving useless units towards the Standard to rally. Salvaging a routed army is beyond the scope of the game.

As you might expect, there is facing of units, towards the vertex, and so there are two front hexes, two flank, and two rear hexes. Attacks from the flank and rear are bad. Attacks from multiple directions are even worse.

Leadership is important in this game. Most of the individual "Battles," or formations, have a designated commander necessary for the Battle to be in command. Each leader has a command range, as you might expect, but so long as units of a Battle are adjacent to another unit of the Battle, that is also in command; it will be in command as well even if out of range of the leader. Thus, units of a Battle will need to remain grouped together, and you will see plenty of Battles deployed in long lines to extend the flanks. This is fine until holes appear in that line and units are no longer in command and so suffer penalties. Out of command units cannot move adjacent to or charge an enemy unit, cannot countercharge, cannot move into a hex with an enemy standard or leader, and can't move during an Activation if they start adjacent to an enemy unit. They can fire, however, move back into command, and defend normally.

Leaders are also rated for their Charisma (grants a positive DRM in shock and charge combat), Effectiveness (Overall commanders adding that number to the Continuation die rolls of other leaders within command range), Activation (the base number against which a Battle rolls for Activation by Continuity), and the Command Range. Thus, leaders primarily impact command and Activation, with minor impacts on combat. They can be killed and captured, but there are less-qualified replacement leaders usually available. A leaderless Battle, however, is pretty helpless.

The Rules and Scenarios

The rules seem to be well-written and easy to follow, at 28 pages, including special and a couple of optional rules. Mr. Berg has sprinkled considerable humor within his prose. There is a small amount of post-publication errata available from the GMT website. Each battle scenario has a good historical background, deployment instructions complete with a reproduction of the map, historical and design notes, scenario-specific special and optional rules, estimations as to likely game length and, for many, a description of the hopelessness of one side's chances for victory. Therefore, many have options that will improve a side's situation. A few state that they are best played solitaire, such as **Falkirk** (William Wallace has no chance) and **Agin-court** (the French will be slaughtered). There are big battles (**Najera**) and small (**1st St. Albans**). All total some 20 different battles to fight. These are all field battles, not sieges, although a few happened in conjunction with sieges. Here's the list of the battles you can fight; a "v" indicates there is a Vassal module available:

Men of Iron:

Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland, 22 July 1298 (v)
 Courtrai, Flanders, 11 July 1302 (v)
 Bannockburn, Stirlingshire, Scotland, 23-24 June 1314 (v)
 Crecy, Picardy, France, 26 August 1346 (v)
 Poitiers, Poitou, France 19 September 1356 (v)
 Najera, Kingdom of Castile (Spain), 3 April 1367 (v)
 Agincourt, Pas-de-Calais, France, 25 October 1415

Infidel:

Dorylaeum, Northwest Anatolia, 1 July 1097 (v)
 Antioch, Northern Syria, 28 June 1098 (v)
 Ascalon, Southern Palestine, 12 August 1099 (v)
 Harran, Crusader Kingdom of Antioch/Edessa, 7 May 1104 (v)

Montgisard, Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem, 25 November 1177 (v)

Arzuf, Ayyubid Kingdom of Jerusalem, 7 September 1191 (v)

Blood and Roses:

1st St. Albans, Hertfordshire, 22 May 1455

Blore Heath, Staffordshire, 23 September 1459

2nd St. Albans, Hertfordshire, 17 February 1461

Towton, Yorkshire, 29 March 1461

Barnet, Greater London Area, 14 April 1471

Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, 4 May 1471

Bosworth, Leicestershire, 22 August 1485

I chose the Agincourt scenario to learn the game system, for several reasons. First, the battle is well known from both history and literature, being described in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Second, the scenario uses only a half-size map and relatively few units on each side: the French have 29 units on the map to start, and the English only 12. That the units are all oversized counters didn't hurt, either. Because of the force composition and the scenario's special rules, there is little to worry about with regarding charges and counter-charges; the English have no cavalry, and the French all start disordered and so cannot make charge attacks either. Finally, the notes to the scenario state that because the battle is so one-sided, it is well suited for solitaire play. I also was somewhat familiar gaming this situation from the old SPI **Agincourt** game.

I'll summarize the special rules here. First, the battlefield is muddy, so clear terrain costs are doubled. This means that it will take the French battles longer to approach the English lines. English longbowmen are sitting behind their famous stakes, and cannot be attacked there by Mounted Men-at-Arms, and other units can shock across stake hexsides only at considerable penalty (as Mr. Berg describes, the spaces between the stakes did not allow horses or the heavily-armored Men-at-Arms through). French missile units cannot be rallied from disordered or retired status, and any missile unit that is retired is eliminated instead. The English have a wagon train to defend, but realistically, there is little hope for the French to get through the English line and get to the train. The French get two seizure counters, the English 4.

The additional optional scenario rules are all historically based and penalize the French even further. Because the French spent a good portion of the morning of the battle partying while the English deployed, the entire French army starts disordered. In addition, the French cannot rally retired units, and disordered units can only be rallied in a Continuation or seized Activation, not a Free Activation. When activated and not rallying, French units in a Battle must move at least one hex towards English units and/or fire at English units, unless already adjacent. Lastly, if a French unit is retired, any French units between the retired unit and the Standard is automatically disordered if not disordered already, and the unit has a 30% chance of being outright eliminated. According to Mr. Berg, to best illustrate history, play the game with all the additional rules. He says that if you don't play with the extra rules, the game is much more balanced, but the "English position is tough to turn."

I played through the scenario several times, the first time just to get a feel for the game and rules. I drew only the special seizure counters for the French, including the cancel-a-seizure and mis-named treachery counter, which is supposed to be called "Unsteady Troops/Confusion," so I was a little confused myself when I drew it, but it is explained in the short errata. But the French obtained no outright seizures. The English drew three seizures and a treachery seizure of their own.

So I advanced the first French Battle, commanded by the Duke d'Orleans, as the special rules require one to do, making

immediate contact with the English longbows facing the French left, and the unlucky French Men-at-Arms melted away from reaction fire at 1-hex range. More units in Orleans' battle ran away when play passed to the English. One or two units manage to make contact with the English line, only to be driven away in a hail of arrows. Orleans himself was killed by arrow fire.

I then advanced the second Battle, which consists solely of archers and crossbow units. Its speed was a little better than the armored men of Orleans' Battle, and so once I got a little space I used a continuation activation to rally the units in the third Battle, which consist of five units of dismounted Men-at-Arms. While I was at it, I later rallied the fourth and last French Battle, with the missile units still approaching the English lines. The English were happy to sit still and wait for the French to approach.

The French missile units started attracting longbow fire at a three-hex range, but it is relatively ineffective at that distance. Crossbow fire is even less effective at that range, and Archers cannot fire at all. So most of the French missile units made it to two hexes away from the English lines. I used the treachery marker to disorder an English longbow within range, but, with the French being disordered, the English arrows took their toll, and the French missile units started to "retire," me forgetting that they cannot retire and are eliminated instead, but, oh well, this was my first game, and for learning the game it didn't matter and kept the French in the game longer. I did remember to disorder the freshly rallied French troops through which they ran, however.

Now I made my first English mistake. There being only a couple of French missile units left (and in their perpetually disordered state), and the other French Battles still a couple of activations away, I decided to take Henry V and Edward Plantagenet and sortie against them with two of the three English Men-at-Arms. As soon as they made contact with the French missile units, they were both disordered by reaction fire; but, being disordered only minimally affects the fire of missile units. Being disordered severely hinders shock combat, however, despite the good general modifiers against archers and crossbows, and so the English merely forced the missile units to retreat. So I had to send a couple of longbows out as well to eliminate the remaining missile units, and then seize an activation to run them all back to the main English line before the rest of the French got there. I managed to get them back and rally the disordered Men-at-Arms just before the third battle reached the English line. Didn't really matter, as the longbows did their job again, and most of the third Battle was retired as well.

About that time, the French broke as they reached their flight level. Actually, I forgot to roll the die for French flight as the game progressed, probably giving them an extra activation or two, more than they deserved, but, regardless, the French were pounded by the English in fairly short order. Rules forgotten were mostly from the special scenario rules, but also the Loss Check roll, and I forgot that longbows get to return fire when fired upon by other missile units, also helping the French. I struggled with remembering which numbers were which on the leader units for most of the game, frequently confusing the activation number for the command range, which also helped the French. Pretty much all my errors helped the French, but it still didn't matter.

Lessons learned: mostly that longbows are deadly at point blank range. They cannot really get a poor result at one-hex range against a disordered foot unit, with the most likely result being retired or elimination. Same goes for disordered mounted units. Crossbows can be equally effective if not disordered themselves, and can easily disorder formed foot units, even if led by the King. Shock combat is made difficult for disordered

units because of the -2 modifier, and the shock combat results are a bit more forgiving than the fire table.

So, for the second game, I needed to think of a way to get more non-disordered units to the English lines. There is no particular hurry, even though the French are the timed side, as there are 12 cycles to work with. Unfortunately, Orleans's Battle has to advance immediately. But, after that, there is a little leeway, and it is at least possible to rally the disordered units other than the missile units. The French drew one seizure attempt plus a negate seizure attempt to start the game. England drew only one seizure attempt as well, plus the "treachery" counter, battle cry, and a seizure negation counter.

The French advanced Orleans's Battle as required but did not move the Mounted Men-at-Arms into contact. The Dismounted Men-at-Arms unit that has no choice but to immediately make contact was quickly retired with reaction fire. Then I brought the missile units forward and, before they were too torn up, rallied Orleans's Battle in a continuation phase. I also rallied the third battle, and it began its trek towards the English lines.

But, arrows took their toll on Orleans's Battle while this was occurring, putting the French Mounted Men-at-Arms on the French right briefly out of command. Not for long, however, as Orleans's troops were shot out from under him, and he displaced to take command of the remaining French cavalry on the right, while the missile units advanced to within firing range of the English line. However, French fire was terrible, and the French missile units disintegrated in the exchange of fire.

Orleans took his last unit and attacked the leftmost English longbow unit through the woods but behind the stakes. The shock attack managed to disorder the longbowmen and forced them to retreat! Meanwhile, Alencon's third Battle was approaching the English lines.

Orleans's success was short lived, however, as the two adjacent longbow units managed to retire the Mounted Men-at-Arms. The disordered English longbowmen retook their position behind the stakes and a later activation rallied them.

While this was going on, Alencon's Battle managed to make contact with the English line, intact and mostly in good order, as longbow reaction fire was not particularly effective this time. But the French were approaching their flight limit. The shock attacks, hindered by the stakes, were not very effective and the English stood firm. Then came the hail of arrows, and the French broke and ran. I remembered to roll during the loss checks this game.

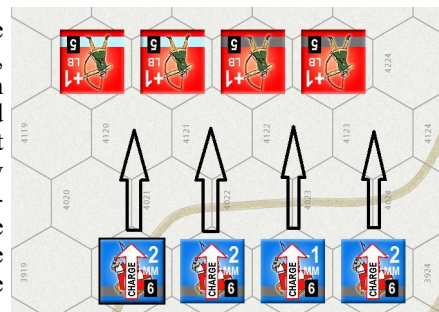
I was much happier with the French performance in the second game, although the end result was the same historical rout. I at least managed to get a Battle to the English lines mostly intact and in order, and then make a set of shock attacks.

Challenging the Awesome Power of Longbows

I got to thinking that maybe the longbow units were a bit too powerful. **Infidel** has no longbows and in **Blood and Roses** longbows do not have as powerful a modifier, so the power of longbows is unique to **Men of Iron**, which I suppose is how it should be. But, I was still curious about how these longbows might stand up to 1,000 charging Mounted Men-at-Arms in good order, so I tried it to see how it would work. Plus, I would get to learn a little about how to conduct charges, since in **Agincourt** there is little opportunity to conduct a charge as defined by the game system.

I set up four longbow units in a line. I then set up four Mounted Men-at-Arms 3 hexes away (charges can't start from an adjacent hex; there has to be at least one intervening hex between the chargers and the chargees); see the example. I assumed the charging units did not move in the action phase immediately preceding the charge, because if they do there is a -1 DRM. Basically, the cocky English longbows have meandered into charging range to take potshots at range and missed.

I commenced the charge down the line, right to left. As each charging unit is placed adjacent to their target longbow, the longbow gets to conduct reaction fire. This is the scary part for the chargers. Two of the charges are disordered, and one is unhorsed (which includes disorder). But, 250 Mounted Men-at-Arms make it through in good order.



The three disordered Men-at-Arms no longer get the charge advantage, and so their combats become regular shock attacks. Disordered units get a -2 DRM in shock combat. Nevertheless, there is a hefty positive DRM for Mounted Men-at-Arms against longbow units (+3), and the longbow units themselves have a +1 DRM in shock combat. So, +3+1-2 gives a final +2 DRM even for the disordered attackers. The unhorsed Men-at-Arms only gets a +1, and so with the -2 for being disordered and the +1 longbow modifier, the unhorsed attack will have a net modifier of 0. The ordered attacker, however, gets the full +3+1=+4 modifier and that on the Charge table instead of Shock.

I start with the unit that is still charging, since it might win a continuation attack and get to attack again. However, my understanding of the rule is slightly off, and even if it succeeds I have to roll off the others first, so it probably would have been best to roll it last, but whatever, so on we go. This attack gets the best result after the modifier, an 8+. The longbow is disordered, has to retreat a hex, and the cavalry gets to continue the attack. It advances into the vacated hex, turning one vertex left, so as to be able to attack either adjacent longbow in the continuation attack. I put a Continuation -1 on the unit after it advances, to remind me that the next attack will have a -1 DRM applied. The unhorsed unit also manages a decent roll, disordering the adjacent longbow.

On the other end of the line to the right, the disordered Mounted Men-at-Arms also rolls high, disordering the longbow and forcing a retreat, but no continuation attack. The attack immediately adjacent, however, gets no result. That ends the shock phase, but the French still get to conduct their continuation attack.

This has to be conducted as a shock attack, not charge. But the attackers are now on the flank of a disordered unit, getting an additional +2 modifier, the disordered unit's modifier is now +2, plus the usual +3 for attacking a longbow, so net +6 even with the -1 continuation DRM. The French roll low this time, however, and only manage to retire, not eliminate, the longbow.

At the conclusion of the attack, one French unit is unhorsed and disordered, two are disordered, and one is mad as hell and is ready to go. The longbow that stood its ground is now surrounded, the other two longbows are disordered, one is fleeing to the standard, and there is a gaping hole in the English line. That result seems satisfactory under the circumstances. Although with some luck the longbows could have held, with poor luck they could have been obliterated.

Play Options

The game is good for solitaire play. As indicated in Mr. Berg's notes, some of the games are particularly good for solitaire study, such as **Agincourt** and **Falkirk**, although there are no bots and one does have to play with a bit of a split personality. The only secret you know is the types of Seizure counters each side has, but that isn't too much of a problem. It is usual-

(Continued on page 12)

Ethics In Gaming from Randy Heller

Each year at the World Boardgaming Championships held by the Boardgame Players Association (BPA) an ethics in gaming seminar has traditionally been held and chaired by Joel Tamburo. It is not closed in any way or held by invitation. It is open to attendees and appears on the convention's schedule. As far as I know, there has been no established agenda, and it is open for topics of discussion brought up from the general audience. Joel does an excellent job of facilitating discussion and maintaining decorum. I have personally attended the seminar throughout the past several years.

Two topics come to mind that prompted the most interesting and lively discussions. The first was the discussion of the use of historical symbols in gaming that might otherwise be perceived as objectionable outside the gaming arena, such as the swastika. This led into a discussion of color selections for unit counter playing pieces, such as yellow for Japanese and white on black for Germans. The second topic was the discussion of game-master approved mulligan round tournament play prior to the start of the convention. A well-known grognard publicly exclaimed such activity to be equivalent to cheating. Those attending the seminar unanimously disagreed with the claim, which was reinforced by the BPA Board of Directors, which disallowed the practice along with the clarification that it was not an ethics violation, i.e., cheating.

At the 2019 WBC Ethics in Gaming Seminar, the discussion was dominated by a scenario in which a gamer, who had been eliminated from a single elimination tournament, was reinstated in the tournament and went on to be awarded first place. Two recommendations ultimately were proposed. One was to establish an official tournament play policy and the other was to make a correction for the records. These recommendations were drafted in a letter to the BPA Board of Directors and submitted. Due to Covid-19 and the election of new board members, discussion was postponed until fall 2020, where rulings are expected. Below is the letter to the board as it was presented.

BPA Board of Directors:

On Saturday evening at the 2019 WBC *Ethics in Gaming Seminar* hosted by Joel Tamburo an appeal was made to endorse a recommendation to approach the board to correct a discrepancy existing in the official WBC records.

An individual who had been eliminated from competition in a single elimination tournament was allowed by an inexperienced GM to be reinstated in the tournament as a "spoiler." Unknown to his opponent, he advanced to the finals, won, and inappropriately accepted the first-place plaque. His final round opponent did not discover what transpired until after the convention and declared he would not have agreed to play the individual knowing he had been eliminated from the tournament competition.

To rectify this injustice, it is respectfully requested that this win be struck from the records, in effect reducing the number of times this individual was awarded by one. Nothing else is requested, i.e., no forfeiture of wood, rescheduling of play or anything else. Both the original GM and a current member of the Board who was there to witness this event are both available to corroborate these facts.

Those in attendance at the *Ethics Seminar* unanimously endorsed this recommendation. In addition, they requested that future WBC rules specify any spoiler wear a notification, such as a sticker or a badge, to clearly identify his/her spoiler status, and that a spoiler not be allowed to participate in semi-finals or finals tournament play.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Randy Heller, WBC#881

Book Review

Mussolini by Richard Bosworth

Published in 2002 by Arnold Publishers

584 pages

Reviewed by Tom Walsh

I was fourteen when I purchased Avalon Hill's *Anzio* — in no small part because it had just been rated as the best game by readers of the company's *General* magazine. I couldn't have known then how much I'd love that game and how interested in the Italian campaign I'd (eventually) become.

One day years later I took up a Mussolini biography. I found it fascinating. To date I've read five of them. What a character; so many gifts, so many flaws. So utterly human. And though I couldn't have imagined when I started reading about him years ago—really an individual worth contemporary consideration.

I recently re-read Bosworth's book. My first read a couple years ago felt unsatisfying. I don't have the credentials to criticize his scholarship. But his prose just seemed awkward, difficult, clumsy. I just never got into a groove with the book. Bosworth is Australian, and so I wondered whether his "native tongue" simply differed enough from mine to account for this.

My re-read was very similar. Enjoyable to an extent but a choppy read that just never flowed.

I'll admit the book has merits—although what I'll mention here may somehow reflect poorly on me.

The opening chapter deals with the last chapter of Mussolini the man: His flight north and capture. When I read that a partisan reported to his commander that "We've got Big-Head," well, I figured I was in for a swell read!

As the book is ending Bosworth recounts the extensive (tortured?) journey made by the Duce's mortal remains. That I found this interesting and remarkable may mark me as sophomore; but I confess that I did.

Bosworth concludes by reflecting on the legacy of Mussolini and fascism. These pages contain considerable opinion/commentary and are often contemplative/reflective in nature. I found the author's views generally thoughtful and worthwhile.

This is the least favorite of the Mussolini biographies which I have read. But if he is a figure that intrigues you, you will probably consider reading it worth your time and effort.



Upcoming Events

The Steve Jackson site I use shows no upcoming conventions. If you have any knowledge of other sites that list conventions, I would like to know. Until then, it is solitaire games.

A good source for information on all kinds of conventions is the Steve Jackson game site: <http://sjgames.com/con>

Open Match Requests from Chuck Tewksbury

1985 Under an Iron Sky TRL 8th Army: Operation Crusader (1984) GDW	Martin Hogan (1704)
ACW Brigade Series MMP	Geoffrey Moores (1993) V
Adv Third Reich (1992) AH	Aaron Kulkis (1983)
Adv Third Reich AH	Geoffrey Moores (1993) V
African Campaign CG	Rick Cholett (2015) EFV
Alexander AH	Bob Jones (1548) V
ASL MMP	Raymond Starsman (2005) ELV
Bitter Woods CG	Raymond Starsman (2005) ELV
Blitz:A world in conflict CMP	Bob Jones (1548) V
Bloody 110 COA	Mike Ricotta (2004) VXE
Bloody Kasserine GDW	Aaron Kulkis (1983) FVL
Breakout Normandy AH/L2	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Breakout to Paris 1918 HFD	Bob Jones (1548) V
Bulge '81 AH	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Chickamauga SPI	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Clash Giants Tannenburg GMT	Peter Bertram (790)
Combat Commander GMT	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Empire in Arms AH	Allen Evenson (1553) E
Empire of Rising Sun AH	Edson Ramos (1989) P
Empires of Rising Sun AH	Rick Cholett (2015) ES
Flying Colors GMT	Mike Scott (1555)
Fortress Europa AH/Compass	Rick Cholett (2015) EV
Fortress Europa AH	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Fox's Gambit HFD	William Goranson (2008) AE
Fury in the West AH	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Guilford GMT	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Guns of August AH	Jay Unnerstall (1264) EP
Hells Highway (1984) VG	John Troskey (1554) CV
Holland '44 GMT	Geoffrey Moores (1993) V
Main Battle Tank 2ed GMT	William Goranson (2008) VE
Monty's Gamble:	Martin Hogan (1704)
Market Garden MMP	Jerry Wong (1974) FV
No Retreat: North Afrika GMT	Jerry Wong (1974) FV
No Retreat: Russian Front GMT	Bert Schneider (1569)
Panzer Battles MMP	John Troskey (1554) CVS
Panzer Blitz AH	Jeff Gaul (2003)
Panzer Grenadier AP	Carl Wolf (1992) V
Panzer Leader AH	Jeff Gaul (2003)
Proud Monster XTR	Edson Ramos (1989) P
South China Seas CMP	Mike Ricotta (2004) VXE
SPQR GMT	Justo Perez (2009) FV
Squad Leader AH	Jack Cameron (1988) V
Stalingrad Second Ed AH	George Phillis ZVX
The Russian Campaign AH	William Goranson (2008) AE
Third Reich or Adv AH	Raymond Starsman (2005) ELV
Thunder at Cassino AH	Jerry Wong (1974) FV
To Green Fields Beyond SPI	John Troskey (1554) CVS
WWII Commander: Vol 1, Battle of Bulge CG	Bob Jones (1548) V

Match Coordinator

To accept one of the listed matches or have a new match listed, email to: DUNCANR@TELUS.NET

Match Codes

A: ADC2	P: Postal Mail
C: Cyberboard	S: Slow Play
E: Email	T: A.C.T.S..
F: Fast Play	V: V.A.S.S.A.L.
G: Will Gamemaster	X: Non-rated Game
L: Learning Game	Z: Zuntzu

Multiplayer Info from Jeff Miller

Hopefully everyone had a great Thanksgiving and will have a great Christmas with lots of new games under the tree. ☺

On the multiplayer side of things, both **Samurai** and **Fire in the Lake** have games running now. [Map page 17.]

Both are in the early stages, although one player is out in **Samurai** already. He gambled on avoiding the destruction of his entire clan by grouping them together for a campaign of conquest.

However, fate stepped in and, as his clan celebrated their victories inside a castle, it caught fire and everyone died. [something like a 1% chance!!!]

FITL has had its first coup card, fairly early. The NVA and VC have been corrupting the minds of the peasants fairly rapidly, but the ARVN and US are about to start stepping on them. Having built their resources to the highest amount I have seen in a game so far. ☺

Okay, those who have an interest in a multiplayer game please take a look at your shelves and see what you would like to have hit the table and drop me a note!

Also please take a look at the multiplayer request list; there some games that are really close to starting. If you want in, now is the time to ask, as usually it takes a bit for a second game to get started once the first one is out of the gate.

For those of you who are on the list already, please take a look and make sure the games you are listed for are still current. If not, drop me a note so I can keep the list up to date.

Hope everyone has safe and enjoyable Christmas.

Multiplayer Games

If you are interested in playing any of the following games, contact Jeff Miller (address on page 12).

A Distant Plain GMT – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 A Distant Plain GMT – Aamir Zakaria [1993]
 Angola MMP – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Angola MMP – Aamir Zakaria [1993]
 Amoeba Wars AH – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Colonial Twilight GMT – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Colonial Twilight GMT – Aamir Zakaria [1993]
 Crown of Roses GMT – Mike Kettman (1067) V
 Conquistador AH – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Conquistador AH - John Hoffmann [884] V
 Conquistador AH – Mark Palmer 1074
 Diplomacy - Aamir Zakaria [1993]
 Dune AH – Jeff Miller [1303] V
 Dune AH – John Hoffmann [884] V
 Dune AH – Aamir Zakaria [1993]
 Empire in Arms AH – Kevin Conway [1930] V
 Empire in Arms AH – Andrew Patience [274]
 Empire in Arms AH – Thomas Scarborough [1345]
 Empire in Arms AH – Mike Kettman [1067] V
 Empires of the Middle Ages SPI – Mike Kettman (1067) V
 Falling Sky GMT – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Gunslinger AH - Matt Scheffrahn [1844] VMG
 Kremlin AH – Jeff Miller [1303] V
 Kremlin AH - John Hoffmann [884] V
 Kremlin AH – John Hren [1737]
 Stellar Conquest – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Time of Crisis GMT – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 War of the Suns MMP – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Wizards Quest AH – Jeff Miller, [1303] V
 Wizards Quest AH - John Hoffmann [884] V

(Continued from page 9)

ly pretty obvious when to try to seize Activation and when to try to prevent it, and I suspect hoarding one's seizure counters in not very helpful. On the other hand, if things are otherwise going well, there is probably no reason to burn them with minimal benefit, either.

None of the battles are particularly long, and notices are given for approximate playing time for each battle. There are some admitted play-balance issues in some of the battles, as Mr. Berg plainly points out, but there has been no effort to make the battles competitive by tweaking victory conditions. If you have to win, don't play the French in **Agincourt**. But, the fun is trying to do better than history.

With Vassal modules available for many of the battles, play options open considerably. However, I think the game would be playable by email as well, especially as play is broken down into manageable chunks, given that a player activates and moves one Battle at a time, there is nothing similar to opportunity fire, and reaction and return fire is pretty much automatic. There would be necessary pauses for potential seizure attempts, but that would keep one's moves within manageable bites. There are some decisions for a non-active player to make, such as countercharge and retreats, but again, these are quick back-and-forth things where relatively few units are moving and fighting, making decisions pretty quick.

Conclusions

What's missing? As I mentioned, there is no separate consideration of the morale of the individual units. In all fairness, there is no way to determine the morale of individual units in these battle games or any sort of battle games from distant history. As the designer's notes make clear, the sources on these battles vary widely, sometimes as to whether certain forces even participated in the battle or not, let alone speaking to the quality of the units. Therefore, I think it fair that the game makes assumptions regarding morale and relating it to the modifiers by unit type and unit status, i.e. ordered or disordered, with minor variations in the presence of a leader, instead

of assigning what would be an arbitrary number to each individual unit.

Despite the similarities between the games of the system, there is no unification of the system between the eras represented. As mentioned, there are differences in scale between the three games, as well as different subtleties in interactions between arms in each era. Thus, you could not easily pluck out an army from **Blood and Roses** and pit it against a Saracen army from **Infidel** and see what might happen. In that sense, a further development of this system to, say, take the game further back into the Dark Ages and pit Vikings vs. Fyrds would work, but would require a reworking of the scale, charts, and tables. I presume the system could be worked backwards just about as far back in history as one could want to go, but making it possible to pit Romans against Henry V would require such a watered-down approach that it would destroy the intricate interplay between unit types and weapons systems. Or, it would have to be ridiculously complex.

This is a game system that deserves to be played. As I have no working knowledge of games similar in scope and topic, I cannot really offer any comparisons. All I know is that the system gives me what I expected to refigure Medieval battles and plenty of them to choose from. There is a sequel game that appears to be in stock at GMT, that being **Arquebus**, featuring eight battles in Northern Italy from 1495 to 1544, that being the approximate time frame of events in **Here I Stand**. I think I need a copy.



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PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Articles will be accepted at any time, though submission of an article does not guarantee its publication. News items will be accepted if received in sufficient time to allow production schedules to be met.
Deadline for next issue: January 31, 2021.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Kommandeur (K) is the official newsletter of AHKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by email and mail. AHKS is an organization of amateurs, staffed by volunteers, and is not affiliated with any game company or publisher. Society dues are yearly. Additional information about current rates is available from the Treasurer. We do not accept advertising. We do accept "ad trades" on an issue-for-issue basis with other publications and organizations. Direct inquiries to the Editor.

WEB SITE ADDRESS
www.AHIKS.com

Game News

Avalanche Press

The Deluge World War II began when German tanks rolled across the border of Poland on September 1, 1939. The Poles fought back courageously, blunting several attacks, but the force of numbers and superior weapons drove them back toward Warsaw. Once the Soviet Union launched its own treacherous attack, the Polish state was doomed.

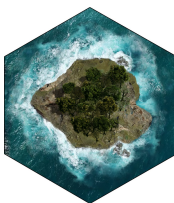
The Deluge is a Panzer Grenadier expansion book focused on the battles of September 1939 between Poland's defenders and the German and Soviet invaders. There are 40 new scenarios featuring battles of cavalry against cavalry, a couple of tank battles, and, best of all, World War Two's only fight between opposing armored trains. Plus of course background articles on the armies and weapons involved. You'll need **Fire in the Steppe** and **1940: The Fall of France** to play all of the scenarios. \$35 <http://www.avalancheexpress.com/gameWhiteEagles.php>

Second World War at Sea: Islands is one of the coolest things we've ever made. It's a set of extra pieces for use with any Second World War at Sea game: like the name says, these are islands. You place them on the Tactical Map where the scenario instructions tell you to put the island marker. The games come with a small island marker; these wonderful new islands take up the entire hex.

There are many kinds of islands, for use in the many places to which Second World War at Sea games take you: jungle islands, forest islands, rocky islands, frozen islands. Some cover just one hex (the usual size of a Second World War at Sea island); others cover multiple hexes and strips of coastline. They turn that standard blue Tactical Map into a colorful miniatures table, with islands rising out of the seas.

You don't need these to play Second World War at Sea: you can mark off the islands and coastlines just fine with pennies or quids. But really, do you want your battleships steaming past these glorious jungle-covered islands, or Abe Lincoln's coppers head? \$20

<http://www.avalancheexpress.com/gameIslands.php>



Compass Games

An Attrition of Souls is a light, fast-paced wargame at the strategic scale covering the Great War, designed with a high degree of replayability—no two games play alike. This deluxe game with mounted mapboard and large game counters features a unique tile-placement system to simulate the First World War. Game strategy is key due to the unforgiving combat system capturing the horrific attrition of this conflict; the dice offer no bloodless victories or reprieve for either side. \$69/\$55

<https://www.compassgames.com/an-attrition-of-souls.html>

Dawn's Early Light: The War Of 1812 is a two-player card-driven grand strategy game: a quick-playing, high-level abstract recreation of the entire conflict encompassing the territorial, naval, political, and economic competition between the two sides. Players will appreciate the high-production quality of the components which includes a **mounted** game map and large, 5/8" size punch-out counters.



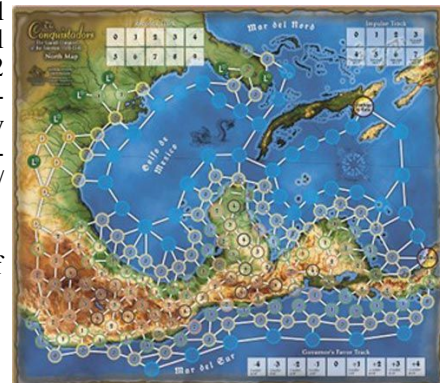
Players take the role of the United States or Great Britain over a four-year period spanning the war and its prelude, with game cards for events and operations that offer players the tools to remix the entire scope of the conflict. Events such as "Andrew Jackson," "Old Ironsides," "Laura Secord," "Tippecanoe," and "Dinner at the White House" recreate the characters and moments that shaped the war, while operations such as recruiting, campaigning, privateering, raiding, and shipbuilding let players take it in their own direction. Each side earns victory points for capturing the enemy's towns and territory, outcompeting them at sea, and outmaneuvering them in politics and public sentiment. \$57/\$69

<https://www.compassgames.com/dawn-s-early-light-the-war-of-1812.html>

The Conquistadors: The Spanish Conquest of The Americas – 1518-1548 In the half-century after Columbus, small bands of daring Spanish adventurers conquered Central and South America, destroying the huge armies of long-established native empires in the process. Some won great fortunes in gold, while many others only died an early death. These men were The Conquistadors. In this partly card-driven, partly procedural game—a brand-new design from Jon Southard—one to five players each control a group of conquistadors, trying to discover and loot the civilizations of the Americas and end up with the most gold and power.

A game of **The Conquistadors** begins with the outline of Central and South America as known in 1520. Your first task will be to seek out and discover the great Indian cities and empires -- which may appear in their historical locations, or in quite different places. Once you discover where the cities and empires are, it is time to gather gold. You might battle and plunder the Indians, or your best plan may be to attempt diplomacy and enlist them as allies -- especially if you have an Indian interpreter in your expedition. Like Francisco Pizarro, you might try a Sudden Shock Attack to capture a native king and extort a fat ransom. Always you must be sure to keep the Governor happy, or he may issue a warrant for your arrest. Beware of native uprisings, painted warriors, and poisoned darts around the next corner, and watch out for defection in your own ranks. If you fall behind in the race for gold, you might try to descend the Amazon or discover the Fountain of Youth. And when you are really in a tight place, perhaps you can appeal to Mano de Dios (the Hand of God) to bail you out.

The Conquistadors is playable by from 1 to 5 players, with an introductory Basic Game, a more involved Standard Game, and some optional rules. While the normal game system requires 2 or more players, solitaire play is enabled by a special solitaire module. \$64/\$89 <https://www.compassgames.com/the-conquistadors-the-spanish-conquest-of-the-americas-1518-1548.html>



Dissimula Edizioni

From Salerno to Rome allows you to simulate the first ten months of the military campaign in Italy during WW2, from the landing in Salerno (September '43) to the liberation of Rome (June '44). €73
<https://www.dsimula.com/>



Flying Pig Games

Old School Tactical Volume II: West Front 1944-45

The popular Old School Tactical series returns for its second edition with Old School Tactical Volume II: West Front 1944-45. This iteration of the quick to learn, challenging to master, tactical game introduces the Americans to the series. Fight across the European countryside with M-10 tank destroyers and Sherman Easy Eight Tiger tank destroyers. Pile your powerful rifle squads into venerable M5 halftracks or nail an onrushing armored car with a bazooka. Find your enemy, fix them, flank them, and finish them. If it works on the battlefield, it works in Old School Tactical, and it works with minimal fuss and muss.

About Old School Tactical: Two players contest each scenario using counters representing the soldiers, guns, and vehicles that fought these desperate battles. On each turn, play goes back and forth between the sides as Impulse Points are spent to enable a player's forces to act. When the battle is over, casualty and victory points are tallied, and a victor is declared.

Infantry target other soft units and attack using their Firepower value against the target's Defense value. The attack can be modified by Leadership, support weapons, and terrain effects. When things get intense, Assault moves into enemy hexes result in deadly Close Combat. Dice rolls are made using the Infantry Combat Table, and results are implemented. Attacking armored vehicles requires a roll to hit the vehicle. If a hit is scored, the Firepower value of the attacker's gun is used against the target's front or flank defense value. Dice rolls are made using the Vehicle Combat Table and results are enforced. Vehicles may also use their HE Firepower value and secondary armaments directly against soft targets using the Infantry Combat Table. \$85

<https://flyingpiggames.com/products/old-school-tactical-volume-ii-west-front-1944-45>

Old School Tactical Vol III brings the popular OST system to the Pacific Theater of World War II. Fight in the jungles and on the beaches against both the Imperial Japanese Army and Naval (Marine) units. Unlike other OST soldiers, the fanatical Japanese have no Gut Check number, preferring death to dishonor. The Japanese also come with the new tank-killer units and, of course, rules for the famous Banzai attack. The Americans answer with canister rounds for their Stuart tank, the famed Marine firepower and discipline, and plenty of armor and artillery support. \$90/\$100

<https://flyingpiggames.com/t/old-school-tactical>

GMT Games

In 1992, Ted S. Raicer published his first design in the late lamented *Command Magazine*, **1918: Storm in the West**, covering the last nine months of WWI on the Western Front. The game was an immediate success, earning a Charles S. Roberts Award nomination, and leading to the design of a Plan 1919 variant which assumed a German defensive strategy in 1918 and an all-out Allied assault to win the war the following year. GMT is pleased to offer a new boxed version of these classic Great War designs, with new artwork, and including an additional 1918 Allied Offensive scenario published later in *Command*.

This new GMT boxed version of **1918/19: Storm in the West** is a two-player system that also works fine for solo play. Units are mostly corps (divisions for the USA, whose oversized units were nearly the size of Allied corps), and include infantry, tanks, cavalry, and air support. The Germans start the 1918 campaign with large numbers of Stosstruppen, trained to overcome the trench stalemate of the previous three years. This gives the German player a strong offensive capability in the first half of the game. But these "shock troops" are a wasting asset, and if the Allies survive the initial blows, growing numbers of US troops and Allied tanks will see the Germans forced into a desperate defense in the game's second half.

In the Plan 1919 campaign, the Germans are assumed to have used the collapse of Russia to stabilize the Balkan and Italian fronts, forgoing the historical 1918 Kaiser's Battles in the West. The Allies are thus faced with a strong German defense, but with a fully mobilized American army and backed by masses of tanks and planes. This hypothetical campaign challenges the Allies to leverage these arms into the world's first blitzkrieg, while the Germans fight to force a stalemate that will leave them dominant in Europe.

The large-hex map, scaled at 8 miles to the hex, covers the active area of the Western Front, from Epinal in the south to Antwerp and the Channel Coast in the north. Terrain includes Forts, Allied trenches, German Secondary and Primary Trenches, Forts, Forest, Marsh, Flood Plain, Mountain, and the Devastated Zone created by the German withdrawal in the Somme sector in 1917. The map is back-printed with separate versions for the 1918 and 1919 Campaigns.

Simple but not simplistic, this new GMT version of **1918/19: Storm in the West** can be played in a single session and offers players a wide range of strategic and operational choices in bloody but dynamic campaigns to decide the outcome of the First World War. With updated artwork by Mark Simonitch and Charlie Kibler, this new combined edition is a must for lovers of classic wargaming. \$49
<https://www.gmtgames.com/p-670-19181919-storm-in-the-west.aspx>



A Time for Trumpets (ATFT) is a battalion level game of the Battle of the Bulge. The game system incorporates a number of concepts from two the highly playable games on the same subject: **Bitter Woods** by The Avalon Hill Game Company and the iconic battalion level **Wacht am Rhein** from SPI in 1977. In addition, the command and control concepts devised for the TAHGC version of **The Siege of Jerusalem** were utilized.

Most of the ground combat units in "ATFT" are battalion sized combat units. The battalion is homogeneous with regard to mission and functionality. Homogeneous, because an infantry battalion is comprised primarily of infantry companies; a tank battalion is comprised primarily of tank companies, etc. A battalion based game is designed with differentiation inherent to the system, whereas a regimental level game is designed with integration inherent to the system. For example, in a battalion level game, Kampfgruppe Peiper will include at least two separate panzer battalions, a panzer grenadier battalion, an AA battalion, and an artillery battalion; whereas in a regimental level game, KGP will be comprised of one counter representing all of the aforementioned units.

Game concepts include: HQ activation status (active or resting), fatigue and exhaustion, command and control, formation supply, supply by air, German fuel shortages, American supply

dumps, ground conditions, atmospheric conditions, air strafing and interdiction, construction of defensive positions and bridges, demolition, sacrosanct formation boundaries, limited winter movement across rivers and streams, strategic movement, infiltration due to limited visibility, over-run of vulnerable units, German night combat advantage, Kampfgruppe Peiper Breakout, German Nebelwerfer Operations, German FA Operations, Allied FA Operations, Time on Target, terrain effects for ground combat, weapons effects on ground combat, exploitation after combat, etc.

Extensive research using the most modern sources available has assured an accurate and complete Order of Battle. Also included are optional random events that will provide additional challenges. Scenarios will include the Campaign Game, 6th Panzer Army, 5th Panzer Army, 7th Army, Patton's Relief of Bastogne, and the Race to the Meuse. \$149

<https://www.gmtgames.com/p-658-a-time-for-trumpets-the-battle-of-the-bulge-december-1944.aspx>

Caesar: Rome vs. Gaul is a fast-playing, easy-to-learn, two-player card-driven game on Caesar's conquest of Gaul. One player plays Caesar as he attempts to gain wealth and fame in Gallia at the expense of the Gauls. The other player controls all the independent tribes of Gaul as they slowly awake to the peril of Roman conquest.

Caesar: Rome vs. Gaul uses many of the core rules and systems used in **Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage**. Players are dealt 7 cards at the start of each turn and use their cards to move their armies and place control markers. Players familiar with **Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage** will quickly learn this game.

The game covers the height of the Gallic Wars, the period between 57 BC and 52 BC when Caesar campaigned back and forth across Gaul putting down one rebellion after another and invading Germania and Britannia. Units are individual Roman Legions or Gallic Tribes. Each turn represents one year. \$60

<https://www.gmtgames.com/p-755-caesar-rome-vs-gaul.aspx>

High Flying Dice Games

Operation Jubilee, The Raid on Dieppe \$21

<http://www.hfdgames.com/opj.html>

Nightmare Island, The Battle for Biak Island, 1944 \$18

<http://www.hfdgames.com/nmi.html>

Hollandspiele

The Roman Empire is broken. The crisis of the third century—a decades-long fever dream of civil war, plague, and economic ruin—stretched it thinner and thinner, until finally, inevitably, it splintered. The Palmyrene Empire to the east, the Gallic Empire to the west, and sandwiched between them, the remnants of the Roman Empire. Deprived of its richest provinces and stuck in a series of endless wars along the frontier, it seemed destined, at last, to fall. But in 270, when the emperor died, troops along the Danube did what troops along the Danube always did, and demanded that their commander take the purple. His name was Lucius Domitius Aurelianus, and over the course of his short reign, he would do the impossible: he would put this broken world back together again.

Aurelian, Restorer of the World is a solitaire game from Tom Russell. Three cups are used to represent shifting attitudes toward Aurelian's rule; actions you take will move chits from one cup to another. This game is short and fast, lasting a maximum of six turns. It's also more difficult. Beyond marching around the map, quelling revolts, and smacking down usurpers, you must manage monies, maintain a strong defensive line along the Danube, make war against Germanic tribes, build up city defenses, and spread the cult of Sol Invictus. You do not have nearly enough time or resources to do all of these things

equally well and will need to make hard choices. If you succeed, you will earn the title afforded to Aurelian by the senate: Restitutor Orbis, "Restorer of the World." \$35/\$40

<https://hollandspiele.com/products/aurelian-restorer-of-the-world>

District Commander: Kandahar simulates the problems facing insurgent and counterinsurgent commanders in southern Afghanistan circa 2009-2010. This is not Brian Train's first or even second game about this conflict, and you might be wondering, what does this one have to offer? We think that the District Commander system—with its emphasis on bluff and deception, scarce resources, and shifting operational goals—is an especially good fit for capturing the pace and nature of operations in Afghanistan.

Brian Train's District Commander is a series of operational games on counterinsurgency situations. The players alternate activation of groups of units (stacks) to perform discrete operations (missions) through the expenditure of Task Points (TP). Some missions are Tactical Missions—straightforward military tasks such as performing patrols, ambushing or attacking enemy forces, or moving from one place to another—and these may be performed multiple times by a stack during a turn. Other missions emphasize the "non-tactical" end of the campaign, establishing friendly influence, control, and infrastructure in an area, reducing the enemy's claim to the same, and recruiting or training troops. These missions take more time to perform and so unlike the tactical missions may be the only mission performed by the stack during the turn.

Missions are resolved by play of secretly-held Chance Chits, each with ratings that are better or worse for certain types of operations. Chits are played simultaneously and the ratings compared, modified by units, assets, and the current board state to determine the outcome. Using the right chit at the right time (knowing when to save a good chit for later and when to use it, and trying to determine if your opponent is going all-in or holding back) will require steely judgment in an atmosphere of doubt and deception.

All this is done in pursuit of objectives handed down to you by your superiors (i.e., chosen randomly) and kept secret from your opponent, objectives that may even change over the course of the game. Within this framework, the two sides, Government and Insurgent, play very differently, with the Insurgent player, in particular, depending on bluff and deception to achieve their goals. A large number of variant rules allow you to turn the game into a sandbox for exploring counterinsurgency doctrine and practice. \$45/\$50

<https://hollandspiele.com/products/district-commander-kandahar>

Multi-Man Publishing

The ASL Trio comes with one copy each of the following three scenario packs:

Best of Friends 2

Action Pack #15: Swedish Volunteers; and

ASL Roma 2020 \$62

<https://www.multimanpublishing.com/tabid/59/ProductID/388/Default.aspx>

Nuts! Publishing

This War Without an Enemy is a 2-player strategic block wargame on the first English Civil War, during which the Royalist forces fighting for King Charles I were opposed by the



English Parliamentary troops and their Scottish allies, the Covenanters, in a struggle for political, economic and religious control of England.

The game engine will be familiar to anyone who has played a card-driven block wargame. A year consists of 6 turns. At the beginning of each year both players draw a hand of 6 cards. A turn consists of the following phases:

Initiative Phase: each player plays a card to determine player order for the Strategic Phase.

Strategic Phase: each player, in turn, spends the action points on the card they played to move blocks and/or recruit (deploy new blocks or add strength to existing blocks).

Tactical Phase: battles and siege combats are fought.

Supply Phase: blocks exceeding the supply limit of an area are reduced in strength.

Victory Phase: if the marker on the Victory Track has reached 3 or more VPs for a player's side, then that player has won the game.

The game map depicts England and Wales, the scene of the conflict, split into five Regions and further divided into Areas, as well as parts of Scotland, Ireland and 'Le Continent', from which other forces may enter the war. New troops that can be raised in England and Wales are represented by blocks kept in the Recruitment Areas. Blocks that enter the game through major events or through card play remain off map.

There is a deck of cards for each player. Every card has a number, from 2 to 4, which is the amount of Action Points it provides. 2- and 3-AP cards also have an event, described in the text, which can be activated in a specific phase. Some cards are removed from the decks at the end of a year, and other cards are added to the deck.

Battles are resolved on the Battle Mat. This helps players to keep track of the timing of the battle and the interaction between the blocks. There are different sections for each class of block, as well as for reserves and for off-battlefield cavalry. There are specific rules for each class of block that reflect the use of the different types of soldier on the mid-17th century battlefield. €65

<https://www.nutspublishing.com/eshop/this-war-without-an-enemy-en>

Turning Point Simulations

We Are All Mortal, The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 This is the 21st game in the "Twenty Decisive Battles of the World" series. Your editor's copy arrived at the end of November. It was designed by Paul Rohrbaugh, who seems to put a game out once a week. The mounted map is of Cuba and the counters are airplanes, missiles, and ground units. Apparently, the navies are not included. It is a two-player game. Probably around \$40; it is not displayed on the web site yet.

<http://www.turningpointssimulations.com/index.cfm>

White Dog Games

The Most Terrible Battle: Borodino 1812 is an introductory game at the division level of perhaps Napoleon's most famous battle, next to Waterloo. The game includes the meeting engagement fought on September 5, 1812 as well as the main battle of Borodino fought two days later. \$49

<https://www.whitedoggames.com/borodino>

A Spoiled Victory is a solitaire game designed by Paul Fish and Hermann Luttmann that challenges the player with making decisions similar to what the British command was required to make during the evacuation at Dunkirk in May-June of 1940. Points are allocated each turn for defense of the perimeter, creation of evacuee units, and moving evacuees from the beaches to the safety of England. You cannot save them all, so you must pick who will stay and fight and who will escape to fight another day. The level of victory or defeat is measured by the number of troops and the amount of equipment that is saved through evacuation. \$45

<https://www.whitedoggames.com/dunkirk>



MAGAZINES

Alea # 35 includes the games **Italia '44** and **The Masters of the Horizont**

(galley fighting) €20

<https://alealudopress.com/index.php/product/magazine-alea-35/>



Modern War #50 **Putin Moves East** is an operational-strategic level two player wargame covering a struggle for control between the Russian led Eurasian Union and a Coalition of opposing states, led by the People's Republic of China, to gain control of the Far East. Among other things, the game presumes a breakdown in Russian Chinese relations leading to open belligerency. Units represent operational task forces of corps or reinforced size; special forces; airpower; and cyberwar. Additionally, paramilitary forces play a significant role in the game rules. The objective of each player is to seize critical resource, industrial and communications centers, thereby gaining control of the Far East. Each hex on the map represents 100 kilometers from side to side. Each turn of play represents anything from three days of intense combat to a couple weeks of refitting. Ground units represent mostly corps sized task forces. Special forces units are regiments, brigades, or groupings of cadres. \$40

<http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=MW50>



Slingshot #332

Every Man's Hand by Matthew Bennett and Roy Boss

Garamantes by Jim Webster

Going Back to Gaugamela by Chris Hahn

The Sound of Battle by Anthony Clipsom

An Armati List for Cyrus the Great by Rodger Williams

Counting the Enemy by John Hastings

Telamon in Anaheim by Andrew Gledhill

T'angoed! by Nicholas Harbud

Warfare in Antiquity Conference by Rodger Williams

Slingshot Figure Reviews

<http://www.soa.org.uk/joomla/>

Strategy & Tactics #325 **Italian-Ottoman War 1911-1912** is a two-player wargame using a variation on the system used in Windhoek (*S&T* #313) simulating the Italian invasion of the territories that became Libya in 1911 and the subsequent campaign that ended in the following year. The campaign saw the Italians seize the coastal towns, but the Ottomans, supported by local Arab and Bedouin tribes, fell back into the interior. The

war came to an end via Italian naval attacks in the Aegean and elsewhere, with the Ottomans finally ceding Libya to Rome. This laid the foundation for the establishment of an Italian colony and had an obvious effect on the campaign in North Africa during World War II. Scale: Each hex represents 45 kilometers, with each game turn one to two months. Units are at the battalion level. \$40
<http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=ST325>



World at War #75 Centrifugal Offensive: The Japanese Campaign in the Pacific, 1941-42 is a solitaire, strategic level wargame of the initial Imperial Japanese campaigns in the Pacific War, 1941 to 1942. The player commands the Japanese forces, with the Allies controlled by the game system. The player's objective is to accomplish campaign objectives ahead of the original schedule, thereby forestalling the inevitable US-led Allied offensive. A critical factor in the game is victory fever. The more the Japanese are winning, the greater the chance they will have to attain additional objectives to win the game. Another factor is the game ends before the Allied counteroffensive in the Solomons, so there are no Allied amphibious operations. Most ground units in the game represent divisions, brigades, and regiments. Aircraft units represent one to three air groups or regiments (three to nine squadrons). Distances between each space on the map vary depending on location and strategic importance, with the distance varying from 1,000 to a few hundred kilometers. Each turn represents one month of operations. \$40
<http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/ProductDetails.asp?ProductCode=WW75>



Fire in the Lake gameboard.



This is a partial map of what game?