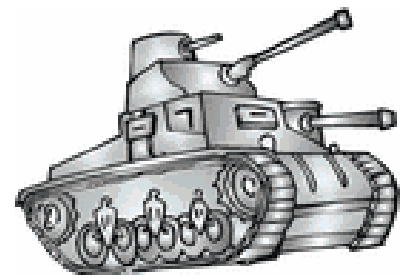


The Kommandeur



Volume 48 Number 4

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August 2013

From the President Kenneth Oates

Whew! It is a Sunday afternoon just past midsummer; it is raining outside off and on, so what can I do? Hmm, how about unwrapping a game purchase and preparing it for play? As I indicated in the last column, I have been fortunate in receiving several games recently, and now need only to make them combat ready.

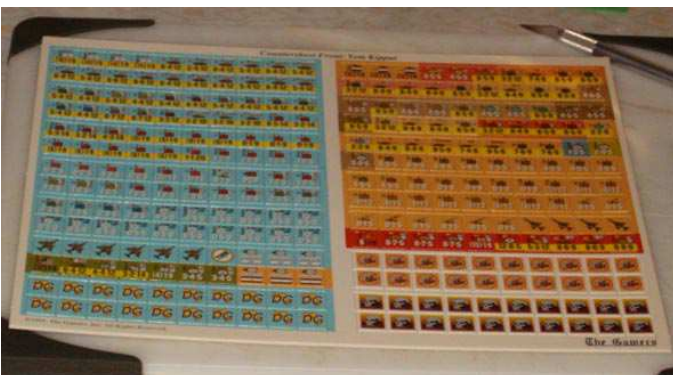
I chose to unwrap a GMT Battles of the American Revolution (BAR) title, **Germantown**, to put through the preparation process. I have six of the games in the series, and on the complexity scale they rate exactly in the middle, a good place. The solitary rating is on the low side of medium. And finally, there is a Vassal module. The rules are stable; I saw only one line of errata, for both this game and **Pensacola**, and it concerned an incorrect value on the To Hit Table. This game was published in 2010, and in the two subsequent games no counter replacements for this game were included, although GMT did include seven replacements with **Germantown** for **Brandywine**.

My first impression was that this was another example of quality components we take for granted today. The die cutting was spot on, colors of one counter did not bleed into its neighbor. Be forewarned, the counters have icons. These are executed individually, and I assume the artist (I cannot draw stick pictures, so do not expect criticism from me!) has used historically accurate regimental uniforms or in the case of the colonials, representative "uniforms." At any rate, the map will be awash with 18th century warfare color.

The rules come in two booklets, one series oriented and one game specific. Two player aids complement the rules, one for each player. The BAR series uses tactics cards and chits, so solitaire play might be thought to be out of the question. Included with the game is a random Solitaire Tactics Table card, including rules. Nice touch.

There is one 22"x34" map. Plenty of maneuver room for the relatively "full" OOBs.

My interest in the American War for Independence stems from an observation a few years back that few Americans could name as few as four battles from that conflict. And this sparked a world war.



Germantown counters.

On October 4, 1777, George Washington's Continentals displayed an inspired attempt to surprise and wrest Philadelphia from the British and their Hessian mercenaries. The four pronged coordinated attack failed, but it demonstrated what we in this age call out-of-the-box thinking. This is the setting of this volume of BAR.



A view of the open **Germantown** storage box.

After examining the components and doing a quick inventory, I created a manifest by scanning the front of the counter sheet. It is one way of keeping up with what is in the individual games and is quick and easy to do. At this point I also placed the tactical cards in protective card sleeves.

Organizing a game's counter storage has always been a challenge, and a part of the enjoyment of the hobby for me. There are many different approaches. For this series I started using Plano 9 cubicle boxes; they fit the box, are sturdy, do not "leak" counters, and effectively separate the various counters (there are not that many). This also seems an improvement on the old standby, the plastic baggy. Plus, I get to customize the top, in this case a drawing of the conflict around the Chew House. Inside, I have a chart as a key to what is in each cubicle.

But we are not finished, the counters have to be punched and their corners clipped. I am just doing newer games; the white core material used in making today's counters seems to be made for clipping, however the cardboard used for counters in older games is just too thick and leads to too many problems; it would be an overwhelming task. The counters are then sorted and placed in the appropriate cubicle. And that is how I spent a summer's afternoon.



Secretary's Notes Bob Best



Today is August 5, 2013. We are deep into summer now, and, I'm sure like many of you, Sue and I have been enjoying the warm sunny days of summer. We've made a number of trips to the high Sierras near Lake Tahoe where we have spent some wonderful days at our condo soaking up the sun, taking local trips through the backcountry and enjoying the beautiful mountain scenery. We've also spent some time in the high desert country of Nevada east of Reno where we maintain another home. We've had lots of fun "train watching"—photographing locomotives, train cars, and the continual maintenance activity to track and right-of-way that goes on around a class one railroad. The high desert country has its own beauty, and we never tire of driving through the Truckee River Canyon east of Reno as we travel to our other home. The main east-west line of the Union Pacific Railroad traverses the canyon and makes for some great train watching. All this outdoor activity has certainly limited my summer game playing, and I imagine that your gaming has slowed as well.

As a result of my hours available to game and the fact that my opponents are enjoying their summer vacations too, game moves tended to slow down as they always do in the summertime. So when the gaming urge strikes and there is no game move waiting to be made, I turn to my solitaire game collection for some gaming pick-me-up. I have recently acquired three new solitaire games to add to my collection. The first game is **Phantom Leader-Deluxe**, a Dan Verssen Game Company design. **PL-D** was just released this July. There is a review of the game elsewhere in *The K*. It is a fun game to play and the short time needed to play a mission, 30-45 minutes, is ideal for me. The second game is also by DVG. **Hornet Leader-Carrier Air Operations** is the Navy version of **PL-D**. Both of these games are the new upgraded games of their earlier versions that feature additional aircraft and pilots, along with advanced missions and weapons systems. I thought the original **Phantom Leader** and **Hornet Leader** were good games but the deluxe versions certainly add a lot of bells and whistles without cluttering up play. If you want a fun solo air game to play at your leisure, either or both of these would be good candidates.

The third new game I bought is **IWO-Bloodbath in the Bonins** by Decision Games. It covers the invasion of Iwo Jima. It is one of their folio games and takes about 1-2 hours to play. There is a standard set of rules for the Fire and Movement series games along with the exclusive rules for **IWO**. If you enjoy solo invasion games, give **IWO** a try.

One other game that I have found to be fun to play is called **Chrononauts**. It is a time-travel card game by Looney Labs. You can find them at www.Looneylabs.com. It is a great game for playing with the family and with kids. It takes less than an hour to complete a game. My wife and I have played it with our daughter and her boyfriend on game nights, and Sue and I also play it when we want a fun game event. In **Chrononauts** each player is a time traveler. A way to win the game is to arrange the timeline to match a set of events listed on your player card so that you can return home. A second way to win is to collect the artifacts listed on your mission card. There are lots of interesting gadgets and relics of the past that help you complete your mission. You can also try to patch Paradoxes in the timeline when events are changed. You have to make sure there are not too many paradoxes in play at any one time or else a collapse of

timeline occurs and everyone loses. The game can be played solo as well. I don't normally like card type games, but this one is a lot of fun to play.

On the Gaming Front

While shopping for my **PL-D** and **HL-CAO** solo games I came across AHIKS member Randy Heller's new game **Operation Skorpion**. Compass Games has recently released it, and it looks to be another of Randy's interesting game designs. The description of the game system tells that the game is set in the Halfaya Pass in North Africa in May 1941. The game description indicates the game is relatively short and fast moving. It says that Randy has introduced a new fog of war game system where "Opposing strength is unknown until units enter combat. Once revealed, those combat values can continue to fluctuate during the course of the game based on judicious use of mobile supply units, which can distribute and absorb Allocation Points. Although fighting a defensive battle, the British Player is not without counterattack capability. He will find his artillery arm, both direct and indirect fire, to be a potent force. Game rules such as: Combined Arms, HQ Coordinated Combat, Road Overrun, Engineers, and Reconnaissance Probe, all contribute to an appropriate sense of realism. Operation Skorpion provides exciting, tense, and balanced game play. Determining the ultimate winner often occurs on the last or next-to-the last game-turn. Turn back the clock to the heady days of spring 1941 and command the Afrika Korps, or take on the British and ultimately break the sword of the Desert Fox, himself, in this battle game by Compass Games."

Randy's new game sounds like an interesting one and is something that I plan to add to my collection. It sounds like it would have potential to be played as a monitored game on the AHIKS forum, and there might even be a potential for multi-player action here. Maybe we could even talk Randy into running a monitored game of **Operation Skorpion** on the forum. What a *great* way to learn the game system! How about it Randy?

Speaking of the AHIKS Forum, it has been slow as well so far this summer. Paul Pearson's second game of Avalon Hill's **Flight Leader** has paused, waiting for players to return from vacations and other family events. My MiG 17 is waiting for the U.S. Navy players to make their moves so John and I can continue our attack on Cory's F-8 Crusader. We are expecting the action to pick up again after school starts in the fall. Now is a good time to catch up on the past few turns of the **FL** game. If you haven't seen it yet, stop by and take a look.

Our AHIKS forum's featured game is **Alexander the Great** from Avalon Hill. Charles Marshall and Bert Schneider are slowly making progress as they maneuver and attack in this game. **Alexander the Great** can be found listed on the forum's main menu under the "featured games" heading.

In the last issue of *The K*, I asked a question about Vassal. The question was, "Is there a way to save a Vassal log file in mid move?" Thank you Jeff Miller for taking the time to answer the question and for sending me detailed instructions on how it is done. I do appreciate it!

I still have two Vassal games of **Bastogne** in progress, one with Shane Woyak and the other with our Match Coordinator, Duncan Rice. Unfortunately, my Vassal program is on my desk-

top computer, and, when I travel, I cannot take the game with me. Thanks to both of you for being so patient with me so far this summer with my sporadic game moves.

The AHIKS Facebook Page

As of today, the AHIKS facebook page now has 43 members. If you are a facebook user and you wish to join us on facebook simply search for "AHIKS" (No Quotes) on your personal facebook page. To join simply click the "join the group" button after searching for AHIKS and one of the AHIKS administrators will approve your membership.

Meet the Member

Again, I did not receive any new meet-the-member submissions for this issue. If you would like to see this feature continue, I would encourage anyone who has not sent in a profile to please do so. Step up and introduce yourself to the other members. We would all like to get to know you.

New AHIKS Members

I would like to introduce and welcome the latest group of new members that have joined AHIKS since the last issue of *The K*.

Brett Bayerly 1740 Bakersfield, CA
Luca Chiaffarino 1741 Rome, Italy
Bill McCarty 1742 Brea, CA

I would like to *welcome* you all to AHIKS!

Change of Address

And lastly, if you have a change of address or get a new email address please contact me at the address listed on page 12 of *The K* so that we can update the membership roster. As the Secretary, I will update the roster and forward your new information to the Editor and the Match Coordinator to make sure your subscription to the newsletter and your game requests are uninterrupted.

Until next time, Happy Gaming to you all!



From the Editor

My copy of John Butterfield's **D-Day at Omaha Beach** Version 2.0 has arrived. Copyright 2013. There are several pages of charts and a 32-page rule book. This is a solitaire game, and the rule book looks like it will keep one man busy for some time. It also contains a deck of cards and two counter sheets (352 pieces). The map sheet, containing play aides as well as the map, is 34 by 22.

I now have eight of the 20 games in the Twenty Decisive Battles of the World series published by Turning Point Simulations (2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 19, 20). I have opened only one of the games. If any other member would like to choose a game and play it with me, I would be pleased. The games look playable. None of the games seems to be available through Vassal, but I would be happy to make up OOB sheets. Think it over and let me know.

When I told Dave Bergmann about the lack of English in Russia, he wrote:

Omar,

Looking forward to your article about Russia. No surprise about the English. The Bear is threatened with that language. I remember in 1983 my wife and I visited East Germany and found that English was the 4th language behind Russian, German, French and then English. Hence no one spoke English to any degree. I spoke enough German to get around. What an oppressive system that was. We went back in 1989 when the wall was about to crumble and since then many times. The place has come alive with amazing effect.

My best, Dave

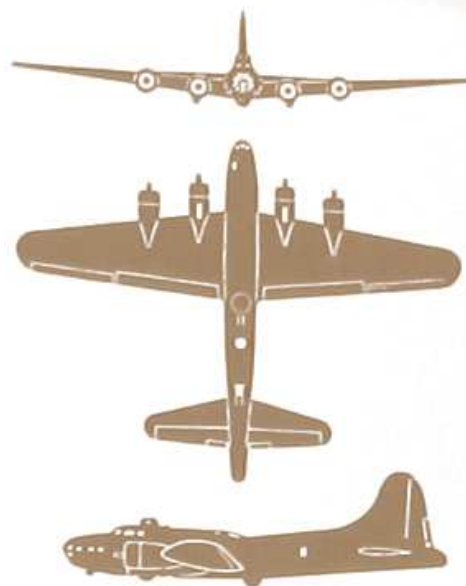
The next deadline is September 30. I will be away most of the month and will return on the 29th. Articles, of course, are welcome any time.

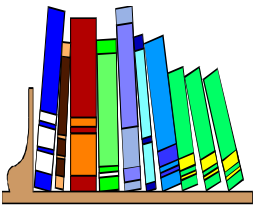
Identify That Plane!

In this issue there are six WWII airplanes to be identified. The answers are on page 13.

The plane below is

#1





Book Reviews

The Guns at Last Light, the War In Western Europe 1944-45
Volume 3 of the "Liberation Trilogy" by Rick Atkinson
©2013 Henry Holt and Company, NY.

641 pages of text, before 169 pages of notes, and an index and miscellaneous stuff after that.

\$30 in hard-copy, and has a waiting list for library copies.

Reviewed by John Michalski

I had originally read his first volume, "An Army at Dawn" about the war in North Africa in 1942-1943, out of curiosity: it was a rare story that concentrated on the U.S. Army, and it was advertised as a Pulitzer Prize winning book. I wanted to see if he earned that prize, or was it like Obama's Nobel Peace Prize? Quite honestly, I hadn't really expected very much: I'm glad to say that I was very pleasantly surprised by what I found.

Of course the story of that first campaign of ours across French North Africa was not exactly glorious; thus the title: an army just waking up. The U.S. Army threw in what it had and who it had, in a surprise attack on an unsuspecting Vichy France, and managed to win. The British called us "our Italians," and the U.S. conduct too often earned the accolade. The history was a sort of "coming of age" tale. I thought the best incident was the story about Patton, commanding the Moroccan landing forces, addressing the planners. Great story: pure Patton.

The book told the story from the soldier's view, not just the generals' self-serving memoirs that make up the bulk of the WWII historical literature we are so used to. The many anecdotes of the fighting units contrast well against the descriptions of the Christmas dinners at the general headquarters on down through the corps and armies, and that sort of thing. Mr. Atkinson has a good story-telling ability and wrote on a ninth grade level in place of the more common fifth grade level other publishers put out. Or third. The Pulitzer was for his writing style, and he earned it. This style carries throughout all three volumes.

'Dawn' caused me to seek out the second book, "The Day of Battle," the campaign across Sicily and southern Italy up to Rome, 1943-1944. That was ground much more commonly (and widely) covered by others, but his handling of story and detail made for an interesting retelling. Patton in Sicily ties with the story of the bombing of Monty's headquarters as the high points of that book, in my judgment. His style and story-telling kept you interested, even knowing the history. By the time I was finishing it, I started watching for the third and final volume with some eagerness.

"The Guns At Last Light" came out this summer (2013). I drove across town to the first place that had it: even paid full price for the hard copy! As war books go, it is certainly worthwhile, but to be honest, I wonder if I should have waited for it to appear in Edward Hamilton's catalog first? Or wait on the library system. Even with his very readable style, the D-Day story has been told so often by so many who all have tried to sprinkle their story with enlightening historical anecdotes, that

it is hard for Mr. Atkinson to do the same without the reader picturing the scenes from "Patton" or "Longest Day" or any of those half dozen D-Day specials most of us have seen more than once. The British-U.S. argument over the decades, between Monty's one-thrust across the north versus Ike's "broad front" decision, brought out a lot of stories of the clashing issues and the personalities decades ago. Chester Wilmot's "Struggle for Europe" versus Ike's "Crusade in Europe," Bradley's "Soldier's Story," Patton's "War As I Knew It" and many others, have left few stones unturned. Rick's style makes a good effort, but I'm afraid my expectations from the two earlier books ("Dawn" and "Day") were too high.

As a result, the best parts for me came from the light that was cast on the lesser known aspects. The personal conflicts between the highest commanders, the service chiefs, four nationalities, and the political influences from above that Eisenhower had to deal with tell the more human story of what it takes to wage a cooperative war effort as opposed to the simpler (albeit less effective) totalitarian systems. I am reminded of Jefferson Davis' yearnings for even half the war powers his opponent Lincoln commanded in a "union" versus his own interstate begging in a "confederacy." But those two dealt with Americans: neither had a deGaulle threatening to leave the alliance, a Churchill blowing alternately hot and cold from Algeria right on across the Rhine, or insubordinate air commanders waging their own idea of war.

I would like to recommend the lengthy Epilogue. Most histories end by saying "we won." Mr. Atkinson details the problems and the costs of the end of a war and the rarely if ever asked question, "what do we do now?" Important decisions were made that aren't noted by others: for example, every American soldier who died in Germany, including those buried in makeshift graves where they fell, were all sought out, disinterred, and sent to U.S. cemeteries elsewhere for formal interment. No U.S. soldier would be buried in the former Third Reich. Let me quote a sample paragraph just a bit further on (pages 638-639) to show the kind of detail/ insight provided:

"In 1947, the next of kin of 270,000 identifiable American dead buried overseas would submit Quartermaster General Form 345 to choose whether they wanted their soldier brought back to the United States or left interred with comrades abroad. More than 60 percent of the dead worldwide would return home, at an average cost to the government of \$564.50 per body, an unprecedented repatriation that only an affluent, victorious nation could afford. In Europe the exhumations began that July: every grave was opened by hand, and the remains sprinkled with an embalming compound of formaldehyde, aluminum chloride, plaster of Paris, wood powder, and clay. Wrapped in a blanket, each body was then laid on a pillow in a metal casket lined with rayon satin. "

A view of the war not often making print.

(The latest "bargain book" catalog that came late last week, lists "Guns" in it. Although the "bargain" price is the same \$28 price, you can walk into any Barnes & Noble bookstore and buy it retail. The sales tax is likely only half of the \$4 shipping fee Edward Hamilton charges. Some "bargain."



Battlegrounds, Geography and the History of Warfare

Edited by Michael Stephenson

National Geographic Society

©2003

287 pages, maps

Reviewed by Omar DeWitt

A strange book. It is divided into chapters with such names as Coasts, Peninsulas, and Islands. Each chapter has a one-page introduction by the editor. But I never got a real feeling that the geography played that big a role in the battles described. Of course the battle at Tarawa was different from the battle at Chancellorsville, but the precise geographic difference did not come through to me.

Thirty eight battles are recounted, each in about five pages. There is a map of the battle site for each battle, but they are usually useless for following any action described since I could not read the words on the maps.

If you are interested in a brief account of some interesting battles, you might be interested in this book. A much better book for that is "The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 BC to the Present" by Ernest Dupuy and Trevor Dupuy. My copy was printed by Harper and Row.

**Double Cross**, The True Story of the D-Day Spies

by Ben Macintyre

© 2012

Crown Publishers

399 pages, photos, map

Reviewed by Omar DeWitt

Here is everything about the British control of the German spy network in Great Britain. At times it is a little too much, but overall it is an interesting book.

A group of British MI5 officers under Tar Robertson assembled some six or seven eccentric, bizarre, and even normal men and women who then fed the Germans with innocuous and incorrect information. The spies traveled to Spain periodically to confer with their German handlers and get paid.

Their adventures as described in the book were not always of interest to me, although I was interested in the spy sent to the U.S. in September 1941. The Germans were interested in atomic energy, military preparations, convoys, and Pearl Harbor. The U.S., especially J. Edgar Hoover, was totally disinterested in cooperating with the British and their spy, Dusko Popov. Hoover considered spies useful only to capture other spies. Popov was put under FBI surveillance and given no useful information to send to the Germans.

In the months before D-Day, the object of the group was to focus the German interest on Pas de Calais and away from Normandy. We are aware of the false Allied army in existence across from Pas de Calais. Norway was also on the list of possible invasion sites, and the quarter of a million soldiers there were left there for the rest of the war.

One of the group of spies, Johnny Jebsen, was highjacked from Spain and sent to Germany a month before D-Day. The Gestapo "interrogated" him, and the British, unaware of what was happening, were very afraid he would talk and expose all they had done to mislead the Germans. Jebsen, who had many irons in the fire with many Germans, was apparently apprehended for one of his illegal deals. At any rate, he did not ex-

pose the Double Cross system. He was seen later in a concentration camp, what was left of him, but he then disappeared.

The rest of the spies were very successful. A couple even were given German medals, and several got written commendations. Their efforts undoubtedly kept German troops in Pas de Calais and away from Normandy where they could have done great damage to the Allied buildup.

They are all a group of people who deserve our thanks.

**England's Last War Against France**, Fighting Vichy 1940-42

by Colin Smith

© 2009

Reviewed by Tom Oleson

A must-read if you're interested in WW2 and very well written.

The initial meetings between Hitler and the new masters of Vichy were in a way amusing, because at that time Hitler hoped for peace with England, so the Vichy-ites were scathing in their denunciations of Perfidious Albion, while Hitler was a bit taken aback by their attitude. I earlier mentioned "The Two of US" a 1957 Vichy-theme French film set in 1943, which cites the British as the worst enemies of France, Germany not even on the list. This from a veteran of WW I with a picture of Petain on his wall.

The discussion of the Madagascar campaign is fascinating. At that time Japan had strong naval forces East of Ceylon, and the British were very worried they would try to occupy Madagascar. There is a game in here.

Vichy fought stubbornly there, in Syria, and the initial stages of Torch, and in the latter case, not just against the hated British but Americans too. In some engagements, American casualties were heavy.

You could make the case that in retreat, Vichy was a more effective German ally than was Italy.

Not much point in citing price (initially £25), as I get these from discount catalogs.



Member Tony Arena has published a book in digital format on Amazon's Kindle and that you might be interested in.

The title is **MOSARR**, author listed as Anthony Arena.

Here is the blurb as it appears on the Amazon page:

"In a world where three moons, each of a different size and color, dominate the night sky, many believe them to be Gods and deem their courses and positions to foretell and decree fates. In a poor, isolated valley, a young boy, Alexicles, looks up in the night and wishes his fate might bring him the adventure and treasure he craves. When a stranger with apparently miraculous powers comes to his small village, Alexicles determines to go with him, leaving behind the toil and ill treatment of his life in the valley, seeking treasure and adventure and, possibly, glory."

Even for those without Kindles, there are free apps available to read the book on computer, IBM and Mac, iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, and iPod touch smartphones, as well as iPad, Android, and Windows 8 tablets.

The link is: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CAUI1ZY>

Give it a look.



Treasury Notes

Brian Stretcher



Git 'em up, move 'em out!

Although typically I get a bit of a respite this time of year because of the delay in publication of the July-August issue until mid-August, no such luck for me. If I wait until closer to the due date, no telling if I could get anything to Omar or not. Yes, this moving thing is terribly disruptive. I would much rather just grow roots. Oh, I'll enjoy living in the mountains, to be sure, but getting there is a real pain, sometimes literally. Grumpy old man has been around quite a bit lately.

One of the more enjoyable parts of preparing for the move, however, was packing away the old games. A lot of them had not been through my hands for a long time. That includes some old favorites, like **Kingmaker**, **Diplomacy**, **Midway**, and **Star Fleet Battles**, some well worn titles that I haven't played in years. Also some nifty old SPI flat box titles, like **Panzergruppe Guderian**, **Korea**, **Dreadnought**, and **Panzerarmee Afrika**; some true collector's items like the original edition of **Empires in Arms, 1914**, and **Guadalcanal**; a handful of monster games like first edition **Drang Nach Osten**, **War in Europe Module 1: First World War**, **War Between the States**, and **The Longest Day**; some rare titles like **Streets of Stalingrad**, **Belleau Wood**, **Napoleon at Leipzig**, and many, many more out-of-print games that I would still love to play someday (shall we nuke each other over a game of **Ultimatium**?). Collectively, they are a lot heavier than I remember, especially all those magazine games I still have, and the magazines themselves: many issues of **S&T** (through three different publishers), **The Wargamer**, **Moves**, **Fire & Movement**, **The General**, and **The Grenadier**. I can't believe how much money I used to spend on all these things, especially considering I didn't have any when I got most of them. Ah, but it seems that I had more time then as well. Then came children...

Except for the handful of games I have going on now, plus **WS&IM** that I kept out for when I put together my grand replay of *El Diablo Rojo*, all game-related materials will soon be in boxes and remain that way for about two years, unless I have the gumption to get some out and actually play. And I might, as I recently discovered that I do *not* have to take the North Carolina Bar Exam to practice there, thanks to a relatively recent rule change. Since the powers that be will not act on an application for at least six months, that means at least six months as a house-husband for me, with no children in the house. HA! I may actually have time to play some of these things! And read. And play computer games. *Plus* do all the outdoor stuff my wife and I enjoy. House on a lake, with fish; sunsets on the deck overlooking the lake, with a glass of wine. Life can be rough sometimes.

Book Review: The Eagle and the Rising Sun

I have had a little time to do some reading this summer. *The Eagle and the Rising Sun: The Japanese-American War 1941-43* by Alan Schom, W.W. Norton & Company, 2004, presents an insightful overview at the strategic command level at events in the Pacific leading up to Pearl Harbor through the Guadalcanal Campaign. Mr. Schom writes well, and the book reads easily through 456 pages of actual text, a relative handful of maps

(never enough for me), and the usual set of photos in the center of the book. The author examines command strengths and weaknesses on both sides, from Hirohito on down for Japan, and from Roosevelt on down for the Americans. Mr. Schom pulls no punches and is critical of mistakes made, from the incredible narcissism of Douglas MacArthur and his inept handling of the defense of the Phillipines, to the tactical errors made by American naval commanders who lacked the experience of their Japanese counterparts through this part of the war. If I have any complaint about the general tone of the work, it is the 20/20 hindsight that Mr. Schom applies in examining the errors made by the various commanders. A lot easier to criticize deployments and delays when you have all of the information, rather than operating in the dark, literally in many cases, but I would agree that the Americans were a little slow to learn their lessons, especially in night surface actions. But he does give ample credit when credit is due as well. Nimitz and Halsey are both well regarded by the author.

The book emphasizes naval strategy more than the ground campaigns of the Philippines, New Guinea, and Guadalcanal, although they are discussed. But, if you're looking for unit A moving to hill B and attacking unit C sort of thing in these campaigns, you will find only a little bit of that here, and primarily in the Guadalcanal discussion. There is much more of that in the description of the naval battles. While summarized, you still get a lot of tactical feel with the naval battles, which include Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz, Savo Island, and other battles involving the Tokyo Express. Made me want to play **Flattop**. Also thought a lot about Chester Hendrix's AHKS Guadalcanal game **First Blood**, which was a fun little game even if a little bleak for the Japanese. One of the more interesting discussions was of Japanese pre-war politics involving China and Manchuria. This was the first time I recollect reading about the issues between the Japanese Army and the civilian government, and how the government essentially abdicated its responsibility in directing the course of history to the Army.

If you're interested in strategy and command in the Pacific, then this book's for you. I presume there is a sequel somewhere covering the rest of the war, but I haven't seen it or looked for it yet. But perhaps a little game of **Victory in the Pacific** in the meantime.

Treasurer's Report

I'll stick with convention and report the two months of activity through July 30 only. Essentially no activity this period. Only change is a massive 81 cents in interest, which interestingly is the exact same amount as last time.

Perpetual Fund Balance, 5-30-13:	\$ 3,424.01
Interest Income through 6-30-13:	\$ 0.29
Perpetual Fund Balance 7-30-13:	\$ 3,424.30

Operating funds in Savings, 5-30-13:	\$ 6,179.39
Interest Income through 6-30-13:	\$ 0.52
Operating funds in Savings, 7-30-13:	\$ 6,179.91

Total balance, 7-30-13:	\$ 9,604.21
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Until next time!

3R Mini-Mini Convention Results

by John Michalski

I am pleased to report that the mini **Third Reich** convention in Oklahoma City last week was a success. Mark Kerwin got checked in and was welcomed late Sunday, and gaming action started Monday morning. I think we ran through all or part of four games, two of which were significant in length. I remember pulling one out after an incredible string of long-shot efforts by both sides, each of us going for total victory that "should" have been ours more than once. Since that's the only one I remember, I probably lost the others.

We were fortunate that the La Quinta had an odd, large table built into the room. It came out of the wall narrowly, about desk width, but then widened out into a circular shape with only a single large round central support, making it perfect for play by two to perhaps even four people seated around it. If anything, it was perhaps a little large, but we got by. Mark stuck the Do Not Disturb sign out to keep Housekeeping away from "straightening up" the desk, and we got in four solid days of campaign-game action. Except for spilling hot coffee on my hand on my way up from the lobby during one break, I believe all went well. (Oh, Mark did get a dented rear bumper by some anonymous hotel customer one night, but at least it did not affect the car's operation.)

I showed him a selection of watering holes in town during our lunch breaks (usually somewhere between 1:45 and 3:30) and tried to meet a veteran docent at the 45th Infantry Division museum after lunch one day, but it was 4:15 when we got there, and it closed at 4:30, so that fell through. We only got a quick walk through part of it and got to see a couple of the many artillery pieces and vehicles in the open outside as we left. Nice comparison to see a sample of those joke "37 mm anti-tank" guns that the European powers started the war with, compared to a hefty "8 inch howitzer" across the lot from it. If you haven't seen one, the 37mm looks like a kid's toy in an artillery petting zoo. You'd expect to see a couple of tykes crawling over the thing or riding the barrel like a teeter-totter. Might stop a truck if it wasn't moving too fast. Hard to believe nations went to war with something like that as their standard weapon, but then, some aircraft still had wood or canvas, right?

Mark's visit here was like a week-long vacation for me, too, even as I adjust to the permanent vacation status of retirement. Oddly enough, my wife commented later that it was like a vacation for her too, what with me out of her hair and not underfoot for four solid days. Just breakfast and out the door, then back sometime well after dark.

Neither Mark nor I had played face-to-face in a couple of decades, but once the board was set up and the cards laid out with the nationalities, we just rolled along. We rolled for initial sides; skipped the variant draws so as to keep it "pure" **Third Reich** play, not sabotaged by phantom Spanish or Irish armies popping up out of the ground or making Mussolini suddenly look powerful; and we had each side at least twice. (Might have been five attempts; I don't recall exactly). Also avoided any exotic rules problems, as the die rolls provided enough variations all by themselves. Lots of 4s at 2-to-1, but most came back "5" instead of "6." Naval units got pounded by air pretty badly despite only a 1 in 6 chance for each factor to accomplish something. And the airfleets themselves had a hard time of it. Never had a game where it was a simple "Poland-&-75" start, followed by a Fall or Winter 1940 Barbarossa with

twelve panzers, one lent, and one Vichy 3-5 jumping off in one of those machine-perfect games. I recall one game where my Axis never got the Luftwaffe up to strength until 1943. Another time my Russians made a wave of 1-to-1s against exploiting panzers out front on point, and rolled two "5s" in a row, PLUS a 9 to 16 A-Elim on a stack of two of them, all in one turn. Another time the U.S. came in, and it was all it could do for a year just to plug holes for Britain and pump out BRP help to everyone. I suppose a lot of those were realistic, historically at least, but when you've fought through 8 to 12 turns to get there, "historically correct" isn't a lot of comfort!

Still, it was great to do what we like to do best. It was a two-day drive here from NE Ohio, but there were no dust storms or grass fires to close the interstates with smoke. The heat isn't so bad when you start before ten and leave about the same time at night. (Mostly. One night ran very late.) Oklahoma's summer days are pleasant if you witness them at 11pm.

I'd like to do the same myself sometime in the future. If any of you can attempt something similar yourselves, I encourage you to try.

John was being too kind. He kicked my butt in 3 out of the 4 games. Although maybe I could have gotten a draw out of game 4, but I was behind after failing to knock out Berlin on a flip, and he'd have put me further behind after his return flip.

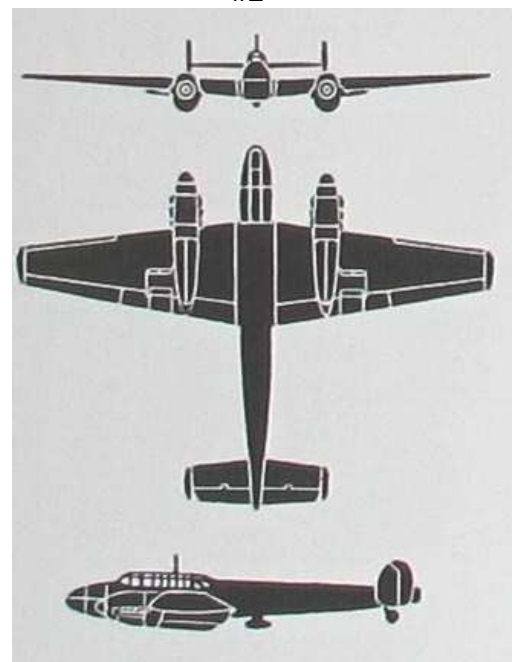
But all in all, I had a good time and learned a lot. I was shocked at the drastic difference between e-mail and face-to-face. There is no such thing as a perfect turn in FTF, and it will mentally wear you down; especially if you play for 4 days in a row. At least it did for me. Still, I'm glad I went. It beat going to Vicksburg, which was my backup plan had John not been available.

I agree with John. You guys should try it if you can. It's way better and much harder than playing via e-mail.

Mark Kerwin (nonmember)

★★

#2



WBC 2013 Last In Lancaster? by Bill Watkins

“Sorry guys, we don’t have enough games for the **White Star Rising** heat.”

“No problem, Sean, I’m always prepared. Got my game right here!”

“Great, Bill! Set up over there.”

“Uh Sean, problem. Uh, I think I left the maps on my desk. At home. In New Jersey.”

So much for the first night at WBC. I won the heat: a Panther, three Mk IVs and infantry against a British force of two Fireflies, three Cromwells and more infantry. Grabbed the objective on the very last turn. Lost the next heat through an additional piece of Incredible Stupidity on my part. I kept thinking the scenario was ten turns. All of a sudden, my opponent casually mentions at the start of turn eight we’re on the final turn. My units can’t make it to the objective in time. Sigh.

Raised my Stupidity Index a good ten points the next day. Won **Eutaw Springs**, the first heat of the GMT American Revolution series, as the Brit. That incredibly nothing foraging party managed to survive the first American attack. Used them to continually slow the American advance down the main road. My poor opponent couldn’t kill that (1) strength group! For the second heat, I am paired with Chris Easter, one of the real experts, in **Germantown**. Never played it before. Gave the rules a quick look at 2 AM. Missed the part where it says I can use faster, strategic movement on the lateral roads. That means I don’t reinforce the militia on the flank. They get eaten alive by the Hessians.

I form a new line and manage to get my superior artillery up. They prove their superiority by blowing every die roll. I’m dead. A dumbfounded Chris says, “You didn’t know you could use strategic movement?” No, I didn’t. Chris says if he had known, he would have warned me. I tell Chris to beat me up, so at least I can learn the game. He does. Double sigh.

Chris keeps advancing. I see him against Rob Doane. Don’t know who to cheer for. Chris is a real nice guy, so is Rob. Of course, Rob’s last name is my middle name.

Rick Young asks if I am coming to the tournament of his game **Leaping Lemmings**. I did try it last year but didn’t really understand it. GMT’s Andy Lewis is kind enough to teach me. Great little game. I win the heat against Andy, a 12 year old girl, and a 9 year old boy. My great victory of the week!

Also did two rounds of **Mr. Madison’s War**. Love that game! Win the first round against a newbie from the Ottawa game club. We stumble through the rules. I win, but later discover I’ve screwed up the rules so badly I probably should have lost! Do lose the second round to another member of the same club. My Jacob Brown charges across the Niagara to show those Canadians who is boss and proceeds to lose every single die roll.

Oh yeah, I have to confess. I actually attended a demo of and played a heat of **Puerto Rico**. I know, I know, I’ve managed to avoid Euros for 20 years. And, yes, people did tell me the first couple of turns are heavily scripted. But, my opponents were nice, and I enjoyed the heck out of the game! Do I get banned from wargames for playing PR?

Ran into the usual nice people. Andy Maly was up, and I had great conversations with Paul Rohrbaugh and others. Lots of good guys from my own JAG group, more of whose game

days I really wish I could get to. MMP’s ASL star Ken Dunn said he wouldn’t talk to me. Stupidity Index kicked in when I realized I was wearing a “Combat Commander” shirt! Ken relented! Wish I could name drop all the nice designers, company folk, and gamers I got to talk to. Did manage to ask Mark Herman about Snowden. He replied with a laugh he wasn’t in charge of that division and isn’t to blame! Got to sit outside and yak with Mr. Rothberg. Argued with him about what Jerry Pournelle told me about our Vietnam war crushing the Russian economy. Have to admit he then did a great job presenting the Charles Roberts awards. Even had an opponent say that, rather than play, he’d like to ask about my memories of those final awful days during my brief tenure on SPI’s Board.

Aside from my Stupidity Index going through the roof, WBC was great fun. Everybody was in a good mood. No complaints. That was the result of the air-conditioning actually working in the main room. Plus the fact that the Host actually caught up with our Continental Inn and gave free breakfast. Still, my wife tells me she was told they are moving WBC next year or the year after.

We hope it’ll still be in the area, although I can’t think where they might go, except for the downtown expo center. Hope not. We like the Continental’s breakfasts and our Amish family restaurants.

Sadly, the economy is hurting...badly. I always rave to you about Stoltzfus for dinner. Peg and I drove out there. Gone. On the way back, I realized the Family Cupboard, which was always filled with Amish farm families, is gone. We did the Rockvale Outlet mall. Half the stores are closed. And in the most devastating blow to my maleness, Black & Decker is gone!

OTOH, there were more game dealers in attendance. They filled the Dealers Room and spilled out into the food area. A good deal of shiny new stuff.

Best of all, Scott Muldoon and Bill T. were there with the playtest of **Cataclysm**. I playtested this at GMT East. That was the great night when my Stupidity Index almost went off the charts. That was the night I discovered the Corey Wells sitting next to me was not only a member of AHKS but was *that* Corey Wells! Sorry, Corey, I really didn’t know!

That playtest convinced me of something WBC confirmed. I don’t expect the game to see print for a year. When it does, I expect it to win every award! It is a terrific WWII strategic game, best with three or seven players. Remember, I’m the one who told you John Butterfield’s **D-Day** was a winner a year before that one hit. Believe me, Stupidity Index notwithstanding, **Cataclysm** is a winner! I’ll give you an advance look the next K.

Lemme see what else happened. I got a great hug from Britt’s Louise, one of the nicest couples in gaming. All the way from England for WBC. Saw them and Don Greenwood’s group at Miller’s. Don might have smiled. I told a joke. His companions all laughed. I think I saw Don’s whiskers twitch.

And somebody tell Kaarin Engelmann I really wasn’t avoiding her in **Ace Of Aces**. Her nephew wiped me out!

All in all, one of the best cons I’ve been to. Hope to see you there next year. Wherever “there” is.



Anzio⁷ from Tom Oleson

The 7th edition of **Anzio** is at the printers. It includes many scenarios, one of which goes from July '43 to May '45. Ace tester Mike Scott and I have just begun a game in which we intend to follow the historical pace, that is, July 2013 through May 2015, although this is not guaranteed, since both sides have options which could force an earlier conclusion. Mike pondered a "Husky" invasion on the mainland*, but faithful to the intent of the game, invaded in Sicily. He was a bit worried that I might garrison Sicily more strongly than the historical OOB, but I did not do so. The Hermann Goering and 15th Panzer Grenadier divisions, and the Italians, are there in roughly historical locations, and in response to his also historical invasion, I have brought over one regiment of the 29th Panzer Grenadier division from the "toe" of the peninsula, with another poised to join it. I have to worry about commando raids or paratroops behind my lines, although as was the case historically, initial Allied paratroops are very risky. Mike will have to worry about my paratroop capability, which again historically, the Germans did use. So we are off to an historical start!

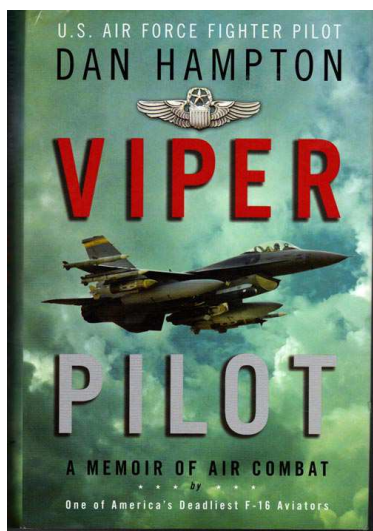
*I know this because the Axis set up face down, with Allied capability to discover who is on 2 hexes.



From the Bench

by Lee Massey, AHKS' Judge

Greetings, fellow AHKS' members from the Judge's bench! There appears to be some confusion among some members as to who the current Judge is. Let me reintroduce myself. My name is Lee Massey, and I have been the Judge since June of this year. My e-mail address is leemassey@embarqmail.com. Feel free to contact me with any rules questions! I will do my best to help resolve questions. I can't help with questions about game components such as mapboard hex numbering or lack of it, etc. Just rules questions, please! Hope everyone is enjoying some good matches and fun games. I'm still working on making a rulebook library with Charles Marshall. I have many rulebooks to scan and add to the library. We hope to be able to use that as a reference for rules questions. Have a good remainder of the summer!



Book Review

Viper Pilot, A Memoir of Air Combat

By: Dan Hampton

Ascalon, © 2012

337 pages, photographs

Reviewed by Bob Best

Lt. Col. Dan Hampton's memoirs of aerial combat in the Middle East tell an interesting story of the U.S. Air Force's capabilities against the ground-to-air threat faced by modern air power. LTC Hampton flew 151 combat missions between 1986 and 2006. He had 21 hard kills on surface-to-air missile sites and earned four Distinguished Flying Crosses with Valor and a Purple Heart. He flew the Wild-Weasel missions in the Air Force's F-16 Viper fighter.

The surface-to-air missile suppression mission, or "weasel" mission as it is called, is one of the most dangerous jobs in modern air combat. The weasel pilots go in before the main strike missions and stay until the strike aircraft have returned to friendly airspace. The weasels intentionally attempt to draw the fire of enemy surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery. They use a host of electronic devices and decoys to locate enemy radar, detect and evade the launching of the SAM missiles, find their sites, and then attack them.

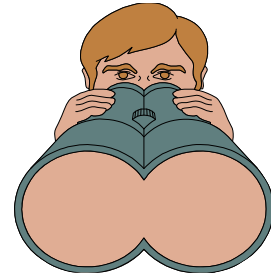
During 2003 Hampton led the first U.S. planes over the border into Iraq to take out the SAM threat on the eve of our invasion of Iraq. Hampton's accounts of "trolling for SAMs" is very riveting and gives one a feeling of actually being in the cockpit of the single-seat F-16 fighter trying to evade a SAM launch and then turning in to attack the enemy site. The weasels work in teams and Hampton led a 4-ship section during most of the strikes.

Interspersed with his excellent combat narratives of different missions he flew, Hampton tells what it's like to be a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force. He talks of the constant training each pilot goes through to be at the top of his game and the constant testing of each pilot to ensure proficiency. He also talks about the different assignments he had in both the U.S.A. and in foreign countries. He tells about running with the Bulls in Spain and visiting other interesting places while assigned in such places as Spain, Egypt, Germany, and Turkey.

From a gaming perspective, several games come to mind that would have benefited if the designers had read this book. The first game is **Phantom Leader-Deluxe** (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), the second game would be **Hornet Leader-Carrier Air Operations** by DVG. **HL-CAO** is another solo game that is a lot of fun to play and puts the player in the role of a squadron commander staging air strikes in the same environment as described by LTC Hampton. "Viper Pilot" would also be applicable to Avalon Hill's **Flight Leader** (a game of which is now being played on the AHKS Forum). The book would also give some perspective to GMT's **Downtown** game as well. **Downtown** is a game covering air strikes over North Vietnam from 1965 to 1972.

I found the book to be a most interesting read and it gave a real insight into the Wild-Weasel mission and the capabilities of our modern U.S. Air Force fighter squadrons as well as what it was like to be a fighter pilot between 1986 and 2006. I would recommend it both as a good historical source and a good read. Two Thumbs Up! ☺

Upcoming Events



August 15-18, Indianapolis, IN
GENCON INDY 2013
<http://www.gencon.com/>

August 30-Sept. 1, Buffalo, NY
QUEEN CITY CONQUEST 2013
<http://queencityconquest.com/>

August 30-Sept. 2, Los Angeles, CA
STRATEGICON: GATEWAY
<http://www.strategicon.net/>

Aug. 30-Sept. 2, Santa Clara, CA
PACIFICON
<http://www.pacificongameexpo.com/>

August 30-Sept. 2, Sterling, VA
TCEP 20: THE MOST INTERESTING CON IN THE WORLD
<http://barkingmad.org/>

September 9-13, Columbus, OH
BUCKEYE GAME FEST
<http://www.buckeyebordgamers.org/buckeyegamefest.htm>

September 13-15, Kansas City, MO
RECRUITS
<http://recruits.mtswebsites.com/Site.php>

September 27-29, Savannah, GA
SAVANNAH SKIRMISH 2013
<http://social.consimworld.com/events/savannah-skirmish-2013>

September 28-29, Waco, TX
WACON
<http://www.wacogamecon.com/>

Oct. 4-6, Omaha, NE
NUKE-CON
<http://www.nuke-con.com/>

October 12-13, Rockville, MD
CONGRESS OF GAMERS
<http://www.congressofgamers.org/>

Oct. 17-20, Hudson, OH
CON ON THE COB
<http://cononthecob.com/>

October 18-20, Charleston, WV
CHARCON
<http://www.charcon.org/>

Oct. 25-27, Cromwell, CT
FURFRIGHT
<http://www.furfright.org/>

November (Dates T.B.A) Pittsburgh, PA
GASPCON
<http://www.gaspgamer.com>

Nov. 1-3, Madison, WI
GAMEHOLE CON
<http://www.gameholecon.com/>

Nov. 1-3, Ottawa, Ontario
N2U ANIME & GAMING CONVENTION
<http://www.n2u.ca/>

Nov. 1-3, Augusta, Maine
Maine Game Con
<http://www.mainecon.com/>

Nov. 2, Warner Robins, GA
KING CON
<http://www.twokingsgames.com/kingcon>

Nov. 8-9, Surrey, British Columbia
BOTTOSCON
Contact Rob Bottos: scouterrob@telus.net

November 8-10, Killington, VT
CARNAGE ON THE MOUNTAIN
<http://www.carnagecon.com/>

November 15-17, Lancaster, PA
FALL IN!
<http://www.fall-in.org/>

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



Open Match Requests from Duncan Rice

1914 AH	Mike Kettman (1067)	Russian Front AH	Mike Kettman (1607)
Adv Squad Leader MMP	Dennis Sheppard (804)	Shiloh DG	Mike Kettman (1067) EP
Adv Third Reich AH	Damon Norko (1736)	Squad Leader AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P
Afrika Korps AH	Brian Britton (1603) ZV	Stalingrad AH	Joseph Angiolillo (412) EV
Afrika Korps AH	Mike Kettman (1067)	Stones River Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P
Afrika Korps AH	Paul Martin (1085) P	Stonewall's Last Battle AH	Paul Warnick (1430) VE
Afrika Korps AH	Anders Hench (1724) C	Tamburlaine The Great SPI	Albert Bowie (299)
Anzio AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	Tet Offensive GDW	Martin Svensson (1466) V
Anzio AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) P	Turning Point Stalingrad AH	J.L. Robert EP (1728)
Anzio AH	Ken Rukowski (1398)	Twilight Struggle GMT	Ron Gregory (1366) E
The Arab-Israeli Wars AH	Dennis Sheppard (804) E	Victoria Cross II Worthington Games	Justo Perez (1656)
Battles for the Ardennes SPI	Thomas Ten Eyck (0826) EP	Victory in the Pacific AH	Lee Blake Massey (1382) EV
Bitter Woods AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	War Between the States DG	Harold McPherson EP
Blue and Grey I, II	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	War in the Ice SPI	Grailing Jones (1732) E
Borodino SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) P	Warriors of God MMP	Jeff Miller (1303)
Breakout Normandy AH	Chris Hancock (565) EV	Waterloo AH	Joe Angiolillo (412)
Bulge '65 AH	Michael Paul (1578) P	Waterloo AH	Brian Britton (1603) ZV
Bull Run AH	Grailing Jones (1732) EV	Waterloo AH	Anders Hench (1724)
Bull Run AH	Ron Brooker (1252) P		
Chalons DG	Albert Bowie (299)		
Central America VG	Dan Carey (1716) VE		
Chickamauga WEG	Joseph Angiolillo (412) E		
The Civil War VG	Shannon McNamara (1639)		
Combat Commander GMT	Justo Perez (1656)		
D-Day 61, 65, or 77 AH	Brian Britton (1603) ZLV		
D-Day 65 AH	Anders Hench (1724) C		
D-Day 77 AH	Tom Walsh (1427) P		
Decision in the Pacific 1942	GDW Melvin Yarwood (36) P		
Eurofront 2 Columbia	Pete Menconi (146) V		
Eurofront Columbia	Tom Oleson (111) FtF (WA.)		
Fading Glory GMT	Mike Kettman (1067) EP		
Fighting Formations GMT	Justo Perez (1656)		
Flight Leader '86 AH	Paul Pearson (1638) EPV		
Fortress Stalingrad S&T	Chris Harding (1591) E		
Fraser's Farm Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P		
Freedom in the Galaxy SPI	Jeff Miller (1303)		
Gettysburg '77 AH	Damon Norko (1736)		
Gettysburg '88 AH	J.L. Robert (1728) EP		
Golden Horde: Kulikovo ATO	Albert Bowie (299) E		
Hammer of the Scots Columbia	Jeff Miller (1303)		
Hell's Highway	Thomas Ten Eyck (0826) EP		
A House Divided GDW	J.L. Robert (1728) EP		
Kingdom of Heaven MMP	Jeff Miller (1303)		
Korean War VG	Thomas Thorsen (0470) EV		
Leipzig Decision Games	Mel Yarwood (36) P		
Luftwaffe AH	Steve Kozlovski (1712) E		
Ici c'est la France Legion War	Wargames Martin Svensson (1466) Z		
Napoleon at War SPI	Melvin Yarwood (36) P		
Napoleon's Triumph Simmons Games	Justo Perez (1656)		
No Retreat GMT	Thomas Thorsen (0470) EV		
Panzer GMT	Martin Hogan (1704) V		
Panzer Leader AH	Dennis Sheppard (804) E		
Red Winter GMT	Chuck Leonard (0711) V		
Richtofen's War '72 AH	Richard Saunders (1664) EF		
Russia Besieged L2	Michael Paul (1578) P		
Russia Besieged L2	Victory Huguet (1707) C		
The Russian Campaign AH	Greg Dilbeck (1363) P		
The Russian Campaign L2	Harold McPherson (1000) EP		
Russian Front AH	Melvin Yarwood (36) P		

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

Match Coordinator

To accept one of the listed matches or have a new match listed, email to: MC@AHIKS.COM

#3





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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: September 30, 2013.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Kommandeur (K) is the official newsletter of AHIKS, an international society of mature adults who play historical simulation games by email and mail. AHIKS 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.

How To Save With Vassal by Pete Menconi

VASSAL : GAMING ≈ KINDLE : READING

In response to Bob Best's observation about Vassal in the previous *Kommandeur*, there is a way to preserve and re-use unrecorded log files. First, understand that Vassal has two ways to save a game: VSAV and VLOG.

VSAV (the file extensions are "xxxx.vsav") is a "snapshot," showing the status at the time the file is saved. The file captures the instantaneous status of map, counters, cards, notes, markers, etc. When I'm playing an opponent's logfile (more on that in a moment), I often save the status at the *end* of the log because that status is where my next move begins. That way, I can come back to start my move where the opponent's ends, maybe the next day after I get over his success. Maybe. After I pull my foot out of the screen

VLOG (files have the format "xxxx.vlog") is a step-by-step repetition of a move. IOW, it's a "video" of the moves, comments, markers, cards, die rolls, etc. Naturally, if you don't turn on the camera, you miss the action. Most players set the program to automatically suggest they start a new logfile ("vlog") after playing the opponent's file. This helps so we don't waste all the time, etc., then have to redo the move. (But there is a workaround.) Playing a vlog works in reverse, too, if you want to back up and "see it again." Like, your army being destroyed by the opposition. Yeah, play it again Sam. If these are adult games, where are the adults?

Now, let's say you're recording a move (you earlier chose "start logfile," gave it a save name, and started play), about to take Moscow, and your mommy says it's time for dinner (or, perhaps your wife has a more enticing suggestion). You just click on "save logfile." This gives you a "video" of everything up to that point. When ready to continue, you have a couple of choices. One is to open the logfile, play it to the end, and then open a new logfile which will continue the recording of events from the end of the previous file. You just send both files to the opponent. Two-for-one day.

The alternative is to return to the computer, open that previous vlog, and then choose "start logfile" (you're prompted to give it a name, etc.). Once the computer is set to record in a new logfile, simply play the old logfile (either use the big arrow, or "pagedown"). This simply plays the old file into the new one, and at the end of the old one you just start any new moves, comments, battles, etc. Save this second logfile and send it to your oppo. It's actually seamless; the recipient cannot tell the difference.

Another method to capture a series of tricky die rolls that were not captured by a logfile (you goofed, didn't start recording when you should have), is to open the comment window to its full height, highlight the entire running commentary (computer die rolls, etc.), then hit ctrl+C, open an email window, hit ctrl+V*, and the text from vassal is pasted into the body of your email. You then abase yourself in the rest of the email, explaining how you're such a goof, etc. The second and third times you do this, try to come up with more creative self-abuse. It's more convincing.

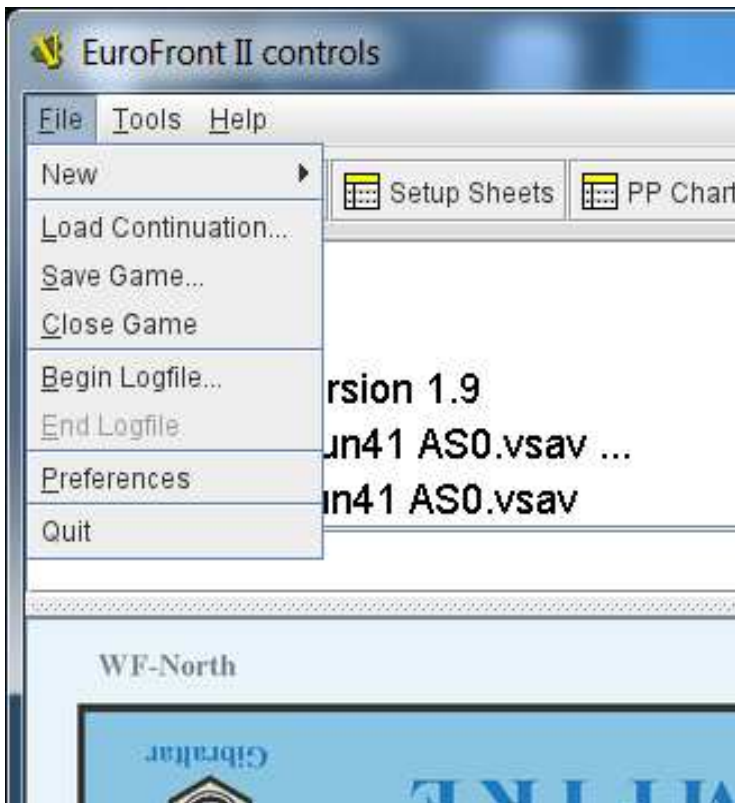
*Those who date back to the time when they had (colored) hair may recognize the C and V as DOS commands for copy and paste. Yup. Vassal doesn't use current Windows tools for these features. But it works quite well.

Want to learn more about Vassal? Go to <http://www.vassalengine.org/>

Or, just Google "vassal engine."

Vassal: A peek behind the curtain. If you go to YouTube.com, and search "Joel Toppen Vassal," you will find a series of video lessons on how to create a Module (game copy) on the Vassal platform. I never intend to create from scratch, but I would like to tweak some features of games I play (e.g., the initial screen magnification). This kind of thing turns out to be rather easy to do, once you know where to look. I will be making some tutorials (print: man's gotta know his limitations) for *The K*, and eventually would be happy to modify a Module for other members of AHIKS. Look for it in 2014?

★★



- #1 U.S. Bomber B-17E "Flying Fortress"
- #2 German Fighter Bomber Messerschmitt ME-110
- #3 Japanese Light Bomber Kawasaki Type 97 "Mary"
- #4 British Bomber "Lancaster"
- #5 Italian Torpedo Bomber Savoia SM 79
- #6 U.S. Dive Bomber SBD or A-24 "Dauntless"

Normandy—the Battlefield Today by Art Dohrman

This past May, my wife and I were fortunate enough to spend six days wandering around the Normandy battlefields. This was a pilgrimage of sorts for me, having read extensively about the invasion and the subsequent battles over the years, and to walk the actual ground was very meaningful to me.

First, some general observations. It rains in Normandy—a lot. They have a whole series of postcards riffing on this fact; the one I brought home has a picture of two rain clouds with the caption “Après la pluie...encore la pluie” (“after the rain, once more the rain”). My first impression, driving in from the east through the Pays d’Auge district, was that it’s hillier than I thought it would be, low rolling hills from place to place, interspersed with low plains. The hills can be quite steep and offer dramatic views of the surrounding countryside, such as Hill 317 near Mortain or Mont Ormel near Chambois. Even those with rather gentle slopes, such as Hill 112 west of Caen (the “Hill of Death”), can offer dominating observation. The small compounds of farm buildings are mostly made out of stone masonry with a 5- to 6-foot wall around the farmyard, a natural fortress. The buildings in town are also mostly stone masonry with very narrow streets. In some places the fields are wide open and flat, other places have rolling hills and valleys with small patches of woods and apple orchards. Many hedgerows are still in place but are not as overgrown as described in battlefield accounts; apparently a lot of the former hedgerows have been cut down in favor of bigger fields to allow use of tractors. A significant number still remain, however.

The countryside is filled with historical markers and monuments. Battlefield tourism is a major industry, especially along the coastline. The party line is that the Normans are very grateful for the sacrifices made on their behalf almost 70 years ago, but there’s also a keen awareness of their great suffering during the battle; most towns were flattened by bombing and artillery, and some 18,000 to 20,000 Norman civilians died during the fighting. By the way, the French do not refer to it as an “invasion,” which would connote something done by an enemy; to them it’s the “debarquement” (“landing”). There are a lot of museums, some devoted to specialized topics (such as the Mulberry harbors at Arromanches) and some to the overall battle. We did not have time to go into more than a few, but those we did visit were uniformly excellent.

In general terms, we started in the east and worked our way to the west. Our first stop was Pegasus Bridge at Benouville over the Caen Canal. The original lift span of this bridge was



New Pegasus Bridge, Benouville

removed and replaced in the 1990s for structural reasons. The original span is now at the Pegasus Museum (dedicated to the British Paratroopers, nearby), but the replacement span was fabricated to be in a similar style. The glider

landing sites just a few meters away from the bridge are in a marshy area and are marked with individual monuments. Café

Gondree, liberated by the British glider troops early on D-Day, is literally right on the banks of the canal.

On to Cagny, key location in the GOODWOOD offensive. Wide open fields of fire totally dominate the plain, with Bourguebus ridge visible on the horizon. Easy to see how a battery of 88s stationed here could wreak havoc on advancing British tanks. Beyond Bourguebus, of course, lies Falaise in a little valley surrounded by hills. Hard to see the town until you’re right on top of it. Falaise is the birthplace of William the Conqueror, and his 11th century castle on a rocky hilltop dominates the town with its narrow medieval streets.

Falaise was famously the location where U.S. and British forces failed to close the pocket on German forces striving to escape eastwards in August 1944. Chambois, just to the east, was where the actual junction took place, and there’s a memorial to the U.S. and Polish forces who met here to close the Falaise pocket. The Polish 1st Armored Division seized and held Mont Ormel east of Chambois, against fierce German opposition and counterattack from both inside and outside the pocket. It rises steeply from surrounding terrain and totally dominates the whole area.

The east end of Sword beach is at Ouistreham, where the Caen Canal meets the sea. The Casino de Ouistreham, which the French commandos assaulted, has been rebuilt next to the ferry port. The French commander is supposed to have remarked that he’d be glad to attack the place, having lost a lot of money there before the war. The beach itself is broad, flat, and sandy, with beach houses right behind the seawall and low dunes (no higher than 10 feet). Next west is Juno Beach—O Canada! The seawall is 6 to 10 feet high, and the beach is very narrow at high tide. One house right behind the seawall is named



JUNO Beach

“Maison de la Queen’s Own Rifles,” said to be the first house liberated by seaborne forces. The street behind it, parallel to the coast, is named “Rue de la Chaudieres” in honor of a French Canadian unit that came ashore later on D-Day. The Canadians had somewhat of a tough fight on Juno but ultimately prevailed.

Gold Beach was the site of the British Mulberry harbor at Arromanches. There are still approximately 20 breakwater units in place out of 115 original. There was originally a U.S. Mulberry also, but it was wrecked in a storm in late June 1944 and so badly damaged it had to be abandoned, with surviving parts and pieces used to repair the British Mulberry. The Musée du Debarquement in Arromanches tells the story of the conception, preparation, construction, and operation of these artificial harbors. Somewhat inland is Bayeux, liberated on 7 June and one of the few large Norman towns to be liberated without being bombed and shelled to pieces. It’s also the site of the museum housing the Bayeux tapestry, depicting the story of William’s conquest of England in 1066. Since it’s believed to have

been commissioned by William's brother, it has to be considered an early example of spin doctoring; Billy himself comes off as a hero righting the wrongs committed by Harold. Another example of history being written by the victors. We drove through Villers Bocage, where Michael Wittmann in his Tiger tank stopped the 7th Armored Division almost single-handedly, and Tilly-sur-Seulles, sites of much fierce fighting in June. Just to the south and east is Hill 112, the "Hill of Death" depicted in Panzerblitz: HOD. Quite gentle slopes, wide open fields, not much to look at but from the crest you can see for miles in any direction, including all the way to Caen in the east (at least 5 miles).

St. Mere Eglise, first town liberated by the U.S. airborne, has an excellent museum devoted to the U.S. airborne troops. These days, the church steeple has a dummy paratrooper hanging from it, representing Pvt. John Steele who really did get



Church in Ste. Mere Eglise, with "PVT Steele"

hung up on the steeple during the drop and had to play possum for several hours in order not to be shot by the Germans in the square below. The Chef du Pont Bridge over the Merderet

River was heavily contested on 6 June. Today the marshes are mostly drained but are quite flat, and it's easy to see how a little flooding would go a long way.

At Utah beach, another excellent museum on the site of the former German Widerstand (resistance) nest 5. The dunes in this area are 20-30 feet high, but the land behind the beaches consists of low

pastures, which were flooded before the invasion. The beach gradient is extremely flat, so that the beach is hundreds of meters wide at low tide. The Navy originally didn't want to make the landing at this location due to the shallow water and flat gradient, but the initial landing craft were swept to the south due to tidal currents. Brigadier General Roosevelt, Assistant Division Commander of the 4th Infantry Division, upon consultation with infantry and engineer senior leaders, decided "we'll start the war from here."

Pointe du Hoc, captured by the 2nd Ranger Battalion, is awe-inspiring. The visitor center is under expansion/renovation but the battlefield is still open. It's been left as it was immediately after the battle (but hopefully they policed up most of the UXO!); it looks like a moonscape from the preliminary air

bombardment. The beaches are miniscule and the cliffs sheer; how the Rangers climbed under fire is mind-boggling.



Bloody Omaha—the U.S. cemetery at Pointe du Hoc St. Laurent is very moving; the visitor center has some very good exhibits and very moving videos. Seeing the crosses and stars of David lined up row on row really brings home the true costs and consequences of war. Les Moulins draw, below St. Laurent, formerly held an old mill (hence the name) and contains a spring-fed stream. Bluffs above the 1st Infantry Division sector (east of Les Moulins) and east of the Vierville draw are approximately 100-130 feet high and quite steep but are not a "technical" climb. West of the Vierville draw, where A Company 116 Infantry and 5 Ranger Battalion came in, the bluffs are much steeper and may be a technical climb. The beach flat at low tide goes waaaaay out. The Omaha Memorial museum is located in the Vierville draw. There was a new "Overlord" museum under construction in Colleville on the D514 highway, almost opposite the cemetery, but it was not scheduled to open until 2 weeks after my visit.

We drove through St. Lo, which has been rebuilt in drab 1950s style concrete buildings, and St. Gilles southwest of the town, where the initial COBRA breakthrough took place. From there, we followed the D38 and D7 highways down through Gavray, St. Denis-le-gast and other small towns, following the path of Combat Command A 2nd Armored Div. We zoomed right through Avranches without stopping to Pontaubault, where the original stone arch bridge captured by Patton's tankers still stands over the Selune.

Mortain was the site of the abortive German counterattack in August 1944. The town itself has been rebuilt, with streets

named after some of the U.S. formations involved. The town is on the western slopes of Hill 317, where a battalion of the U.S. 30th Infantry Division held out behind German lines for six days before being relieved. Hill 317 now has a wooded park, and a "Petite Chappelle" has been built to honor the soldiers of the 30th. The view from the hilltop is amazing; Mont St. Michel, 25 miles away, is clearly visible on the horizon.



Stone Arch Bridge at Pontaubault

Practicalities: Tours are available from a number of sources, notably from the Caen Memorial Museum, but we chose to do the self-guided option. We stayed in Ouistreham, north of Caen, for four days and Ducey, just east of Pontaubault, for two days. Both made good bases for their respective parts of the battlefield. Bayeux would also be a good cen-



Utah Beach Museum with examples of beach obstacles

tral location for a base. Readers will note that I left out a lot of sites or remarked that we just zoomed through certain locations. We could easily have spent more than six days to see everything, much more if we'd tried to go into more than a few museums. Navigation can be challenging: following a particular highway through towns can be confusing due to the twists, turns, and narrow streets. I had a good Michelin road map and knew where I wanted to go, but I still missed things (for example, the Ranger Museum in Grandcamp-Maisy). A GPS would have helped. There are a series of eight marked routes through the area, each exploring a particular theme (for example, the assault, Cobra), marked "Normandie – Terre Liberte." It's surprisingly difficult to find info on these routes on the Web, but one source is <http://www2.normandie-tourisme.fr/site-grand-public/menu-principal/activites/visites/le-debarquement-et-la-bataille-de-normandie-172-12.html> (download the brochure 'Normandie Memoire'). Many people in the primary tourist areas on the coast speak English, not so much in the areas less frequented by tourists. Knowing at least a few words and

phrases in French helps, not least with navigation, and seems to be appreciated by the locals. Everyone we met was very friendly and hospitable, the rumors that the French are snobbish towards tourists who don't speak French are just that, rumors.

Let me close with a quote from the German soldiers' cemetery at Mont de Huisnes west of Avranches, just as moving as the U.S. cemetery above Omaha Beach.

"If people only knew how hard it is to be wounded, to die—they would all be meek and gentle, would not split into parties, would not incite mobs to attack one another, and would not kill. But when they are in good health they know nothing of this. When they are wounded, no one believes them. When they are dead, they can no longer speak." — Mihaljo Lalic



Too Many Museums, Too Little English

Visiting the Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Helsinki Military Museums

by Omar DeWitt

Visiting the Central Museum of the Armed Forces was pleasant and interesting. Getting there and back was *quite* interesting. On the previous day, our concierge told me how to get to the Museum: take the underground to the middle of Moscow, go to a hotel, ask their concierge to get me a reliable taxi, take the taxi to the museum. The museum is in the north of Moscow, and I thought our boat was in the south of Moscow, so that sounded reasonable.

Sue and I left the ship and were walking to the underground station and started talking. I finally realized that the ship was north of Moscow, not south, so why would I want to travel south to the city center and then travel north to the Museum? We went back to talk to the concierge again.

Realize that whenever we talked with the concierge we were competing with half a dozen other passengers. He finally explained that Moscow was shaped like a wagon wheel, with the city center at the hub. Traveling from spoke to spoke was very difficult. The simplest way is to go to the hub and then take another spoke.

OK. Yes, he said, we could take a taxi from the boat directly to the Museum. Good, I said. Let's do it. It took a half hour wait to get the taxi, and Sue admitted that she was not enthusiastic about going!! Well. I got in the taxi with my short, overweight, female driver and off we went. The traffic was heavy and it took about 45 minutes to get to the Museum.

I walked through two sets of doors and approached the desk, asking "Tickets?" The woman pointed back the way I had come, and I saw a window. At the window I offered a 500 ruble note to the clerk and she shook her head and held up a 100 ruble note. We did this a couple of times, and then I took out a 100 ruble note. She shook her head again and held up two fingers. I put down another 100 ruble note and she took them both. I received a ticket and some change.

Inside again, I gave my ticket to the woman at the desk who tore off part of it and gave me back the remainder. She reached under the desk and pulled out a sheet of instructions in English. How she knew I spoke English I'll never know. After reading the typed instructions several times, I grasped that I should keep to the right and view the downstairs, then go upstairs and do the same thing. Outside was a display of larger vehicles.

The first room dealt with Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. (In the entire Museum, there were no labels in English. There were a few items on display in English but there was no translation into Russian.) If one knew nothing of the battles, this Museum would be rather a disappointment. Covering one wall was a painting of a battle, probably Borodino. Cases around the room were full of memorabilia: weapons, papers, uniforms, maps. The displays throughout the Museum were well done, not too much in the cases, and well lighted.



Water-cooled machinegun

I'm not sure how to describe a museum, especially one exclusively in Russian. There were many posters from the war years, and I was amazed at how handsome, well built, and deadly those Russians were. Actually, not all that different from the U.S. posters! There were machine guns and smallish artillery guns. Several dioramas were positioned around. Maps in Russian were common, as were photographs. One display commemorated the female soldiers in the war.

The Soviet flag that was flown over the Reichstag in Berlin was on display, over a broken, on-the-ground Nazi eagle. I knew this only because of what I read on the internet.

Space exploration was displayed.

Napoleon's invasion and WWII were not the only conflicts in the Museum. The Russian war in Afghanistan was also displayed.

Outside was a large parking lot full of airplanes, artillery, tanks, and a few odds and ends. I noticed no aircraft from WWII, but there were many jets. One "aisle" had artillery pieces on one side from small to gigantic in size. Tanks filled another aisle side from a small 1935 tank to modern ones. The T-34 looked rather small compared to the later tanks. The early Soviet heavy tank with a huge box for a turret has always struck me as an easy target, but the one there had no holes in it. An armored train was on display, along with a huge railway gun. An armored car from the 1930s was in a corner of the area.

There were two small shops in the entrance hall. One had some plastic models, but the ones I can now work on were in boxes too large to take in a suitcase. I did buy two paper models (a Whippet tank and a Russian fighter airplane JaIT-3 or LaGG-3 in use from 1941 to 1944) and two refrigerator mag



Wooden holster.



T-34 and plaque

nets, although I doubt they will be allowed on the refrigerator. The paper models have extensive assembly instructions, in Russian, of course. At home, I built the Whippet, no scissors, no glue. It went together rather well, and since the surface was printed, that part of it looked fine. But it is not in the same class as a plastic model. The most intriguing thing was wondering how the designer figured out how to put it all together.

When I had finished with the museum, I went about calling the boat for a ride home. There was a woman at the main entrance, wearing a uniform, but she spoke no English. She was quite pleasant, though, and took me across the hall to a sour-faced woman, who looked as if helping me would cause pain. However, she spoke more English, say six words total. She fumed and fussed for a bit, then got up and walked into the nether lands. Eventually, she returned with a man (!) who spoke good English (!). I explained that I was trying to call my boat so they could arrange a taxi back to the boat. He thought a bit then took me downstairs to a telephone on the wall. He said I could use that and that there would be no charge. I thanked him.

I dialed the number a couple of times, getting a busy signal. Then I noticed that only seven digits were showing on the readout. OK, they didn't need the area code *or* the international code. I dialed again. Busy signal. Again. Same result. I tried the other number for the boat. Busy signal. After a few more tries (why, Omar?), I gave up and went back upstairs for help.

The sour-faced woman was not delighted to see me. We discussed the situation, her in Russian, me in English. She kept looking at the Help! card the boat had given me on the wrong side. She got up again and went off, me following at a respectful distance. She went downstairs, I followed. She went to one side of the hall to get a uniformed officer to let her in a door on the other side of the hall. She disappeared.

Now the first (uniformed) woman I had spoken to came down the stairs, and I made various motions and said, "Problems." I pointed down the hall at the telephone I had used and shook my head. She understood, and went over to the lackadaisical officer who had unlocked the door for the sour-faced woman and talked him into letting me use his phone. She dialed the outside line and handed me the telephone. I dialed. Busy signal. A couple more tries got the same the result. I shook my head, handed her back the telephone, she disappeared. I went back to waiting for the sour-faced woman.

She eventually reappeared with another woman with a cell phone. She spoke slightly more English, say 15 words. They were talking away. I gave her my card and the two were looking at the wrong side and discussing it. The new woman dialed a number and talked with someone for a while, then handed the phone to me. A man was speaking English! I explained my problem, and we talked in circles for a while, but he obviously was not from *The Ingvar*. I don't know who he was or why he was called. I handed the phone back to the Second Woman.

I went back to pointing to the phone number on the back of my card. After more discussion in Russian, they decided to take me elsewhere. The Second Woman flashed her badge at the reader on the door, waved me through, and took us to her office down the hall and around the corner. From her surroundings, I took her to be a receptionist. More phone calling. Eventually she handed me the phone. It was someone from my boat! It was arranged that a taxi would pick me up in half an hour. It was difficult talking on the cell phone because the two women were busy chatting about something, but I did figure out the plan.

I was ready to thank the two women and go outside to wait for the taxi. No. They both walked me up to the main floor. The Second Woman asking me with gestures if I had seen the Mu-



KV-2 and plaque

seum. I said yes, very nice. She asked if I had seen the shop. I said yes and showed her my bag. I was leaning toward the door, when the sour-faced woman gestured that I should follow her. The Second Woman gestured that I should follow the sour-faced woman. I followed.

She led me into a room I had visited before. We stood in front of a display, and she told me in great detail about one of the Murmansk boat convoys. She spoke slowly and clearly and pointed to her left shoulder. I knew it was about Murmansk because I had already studied the photos (words in Russian did not translate well with me). What she told me, I have no idea.

However, she was on a roll. She pulled me to another display. This one was of Leningrad (obvious because of the map but not the writing on the map). Again she carefully detailed some story. Occasionally she would call over to the woman who was the “guard” of the room. She was a young chubby woman in a dress, carrying a purse. She might call back “one hundred.” The sour-faced woman went on with her story. She called back to the young woman, who said “twenty five.” Now it was becoming clearer to me. The sour faced woman continued, gesturing with her hands. (During her talk, I was never sure if she were speaking Russian or mispronouncing English.) Again, she called over to the young woman, but she shook her head. She looked a bit frustrated. The young woman got up from her chair and came over, and the two women continued to explain the situation. When I had all the facts: one hundred items did something, and twenty five things did something else, she was satisfied, and she led me to Stalingrad (again, the maps gave it away).

She was into another good story, when the Second Woman appeared carrying her cell phone. Thank God! It was for me from the boat. The woman from the boat still spoke English, but she had no new news. The taxi would be arriving shortly.

The Second Woman went back to her office with my grateful thanks, and the sour-faced woman took me outside to the curb. By the curb was a display of some sort made up of helmets and some other military items. For a minute or two she explained to me what this all meant. I think it finally hit her that I had no idea what she was talking about. She walked down to the curb and waited for the taxi. A few minutes later it arrived. The taxi driver was the same chubby woman who had driven me over. I thanked the sour-faced woman very much for her help and got in the cab. While her face might have been a bit sour, inside she was very generous.

Everyone I met in the Museum had been extremely helpful. More than helpful. They had gone out of their way to help me. Wonderful people.

St. Petersburg

There was also a military museum in St. Petersburg. Sue and I decided to brave the transit system and go into town on our own. At least the signage here was in Cyrillic and Roman,



A humungous Russian artillery piece



An early artillery piece with several rotating rows of five guns

so we could read signs easier. We had some directions from one of the guides on the boat. We walked across the four-lane road at the zebra and went to the bus stop. An 8 (big bus) or 8K (small bus) were our choices. The buses stopped on one side of a circle to let passengers out. On another side, passengers got on the bus. When we saw an 8 bus let out its passengers and then zip by our side of the circle, we thought we should be where the passengers were let out. We walked over to the other side. An 8 came along. We tried to get on. The driver shook his head and pointed to where we had been. We went back to wait for him. He turned his bus and zipped by us!



Then we noticed an 8K was stopped at the loading spot. To be sure, we showed him a map, pointing to the spot we wanted to go. He took out his glasses, and we all finally agreed that he went there. We got on the sliding door, paid our 60 rubles, and found a seat. I was sitting in the rear, and when the bus went over a bump, I was propelled a couple of inches into the air. The driver got up a good speed at points. He did not stop at every bus stop. We passed the 8 at one point. At another a man was running after us waving his arm. Tough darts, fellow.

At the Moscow Hotel (quite visible from a distance) we got off and started looking for an M for metro. A passing local noticed the lost glaze in our eyes and asked what we were looking



Early grenade launchers

for. I said, "Metro." She pointed, we followed. I bought four tokens (two to return), we went through the turnstile, we rode the escalator down and down and down. The end stop on our maps told us which train to get on. Many of the underground stops do not have sides open to the tracks. One finds a likely door. When the train arrives, the door opens, people get off, people get on, two doors close, and the train moves.

After two stops, we got off and changed trains! Were we impressed by ourselves. Another stop and we got off. Outside, we stood looking about, since we did not know where the museum was. Our map showed that it was on the other side of a canal, so we looked for water. Eventually we found water and followed it to the right, but the walkway dead-ended. I could see a couple of artillery pieces in the distance, so we turned around and eventually found the entrance.

The museum is in the shape of almost half a circle. The "lawn" in front of the building was about 100 yards wide and half as deep. It was covered with artillery, tanks, tank destroyers, rocket launchers, big rockets, and you-name-it. There were cannons from Napoleon's time to almost present times. An amazing jumble of military equipment.



Rocket launcher

As in Moscow, signs were only in Russian. Inside, we passed two women in uniforms kind of guarding the entrance. I bought two tickets and a photo ticket for 700 rubles. Then we toured the museum. Russia has no lack of short, chubby women carrying their purses. These custodians are sitting in most rooms. (They also are outside picking up trash.)

There were other customers looking around, but not many. There were some interesting early guns and lots of later guns. Early grenade launchers. Displays of making the guns.

The building was not in good shape. The floors were an interest in themselves. They were parquet, made of pieces about six inches long and 1½ wide forming Vs. Initially they were stuck together. Now they were loose; if one were not careful, he could kick a piece across the floor. One could walk along a hall and find rooms displaying something or other, or the hall would end with a sign. In Russian.

Two rooms were interesting. One was devoted to Mikhail



Kalashnikov, the inventor of the AK-47. He designed other guns, and they were on display. A lot was said about him, but who can read Russian?

The other interesting room was a hobby room. There were plastic models of ships, planes, and tanks, the interesting ones too big for my suitcase. And they had wargames! Some were in boxes, but I picked one in a folder for 350 rubles (\$12) entitled **БОРОДИНСКОЕ СРАЖЕНИЕ 1812**, of course, according to the receptionist on the ship, the Battle of Borodino. There were no English rules and the clerk said no English rules were available. Thank goodness I bought only the one game. It is published by StatusBelli; their web address is <http://statusbelli.ru>. When I got home, I looked it up. English rules were available, and I downloaded them. You, too, can buy the game for \$20 plus postage.

At lunchtime, we pulled down the seats on a couple of Russian-folding-chairs and ate our nut bars. This was in a hall; it was quiet, musty, echoic, and mysterious.

There was lots to see and nothing to read. We tired of seeing and decided to leave. A guide had said there was a museum on the Siege of Leningrad. We made an attempt to find it, but went over one bridge when we should have gone over two. Some people would say we were technically lost, but one can only laugh at them. Ho, ho, ho. Somehow we found a river and Sue figured out where we were with the map and her memory. Lost? I don't think so.

More walking got us to the underground. We got back to the Moscow Hotel and found the spot where we had gotten off the bus. We stood on the opposite side of the street to await an 8. The main problem was that we did not know the route of #8; we were assuming it went on and turned around and came back. When several #8s stopped on the other side of the street

and moved on, we thought we had better check things out. Sue tried to talk to two kiosk vendors, but even drawing an 8 brought expressions of complete incomprehension. We crossed the street and approached an 8K. Sue showed him the Russian address on our card. The driver took out his glasses, and we said, "It's the same driver." It was. He smiled and motioned us into the bus.

So, we saw the museum, survived the day, and got back to the boat.

Finland

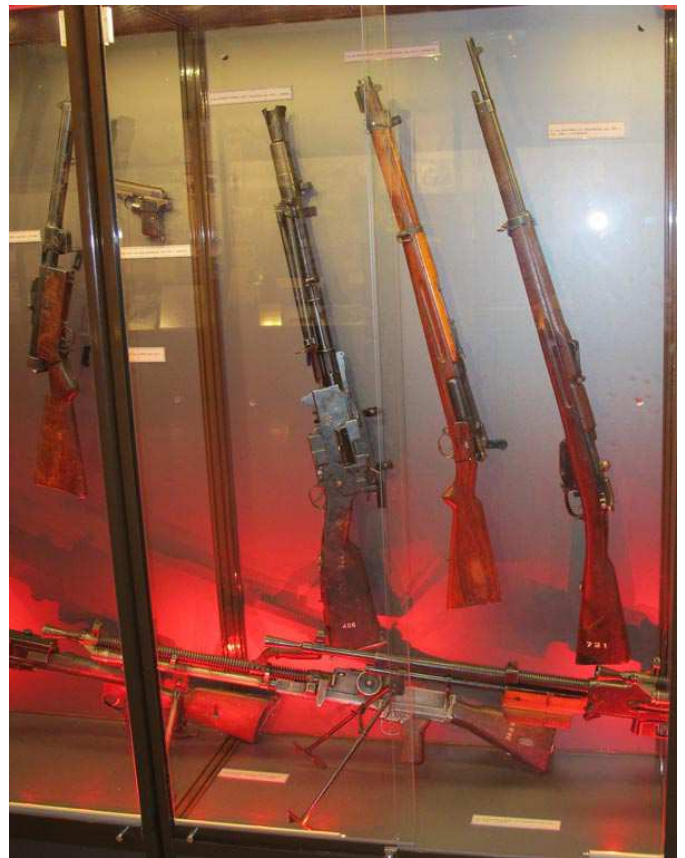
Wednesday June 26 was our last day in Finland. The tour to Suomenlinna was on, and the six of us met in the lobby at 10 AM. Our Viking (pronounced Veeking in Finland) guide walked us to the harbor and got us on a boat. The ride took about 15 minutes. On the island, she bought tickets for us for an English-language tour and went home.

Our new guide was an attractive young woman with dark hair and dark complexion who spoke excellent English. The fort (originally called Sveaborg) was financed by the French to thwart Russian expansion desires. In those days, we were told, only cowards would bypass a fort, so a fort on an island was a reasonable idea. It took 40 years to complete the fort, due to various reasons. It would hold 7,000 men and many cannons.

There is not too much left of the fort today, although when it was built, it was considered invincible. Some stone walls are left and a few casemates. The house the commander/builder lived in was open to the public. It contained a few well-done displays, maps, models. Originally, the bedroom contained a cannon as part of the wall of the fort.

How invincible was it? One winter in 1808, 6,000 Russians walked over the ice from Estonia. There were about 6,000 men and 700 cannons defending the fort. After some discussion, the then-commander, Admiral Carl Olof Cronstedt, surrendered the fort. Later in the 1800s a fleet of boats (whose, I don't remember) appeared and bombarded the fort. The old guns of the fort could fire only one tenth the distance of the fleet's guns, and the fort was severely damaged. The fleet sailed away.

In the Winter War of 1940 the Finns did relatively well, but they were losing many men, so Finland sued for peace. They lost land to Russia. The Finns there moved west. The land they left is still pretty much unpopulated; lots of trees.



Curious breach on a cannon at the Finnish fort at Suomenlinna. Obviously a piece had to be inserted horizontally before the gun was fired.



The Finns felt they need some aid against possible future Russian moves against them. They made overtures, but the only country willing to ally with them was Nazi Germany. When the Germans invaded Russia, the Finns (calling this the Continuation War) and their Germans advanced against the Russians and made progress, but then the advance stopped and the front was static for two years.

Russia bombed Helsinki three times. The damage was not severe because of the inexperience of the pilots and the fact that the Finns moved Helsinki. The bombings were at night, so the Finns put lights in a forest to the east and put AA guns there as well. Russian security was not very tight, so the Finns had notice of the air raids.

In 1944, the Finns and Russians came to terms. The Finns were required to expel the Germans in Finland back to Norway. The Finns eventually and reluctantly fought the Germans in the Lapland War with their army reduced on the conditions of the peace treaty with Russia.

After seeing what little there was to see of the old fort, we visited the Military Museum on the island. It was one room in a large building. After paying three euros (the old-age-pensioner's rate) each, we walked through the room with a few other visitors. The right-hand wall contained manikins behind glass in various military uniforms; they all carried a rifle or machine gun. The center of the room was taken up with a horse-drawn field kitchen, an 88, a tank, and a few artillery pieces. A full sized communications bunker had been built out of logs. The left side of the room contained a series of photos with a concise history of the recent Finnish wars.

We took the boat back to the market square and walked to YET ANOTHER military museum. It was a warm day (hot to the Finns). People sat at outdoor cafes *in the sun*. With their long

winter nights, the sun is revered whenever it appears.

Sue, being militarily sated, waited in the park for me. The entrance was two very tall, very heavy, quite narrow doors. The museum might well have been closed, but I was able to open a door and walk up the steps to the museum. I paid my pensioner's fee and was told where to start.

The museum was not large, but it was neat and well laid out. Photographs are included, but there is not much to say about the museum except that there were very few (one or two) other people there. There were English labels.

As far as I can tell, everyone in Finland speaks good English; they all have to speak a foreign language because no one knows Finnish. When we got back to the U.S., the locals all spoke English, but not as well as the Finns.

It was an interesting experience. It is hard to recommend the Russian museums to anyone who does not read Russian, but if you are in Russia anyhow, the museums are worth a visit.



Giant Finnish mortar.



"An antitank man in a summer jacket M/39 and with a helmet M/38. The weapons are a "Suomi" submachine gun and a Panzerschreck and Panzerfaust." Note: The manikins always look slightly effeminate. However, they are *real* men.

Copied from three plaques in the Finnish museums.

Finnish Soldiers in the German Army 1941-1944

During the continuation War (1941-1944), 1,200 Finnish volunteers served in the German Army fighting against the Soviet Union. Foreigners could not join the German Army itself, so all foreign soldiers were part of the Waffen-SS, because it had different regulations concerning foreigners than the rest of the army. The Finns formed their own SS battalion which was part of the 5th SS Panzer Division Wiking. The Division fought in Ukraine and in the Caucasus, and ca. 250 Finns were killed in action. The Finnish battalion was disbanded in 1943, and most of the Finnish soldiers returned home. Some Finns joined the Waffen-SS even as late as in 1944, after the Moscow Armistice. For them, it was plausible to join the ranks of a longtime brother-in arms. However, according to the Armistice, Germany was now an enemy of Finland, and all those joining their ranks were charged for treason. The most famous of them was Captain Lauri Tömi, a Knight of the Mannerheim Cross, who later served in the U.S. Army Special Forces.

Soviet Partisans' assaults in Finland

During the Continuation War (1941-1944), the Soviet partisans assaulted the Finnish villages near the Soviet border. The aim of these assaults was to terrorize the civilians and to diminish their will to fight. The assaults were carried out during the summer months--the most active summers being 1942 and 1943--when it was easy to move across the forest without leaving any traces. Over 100 persons were killed in these strikes, most of them women and children. The assaults were not reported in the Finnish news because of the war-time censorship. Also the Soviet propaganda denied the assaults. In the Soviet Union, the partisans were considered heroes of the war against Germany. Therefore, it was not in the Soviet leadership's interest to let the people know about their heroes attacking Finnish civilians.

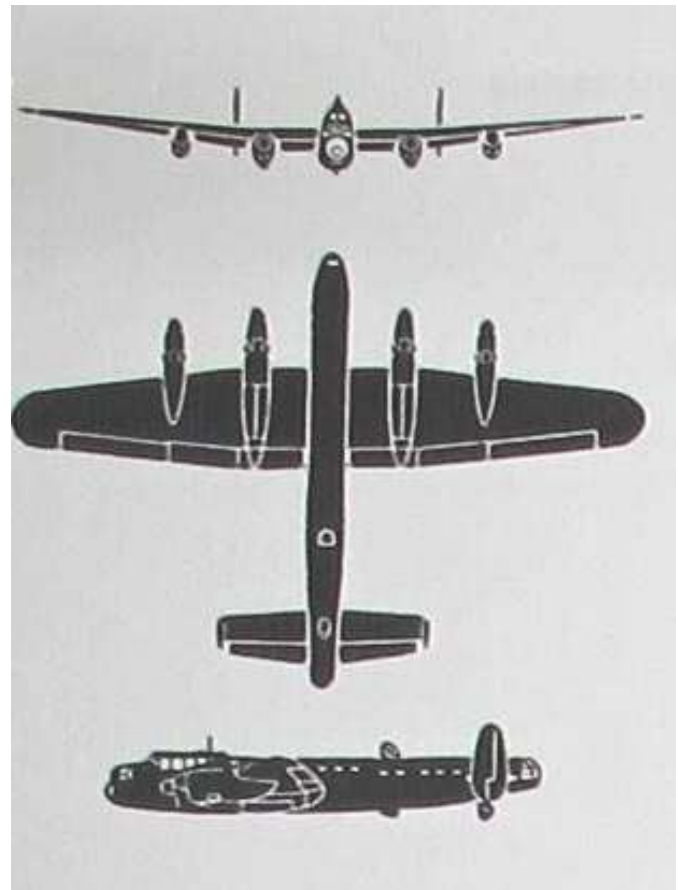
Prisoners of War

During the Continuation War, the Finns captured ca. 64,000 Soviet soldiers. They were all first put in jail, but as the number of prisoners increased, Finland started to set up prison-camps. Officers, political commissars, and soldiers who had tried to desert were placed in separate camps. Some of the prisoners also worked among civilians in agriculture or at fortification construction sites. Prisoners were generally treated according to international treaties, but there were shortages in for ex. accommodation and food-rations. Around 18,700 Soviet prisoners died in Finnish prison-camps. Circa 3,000 Finnish soldiers and officers were taken prisoner by the Soviet Union during the Continuation War. There was a disagreement between the two nations about the number of Finnish prisoners in Soviet Union when the returning of the prisoners began in 1944. Even as late as in 1995, Finland asked Russia to return some of the prisoners taken during the Continuation War.



Machine gun in a Finnish diorama.

#4



Game News

Most of the following information comes from
www.Consimworld.com. OD

New Games

Avalanche Press

Avalanche Press is offering 30% off anything in stock except the newest of the new (Plan Red, Remember the Maine, Western Desert Force, Saipan, Plan Crimson, Hammer & Sickie, South Flank). There's no minimum and over 100 items on sale! Use the coupon code **MELISSA** to get your savings. *On the Shopping Cart screen, you'll see a small window on the left-hand side that reads "Coupon code (optional)." Type in MELISSA and click "Apply."*

<http://www.avalanchepress.com/>

Clash of Arms

Now available for preorder: **La Bataille de Dresde, 1813**. The game details the titanic battle that ensued on August 26 and continued through the 27th. Up to four 4 players control the Prussian, Austrian, and Russian forces commanded by Feldmarschall Carl zu Schwarzenberg, while a further four command such personages as Marshals Ney, Marmont, Mortier, Victor, St. Cyr... or Napoleon, himself. Every battalion of infantry, squadron of cavalry or battery of artillery that was present at the battle is included in its 1,000+ counters and are at their command. Using the award winning **La Bataille** rules, first pioneered by The Marshal Enterprises Household in the 1970s, **Dresde** is volume XIII in the *La Bataille series*. Preorder Price: \$120

Command at Sea Volume XII, Mediterranean Fleets includes over 150 ships and 90 aircraft. For the first time the Admiralty Trilogy covers the Greek, Turkish, and Yugoslavian Navies. Previous listings of Italian ships and aircraft have been updated with information from many new reference sources (including Italian naval experts in Italy who were consulted and graciously shared information that resolved many questions caused by limited English references. Fire control, Gunnery accuracy, and ASW capabilities especially benefitted from their assistance). All data and information has been updated to **Command at Sea 4th edition** standard. More than just making the information compatible with **Command at Sea**, this data is now in the same format as **Harpoon** and **Fear God and Dread Nought**, the other core games in the Admiralty Trilogy. Prices start at \$26.32.

<http://www.clashofarms.com/LaBatDresde.html>

Compass Games

End of Empires: 1744-1783, designed by Bill Marsh, is a two player game covering the three great conflicts fought on the North American continent between 1744 and 1783: King George's War, sometimes known as the Old French War, which was part of the War of the Austrian Succession, the French and Indian War, part of the Seven Years War (known in England as the Great War for Empire), and the American Revolutionary War. The French and Indian War ended the French Empire in Canada; the American Revolution ended the British Empire in the 13 American colonies.

Each **End of Empire** game turn represents two months time. Each year consists of one spring turn, two summer turns, one fall turn, and two winter turns. Each hex is approximately 20 miles across. Units are mostly regiments but a few represent other sizes, each step represents approximately 250 men.

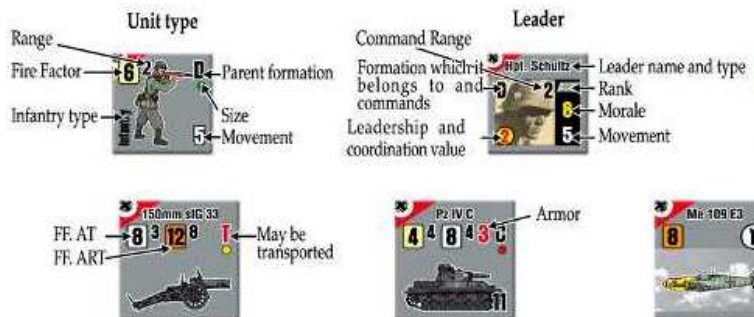
End of Empire features two maps showing eastern North America. Each hex or town contains natural and/or man-made features that can affect the movement of units and the combat between units.

End of Empire is an Epic game and perhaps the most detailed coverage of the critical period that saw the Empires of England, France, and Spain exit North America and the rise of the United States of America. There are thirteen scenarios. Price: \$99; preorder price: \$75; release date Nov. 2013.

La Bataille de France 1940, designed by Juan Carlos Cebrían and Niko Eskubi, is Game #2 in the **War Storm Series**.

In May 1940, the Second World War took a turn which would change world history forever: the German armies invaded France across the neutral territory of Belgium and The Netherlands. Two months later France had surrendered and the British Expeditionary Force had only narrowly escaped destruction by a near miracle at Dunkirk. **La Bataille de France 1940** recreates the events of those days and allows the players to reproduce the most famous battles of the Blitzkrieg on the Western Front at a tactical level. Players take command of either the Allied or Axis forces (or can play solitaire) in the tactical battles of each scenario. A War Storm Series game designed to simulate combined arms company level combat.

Price: \$63; release date Oct. 2013



Spartacvs by John B. Firer – back in print in 2013.

Rome, 80BC. The Republic stands on the threshold of a new era. Lucius Cornelius Sulla has ousted the Marians, returned power to the Senate, and worked to restore the Republic to its former glory—in his own brutal way! Thus his reforms birthed violence and not peace, and rebellion is the watchword of the times. Soon Rome will face a triple threat to its fragile stability: Sertorius will foment civil war from his lands in Spain; King Mithradates VI of Pontus will forge an alliance with Sertorius; and the ultimate insult: a slave revolt, led by an able gladiator-general named **Spartacvs**.

Spartacvs is a two player card-driven game pitting the might of Rome against the multi-threat Sertorians. This turbulent time plays out on a beautifully rendered point-to-point map covering Spain, Gaul, Italy, and Asia Minor. Card deck and rules will include errata.

Price: \$65; preorder price: \$50; release date: Sept. 2013

<http://compassgames.com/>

Decision Games

Four brand new titles have been added to their **Folio Game Series**. These games are designed for quick learning and easy play and are a great value. They are perfect for a new gamer starting out as well as a great break for veteran gamers from our larger games.

The **Folio Game Series** takes only minutes to learn and once one game is played, players can immediately play many more scenarios with the same standard rules. Most folio games have a 17" x 22" map and 80-100 counters, so set-up takes only a few minutes and most games take 60-90 minutes to play. The folio games are presented in a folio rather than a box for easy storage. Price: \$19.95 per title.

Vimy Ridge: Arras Diversion

Meuse Argonne: The Final Offensive

Battle of the Scheldt: The Devil's Moat

Iwo: Bloodbath in the Bonins *Your editor has ordered this solitaire game.*

Four brand new Mini Games expand our new mini-game series launched in 2012 and designed by Joseph Miranda. We have added four new games designed by Chris Perello, each with a streamlined version of his **Musket & Saber** rules. These Quick Play **Musket & Saber** rules can also be used to play his earlier designs in the folio series.

Saalfeld: Prelude to Jena

In October 1806, Napoleon's Grande Armee is descending on western Saxony in multiple columns. The Saxons and their more powerful Prussian cousins are gathering to give battle. On 10 October, the advance guard of one French column crashes into the advance guard for one wing of the allied armies. A French victory will open the possibility of splitting the allies; an allied victory will threaten the flank of the other French columns. Time presses both. The forces are equal in strength; victory goes to the player who best understands the strengths and weaknesses of each side. Retail \$9.95

Molino Del Rey: Gateway to Mexico City

In August 1847, Winfield Scott's U.S. Army was at the gates of Mexico City after a string of victories over Santa Anna. However, Scott paused to negotiate. Both sides used the delay to regroup, but when Scott heard a rumor that the Mexicans were casting cannon (true) at Molino del Rey (false), he resolved to take the place. The Mexicans saw it coming and prepared their defenses. The result was a narrow but costly American win that left the city's defenses intact. A quicker victory might have pushed into the city and ended the war. Retail \$9.95

Chantilly: Jackson's Missed Opportunity

After the Confederate victory at Second Bull Run in August 1862, Stonewall Jackson led his wing of the Confederate army to get behind the retreating Federals and finish the job. Mud and fatigue slowed him just enough to allow some hastily-collected Federal units to get in position to stop him. The result was a confused battle near Chantilly. At stake was the survival of an entire Union army, or of Jackson's isolated Confederates. Retail \$9.95

Salem Church: East of Chancellorsville

As the battle of Chancellorsville raged, a Union corps was dispatched to hit the vulnerable Confederate army from behind. The flanking column was delayed by a single Confederate brigade at Salem Church. The battle grew as Confederates arrived first to firm up the front, then to turn the tables on the Federals. The flankers became flanked and had to fight for their lives. Retail \$9.95

<http://decisiongames.com/wpsite/>

High Flying Dice Games

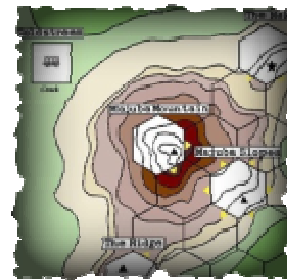
A Monstrous Fuss is a simulation of the battle fought on August 10, 1861, at Wilson's Creek between the Union Army under General Nathaniel Lyon and the Confederate forces led by Generals Benjamin McCulloch and Sterling Price. The Union force, badly outnumbered, launched a bold attack that caught the Rebels still encamped. Both sides' armies were made up of militia and volunteers who were in combat for the first time. Features four 11" x 17" maps, 280 double sided counters, player aid card, and an eight-page rules book. Price: \$20.95 (add \$5 for mounted counters).

A Barbarous Ground covers the Battle of Germantown, 1777. The game uses the same design system from the very popular **Devil Takes All** game. Leadership, orders to the various formations, and morale are central to the game's design. Players on both sides will be tasked with challenging decisions as well as opportunities for attack and defense. Price: \$20.95 (add \$5 for mounted counters).

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

Isle of Empires Games

Hill of Doves is a solitaire boardgame in which the player controls an Imperial British Army during the First Anglo-Boer War. The British army's aim is to win the war by controlling the area known as Laing's Nek which lies on the border between Natal and the Transvaal. The British army has up to twelve weeks to achieve this, failing which, the Boers will win the war. Price: €29.95 for DTP Edition. *Your editor has purchased this game; the cost was \$61.92.*



Hill of Doves is played on three boards simultaneously. These are the Strategic Board, Operational Board and Tactical Board. Game information is recorded on these boards and British strategic, operational, and tactical columns are maneuvered on the maps located on these boards.

<http://isleofempiresgames.weebly.com/>

Lost Battalion Games

Battle Patrol is the first in a series of Equipment and Tactical Modules for Sergeants Miniatures Game. These modules offer a new level of player coordination and effectiveness, thus allowing players to create specialized mini-teams within their squads that have increase flexibility and effectiveness. Price: \$19.95. *Ownership of Day of Days or Red Devils Starter Set is required.*

<http://www.lostbattaliongames.com/>

Ludifolie Editions

Now available for preorder: **Normandy 1944: A Bloody Summer**, which is a divisional scale game depicting the action throughout the Normandy campaign from June to August 1944. This is a redeveloped version of the *Vae Victis* #27 best seller game (published in 1999). The game has been redeveloped,

with new mechanics and an updated OoB (twice as many counters compared to the first edition). The Allied air force is now fully included in the game and can be used by the Anglo-American player to influence the outcome of the war. A second map allows the Allies to push their units toward Paris or the Atlantic harbors. More details, more counters and a wider map for a more comprehensive, compelling game. English edition available. Preorder Price: 28,99 euros. <http://www.ludifolie.com/>

Multi-Man Publishing

Now available for preorder, **Last Chance for Victory** is the next entry in The Gamers' **Line of Battle** series (LoB) which simulates the Battle of Gettysburg. It is the second game in the series, following the well-received **None but Heroes** about the Battle of Antietam. This is the definitive Battle of Gettysburg regimental-level game and is the only regimental-level Gettysburg game which can be played to completion in a reasonable amount of time. Make no mistake, though, this is a large game. Preorder Price: \$135 (savings of \$45).

Canadian Crucible is a new entry in the Gamers Tactical Combat Series (TCS) depicting the Canadian defense of Normandy on D-Day +2 (June 8, 1944) against a counterattack spearheaded by grenadiers of the 12th SS Panzer Division.

It Never Snows is a Standard Combat Series (SCS) game covering the pivotal Market Garden offensive in September, 1944. Using a system based on the well-received SCS Game **Bastogne**, **It Never Snows** covers the landings and the ground offensive endeavoring to link up with them at 600m per hex with units, generally companies. Each turn is half a day, making for a 17 turn campaign game (uniquely playable among Market Garden games).

Now available for preorder, **Rising Sun** is ASL's long-awaited return to the jungles, islands, and atolls of the southwest Pacific. MMP has combined the original ASL modules, **Code of Bushido** and **Gung Ho!**, into one monster package. **Rising Sun** includes the entire Japanese, Chinese, and United States Marine Corps orders of battle; a 2nd edition of Chapter G, which covers the unique rules needed to play ASL in the Pacific Theater of Operations and incorporates all the current errata; and an updated Chapter H for the Japanese and Chinese vehicles and ordnance and for landing craft. Also included are 32 updated scenarios, combining the original **Code of Bushido** and **Gung Ho!** scenarios with 16 out-of-print PTO scenarios that originally appeared in the pages of the *General*, the ASL Annual, and the ASL Journal. The package is rounded out by seven 8"x22" geomorphic mapboards (boards 34-39 and 47) and dozens of overlays, all updated to match the latest style of boards. Both the rules and the counters benefit from a larger, more readable font. *Ownership of Advanced Squad Leader game system is required to play.* Preorder Price: \$123 (savings of \$41).

<http://www.multimanpublishing.com/>



Naval Warfare Simulations

Steam and Iron Campaign Expansion is a new edition for their **Great War at Sea** series. Four full-fledged campaigns covering the North and Baltic Seas during WWI are covered. *Note: ownership of Steam and Iron is required for play.* Price: \$19.99. Windows OS required. <http://www.navalwarfare.net/>

Paul Koenig Games

Chancellorsville: Bloody May, 1863 ("CBM") is volume two of Paul Koenig's **Bloody Civil War Series**. It is a two-player wargame simulating Jackson's infamous flank attack that occurred west of the Chancellor House (Chancellorsville) on May 2, 1863. CBM is an old-fashioned beer and pretzels game based upon the intermediate system of Avalon Hill's **Gettysburg 1977**. It can be easily played to conclusion in about four hours. Price: \$42 (order through VPG). <http://www.paulkoeniggames.com/> or www.victorypointgames.com

Pratzen Editions

The Flight of the Eagle marks the third and last volume of our Napoleonic campaign rules. This game system is an umpired, double-blinded system in which players communicate only through written messages. It uses maps of that time and a simple system to manage units. Combats are resolved using a face-to-face system, simple but precise, with the morale as the main endpoint. Combats can also be resolved using any existing operational or tactical system including miniatures. The present volume 3 does not need the volume 1 or 2 to be played. The box includes five booklets (from 40 to 68 pages each), 53 sheets of units to play the campaign of 1809, the campaign of France of 1814, and the eight campaigns of the Peninsular war between 1808 and 1814. Seven maps and 52 unit sheets are included. <http://didier-rouy.webs.com/>

White Dog Games

Loyaulte Me Lie: Bosworth Field, August 22, 1485 is an introductory, tactical-level board game for two players, simulating the last significant battle of the War of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York. The 150 thick, double-sided playing pieces represent the "battles" of Henry Tudor, Richard the Third, Lord Stanley, and William Stanley. The 22" x 17" game board uses map terrain of the historical site, newly discovered by battlefield archaeology. There is a 12-page rulebook and one player reference sheet. Price: \$32 (boxed), \$26 (ziplock), or print-n-play download (\$17). <http://www.whitedoggames.com/>



Worthington Games

Hold the Line: Frederick's War features eight battles based on the **Hold the Line** games series: Mollwitz, Choutwitz, Hohenfriedburg, Kesselsdorf, Kolin, Leuthen, Hockkirk, and Liegnitz. The game features a mounted 25 x 22" board, terrain tiles, unit counters, dice, and rule book. Price: \$45 (save \$20 by ordering now before this introductory price expires). *Special bonus: buy now and receive Highland Charge for free*

Hold the Line: Highland Charge covers one of the most fabled conflicts in history—the Jacobite rebellions—using the **Hold the Line** game system. Featured here are five battles from the fearsome contest: Sheriffmuir, Glen Shiel, Prestonpans, Falkirk, and Culloden. Price — *free* with the purchase of **Frederick's War!** <http://www.worthingtongames.com/>

Magazines

Mike Rinehart has published *After Action* — a flipboard magazine [reader App required] that covers after action reports and game reviews for mostly modern era games. <http://flipboard.com/section/after-action-br3Pc7>

Against the Odds #39 has the game, **These Brave Fellows**. It was a bit after four that afternoon. The Russians had moved a column behind Gazan into Durenstein. His men, though victorious up to this point, were exhausted and nearly out of ammunition, with no relief in sight. Brigadier Jean Graindorge begged Marshal Mortier to escape the encirclement by boat to avoid capture or death. Mortier's answer was clear: "No! We must not separate from these brave fellows; we must be saved or perish together!"

Against the Odds #40 (Feb 2013) **The Battle of the Boyne** might be considered the last battle of the English Civil War—a conflict that had spilled into both Scotland and Ireland along the way. The Battle of the Boyne might also be considered a transition point in military technology: the last of the matchlocks and pikes and the first of the flintlocks; a final time when cavalry *caracole* competed with pressing home a charge. <http://www.atomagazine.com/index.cfm>

Battles Magazine #9 is packed full with 164 pages and features the insert game, **The Flowers of the Forest**, by Charles Vasey. The magazine features many game reviews (**It Never Snows, Tonkin, Bomber Command**, etc.), Game Reports (Wargames in Russia...), War Academy (The BAR Series...), general articles by David Isby, Professor Sabin, Charles Vasey, and Markus Stumptner.

The game covers the Anglo-Scots battle of Flodden, 1513, in which an invading Scots army under the charismatic James IV was destroyed in hand-to-hand combat by the Earl of Surrey's forces. A clash between numbers of weapon-systems and a merry blood bath. With four sizes of counters representing the bands in order of battle on the map, and units composing these bands on dedicated arrays. Price: 22 euros. Your editor has not yet received his copy. <http://www.battlesmagazine.com/eshop/index.php>

Strategy & Tactics #282 features the insert wargame **The War of the Pacific, 1879-83**.

War of the Pacific, Chile vs. Perú and Bolivia, 1879-1883 is a two-player, low-complexity simulation of one of the most decisive wars waged in South America during the 19th Century. This game simulates the conventional aspects of the war, from the outbreak to January of 1881 when the Chileans captured the Peruvian capital of Lima, and the guerilla war that followed, to the standoff that ensued to 1883.

The game consists of twelve game turns, each game turn representing approximately two months of real time. Each hexagon on the map represents approximately 31 miles (50 kilometers) from side to opposite side, and individual units represent battalions and regiments; naval chits generally represent individual ships. Price: \$30.

<http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/>

Modern War #7 features the insert game, **Vietnam Battles: Snoopy's Nose & Iron Triangle**.

<http://strategyandtacticspress.com/modern-war/>

World at War #30 features the insert game **Hinge of Fate**. This new game is primarily meant to examine the strategic alternative history possibilities inherent in the campaign that could've occurred within Poland and the Rhineland in September 1939 if the French had resolved to keep their promise to launch a "major offensive" into Germany within a week after that nation invaded Poland. The action in that scenario is fought on two maps, East and West, and also allows for the possibility of a last-minute change of side by Stalin. Price: \$30. <http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/>

World at War #31 features the insert game **Dubno, 1941**. During the opening days of Operation Barbarossa, the German First Panzer Group drove deep through the Ukraine with its ultimate objective the great city of Kiev. Leading the thrust was the 48th Panzer Corps. The Germans broke through the Soviet frontier defenses, but the Red Army quickly counterattacked with several mechanized corps. While the Germans were outnumbered, especially in tanks, they had superior command control and tactics, allowing them to defeat the Soviets piecemeal. Moreover, the Red Army at this stage of the war was in the midst of reorganization, and suffering from severe logistical shortfalls. Still, the Germans got a surprise when they ran up against T-34 and KV tanks which were far heavier than the German AFVs and were largely impervious to their anti-tank fire, except for the infamous 88mm flak guns. Following several days of mobile battles, the Wehrmacht routed the Red Army. Yet, the Germans were delayed long enough to cost them a quick capture of Kiev, a failure which would have considerable ramifications in the next several months of the campaign. Components: One 22" x 34" map and 228 counters. Price: \$30. <http://shop.strategyandtacticspress.com/>

Vae Victis # 110 features the game, **Stalingrad 1942**. The game includes an A4 map and 108 die-cut counters. The magazine also includes counters and an extra scenario for **Les Rois Francs** (VV #100 insert game). Price: 14.95 euros.

Vae Victis #111 features the insert game, **Les Maréchaux II** (The Marshals) —an operational wargame designated to simulate campaigns lead by French marshals and generals of French Revolution and 1st Empire, when Napoleon was not directly acting on the theater of operations. *Note: The first game in the series is Les Maréchaux I with two campaigns in Portugal — Junot 1808 and Soult 1809.*

This game features three scenarios, each with its own game map:

Dupont 1808 related to General Dupont's campaign in south of Spain against Spanish General Castaños, during summer 1808.

Victor 1811 related to Marshal Victor's campaign near Cadix against General La Peña trying to relieve the city siege with help of an English division, late winter 1811.

Suchet 1813 related to Marshal Suchet's campaign against General Murray for the last big battle in Aragona, spring 1813. Players are moving divisions and brigades on a "point to point" map. They have to deal with supply, forced march, and to prepare for battles. The leaders of each army have a key role in coordinating actions. Rules in French and English are available online. Price: 14.95 €.

<http://vaevictis.histoireetcollections.com/en/>

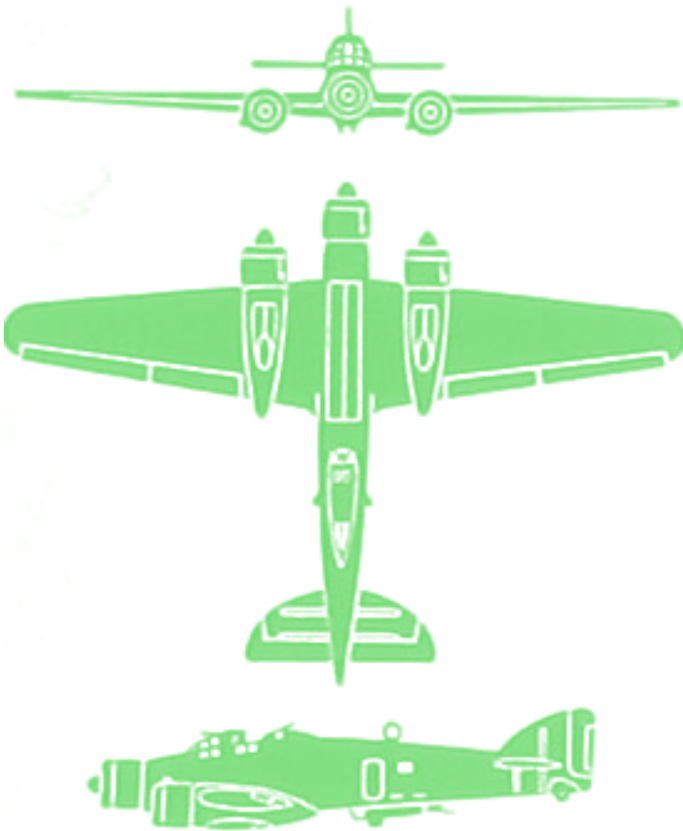
Books

"The Battles from the Age of Reason (BAR) Primer" is designed as an illustrated learning tool to accompany and enhance the Third Edition BAR rules. This Primer features illustrated rules demonstrations, game tactics, learning modules, and 280 upgrade and errata counters for previous BAR games. For twenty years, the **Battles from the Age of Reason** (BAR) game series has been the ultimate gaming expression of mid-eighteenth century warfare. The BAR games feature a highly detailed, realistic, and interactive game system, gorgeous map and counter graphics, thorough research and exciting battles throughout Europe and America. This Primer can be used with all BAR games and even with older rules sets but is designed around the Third Edition BAR rules and ownership of **Fontenoy** is required for use of the "Learning Modules" sections. Preorder Price starts at \$36.

<http://www.clashofarms.com/>



#5



The Charles S. Roberts Awards for 2012

The winners are in **bold red** type.

Best Ancient to Napoleonic Era Board Wargame

Amateurs, to Arms! (by Kevin McPartland), Clash of Arms Games

Fading Glory (by Lance McMillan), GMT Games

Kingdom of Heaven (by Scott de Brestian), Multi Man Publications, Inc.

The Battle of Fontenoy (by Paul Dangel, Matt Hinkle & Phil Boinske), Clash of Arms Games

Virgin Queen (by Ed Beach), GMT Games

Best Post-Napoleonic to Pre-World War 2 Era Board Wargame

Battles of 1866: Frontier Battles (by Mike Bennighof), Avalanche Press

Bloody April (by Terry Simo), GMT Games

Guns of the Askari (by John Gorkowski), Against the Odds magazine (ATO)

Somme 1918 (by Thomas Pouchin), Nuts Publishing

Zulus on the Ramparts (2nd edition) (by Joe Miranda), Victory Point Games

Best World War 2 Era Board Wargame

It Never Snows (by Dean Essig), Multi Man Publications, Inc.

No Question of Surrender (by Nick Richardson), Multi Man Publications, Inc.

Panzer (2nd Edition) (by James Day), GMT Games

Red Winter (by Mark Mokszycki), GMT Games

The Blitzkrieg Legend (by Hans Kishel),

Multi Man Publications, Inc.

Best Post-WW2 Era Board Wargame

1989: Dawn of Freedom (by Jason Matthews), GMT Games

Andean Abyss (by Volko Ruhnke), GMT Games

Angola (by Phil Kendall, Adam Starkweather),

Multi Man Publications, Inc.

The Next War: Korea (by Gene Billingsley), GMT Games

Thunderbolt Apache Leader (by Dan Verssen),

Dan Verssen Games

Best Pre-20th Century Era Computer Wargame

Civil War: 1863, Hunted Cow Studio

Levee en Masse (by John Welch), Victory Point Games

Napoleonic Battles: Campaign 1814, JTS

Scourge of War: Gettysburg, Norb Development Software

Zulus on the Ramparts (by Joe Miranda), Victory Point Games

Best 20th Century Era - Modern Computer Wargame

Battle of the Bulge, Shenandoah Studios

Combat Mission: Fortress Italy, Battlefront.com

Conflict of Heroes: Awakening the Bear, Matrix Games

Operational Art of War 3, Matrix Games

Panzer Campaigns: Moscow '42, JTS

Best Science-Fiction or Fantasy Board Wargame

Darkest Night (by Jeremy Lennert), Victory Point Games
 Dawn of the Zeds 2.0 (by Hermann Luttmann), Victory Point Games
 Lords of Waterdeep (by Peter Lee), Wizards of the Coast
 Merchant of Venus (by Rich Hamblen Robert Kouba), Fantasy Flight Games

Star Wars: X-Wing Miniatures Game (by Jeffrey Kniffen), Fantasy Flight Games

Best Science-Fiction or Fantasy Computer Wargame

Conquest of Elysium 3, Illwinter Game Designs
 Fallen Enchantress
 King of Dragon Pass
 Mass Effect 3, Bioware Electronic Arts
X-Com: Enemy Unknown, Firaxis 2K Games

Best Magazine Game

Beyond Waterloo (by John Prados), Against the Odds magazine (ATO)
 Boudicca: The Warrior Queen (by Richard Berg), Against the Odds magazine (ATO)
 Guns of the Askari (by John Gorkowski), Against the Odds magazine (ATO)
 Red Dragon / Green Crescent (by Bruce Costello), Decision Games
 Wagram 1809 (by Laurent Martin), Battles magazine

Best Desktop Published (DTP)/Print-and-Play/Postcard Game

City of Confusion: The Battle for Hue, Tet 1968 (by Paul Rohrbaugh), High Flying Dice Games
 La Garde Recule! (by Paul Rohrbaugh), High Flying Dice Games
 Valor & Victory (by Barry W. Doyle), Barry W. Doyle

Best Expansion or Supplement for an Existing Game

Festung Budapest (by Bill Cirillo), Multi Man Publications
 Hell over Korea (by Steve Dixon), Legion Wargames
 Panzer Expansion #1 (by James Day), GMT Games
 Space Empires Close Encounters (by Jim Krohn), GMT Games
 Steel Typhoon (by Ed Kettler), Clash of Arms Games

Best Board Game Graphics

Amateurs, to Arms! (by Tim Schleif), Clash of Arms Games
 Bloody April (by Ian Wedge), GMT Games
 No Question of Surrender (MMP) (by Nicolas Eskubi), Multi Man Publications, Inc.
 Red Winter (by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood), GMT Games
The Battle of Fontenoy (by Timothy Schleif & Charles Kibler), Clash of Arms Games

Best Computer Game Graphics

Battle of the Bulge, Shenandoah Studios
 Combat Mission: Fortress Italy, Battlefront.com
 Mass Effect 3, Bioware Electronic Arts
 Scourge of War: Gettysburg, Norb Development Software
 X-COM: Enemy Unknown, Firaxis 2K Games

Best Professional Game Magazine

Against the Odds, Against the Odds magazine (ATO)
 Battles, Battles magazine
C3i, RBM Publications
 Le Franc-Tireur (ASL magazine)
 Special Ops, Multi Man Publications, Inc. (MMP)

Best Amateur Game Magazine

1914 Dispatches, Oregon Consim Gamers
 Dispatches From the Bunker, Dispatches from the Bunker
 Line of Departure, Jim Werbaneth
 Stratagema (Russia)
 Tactical Wargamer's Journal, The Tactical Wargamer

Best Historical/Scenario Article

1914 - A postwar Solution for Austria-Hungary's Mobilization (Michael Resch C3i nr 26)
 A More Better Bull Run. Mat Kirschenbaum. Special OPS #3
 ASL: Journal 10 - Son of Squad Bleeder
 At the peak of their powers? Napoleon and the French Army at Wagram. David Hughes. Battles #8
 Beyond Waterloo: Napoleon's Last Gamble by John Prados, ATO Annual

Best Game Review or Analysis Article

Bloody April 1917 - Planes fly over Arras again.... - A review, Tom H (tomster), BoardGameGeek
 Can less be more? - A review of La Bataille de la Moscowa. David Hughes, Battles #8
 Designers & Developers: Relationships in Motion, C3i #26
 FB17 Stalingrad Redux - A scenario replay, ASL Journal #10
For the People: Defending the Union (by Dave Dockter and Mark Herman), C3i Magazine

James F. Dunnigan Design Elegance Award

Dean Essig

Clausewitz Award HALL OF FAME

Brian Youse

**12.4 REINFORCEMENTS**

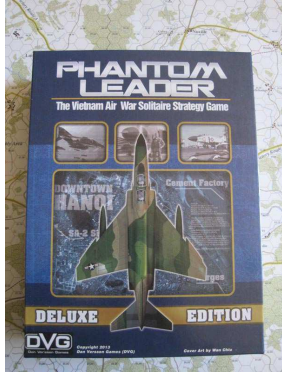
Reinforcements may enter at any friendly North, South, East, or West mapboard edge. New units may arrive by ground, rail, sealift, or airlift and count against stacking limits. Reinforcements are fully combat-capable on Turn of entrance.

1740 Brett Bayerly	Bakersfield, CA
1741 Luca Chiaffarino	Rome, Italy
1742 Bill McCarty	Brea, CA

Phantom Leader-Deluxe

Game Review by Bob Best

We are deep into summer now, and it is that time of year that many of us find ourselves with limited gaming time. My gaming opponents are off doing summer time family things or taking vacations, and game moves are slow in coming. When I find I have an hour or so of free time and no game moves pending, I turn to my solitaire games collection to enjoy a bit of gaming.

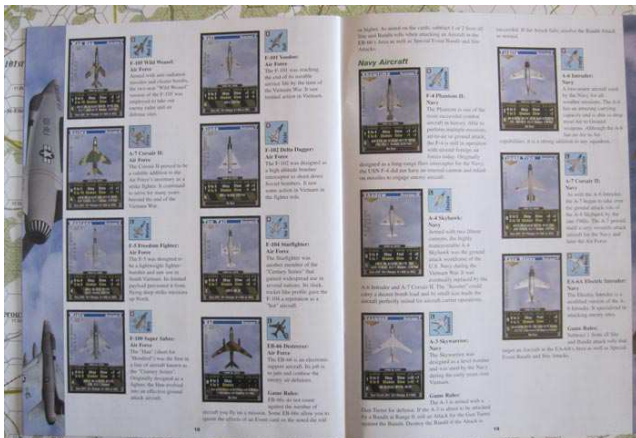


Phantom Leader-Deluxe is just such a game. Dan Verssen Games recently released **PL-Deluxe** and my copy arrived in the mail a few days ago. **PL-Deluxe** is a solitaire game that covers the air war in Vietnam. The game puts you in command of either a U.S. Air Force or a U.S. Navy squadron fighting the air war over North Vietnam.

You can pick a short, medium, or long campaign depending on the amount of time you have available

to play. The game system generates several missions available for you to fly during the campaign. Each mission has a Political Point value. This is where it gets interesting as selecting a mission is controlled by Political Points that you have accrued. Too many Political Points accrued and you lose the ability to pick higher value targets. The game system is designed to reduce Political Points that accrue over time, and in my opinion this is the heart of the game system as it gives the player that frustrated feeling our Air Force commanders felt while being micro-managed by President Johnson and Secretary McNamara. You don't want to go "downtown" and strike a very high value political target, as public outrage and backlash of the government will restrict your ability to attack other targets until the Political Points are reduced to a tolerable level. Pretty true to real-life history.

For the mission, you get to select the pilots, their aircraft, and the munitions load they will use for the mission. Each pilot has his own unique skills, and over time, as the pilot flies missions, his skill levels improve. Pilots also become fatigued as they fly and fight a mission. Too much fatigue degrades these skills, and the pilot becomes unfit to fly until he is rested. The system works really well in my opinion and gives the feeling of managing your personnel and resources just as if it was a real life military unit.

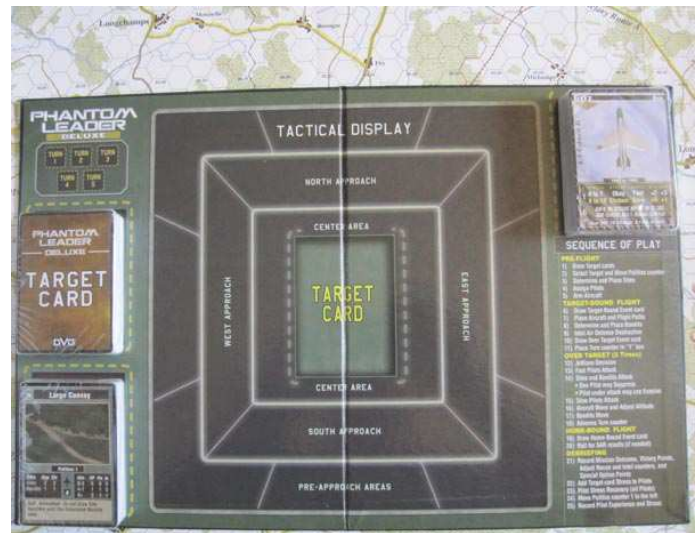


Rulebook page showing aircraft cards with descriptions.

It takes about 30 minutes to set up the game for play. You will pick your mission from the mission cards available and receive intelligence and a briefing on the target. You then have to select the best pilots for the mission and arm your aircraft. Different aircraft carry different weight loads. Bombs, missiles, pods, etc., all have different "weight point" values and each aircraft has a different weight-point ability. Once you've done this, you are ready to begin the mission.

Each mission plays out in 15 to 30 minutes. You will have to determine your flight path over the target and follow it exactly (another real-life feature of the game system as time of attack and the flight path of the attackers was generally determined by the President in his weekly "civilians-only" meeting at the Whitehouse. President Johnson was fond of telling Air Force generals that they couldn't bomb an outhouse in North Vietnam without his approval!

You will spend five turns over the target, one turn in each of the five areas on the map. As you follow your flight path you will be engaged by anti-aircraft artillery, surface to air missiles, and MiGs. Do your best to destroy them and the target



while suffering the least amount of losses. At the end of the mission you will apply the stress points to your pilots, add any experience points, adjust the political track, and prepare for the next mission.

For those of you who already own the original **Phantom Leader**, here is an idea of what is new in the **Phantom Leader-Deluxe** game.

New target cards have been added and updated from the old **Phantom Leader** game. Target cards now have the ability to be "damaged" so you can get some points for it if you are unable to destroy it completely. Some targets have the "ambush" capability which means you don't get to see the location of the weapons sites until the bandit draw portion of the turn.

New aircraft have been added and for the Air Force include the A-7 Corsair II, F-5 Freedom Fighter, F-102 Delta Dagger, and the F-101 Voodoo. The Navy received the A-3 Sky warrior, the E-1 Tracer, and the E-2 Hawkeye.

New weapons include the Aim-4 Falcon, Mk. 82 Snake Eye bombs, AGM-78, and the M-118—the 3,000 lb “iron bomb.”

There is a ton of new pilot cards, about three times the number that came with the original **Phantom Leader** game.

The attack angle rule is also new. Weapons sites have various angles of attack that represent “masking” of field of fire by terrain, line of sight, etc., and can completely alter your mission planning. Its possible to sometimes avoid some sites, or you may end up right in a heavy crossfire.

The flight path rule mentioned above is also new. You have to plan your flight path before you enter the playing area. You place your entry counter and then your exit counter. So after you leave the center target area you have to move all your aircraft off the board at the exit point on turn 5. Couple this with the attack angle rule, and you can see how it could affect your mission.



PL-D Charts and counters

Each pilot has two pilot cards with 4 sides total that allows for promotion and gaining experience which add to the potential of the game.

There are four different campaigns included with the game. 1965–War in the South, 1967–Rolling Thunder, and 1972–Linebacker. A bonus campaign for the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis is also included. The above four campaigns can be played with either a Navy or an Air Force squadron.

Game component quality is quite high in my opinion. The counters are easy to read and I like the aircraft silhouettes. The campaign cards are printed on heavy card stock and plastic coated. The mapboard is mounted. It contains the sequence of play along with the tactical display (play area), turn record track, and spaces for the target deck, event deck, and pilot deck. The individual target and pilot cards are easy to read and are plastic coated.

The rulebook runs to 23 pages, but it is easy to read and understand. There is a complete sample mission included in the rulebook. All the Air Force and Navy aircraft cards are pictured in the rulebook along with descriptions and special abilities. Weapons counters are also pictured along with a description of their capabilities.

Phantom Leader–Deluxe seems to have great replay-ability. There are 9 different Navy plane types and 10 different Air Force plane types to fly over 4 different campaign games, and, when you consider the multitude of ability levels of the pilots, no two games should ever play out the same.

The game retails for about \$80, but I was able to purchase my copy from the NWS Gaming Store for \$44.95 plus shipping. The game can also be found on-line at several other game sellers as well as at DVG.

All in all, I would say **Phantom Leader–Deluxe** is a great value for the price, and I’m sure I will get many hours of fun gaming out of it. I do recommend the game for any of our air enthusiasts and for anyone who enjoys a good quick-playing game.

