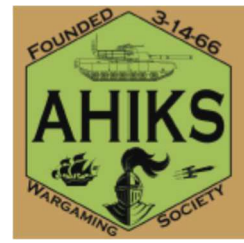


The *Kommandeur*



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AHIKS President George Phillis

From your president!

Greetings from Worcester!

I hope you all had happy holidays and fine additions to your game collections and game victory counts! The bylaws call upon me this month to report on the state of AHIKS. Where shall I begin?

First, the two tournaments that I announced last issue are under way. We now have ongoing play in the **Afrika Korps** and **Blue and Gray Quad** events. These tournaments are all-play-all, play each opponent once as each side, so more players can be added at any time. Please contact me if you are interested.

To try again, I propose a tournament in **Titan** (Avalon Hill). Games would be one-on-one. Please contact me if interested. I would like to propose a tournament on some more modern titles, say from Compass Games or Decision Games (not that there aren't other game companies), but have no opinion on which titles would be good. Please advise. In addition, preparations for Randy Heller's **The Russian Campaign** tournament are advancing.

Please contact me if you would like a tournament in some other board wargame. There are many more than 7000 different board wargames out there. Surely some of you would like a tournament in some game?

Second, serious news. We have been faithfully served for many years by our current Treasurer, but he writes us "... I was planning on stepping down as Treasurer in 2024 anyway, as it about time for someone else to take over this job...The Exec has almost two years to find a new candidate for Treasurer..." When I first read this, I thought a replacement now was needed, but fortunately we have a year to find a replacement.

An ideal Treasurer is a long-time member, in good physical and financial health, preferably with an adequate understanding of bookkeeping and tolerance for modest amounts of paperwork. Someone who has done tax accounting or the like would be ideal. Please speak up to Officers@AHIKS.com if you are able and willing.

Third, after many years of wonderful work, Omar DeWitt ended his term as AHIKS Editor. Our new Editor is Bruce Geryk <bruce.geryk@gmail.com>. Thank you, Omar! Welcome, Bruce! Please keep Bruce's email box flooded with fine articles for The *Kommandeur*! Continuing with officer news, our Secretary reports that he has substantially recovered from an issue and is catching up on back AHIKS business.

Fourth, writing as Publisher of the *Kommandeur*, it is still the case that no one has offered to assist with persuading YAHOO.com to transmit email from AHIKS.com, so members with yahoo addresses must read the *Kommandeur* on our web pages. If anyone is willing to try doing this, please speak up.

Now, on to a broader view of matters. Our very limited recruiting efforts are bringing in new members, but we are in the boat that there are far more board wargame titles than we have players. That situation makes it hard to find opponents. A much larger AHIKS, filled with responsible adult wargamers, would be a club that helped you find more opponents. Yes, there are people who want us to have mature adult players, and people who want us to be a huge club. I want us to be a huge club entirely filled with mature adult players.

In much of the world, the pandemic has faded, and face-to-face meetings would again be practicable. This would be a good time for members in the same area to form face-to-face chapters for game play. Indeed, I see that AHIKS Member Chuck Tewksbury's Gaming Garage has been meeting in Gardner, Massachusetts, playing **ASL**, **Terraforming Mars**, and other games.

That note leads to a general question. We have more than 800 members. The number of matches arranged and games reported annually is much smaller than that. Is it that members aren't interested in competitive play anymore, and only engage in friendly gaming? Are there other reasons that people belong to AHIKS? Are you simply continuing as a member, even though your gaming days are long gone? Please give the officer corps answers to these very general questions, so that we can see how to optimize the club's structure.

As always, if anyone would be interested in playing **Space Empires IV** Deluxe, which comes with its own computer support as opposed to using Vassal, please speak up. (There is also Space Empires the paper map and cardboard counter game, but that's not the game I am talking about.)

Finally, my ongoing campaign of **Empires in Arms**. I am pleased to note that this seven player campaign game is still managing to keep up with real time. We are about to enter the ninth month real time of play, and the game has advanced from January 1805 through the end of August 1805. The game runs through 1815, so completion by Summer 2033 real time definitely looks possible. What has happened?

I am Spain. Spain, Prussia, and Austria were neutral. France and Russia are allied against Britain and Turkey. France attacked Prussia, so I dutifully responded to the call to arms from my ally Prussia, and declared war on France, I netted control of Tuscany. The Prussian Army, badly outnumbered, did poorly against the French. The Franco-Russian combined fleets sortied from Sicily, encountering a Turkish squadron and the actually very large Spanish navy. I attempted to intercept the sortie, being reasonably sure (5/6 chance) that I would miss and therefore not offend the Emperor Napoleon. However, having failed to intercept I could say that I tried. I intercepted (1/6 chance) and did considerable damage to the French navy. At the same time, my army in Africa conquered Tunisia. My plan to stay in my corner and build up my forces for a few years is doing poorly.

The Vice-President's Desk

Martin Svensson

The **fog of war** (German: *Nebel des Krieges*) is the uncertainty in situational awareness experienced by participants in military operations. The term seeks to capture the uncertainty regarding one's own capability, adversary capability, and adversary intent during an engagement, operation, or campaign. Military forces try to reduce the fog of war through military intelligence and friendly force tracking systems.

The term has become commonly used to define uncertainty mechanics in wargames.

In real warfare, commanders have incomplete information about their enemy and the battlespace. A wargame that conceals some information from the player is called a *closed game*. An *open* wargame has no secret information. Most recreational wargames are open wargames. A closed wargame can simulate the espionage and reconnaissance aspects of war.

Military wargames often use referees to manage secret information. The players may be forced to sit in separate rooms and communicate their orders with the referee in the game room, who in turn reports back only the information he judges the players should know. Some recreational wargames use a referee too, often referring to them as "the Gamemaster."

The fog of war is easy to simulate in a computer wargame, as a virtual environment is free of the physical constraints of a tabletop game. The computer itself can serve as the referee.

A friend and fellow AHIKS member that I have played with for nearly 25 years has grown weary of the nature of open wargames where both players have unrealistic knowledge of one another's locations. As he states, commanders in real life would never have the level of knowledge that a boardgamer does. When we play live, or more likely via VASSAL, we know where we stand. I know all the unit locations. If it is a single counter stack, I know the exact unit and its characteristics. Many games even allow examination of stacks. He and I have never gone that route.

Recently, we tested total fog of war playing Jack Radey's **Borodino '41** using VASSAL. The module includes a masking and hiding counter feature. We proceeded to play with all our troops being invisible. Let me tell you, this was a vastly unique experience. I felt like I was stumbling around in the dark without a flashlight! The counters would be revealed only when contact was made. Establishing if we made contact, was a challenge.

The experiment gave him the impetus to try and devise total fog of war for a boardgame without a gamemaster. I will be interested to see where these leads.

Meanwhile, we have games such as **Flat Top** and **Submarine**, both originally released by Battleline Games and later Avalon Hill that have an established history of success utilizing a gamemaster. A long-time gaming friend of mine who resides in Frankfurt, Germany once told me that his greatest gaming

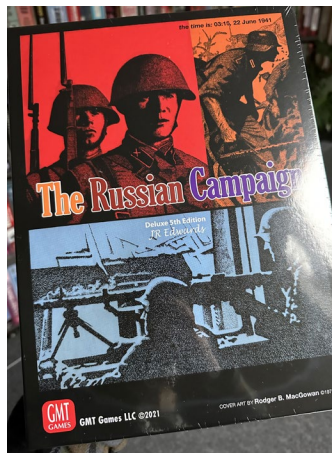
experience was umpired **Flat Top**. He was effusive about it. If anybody has experience with the non-gamemastered total fog of war, please send me your methods: inquiring minds want to know!



Multi-player, gamemastered contest of *Submarine*

TOURNAMENT PLANS

Randy Heller



As AHIKS Judge, my goal for 2023 is to work in cooperation with the President and Officer Corps to provide a tournament utilizing the new, 5th edition, Consimpress **The Russian Campaign** (TRC), distributed by GMT Games. I have been anticipating this for quite some time, and I'm looking forward to seeing it come to fruition. This will likely be a relatively long process. I hope to give it the maximum publicity for the organization, and I would like

it to have a secondary recruiting purpose.

My plan is to utilize two variants offered in the new edition. The major one puts an end to the front loading of German mechanized units in Rumania during setup. Much to the chagrin of the TRC grognards, who are long since accustomed to their entrenched (no pun intended) strategy of utilizing the Maximum Odessa Overrun (known as the MOO), this puts a definitive end to this ahistorical strategy. Why do I say ahistorical?

I confidently claim it, because it would have been logistically and politically impossible to carry out at the time. To lend credibility and to substantiate this claim, I consulted with the well-known eastern front game designer and historian, Jack Radey, for his opinion. Here is what he had to say on the matter:

By front loading I assume you are suggesting that the Germans could have deployed a motorized corps (they didn't call them mechanized corps, or

panzer corps in 1941) to the Rumanian front, in order to presumably provide a southern pincer against the Kiev Special Military District's (Southwestern Front) forces?

There are a number of reasons they did not do so. For one thing, your typical motorized corps consisted of 2-3 divisions, generally a motorized division and 1-2 panzer divisions. To do so, the corps would have had to come from somewhere, which would presumably have meant taking one from Army Group South's forces. Which would have left them that much weaker, facing what turned out to be (though the Germans didn't know this at the time) the largest concentration of Soviet mechanized corps. Splitting off one motorized corps would have been a classic example of dispersing your assets, as opposed to concentrating them, which ran contrary to German military doctrine, and good sense.

Then there is the question of logistics. Support for such a deployment would have to be over Rumanian territory, which had a less well-developed infrastructure, requiring a good deal of German engineering work to make useable, plus problems of coordination with the Rumanians (who were NOT ready for prime time in June, 1941). Then there is the question of the initial terrain through which this corps would operate, which was not ideal (it was further east though).

All in all, it looks to me more of a wargamer's option than a real-world military option. In the advance to Odessa in late July and early August, the Rumanians had problems just with the German infantry having priority on all the roads, which delayed the Rumanian 4th Army considerably en route to Odessa and created supply difficulties. A motorized corps would have taken up much more road space, and done the roads more damage as well.

By splitting off a corps from AGS and basing it in Rumania, the Germans also would have run the risk of defeat in detail. To my way of thinking, the only advantage the Germans could have seen in such a deployment would have been to have a "belt and suspenders" potential defense if the Soviets had made a push towards Ploesti.

Well said, Jack! The net effect will be a refreshed version of the game, which is more historically accurate. I will soon move forward to develop an AHKS Tournament Scenario, which will be relatively succinct and play balanced. Of course, this will require playtesting. I plan on bringing the game to Compass Games Expo this coming May to conduct some intense face-to-face play. If you would like to participate in playtesting the proposed tournament scenario, solitaire, online, or otherwise, please contact me. I will gladly entertain your suggestions.

Randy Heller
AHKS Judge

REVIEW:

The Great War in Europe: A Bookshelf Jewel

Terry Gallion



Ted Raicer's **The Great War in Europe** was originally published in 1995 in XTR's Command Magazine. It was good enough to quickly get an expansion, called **The Great War in the Near East**, and in 2007, GMT Games published a combined version called **The Great War in Europe: Deluxe Edition** (pictured). Whatever you call it, it is just too good a game to leave on the shelf and not play.

The rules are not that hard follow. The counters are too pretty, and the mapsheets are too well done. All right there are three mapsheets totaling six different maps, 1200+ counters, and 40-plus turns. Let not your heart be troubled, it is playable.

The design of the game divides the maps into West Front Maps; France, Italy and Egypt/Palestine and East Front maps; Russia, Iraq and Turkey/Caucasus. While one player is moving and setting up attacks on the West Front maps, the other player is moving and setting up combat on the East Front maps. Upon the conclusion of those moves and combats, players switch fronts. That would make a turn, repeat approximately forty more times and that's a game, easy.

Because of the difference in scale between West Front and East Front maps (approx. 9 miles per hex on the West and 21 miles per hex on the East maps), units on the West Front maps are allowed to move twice their printed movement allowance. This makes for some exciting flanking maneuvers on the France map. Enjoy while it lasts, for on turn six there are restrictions placed on this type of movement on the European Maps. It is always allowed on the Egypt/Palestine map.

Combat odds are regulated by column shifts instead of factor doubling. It is also possible to receive die roll modifiers. Column shifts are added/subtracted via terrain, HQ's, national cooperation, or specific scenario rules. Die roll modifiers are gained/lost due to specific scenario rules, excess column shifts, concentric attacks, entrenchments and event counters. Combat factors are only halved due to

supply, never doubled, for anything.

There is a limited amount of strategic movement allowed at the end of operational turns. This is where you are allowed to transfer units from one mapsheet to another. Only the Allies can move units by sea. British transfers to the Near East, originate in the available units box or at a port. From there they go to Egypt. Once in Egypt, they could go to a port in Iraq. Units may not transfer directly between Iraq and Europe, there must be a layover in Egypt. Units returning to Europe land at a friendly port.

There are some that have a hard time getting their arms around the supply rules. I will attempt to 'splain. There are ultimate supply sources and there are secondary supply sources. Ultimate supply sources are generally located at board edges or are indicated with supply symbols. Those source hexes have an unlimited hex range. Secondary supply sources are as follows. Cities, named hexes with grey hashmarks. Towns, named hexes with yellow dots. Headquarters. They are in supply as long as an uninterrupted chain of hexes can be traced from an ultimate supply source to that hex.

That said, I do not like the supply rule as written. It allows for the following. Lay out the East Front map, create a contiguous line of Russian units from the Baltic to the Adriatic. Place some Austrians in Kiev. It will be obvious that they are out of supply. Remove the Russian unit on the Baltic coast line. Lo and behold, the Austrians are in supply. That's right, the supply line runs across uncontrolled Russia and Russia Poland hexes, behind enemy lines. Now then, if this irritates your anal pore rash as much as it does mine, let not your heart be heavy, we have developed a solution.

Let us move on to fun stuff, events. I like to refer to events as upper echelon commands. Some *must* be played when drawn, while others can be saved for future reference, like playing at the most inopportune time for your opponent. Some events will usher in neutral powers, some will grant players die roll bonuses, while others will force you to take actions you would never dream of. Like I said, fun stuff.

Victory. Way easier said than done. The CP player wins by having 20 victory points during the strategic turn, starting with the C strategic turn. The Entente player wins by reducing the CP VP total to zero during the strategic turn. Any other result ends in a draw. As near as I can tell, achieving a win is extremely difficult if not outright unattainable, so at some point one should decide when to go on defense to deny your opponent a win.

There are some nice options included in the rules that I believe should be used.

- A) No advance after combat into hexes defended by -2 entrenches unless specifically allowed.
- B) Scheffer-Boyadel. Once per game, a surrounded stack of up to four units, if declared, can be deemed to be in supply.
- C) The Great War in the Near East was released as a stand-alone game. As such, it could be considered an optional rule, although I believe it should always be considered as part of the game.
- D) Fog of war. I do not recommend it.

How about some optional "rules" that are not in the rules?

- 1) Apply the West Front advance into minus two

entrenchment hexes rules to the East Front.

2) Allow advance after combat into -2 trench hexes if the attacker is able to reduce the -2 modifier to -1 or less through the use of super-high combat odds.

3) At all times and on all maps, do not allow advance after combat if the attacker does not use HQ support and the defender does.

4) There are three gas attack events. If the CP player uses any in combat, move the US entry marker one strategic turn to the left, once per instance. If the Entente player uses any in combat, move the US marker one strategic turn to the right, once per instance.

5) Only allow cavalry units to be redeployed to the Near East, except England, which may redeploy the three VR units. Allow the Germans to convert their cavalry in the Near East during the new units phase. Turkish European units are unaffected.

6) Fog of war combat. Use PWE counters to mark combats. Use one color to mark the defending hex and use the other color to mark attacking units. Assign the same number to both colors. All attacks are to be designated before combat begins. Once attacks are assigned, they must be made.

7) When the Armenian massacres event is played, if there are two or more Turkish units in the Van hex, allow the Turks to use the concentric modifier.

8) Secondary supply sources will not be allowed an unlimited line of supply if behind enemy lines. Secondary supply sources (including HQs) may trace a supply line of no more than four hexes to either a friendly combat unit that is in supply or trace a line of no more than four hexes to a different supply source(not an HQ)that is itself in supply. This source may claim supply as explained above, etc. This rule has been playtested (thanks to Don Deacon, Steve Carter, Paul Raphael and Dave Moseley for their help) and it works very well. Sometimes what is behind the front lines cannot be agreed upon. In those cases, you can arm wrestle, roll a die or use the supply rule in the rule book(pffft!).

There are three U-boat event counters. The rules give direction on how to make use of two of them, not so much on the third. HELP! I would appreciate as much input as I can get. Maybe we can create another option for the third U-boat counter.

No, I did not cover everything that this game offers. I had no intention of writing a tutorial (maybe another day), just a tease, a little something to hopefully pique your interest.

Anyone wanting to help with playtesting the optional rules can set up a match game through Mr. Palmer. "Call, and I will answer!" Thank you for support.



Multiplayer Info from Jeff Miller

Game	Name	AHIKS#	Method
A Distant Plain GMT	Duncan Rice	1934	V
A Distant Plain GMT	Jeff Miller	1303	V
A Distant Plain GMT	Art Dohrman	1551	V
Advanced Civilization	Jeff Gual	2003	V
Advanced Civilization	Eric Aune	2122	V
Advanced Civilization	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Age of Renaissance	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Air Force	Sam Thornton	1538	E, P
All Bridges Burning	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Amoeba Wars	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Andean Abyss	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Angola	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Angola	Nick Rush	1913	V
Angola	Tom Liakos	2047	V
Blackbeard	Nate Forte	2016	V + Discord live play
Blackbeard	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Blitz Compass	Jim Lauffenburger2191		V
Circus Maximus	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Clash of Cultures	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Colonial Twilight	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Conquest of Paradise	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Conquistador	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Crown of Roses	Mike Kettman	1067	V
Cuba Libre	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Divine Right	Delwayne Arakaki1991		V
Dominant Species	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Dominant Species	Nacho Fernandez 1745		V
Dune	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Dune	Brian Nickel	1797	V
Empires of the Middle Ages	Mike Kettman	1067	V
Falling Sky	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Falling Sky	Jim Lauffenburger2191		V
Fire in the Lake	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Fortress America	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Gangsters	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Gandhi	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Gunslinger	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Gunslinger	Matt Scheffrahn 1844		V M G
Liberty or Death	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Machiavelli	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Machiavelli	Nacho Fernandez 1745		V
Magic Realm	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Merchant of Venus	Mark Palmer	1074	V
Merchant of Venus	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Napoleonic Wars	Aaron Martin	2107	V
Napoleonic Wars	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Pendragon	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Plains Indian Wars	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Republic of Rome	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Sails of Glory	Nate Forte	2016	TTS Discord live play
Samurai	Delwayne Arakaki 1991		V
Source of the Nile	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Stellar Conquest	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Stellar Conquest	Mark Palmer	1074	V
Stellar Conquest	Brian Stretcher	885	V
Stellar Conquest	Terry Gallion	2044	V Discord live play
Successors	Jeff Miller	1303	V

Game	Name	AHIKS#	Method
Tank Duel	Nate Forte	2016	V Discord live play
The Kaiser's Pirates	Nate Forte	2016	V Discord live play
Time of Crisis	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Time of Crisis	Derek Lenard	251	V
Titan	Jeff Gaul	2003	V
Titan	Eric Aune	2122	V
Titan	Jeff Miller	1303	V
Unterseeboot =AH Submarine	Nate Forte	2016	Discord live play
Versailles 1919	Aaron Martin	2107	V
Virgin Queen	Jeff Miller	1303	V
War of the Suns	Jeff Miller	1303	V

Hi Gang,

Hopefully everyone had a great Christmas!

I added a couple of new titles to the collection.

A Time for Trumpets from GMT, yes, another Battle of the Bulge game but this one just looks cool. Or it is my interest in large games. 😊 Cool enough that my thinking of “I seriously don’t need another game on this battle” gave way and I am seriously looking forward to giving this a run.

And, Gallipoli, 1915 also from GMT. In this case a battle I have not attempted to play before so this looks like a good chance to do so.

On the lighter side Rommel in the Desert from Columbia, along with the large map to go with it. 😊

As I was typing this I see an email came through about MMP raffling off a set of microarmor and buildings from the personal collection of Charlie Kibler at Winter Offensive. They look as awesome as his maps do, so perhaps I’ll have to get in on that drawing. Not going to make it there this year but they have an online option as well.

Okay now to game requests, very little activity, although I added a few more I would be interested in.

Take a look guys, multiplayer games are an interesting change of pace from the usual 2-player. They do take longer but are certainly worth it. If you do not see one you are interested in drop me a request for one you would like to play.

We are on our 4th or 5th Kingmaker game, alas I have drawn Stanley and only Stanley. So far, I have spent my turns walking the beaches of my isle and admiring the sunsets with goblets of ale. – Update: Stanley is still walking the beaches, exciting not, but hope springs eternal.

Here I Stand we have moved on to the next turn. France is going to have a slow turn as the Hapsburgs have forced the end of our war and I cannot restart it until next turn. The Hapsburgs have turned their attention to the Ottomans who I am allied with, which gives me a chance to build up my forces.

The Protestants are still locked in a religious struggle with the Pope who is putting northern Italy to the sword at the moment.

Kind of the convert or die approach it seems. 😊

England has declared war on Scotland which France due to prior agreements.

Britannia is a bit slow at the moment as one player sorts out some stuff.

Empire in Arms, France has declared war on the peaceful people of Prussia and is currently slaughtering women, children and priests which has shocked all of Europe! Well except for the barbarians in Russia. 😊

On the two player front I am slowly stepping through a game of Combat Commander, interesting system. I still have no idea what I am doing but so far I like it.

The Civil War is about to kick off after our running a couple of turns for me to break off a lot of rust. Hopefully I do better this time, the ANoV was in PA after two turns!

Just kicked off a game of France 1940 as well. Haven't played it in decades so took a bit to get back up to speed on it. Trying a different strategy this time around, we avoid attacking Belgium for the first turn so we could close in through the Netherlands and Luxembourg--we shall see if it pays off or not.

Game on!

Open Match Requests from Mark Palmer

1985: Under an Iron Sky	TRL	Martin Hogan (1704)	
ACW Brigade Series	MMP	Aaron Kulkis (1983)	
Advanced Squad Leader-Campaign	AH	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Afrika Korps	AH	Thomas Walsh (1427)	PE
Afrika Korps	AH	Mike Stubits (2311)	V
Air Assault on Crete	AH	Peter Hansen (2129)	V
A Most Dangerous Time	MMP	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Arab Israeli War	AH	Dennis Sheppard (804)	VE
Ardennse Offensive	SPI	Hugh Smithers (2313)	VE
A Time for Trumpets	MMP	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
A Victory Lost	MMP	Ed O'Connor (1243)	VE
A World At War	GMT	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Battles for the Ardennes	SPI	Thomas Ten Eyck (826)	EP
Bitter Woods	Compass/L2	Hugh Smithers (2313)	VE
Blitz	Compass	Jim Lauffenburger (2191)	VXE
Bloody 110	COA	Aaron Kulkis (1983)	FVL
Breakout: Normandy	L2 (pref.) or AH	Art Dohrman (1557)	VEF
Caesar Alesia	AH	Damon Norko (1736)	VE
Caesar's Legions	AH	Stephen Genoff (2194)	VE

Cedar Mountain	SPI	Peter Hansen (2129)	V
Empire in Arms	AH	Edson Ramos (1989)	P
Empire of the Rising Sun	AH	Mike Scott (1555)	
Falling Sky	GMT	Jim Lauffenburger (2191)	VXE
Fifth Frontier War	GDW	Dane Patterson (2010)	EV
Fire in the Sky (1999)	Phalanx	William Marcy (1761)	VTE
Flat Top	AH	Paul Koenig (1577)	V
Flying Colors	GMT	Thomas Ten Eyck (826)	EP
Gallipoli	GMT	Ivan Kent (2133)	V
Gettysburg '65	AH	Stephen Genoff (2194)	V
Great War In Europe	GMT	Donald Deacon (2241)	V
Great War in Europe Deluxe	GMT	Terry Gallion (2044)	V
Grenadier	SPI	Charles Sutherland (1804)	VE
Guns of August	AH	John Troskey (1554)	CV
Invasion of Malta, 1942	AH	Chris Hyland (1862)	VX
Knights of the Air	AH	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Korean War	Compass	Paul Koenig (1577)	V
La Grande Armee	SPI	Charles Sutherland (1804)	VE
Lee vs. Grant	VG	Jeremy Rowley (1942)	V
Leipzig	SPI	Charles Sutherland (1804)	VE
Midway	AH	Bruce Warren (2293)	FTF
Midway	AH	Mike Stubits (2311)	VE
Main Battle Tank 2ed	GMT	Martin Hogan (1704)	
Monty's Gamble: Market Garden	MMP	Jerry Wong (1974)	FV
Napoleon at Waterloo	SPI	Paul Purman (2159)	V

No Retreat: North Afrika	GMT	Jerry Wong (1974)	FV
NATO: Cold War Goes Hot	Compass	Giovanni Faisca (2178)	VEL
Pacific War	VG	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Panzer Battles	MMP	John Troskey (1554)	CVS
Panzer Grenadier	AP	Carl Wolf (1992)	V
Panzer Leader	AH	Stephen Genoff (2194)	V
Proud Monster	XTR	Edson Ramos (1989)	P
Rebel Sabres	TSR	Peter Dunn (2235)	V
Rise and Decline of the Third Reich	AH	Bruce Warren (2293)	FTF
Russian Campaign	Jedko Games	Peter Dunn (2235)	V
Russian Front	AH	Martin Kerslake (2011)	V
South China Seas	CMP	Mike Ricotta (2004)	VXE
SPQR	GMT	Justo Perez (2009)	FV
Tank on Tank	LnL	Duncan Rice (1394)	V
Terrible Swift Sword	TSR	Peter Dunn (2235)	V
The Russian Campaign	AH	Damon Norko (1736)	VE
The Russian Campaign	AH	Bruce Warren (2293)	FTF
The Russian Campaign	AH	Mike Stubits (2311)	V
The Tide At Sunrise	MMP	Nick Rusch (1913)	V-E-L-X
Third Reich or Advanced	AH	Raymond Starsman (2005)	ELV
Thunder at Cassino	AH	Jerry Wong (1974)	FV
Tobruk	AH	Dennis Sheppard (804)	VE
To The Green Fields Beyond	SPI	John Troskey (1554)	CVS
Twilight Struggle	GMT	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Verdun 1916: Steel Inferno (2020)	FOS	William Marcy (1761)	VE
Vietnam	GMT	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
War and Peace		Mike Kettman (1067)	V
War Galley	GMT	Graeme Dandy	V

		(916)	
War of the Suns	MMP	Jeff Miller (1303)	VE
Wooden Ships and Iron Men	AH	Peter Dunn (2235)	VD
WWII	SPI	Erica Snarski (2142)	V
WWII: Commander: Battle of the Bulge	Compass	Bob Jones (1548)	V

The MapBoard

by Mark A. Palmer

To access the Open Match List in real time:

1. Go to www.ahiks.com
2. Move your mouse pointer to "Want an Opponent?"
3. Click on "People Wanting a Game" that appears when you hover over "Want an Opponent?"
4. The banner won't change, but the text below will. Scroll down so you can read the text.
5. Click on [Google Spreadsheet](#) to view the Open Match List

Please let me know if the status of your Open Match listing has changed.

I was recently asked, "Where do you keep a list of active games?" The simple answer is: "I don't."

I perceive my function as someone who might say, "I now pronounce you Player 1 and Player 2. You may record your match". I did my job to get you two together and now it's up to you to proceed.

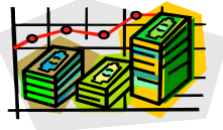
Even with the use of online gaming tools (i.e., VASSAL and the like) matches could take years to complete. Life Situations are sure to affect a match during its course that will cause delays or a cancellation. And I'll say it out loud here; the passing on of an opponent is a real possibility taking into account the average age of the AHKS membership.

Also, it is not necessary to have a Match Assignment generated. It's up to you. You might be playing a Learning game or just something played casually and off the record. Whatever; I'm at your service.

However, it is a good thing to know what titles are being played. For example, the recent **Blue and Gray** and **The Russian Campaign** tournaments are due to those being popular titles based upon the match assignments. Besides, why not request an assignment? Whether you turn it in or not is up to you, but at least we will know what's being played.

Treasury Notes

Brian Stretcher



The Long Goodbye

Given the nature of the treasurer's position and the need to make arrangements prior to closing our account and transferring AHIKS funds, with this issue I am announcing my intention to step down as AHIKS Treasurer at the end of 2024. I have been doing this so long I can't quite remember when I actually started, but when I did we were still collecting annual dues and sending out print K's to the entire membership. We had other recurring expenses, mostly associated with mailing, printing supplies and related costs. Technology allowed us to reduce our expenses considerably over time, eliminate the work required to print and mail the K (not write it, however!), and the considerable effort to send out dues announcements, process and credit payments, and chase after people who didn't pay. Most of those persons didn't intentionally mean to stiff us, but simply forgot and happily coughed their money up when reminded. Those who didn't, however, had to annually be culled from the ranks by the Secretary.

I'll be 63 in 2024, and my wife and I have been talking about retirement a lot. While I would like to think that I will have endless amounts of time once I retire, I know how this will really work if we have our way; we will be busier than ever, just in different ways. While the actual Treasurer duties are pretty light these days, work gets in the way of putting these columns together, and they typically languish until either right before or after the bi-monthly deadline, and it has become more difficult recently with my job relocation. So, I think it is almost time for me to be done. I will continue to submit my columns regularly until I wrap things up, and most likely won't give up contributing to the K entirely, but when I do it will be according to my schedule. You might get more when you do hear from me, however, if I am not pushed by deadlines.

If you are interested in the position, here are some qualifications: you have to have been an AHIKS member for at least five years. We would like to return to having at least two persons on the account, and it is necessary to have an account holder appear in person to add their name. For that reason, it might be nice to live in an area where at least one responsible AHIKS member might also reside, or at least have ready access to the same bank. Depending on your local banking regulations, it may not be possible to operate the AHIKS account as a DBA operation, so the Exec may have to work on that issue with you in order to get this to work. It isn't as easy as it used to be to open or even maintain a bank account as a hobby account in a different name. You might find it easier or more accommodating to our needs to open an online account somewhere. And all of that would be subject to the Exec's approval and possibly require Bylaws amendments. That's why we need some lead-in time to find a new Treasurer. Let me or George know if you're interested.

Book Review: The Fall of Carthage, by Adrian Goldsworthy

This book was first published by Cassell in 2000 as *The Punic Wars*, with the first ebook version in 2011 by Phoenix. The current ebook version appears to belong to Orion Books, which is the version I read.

The book covers all three of the wars between Carthage and Rome, from 265 to 146 BCE. Starting chronologically, the book takes the reader through each war in detail, and includes all the major battles. The first war was fought mainly over the island of Sicily, and was mostly a naval affair, so there are separate chapters devoted both to the land campaign and the naval engagements. This war didn't go real well for either side, but the Romans ended the war with a permanent presence in Sicily, and at least naval parity with Carthage.

Most of the book deals with the Second Punic War, you know, with Hannibal crossing the Alps, rampaging across Italy, annihilating Roman armies at every turn, and yet ultimately being cornered in the heel of the boot after some 20 years of campaigning against superior numbers. Meanwhile, Scipio landed in Africa and marched on Carthage itself. Recalling Hannibal out of desperation, Hannibal met Scipio on the field at Zama and his freshly minted army was routed by now well-led, experienced and less foolhardy Roman legions. Carthage itself was allowed to survive, however, leading to the Third Punic War some half-century later.

By this time the Carthaginians were no match for a Rome on the verge of Empire, even if the legions had forgotten what they learned under Scipio Africanus. The Carthaginians sorely lacked the sort of leadership available during Hannibal's time. The Romans once again returned to Carthage, and this time the rump of the Carthaginian Empire was literally removed from the map following a prolonged siege.

The book is well written by Professor Goldsworthy. It is not overwritten at all, and should be accessible to all readers with an interest in ancient history. Goldsworthy readily admits where there are unanswered questions from historical sources, sometimes even exactly where these battles took place, such as Zama. Ancient sources frequently exaggerated numbers, especially as the primary sources that remain are Roman in origin; there are essentially no Carthaginian records to draw upon for any of these wars. There are plenty of maps, legible even on my tiny e-reader. It was interesting to note that just about every Carthaginian leader was named Hannibal, Hamilcar, or Hanno, regardless of war.

The main lesson learned is how tenacious the Roman Republic was, especially considering that it was, at least at that time, a plutocracy. No matter how many disastrous battles they fought, how incompetent many of their commanders might have been, they simply persevered, raised new armies, and slowly ground down and contained Hannibal, even ignoring him at the gates of Rome itself. Among most ancient Mediterranean powers, wars were expected to be brief and ended in a quick peace after an opposing army was defeated (usually routed and annihilated). Rome, however, did not play that game. Instead, they accepted only absolute victory, and had the resources and manpower to earn those victories, even if they were stretched thin at times and

had to resort to extraordinary measure, such as raising slave legions. And they were aggressive to a fault, sometimes too aggressive. They were arrogant and willing to engage the enemy on the enemy's terms, especially early in the Second Punic War, which led to the disasters at Lake Trasimene and Cannae. They learned, but it took a while. There is a cautionary lesson there for current times, although Moscow is not Rome. Highly recommended reading.

This book prompted me to order **Commands and Colors Ancients**, which features many battles between Carthage and Rome. I haven't read the rules yet, but it looks fun. I would probably fancy the more advanced **Great Battles of History** system as well, but I am kidding myself to think I would actually play those games during my lifetime. But still...

In the Trenches

Here are recent developments in the games I have in progress right now.

Kingmaker: Play slowed a little through the holidays, but we have managed to reach Round 8 in the ongoing Kingmaker game. Acorn has seized Kenilworth and Edward, earning the wrath of Portcullis. Nevertheless, the only Portcullis noble in play has been Stanley, still sitting quietly on the island of Douglas; no other Portcullis nobles appeared in England proper prior to this turn, and so Acorn has ignored Lord Stanley's threats. Shortly after the siege at Kenilworth, Acorn's entire force went to Ravenser in the north, as King Henry had to meet a foreign ambassador there. Sun has made Clifford the Chancellor of Cornwall, and so now has a power base in Devon and Cornwall, and was working to gather his nobles there. For the Boarshead faction, Percy, the Marshall of England, was summoned to the Continent for a War in Europe (and all mercenaries in play returned home), but didn't have any ships to leave the Continent, forcing him to Calais. There he laid siege to the town and took the town and heir there. While Percy waited for a ferry to return to England, the rest of Boarshead's nobles finally made it to Harlech to take the royal heir inside that castle. Meanwhile, the Warden of the Northern Marches and the other Ragged Staff noble were hanging out in Bamburgh castle when the Scots invaded. While the Warden's presence kept the Scots out of Bamburgh and Berwick, and Lord Gray hastily met the Scots at Chillingham, the Scots swept most of England north of the River Tees as far south as Durham. They now control that town, nearby Raby, Carlisle, and both of Percy's castles, since Percy was stuck in Calais when the Scots invaded. Worse, the event deck was reshuffled with this draw, and so cities and towns once safe from plague are now vulnerable again. As of this writing, Acorn has just summoned Parliament, and the nobles of the great houses of England have started to arrive, following a flurry of card play.

MESSAGE FROM THE RATINGS OFFICER

Greetings AHIKS members,

I trust you all had a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year celebration. In spite of a large surge in membership we had a substantial drop in rated matches for 2022. In 2021 we had 25 reported matches that dropped to 16 for 2022. This after a wave of new members to the association. Possibly new members may be reluctant to enter into rated games due to their newness and unfamiliarity with AHIKS' rating system. Feeling their way into the Society one might say.

After much discussion by the Exec the decision was made to change the criteria we use for determining what members are eligible for the AHIKS Top 40 list. Historically, eligibility for an individual for the list was ad Infinitum, lifetime and beyond. This could be a difficult challenge to make the list when for example a high scoring member, say in the neighborhood of 1700, acquired that rating in 1987. Then after that disappeared from the rolls for one reason or another. The result was a very "top heavy" list; and not of active members. This made the list less than contemporary and generally unattainable for most of the membership.

For a more user-friendly list the decision was made to lean more towards rewarding active players; and the consensus for that time frame was 5 years. So, any member who has not completed a rated game or match within the last 5 years will be dropped from the Top 40 list until he once again completes a rated game.

And not to leave out an important point; the list will no longer be the Top 40. It will be as of now the Top 25. This to keep (hopefully) the minimum score above the entry rating of 1200.

Congratulations to Jay Unnerstall #1264 for leading the pack with a stellar rating of 1820.

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2023 in a world filled with more turmoil than we need or want.

Keep on gaming!

Dave Bergmann
Ratings Officer



RANKING	NAME	AHIKS #	RATING	GAMES	QUALIFIERS	OPPONENTS	QUALIFIERS	TITLES	QUALIFIERS	DATE OF LAST RATED GAME
1	UNNERSTALL, JAY	1264	1820	24	G	12	H	12	I	7/15/2022
2	DANDY, GRAEME	916	1730	20	G	11	H	11	I	8/1/2022
3	JERKICH, LOU	544	1685	16	F	7	F	6	F	11/10/2022
4	WHITE, MARK	842	1650	16	F	4	D	10	H	8/5/2020
5	KLITZKE, WILLIAM	305	1645	232	X	61	S	39	R	3/23/2021
6	DEWITT, OMAR	44	1610	110	Q	34	N	35	Q	9/11/2020
7	CARTER, STEVE	1713	1590	11	E	3	C	4	D	3/21/2019
8	BERGMANN, DAVE	854	1590	21	G	11	H	6	F	8/10/2022
9	MITCHELL, MICHAEL	1086	1580	7	D	4	D	5	E	9/11/2020
10	SANDER, JIM	1339	1570	33	I	6	E	5	E	4/3/2018
11	STRETCHER, BRIAN	885	1555	82	O	31	I	34	Q	8/10/2022
12	MILLER, JEFF	1303	1525	96	P	28	M	33	Q	10/10/2022
13	GRILLS, JOE	748	1480	133	S	44	P	41	S	7/24/2019
14	HOFFMAN, JOHN SCARBOROUGH, TOM	884	1460	18	F	8	F	6	F	5/6/2020
15	1345	1440	157	T	39	O	15	K	7/24/2019	
16	LASKEY, BRIAN	1435	1365	20	G	9	G	8	G	8/29/2018
17	SAUNDERS, SCOTT	1664	1355	18	F	13	H	6	F	9/17/2021
18	WARNICK, PAUL	1430	1355	33	I	11	H	9	H	10/9/2018
19	DOWREY, BOB	1507	1350	10	D	11	H	6	F	8/10/2022
20	PATIENCE, ANDREW	1646	1345	7	D	7	D	7	D	1/31/2020
21	LEONARD, CHUCK	711	1330	116	R	23	K	5	E	9/30/2020
22	BAYLISS, MARK	1666	1310	32	I	13	H	7	G	1/26/2021
23	LADNER, CRAIG	1562	1295	12	E	4	D	5	E	12/7/2019
24	BEST, BOB	552	1290	77	N	13	H	22	M	3/23/2021
25	HYLAND, CHRIS	1234	1280	10	D	6	E	5	E	9/20/2022

TOP 25 LIST OF RATED MEMBERS UP TO DECEMBER 31, 2022. SUBMITTED TO BRUCE JANUARY 10, 2023

A RATING QUALIFIER OF "C" OR GREATER IS REQUIRED IN ALL CATEGORIES TO BE ELIGIBLE.



Editorial

Bruce Geryk

I never thought I'd end up being the editor of the "K." Back when I joined AHIKS in 1982 (I think) it was a big deal to set up a newsletter and get it photocopied. I think a lot of the dues went to getting it printed. Now we have amazing layout tools and fancy graphical abilities, but it somehow feels—I dunno—less so, because it's all just on a screen. There were issues of the "K" in the 1980s that I practically memorized because I picked them up so often. They were just lying around, you know? Since we didn't have the Internet, and there was rarely anything good on TV, you re-read stuff: the newspaper, various handbills, cereal boxes ... even newsletters from your beloved niche wargaming club. Especially those, I guess. Now I'm the editor.

As the editor, I have the final say on what goes here, and I was planning to write an article to *pour encourager les autres* (but in a nice way) so to speak, but seriously underestimated how long it was going to take to lay out my first issue of the "K." As a result, I didn't get a chance to write anything. But I didn't want to leave you without anything from the editor, so I found a piece that might be of interest that I wrote years ago and published on my website, wargamespace.com. Since I wrote it and it's my own website, I hereby give myself permission to reprint it. I know AHIKS has some lawyers among the membership and I want to make sure this is all on the up-and-up. I hope you enjoy it. If you do, you can find more stuff there. Sadly, it's not on paper.

"Divebombers, Mr. Rico! Zillions of 'em!

(first published on wargamespace.com, May 2014)

If you love games, you owe yourself a read of *Playing at the World*, a wonderful history of tabletop gaming by Jon Peterson and published in 2011 by Jon's own imprint, Unreason Press. It investigates the beginnings of the hobby we know as role-playing games, and in the process uncovers a lot of stuff I didn't know about my beloved but now dust-covered board wargames.

Peterson does something interesting when it comes to the history of gaming, which is that he eschews personal narrative for an examination of the written record. While that is less remarkable in historical research, it hasn't been applied too much to the history of gaming. A lot of gaming history consists of reminiscences and personal accounts, which are great, since not a lot that happens in gaming history needs to be rigorously examined or refuted. But that leaves it susceptible to misconception.

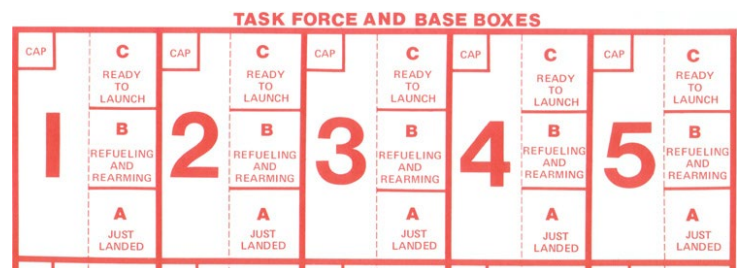
I talked to Peterson on a podcast about his book, and he explained that he had spent a lot of time (and money) collecting old fanzines, game memorabilia, and things that recorded the contemporaneous thoughts of important members of the gaming hobby in the early days of the pastime. I can imagine that this is a difficult and time-consuming yet ultimately straightforward task, since once you find the documentation, you can read it yourself. But what if it were freely available, but in a language you didn't understand? And what if it were about something a little more important than the history of wargames and role-

playing games? It would already have been uncovered and examined by now, right? You would think.

The history of the Battle of Midway in 1942 has long been mythologized in American military history as the "turning point" that changed the war in the Pacific. With good reason. Before that battle, the Japanese had six functional fleet aircraft carriers. After the battle they had two. Given the disparity in industrial capacity between the United States and Japan, the gap in carrier strength could only grow bigger. So how it came to be that on a June morning in 1942, the bulk of the Japanese carrier fleet ended up on the bottom of the Pacific is a pretty dramatic story. The kind of drama perfect for narratives. And for gaming.

Playing wargames reduces some historical facts to lines in a rulebook. It's one of the hazards of the pastime. One of them is that planes on an aircraft carrier deck are susceptible to dive bombing, while planes in a carrier's hangars which are being armed are instead more vulnerable to torpedoes.

The late, great S. Craig Taylor, game designer extraordinaire, designed a pretty good game about Midway* entitled *C.V.* He came up with an interesting system for flight deck operations in which planes moved from box to box on a control sheet. Planes in the Readying box got armed with weapons, either bombs or torpedoes. They then got moved to the Ready box, which put them on deck and able to be launched. When the carrier recovered planes, they went into the Just Landed box, from which they could be moved to Readying.



If you attacked a carrier and hit it with dive bombers, you doubled your hits if there were any planes in the Just Landed or Ready boxes. If you hit it with torpedoes, you doubled the hits if there were planes in the Readying box. It makes sense: planes on deck are going to get hit by bombs, whereas planes below decks in the hangar are going to be hit by torpedoes. Plus, this is what actually happened: during the Battle of Midway, the Japanese carriers had their decks loaded with planes, just "minutes" from launching a decisive strike on the American fleet, which by then had been spotted. Then, the famous American divebomber strike wrecked three of the four Japanese carriers. No torpedo hits were ever inflicted on the Japanese, but they had all their planes fueled, loaded, and on deck, which greatly increased the devastation. Just like the rules say. Factual.

But the assumptions in those lines sometimes aren't applicable to the historical situation.

I grew up on two books about Midway: Walter Lord's *Incredible Victory* (1967) and Gordon W. Prange's *Miracle at Midway* (1982). Both were exhaustively researched, well-written, and as far as I know heavily influenced the direction of subsequent Midway research. Prange's book, especially, coming on the heels of his critically praised and widely popular *At Dawn We Slept*, a frank analysis of the Pearl Harbor debacle with voluminous documentation behind it, seemed to settle the outstanding questions concerning America's "miraculous" victory over the "overwhelming force" of the Japanese Combined Fleet in June 1942. These are pretty much the two major accounts that have shaped Midway scholarship in English since the battle happened. After that, I figured I had read about and pretty much assimilated everything worth knowing about the Battle of Midway.

Then I picked up a book entitled *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway*.

I have two general rules about military histories: never buy a book with a question in the title, and never buy a book that claims to reveal "the secret of" anything. The subtitle of *Shattered Sword* sailed dangerously close to rule number two, but flipping through it, I noticed a lot of line drawings, diagrams, and course plots. That appealed to my quantitative side, so I bought it. And promptly learned that I didn't really know anything about the Battle of Midway.

There are two intertwined assertions about the battle that have been propagated since the publication of Mitsuo Fuchida's "Midway: The Battle that Doomed Japan" in English translation in 1955. Fuchida was the air group commander of the attack on Pearl Harbor, but famously was unable to participate in the Battle of Midway due to an emergency appendectomy just before the battle. Instead, he spent it on the Japanese flagship *Akagi*, which was sunk along with the entire Japanese main carrier force, although Fuchida obviously survived if he went on to write a book about it. He made several claims in his book, but two in particular have been carried forward through American histories — including *Incredible Victory* and *Miracle at Midway* — since then.

The first is that the Japanese would have spotted the American fleet thirty minutes earlier on the fateful day of June 4, 1942 if only the No. 4 search plane from the seaplane cruiser *Tone* had been launched on time. It was not, however, and was delayed instead by half an hour. This caused the American fleet to go undetected until too late.



The second is that when the decisive American dive bomber strike led by Lt. Cmdr. C. Wade McClusky struck the Japanese force and sunk three of the four carriers there on that same day, the Japanese were just minutes from launching their own strike,

which would have caught the American carriers without their fighter cover (which had been sent with their own airstrikes).

The message? Thirty minutes and a faulty seaplane separated the Japanese from dealing the Americans a heavy blow which would have changed the calculus in the Pacific war. "We were that close!" was effectively Fuchida's claim. And everybody bought it.

The authors of *Shattered Sword*, Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully, decided to investigate these "facts" through more than just interviews with battle survivors. Instead, they treated the battle to some extent as an event supported by various forms of objective data.** They use some impressive tools.

In addition to the details surrounding the carriers, we also draw heavily on the Japanese operational records of the battle. While it is true that the logs of the individual Japanese vessels were destroyed after the war, the air group records of the carriers survived. The tabular data contained in these reports (known as kodochoshos) has been used in some newer works to supply such details as the names of individual Japanese pilots. Yet, these records have never been used in a systematic way to understand what the carriers themselves were actually doing at any given time. For instance, knowing when a carrier was launching or recovering aircraft can also be used to derive a sense for the direction the ship was heading (into the wind), and what was occurring on the flight decks and in the hangars. Thus, we use the kodochoshos as tools to understand the carrier operations of 4 June in more detail than has been attempted previously.

They also use published Japanese sources that have never been translated, such as the volumes of the official Japanese war history series, which they state are "highly regarded for their comprehensive treatment of individual campaigns, as well as their general lack of bias." They also use "never-before-translated Japanese primary and secondary sources, including monographs on Japanese carrier and air operations, as well as accounts of various Japanese survivors."

As a physician and a scientist, I love data and objective analysis. As a writer and literature major in college, I love stories. In my experience, it's rare to find a historical situation where the former goes so much in hand with the latter. Historical battle reconstruction is often an academic exercise with limited appeal, much like historical wargaming. The story of Midway is one where a painstaking reconstruction of historical events can lead to fundamental changes in the historical narrative. The hard data in effect writes a new story.

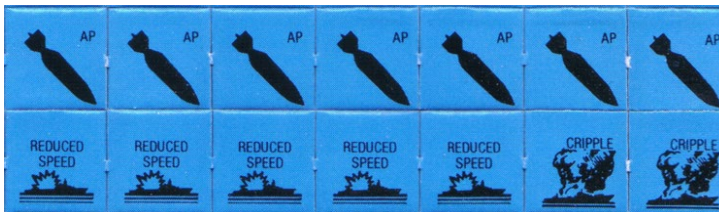
I should emphasize that the things I mention here are just a tiny fraction of what *Shattered Sword* addresses, and anyone interested in a singular account of a major battle that will likely change the way you look at military history from this point forward should buy and read the book him- or herself. It's a brilliant combination of rigorous analysis and readable explanation, presented understandably and even more so, enjoyably. Their thought processes are logical and well

communicated, and the documentary support is always presented clearly.

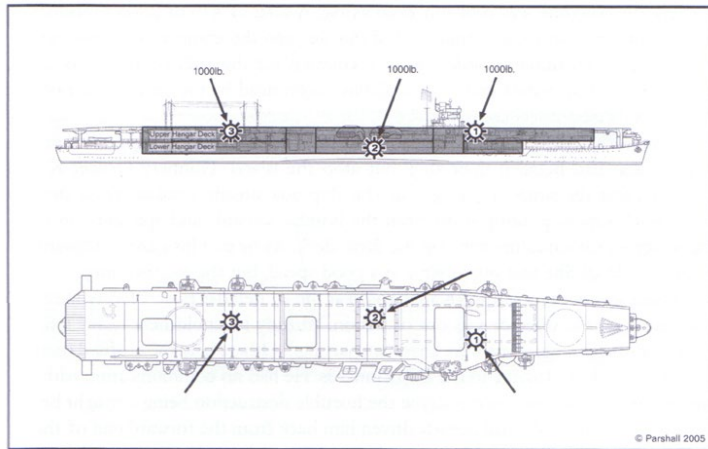
The whole “Tone search plane No. 4 was late” thing has always bothered me, because even the first time I read it, it didn’t make sense. If the plane took off a half hour late, then the ships it sighted had to have been in a different place than they would have thirty minutes earlier. So if the Tone No. 4 plane spotted the US fleet at 0745, can you say for sure it would have done so at 0715?

Parshall and Tully do the obvious thing, which is to plot the course of the American fleet against where they would have been if the No. 4 search plane had taken off on time. Of course, it’s not just a case of putting one overlay over another and saying, “Aha!” But based on their analyses of the search patterns, as well as radio traffic between the aircraft and the carrier fleet, and the plotted movements of the US task force, the Tone No. 4 plane would not have seen the Americans if it had flown its assigned route a half hour earlier. In fact, according to the plots, the US fleet position was actually overflown around 0630 by the No. 1 search plane from the seaplane cruiser Chikuma. But it was experiencing heavy clouds and was only intermittently descending below the cloud level to check the ocean. It never detected the US carriers.

The significance of the late search plane depends on accepting Fuchida’s assertion that the Japanese strike was fueled, on deck, and within five minutes of being launched when the American divebombers appeared at 1020. Had the searchplane found the Americans at 0715, the Japanese strike would have been winging its way toward the US task force already, and the American planes might not have had any carriers to come back to.



That’s one of the key myths of the battle that Parshall and Tully go to great lengths to dispel, and much of the book builds a convincing case that in fact the Japanese strike force was entirely below decks when the carriers were hit. They go through numerous sources and methods to ascertain this: an understanding of Japanese carrier operations to determine how long it would take to spot*** a strike on deck, the flight logs of the air groups on the Japanese carriers, which show almost continual launching and recovery of combat air patrol (CAP) up until 1010 on 4 June, which would have precluded the strike from being spotted at 1020 when the divebombers struck, and numerous Japanese sources, including the Japanese official war histories (Sensi Soshō) published in the 1970s which did not support Fuchida’s assertion of a spotted strike on deck. Parshall and Tully go to further lengths to identify the likely location of this bomb hits on each carrier and compare this to the deck plans and aircraft storage locations to show that the many fires started by these attacks were the result of armor-piercing bombs penetrating the flight decks and starting fires below.



14-2: Known hit locations on *Sōryū*.

SSG’s Carriers at War is probably the most accessible carrier battle game available on PC. It’s a bit inscrutable in describing its damage mechanics, though. All it tells you is that carriers are much more vulnerable with planes fueled and armed, and that hits can start fires which may then spread “based on the ship’s damage control rating.” I wonder if hit location has anything to do with it.

But the whole basis for the damage model in the C.V. series is that bombs hit the deck and have their hits doubled if there are planes in the Ready/Just Landed boxes (on deck) and torpedoes double hits when planes are Ready (below decks). It’s a major consideration in game strategy. In Victory Games’ innovative solitaire game Carrier, released in 1990, the rules explaining surprise have this “Design Note” in the main rulebook explaining the design decisions.

In its worst form, [surprise] could mean being struck with planes on deck. The latter was every carrier admiral’s nightmare. A group of fuelled-up, bombed-up planes amounted to a mass of explosives ready to be touched off. In such a situation one bomb could transform the carrier into a blazing ruin – as happened to the Japanese at Midway.

“Being struck with planes on deck.” You know a military history meme has buried itself deep when the ultra-historically minded people who write wargame rules are using it as justification for their game mechanics in a design note.

Parshall and Tully make a convincing case that Fuchida’s account was incorrect in critical ways. It’s a spectacular revelation, and you would think that’s the end of the story, but even though it hardly seems possible, it just gets better. They had apparently been collecting doubts about Fuchida’s account for years.

*[I]t was a conversation between the authors and John Lundstrom**** that crystallized the matter. Lundstrom had noticed, in one of those rare epiphanies when the obvious suddenly reveals itself, that the photographs taken by American B-17s over [the Japanese carrier force] on 4 June showed completely empty flight decks on three of the Japanese carriers at around 0800. What did that mean? To be sure, the pictures were taken more than two*

hours before the American attack, but it caused Lundstrom to pose an interesting question. Had Nagumo's reserve strike force ever been on the deck at any time during the battle?

It's that moment, the authors say, which led them to undertake the investigation that resulted in the discovery about Fuchida's inaccuracies.

As with any historical discovery that substantially deviates from the accepted scholarship, Parshall and Tully made efforts to confirm their research by seeking input from Japanese scholars who would be familiar with the very Japanese data they were interpreting.

[S]eparate inquiries were sent to two knowledgeable Japanese sources, politely asking for their insights on the matter. This was done in an extremely circumspect fashion, on the assumption that Fuchida was still held in high regard in Japan and not wanting, as foreigners, to appear disrespectful towards a famous war hero.

To their surprise, their Japanese sources completely dismissed Fuchida's account. This is quoted as part of the reply Parshall and Tully got from their Japanese correspondents, and is one of my favorite paragraphs in a military history book, ever.

To tell why Fuchida's book contains transparent lies, it's necessary to explain the background of the time it was written. Until around Showa 27 (1952), Japan's speech and writing was under ... censorship ... so they could not say what they wanted. However, since around Showa 28 (1953) ... "Cheering up" memoirs by mainly former military personnel were rushed out ... Of course, the mental pressure of those who were truly incompetent and responsible, and who tried to conceal their own faults, gave strong effect as well [sic in original -bg]. Fuchida's Midway or Kusaka's Kido Butai that came out almost simultaneously, could be regarded as nonsense books which were meant to conceal failures and incompetencies of such kind, and to protect each other. If they are still among the few books available [on the Battle of Midway] that have been translated into English, it's a funny story.

"Transparent lies." Translation: Ha! Joke's on you, America! Stop relying on eyewitness accounts!

And learn Japanese.

I was reading Craig Symonds' book *The Battle of Midway*, published in 2012 as part of the Pivotal Moments in American History series by Oxford University Press, for the 70th anniversary of the battle. At the end, in "A Note on Sources," he makes this extraordinary acknowledgement of *Shattered Sword*.

Both Walter Lord and Gordon Prange conducted a number of interviews with Japanese survivors of the battle (often using intermediaries) and incorporated their views in their excellent histories. But among the sources in

*translation, the most influential was a memoir by Mitsuo Fuchida (with Masatake Okumiya) published in America as *Midway: The Battle that Doomed Japan, the Japanese Navy's Story* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1955). Fuchida, a naval aviator who had led the attack on Pearl Harbor, was also to have led the air attack on Midway, and would have done so except for an untimely bout of appendicitis. Because of that, he was instead an interested and knowledgeable spectator on the bridge of the flagship Akagi during the battle. Because of the dearth of Japanese sources, and because of the persuasiveness of Fuchida's firsthand account, it had a tremendous influence on Western narratives of the battle. Alas, as Jonathan Parshall and Anthony Tully demonstrate in their book *Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005) Fuchida had an agenda of his own, which was to suggest just how close the Japanese had come to delivering a coup de grâce against the Americans, and as a result, not everything in his book can be taken at face value. Parshall has charged that "it is doubtful that any one person has had a more deleterious long-term impact on the study of the Pacific War than Mitsuo Fuchida." (Parshall, "Reflecting on Fuchida, or 'A Tale of Three Whoppers,'" *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2010) 127-38. Whatever the merits of that statement, Parshall and Tully made an immeasurable contribution to the historiography of the Battle of Midway by delving into the Japanese accounts and analyzing the battle from the perspective of the Imperial Japanese Navy.*

Parshall and Tully's book was published in Two Thousand and Five. It has taken that long to correct the scholarly record in English of America's Pacific-War-defining battle that took place in 1942.

Maybe more people should study Japanese.

And update the C.V. rules.

*Taylor used the same system in one of my favorite boardgames of the early 1980s, *Flat Top*, to depict the Solomons carrier battles.

**The authors treat the historical event of the battle with a tremendous attention to its complexity, and they acknowledge that many of the things that they address may not be ultimately knowable (like Admiral Nagumo's thinking at a particular time). But their rigorous attempts to fit the description of the battle to the existing data and what is known about Japanese carrier operations and doctrine is truly remarkable, in my opinion.

***Spot is a term for moving aircraft onto the flight deck in preparation for launch.

****Lundstrom is the author of *First Team*, a landmark study of air combat in the Pacific War.

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Brian Stretcher, 117 Camellia Trail, Brevard, NC 28712

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.
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GENERAL INFORMATION

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CENTRAL OFFICES

PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester MA 01609
phillies@4liberty.net
508 754 1859

VICE PRESIDENT

Martin Svensson
1204 Barksdale Drive NE
Leesburg, VA 20176-4911
703-771-9761
Spqrfan@aol.com

TREASURER

Brian Stretcher
117 Camellia Trail
Brevard, NC 28712
(828) 774-8654 Doctorlaw@juno.com

RATING OFFICER

Dave Bergmann
429 Countryside Circle
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
opusone1945@sonic.net

EDITOR

Bruce Geryk
bruce.geryk@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Robert Granville
8 Valley Drive
Littleton, MA 01460
978-339-3348
rgranville@verizon.net

JUDGE

Randy Heller
113 Tolend Rd
Barrington, NH 03825
RGHeller50@Aol.com

MATCH COORDINATOR

Mark Palmer
113 Warm Wood Lane Apex,
NC 27539
remlap919@outlook.com

SUPPORT SERVICE OFFICERS

ARCHIVIST

William A. Perry
21 Fitzgerald Lane
Columbus, NJ, 08022
(609) 298-9823
bpilot8@comcast.net

WEB SITE MANAGER

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester, MA 01609
508-754-1859
phillies@4liberty.net

VIRTUAL FACE-TO-FACE MATCH COORDINATOR

Nate Forte
13192 Pennsylvania Circle
Thornton, CO 80241
(303)-884-5250
Natforteg1@gmail.com

MULTIPLAYER COORDINATOR

Jeff Miller
263 Buchert Road
Gilbertsville, PA 19525 (610)-367-8209
Blachom1@gmail.com

UNIT COUNTER POOL

Brian Laskey
162 Hull Street
Ansonia, CT 06401 (203) 732-1009
raftman666@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT OFFICER

Open

GAME DESIGN BUREAU

Jeremy Rowley
jerowley@yahoo.com

WEB SITE ADDRESS
www.AHIKS.com