



# irregular

Spring Issue 2021

## magazine

Another Glorious  
Day

USA Vs UK

Stargrave  
Talisman RPG

Back to Basics  
Gulf War 1991

*Plus Blast from the Past, Reviews, and much, much more*





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# Spring Issue 2021

# Editorial

**Jason Hubbard**

Well we're into March of 2021, here in the UK we're in yet another lockdown, so things haven't changed much so far apart from the vaccine roll out, so there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

For all those like myself who were hoping we'll see some gaming conventions this year, will probably have to wait until the Summer for the first of these. Most of them here in the UK having been cancelling dates left, right and centre.

We've seen some big releases already this year, with Billion Suns finally dropping after all the hype on the internet, and posts on various blogs and facebook pages of folk building space fleets. For me I'm more interested in the updated SPQR rules and finally getting my hands of 2nd Edition Test of Honour which I haven't picked up yet. One release that does tempt me is Baron's War, some medieval skirmish gaming sound like a good idea.

I've spent most of my time painting and building terrain, with playing the odd solo game mainly to learn rules. This last 12 months has made me realise that I don't need as many miniatures as I have and should really concentrate on fewer games. So I'm spending some time going through my collection and whittling it down to the games and rules I intend to play. This will result in getting rid of some miniatures that I've never used in a few years because I no longer play that period or genre.

StarGrave is about to drop soon, in April, this could have the same impact as FrostGrave but for Sci-Fi. I'm intrigued by this rules set as I've found recently I'm drawn to miniature agnostic games. What I mean by miniature agnostic is games where you can use any minis from any manufacturer.

I also made the decision this year that if I want to play a mass battle game then I'll drop down to either 15mm or 1/72, simply because these are easier to store being a smaller scale. Storage has become an issue and I'm looking at different storage solutions. I'll write up an article for the next edition of the magazine about this.

Well that's all for now folks.....enjoy this issue and we'll see you next time.

Jason



## ABYSTYLE STUDIO CELEBRATES THE ONE PIECE PHENOMENON

While the 1,000th chapter of Luffy's adventures was unveiled a few weeks ago, One Piece continues to be the best-selling manga of all time. The manga's 100th volume is getting ready for 2021 and its author, Eiichiro Oda, promises the end for quite soon... in four or five years!

[...] By believing in Luffy, you made me believe in you, and that allowed me to continue drawing the manga I always wanted to draw. » Eiichiro Oda

As a worldwide phenomenon, One Piece is today far ahead of other manga such as Dragon Ball or Naruto with more than 470 million copies sold worldwide. In the United Kingdom, One Piece was first published by Gollancz Manga 15 years ago.



It is therefore quite obvious that ABYstyle Studio wanted to pay tribute to the future King of Pirates with this 17 cm high figurine on a scale of 1/10th. On its base elaborated with the Straw Hat Pirates skull logo, this PVC figurine is 100% official, created in close collaboration with the rights-holder Shueisha/Toei Animation in Japan.

Available at the beginning of February, Monkey D. Luffy joins the SFC (Super Figure Collection) range that already counts among its references Death Note and My Hero Academia.



VIZ Media then took over and has been the publisher of the manga since the 14th volume: to date, 95 volumes have been released with the popularity we know.



## Smash Up: Marvel is now in retail stores everywhere!



Eight super-factions join the fray, each with their own strategies and powers for winning the day.

**The Avengers** - These singular heroes bring massive power and unique abilities such as Cap's Shield and Hawkeye's Arrows that can turn the tide at a base. Pairings to consider: Princesses, Wizards, Vigilantes.

**Hydra** - With Hydra Agents to spare, these fanatics will swarm bases, and when you cut off one head... well you know what happens... Pairings to consider: Rock Stars, Innsmouth, Robots.

**Ultimates** - Captain Marvel and her friends protect the galaxy, moving from one place to another with speed. Their rapid appearances can save the day. Pairings to consider: Bear Calvary, Explorers, Pirates.

**Spider-verse** - Peter, Miles, and the gang swing into action to protect the city from all the baddies. Pairings to consider: Ninja, Musketeers, Mounties

**Masters of Evil** - Baron Zemo has plots within plots to score Victory Points before the opponent knows what's happening. Pairings to consider: Aliens, Shapeshifters, Vampires

**SHIELD** - The Agents of SHIELD work together with precision to take down threats that normal humans could only hope to stand against. Pairings to consider: Zombies, Giant Ants, Steampunks

**Kree** - This highly advanced and aggressive race plans for efficient combos and multiple card plays. Pairings to consider: Disco Dancers, Kung Fu Fighters, Kaiju

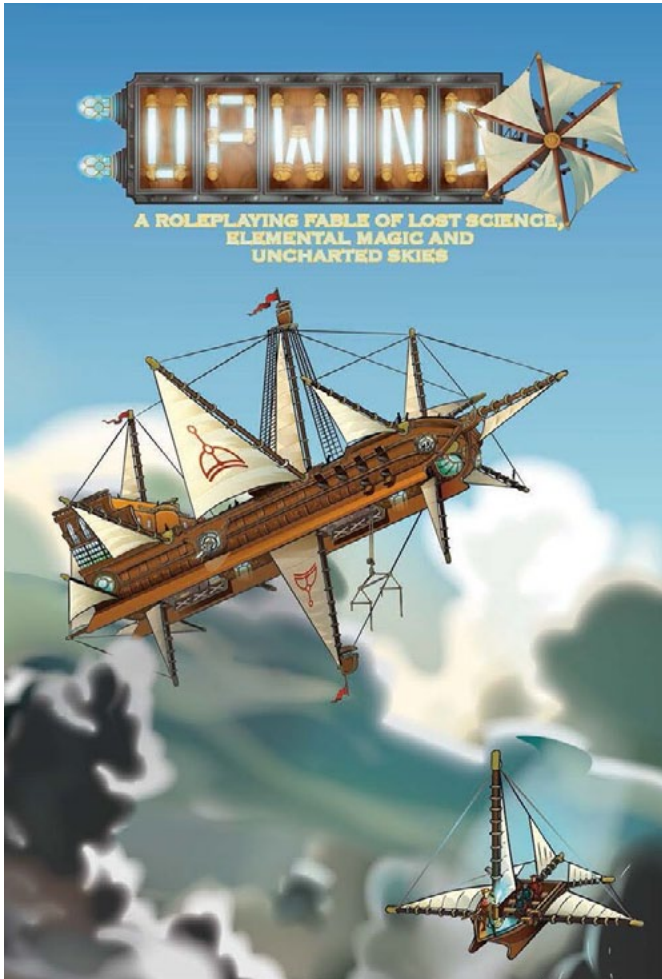
**Sinister Six** - Spidey's old foes make a formidable faction, with endless plans to foil the heroes. Pairings to consider: Dinosaurs, Truckers, Penguins.

Need a refresher? Becca Scott goes over how to play Smash Up: Marvel in this [How to Game](#) video by the





## Chaosium is distributing Upwind



Chaosium is distributing Upwind, the RPG fable of lost science, elemental magic, and uncharted skies. Originally produced by Nocturnal Media and Biohazard following a successful Kickstarter, Upwind is now available from Chaosium in full color hardcover and PDF, along with the Prophecy of the Grand Amplifier sourcebook.

"Imagine Bakshi's classic animated film Wizards has a head-on collision with Disney's Treasure Planet and the resulting fire is put out with a whole lot of Studio Ghibli's Castle in the Sky. That, in an unexpected, animated mash-up, is Upwind."

Upwind is a narrative style RPG set in a strange alternate world of floating island nations, flying sailing ships, long-lost technology, wild elemental powers, looming war and forgotten legacies.

Upwind is powered by the Q system, an original stakes-based, playing card-driven mechanic that gives every encounter consequences with meaningful, narrative-building outcomes. With its unique bidding rules, Upwind plays as fast as you can tell your story.



Our biggest release ever!



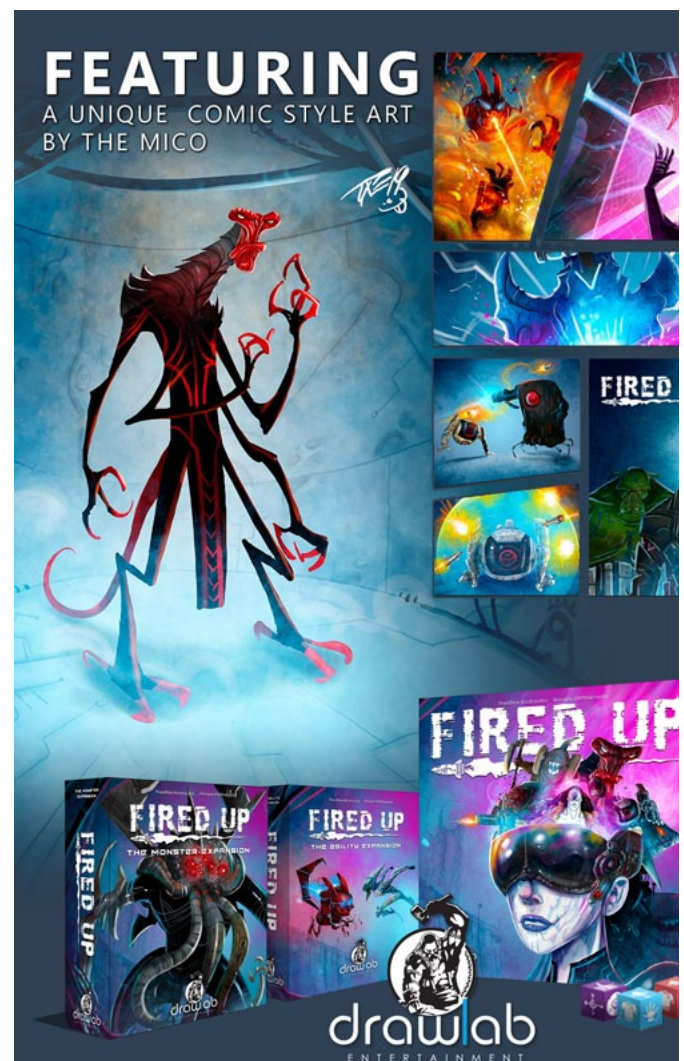
Drawlab Entertainment is excited to announce our new release, Fired Up is going to be available through international distribution starting in March.

Fired Up is a cyberpunk arena game in which players are the audience of the most fascinating fight in the world. From your position in the audience, you can influence all the fighters trying to get them to perform some amazing Highlights and getting you Fired Up while scoring your secret objectives.

Fired Up comes with original artwork by The Mico, high quality miniatures, a unique pentagonal board, custom dice and Game Trayz.

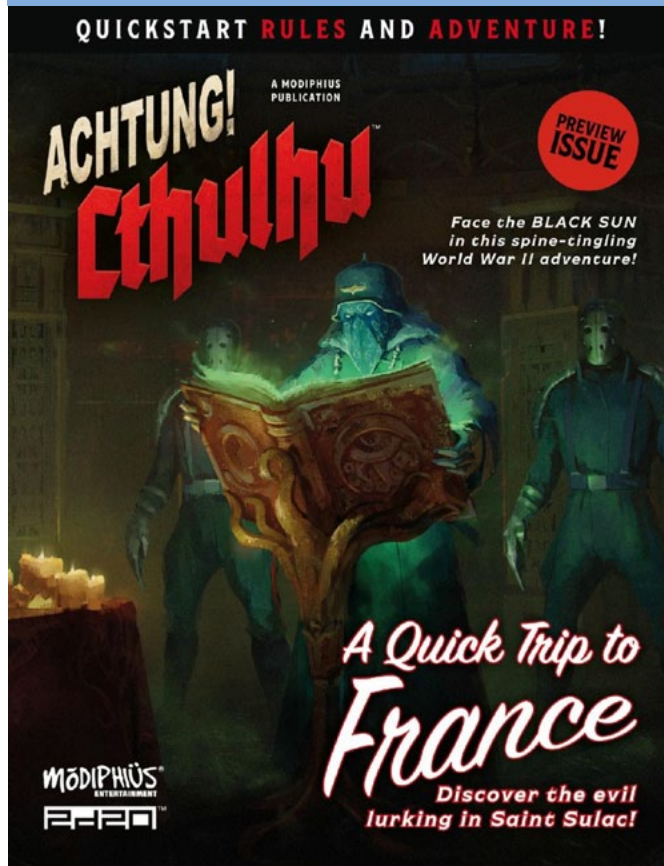
Fired Up got a ton of positive reviews in the last physical convention it was available for playtesting by players and reviewers alike while it has been named as one of the Most Anticipated Games of 2021 by Board Game Spotlight.

Fired Up comes with 2 expansions getting released on Day 1, the Agility expansion including 2 new speed-based Fighters and the Monster expansion including 4 more Fighters as selected by our backers of our successful Kickstarter campaign.





## Achtung! Cthulhu 2D20



Modiphius Entertainment, the London-based tabletop publisher and creator, announced the launch of the long-awaited Quickstart rules for its World War II-themed alternate-history Achtung! Cthulhu series. Previously an incredibly popular setting for Savage Worlds and Call of Cthulhu, Achtung! Cthulhu is now available as a standalone TTRPG, using Modiphius' own cinematic-styled 2D20 system. The Quickstart rules are available for free via Modiphius' Achtung! Cthulhu 2D20 website.

This Quickstart ruleset will give players everything they need to get started with the world of Achtung! Cthulhu ahead of the game's full launch. The free Quickstart PDF contains:

A complete starter rule set for Achtung! Cthulhu 2d20 with plenty of hints and tips for new GMs

Begin your journey into The Secret War with the exciting adventure, A Quick Trip to France

Five pre-generated characters so you can pick up and play the game straight away

Battle the special Nazi occult forces and save humanity from the malign power of the Mythos!

Achtung! Cthulhu started out as a setting for Lovecraftian roleplaying — taking place during an alternate history World War II. A secret war is being fought as the Nazi's forge alliances with ancient and terrible gods, unearth arcane technologies and unleash nightmares on the battlefield. Players must discover the truth behind the Mythos' influence as conflict engulfs the globe during the most significant conflict in world history.



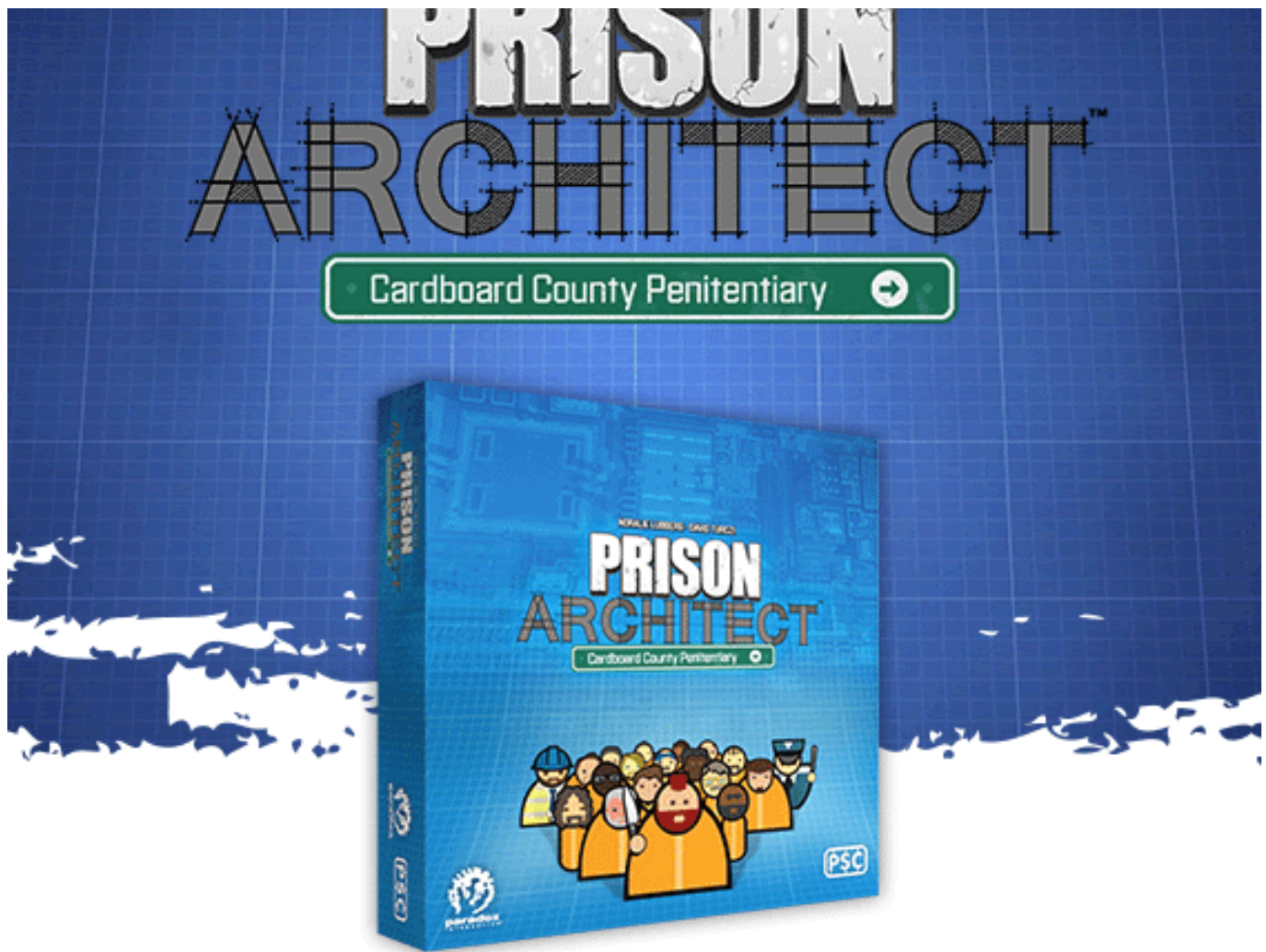
In this pulp-influenced world of brave Allied heroes, secret agents, mysterious mystics, and dauntless two-fisted adventure, players take on the roles of Allied servicemen and women, secret agents, members of the French Resistance, or even hapless civilians caught up in the wider conflict.

All stand firm against the twisted might of the Nazis and their occult forces, including the Cult of the Black Sun, who wield foul magic and summon ancient horrors in their bid to unleash Yog-Sothoth and Nacht-wölfe, the Night Wolves, who place their trust in weird science and wonder weapons to prevail.

"We're really excited to share this Quickstart version of Achtung! Cthulhu with our community and give them a first glimpse of what this new and updated edition has in store for them," said Chris Birch, Founder of Modiphius Entertainment. "This latest edition delves deeper into the darker side of the mythos and throws players into an epic struggle against both the Nazi Occult and the Great Old Ones in a war that has spanned millennia."

Join the secret war at: <https://www.modiphius.net/pages/achtung-cthulhu-2d20>

## Prison Architect: Cardboard County Penitentiary



PSC Games has partnered with Paradox Interactive to bring you the ultimate prison building experience in cardboard form, Prison Architect: Cardboard County Penitentiary. The Prison Architect themed board game is designed by Noralie Lubbers and Dávid Turczi, designer of Anachrony and Kitchen Rush. PSC Games is an indie board game publisher based in the UK that has created strategic and thematic board games such as the highly acclaimed Blitzkrieg! and Rome & Roll.

The popular simulation game, Prison Architect, is a private prison construction and management video game from Paradox Interactive that allows you to act as the warden and creator of a maximum security prison.

As you plan the entire prison layout, you must also manage staff and ensure high prison morale. With a massive following, the BAFTA award winning Prison Architect has been downloaded by more than 4 million players across PC, console, and mobile since release across all platforms.

Prison Architect: Cardboard County Penitentiary allows you to allocate resources to optimize your compound to ensure the security, wellness, and happiness of the inmates all while gathered around your game table moving tiles and meeples around your personal penitentiary player board.

Key Features of Prison Architect: Cardboard County Penitentiary:

- Easy Setup and Get Started features to get you playing faster
- Allocate your funds carefully while competing with fellow wardens for limited resources
- Build new rooms to unlock placement bonuses and meet your goals
- Fulfill prisoner needs in order to ensure their safety, health, and potential parole
- Manage security needs to prevent escape!



Wardlings Comes to Roll20 today!



Renegade Game Studios is proud to announce a new partnership with Roll20, beginning with today's re-release of the Wardlings Campaign Guide for the Roll20 platform.

With a new Adventure Module featuring new custom maps, a charactermancer-compatible Compendium expansion, and a player token and handout pack, Roll20 now has everything a group needs to start playing Wardlings online.

Wardlings is a 5th Edition-compatible campaign setting, based on WizKids' pre-painted miniatures line, where the youth are the only ones capable of perceiving and interacting with the magic of the world.

It provides a great entry point in to roleplaying for ages 10 and up.

Roll20 is an online service that makes it easy to play your favorite roleplaying games remotely. It provides a shared virtual tabletop, a variety of communication tools, and access to a marketplace filled with content for your favorite system.

This is just the start of a new collaboration between Renegade Games and Roll20. In the coming months there are plans to bring additional Renegade RPG lines to the platform.

"Roll20 offers more than just a way for people to play their favorite RPGs online," explains Elisa Teague, Senior Producer of Roleplaying Games at Renegade Game Studios and Wardlings Campaign Guide designer. "

It makes games easier to run and helps players quickly get to the fun part of experiencing an adventure together. We are so proud to bring Wardlings to this wonderful platform, opening it up to more groups."

## WizKids, Critical Role Partnership Brings Exandria to Life



The global RPG phenomenon goes to the next level with new product offerings!

WizKids, the premier manufacturer of premium pre-painted miniatures and tabletop games, today announced a partnership with Critical Role, the most popular story-driven and worldbuilding digital media brand in the world. Adding to its leading line of high-quality miniatures, WizKids will debut product offerings from the expansive world of Exandria, beginning Q1 2021.

"I've been a rabid collector of WizKids' minis for... well, a very long time, and to be able to work directly with them to bring the denizens and dangers of Exandria to life for everyone to use is beyond exciting," said Matthew Mercer, Chief Creative Officer and cast member of Critical Role. "They bring such skill and expertise to their work, and this upcoming collection really captures the characters and atmosphere of Exandria. I think fans of Critical Role, as well as players new to our world, will greatly enjoy this opportunity for deeper play, collaboration, and imagination."

At launch, fans can expect to see iconic monsters and popular Player Characters (PCs) to enhance their own adventures in the roleplaying game set on the continent of Wildemount.

Included in these is Critical Role's Game Master Matthew Mercer's famed deluxe "gargantuan" size, pre-painted Udaak. Sculpted with high-detailed features using premium paints, it's truly a great foe, or ally, for any adventure!

"In this new line, we've focused our releases on the player's experience while in the world of Exandria," said Patrick O'Hagan, Executive Producer RPGs at WizKids. "This way, we hope to empower players to create their own story and experiences with this thrilling roleplaying game."

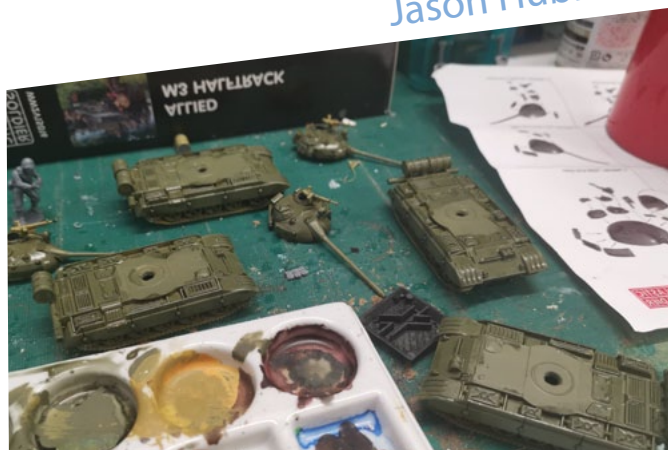
Through this partnership, players can expect to see many additional releases in the coming years that span various continents in the world of Exandria, including products and RPG accessories like premium pre-painted—and unpainted—miniatures in the tiniest of figures all the way up to gargantuan and more. All packaging comes with a clear window, so fans can see exactly what they are getting on the store shelf.

The first six box sets of premium painted figures will release in Spring 2021 and will be available at Friendly Local Game Stores (FLGS) worldwide. The deal was negotiated by Critical Role's Licensing Agent, Jason Kletzky, President of Collaborations Licensing.



# Ed's Challenge

Jason Hubbard



Last year I started a few new projects, and I have a couple of ideas for projects this year. So, this post is a roundup of how each of the projects are going and what I have planned for this year.

So last year I started the year with a few new project ideas, some of those are near completion, whilst others have fallen by the wayside somewhat. The first of those projects was Flames of War armies, both a US and German army, based on the contents of the Hit the Beach starter set.



Both of these are coming along nicely, and I'm happy to say both armies are nearly finished. I'm in the last stages of completion on both of these. For the Americans I have 6 Sherman Tanks to finish and then all that needs finishing after these are the infantry. I added mortar and HMG platoons to the Hit the Beach infantry units, all of which need a lick of paint. With regards to the Germans, I have a few half-tracks and 4 Panther tanks to paint, and this army will be finished.

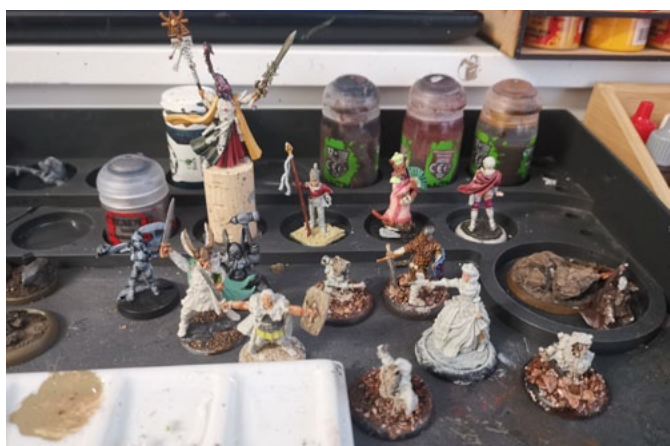
My Lord of the Rings project has been rather slow going over the last 12 months. I have managed to get some bits and pieces painted but nowhere near as much as I wanted, so this will continue to chug along



this year as well. I did open the year by painting a unit of Gondor infantry. I'm hoping to get more units painted this year, and that's what I plan to concentrate on, as last year I mainly painted character models.



Another project I started last year was to paint up miniatures for both SPQR and Mortal Gods. For both of these I managed to finish a small unit of infantry. For SPQR I managed to paint up the Roman infantry from the SPQR starter box.



I've now started on the Celts, already completing the limited-edition Druid, and making a start on a couple of hero models. For Mortal Gods I've painted a unit of Phalanx and the Macedonian command, along with two Macedonian Heroes.



I'm currently painting up King Philip and Alexander. The aim for this year is to finish the starter models from each box sets and purchase the Roman and Celtic hero boxes later in the year.

My Bolt Action projects have been ticking along for a couple of years and will continue to do so this year. I main aim is to build and paint more US infantry, as well as finish the few Germans and British I have left. I also need to do more work on my Chinese army. I plan to purchase the German WW1 infantry; Partisans and the Boxer Rebellion boxes to make Chinese Nationalist infantry. I managed to paint a unit of Communist Chinese for the Korean War campaign and will add to this later on this year. Another purchase I'll need to add to my Bolt Action project, is a vehicle/tank for the US and some jeeps/LRDG trucks for the Brits. I was supposed to pick these up last year but for one reason or another I didn't get around to it. I did manage to pick up a T-34 and paint it for my Communist Chinese.



Towards the end of last year, I did plan and start research for a small skirmish project set during the English Civil War. I planned to build a 1/72 warband and plan a campaign set in Derbyshire and South Yorkshire, which is close to where I live. I've talked about running a ECW campaign for some time, but never really gotten around to it. So around Autumn time last year I finally bit the bullet and, made a start. I carried out the research for the campaign and picked up some 1/72 hard plastic miniatures. The aim this year will be to paint enough for two small forces.

The big project I planned this time last year, was the Asian/Chinese town game board using the modular tiles by Sarrissa. Most of last year was spent building and painting terrain pieces. This included a number of buildings, and a couple of bridges. Now while I didn't finish this project, or start any work using the modular tiles I did get quite a few of the building I plan to use built and painted. So, this year the aim is to make a start on the modular tiles and get as much as that done as possible.



Another project I started last year, around August/September time was two armies for Team Yankee. The first was a Soviet army, which is nearly finished apart from a T-64, BMP and two T-80s.



The other army I started was the British, which I decided to base on the 4th Armoured brigade which was stationed in Germany and served during the Gulf War. I started this project with the British Army starter set, and plan to add some additional units such as an M109 artillery regiment, which would be my old unit 2nd Field Regiment Royal Artillery. The British forces are now complete for the time being, just a few items for the Soviets to finish painting.



## Chinese Town Project up-date

### Paifang or Gateway

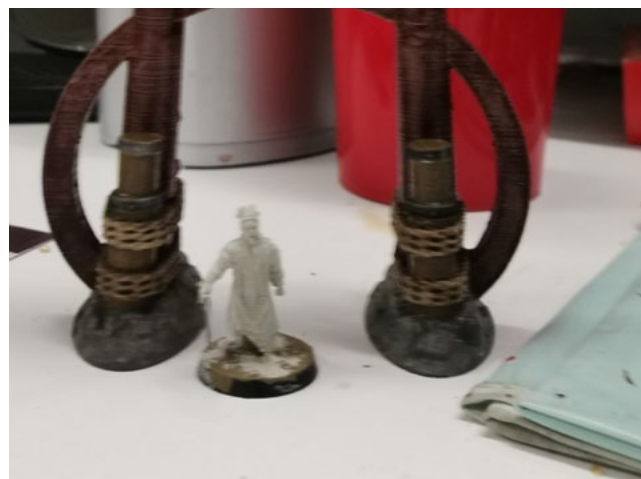
As part of the Chinese/Asian town project, I wanted to add a gateway similar in style to one I saw at the movie town set in Shenyang. I'd seen traditional Japanese Tori style gateways, but nothing that looked similar to a Chinese Paifang. Then I spotted a Tori on E-bay that could pass as a Chinese version. Eventually I will build an entrance with a more traditional Chinese Paifang, but for now the E-bay find will do.



A paifang, also known as a pailou, is a traditional style of Chinese architectural arch or gateway structure. Evolved from the Indian subcontinent's torana through the introduction of Buddhism to China, it has developed many styles and has been introduced to other East Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

The gateway I purchased on E-bay came in two parts and was 3D printed. The first thing I had to do was give it a quick wash before applying a white undercoat. The roof I tried to give a terracotta colour, and then the supporting element underneath I painted a bright blue.

I was going to paint the struts and poles a bright colour but decided to go with a dark wood colour instead. The model itself was quite nice and at a reasonable price and would definitely purchase a 3D printed model again.



## Bridges

I needed a couple of bridges for the game table to go over a planned river. I don't plan to stick the bridges down permanently so I can place them wherever I want. There are plenty of different types of Asian style bridges on the market for a variety of prices. I decided to go with the TT Combat bridges simply because they came in a pair and they aren't too elaborate in design.



The style I wanted are called Moon Bridges and are high arch foot bridges generally associated with both China and Japan. This type of bridge was originally designed to allow pedestrians to cross canals while allowing the passage of barges beneath. When constructed using the climbing ascent and descent, it has the further advantage of not using space from the adjoining fields for approaches to the bridge.

The two bridges from TT Combat were really easy and quick to build. I painted them both using contrast straight on to the wood without an undercoat. The blue dried a little darker than I had hoped for but it's fine as is.



## Ruins tiles

The first two tiles for the Asian/Chinese town game board, were the ruins. I built two tiles up, one of which were the main ruins and the second includes a path and trees which will eventually connect to a wooded area tile.

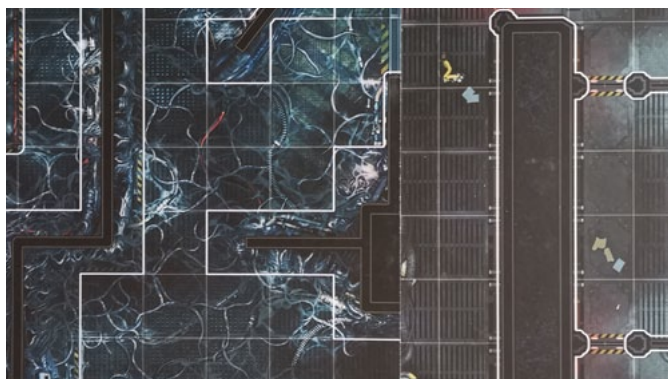


So, what are my project plans for 2021, well I pretty much only have 3 potential projects for this year. The first is a Qin army, which most people will know as the Terracotta army. I have some miniatures from Studio Eye in the states. I was fortunate to visit Xian in China where the Terracotta army is and since then I've been inspired to build an army.



The second plan is to build a small force to try out Saga Age of Magic game. My plan is to use the old Celts miniature range to build a barbarian style warband for this game. The final plan I have is to build a small warband for the forthcoming Baron's War rule set. This will be a small force just to play skirmish size engagements.

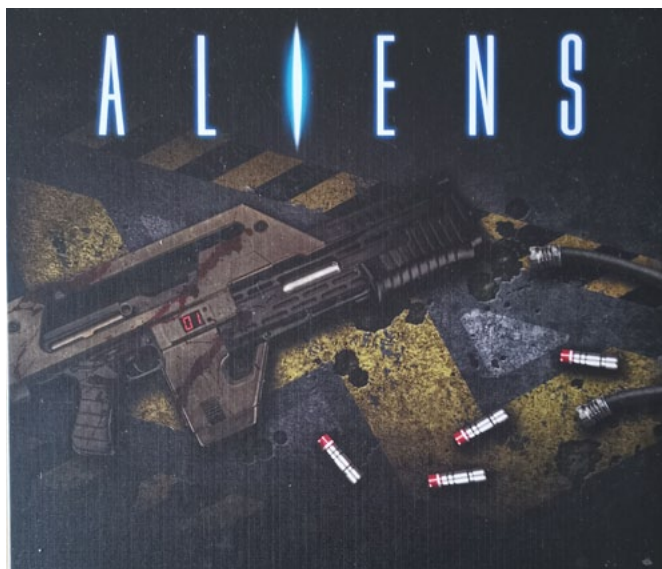




## Another Glorious Day in the Corps!

*Aliens: Another Glorious Day in the Corps! is a co-operative survival board game in which you and your team of specialist Colonial Marines will gear up with serious firepower and head into Hadley's Hope to find survivors and answers. But you're not alone. To survive, you'll need to work together, keep your cool, and stay frosty to fight off relentless Xenomorph ambushes and get out of there alive.*

Players can play up to six different missions, taking them into different areas from the Hadley's Hope terraforming facility to the deep, dark recesses of an xenomorph nest. Aliens also offers an exciting campaign mode to play four of the missions linked together, so players will need to fight relentless xenomorph attacks and keep each other alive all the way to the end of the campaign. The remaining two missions are purely about survival, it's kill or be killed. The players are dropped into the game with nothing more than a pistol. They will need to scavenge weapons and gear while hordes of Xenomorph aliens are trying to get at them. How long can you survive against the odds?



### *So, what's in the box?*

When we open the box, the first thing we see are the mission cards. There are a total 9 mission cards, on one side is the board set up and on the other side is the information to play that particular missions, such as mission goal, extraction, computer token along with



other useful info to play the mission.

Next are the rules which is 28 pages full colour book, it explains how to play the game in a straightforward easy to read whit a plethora of illustrations and photographs alongside the text. It's well laid out with plenty of examples to show how the rules work.



The actual 4 game boards are next, these are double sided which gives you plenty of options to begin with. One side looks like an alien infestation within the corridors whilst the other side is clean of alien spore. They made from robust card, making them quite heavy and unlikely to damage easily.



Now we're down to the counter sheets, first up are the character cards for each of the plastic miniatures that come with the base game.

These include vital information such as speed, defence and melee. Each card is double sided, on one side is the hero stats and the other is the grunt stats. Any character not being used by a player will play with the grunt side. These are not assigned to any particular player but can be activated by the group.



There is a plethora of tokens for the game, that includes Alien tokens, computer tokens, mission blip, spawn point tokens and many more. There are also two sentry gun tokens and a sentry gun dial, these are basically automated guns which can be set down anywhere on the board. Each gun starts with 450 rounds of ammo and they can only hoot anything in front of them. Though they're still a useful addition to help kill those blood thirsty aliens.

For everyone who's watched the Alien films, the first thing most people think of are the face huggers. Well, you won't be disappointed as they are included in the game in the form of two tokens. I would have preferred a couple of plastic models but at least they've been included in the game. The tokens are made from the same card as the board games, which means they are quite robust and user friendly.



There are two decks of sealed cards in the box and these include equipment cards, endurance cards and motion tracker cards. The endurance deck is the resources that players will use throughout the game. If there are no cards in the endurance deck or the exhaust pile players will lose the game, so managing this resource is important. The motion tracker cards spawn new aliens and also gives them special abilities. The card provides information such as the number of



blips the card will spawn into play, it will also include the spawn location and game text which will provide some instructions you'll need to follow.



There three dice in the box, two 10-sided blue dice and one black 6-sided die. The blue dice are used by the marines and the black 6 sided is the Alien die. Now we come to the most important aspect of this game the multi-part hard plastic miniatures. There are 4 black sprues for the Aliens, this will allow you to build 16 Aliens to attack the characters. You'll need to follow the instructions when building them, once you've built the first four then the next 12 will be really easy and you may not need to follow the instructions.



We've included a simple painting tutorial in this issue to get some paint on them, though it's not necessary. Then finally we come to the characters on a single green sprue, these are multi-part, but its minimal parts compared to the Aliens. These are well sculpted and cast, there are some mould lines on them, but these are easily removed with a sharp craft knife or file. You will need some plastic glue to build both these and the Aliens models. I was pleasantly surprised that these were hard plastic miniatures normally associated with war gaming figures. For those like myself who like painting minis, these will look great once they're fully painted. It has to be said though it's not necessary to paint up any of the miniatures, as they're in two different coloured plastic.

On first looks this does look like a great game, the quality of the parts is exceptional, and the miniatures are of better quality than normally associated with board game pieces. At the time of writing this the UK is in lockdown, so I've not been able to play the game enough to give an in-depth review of how it plays. I'm hoping to get a good play through once I can meet up with friends. Overall, first impressions are quite high, next thing for me to do is to get all the miniatures built and painted. Also don't forget to check out the simple painting tutorial for the Aliens.

# A NOBLE CRUSADE

*The History of Eighth Army 1941-1945*

*Author: Richard Doherty*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

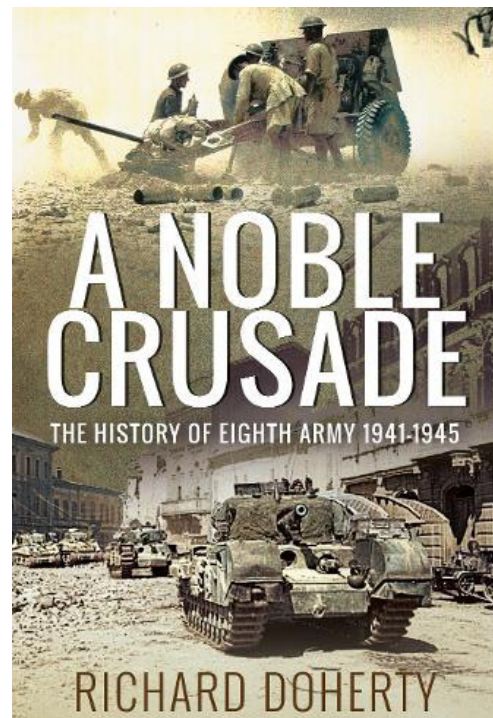
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

‘A Noble Crusade’ provides a comprehensive history of the Eighth Army, one of the most famous of all British armies. Richard Doherty uses official records, personal accounts and Victoria Cross winners’ stories to deliver a complete tale of the Eighth Army from its beginnings in the sands of North Africa through the victory of El Alamein to the end of the war and eventual victory.

The army, under the inspiration of Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery launched a major offensive in El Alamein before taking part in the successful invasion of Sicily and the long and bloody campaign to defeat the Axis forces in Italy. Under Montgomery and later Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese and Lieutenant-General Sir Richard McCreery the Eighth Army consisted of soldiers of the British Commonwealth and Empire, as well as those from occupied countries in Europe. By the time the war ended the Army had won an astounding 34 Victoria Crosses.

This was first published in 1999 by Spellmount Ltd, and in 2020 by Pen & Sword. It’s a softback book, though I believe there is also a hard back version, with over 300 pages and is broke down into 21 chapters. This is the story and history of the Desert Rats, the British army units who defeated Rommel’s Afrika Korps in North Africa. This is a well-researched and written book, though I’d have preferred more illustrations such as maps and photographs throughout the book. It does provide a really good insight into the march of the Eighth Army from the deserts of North Africa to the Mountains of Austria.

I was excited to read this book as I’m building an 8th Army and LRDG army for Bolt Action, so for me this was a book I was looking forward to reading it. My hope was this book would provide a lot of background info for my planned army. I wasn’t disappointed the book provides a great depth of detail regarding the desert war, as well as the European campaign.



If you’re planning to build an Eighth Army force for any wargame set during World War 2, especially for Bolt Action or Flames of War then this is definitely worth picking up. If you’re after a book with photographs then there are better books out there, such as the Images of War book series. Anyone looking for a book with detailed researched information on the background of the Eighth army should take a look at this book.

Anyone who has an interest in military history will also not be disappointed by this book, its a easy read and a good starting point for reading more about the North African Campaign.



# English Collusion & the Norman Conquest

*Author: Arthur C Wright*  
*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

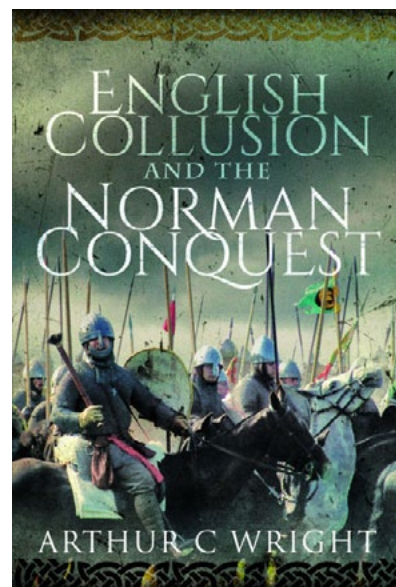
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The reality of war, in any period, is its totality. Warfare affects everyone in a society. Here, for the first time, is a comprehensive analysis of eleventh century warfare as exposed in the record of the Norman Conquest of England. King William I experienced a lifetime of conflict on and off so many battlefields. In *English Collusion and the Norman Conquest*, Arthur Wright's second book on the Norman Conquest, he argues that this monarch has received an undeserved reputation bestowed on him by clerics ignorant alike of warfare, politics, economics and of the secular world, men writing half a century after events reported to them by doubtful sources. How much of this popular legend was actually created by an avaricious Church?

Was he just a lucky, brutal soldier, or was he instead a gifted English King who could meld cultures and talents? This is a tale of blood, deceit, ambition and power politics which pieces together the self-interested distortion of events, brutalising conflict and superb strategic acumen by using and analysing contemporary evidence the like of which is not to be found elsewhere in Europe.

By 1072 King William should have been secure upon the English throne, so what went wrong? How did a Norman Duke and a few thousand mercenaries take and hold such a wealthy and populous Kingdom? Even in the 'Harrowing of the North', which probably saw the death of tens of thousands, who was really to blame and why did it happen?

I think most people in the UK are familiar with the story behind 1066 and the Norman Conquest. This is an area I'm very familiar with, and the aftermath, the brutal early occupation by Norman nobles. This book looks at how did the Normans manage to control and hold onto power in England. The army of William wasn't massive, so how did that many mercenaries and warriors manage to keep a grip on the country and conquer it.



The author takes a look at the possibility of collusion by Saxon English to help not only invade the country but hold onto it. This seems plausible as some help from people with England would have been required, along with a brutal put down of any uprising and resistance.

I enjoyed reading this book, though I didn't agree with all of the authors findings at times I did find some of his conclusion's way off the mark. Yet overall, I do agree that William must have had individuals amongst the Saxon population willing to collude and assist. It's only natural that there would have been some out there who were willing to collude to save their own skin and protect their assets.

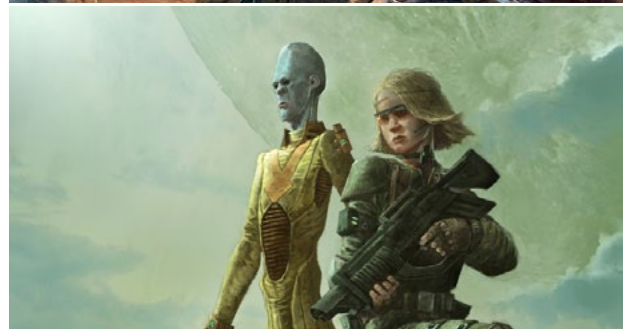
I think you need to approach this book with an open mind, otherwise you may not enjoy it and at times find it to frustrating to continue. That said it's not a bad book, it quite good and brings a new perception on the Norman conquest. It's definitely worth a read, though I think it's a bit like marmite, some will enjoy the book whilst others will find it frustrating simply because of the subject matter.



## Stargrave: Science Fiction Wargames in the Ravaged Galaxy

In a galaxy torn apart by the Last War, vast pirate fleets roam from system to system, robbing, extorting, and enslaving. Amidst this chaos, thousands of independent operators – smugglers, relic hunters, freedom fighters, and mercenaries – roam the dead stars in small ships, scratching out a living any way they can. In Stargrave, players take on the role of one of these independent operators, choosing from a range of backgrounds each with their own strengths, weaknesses, and associated powers. Next, players must hire a crew for their ship, recruiting a lieutenant with a unique skill set and a handful of soldiers, mechanics, hackers, and other specialists. Some captains may even recruit strange alien lifeforms with abilities no humanoid could ever possess.

Once the players' crews are assembled, they are ready to dive into a campaign. Over a series of games, their crews will have the chance to carry out a variety of missions – recovering lost technology, stealing data, freeing slaves, and fighting back against the pirate fleets. In time, as the crews gain experience, they will become more powerful and hire more talented specialists. The more they grow, however, the more likely it is that a pirate fleet will take note of their activities and come after them!



With the popularity of Frostgrave, a fantasy skirmish game, that it only seems natural for Joseph A. McCullough to turn his sights to outer space and do for Sci-Fi what Frostgrave has done for fantasy. Now I haven't had Stargrave in grubby little hands for long, as of writing this article I've only managed to get a couple of simple games to learn the basic rules.

So Stargrave is a miniatures agnostic game, what I mean by that is it's a game that isn't tied to a line of miniatures. You can use any sci-fi miniature you want. Though Northstar are planning to release some plastic miniature kits for the game like they did for Frostgrave. Though at the time of writing this there weren't any finalised release date for them, but it's expected to be around the same time as the rules. They plan to release three boxes which will allow you build a set of crew members, mercs and troopers, each box will allow you to build 20 miniatures.



The game has similar mechanics to the fantasy version, so those who have played Frostgrave will have some familiarity. In Frostgrave you built your warband around a wizard and an apprentice, in Stargrave you build your crew around a captain and his/her XO (2nd in command). You then fill your crew with specialists such as soldiers, mechanics and hackers. Just like Frostgrave, Crews will compete against each other for the spoils.



This game works best in a campaign mode, as you can improve your crew as you play through the campaign.

Your crew will gain experience and resources which will allow you to improve equipment or recruit better crew members. There are also other elements that your crew could come up against besides rival crews, such as bounty hunters, troopers, pirates and strange vicious creatures.



The layout has been well designed to the extent that it makes reading and understanding the rules very easy, it's what I'd call a user-friendly rulebook. There are several scenarios included in the book. These could be used as part of your first campaign or just as simple pick-up games whilst you're learning the rules.

I did find the rules very flexible, in that you can quite easily play the game on board tiles, or the more traditional war game route with a table of cool terrain. One of the first games I played was on a Loke Battlemat book with some pre-painted Star Wars miniatures.

My plan for Stargrave is to utilise some of the sci-fi miniatures I already have that haven't seen the light of day for a while, paint up a few Eldar I have and break out some of the miniatures from Sedition Wars. I can see a lot of potential for this game, just like I did when Frostgrave was launched. This may be the game that sparks my interest in Sci-Fi again, another Osprey game Reality's Edge did whet my appetite for space gaming, but I think this will really give a good hard kick. I like Reality's Edge but because it's a cyberpunk setting you are limited in your miniature choices, as they really should fit into a Cyberpunk world. Where as Stargrave will allow me to go wild and use anything space related that I like the look of.

Will this game appeal to everyone, no probably not? There will be some who'll think this is just a Frostgrave re-skin and won't like that, though there are enough differences between the two that it's not quite a re-skin. For others they won't like the fact there is very little background fluff, especially those who love that fact about 40k. It's not a perfect set of rules, but I did find it a lot of fun to play, and I like the idea of being able to use any miniatures, which also opens it for kitbashing, not just your crew but terrain and vehicles as well. There will be plenty of folk out there that will be put off by the fact there isn't a line of miniatures tied to the game. What I can say is if you like kitbashing, grabbing minis from a variety of ranges, making up your own fluff or using a sci-fi setting from a book, film or TV show then this is perfect for you.

I'll write about my progress on building up a crew in the next issue, and some further thoughts about the game as part of my Ed's Challenge articles. Overall, I like the game based on my initial reading and quick playthroughs.



## TALISMAN ROLE PLAY GAME

*Jason Hubbard*

The Talisman Adventures Fantasy Roleplaying Game is a hardcover book divided into two sections: The Player's Guide and the Game Master's Guide. In the back of the book, you'll find Light and Dark Fate tokens, character sheets, and six pre-gen characters. It also includes a short, starting adventure, Death's Messenger, so that you can jump right into the action.



If you want to be even better prepared for your heroic journey the Talisman Adventures Accessory Pack (Dice & Tokens) is available for purchase. It contains as many Light and Dark Fate Tokens as you could ever need in addition to 3 Talisman Adventures Dice. The special look of the customized Kismet Dice will make it easier for you to see what fate has in store. (Of course, you are free to use common six-sided dice of different colours instead.)

The Talisman Adventures Fantasy Roleplaying Game rules are fast-paced, easy to learn, and feature the new 3D6 Adventures rules set. With these rules, the players take the lead and determine the action as their characters explore magical new lands, encounter enigmatic strangers, and do battle against terrible monsters. This book provides a multitude of enemies, strangers, followers, mysterious locations, and magic items to include in your adventures. Forbidden knowledge and fabulous treasures — perhaps even the fabled Talisman of the Great Wizard — await the daring and heroic.

For those who are unaware Talisman RPG is based off the popular board game first published by Games Workshop. Basing an RPG from a board game was always going to be a little risky and potentially difficult. Simply because what works in one form may not necessarily work in an-



other, basically just because the board games are good and popular doesn't mean the RPG will work or even be liked.

The slight irony here is that the original board game was actually based on old school rpg's when it was first produced back in the 80's. So maybe going back to an RPG may work. So, the multi dollar questions is Does it work? The game is presented as a 300-page hardback book, there is a plethora of new artwork throughout the book rather than using art from the board game.

The design has allowed for easy navigation and has been divided into a player's section and a whole chunk of the book for the GM.

The first section of the book is the background, this gives you enough information to gain a flavour of the Talisman setting. This is based off the board game, and it's quite vague, it's enough to give you a flavour of the realm and just enough to know what's going on. Then it moves on to actual locations within the realm. This provides plenty of information for you to get going. I'm going to assume there will be further books that expand on some of these locations at a later date.



It's a 3D6 game system, which basically means you roll 3 six-sided dice and add an aspect. Aspects come from your characters attributes of which there are two of them.

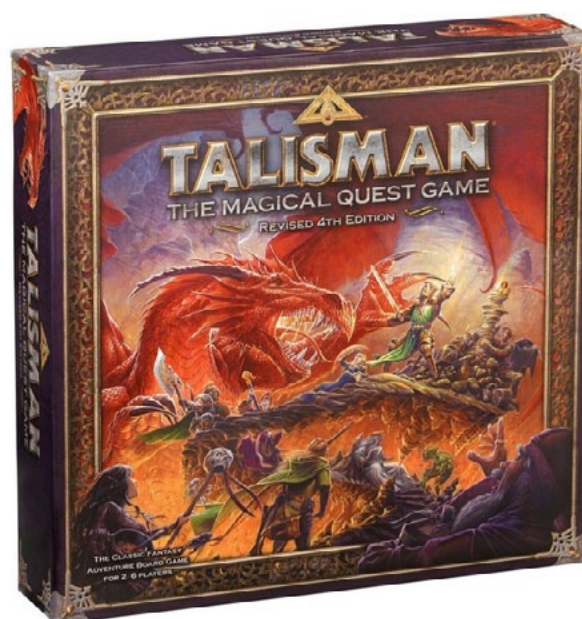
There are six aspects in total, three for each attribute. Strength attribute has the following aspects Brawn, Agility and Mettle, whereas Craft attribute has Insight, Wits and Resolve. One of the three dice is a different colour and is used for Kismet (fate) and this will have additional impacts on your character.

The combat is quite streamlined in this game which

make it very easy to get to grips with. What's great is that combat is simultaneous. If a PC has a failure in combat, then the enemy automatically does damage to your character. Yep, you heard me, if you miss you end up basically doing damage to yourself.



This makes combat pretty brutal and you may at times want to avoid fighting and resolve an encounter another way.



Magic works in a similar manner in that if it fails then bad stuff and I mean bad stuff happens, so unless you're quite high in craft then it may be something you avoid or try at your risk.

This actually make magic more fun as it can backfire with some serious or amusing consequences.

So, what races can you play, well similar one to the board game, human, dwarf, elf, ghoul (yes you can play a corpse eating fellow), leywalker which is basically a satyr, a sprite and a troll. There are several classes you can use as well. In the second half of the book is the GM's section it starts with a discussion on how to structure stories, how to frame failed roles, facilitating character



aspirations, story goals, and some optional rules facilitating which is very useful for first time game masters.

After this the GM guides moves to NPC's whereby it classes them as strangers and allies, which makes sense

as most of the time it's unlikely the adventuring party will have met them before. There is also a section on stranger descriptions which provides a lot of different NPC types with a simplified stat block for what are the relevant interactions.

The adventuring section of the book provides multiple rules for travelling around the realm. The maps don't have any key on them regarding distance, so it suggested that GM's state the distances in how many days to travel from A to B.

It also includes information on hazards and traps they could encounter in the wilderness.

There is an adventure also included in the book called Death's Messenger, the characters will attempt to keep someone from using a lost relic which was created by the Great Wizard from doing something catastrophic that will cause a supernatural imbalance.

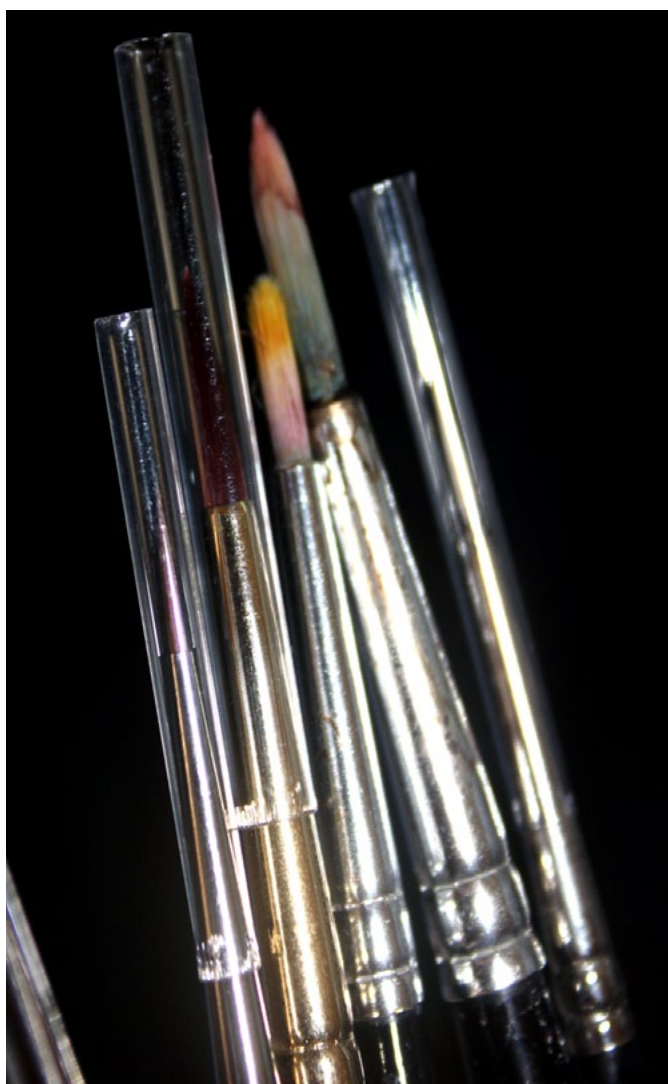
I have to say I'm really taken with this RPG, it's a great game with a lot of potential. I would say it's probably a very good starter RPG, and what I mean by that is if you have some friends who've never played an RPG before then this could be ideal for them. Does it capture the spirit and feel of the boardgame, in short yes, I think it does?

As a teenager Talisman was one of my favourite board games, and so I approached this with some in trepidation and eagerness. I was expecting it to fall short by some distance, but I was pleasantly surprised. I enjoyed the playing the game, it felt very reminiscent of the fighting fantasy books. I think it's definitely one to add to your shelf when it's finally released later this year.





# Back to Basics



With this we're going back to the basics of miniature painting. So, if you've never painted a miniature before or would like a refresher, then continue reading. This is aimed at those who are just getting into war-gaming or board gamers who'd like to paint up some of the miniatures that come with one of their board games. A lot of board games these days come with some very highly sculpted playing pieces that would probably look far better with a lick of paint on them.

So where do you start, what tools do you need, and which are the best paints to use. You've probably realized after a quick search on-line or by popping into your local store that you've most likely noticed a plethora of different paints available. Along with an array of tools, brushes, basing material and other paraphernalia. You may have no idea what to buy, what items you need to use and really don't know what you need to purchase.

Hopefully this article will help and provide enough information to get going. We'll start off with brushes and paints.

The obvious place to start if you have a store near you, is Games Workshop. They provide a large range of paints, along with a plethora of brushes and tools. They also have a range of starter painting sets, along with basing material sets.



Another good reason for popping into a local GW store is the staff will provide a great deal of help as well. Though remember these guys are sales staff so beware not get up sold too many items you won't need to begin with. This may be the easiest option for some people but remember GW isn't the cheapest option.

What makes them an easy option for some, is the ability to walk into the store and pick everything up in one go and head home to start painting straight away. Tough during lockdown this obviously isn't an option for many.

So, which brushes will you need to begin with? You can probably get away with around 3 brushes, I would say you'll need a 0-size brush, size 1 or 2 Brush and a brush suitable for dry brushing (we'll talk more about this technique later in the article). If you visit a store or website for art supplies, you may be able to purchase a set of brushes for acrylic paints for a reasonable price. These are perfect for beginners; quality will vary depending on brand and price.



Now depending on the miniatures you'll be painting you may need a set of clippers to clip off the parts/miniatures from a sprue. You can purchase clippers from Games Workshop or your local gaming store, but these will be quite pricey. I would suggest looking on a site like E-bay for a set, as I bought a set from eBay

for around 3 quid around 5 years ago and only recently needed to purchase a new set.

So now we get to the issue of paints, this is a subject most war gamers will definitely have an opinion on this subject. A lot of gamers/hobbyists will have a preferred brand and will go to great lengths to tell you why. I personally don't have a preferred brand though I do generally prefer to buy Vallejo or Army Painter, because I simply prefer the dropper bottle compared to the normal paint pots, not because I think the paint is better than other paint brands. Now I do still purchase GW paints because they're easy to pick up. I would suggest at this stage purchase the ones that are easy to get hold of, especially if that particular brand can be bought locally.



Both Vallejo and Army Painter sell paint sets, and these may be the easy option to order on-line. Army Painter also produces a basing starter set for around 10-12 pounds which contains more than enough material to keep you going for some time.

Another item you're going to need is a palette to dip the paint out on to. Now you can pick up a plastic palette for a few pounds/dollars from any art supplier, another option is to pick up a ceramic kitchen/bathroom tile. You can get one of these at several DIY outlets, some time for free as a sample of for a couple of pounds/dollars.





These are quite good to use as they're really easy to clean. There are also porcelain palettes available in art suppliers though these can cost a lot more than a plastic version. I would only recommend purchasing one of these if you plan to paint on a regular basis.

Finally, you will probably need a cutting mat, now these come in various sizes and I'd recommend one between A5-A3, this will protect any table surface you're working on. An alternative to this is a plastic/silicon kitchen cutting board, which can be purchased in a dollar/pound store and are generally around A4 size.



For some plastic glue may be required by some, which can be purchased at most hardware store, some supermarkets. I'd recommend not purchasing glue from Games Workshop as it's quite expensive. I use Revell plastic glue with a long metal nib, as it gives me far better control. This can get bunged up, but a good tip is to remove the metal nib with clippers or pliers and run a flame along it with either a match or lighter. This will burn off the dried-up glue in the nib, remember to remove it from the plastic pot first.



## Basic Techniques

**Priming/Under Coating** – This is applying a layer of paint all over the model, this can be done with a spray paint can or surface paint that you brush on.

## Base Coating

This is just simply painting the base colours you're going to use before adding shade and highlight tones.

### Washes

These are paints are a type of paint which makes shading a lot easier and quicker. They are basically quite a thick transparent which when applied are designed to pool in the crevices on a model. This will give areas that are supposed to look dark shaded.

## Dry Brushing

This is a quick and simple technique to add some highlights to raised areas on a miniature. So, you take your brush and apply some paint to it. Then you brush off the paint on to a piece of kitchen towel to the point of there is barely any paint left on the brush.

Then gently flick the brush back and forth over the raised areas of the model. This will give the impression of light bouncing off raised areas in real life.

There are plenty of basic tutorials on YouTube as well as numerous written tutorials on a wide variety of blogs and websites. I can recommend the following websites and YouTube Channels

On Tabletop; [www.beastsofwar.com](http://www.beastsofwar.com)

Duncan Rhodes Painting Academy;  
[www.duncanrhodes.com](http://www.duncanrhodes.com) Duncan also has a YouTube channel, with some free tutorials.

Squidmar Miniatures on YouTube

Geek Gaming Scenics on YouTube &  
[www.geekgaming.co.uk](http://www.geekgaming.co.uk)

# Airborne Landing to Air Assault

## *A History of Military Parachuting*

*Author: Nikolaos Theotokis*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

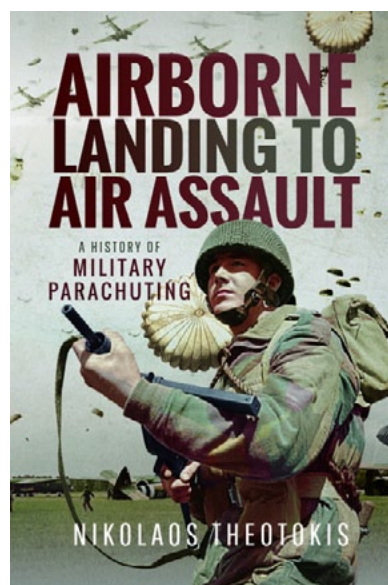
Many books have been written about military parachuting, in particular about famous parachute operations like Crete and Arnhem in the Second World War and notable parachute units like the British Parachute Regiment and the US 101st Airborne Division, but no previous book has covered the entire history of the use of the parachute in warfare. That is why Nikolaos Theotokis's study is so valuable.

He traces in vivid detail the development of parachuting over the last hundred years and describes how it became a standard tactic in twentieth-century conflicts. As well as depicting a series of historic parachute operations all over the world, he recognizes the role of airmen in the story, for they were the first to use the parachute in warfare when they jumped from crippled aeroplanes in combat conditions.

Adapting the parachute for military purposes occurred with extraordinary speed during the First World War and, by the time of the Second World War, it had become an established technique for special operations and offensive actions on a large scale. The range of parachute drops, and parachute-led attacks was remarkable, and all the most dramatic examples from the world wars and lesser conflicts are recounted in this graphic and detailed study. The role played by parachute troops as elite infantry is also a vital part of the narrative, as is the way in which techniques of air assault have evolved since the 1970s.

If You're interested in parachute units, regardless of country then this is the book for you and that's all you really need to know. I found this a very interesting look at the development and use of airborne infantry. I've read book previously about the British Parachute Regiment, but this looks at the use, and the tactics developed by those units.

The author looks at the development and history of famous units such as the Parachute regiment an 101st Airborne, he also considers their contribution to warfare since their development.



At over 200 pages this is a comprehensive look at airborne units, the book is broken down into 17 chapters looking at the origins of the parachute, the pioneering nations of airborne regiments, then there are several chapters looking at airborne units from a variety of countries along with chapters investigating their use in post WW2 conflicts.

I would have preferred more photographs and illustrations throughout the book, and that's really my only criticism. I enjoyed the book immensely and found it an interesting read, it's an incredibly well researched book. It's definitely going to appeal to a lot of military history enthusiasts, along with anyone who has served in the airborne forces. In regard to war gamers, it will provide good research for background reading for anyone planning to build an army centred around airborne forces. Especially those considering a campaign game set against the backdrop of Operation Market Garden. It's one of those books that everyone interested in modern warfare should put on their list to pick up.



# Allied Armour 1939-1945

*British and American Tanks at War*

*Author: Anthony Tucker-Jones*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

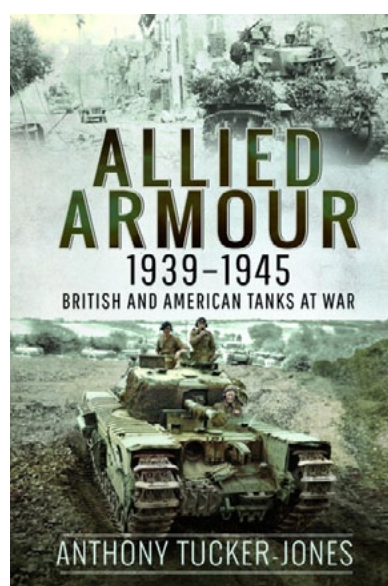
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

During the first years of the Second World War, Allied forces endured a series of terrible defeats at the hands of the Germans, Italians and Japanese. Their tanks were outclassed, their armoured tactics were flawed. But the advent of new tank designs and variants, especially those from the United States, turned the tables. Although German armour was arguably still superior at the end of the war, the competence of Allied designs and the sheer scale of their production gave them a decisive advantage on the armoured battlefield. This is the fascinating story that Anthony Tucker-Jones tells in this book which is part of a three-volume history of armoured warfare during the Second World War.

Chapters cover each major phase of the conflict, from the early blitzkrieg years when Hitler's panzers overran Poland, France and great swathes of the Soviet Union to the Allied fight back in tank battles in North Africa, Italy and northern Europe. He also covers less-well-known aspects of the armoured struggle in sections on Allied tanks in Burma, India and during the Pacific campaign. Technical and design developments are a key element in the story, but so are changes in tactics and the role of the tanks in the integrated all-arms forces that overwhelmed the Axis.

This is a hard back book of over 200 pages broken down into 17 chapters, its well-researched and comprehensive look at allied armour during the war. The author starts from the early days of the war where allied tanks took a battering against the far superior German armour. He then traces the development of the tanks, to where they eventually become on an equal footing and in some cases far superior battle tanks that help defeat the German forces.

He also takes time to show how research and tank production by the US helped to give the allies an advantage on the battlefield in the later part of the war.



He manages to trace the development of the allied tank from the Matilda to the Churchill, Sherman and eventually the Pershing.

I particularly liked Chapter 7 Rumble in the Jungle as it highlighted how unprepared and ill-equipped British forces were in Malaya and Singapore to fight against the Japanese. They lacked any suitable armour, anti-tank weapons and ironically jungle warfare training. The Indian units sent as reinforcements to Malaya had trained for Desert warfare and had not seen or trained to combat tanks until they came face to face with the Japanese Type 97 tank.

Overall, this is a really good book for anyone interested in WW2 and tank warfare. I can envision this being a popular read for those wargamers who enjoy the Second World War, as well as military historians. I found the book quite easy going and I didn't feel it was a chore to read. I can highly recommend this book, and it would be well placed on anyone's book shelves.

# Asian TV Shows to watch

Jason Hubbard



With most places still in and out of lockdown I have some Asian TV shows to binge watch whilst stuck at home, some of which might provide some future gaming inspiration for you. I've selected some shows that are currently available to watch on the apps Netflix and Viki. Most are either Chinese or Korean, though there is one from Japan and another from Taiwan.

## Nokdu Flower (Netflix)

Set during the Donghak Peasant Revolution which took place from 1894-1895. Two half-brothers fight on opposite sides of this rebellion. Baek Yi Kang is the first son of an important family. His father is wealthy, and he is notorious as a local government officer. But Yi Kang's mother is from the the lowest class. Due to his mother's low social class, people look down on Baek Yi Kang. Song Ja In is the only daughter for the head of a large peddlers group. She is the owner of Jeonjoo Yeokak, which sells merchandise and is also an inn. She has courage, stays calm under pressure and has charisma. Song Ja in dreams of becoming the best merchant in Joseon.

The show follows the lives of two brothers during the Donghak Revolt, who end up on opposite sides



to each other. Though fictional the background of the revolution is based in fact, all the key members of the Donghak leadership were real individuals. The revolution is used to drive along the story of these two brothers, whose destiny seems ill fated. The show is well produced and gives an insight to the plight of Korea just as the 19th Century is slowly coming to an end and the inevitable take over of the country by Japan. The series highlights the struggle of old Korea against the influence of the modern West along with the growing conflict with Japan.

I enjoyed this show, and I could see potential gaming ideas springing from the series, especially skirmish games between Korean factions and the Japanese. It's a definite show to watch for those interested in historical gaming.

## Alice in Borderland (Netflix)

Alice is a Japanese science fiction suspense-thriller drama streaming television series based on the manga of the same name by Haro Aso. The series stars Kento Yamazaki as Arisu, a young man who finds himself lost in an abandoned Tokyo alongside his best friends, Chōta (Yūki Morinaga) and Karube (Keita Machida). As



they begin their search for civilization, the trio quickly finds out that they are trapped in a city in which they are forced to participate in risky, violent, and dangerous games in order to survive.

The show follows Arisu trying to survive in this surreal gaming environment, every time a player survives a game his/her visa gets extended. If they fail to extend the visa, they are killed by the mysterious game controllers. This means in order to survive the players are forced into potentially life-threatening games where they could be killed.

At times this show moves into the dark side, but doesn't stay there, which I found interesting. It makes the series much more interesting to watch. There are also plenty of humorous moments in the show which pulls it away from the darker side and thus makes it a far less depressing dystopian TV show compared to others.

It's a very slick, well-choreographed action show and the games they're forced to play are unpredictable and dangerous, but the fact that the players are under resourced going into them makes it much more enjoyable to watch when they overcome the odds to win.



## The Uncanny Counter (Netflix)

Uncanny is a South Korean television series starring Jo Byung-gyu, Yoo Jun-sang, Kim Se-jeong and Yeom Hye-ran. Based on the Daum webtoon Amazing Rumor by Jang Yi, it centers on the titular character So Mun, a crippled high school boy who is enlisted to be part of the Counters, a group of demon-hunters who search for and fight against evil spirits that escape from the afterlife to prey on humans.

The counters are effectively Grim Reapers trying to catch evil spirits who have entered the bodies of individuals who have committed violent acts of crime. This is an action sci-fi adventure show in a similar vein to Heroes, where the main characters have superhuman powers, and which the main character So Mun strug-

gles to harness his. It's a light-hearted show with some great action sequences, and plenty of martial arts fight scenes. There are plenty of light-hearted moments in the show that adds some comedic elements, though I wouldn't say this was a comedy, it's action-based drama that tries to be humorous in places. Though its well worth a watch.



## Futmalls (Netflix)

Investigation into a series of strange cases leads police Zhao Xu Zhen to a mysterious website called "Futmalls.com," which claims to be from the future. Customers can buy anything from the site, including future love, fame, or beauty. The product is non-refundable. And the price is unimaginable.

This was one of the more intriguing shows I watched recently, it's a Sci-Fi crime horror TV series set in modern-day Taiwan, where people can unknowingly purchase items from the future, though there may be consequences in doing so. It's an interesting concept where vulnerable individuals are targeted to purchase items from the website, which end up with extreme consequences. This is one of the first Taiwanese shows I've watched and was really pleased with the result. It's

well written, edited and produced. It's one of the more thought-provoking Sci-Fi's I've seen in a while. It's a definite one to watch, though I was disappointed it was only 8 episodes.



## Sweet Home (Netflix)

This is an apocalyptic horror South Korean television series starring Song Kang, Lee Jin-wook and Lee Si-young. Based on the Line Webtoon of the same name by Kim Kan-bi and Hwang Young-chan, which recorded over 1.2 billion net views. Following the death of his family in an accident, loner Cha Hyun-soo moves to a new apartment. His quiet life is soon disrupted by strange incidents that start occurring in his new building. As people turn into monsters which take the form of their hidden desires, Hyun-soo and other residents try to survive.

Most of the action takes place in and around the apartment block that our band of survivors are trapped in. Unlike recent shows like the Walking Dead the villains aren't zombies but a wide variety of monsters, which makes a nice change. This isn't a gritty post apocalypse horror fest like walking Dead, but a more tongue in cheek monster horror. There are some gritty moments but overall, it didn't take itself too seriously. It's a fun watch, with plenty of action, twists and turns stuffed with monster mayhem at every turn.



## Autumn Cicada (Viki)

The year is 1941 and East Asia is being torn apart by war – on land, at sea, and in the air. Imperial Japanese forces have occupied Hong Kong and work with native collaborators in a bid to impose strict Japanese martial law. Into this lethal fray steps, a young man named Ye Chong a fierce patriot and a devoted communist. Recruited by Chinese communist forces, he agrees to go undercover as a double agent. His role will be to infiltrate the collaborators who are helping Japan tighten its grip on Hong Kong. The role involves becoming the "Autumn Cicada," a spy who will relay information back to his communist comrades who are still plotting to throw off the Japanese yoke. The role is perilous and beset with danger at every turn. When Japanese intelligence officers learn that a mole has infiltrated the military ranks, a deadly hunt begins – in an effort to expose, capture, and torture the Autumn Cicada. Fortunately, a handful of sympathetic freedom fighters is ready to help Ye Chong complete his mission – including the beautiful He Ying.

This is a period spy drama set in worn torn Hong Kong, this type of wartime drama is a genre that the mainland China excels at. As a period drama it's well produced, great scenic set pieces, costume with a well written plotline that has plenty of action and suspense. My issue with this show is the fact that the CCP are over played, in reality they probably didn't have a spy ring in Hong Kong, it's more likely to have been Nationalists spies operating in the colony rather than CCP. Apart from that it's an enjoyable spy drama. If you like spy dramas then I'd also recommend the Disguiser and Sparrow both set during WW2.







## The Sleuth of the Ming Dynasty

The Sleuth of the Ming Dynasty is a 2020 Chinese television series based on the novel of the same name by Xi Mengshi. The series was produced by Jackie Chan, it stars Darren Chen, Fu Mengpo and Liu Yaoyuan in the lead roles. Set during the 14th year of Chenghua Emperor's reign, Tang Fan, a sixth rank official and Sui Zhou, an imperial uniform guard, join hands to crush a conspiracy to maintain peace and order for the people.

After working together to solve the case involving the Marquis' son, Tang Fan and Sui Zhou gain widespread fame and form a lasting friendship with each other. Although his reputation precedes him, Tang Fan remains honest and upright in his duty as a public servant and continues to rent a humble home. His landlord is found dead in her quarters presumably from suicide, but clues lead to suspicions of foul play. After the case is resolved, Tang Fan travels to Henan to investigate the sudden disappearances of people near the tomb site of the late Northern Song Emperor.

When the culprit is revealed, it seems that he is but a pawn in a much grander conspiracy. As major cases continue to plague the capital and the local offices, Tang Fan and Sui Zhou work hard to unmask the mastermind who is pulling the strings in the background.

This is a great mystery drama, with plenty of twists and turns. The characters go through some interesting development as the series progresses. There are some really good fight sequences in this show, and plenty of action throughout. The villains aren't one-dimensional caricatures like in so many shows. They have some depth and are actually really interesting individuals. If you like detective shows, then this is definitely one to watch.

Going forward into 2021, we're going to make this a regular feature where we highlight some alternative TV shows that may inspire possible gaming ideas or are just fun to sit back and watch.



# Armies of Ancient Italy 753-218 BC

*Author: Gabriele Esposito*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

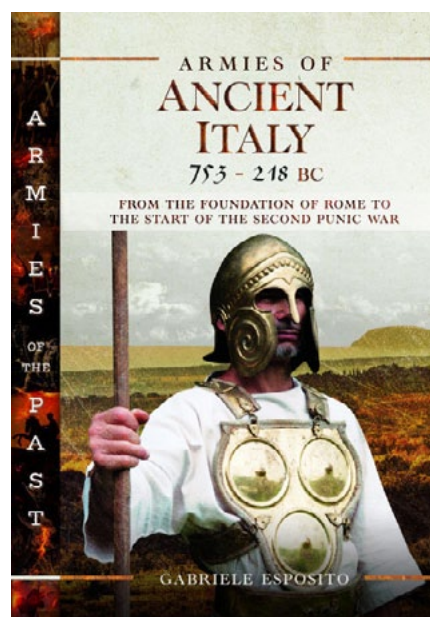
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

Before becoming the masters of the Mediterranean world, the Romans had first to conquer the Italian peninsula in a series of harsh conflicts against its other varied and warlike residents. The outcome was no foregone conclusion, and it took the Romans half a millennium to secure the whole of Italy. Gabriele Esposito presents the armies that fought these wars, in which the Roman military spirit and their famous legions were forged. He not only follows the evolution of the Roman forces from the Regal Period to the outbreak of the Second Punic War but also the forces of their neighbours, rivals and enemies.

The most notable of these, the Etruscans, Samnites and the Italian Greeks are given particular attention but others, such as the Celts and Ligures of the North and the warriors of Sicily and Sardinia, are also considered. Details of the organization, weapons, equipment and tactics of each army are described, while dozens of beautiful colour photos of reenactors show how these warriors looked in the field.

Gabriele has again produced an outstanding book; this will be an absolute vital resource for anyone wishing to build an army to wargame this period in history. The author has written a complete and detailed breakdown of the organization and equipment utilised by the armies of Ancient Italy. Just like previous books on the Greek and Hellenistic armies this book is filled with full plate photographs of re-enactors in period clothing and armaments.

The book is just shy of 200 pages and is broken down into 12 chapters, followed by a conclusion and appendices. The author starts with the founding of Rome and the early kings, through to the birth of the republic, the First and second Punic Wars as well as covering the Etruscans, Gauls and Samnites. I always enjoy reading these books, they are thoroughly researched and well written, every one of the books I've read so far in the series have been a great resource and starting point on learning about the armies in question.



This book and the series it belongs to are a must read for anyone interested in armies of the ancient world. They are especially good starting points for war gamers looking to build armies and plan campaigns to play set in this era of European and Mediterranean history. The full colour plates are a useful resource when it comes to painting your army, they make very good guides regarding the colours used. They are also an excellent resource for anyone considering sculpting miniatures for this period or making conversions on existing minis.

These books will also appeal to historians especially those who are interested in military topics rather than social history. This volume is as good as previous volumes we've reviewed, and I'd definitely suggest you add this book to your shelves.



# US plan to attack the British Empire

There was no 'special friendship' between the US and the UK before WW2. In fact, war between the two was not such a far-fetched idea - the US had its own empire ambitions, the problem was the UK ruled the world. The US decided that if they were to build an empire, they would have to remove the Royal Navy from the equation as they were deemed an obstacle to any future expansion plans. So, a conflict between the two was considered a possibility by those in the US government.

The most obvious way this would happen was the US coming up against Japan, who were expanding their empire in Asia, as Japan also had ambitions of further expansion. The US at the time were very anti-Japanese and it was likely that the US would come into conflict with Japan in Asia as both interests in the region were likely to clash. If this were to occur it would also in all probability bring to the US into conflict with Britain because at the time Britain in an alliance with Japan (Anglo-Japanese Alliance).

So, the likelihood was that the US would come into conflict with both Japan and the British Empire at the same time. So, the US government decided they needed a plan for this very outcome. War Plan Red was developed by the War Department after the 1927



Geneva Naval Conference and approved in May 1930 by Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley and Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams III and updated in 1934–35. It was a routine hypothetical exercise and did not require presidential or congressional approval. Only the Congress has the power to declare war. The war plan outlined actions that would be necessary if, for any reason, the US and Britain went to war with each other. The plan assumed that the British would initially have the upper hand by virtue of the strength of the Royal Navy. The plan further assumed that Britain would probably use its base in Canada as a springboard from which to initiate an invasion of the United States. The assumption was taken that at first, the US would fight a defensive battle against invading British forces, but the US would eventually defeat the British by blockading Canada's ports and cutting off its food supplies. It is debated whether this would have been successful however and if the plan would

have ultimately resulted in a stalemate. That was the strategy employed by Britain against the US in the War of 1812.

The British military never prepared a formal plan for war with the United States during the first half of the 20th century. For instance, the government of David Lloyd George in 1919 restricted the Royal Navy from building more ships to compete with American naval growth and thereby preventing the plan's development.



The British military generally believed that if war did occur, they could transport troops to Canada if asked, but nonetheless saw it as impossible to defend Canada against the much larger United States, so did not plan to render aid, as Canada's loss would not be fatal to Britain. They believed that once the US blockaded the Canadian ports then Canada would be lost.



British military officers planned to, instead, attack the American fleet from a Western Hemisphere base, likely Bermuda, while other ships based in Canada and the West Indies would attack American shipping and protect Imperial trade. The British would also bombard coastal bases and make small amphibious assaults. India and Australia would help capture Manila to prevent American attacks on British trade in Asia and perhaps a conquest of Hong Kong. The officers hoped that such acts would result in a stalemate making continued war unpopular in the United States, followed by a negotiated peace.

Canadian Director of Military Operations and Intelligence Lieutenant Colonel James "Buster" Sutherland Brown planned for a Canadian pre-emptive attack against the United States in the event of an imminent conflict between the United States and the British Empire. The purpose of invading the US was to allow time for Canada to prepare its war effort and to receive aid from Britain.



Sutherland Brown along with other officers carried out reconnaissance for the plan, in civilian clothes during 1921-26. Some military officers thought the plan was so crazy that it might just work whilst others considered it suicidal.

This could make an interesting alternative history campaign using early WW2 miniatures, basing in either the North American theatre of war or a conflict based in Asia against both the British and Japanese, or fighting them separately. A couple of ideas could include an invasion of Japan or trying to capture Hong Kong from the British. At this time Japan was engaged in Korea and China, so one idea for the US could be to land troops in China and aid the Chinese against the Japanese. China would be one of the main targets for expansion by the US in Asia, simply because of the resources that would be available. If the US captures China, you could have an uprising by Chinese factions, or skirmishes along the border with Russia. Once the US ventures into Asia a conflict with Britain would be inevitable because of British interests in the region.



# BLAST FROM THE PAST: MORDHEIM

**JASON HUBBARD**

Mordheim for me was the one game from Games Workshop I have never stopped playing since first picking up a copy. I would go as far to say it's one of the best games produced by GW. There have been several clones since its release, one of the better ones is the recent game Frostgrave but this is still in my opinion doesn't come close to Mordheim.

So, what is Mordheim? It's a skirmish game set in the Old-World Fantasy Warhammer setting. You would build a warband of fighters to explore and fight for glory and riches in the ruined city of Mordheim.

What made Mordheim great was several factors, for starters it was a set in the old world, and it didn't require you to build a large army but a small warband of individual fighters. Modelling and scratch building was essential to the game, especially kit bashing your warband. Scratch building terrain was popular with players, because when the game was released there wasn't many manufacturers producing city ruins.

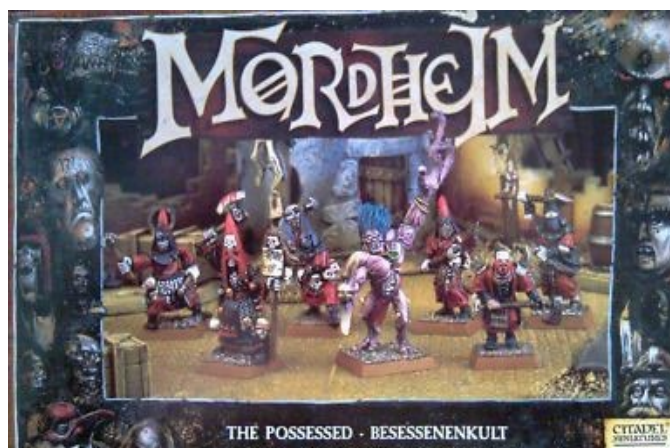
For this reason, it was one of the few games that totally encompassed the entire hobby. Mordheim was an imperial city some 500 years before





the game setting. The city was destroyed after a comet struck the city, destroying it and scattering a material called Wyrdstone throughout the city. This with other riches attracted mercenary warbands to the city to search for it. It also attracted bands of Skaven who want the Wyrdstone for their many strange contraptions and experiments.

When the game was launched it came with a comprehensive starter set, which included a soft back rule book, card and plastic scenery and sprues for a human (Empire Free Company Militia) warband and sprues for Skaven warband.



When the game was released the terrain that came with the starter set was quite impressive. It was full coloured sturdy card, with plastic components. I still have mine in really good condition, and it's regularly used for gaming. The game was supported by Games Workshop with several expansions, articles in White Dwarf along with it's own magazine called the Town Crier. Then from 2004 GW started to reduce its support of the game.



By 2014 it was no longer supported in any form, when they removed the digital version of the rule book from being available for download.

Since 2015 the game has only been available as a computer-based game titled Mordheim: City of the Damned initially released for personnel computers and in 2016 it was released for consoles.

Mordheim the tabletop version of the game has enjoyed an active following and a large community on-line. One particular un-affiliated expansion that this community produced was Border Town Burning. It took the game out of the city of Mordheim to the Northern Chaos Wastes and Cathay.



This is one of the games from the specialist range that many gamers would like to see a new updated version released. Currently if you want to play this game the only way to get hold of the rule book is either second hand on e-Bay or digitally from sites like Scribd.

Today there is a greater choice for terrain, as several companies now produce city ruins in plastic and MDF, as well as card. All of these are suitable for a Mordheim campaign. So, you've no longer got an excuse to play a game of Mordheim.





# The Black Prince and King Jean II of France

## Generalship in the Hundred Years War

*Author: Peter Hoskins*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

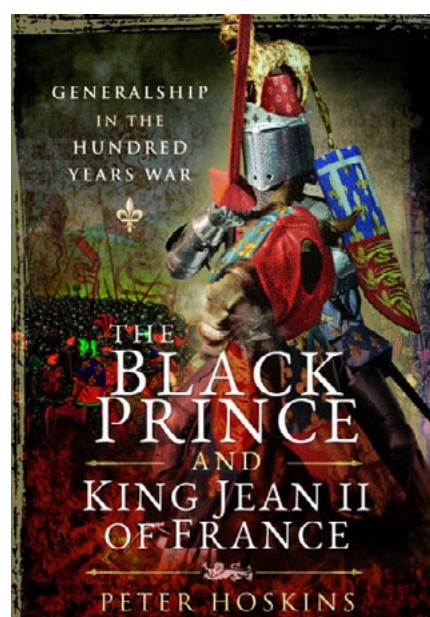
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

What were the essential qualities for a military commander during the Hundred Years War? How important were strategic vision, tactical skill and powers of leadership in medieval warfare? These are the questions that Peter Hoskins explores in this perceptive study of the careers of Edward, the Black Prince who led the English army to victory at the Battle of Poitiers and the opponent he defeated, the French King Jean II. Their contrasting characters and backgrounds are considered as is the military tradition of their time, but the primary focus of the book is a close comparison of their strengths and weaknesses as soldiers as they were revealed on campaign and on the battlefield.

The Black Prince was one of the most admired generals of his generation, a charismatic leader, a shrewd tactician and strategist and a decisive commander. In contrast King Jean was impulsive, driven more by pride, his sense of honour and personal objectives than strategic priorities. When he was put to the ultimate test at Poitiers, he lost control of his army, while the Black Prince took the initiative personally to secure victory against the odds.

Peter Hoskins analyses the leadership qualities of the prince and the king according to the principles of war enunciated by Sun Tzu and Vegetius as well as the modern principles of war of the United Kingdom armed forces. He gives readers a fascinating insight into the nature of command and the conduct of war in the Middle Ages.

The author has carried quite an in-depth research on both commanders fighting against each other during the Hundred Years War. He starts by providing a background on both of them, which I felt was necessary to understand prior to discussing the details of leadership from each of them. He starts this section of the book with some discussion of Sun Tzu leadership principles, which was a fascinating read. The author also focuses on the battles they fought in and the weapon technology utilised in those battles.



This is a book that looks more at military leadership than the history of that period, which will appeal more to military history enthusiasts than it will to those who prefer books on social history and the events of the day. I'm not sure it will appeal to all war gamers either, those who really enjoy campaign planning and tactical leadership in gaming will like this book. I think there are other books on the Hundred Years war that will appeal more to the average wargamer.

It's well researched and well written book, that takes a fascinating in-depth look at the two leaders of the day, a very good insight into military command during the Medieval period in Europe. I found it an interesting book to read but at the time of reading knew it wouldn't appeal to everyone.

If you have an interest in military leadership and history then this is definitely a book you should pick up.



## Are 3D Printed Miniatures any good?

*So, 3D printing has been around for a few years now and the technology is improving constantly, most people print terrain and miniatures at home with small printers. It's becoming more and more accessible every year. Yet what if you don't want the hassle of setting up your own printer at home or unsure you want to invest in a printer, well there are companies that will print a 3D model for you.*

There is also a plethora of highly talented sculptors on the internet producing sculpts that you can print yourself or have a third-party company like Shop3D print it for you. Every year this sector of the hobby/industry gets bigger and bigger, with more sculptors producing high quality products and 3D manufacturers making great leaps in technology advancement with more sophisticated printers being released.

One such third party print company is Shop3D, who print miniatures on behalf of the two sculptors whose models we were sent.

### *What is Shop 3D*

Shop3D is the world's first and yet unique 3D printing manufacturing plugin. Shop3D built an On Demand Manufacturing software so that you can focus on what you love most: designing beautiful products. The plugin takes care of the manufacturing and the fulfilment of your orders. It's really your factory in a button. With shop3D you can start selling physical products worldwide from your digital 3D files. the plugin automatically processes your files into physical products via our software and worldwide manufacturing capacity.

Shop3D is your Manufacturer and fulfilment partner in the Cloud. (taken from Shop3D website)



### *Miniature Reviews*

So, you're curious about a 3D printed miniature but don't want to rush out and buy a printer, well then you can easily purchase a miniature online and fortunately we've been sent a few in the post for review. So, here's our thoughts on the miniatures we were sent.







### Printed Obsession

Printed Obsession sent me two miniatures to take a look at the first is a 28mm Dwarf and the second is a larger miniature called Bob the Gravedigger. Both are 3D printed and cast in the same grey resin.



We'll start with the dwarf, he's an engineer and would work in a steampunk or Sci-fi setting rather than fantasy. The detail on this model is really good, you can see the facial feature, the spanners on his belt, along with all the detail on the handle of the large tool he's holding. There is even very good detail on his hands, you can clearly make out all his fingers. He's a really nice model and would definitely work as an RPG character.

The next miniature is a gravedigger and much larger than the dwarf, he probably somewhere between 32-40mm. The detail on the model is a little soft compared to more mainstream miniatures, but there is enough detail for painting. One feature I like is the candle on his hat and will be an excellent opportunity for some OSL (Object source Lighting) on this mini. He's stood on a pile of skulls and there is no definition loss here, you can quite clearly make out the skulls. It's a very nice sculpt and the cast/printing is really good. He's going to be a nice model to paint up.

### Nicky's Hatchery

I was sent what looks like a wolf on a ruined Greek column from Nickey's Hatchery. It's printed in a grey resin and is around 28mm in scale.



It's a nice miniature, though it feels a little small for use with say Sigmar figures from Games Workshop, it more like true scale than heroic. So, with that in mind I plan to use him as part of a duel piece. Well, I digress back to the miniature in question. The detail on the mini is quite nice it's not as crisp as a mainstream miniature cast in metal or plastic, yet it is a nice sculpt. There is some nice fur texture on the body of the model which should show up more once painted. There is some nice detail on the head and paws of the wolf. I would honestly have to say he needs to be a little bigger, just to make him seem more intimidating but overall, I quite like him and can't wait to build a duel diorama with him and either an ancient Greek warrior or a Viking warrior.

So, what are my overall thoughts with 3D printed. Well, the last time I purchased a 3D mini was some years ago, which was a Minotaur, and I was a little disappointed by the result. These are a vast improvement and has gotten me considering investing in a resin printer to print my own minis. I may even have to dust off the old 3D modelling skills, which are a little rusty and have a go at making my own sculpts. 3D printing still has a way to go before it's on par with conventionally cast miniatures but it's quickly getting there. As technology progresses the price will start to come down and it will be relatively cheap to purchase your own printer, just like a paper printer is these days.

I would definitely recommend purchasing a 3D printed model at least once and there are plenty of sculptors out there producing some great looking minis. Below we've added the links to the two sculptors whom we reviewed in this article.

[www.printedobsession.co.uk](http://www.printedobsession.co.uk)  
<https://nickeyshatchery.com/>  
[www.shop3d.io](http://www.shop3d.io)

# De Montfort

## Crusaders and Revolutionaries

*Author: Darren Baker*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

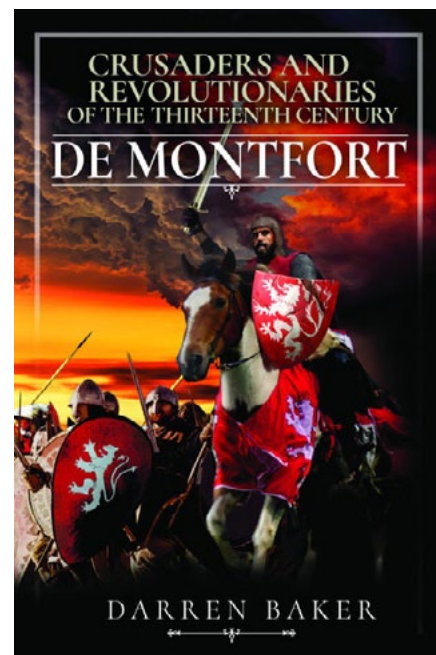
One of the families that dominated the thirteenth century were the de Montfort's. They arose in France, in a hamlet close to Paris, and grew to prominence under the crusading fervour of that time, taking them from leadership in the Albigensian wars to lordships around the Mediterranean. They marry into the English aristocracy, join the crusade to the Holy Land, then another crusade in the south of France against the Cathars.

The controversial stewardship of Simon de Montfort (V) in that conflict is explored in depth. It is his son Simon de Montfort (VI) who is perhaps best known. His rebellion against Henry III of England ultimately establishes the first parliamentary state in Europe.

The decline of the family begins with Simon's defeat and death at Evesham in 1265. Initially they revive their fortunes under the new king of Sicily, but they scandalize Europe with a vengeful political murder. By this time, it is the twilight of the crusades era and the remaining de Montfort's either perish or are expelled. Eleanor de Montfort, the last Princess of Wales, dies in childbirth and her daughter is raised as a nun.

This was a turbulent period in Medieval British history, that saw the signing of the Magna Carta. It's not a period of British history I'm overly familiar with beyond the Magna Carta and the Crusades. Yet I was looking forward to learning a little more especially with the new rule set The Baron's War due to be released soon. This seemed like the perfect book to read in preparation for the game and I can say it is. If you are thinking of starting Baron's War when it's released, then this really will help set the scene and provide you with a good understanding of this chaotic period.

The book is centred around the Montfort's, one of the most famous and infamous of the noble families from this period in British history. The author traces the family from its origins in the eleventh Century, when they were mere wardens and foresters right up to the height of

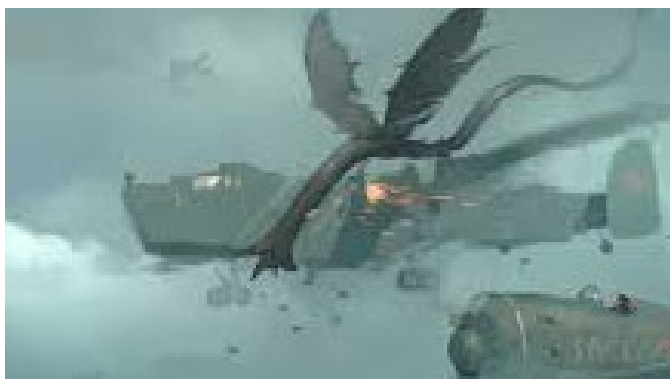


their power in the thirteenth century. This includes their involvement in both the first and second Baron's War, along with the Crusades.

This is a compelling read about one of Britain's most notorious families in this period of history, and it's set against the backdrop of the Crusades and the Baron's Wars. I'd definitely recommend this to anyone considering delving into the period as a wargamer.

The book will give you a good insight into the machinations of the period as well as the conflicts in the UK and the Middle East. It's also a great read for anyone interested in the medieval period, and especially those interested in learning more about the Montfort's.





## Achtung Cthulhu

### *Call of Cthulhu Setting*

*Jason Hubbard*

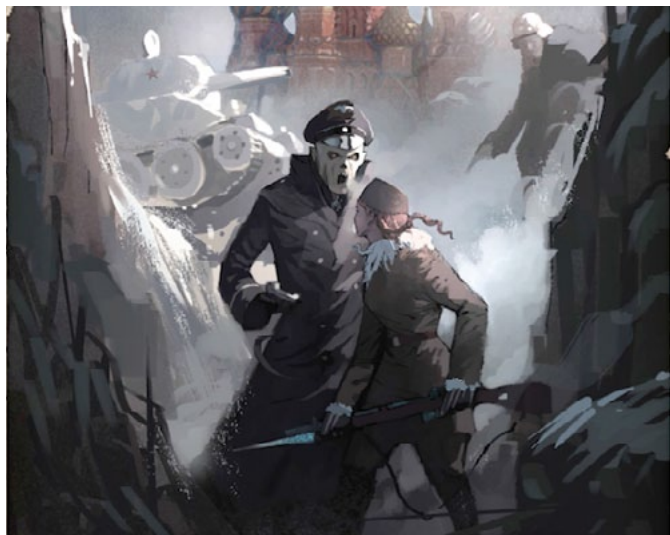
Last issue we looked at Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition starter set, this issue we're going to look at a setting for the game, called Achtung Cthulhu. In Achtung you take on the role of an allied hero fighting a secret war against the Nazi Black Sun and their rival the Nachtwolfe. The Nazis are on the verge of unleashing powerful weapons upon the allied armies. It's your job to stop them.

You'll discover the secret history of the Second World war, and the heroic deeds that some members of the allied armed forces carried out to overthrow the nightmarish alliance of occult and science created by the Nazis. You'll learn of the bizarre and inhuman conspiracies from the depths of time, as well as the outlandish war machines created by the Nazi scientific geniuses, and how close we came to being devoured by Cthulhu.

There are plenty of options when it comes to the types of characters you can play, everything from Russian Political Officers, British Commandoes, US Special Forces, government investigators, journalists through to resistance fighters from across the European



theatre of war. You can play a campaign set in the opening shots of the war, the fall of Berlin or the cold wastes of the Antarctic.



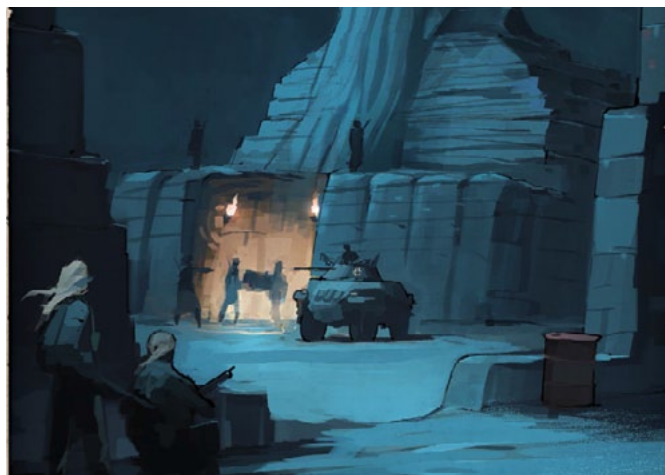
There are several different ways you can play this game, which could include espionage and counter-espionage, investigating a strange murder, an adventure as part of a partisan group or a campaign set behind enemy lines. It combines all the elements normally associated with Call of Cthulhu such as mystery, detective work, the occult and horror, along with war, alien tech, science and creatures from mythos. It's basically a pulp themed WW2 setting with creatures from the unknown thrown in for good measure, everything you want from a CoC setting.

So, it's presented in two books, the Keeper's Guide (GM) and Investigators Guide (Players), both of these books introduce the setting as well as provides information regarding the social, political and military background that particular to the campaign setting. The investigators guide provides a great of detail on character creation as well new skills such as radio operator, as well a plethora of equipment that can



be utilized. It also provides some excellent additional reference material and resources such as films, books and TV series that might help to provide some inspiration for future games.

There three different timelines provided for the game, one for the UK, another for France and the third is for the USA. These are basically social timelines, which affect the lives of people in each country, during the years 1922-45.



Each country also has suggestions for the types of scenarios that you could play, so for instance in the UK you could play more espionage games, whilst in France you could be involved with resistance activities such as sabotage or infiltration. There are also rules for using this setting with the Savage Worlds gaming system.

Remember that you'll need both the Keepers and Investigators books, along with a set of Call of Cthulhu core rules or Quick start rules to play this game. This is not a complete game by itself it's a setting under licence for Call of Cthulhu. The main books are heavily skewed to the European theatre of war, and if you want to play games set in the East, then you'll have to purchase the additional book, Guide to the Pacific Front.

My plan is to run a campaign set before the war in China, involving gangsters, spies, tomb raiding an Asian mythos. Most of the action will take place in Shanghai before moving to an ancient tomb.





# ALIEN PAINTING TUTORIAL

## ANOTHER GLOURIOUS DAY IN THE CORP

JASON HUBBARD



This is a very basic tutorial aimed at those who don't normally paint miniatures, those who have never painted a mini or for anyone who wants to a fully painted board game miniature quickly onto to the tabletop.

We're going to suggest that those who don't have any paints to use some from Games Workshop as for most people these are probably to easiest to purchase, especially for anyone living in the UK.

So, what will you need for this tutorial?

Paint: Nuln Oil (Wash), , Leadbelcher (metallic), a brown, clippers and plastic glue.

Whereas the grey can be any shade of grey as it's going to be the base colour, try to use as dark a grey as possible.



you will need at least two paint brushes, one of which will need to be a dry brush. I would also suggest having a sharp craft knife as well.

Other items you'll need is some kitchen roll, just a couple of sheets, water and something suitable to be used as a paint palette, an old plastic lid can be used or a ceramic tile.



### Step 1

Stage 1; Build the plastic aliens and under coat in either white or grey.



### Step 2

Stage 2; Paint the entire miniature in a dark grey. I used Eshin Grey from Games Workshop, it's better to paint in a dark grey rather than black.



### Step 3

Take the grey painted alien and give it was in Nuln Oil or any other black wash. This will seep into the crevices and shade the miniature, giving a black colour in appearance.



### Step 4

Stage 4; You can now coat raised areas in a gloss varnish to make the skin look shiny. Ideal areas to varnish are the head. Another way to achieve this is to use the Gloss version of Nuln Oil.

### What is dry brushing?

This is a technique where you add paint onto the brush and then brush it off onto a piece of kitchen roll before painting the miniature.

You will brush the paint off until there is very little paint left on the brush, then you'll flick the brush over the raised areas of the tanks and flat areas.



### Step 5

Stage; Now it time to paint the base, as it's a metallic looking floor, we'll paint the base either black or dark grey. Once dry, it's time to dry brush a metal colour, I used Leadbelcher from Games Workshop. Once this has dried, whack a black wash over the metal to dull it down.

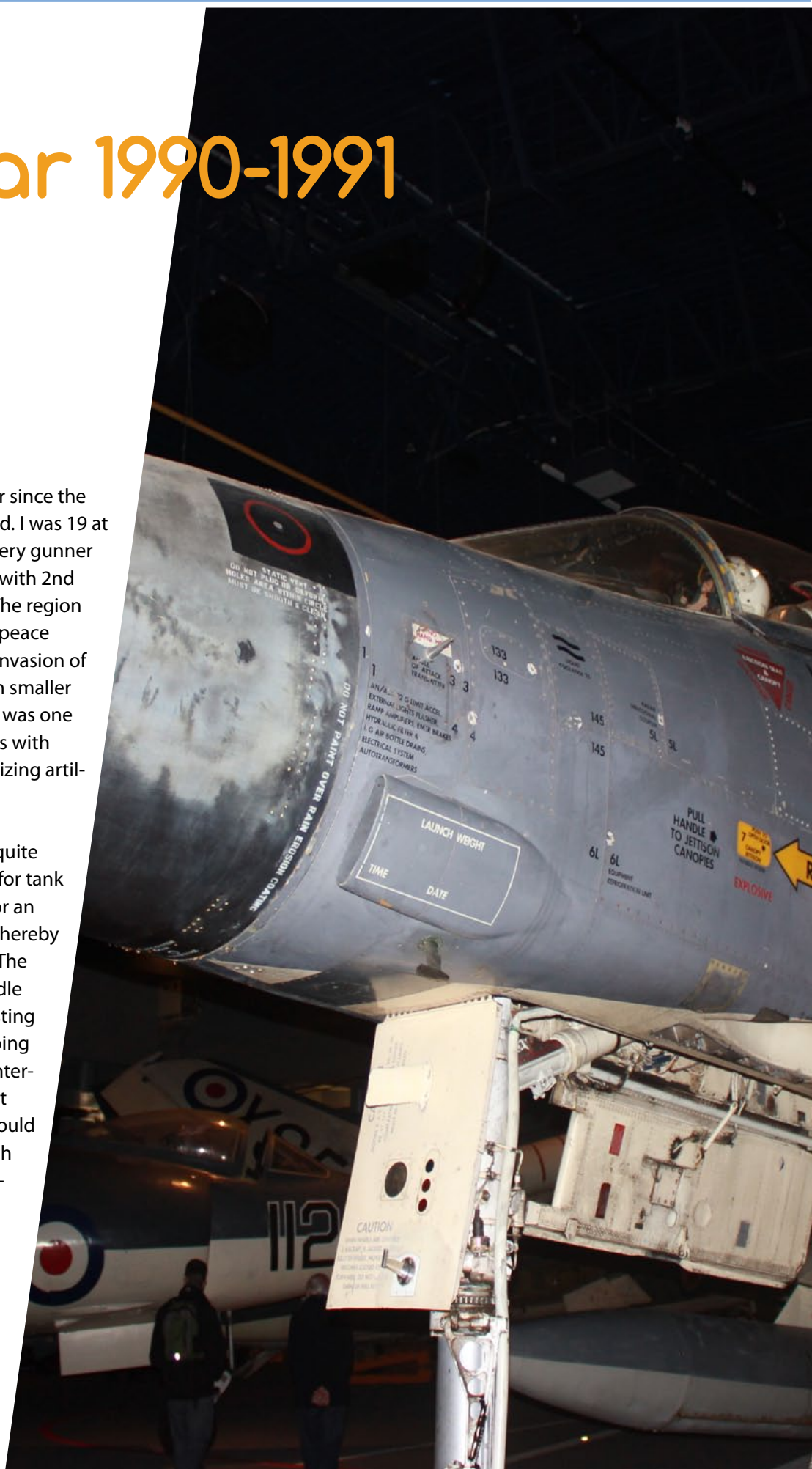


# Gulf War 1990-1991

This year will mark the 30th year since the conflict in the Middle East ended. I was 19 at the time and serving as an artillery gunner on an M109 Self Propelled Gun with 2nd Field Regiment Royal Artillery. The region hasn't seen much in the way of peace since then, with the rise of Isis, Invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan along with smaller constant conflicts. The Gulf War was one of the last conventional conflicts with combined air and land wars utilizing artillery and MBTs.

Even though the land war was quite short, it does have some scope for tank battles, there is also potential for an alternative history campaign, whereby the war didn't end when it did. The possibility for an extended Middle East conflict could be an interesting alternative, with allied forces going into Iraq, and Iran deciding to intervene, and a mirror of the current situation with insurgents. You could use the Iraq Invasion for research regarding what could have happened in 1991 had the Allied forces pushed on into Iraq.

The Gulf war or as its more commonly known in the US, Desert Storm, began on August 2nd when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, in a dispute over oil fields. Control of these fields, along with Kuwaiti and Iraqi



reserves, would have given Hussein control over the majority of the world's oil reserves. The allied response, which was to remove Iraqi troops from Kuwait began on January 17th, 1991, with aerial bombardment.

I was by this time already in theatre of operations with my artillery unit, based in Saudi waiting to move up to the front. The biggest threat at this point we faced from Iraqi, were the Scud missiles. There was only one incident when we got air raid warning that a scud had landed near us.



We spent the night in NBC kit, sat in a trench, not a comfortable night, I did manage to sleep, though to the amazement of those around me, back then I could anywhere and during any situation. I even managed to sleep through a fire mission during the ground war next to the M109 Self-propelled gun, once asleep I was like the living dead.

The Gulf War started with an extensive aerial bombing campaign. The coalition flew over 100,000 sorties,



dropping 88,500 tons of bombs, and widely destroying military and civilian infrastructure. The air campaign was commanded by USAF Lieutenant General Chuck Horner, who briefly served as Commander-in-Chief – Forward of U.S. Central Command while General Schwarzkopf was still in the United States. (Wikipedia)

Once up near the front we saw on a regular basis the US A-10's tank buster aircraft carrying out numerous sorties. I always remember waking up one morning to the sound of some very low flying aircraft, which included A-10's and assorted helicopters. These flew over at a very low-level, and a few minutes later we could hear them unloading their payload on to an Iraqi position.



## Battle of Khafji

I don't know much about Khafji, so I've included an extract below from a wikipedia article.

On January 29, Iraqi forces attacked and occupied the lightly defended Saudi city of Khafji with tanks and infantry. The Battle of Khafji ended two days later when the Iraqis were driven back by the United States Marine Corps, supported by Saudi and Qatari forces. The allied forces provided close air support and used extensive artillery fire. Casualties were heavy on both sides, although Iraqi forces sustained substantially more dead and captured than the allied forces. Eleven Americans were killed in two separate friendly fire incidents, an additional 14 U.S. airmen were killed when an American AC-130 gunship was shot down by an Iraqi SAM missile, and two American soldiers were captured during the battle. Saudi and Qatari forces had a total of 18 dead. Iraqi forces in Khafji had 60–300 dead and 400 captured. Khafji was a strategically important city immediately after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi reluctance to commit several armored divisions to the occupation, and its subsequent use of Khafji as a launching pad into the initially lightly defended east of Saudi Arabia is considered by many academics a grave strategic error.



Not only would Iraq have secured a majority of Middle Eastern oil supplies, but it would have found itself better able to threaten the subsequent U.S. deployment along superior defensive lines.

## The Ground War

The ground war for us started 10 days before the actual push through the mine fields. We were sent on shoot and scoot fire missions prior to the big push, the aim was to go to set co-ordinates and carry out a fire mission. Once you've completed the mission your gun leaves, even if other gun crews are still firing. I'll never forget that on one occasion, we completed the fire mission, and when we set off to leave our right track came off due to hitting some very soft sand. This became a tense moment, because we had to put the track back on, which is no mean feat, but we were under severe pressure as we would be vulnerable to counter-battery fire from the Iraqi's. As far as we were concerned at this point, the Iraqi's were fully capable of returning artillery fire, so it was quite tense and nerve-racking situation.

On 24 February, both British and American forces moved through the breach in the mine fields and into Iraq. The breach was basically a long thin road cut through the minefield, all drivers were told not to deviate, or they would be up the proverbial creek. We went through during the night in convoy, the only way to see the vehicle in front was by the way of a red torch. unfortunately for us the vehicle in front, their torch had gone out, though we didn't know this. It couldn't be seen, so the sensible conclusion was we've dropped behind, so speeding up seemed the correct idea. The barrel went straight into the back of a high explosive ammo wagon. The driver and the other lad were absolutely shitting themselves they told us once we arrived at the new position.



So, we moved into our first position and carried out a 50-round fire for effect, the adrenaline was really pumping now, and it didn't go down until after the ground war ended. Most of the guys didn't sleep during this period and those that did manage to get a few winks, like myself never got a full night's sleep. At most positions we were presented with Iraqi prisoners, it seems they were surrendering in their droves. I was on one patrol after entering a new position, when we came across several, they dropped any weapons and threw their hands up, we disarmed them and waited for some MP's to collect them.





There were several incidents on the gun position during this time, one of which I look back at fondly. We were in down time on the 2nd or 3rd day when an American Humvee turns up, they pulled up and asked for directions. Now these weren't direction to our HQ, or to another unit nearby, which is what you'd assume, NO, these guys asked if we knew how to get to the front, as they were supposed to be behind Iraqi lines, yep, US special forces, who were lost, LMAO.

The scariest incident happened one night around or close to midnight, we were in the middle of a fire mission, when the order came over the radio, Prepare for Tanks. Even though these were outdated, old Russian tanks, they were still extremely dangerous to us poor old Gun Bunnies. They are more manoeuvrable and better armed than an M109, which meant if they managed to get onto the position we were screwed. As tension and anxiety increased, we waited for inevitable Tank Action, but thankfully it never came, the 17/21st Lancer turned up and saved our bacon, good old tankies.

A trooper mate of mine from the 14th/20th Hussar once told me of an incident involving his tank. They had entered an Iraqi Tank position and somehow ended up being surrounded by about 5-6 tanks. Thinking their number was up, as the Iraqi tanks fired at the Challenger tank, he was sat in. The rounds just bounced off the armour, he said it was a few minutes before the crew realized they were still intact. He then said they slowly took each tank out one after the other, calmly and glad to still be in one piece.

So, the ground war ended, one hundred hours after the ground campaign started, on 28 February, President Bush declared a cease-fire, and he also declared that Kuwait had been liberated. Those 100 hours were intense, nerve-wracking adrenaline filled hours which seemed to last far longer.

Gaming this conflict is probably best done at 15mm or smaller, as this would allow you to field more of the armoured vehicles that you'd be able to at a higher scale. Rule systems such as Team Yankee would be ideal. Personally, I'd be inclined to run 15mm tank battles, as the Team Yankee range has all the tanks that served on both sides amongst their range of plastic kits. Another scenario could be to play out an artillery and tank mission. Iraqi tanks attack an allied artillery position, but the allies could have their own tanks arrive at any moment to save the position. This could be determined by a dice roll and the tank would enter from the tables edge. You could also replay Khafji, this could easily be played in 28mm though I think 15mm would be a better scale. There are plenty of possibilities, for instance tank hunting using helicopters and A10s, or Iraqi Hinds hunting US tanks for an alternative history scenario.



# CHALLENGER 2

*British Main Battle Tank of the Gulf War*

*Author: Rob Griffin*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The pioneering tank crew of the First World War would be astonished by the advances made in the design of armoured fighting vehicles over the last 100 years which have resulted in the Challenger 2, the current main battle tank in service with the British army. In terms of its speed, manoeuvrability and firepower, and the protection it provides for its crew, the Challenger 2 is one of the most advanced and sophisticated tanks ever built, and it is a popular subject with tank modellers and enthusiasts.

That is why this volume in the TankCraft series on the Challenger, featuring hundreds of photographs and specially commissioned colour profiles, is absorbing reading and such a valuable work of reference. Archive photos of the Challenger 2 in service and extensively researched colour profile illustrations depict the tank throughout its operational life. A large part of the book showcases available model kits and aftermarket products, complemented by a gallery of beautifully constructed and painted models in various scales. Technical details as well as modifications introduced during production and in the field are also examined and provide everything the modeller needs to recreate an accurate representation of the Challenger 2.

This is probably one of the iconic vehicles from the Gulf War, especially for the British. It's regarded as one of if not the best Main Battle Tank in the world. The sixty-two-ton tank developed a reputation for exceptional toughness during combat in Iraq. It was this conflict that marked it out as an outstanding tank. In 20 years of combat around the globe, the only time a Challenger 2 has even been damaged was at the hands of another Challenger 2.

The author Rob Griffin is considered an expert in post-war British military armour and writes in a thought provoking and easy style, he also has first hand experience having served with the 4/7 Royal Dragoon Guards.



As usual with a book from the Tank series I'm always impressed with the number of photos, illustrations and information provide on the tank. As I've said in previous reviews of books from the Tank Craft range these are great reference books for both modellers and war gamers. This particular volume is no exception to this, it's a perfect book for anyone wanting a guide to the Challenger 2. I'm quite happy that this will sit on my modern warfare shelf, as I found it very useful when building my British force for Team Yankee.

So, if you're looking to play games set in the modern era, then this will be a useful addition to your research materials. It has a very good section on the different model kits that can be purchased of this tank, along with some stunning images of built 1/35 kits. You won't be disappointed picking this book up or any other from the Tank craft range.

# TOWNS & TAVERNS; BOOKS OF BATTLEMATS

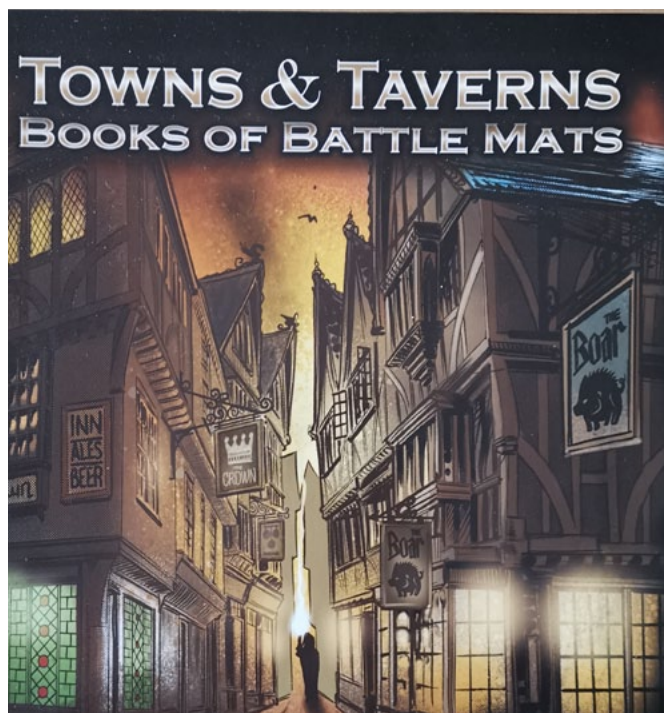


In a previous issue of Irregular we reviewed the Big Book of Battle Mats for RPG encounters, now we have on our desk the |Towns and Taverns Battlemats books, a 2 volume set.

Its 2 x A3 size book with 62 pages of full colour glossy maps that have been beautifully designed.

As usual there is a plethora of different locations within the book that can be used for numerous encounters. It's 1-inch grid based, that makes it very easy to use for a number of games, not just RPG. We have used it my house for several games of A Song of Blades and Heroes, which for those who don't know is a great little skirmish game.

There dockside, taverns, building interiors, town layouts and castle/forts in the book, which means there's plenty of scope for a wide variety of uses in your game.



The books are wire bound which means they'll lie flat , both are also laminated which means they're wipe clean and can be used with any non-permanent felt tip pen so you can draw all over them. The great feature is both books are light and easily portable which makes it a very portable product. We take the big book of battlemats which is A4 in size on holiday with us so we can play out some encounters if the weather isn't great.

I really like these products, and the Towns and Taverns is exceptional. It's great when you don't have time to set up a gaming table, you can place this down open up to any page and you've got a great location to skirmish over.





You could also run a quick and dirty RPG game using this product, by selecting various mats and playing through them creating an adventure as you go.

To go alongside this, we have the Dungeon Decorations.

## Dungeon Decorations

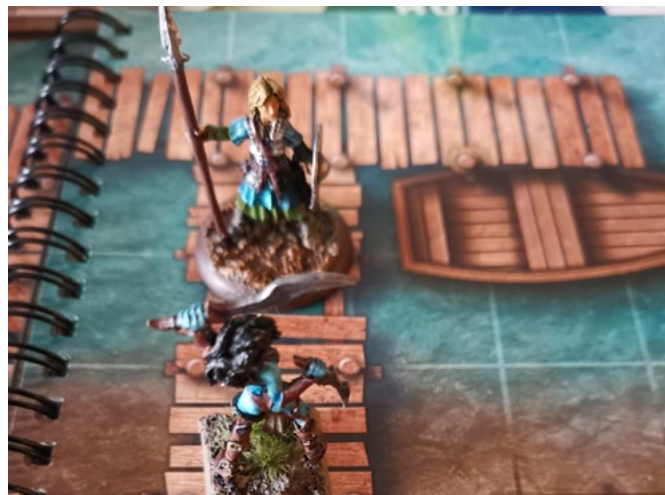
This is a pack of 100+ reusable static clings for use on any laminated surface, which makes them ideal for use in the battle mat books. These decals can add some scenic elements to your mat and game. It allows you to quickly furnish a location or add some interesting elements for you adventurers to deal with.

There are five sheets of decals that includes additional walls, stairs, furniture, doors, traps and treasure. This is



another great product for travelling with, it allows you to add terrain without the bulk of MDF or plastic pieces. It's an easily transportable product with a plethora of options to furnish a dungeon or add some great elements to a room or building interior.

I would like to see another set produced that focuses of exterior locations, such battlefields, camp sites and market stalls. This is an easy to use set, the decals peel



off both the page and laminated surface. They very well illustrated with plenty of bright colour. There is plenty of variety of items for use in the pack and will be a useful addition for any GM or player.

I don't think they're exclusively an RPG accessory as

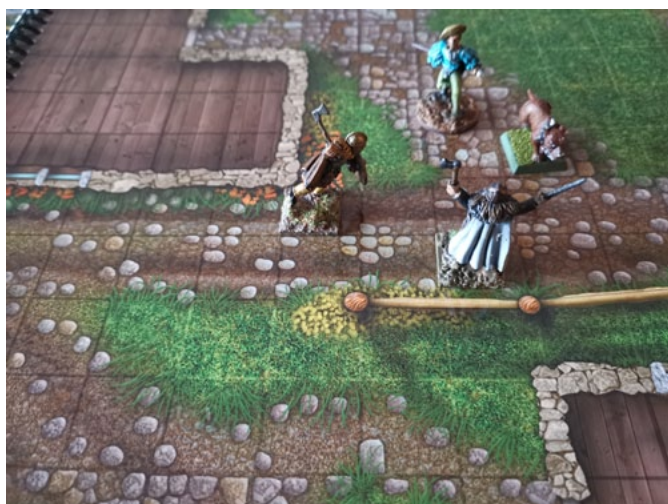






we've used them in conjunction with the Book of Battle Mats for skirmish games, as well as RPGs. My niece used the battlemat products to create simple RPG encounters in urban and wilderness settings.

These have given her the confidence to DM her first few simple games. She said she wouldn't have tried to DM a game before because she didn't think she could, but this gave her the confidence to create an adventure by herself.



She has since used both the book and the Dungeon Decorations several times to set and create some skirmish scenarios.

Myself I liked the fact that I can quickly set up a game with these two products without much effort when time is of the essence. I can take this to the club or pub and grab a quick skirmish game with friends, and we can easily change locations without any effort. Both are great products that any hobbyist should consider picking up, especially GM/DM's.

We even used the Town and Taverns books for a game of Gangs of Rome, these products are very versatile.





# England, France and Aquitaine

*From Victory to Defeat in the Hundred Years War*

*Author: Richard Ballard*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

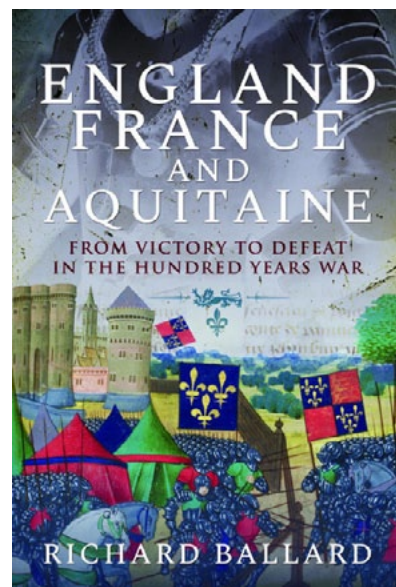
This is a narrative history of England and France during the Hundred Years War, from the triumphs of Henry V to the defeat of England and the loss of Gascony and Bordeaux – a huge blow to English prestige. It is a military history with technical detail, linked to high politics, courtly intrigue, dynastic ambition, and economic interest (the Bordeaux wine trade). The story develops after the death in 1422 of two kings: Henry V of England, soon after his military triumphs, and Charles VI of France. Both had historic claims to the French crown.

Henry V was succeeded by Henry VI, still an infant, and Charles VI by Charles VII. The contrast could hardly have been greater between Henry VI, a scholarly and religious figure, often suffering from mental illness, in an age when kings were expected to be aggressive leaders and effective military commanders, and Charles VII – an increasingly able politician, soldier and, in modern parlance, a ‘hard man,’ who personified the 15th century concept of kingship.

Intermittent but constant warfare continued until the English defeat at Castillon and the complete loss of Gascony after the siege of Bordeaux, both in 1453. The Peace of Picquigny in 1476 between the next kings, Edward IV and Louis XI, brought an end to this decisive episode in the Hundred Years War, foreshadowing England’s future total withdrawal from France.

The author writes about the loss of Gascony and what would prove to be the final aspect of the Hundred Years War. He highlights that Gascony was an important part of medieval England especially Bordeaux economically. As well as it being the subject of a long running dispute throughout the Hundred Years War.

Richard begins with the English victory at Agincourt and the deaths of Henry V and Charles VI both died in 1422. Then the book follows the two young successors to both thrones Henry IV and Charles VII.



Charles was determined on getting rid of the English from French soil, whereas Henry had little interest in the art of war.

Ballard centres on the complex characters and political shenanigans when talking about the end of the Hundred Years War, and at times it can get a little confusing especially when he starts to divert to stories concerning what seems to be peripheral personnel within the background. Yet he handles the political machinations of the French court really well and delivers a well thought-out and researched piece. It’s a solid well written account of the period and the end of the Hundred Years War, though at times can be a little dry.

This will really appeal to the historians amongst us, and it may be of interest to some war gamers looking for background regarding the war for campaign planning. Whilst I found the subject matter interesting, I couldn’t find any use for my own wargaming, mainly as I have no plans to wargame the Hundred Years War, especially the end of the conflict.

# The Highland Battles

*Warfare on Scotland's Northern Frontier in the Early Middle Ages*

*Author: Chris Peers*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

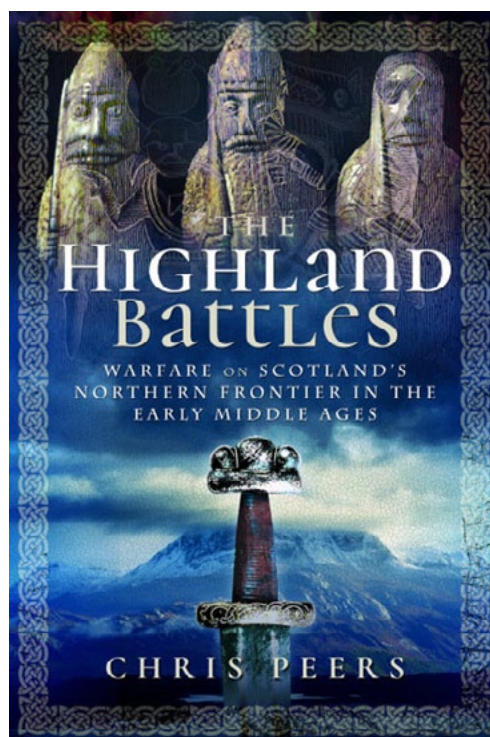
The wars fought in Scotland's northern and western highlands between the ninth and fourteenth centuries were a key stage in the military history of the region, yet they have rarely been studied in-depth before. Out of this confused and turbulent period came the more settled and familiar history of the region. The Highlands and islands were controlled by the kings of Norway or by Norse or Norse-Celtic warlords, who not only resisted Scottish royal authority but on occasion seemed likely to overthrow it.

That is why Chris Peers's ambitious study is of such value for he provides a coherent and vivid account of the series of campaigns and battles that shaped Scotland. The narrative is structured around a number of battles – Skitten Moor, Torfness, Tankerness, Renfrew, Mam Garvia, Clairdon and Dalrigh – which illustrate phases of the conflict and reveal the strategies and tactics of the rival chieftains.

Chris Peers explores the international background to many of these conflicts which had consequences for Scotland's relations with England, Ireland and continental Europe. At the same time, he considers to what extent the fighting methods of the time survived into the post-medieval period.

The Early period of the Middle Ages in Scotland is not something I knew a lot about. Most of my knowledge about this period is generally centred south of Hadrian's Wall around Viking invasions, 1066 and the Saxons. So, it was quite an enjoyable read to learn about the battles and skirmishes north of Hadrian's Wall.

The author, Chris has researched the rivalries between the Viking warlords and their battles with the early Scottish kings. He manages to reconstruct some of the key campaigns and battles fought during this turbulent period. It was period in the history of Britain that saw a lot of upheaval and changes that would go on to help shape the future of the Island.



So, a book dedicated to Scotland's role in this violent era in British history was fascinating to learn about.

Chris provides a good insight into the armies, weapons and equipment utilized during this era in Scottish history. He makes use of archaeological evidence and the sagas to paint a vivid picture of the battles fought.

This is an absolute definite read if you play wargame such as Saga for instance. This will provide you with the information to plan and run as campaign North of the wall. It has wild Scots against the Nordic Vikings, what more could you want. This is one of those books that will make you realise that you don't know as much as you think you do. It's a great read and is suitable not only to war gamers but anyone with an interest in Scottish history or the Early Medieval period. A must have book on anyone's shelf.





## Celtos Miniature Range

Celtos is a miniature tabletop battle system for two or more players. The game is set in the ancient land of Gorla. Five races battle for dominion over Gorla; the Fir Bolg, the accursed living dead-hosts of Anwyn; the Sidhe, the immortal elven rules of the elements; the Fomorians, demonic orc and goblin spawn of Chaos and the Old Night; the Gaels, warrior man and women, the favored children of the All Mother; and the Vanir, dwarven raiders of the frozen wasteland. The Celtos rulebook credits Kevin White (head sculptor), Mike Owen and Steve Saleh as the sculptors and some of the game's artwork was done by Clint Langley and Adrian Smith.

So, there are some big names from the industry attached to this range which includes Hassle-free Kev White, which automatically says quality sculpts before even looking at the range. The miniature range has been around since 2002, first created by i-Kore Limited before changing hands to Urban Mammoth in 2004 and then Brigade Models in 2005. It's been a while since I played the game, probably last played it around 2006. Though we're only going to be looking at the miniature range as they could be used in a wide number of games, which includes Frostgrave, WarCry and Open Combat. All the minis being reviewed today are single piece metal casts.



### Stone Wizard

This would definitely make a nice addition to a Warcry warband, especially as he's armed with two hammers. The sculpt and cast are really good. There are some quite noticeable mould lines down either side of the mini that will take a little work to remove but overall, he is a nice model.



## Irdril of the Silent Arrow

A member of the Sidhe faction in the Celtos world, just like the Stone Wizard. This comes in two parts, the hand holding the bow is separate from the rest of the mini. Again, there are some noticeable mould lines on the model that will need to be removed with either a sharp craft knife or a file. This a nicely posed figure that would work well as a unit hero, commanding an archer unit.



## Manannan, Champion with Greatsword

This guy looks like the classic barbarian, very Conan in style. He'd definitely work in several fantasy games including RPG's. There are some mould lines on this mini but they're very hard to see and would be easily removed prior to painting. The miniature comes in to two parts, which consists of the main body and the sword is the second piece.



## Meduinn, Fomorian Siren Leader

This could easily be used a demonette or something similar. It's a very nice sculpt and looks like Kev White's handiwork. The female looks very feminine and lithe, there are some very minimal mould lines and a tiny bit of flash all of which can be removed with little effort.



## Beastman Champion

This individual come in three parts, body, head and sword. It's a nice sculpt with quite a lot of detail, there is some flash on the head and sword, which will need clipping off. The body has some mould lines, but it took me a little while to spot them. They're quite faint and wouldn't require too much work to remove them. The detail of his armour is really well done and will make look great once he's painted.





## Cernunnos The Horned One

This is one of my favourite miniatures from this range as he reminds me of Herne the Hunter from the old Robin of Sherwood TV show. The scythe is really impressive in regard to size, a nasty looking weapon that you wouldn't want to face. This is another model that has very little in the way of mould lines and flash. He won't need much in the way of cleaning and prepping before applying paint. I'd personally place him on a slightly larger base than the standard one that comes supplied.



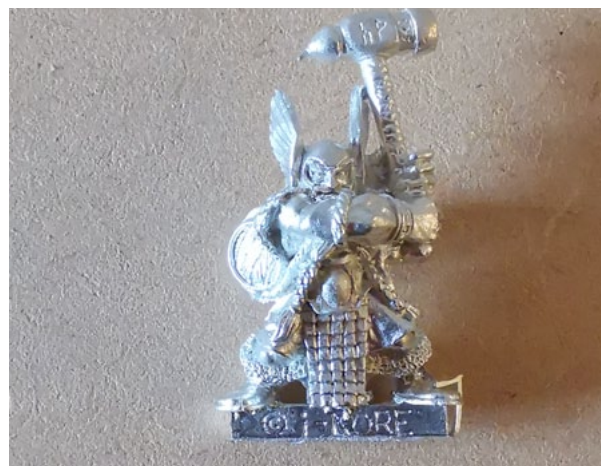
## Modron, concubine of the Old Horned God

This lady could easily be used as an Assassin model either in a game of fantasy tabletop or an RPG. It's a nice well sculpted female miniature, that will be nice to get painted. There is a noticeable mould line down one side that will need a little work to remove. Otherwise, she's good to go.



## Cliodan (axe woman)

Another Gael warrior, this time armed with a massive two-handed axe in a typical classic barbarian clothing. This is a nice simple miniature that will be easy to paint. There are very few mould lines, all of which I managed to remove with a sharp craft knife. Just like the other barbarian, if you don't like painting flesh then this faction is probably not the one for you.



## Skroll Skull Splitter

This is final miniature I have for review from the Celtos range. He's a member of the Vanir faction, which is to you and me a dwarf. He's a great looking dwarf to boot, armed with a large hammer, with runes inscribed down the handle and in true dwarf fashion has a beer barrel slung over his back. There were some noticeable mould lines down one side of this miniature, but they were easily removed with a craft knife. I love the detail of this dwarf, and he's definitely make a great hero character for anyone's army or warband, as well as a nice piece for an rpg.

Overall, I'm really impressed with this range of miniatures, and I think folk should check them out as there is a plethora of nicely sculpted miniatures that could be utilised in a range of games. You could easily put together an army for games like Fantasy Saga. They're definitely worth checking out.

<http://www.brigademodels.co.uk/Celtos/index.html>

# *Invading Hitler's Europe*

## *The Memoir of a US Intelligence Officer*

*Author: Roswell K Doughty*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

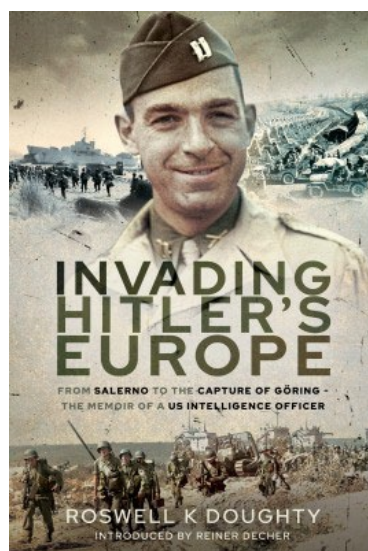
On the day that Roswell K. Doughty graduated from Boston University he also received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army of the United States of America. That, though, was in 1931 and it was not until 1942 that he was called to active duty to face some of the toughest fighting of the Second World War. With the rank of 1st Lieutenant, Doughty became an Intelligence Officer with the US 36th (Texas) Division. He subsequently saw action in North Africa, then at the disastrous Salerno landings in Italy where the Allied divisions involved suffered 4,000 casualties about which the author reveals that suspected intelligence breaches led to the Allies plans becoming known to the Germans.

Doughty was involved in the grueling battles against the formidable German defences of the Gustav Line, particularly in the tragic failed attempt to cross the Gari river (Battle of the Rapido River, January 1944) and the struggle to conquer Monte Cassino. After the Anzio landings and the liberation of Rome, Doughty and his infantry regiment, the 141st, took part in the invasion of Southern France in Operation Dragoon, fighting its way up the Rhône River and advancing up to the River Moselle in December 1944. In March 1945, his unit breached the Siegfried Line and crossed into the Germany itself.

Promoted to captain and later to major, Doughty led an Intelligence and Reconnaissance unit, the role of which was to learn what it could of enemy strengths, mine-fields, useable roads and so on, which involved going behind enemy lines to observe enemy movements first-hand.

As an Intelligence Officer, it was also part of Doughty's duties to interrogate enemy prisoners, which led him to being involved in the capture and detention of Reichsmarschall Goering and in negotiating the surrender of the still armed and hostile German First Army in May 1945.

This is the fascinating and diverse account of one officer's part in the liberation of Europe in the Second World



War, one which led him from North Africa through Italy and France into the heart of the Third Reich.

The author retells his experiences of World War 2 from training camp through the end of the war and post war Germany. It's a well written first-hand account that places you into the thick of the action. The way he writes about his experiences makes you feel you're right there alongside him. It's both a fascinating and riveting read.

One of the things I liked was the fact the author was telling his perspective from his role as an intelligence officer, normally these memoirs are from serving directly in the frontline such as infantry soldiers. So, this makes a refreshing change to read about the second world war from another perspective.

This is one of those books that will appeal to military historians more than a wargamer, though it's an interesting read from a wargaming perspective I didn't find it very useful, though some may. I think those interested in the history of World War 2 will enjoy this book more. I did like the fact it was a memoir from a HQ officer rather than a frontline combat soldier, it gave another perspective that I found interesting to read about.



# First & Second Italian Wars 1494–1504

## *Fearless Knights, Ruthless Princes & the Coming of Gunpowder Armies*

*Author: Julian Romane*  
*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

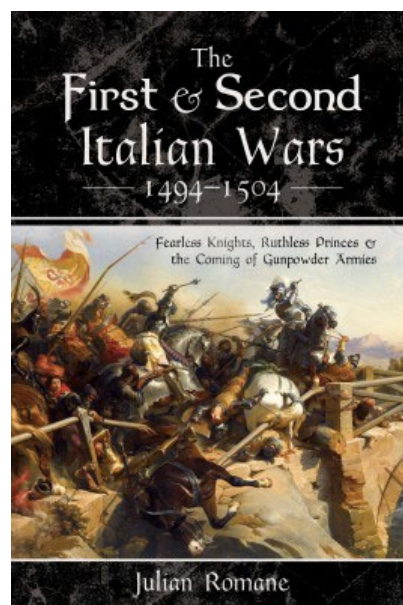
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The First and Second Italian Wars describes the course of military operations and political machinations in Italy from 1494 to 1504. The narrative begins with the French conquest of much of Italy. But the French hold collapsed. The second French invasion gained Northern Italy. This time, the French allied with the Pope's son, Cesare Borgia. Cesare managed to double deal too many people; his efforts ended in disaster. The French agreement with the Spanish allowed them to retake Naples only to be defeated at the Garigliano by the famous general, Gonzalo de Cordoba.

These wars were not just another series of medieval fights. These battles were different from what had gone before: the French utilized a new method of artillery transport; the Spanish commander formulated a new system of military unit organization, and Cesare Borgia sought different systems of raising troops and forming states. And all the powers managed to spend vast amounts of money the likes of which no one had imagined before. This was the emergence of the so-called Military Revolution.

This was an aspect of the Medieval period I knew absolutely nothing about. I was aware of the Italian Wars, and there were a lot of mercenaries used during these wars but that was the extent of my knowledge. I've become a lot more interested in the medieval period recently, especially with news of rules such as The Baron's War coming out soon. So, I was quite pleased to sit down and read about an aspect of the period that was completely new to me. I generally stick to history of Britain when it comes to this period, so stepping out of that comfort zone was quite interesting.

I found the book an engaging read, and the author managed to delve into and explain the complex events of the wars. Julian covered not only the main events such as battles, sieges but also the political shenanigans that went on behind the scenes and he did so in a way that wasn't too dry and dull.



The aspect I found truly fascinating about this era of Italian history was the cast of characters and players who fought and schemed their way through the wars. This was one of those conflicts that dramatically changed the face of military warfare, there were several innovations during this conflict. This was probably the end of medieval warfare as the age of gunpowder descended on to European battlefield.

This is a great piece of research in regard to the transition from Medieval to Renaissance warfare. It's well worth a read just for that aspect alone.

I really enjoyed this book, it provided me with a good understanding of the conflict but also the dramatic changes that took place with military innovation that changed the face of the battlefield. Anyone interested in this period will find this a great book to pick up. I would also recommend this to wargamers especially those looking at planning a campaign set either during the Italian Wars or in Europe around this time period, as this book will give a good understanding of how the battlefield was changing.



# HAMMERS SLAMMERS MINIATURE REVIEW

Recently I was sent a selection of 15mm and 6mm miniatures for the game Hammer Slammers by Brigade Models Limited. Hammer Slammers is a game I've been aware of for some time, but I'd not delved into especially the miniatures. It must be said that you can use these minis for any Sci-Fi game and not just Hammer Slammers.

## SO, WHAT IS HAMMERS SLAMMERS?

The basic game is played by two people with anywhere between 8-30 tactical units on each side (a unit is either one vehicle or one stand of infantry). The game hinges around the quality level of the troops fielded and this is further moderated by their equipment, defensive values and weaponry. The leadership ability of a detachment's commander is also key, as it determines how many TUs can be activated each turn. A small game between single detachments can be played in as little as an hour, while large multiplayer games with numerous detachments can last the day.

We'll start by looking at the 15mm range as this is the scale that appeals to me more. I was sent a selection of 15mm vehicle and some of the infantry for this scale. On initial looks I was quite impressed, yes, the vehicles are a mixture of resin and metal parts, but the casting quality is very high.



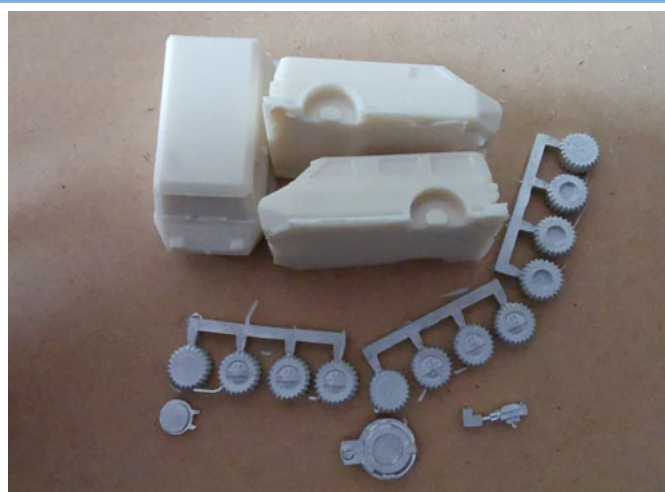
The infantry on first inspection looks good as well, it's always a bit hit and miss at this scale though most miniature manufacturers are producing figures at this scale that are far highly quality than in the past.

We'll start off with the big beast, the Hover Tank (Shaman Firefly). This comprises of two main parts, a resin body and a metal turret. The resin body is a very clean cast with plenty of detail on it, and the metal turret is also a very good sculpt and cast with very minimal flash that needs to be removed. There are some mould lines on the turret, but these can be easily removed with a file.





Next up is the jeep, which is a small resin hover vehicle and two occupants in metal. One of which is a gunner and the other is the driver. Again, the resin piece is a very clean cast and the metal parts have very little in the way of mould lines, in fact they were only visible on the back of the two occupants.



Next are three Cyclo Vans, a basic version, a taxi version and armoured police version. The base van is resin, the wheels are metal and in turret and gun for the police van are in metal. There is some clean-up required on the resin vans, but again it's very minimal and easily removed with a sharp craft knife. I quite like these as most ranges forget to include civilian vehicles and these could be very easily converted to look like insurgent forces vehicles by adding some simple weapons.



Now we have the tracked Colonial Light tank, which comprises of three resin pieces, the body and the two tracks, all of which are a clean cast and fit together very well. You will probably need to do a little bit of cleaning to make sure the tracks are a perfect fit, but otherwise they're good to go. There are four metal parts, the main turret, a small auxiliary weapon and tow hatches. As with the previous tank there are some mould lines which are easily removed and some little bits of flash.



Finally, we have the infantry, as I've said before infantry at 15mm can be hit or miss. Now these aren't the best I've seen at this scale and they are by far not the worse. They fall somewhere in the middle, which is perfectly fine, as most gamers are going to be drawn more to the tanks and other vehicles. They are nicely proportioned with a lot of detail on them, for 15mm figures they fall into the very good category rather than the excellent for me.



The hover Reece car from the ben Mehdi's Legion, this comprises of two parts the main vehicle is in resin and the small turreted weapon is in metal. Both are nicely cast and have minimal clean up. This is a highly detailed model with some nice features on the vehicle.

There are some bits of flash that will need removing but apart from that they are pretty much good to go. Overall, I was very impressed with the miniatures at this scale and would definitely recommend people grabbing them for Sci-Fi games. Personally, I plan to play some old school Rogue Trader with them, Imperial Guard vs Planetary Forces during the early expansion of human forces in the 40K universe.



So now we move on to the 6mm scale versions. We'll start with the three vehicles from the Slammers regiment, which includes a tank, a mortar jeep and a command car. On all three there are some small pieces of flash that will need to be removed, but other than that they all look pretty good. Be warned those who have no experience of this scale, the jeep is tiny at 6mm, and so be careful when handling it.



The Flaming Sword of the Holy Brotherhood is next up, and I was sent 4 vehicles from this range, which included a Tank Destroyer, APC, Cargo Carrier and light support. All of these are hover vehicle which appealed to me, as its not often companies produce hover tanks for Sci-Fi. On all of them there were some very minimal amounts of flash, but I couldn't see any mould lines. There might be some but I didn't notice them. A nice range of vehicles from this faction.



Next up we have some of the Hiroseki National Army, which uses vehicles from the Mercenaries range, which includes Sohei (heavy tank) with Gatling, Shaman Firefly, Magnus APC and a Shinigami Combat Car. These all had some very small amounts of flash that needed to be removed, which is easily done with a set of clippers. There some very tiny machine guns to add on to the combat

car, these are really small and quite easily lost if dropped so be careful when gluing these. All the vehicles are in metal, as with all the 6mm range of miniatures.



So finally, we move onto the infantry pack, which are the Fasolini. At 6mm these are very small but surprisingly very detailed, for such a small scale I'm impressed with the level of detail in these minis.

Having said that it's not a scale I would personally choose due to them being so small, my eyesight isn't up to the job of trying to paint them. There is some flash on the minis, but it is very minimal and easily removed.

Overall, I was quite impressed with the 6mm range even though I wouldn't gravitate towards them. I much prefer the 15mm scale, as my eyes can cope with that size. Both scales are worth checking out, and you don't need to play with the Hammers Slammers rules, I intend to use Rogue Trader (1st Ed 40K) with the 15mm scale for some battles between Imperial Guard and Planetary Defence Forces.

<https://www.brigademodels.co.uk/>



# THE LUFTWAFFES SECRET WW2 MISSION

*Author: Dmitry Degtev & Dmitry Zubov*

*Publisher: Air World Books*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

On the night of 14/15 August 1944, the roar of an unknown aircraft was heard over the dense forests to the south-east of Moscow. Flying past the Soviet capital, the aircraft turned towards a 'secret' landing site at Yegoryevsk on the outskirts of the city. But lying-in wait were troops of Stalin's elite secret service, SMERSH.

The troops turned on the landing lights and the aircraft, a German machine of some description, swept down to land. As the aircraft touched down, some of the SMERSH troops lost their nerve and opened fire prematurely. The German pilot responded quickly and managed to pull his aircraft up in time to brush over the top of the trees at the end of the clearing and disappear back into the dark Soviet sky.

This was just one of many vivid episodes in the operational service of the Luftwaffe's special and secret units which engaged in the delivery of agents and saboteurs in the rear of the enemy throughout the Second World War – not just on the Eastern Front but across Asia and Europe. The activities of the pilots and crews of these squadrons, even in the Luftwaffe itself, were closed and secret. Information on the operations and missions of these units was known only a limited number of people. It was common practice for the crew of one aircraft in these units to know nothing about the assignments of their fellow airmen.

The area of activity of such units and aircraft covered the whole of Europe, North Africa, the Arctic circle, the Urals, the Caucasus, and Central Asia including Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The Luftwaffe not only flew to these remote regions, but also created secret bases for their aircraft. Drawn from German and Russian sources, much of the latter only recently declassified, the authors expose for the very first time the Luftwaffe's secret operations and reveal the fate of many of the pilots, agents and saboteurs in a story as breathtakingly dramatic as any blockbuster novel.

This was one of those books where I wasn't expecting much, just some dry information about some not very

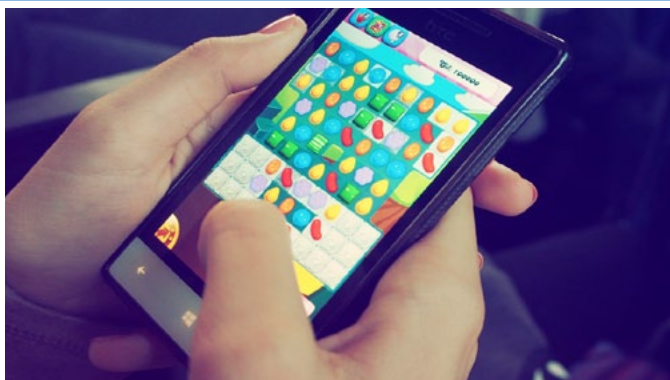


interesting missions, wow how wrong could I have been. This contains a plethora of information which hasn't previously been published in the west before regarding Luftwaffe special ops. Some of these missions could easily be used as plot lines for a WW2 war movie.

The book runs at around 250 pages, is a hardback with plenty of photographs and illustrations throughout. The majority of the missions detailed in the book are on the Eastern Front, and this is probably why the details around them haven't been published before.

It's an easy read, and I found the fact that this book was focused on espionage carried by the German military a refreshing read, normally when I've read around this topic within World War 2 has been about the Allied missions and spies. So, it made a change to read about the types of missions being carried out the Germans.

This book will appeal to several folk, it's worth a read by aircraft enthusiasts, as they talk about some of the rare airplanes used such as the Ar-232A/Tatzelwurm. This will be a useful read for wargamers who play WW2 games, as it could provide some interesting ideas for scenarios. Finally I say that those interested in spies and espionage should also pick this up to read, as they won't be disappointed.



## GOING MOBILE THE ESPORTS POWERHOUSE IN YOUR POCKET

*Many dream of trying their hand at esports. However, esports-ready gaming PCs do not come cheap, often running into many thousands of pounds.*

But with mobile esports booming, most of us already have a competition-ready esports device in our pocket. And with mobile-focused events like the Red Bull M.E.O. tournament offering a route in for everyone, there's more opportunity than ever before to establish a reputation as a respected, competition-proven esports player. Here Red Bull shares essential advice on the games to play, the gear to use, and how to build a successful career.

When most people think of an esports player doing battle at a live gaming event, they likely imagine somebody sat at a high-powered, extremely expensive custom PC; perhaps one with water cooling pipes snaking through its casing, as glowing coloured light pours from its insides. Those kinds of gaming PCs are incredible machines, but they are far from accessible or affordable for

everyone. Many gamers keen to try their hand at esports find the investment in a PC a significant barrier to entry.

*But there is another way.*

Mobile esports is booming, as games like Clash Royale and Hearthstone increasingly rub shoulders with high-profile PC games at major esports events. The best mobile esports pros enjoy highly lucrative careers, travel the world competing and court loyal fanbases; just like theirs. All gamers need to try their hand as a mobile esports pro – aside from dedication and an

appetite for hard work – is the smartphone in their pocket. And with global mobile esports events like Red

Bull's M.E.O. and the Clash Royale League growing each year, there's more opportunity than ever before to take a shot at trying it yourself.

This story offers a guide to getting into mobile esports, and a look behind the scenes of the lives of some of the best competitive gamers that choose a smartphone as their weapon of choice. So, what is needed to get into mobile esports?

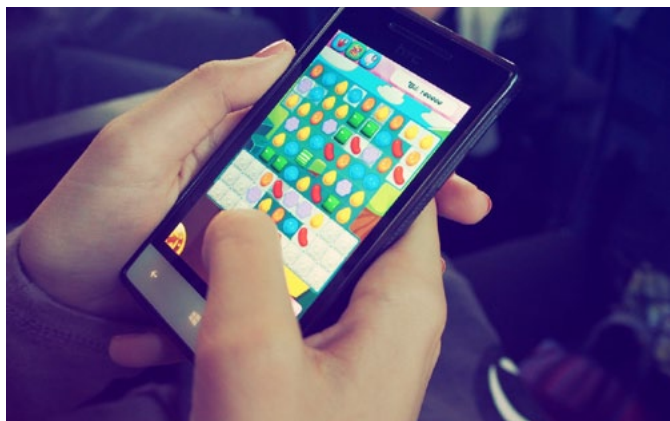




1. Find your niche While a broad experience of mobile games will help you be a better all-round player, the world of mobile esports is the same as its PC cousin when it comes to specialization. You will need to become very, very good at your game, so focus on one game: two at a push. Select something you enjoy... and stick with it. If PUBG Mobile is your jam, keep at it. If you prefer Clash of Clans, focus there. You'll spend hours in your chosen game, so adoring it is essential. You can dip your toe into other games for fun, but the very best players win by knowing their game inside out. The champions are incredibly dedicated and focused; if you want to join their ranks, you need to be too.

#### 2. Pick a phone you feel comfortable with

Most mobile esports games by far will be available on Android and iOS devices. As such, at a very basic level you need to pick a phone that supports the game you have chosen to focus on. But there's more to think about. Here, comfort and familiarity are incredibly important. If you feel more at ease on an older smartphone you've used for years, that can be a huge part of gaining competitive advantage. Maybe you buck convention and find that a smaller screen helps you focus. Again, personal preference is king here. But if you want to find a phone perfect for esports gaming, look for models that offer a bright screen (for under the spotlights of a live competition), long battery life, plenty of storage space, a decent processor, and the ability to display at high resolutions.



#### 3. You don't need a 'gaming phone'

There are lots of phones out there sold as 'gaming phones', and some are superb, like the Razer Phone 2.



But many phones simply sold as high-end generalist phones bring everything needed for esports perfection; models like the Honor View 20 or even the Samsung Galaxy S9 Plus. Those phones are just examples, of course. You should always go with what feels best for you. Just don't assume you have to go with a gaming phone.

#### 4. Practice in all conditions

You might find that when playing mobile games at home you get in the zone when curled up in bed with the lights down. There's nothing wrong with that. But if you are to make it as a mobile esports athlete, you'll need to be ready to compete on brightly lit stages with lots of background noise and large numbers of spectators. To prepare yourself for that, do what many PC esports pros do; find ways to simulate playing in the competition environment. Point a spotlight at yourself while you practice at home, go out and play in noisy public areas where there is plenty of distraction, and tackle games sat in a gaming chair as you would on stage. You might feel a little silly playing at home under the glare of a bright light; but it will feel well worth it if it helps you take away a major financial prize at a mobile esports pro clash.

#### 5. Play with everyone

It may sound obvious to say, 'play against other people'. After all, the best game AI in the world won't give you the nuanced, dynamic challenge a human player brings. But to become the best you need to face off with a variety of players, both in-person and online. Taking on rivals that use different strategies and playstyles will make you a better esports athlete. You must avoid falling into using familiar strategies to best familiar opponents. Even facing the inexperience of a new player can invigorate the way you approach a game. Simply put, keep things competitive, and keep them varied.

# Fighting for Spain

*The International Brigades in the Civil War, 1936–1939*

*Author: Alexander Clifford*

*Publisher: Pen and Sword*

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

In the English-speaking world, the Spanish Civil War is perhaps best remembered through the exploits of thousands of foreign volunteers from across the globe who joined the International Brigades – a force of communists, socialists and others who took their opposition to fascism to extraordinary lengths. Their passionate political commitment to Spain's cause and determination in battle placed them among the crack troops of the Republic's People's Army.

Yet while much has been written about the political, social and cultural significance of the brigades and their experience in Spain, less has been said about their performance as front-line troops. It is this military history that Alexander Clifford focuses on in vivid detail in this highly illustrated new study.

His account tells the story of the brigades as combat units, tracing the course of each major battle in which they fought and showing the drastic changes they underwent as the war progressed – from an untrained militia in 1936, to the tried and tested shock troops of 1937, to a shadow of their former selves by 1938 after repeated maulings and the introduction of Spanish conscripts to fill their ranks.

This is one of those conflicts leading up to World War Two that I knew about. I was aware that international brigades fought on the side of communism against Franco's fascist forces, but I didn't know details. This book filled in some of those details especially in regard to the International Brigades.

Like all civil wars it was a bloody and violent affair, the author provides a very focused and detailed account of the International Brigades during the conflict. He provides a very comprehensive insight with regard to their performance as frontline soldiers. There are also profiles of some of the key leadership of the brigades, such as George Nathan the British commander of the 15th International Brigade.



A soldier before and during WW1 who rose through the ranks to become an officer in the British Army.

The book is well written at over 200 pages with photos and illustrations throughout, including maps of key battles. Alexander covers everything from battles, weapons as well as the enemies the brigades fought against. It's a well-presented account of how ordinary men from all walks of life and all parts of the world came together to fight fascism, a political ideology that was gaining political power in other parts of Europe. Little did these men know that this conflict would spill into the wider European continent against the Germany and her axis partners.

This was a highly fascinating and enjoyable read, it was a conflict that I didn't really have much interest in prior to this book. I was aware of it, but it didn't pull at my interest, since finishing this book I want to find out more. As a wargamer this could be an interesting conflict to plan and game in, similar to the early Japanese/Chinese conflict in the East. The Spanish civil war was a fore runner to the 2nd World War.

If you've not read anything about this conflict then I'd highly recommend grabbing a copy of this book, you won't be disappointed. If you're a wargamer and looking for an early 20th Century conflict to delve into, then this could be ideal for you.





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# irregular magazine

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