



irregular

Autumn Issue 2021

magazine

Napoleonic
Skirmishing

Symbaroum RPG

Mobsitters
GW Alternatives

Napoleonic Rules
Quarantine 37

Plus Editors Challenge, Reviews, and much, much more



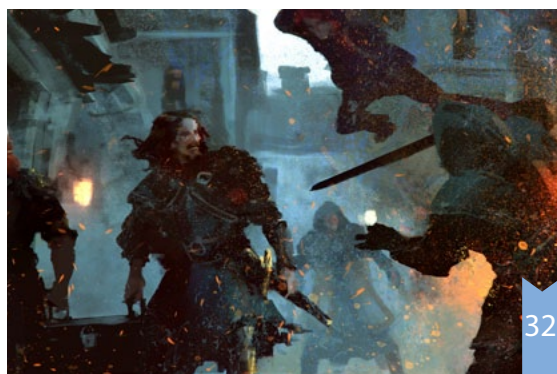
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(<https://pixabay.com/users/computerizer-4588466/>)

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Autumn Issue 2021

Editorial

Jason Hubbard

Welcome back to another issue of Irregular Magazine. The pandemic is still on going, but here in the UK gaming clubs are now open again and folks are back gaming with each other, which is a positive step.

So, Games Workshop has launched it's streaming service Warhammer Plus and we'll bring you our verdict on the service in the next issue as by then we'll have experienced a few months of the service.

In other news Mantic has lauched 3rd Edition Deadzone in the last couple of weeks. In TV land the first trailer for the Wheel of Time TV series dropped recently. James Bond is back on the big screen and Christmas is just aroundf the corner.

In the UK we've a minor crisis when some parts of the population went nuts buying petrol and diesel, and as a consequence many petrol stations around the UK ran out of fuel. I wonder if there will ever be a panic buy on miniatures lol..

In this issue we take a look at skirmish gaming the Napoleonic period, especially as I'm starting a new project Sharpe's Adventures where I plan to dive into the period by recreatinhg the adventures of Sharpe and Harper on the tabletop.

We also take a look at the RPG from Free League Publishing called Symbaroum. We'll be looking at a couple of RPGs published by Free League over the next couple of issues. That'll include Mork Borg and Vaesen.

In the next issue which will be avaliable just before Christmas, there will be a theme around Villians, Rogues and Mistfits.

Well that's all folks.....see you next time, and stay safe.

Jason

The Witch Carnival has come to town!

Once every eight years, the fantastic Witchlight Carnival touches down on your world, bringing joy to one settlement after the next. Its owners, Mister Witch and Mister Light, know how to put on a good show. But there's more to this magical extravaganza than meets the eye!

The carnival is a gateway to a fantastic Feywild domain unlike anything found on the Material Plane. Time has not been kind to this realm, however, and dark days lie ahead unless someone can thwart the dastardly schemes of the Hourglass Coven.



Zybilna & Iggwilv

Zybilna is the Archfey who rules over the domain of Prismeer from the Palace of Hearts Desire, able to grant wishes to those who need them in their time of need

Iggwilv is a legendary archmage who has adopted hags of the hourglass coven as her sisters.



Agdon Longscarf & Harengon Brigands

These Brigands led by the captain, Agdon Longscarf, are notorious through Thither. Often encountered in small bands lurking along trails and roadways they delight in extorting travelers for safe passage while rudely mocking them.

These bullies are particularly antagonistic toward those who appear to be lost or in a hurry. Agdon, aided by the magic of his scarf that he claims was woven from lightning bolts, darts around stealing small objects from anyone who strays too close.



DM Screen

The Witchlight Carnival is a fairground of kaleidoscopic tents and wagons crewed by wondrous beings is brought to life on your tabletop through this screen, with tables for carnival scenes games and prizes, as well as for tracking your party's time spent in the festivities

After their time at the Carnival is complete the screen takes your party to the three splinter realms of Hither, Thither and Yon, that make up the domain of Prismeer. Inside this screen you will find everything you need to help the adventurers explore these lands with maps for each of the realms, along with the features that make each of these Feywild domains so treacherous and unique...



Encounter Maps

The adventures of The Wild Beyond the Witchlight take place across the domain of Prismeer, from the Carnival to the realms of Hither, Thither, & Yon. Lead your party through these regions, encountering friends and foes.

Chaosium acquires Cubicle 7's Cthulhu Britannica and World War Cthulhu lines



Chaosium, publisher of the Call of Cthulhu tabletop roleplaying game, has acquired Cthulhu Britannica and World War Cthulhu from publisher Cubicle 7.

Cthulhu Britannica was produced under license from Chaosium from 2009-2017. Cubicle 7 released twelve titles that explored the Cthulhu Mythos in the British Isles.

The World War Cthulhu line was also published under license, from 2013 - 2017. Eight titles were released focussing on the Cthulhu Mythos in conflicts of the 20th Century including World War 2 and the Cold War.

Both lines received critical acclaim and won multiple awards. Cubicle 7's Call of Cthulhu license wound up at the end of 2017.

Chaosium plans to rerelease these lines for Call of Cthulhu 7th edition, with all-new layout and art. New titles are also planned for each. No release dates have been announced.

New free character sheets to mark Call of Cthulhu's 40th anniversary

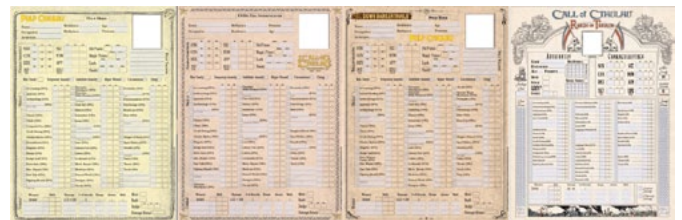
October 2021 marks the 40th anniversary of Call of Cthulhu. In honor of the occasion, we have specially prepared a range of new investigator sheets, available free to download.

The new sheets are currently include:

- Standard Call of Cthulhu (1920s and modern-day versions)
- Pulp Cthulhu

- Down Darker Trails (standard and pulp versions)
- Cthulhu Dark Ages (standard and pulp versions)

Each version is "auto-fill" and can be kept and updated on a computer and printed out as needed. Each version is provided in color and black & white format. While these new sheets will look familiar to Call of Cthulhu players, there are a few differences worth noting:



- The new design allows the sheets to be used with a wider range of PDF viewers on computers and most tablets, as well as in preview mode on most computers. Note: the character sheets are viewable in a browser, but the auto-calc feature will be disabled.
- We've increased the text size where possible to make the sheets clearer to read. And, we've added a new (optional) third sheet that allows players to keep notes, write extended backgrounds, or record whatever useful information is appropriate.
- There are also some new features available, which are described in detail here.

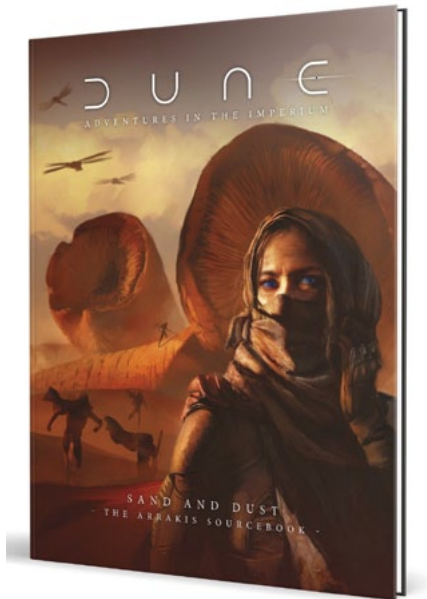
Call of Cthulhu 40th anniversary investigator sheets were designed by Mike Mason, Matt Ryan, and Max Harrison. Our thanks go to Lynne and Richard Hardy, Paul Fricker, Matt Nott, and others who helped to playtest the sheets.



Dune - Adventures in the Imperium: Sand and Dust

ARRAKIS: SOURCE OF THE SPICE.

In the backwaters of the vast Imperium of humanity lies the hostile desert world of Arrakis. It is a deadly place, where no drop of rain falls and the people live a sparse existence in the baking cities of the northern pole. But Arrakis is the most important planet in the entire universe, for it is only here that you can find the spice melange.

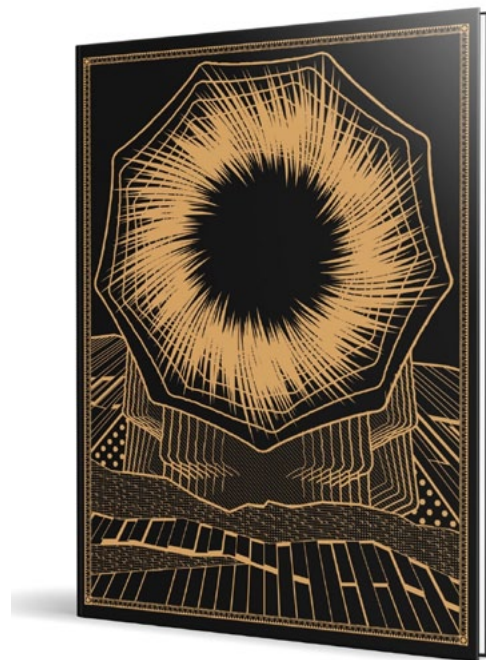


The spice is everything. To some, it is a way to extend life, to others a way to see into the future. It is the key to wealth and power in the Imperium, and many of the noble Houses will stop at nothing to control it in any way they can. The cities of Arrakeen and Carthag are full of agents and spies, all looking to gain advantage for their faction, and ready to kill to maintain the power of their masters. Will Arrakis be the place your characters prove the power of their House, or will their blood be spilled on the unforgiving sands?

Contains:

- A 156 page US letter size high quality sewn hardback packed with full colour art.
- An overview of the planet Arrakis, known as Dune, its history and features.
- Detail on the mysterious desert Fremen, and their many secrets.
- A host of new options for Fremen player characters, including new archetypes, talents and rules for riding the great sandworms.
- An in-depth look at spice harvesting and those who try to smuggle and stockpile it secretly.
- The secrets of spice revealed, including new spice related talents and abilities.

- A gazetteer of the cities of Carthag and Arrakeen, including their layout, noteworthy landmarks, and what life is like for the people of each city.
- Expanded notes on creating your own campaigns on Arrakis, including a host of new NPCs, scenario hooks and story seeds.
- New campaign options as smugglers, Fremen or merchants instead of agents of a noble House.
- A complete adventure 'The water must flow' that involves the player characters in a deadly plot during a water shortage on Arrakis.
- A digital copy of this book will be provided.



Sand and Dust Collector's Edition

This collector's edition sourcebook for the Dune: Adventures in the Imperium roleplaying game, contains all Sand and Dust's features in a stunning foil embossed cover, which takes you to the desert world of Arrakis and explores the secrets of the spice. Visit the hidden sietches of the Fremen to learn the mysteries of their culture. Walk without rhythm in the great deserts and perhaps see one of the incredible sandworms. Trade secrets with spies and agents in the bustling marketplace of Arrakeen or the alleys of Carthag. Arrakis is a planet of mysteries and danger, and those who underestimate it never leave.

- An 156 page US letter size hardback packed with full colour art, the collector's edition also has a faux leather cover and stunning Arrakis foil design.

Dune - Adventures in the Imperium Dice Set: Atreides

Choose your side in the most famous klanly vendetta of the Imperium! Side with the noble House Atreides with this beautiful custom dice set. Stand with Duke Leto, Lady Jessica, and their son Paul in the lush fields and tranquil seas of Caladan. Only with your help can they put a stop to the machinations of House Harkonnen and bring honor to the Imperium.

- Pack contains five twenty-sided dice.
- Colored in marbled green with gold numbering.
- Each dice carries a custom symbol of the Atreides Hawk on one face.



Become Agents of Dune

In early 2022 the Agents of Dune Beginner Campaign Set will offer a complete introduction to the world of Dune and the Dune: Adventures in the Imperium roleplaying game.

Everything you need to play can be found in this box, and you can begin playing the moment you open the lid. With step-by-step guidance as you play, you can run the game the moment you open the box, with no preparation! Even if you are new to Dune or even role-playing games, this adventure set guides you through an epic story where your characters are the heroes.

In this alternate "what if?" adventure, your House trades places with House Atreides as the new governors of Arrakis, daring you to imagine how you might fare on the harsh desert planet of Arrakis.



Placed in the most coveted and challenging role in the Imperium as governors of Arrakis, you must master the precious spice trade, while deadly enemies plot your demise. The whole Imperium hangs in the balance!

Agents of Dune contains a complete 120-page adventure, pregenerated player characters, NPC and asset cards, tokens for Momentum, Threat, and Determination, five custom twenty-sided dice, and even a PDF copy of the Dune: Adventures in the Imperium Core Rulebook to expand your campaign further after play.



Becoming available in Q1 2022, this beginner's box set is a fantastic way to introduce new players to the game. With the eyes of the universe watching your every move, will you be able to retain control of the treasure of Arrakis, or will this appointment spell the destruction of your House?



Vaesen and Symbaroum RPGs launched on the Foundry Virtual Tabletop



Explore the strange Gothic setting steeped in Nordic folklore and the dark fantasy world filled with adventure on the virtual tabletop. Free League Publishing today released the award-winning RPGs Vaesen - Nordic Horror Roleplaying and Symbaroum on Foundry VTT.

The Foundry modules are available as stand-alone digital products or in print & virtual bundles in the Free League webshop platform.

Vaesen - Nordic Horror Roleplaying - Core Rulebook
Symbaroum RPG - Core Rulebook
Symbaroum RPG - Starter Set



Previously released, Tales from the Loop RPG, Mutant: Year Zero RPG, the official ALIEN RPG and Forbidden Lands RPG are all available on the Foundry platform. All the released game modules on Foundry are fully integrated with the VTT platform with online maps and diagrams, player handouts ready to share, and more.

The Foundry modules are offered at a low introductory price, to invite previous owners of the physical products to try the virtual modules as well. For newcomers, the print & virtual bundles offers both in a competitive package. Please note that a Foundry base license is required to use the VTT modules.

Tales From the Loop and ALIEN are also available at VTT-platform Roll20, and you can also find both ALIEN, Symbaroum and Vaesen as official modules on VTT-platform Fantasy Grounds.

Announcing the Power Rangers Roleplaying Game!



Just in case you missed all the news coming out of RenegadeCon Virtual Special Edition this past week-end, today we are proud to announce the Power Rangers Roleplaying Game with a full slate of products to make it easy to bring the world of Angel Grove to life for your group.

It's Morphin' Time!

Become a Power Ranger and protect Angel Grove and the Earth against the evil forces of Rita Repulsa, Lord Zedd, Master Vile, and more in the epic world of Power Rangers! Whether you interrupt Rita's monster attacks in her attempt of world domination or defeat the forces of the Machine Empire from invading Earth, there is no limit to the heroic stories you will tell. In the Power Rangers Roleplaying Game, create your ultimate Power Ranger persona by combining personal traits, childhood influences, and your chosen Ranger color to make a hero worthy of the Power! This book contains everything you need to create your own Power Rangers character and play the game - just add dice, some friends, and your imagination:

Complete rules for players and Game Masters focused on fun storytelling and epic combat

Character creation tools, weapons, equipment, Zords, and more from the Zordon era

Combat and exploration information, detailed locations in Angel Grove, and tools to get your campaign started

An introductory adventure for 1st-level characters that is ready to play with your new character
May the Power protect you!

If that isn't exciting enough, and you've got a whole group that has already picked their ranger colors and can't wait to play, maybe the Power Rangers RPG Deluxe 6-player Core Rulebook Set is more your style? Featuring the same great content as the regular rulebook, this set comes with six copies, one in each ranger color with gold foil details!



For the GM in your life, we've got the perfect starting point for the campaign with the A Glutton for Punishment Adventure & GM Screen. The screen is filled with helpful tables and rules references, and the 32-page booklet features an introductory adventure to get your group started!

Finally, it's hard to play the game without DICE! Whether you're a hot-rolling Red Ranger, or a devious GM, you can pick from six colors of Power Rangers RPG dice sets, and can store them in a stylish Dice Bag!



TODD MCFARLANE LAUNCHES ICONIC GUNSLINGER SPAWN SERIES



The NEW and HIGHLY anticipated Gunslinger Spawn series hits comic store shelves this October as part of Todd McFarlane's ongoing expansion of the Spawn Universe. Much to the excitement of old and new Spawn fans alike, the title is expected to shatter even more comic book records, like the recent King Spawn #1, which sold over a half-million copies. This will be the third number one release that will climb into the #1 spot for orders in less than five months.

Early indications suggest this will be the single biggest monthly comic book launch for a new character in well over 30 years, which includes any superhero publisher, including Marvel and DC Comics.

The new comic title features Gunslinger Spawn, a man out of time who is unwillingly thrust 200 years into the future to the 21st Century. Not only does he have to navigate a new world, but he'll have to deal with the demons of his past. No one is safe from his vengeance as he heads into battle with guns blazing as he tries to find his way back home.

Acclaimed artist Brett Booth will be the featured artist on this book, with additional art by Philip Tan, Kevin Keane, and Thomas Nachlik, with colors by FCO, Andrew Dalhouse, and others. Gunslinger Spawn #1 will feature covers by a roster of superstar artists: Greg Capullo, John Romita Jr., TonTon Revolver, Booth, McFarlane, and The Walking Dead creator, Robert Kirkman! McFarlane will take the lead on writing the regular ongoing story, and he and Aleš Kot tackle the back-up tales.

Gunslinger Spawn #1 cover G adds another level of excitement to this new ongoing series. With pencils by Booth and inks by McFarlane, this cover, along with both the King Spawn #1 and The Scorched #1 (releasing in December 2021), interconnects to form one epic work of art.

Gunslinger Spawn #1 includes a 1:250 retailer incentive cover for retailers who order 250 copies. McFarlane will hand-sign and create a unique sequential number for each issue just like he did for the record-breaking King Spawn #1 (based on the Final Order Cutoff total). Each signed Gunslinger Spawn #1 1:250 includes a CGC Certificate of Authenticity that retailers can send in and redeem through CGC to have their books graded. This is the only time McFarlane will sign the Gunslinger Spawn #1 1:250 incentive copy issue.

Additionally, a Gunslinger Spawn #1 1:50 incentive variant cover by Capullo will be offered to retailers who order 50 copies.

For every 250 Gunslinger Spawn #1 issues ordered, retailers will become eligible to order five incentive covers of Gunslinger Spawn #1 by Capullo and one Gunslinger Spawn #1 McFarlane incentive cover.

The Spawn character was first introduced in 1992, to a record-setting of 1.7 million copies that still stands today as the highest-selling, creator-owned comic issue of all time. Published by Image Comics (the third largest comic publisher in North America), the Spawn character also set a record as the longest-running, creator-owned comic on the planet when issue #301 was published in 2019. In August 2021, the newest Spawn Universe title King Spawn #1 sales numbers demolished The Avengers' record and became a 25-year record-breaking new superhero monthly title launch.



Bright Eye Game's debut release Savannah Park



Bright Eye Games announce their debut release Savannah Park, designed by Wolfgang Kramer and Michael Kiesling, co-published with Deep Print.

A family friendly, pattern building puzzle game, Savannah Park is the perfect title to kick off Bright Eye's mission to bring friends and family together to create meaningful gaming experiences and bring joy to all.

"In the heart of Africa lies a paradise of incomparable beauty. These endless expanses are home to the continent's largest land animals and present the visitor with breathtaking views. You are rangers, each running your own wildlife park in this beautiful part of the world.



Help your animals to gather with others of their kind in the largest herds possible by moving them to new spaces. Secure precious watering holes that increase your park's value and protect against bush fires.

The more shady trees and lush grass in your park the better, too.



Once all animals have been moved, the game ends with a scoring round. The ranger with the most points wins.

Savannah Park unfolds a beautiful interactive puzzle with stunning artwork by Annika Heller for 1-4 players aged 8+.

Developed by the highly acclaimed game design duo Wolfgang Kramer and Michael Kiesling, it combines easy rules with an entertaining experience for families, experienced players and solo gamers alike.

Variants offer new challenges and further depth in gameplay. Compete for the next highscore!"

Hornby: A Model World steams into Yesterday



In a new UKTV Original series on Yesterday, one of Britain's best-loved model-making companies, home to four iconic brands, Hornby, Airfix, Scalextric and Corgi, opens its doors to reveal how their dedicated team of designers strive to shrink a new generation of mighty machines.



From century old steam engines to cutting edge racing cars, each programme follows the process from drawing board to perfect mini replica.

The series observes the ups and downs of the design process as they attempt to get the all-important detail spot on, whether it's perfecting the sound of a 1930's steam loco or the stitching on a First World War fighter plane.

There's a chance to marvel at Britain's best model layout builders, creating miniature masterpieces in lofts and sheds across the land.

These dedicated enthusiasts spend hundreds of hours building perfect replicas of towns, villages and landscapes for their locos to travel through and nothing but perfect authenticity will do in their model world.

In the first episode, the Hornby team go back to their illustrious past when they decide to launch a metal diecast replica of a 1940's steam locomotive, the Merchant Navy, General Steam Navigation. It's a passion project for Development Director Simon Kohler who fondly remembers his brother getting one for Christmas as a child.

The new 10-part series will air on Monday nights at 9pm on Yesterday, from 11th October, and all episodes will be available for catch-up on UKTV Play.



Ed's Challenge

Jason Hubbard



It's been a busy few months for me, as I've made some head way on the Asian Town project and slowly working through the other projects.

I'm one of those people that can't have just one project running, I prefer to have several on the go at any one time. This is because I can get bored easily, so have the ability to switch it up every now and again is beneficial. This does mean that projects take longer to complete than they should do.



The main benefit to this is I don't generally get hobby burn out or hobby block, as soon as I feel a project is becoming a chore, I'll switch to another. In the last 18 months this has been really helpful with being stuck at home in lockdown.

So, I have several projects on the go currently and a couple that have stagnated whilst I try and finish up some of the smaller ones. I've discovered in the last 18 months I'm trying to run too many at once and failing to finish anything. So, I plan to change that going forward. So, in this issue I'm going through which projects I have on the go and why I only plan to start one new project. As I said in the previous paragraph

having quite a few on the go at once has been beneficial during lockdowns as it stopped me from getting bored, but it also has the negative of not being able to finish anything.

So, what projects do I currently have on the go?

Lord of the Rings

LotR has always been one of my favourite Games Workshop rules systems, and I really like the miniatures as well. A couple of years back a friend decided to sell his collection and he offered it all to me for £40. There was far more than £40 worth of items. In fact, there were several duplicates of miniatures in the collection, which I sold and recouped my money back. Since then, I've been slowly painting up the collection of plastic, metal and Finecast minis. I've managed to paint a good chunk of the collection, but I still have a sizeable amount unpainted to get through, so this is one of those on-going projects.

Bolt Action

I started Bolt Action a couple of years ago, firstly with a small German force and slowly over the years this has grown from one tank to 4, plus now I've started a British 8th Army force which mainly consists of infantry, SAS and a Bren Gun Carrier. I still have infantry to finish for both, and I need a couple more vehicles for the British to purchase, but the Germans are pretty much nearly finished. My next plan for Bolt Action is a Chinese force which will be a mixture of Communist and Nationalist forces. I've started this already with a unit of Communists and a T-26 tank. Moving forward I'll need to convert Wargames Atlantic WW1 Germans into Chinese Nationalists.

Asian Town Terrain

Last year I decided to create a modular gaming board using Sarissa tiles. The aim is to make it quite generic so that it could double as pretty much anywhere in China, Korea or Japan. The reason for this is because I plan to play WW2 and Korean War alongside Edo period Samurai and maybe Interwar China.



So far to date I've completed two tiles and have nearly finished 3 more which contain buildings.

SPQR & Mortal Gods

I received these as Xmas presents in 2019, and I'm embarrassed to say they're pretty much still unpainted. I think the reason why both of these ended up on the back burner was because of 2020 and the pandemic.



The plan with both of these was to start playing them at the club in 2020. So, I did start painting units prior to the first lockdown, but due to the fact we couldn't meet up to play then it was placed on the back burn, and I decided to finish other projects. I've even purchased some elements to make terrain as well. This is going to be one of the projects placed back onto the paint desk.

Test of Honour

I managed to grab a load of the Test of Honour miniatures just before Warlord handed it back to Grey for Now. I've been slowly painting this up and building the Asian gaming board was partly for this project. To date I've painted up several samurai and some old Citadel Ninjas I had in a box gathering dust for years. My aim is to continue painting up the miniatures on a regular basis.

I've been focusing on the metal miniatures that I have, and only painted a few of the plastics from the original starter box that Warlord produced. The reason for this is because I really dislike the plastics, they're fiddly and frustrating to build.

Smaller Projects

Baron's War

This small project is finished for now. I completed this yesterday and all I've done is to build and paint a small warband to play simple starter games at some point. I may paint up another warband at a later date, so I have two to demo the rules at the club once we're back playing on a regular basis.



Stargrave

This is another of the small projects I started at the beginning of the year, and so far, I've painted one crew of space pirates and have plans to paint a couple more crews which are currently undercoated.

Modern Military and Civilians

This is a project I started recently to try and get all my modern military/civilian miniatures painted. So far, I've painted a squad of Chinese PLA and some mercenaries. I've also painted up a BMP 1 which can be used as a vehicle for the Chinese, Russian or an African nation. Next, I plan to paint up a squad of US infantry, along with some civilian miniatures as well.

Kill Team

I've been slowly adding miniatures to my Ultramarine Kill Team, so that I have several options to choose from. I've not yet moved up to 2nd edition rules yet, mainly because no one else I know has either. This may be because the club hasn't really gone back to meeting on a regular basis yet. I've also painted up three Eldar figures for a planned Eldar Kill Team.



I'm also considering building and painting a small Necron unit for the game.



Warcry

I've painted up miniatures for a Sigmar warband and a basic Chaos crew. I've purchased several of the Warhammer Underworlds warbands for use in Warcry, which includes the Skaven Spiteclaw's Swarm, which is painted, MorgWaeths Blade-Coven, Hrothgorn's Mantrappers, Garreck's Reavers and Sepulchral Guard. These will be slowly painted up as I'm in no rush for them to be finished as I have three warbands fully painted to play with currently.



Sharpe's Adventures

This project is new and whilst I have a few miniatures already painted because I've toyed with the idea of starting a Napoleonic game for years but didn't want to build and paint a full army. So, I've started painting some dismounted French Dragoons as Brigadier Loup's men from the Sharpe TV/book episode Sharpe's Battle. Once I've finished these the plan is to build and paint Sharpe, Harper and the Chosen men, along with Captain "Sweet William" Fredrickson and some of the 60th American Rifles.



So those are the current projects which are on the or near the paint desk. I do have other planned projects such as English Civil War skirmish in 20mm which will be set in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire. I've completed the research for this project and purchased the miniatures, but it's currently sat in the background waiting for me to start. I also have a small Qin army to paint up at some point. I've painted one of the leaders for the Qin as a test and this is far as I've gotten so far with this. The plan with this is use them with the Ronin rules to go up against Samurai, which isn't historically accurate but looked like it might be a fun campaign.



In the last year I have managed to plough through a MASSIVE chunk of my grey army. I've managed to actually finish both of my Team Yankee forces, as well as the two armies for Flames of War, though both of these now have a couple of new units to paint. Going forward I only plan to start ONE new project which will be Sharpe's Adventures.



I've realised that I'm trying to spin too many plates and getting nowhere. So, after starting my foray in Napoleonic period I don't plan to start another until I finish a project. I've been toying with jumping into the Napoleonic's for several years, but I didn't want to play large mass battles. So, with this new project the plan is play out skirmish games around the book and TV series Sharpe.



So in the next 12 months I plan to finish as many of these projects as possible before I start another one.

Egypt 1801

The end of Napoleon's Eastern Empire

Author: Stuart Reid

Publisher: Frontline Books

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The first campaign medal awarded to British soldiers is reckoned to be that given to those men who fought at Waterloo in 1815, but a decade and a half earlier a group of regiments were awarded a unique badge – a figure of a Sphinx – to mark their service in Egypt in 1801.

It was a fitting distinction, for the successful campaign was a remarkable one, fought far from home by a British army which had so far not distinguished itself in battle against Revolutionary France, and one moreover which had the most profound consequences in the Napoleonic wars to come.

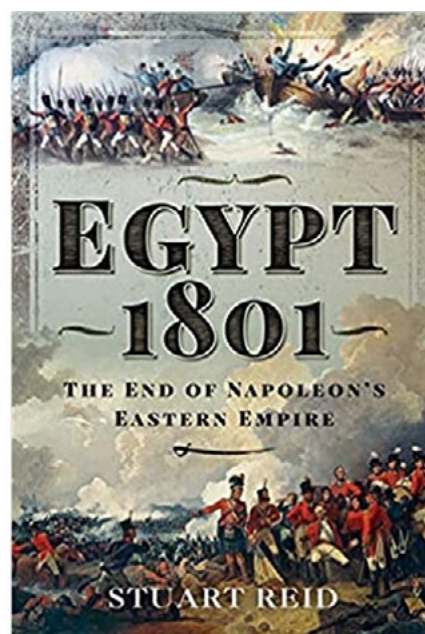
In 1798 a quixotic French expedition led by a certain General Bonaparte not only to seize Egypt and consolidate French influence in the Mediterranean, but also to open up a direct route to India and provide an opportunity to destroy the East India Company and fatally weaken Great Britain.

In the event, General Bonaparte returned to France to mount a coup which would eventually see him installed as Emperor of the French, but behind him he abandoned his army, which remained in control of Egypt, still posing a possible threat to the East India Company, until in 1801 a large but rather heterogeneous British Army led by Sir Ralph Abercrombie landed and in a series of hard-fought battles utterly defeated the French.

Not only did this campaign establish the hitherto rather doubtful reputation of the British Army, and help secure India, but its capture en route of the islands of Malta gained Britain a base which would enable it to dominate the Mediterranean for the next century and a half.

This little understood, but profoundly important campaign at last receives the treatment it deserves in the hands of renowned historian Stuart Reid.

When most people think of the British fighting the French during the Napoleonic period they immediately turn to the campaign in Spain or the battle of Waterloo. Yet some of the first forays of the British army against the French occurred several years earlier in the desert lands of Egypt.



The small British invasion force somehow manages to defeat the French on several occasions and eventually take Egypt from France. Though the British force was small it consisted of well-trained troops, but they were up against the veterans of France. The implausible had been achieved and France was chased out of Egypt.

The author covers all major actions of the campaign, and there are some in-depth appendices along with colour plates that will prove to be very useful to wargamers considering playing out this campaign. The author manages to convey the battles to paper in great detail, with clear and engaging writing.

It was a campaign I didn't really know to much about prior to reading this book. I myself had focused my previous research on the Peninsula campaign in Spain and Portugal, but this book has gotten me thinking about playing out a possible campaign in Egypt.

This book will greatly appeal to those interested in the Napoleonic war, especially wargamers who may be looking for a campaign that isn't set in Spain and recreating Waterloo.

British Riflemen

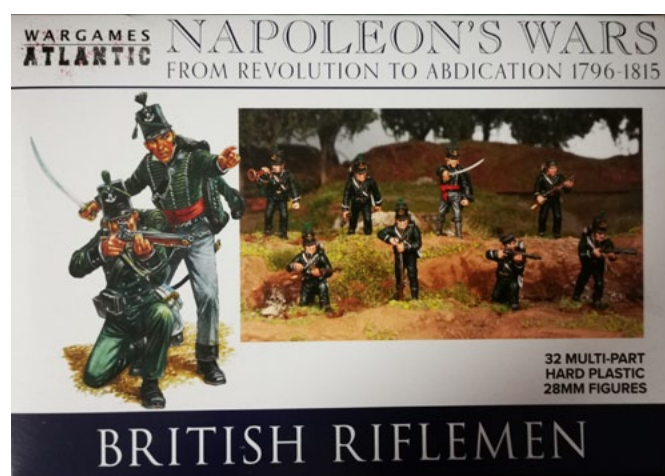
Manufacturer: Wargames Atlantic
Scale: 28mm

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

This set is part of the Napoleonic range from Wargames Atlantic. The box compromises of eight identical sprues and you are able to produce 32 multi-part figures.



Each sprue has bodies for 4 riflemen, one of which is kneeling. One of the bodies comes in two parts, with the choice of 3 upper bodies. Two of these are officer torsos, whilst the third is suitable for an NCO.



There are several head options, 10 to be precise. You have the choice of either Shako or no shako heads, there are two with the iconic flat style hat of the rifles and some bare heads. The detail on the faces is quite crisp and full of character which makes them quite impressive.



There are several weapon options to choose from including the seven barreled Nock gun used by the Navy at the time and made famous by the character Sargent Harper, desktop from the TV/book series Sharpe.

The addition of this weapon will make this set very popular with fans of the books and TV series, especially those wanting to recreate the adventures of Sharpe and Harper.



There are also five rifle options along with an officer's Sabre. Unfortunately, they didn't include a heavy cavalry Sabre similar to the type used by Richard Sharpe.



So, with this set I plan to build Sharpe, Harper and the chosen men. I also have plans to build another character from the series Captain "Sweet William" Fredrickson and a unit of his riflemen of the 60th Royal American.



This really is a great set and it'll allow you to build soldiers from the 95th Rifles, 5/60th Royal American Rifles and Portuguese caccadores. You can also use the arms for other European units that were issued with Baker rifles.



The Baker rifle was issued to several volunteer and militia regiments, a variation of the rifle was used by some cavalry units including the 10th Hussars. There were even Mexican units armed with the Baker rifle at the Battle of Alamo.



These are superbly sculpted and cast, with great detail. I found it hard to spot any mould lines or flash on the sprues, they were pretty clean. The quality of plastic miniatures is constantly improving, and manufacturers are rapidly starting to catch up on the giants of the industry.

If you want a comparison to other miniatures on the market, then you'd have to look at Perry's and they are on par with them.

I can see this box being very popular amongst Napoleonic players, the miniatures are great and the price wise they're very good value for money.

The Bronze Lie

(Shattering the myth of Spartan Warrior Supremacy)

Author: Myke Cole

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

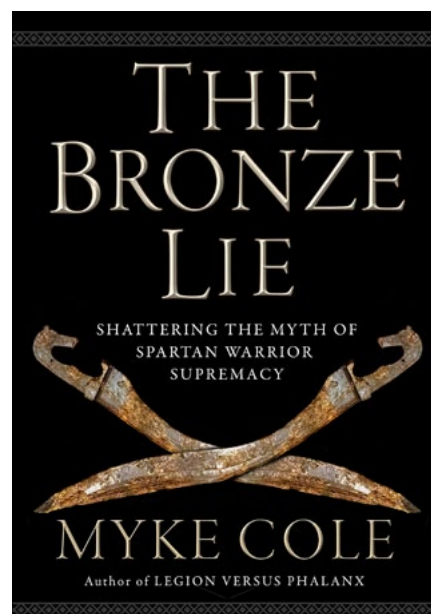
The last stand at Thermopylae made the Spartans legends in their own time, famous for their toughness, stoicism and martial prowess - but was this reputation earned?

Covering Sparta's full classical history, *The Bronze Lie* examines the myth of Spartan warrior supremacy. This book paints a very different picture of Spartan warfare - punctuated by frequent and heavy losses. We also discover a society dedicated to militarism not in service to Greek unity or to the Spartan state itself, but as a desperate measure intended to keep its massive population of helots (a near-slave underclass) in line. What successes there were, such as in the Peloponnesian Wars, gave Sparta only a brief period of hegemony over Greece. Today, there is no greater testament to this than the relative position of modern Sparta and its famous rival Athens.

The Bronze Lie explores the Spartans' arms and armor, tactics and strategy, the personalities of commanders and the common soldiery alike. It looks at the major battles, with a special focus on previously under-publicized Spartan reverses that have been left largely unexamined. The result is a refreshingly honest and accurate account of Spartan warfare.

The image of Spartan warriors has been widely exaggerated by various pop culture outlets including the film 300. It's a myth that's been passed down through history. It's a myth that started after the Battle of Thermopylae 480 BC, where King Leonidas and 300 of his finest warriors died defending their lands against a much larger Persian army. The author suggests that the Spartans were no better at fighting than other military personnel from the various city states in Greece at this time.

The myth of the Spartan warrior might just be one of the greatest PR stunts committed throughout history. They lost the battle of Thermopylae, and yet have been immortalised as some of the greatest warriors in history.

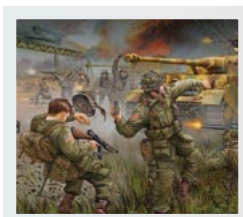
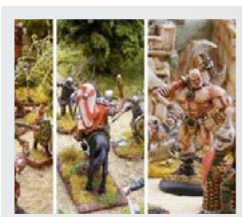
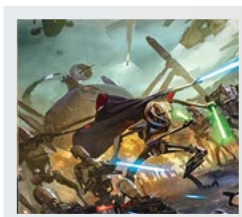
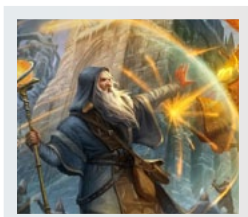
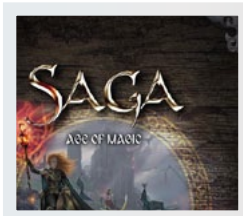
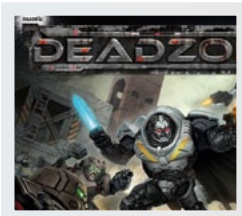
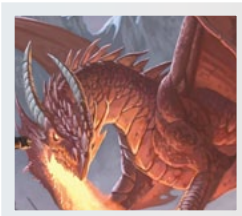
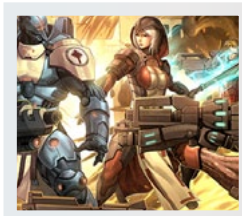
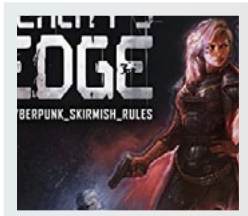


The authors set out in his book to show that this is just that a myth and the Spartans were no superheroes of their day.

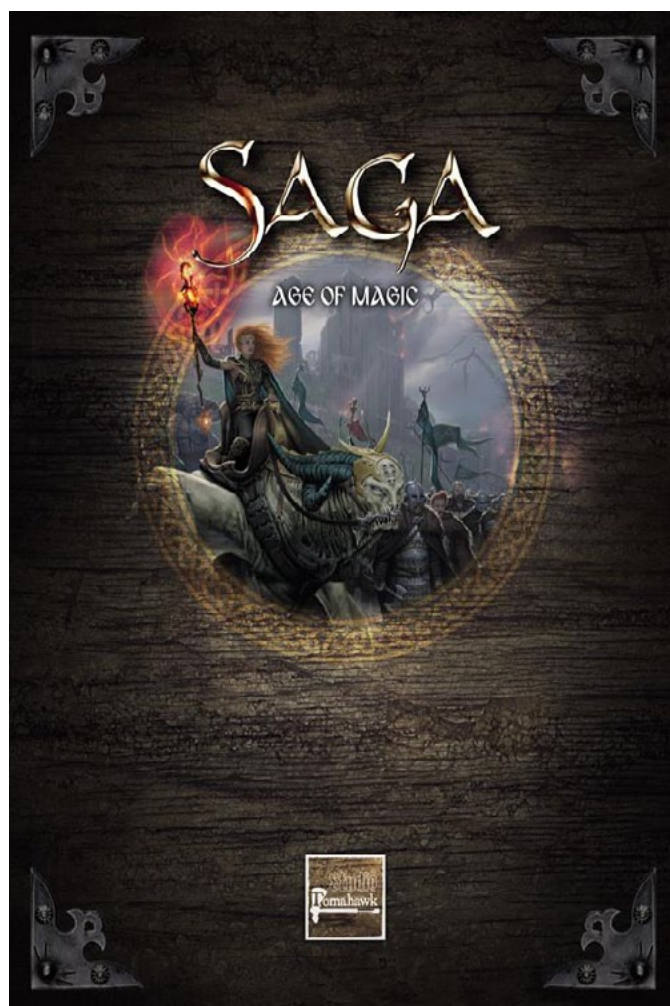
The book is well written, and the author shows through his writing that he has an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the subject matter. I found this book fascinating to read, it was compelling from the first page until the last. It gave me a greater understanding of the soldier of ancient Greece and in particular that of the Spartan warrior.

I would highly recommend this book who is keenly interested in Ancient Greek history, along with anyone who has an interest in military history of that period. Wargamers who are considering this period or those who already play this period will enjoy this book, and it'll provide some useful reference material.

It's been one of my most enjoyable and fascinating reads this year. I can't recommend this book enough.



ALTERNATIVES TO GAMES WORKSHOP



Recently there has been yet another backlash against Games Workshop, with many players saying they're looking for new games to play. Yet, what is there out in the world of tabletop that can be picked up as an alternative.

Well, there are a plethora of different games spanning a wide variety of genres from all periods of history through to steampunk, Cybertech and high fantasy. There are also numerous miniature lines from a wide-ranging number of manufacturers. There are even plastic miniature producers, as well as metal and resin the choice is much larger these days and the quality is really high.

So, what are the possible rules systems out there.

Fantasy Mass and Skirmish games

Kings of War - Mantic Games (Mass Battle)
 Dragon Rampant – Osprey Publishing (Skirmish Battle)
 Battle Havoc – Seb Games (Mass Battle)
 Song of Fire and Ice – Cool Mini or Not (Mass Battle)
 Frostgrave – Osprey Publishing (Skirmish)
 Open Combat – Second Thunder (Skirmish)
 Saga Age of Magic – Studio Tomahawk (Skirmish Battle)

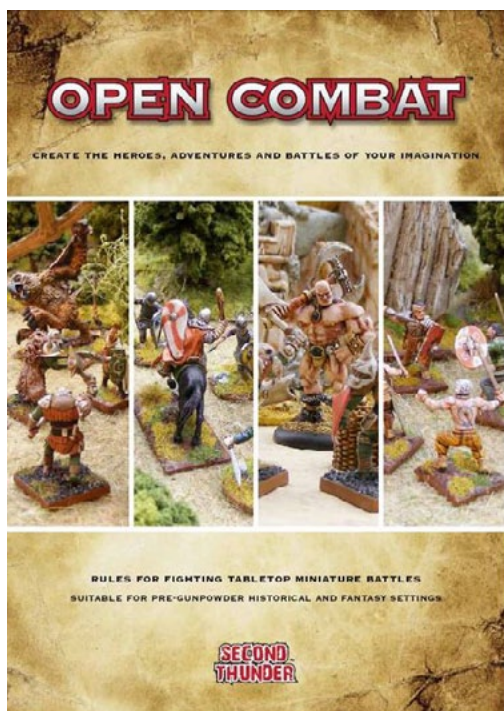


Sci-Fi Games'

Beyond the Gates of Antares (Warlord Games)
 Stargrave (Osprey Publishing)
 Infinity (Corvus Belli)
 Deadzone (Mantic Games)
 Star Wars Legion (Fantasy Flight Games)
 Reality's Edge (Osprey Publishing)

The other alternative is to switch to playing historical games. You'll have the choice to play anything from Cavemen right through to more modern conflicts.

This will include mass battle games as well as skirmish level conflicts. Historical gaming also lends itself to a wide variety of scales from 2mm up to 28mm. Some of the more popular scales in the historical world include 6mm, 15mm, 20mm or also known as 1/72 and 25/28mm. Some of the more popular periods will include Ancients, Dark Ages, English Civil War, Napoleonic and World War Two.



Two games I can highly recommend for those who like tanks are either Flames of War (WW2) and Team Yankee (Cold War) both of which are from Battlefront. Both games are 15mm mass battle games, and the majority of the miniatures from Battlefront are produced in plastic. The starter boxes for both of these games are an absolute bargain, under £40 each. In fact, I managed to get a copy of the Flames of War starter set, Hit the Beach for £28. Both sets comprise of two starting armies which includes tanks and infantry units in FoW and Team Yankee has tanks and other armoured vehicles.



There are plenty of rule systems and manufacturers in the marketplace, covering a wide range of historical periods. Below are just a sample of the possible games you can play.

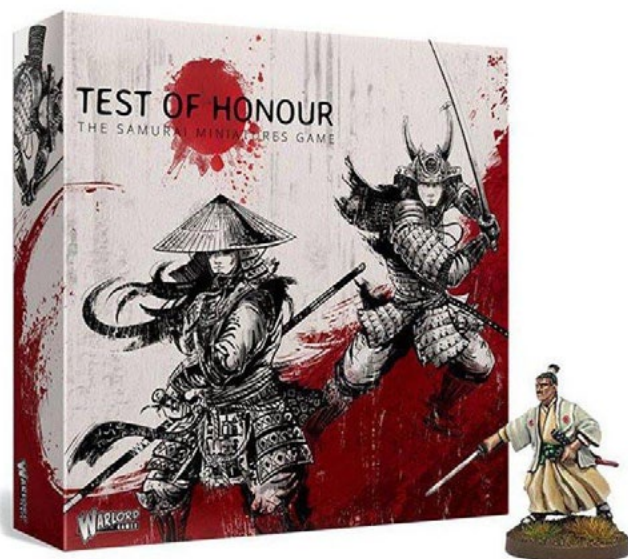
Warlord Games - Bolt Action (WW2), Hail Caesar (Ancients), SPQR (Ancients Skirmish) and Black Powder (Age of Musket).

Osprey Publishing – Osprey produce a number of small rulesets covering a wide range of historical and non-historical genres. There is an article in this issue looking at some of the Napoleonic period rule sets by Osprey.





Mordiphius produces a WW2 game in conjunction with Airfix called Airfix Battles. This is a great way to make use of all those Airfix and 1/72 model kits and miniatures you may have.



Footsore Miniatures and Games – Test of Honour (Samurai), Gangs of Rome (Ancient Roman Street fights), Baron's War (Medieval) and Mortal Gods (Ancient Greek)



I stopped playing the two Games Workshop mass battles games several years ago, simply because I became bored with them both. I still play some of the boxed games from GW, such as Warcry, Kill team and Blood Bowl. I also still dabble in Lord of the Rings as I still feel this is one of the best rule systems Games Workshop has produced and the miniature line is really nice.



These days I tend to play more skirmish level games rather than mass battle, simply because I don't find I have the time or inclination to want to build several thousand points of Space Marines like I did in the past. I prefer to plunge myself in to history and the stories from the past, which allows me to be a bit freer as to where I purchase miniatures from.

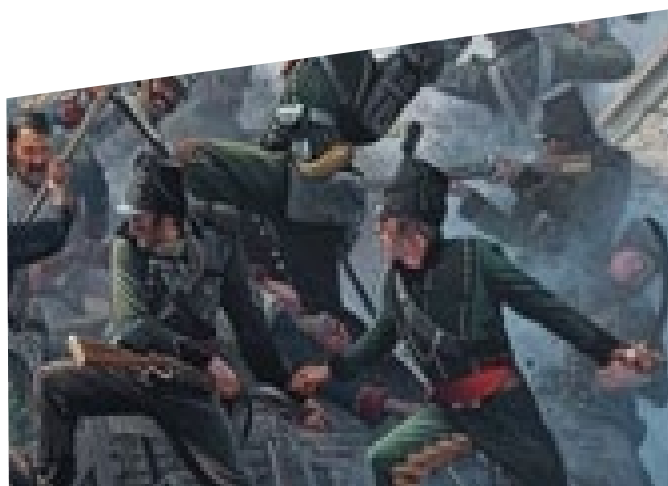


Well hopefully that's given you a jumping off point in your search for alternatives to play, rather than 40K and Age of Sigmar.



Napoleonic Wargaming Rules

Jason Hubbard



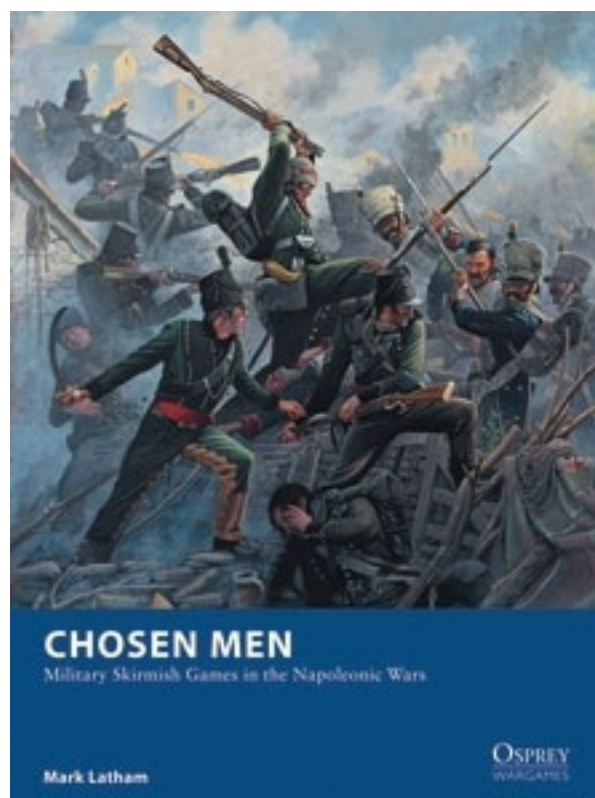
Most of the rules I'll be taking a look at in this article are generally geared towards skirmish gaming rather than large scale battles. I was fortunate enough to be sent a selection of rules from Osprey Publishing, the only rule set I bought and owned prior to this article is Chosen Men. There are a plethora of rule sets out in the marketplace and this is simply because this period of gaming is very popular.

Chosen Men

Chosen Men is a set of fast-action skirmish rules detailing the bloody skirmishes between light troops in the Napoleonic Wars. The primary focus of the game is on soldiers and NCOs in light 'flank' companies, as they scout ahead of larger forces and take part in man-to-man actions against enemy skirmishers.

Although the game allows for the formation of accurately sized companies of light infantry and cavalry if you wish, these formations are broken down into small groups of up to a dozen men. For the most part, officers are not swashbuckling super-heroes, but staunch commanders who rally and direct their men to achieve the battlefield objectives. Although the game uses an alternating action turn sequence, officers can use their influence on multiple units at the

same time in an effort to steal the initiative. With all rolls resolved using standard 6-sided dice, this game combines a classic wargaming feel with modern war-game mechanics.

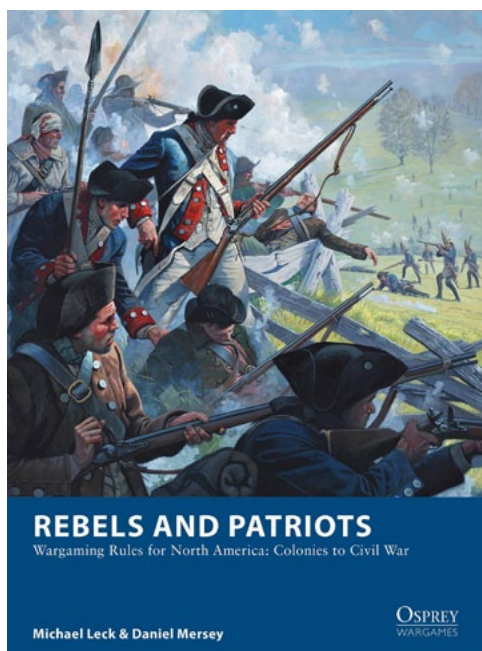


For a new project I'm starting based around the adventures of Sharpe I plan to use this set of rules as my main go to set. I will also make use En Garde for some smaller scenarios where I'm only using a few miniatures on either side. For those who are familiar with Games Workshop Fantasy rules will find this ruleset very similar and thus easy to grasp. This isn't a handful of minis game, but a small unit skirmish game. You are putting together small units of say 4-10 soldiers, with an NCO plus you can add upgrades such as flag bearer, musician, or champion, then you add any special rules and weapons.

This works as a great gateway into Napoleonic's without having to build and paint a large army. It's really quick and easy to pick up, with just a small selection of models per side. It's also a great set of rules for those more veteran Napoleonic gamers who want to play small actions or have limited time to get a game in.

Rebels and Patriots

From the first shots at Jumonville Glen to the surrender at Appomattox, Rebels and Patriots allows you to campaign with Wolfe or Montcalm, stand with Tarleton at Cowpens or Washington at Yorktown, or don the blue or grey to fight for Grant or Lee. From the French and Indian War, through the War of Independence and the War of 1812, to the Alamo and the American Civil War, these rules focus on the skirmishes, raids, and small engagements from this era of black powder and bayonet.



Your Company is commanded by your Officer during these tumultuous conflicts. Each battle that your Officer faces allows him to develop new and interesting traits. Does he perform heroically and earn a *nom de guerre*?



Or falter, to be forever known as a yellow belly?

This game is based on the Lion Rampart ruleset, which is also published by Osprey, so those who have played that set of rules will find Rebels and Patriots very familiar and should grasp it very quickly. This rule set allows you to partake in fighting across the pond and is perfect for those wanting to refight the War of 1812 or the war with Mexico and the Battle of the Alamo. Yet, it is more than that as you can recreate the conflicts prior to 1812 and those that came after right up to and including the US Civil War.

The game is aimed to be played with around 40-60 miniatures, which means it's roughly sits between Chosen Men and Absolute Emperor, it's a small action skirmish game. The rules have a pretty good campaign system, where you get to track experience and roll for traits for your officers. A good campaign system simply is the icing on the cake in regard to rulesets and this ruleset boasts a really good one.

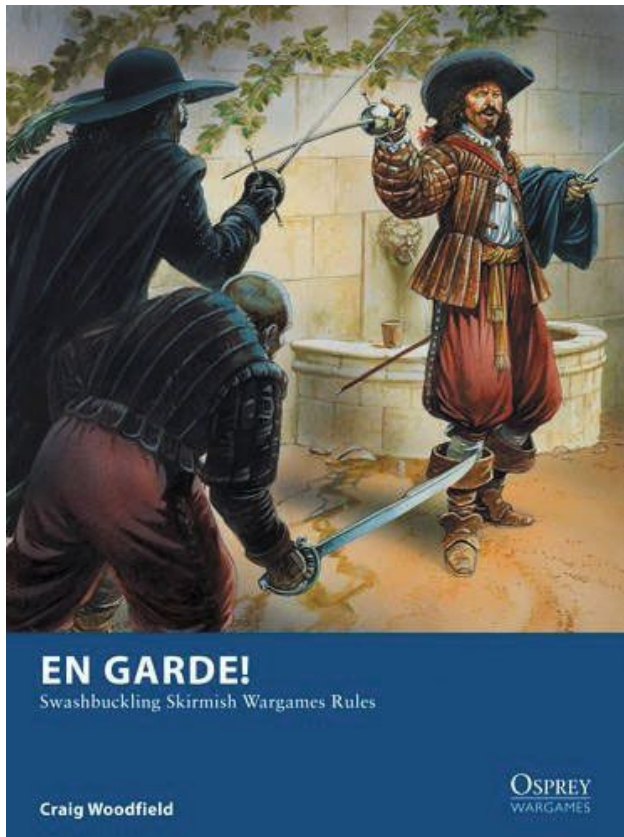
You build your force around your commander, and he will level up as you progress. This is a nice feature as it gives the game a slight RPG feel. The book contains 12 scenarios to play through, and you can play them as a campaign. I really liked this ruleset and I've been thinking of playing some 1812 skirmish games at some point. Also, this will allow me to play some skirmish games set in the US Civil war.

The rules are really quick and easy to learn, especially if you're already familiar with the Lion Rampart rules. Overall, it's a really good set of rules that cover a good chunk of US history.



En Garde

En Garde! is a small-scale skirmish game based on the successful Ronin rules, in which small groups of warriors fight each other for honour or riches.



Rather than just rolling a few dice, the rules allow players to make tactical decisions about how the models that they control will fight - offensively, defensively, or by applying special skills and abilities. En Garde! covers the conflicts of the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries, when black-powder weapons started to become common in battle, but martial prowess still determined the outcome.

Play as Border Reivers, Conquistadors, Landsknechts, Aztecs, French Musketeers, Caribbean Pirates and many more, in scenarios that evoke classic engagements of the genre. Simple campaign rules allow multiple scenarios to be played in sequence and permit warbands to develop over time. An appendix is also included to provide brief rules for supernatural creatures of the period - monsters, demons, revenants and witches - and new abilities and equipment to fight them, making En Garde! the perfect ruleset for gamers who want something a bit different from the norm.

En Garde is a swashbuckling game with the added bonus of black powder weapons which makes it ideal to play small skirmishes between a handful of miniatures, and ideal for my Sharpe Adventures project. The rules are based on the Ronin ruleset also published by Osprey, it's designed to fit the periods from the late

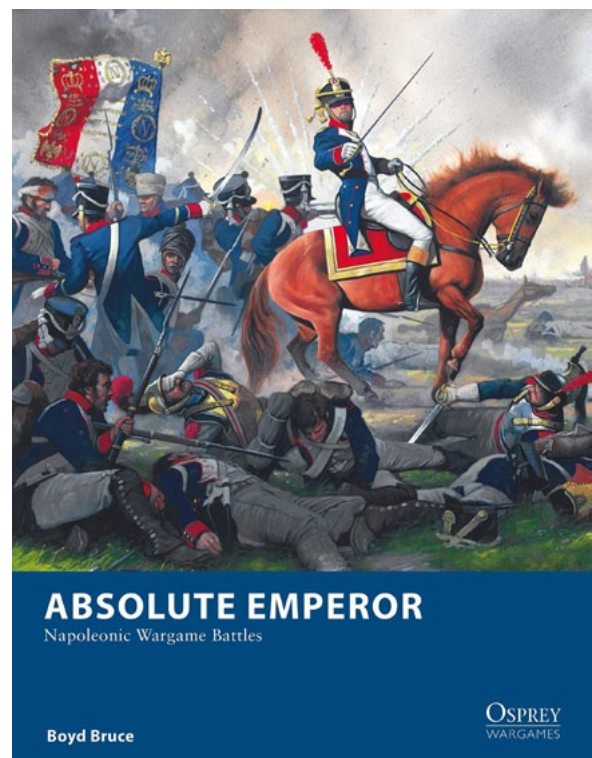
16th through to the 18th Century, but you can easily use them for the Napoleonic period as well. The book includes 8 scenarios and a simplified campaign system, which includes rules for weather and time of day. There's plenty of scope with this rule set, especially the differing periods you can use it for. I plan to use it to re-create some of the small skirmishes from the Sharpe series, such as the fight between Sharpe and El Catolico from Sharpe's Gold.

Absolute Emperor

From the late Revolutionary Wars and Egyptian campaign to the battles of Austerlitz, Borodino, Leipzig, and Waterloo, Absolute Emperor is a mass battle war-game that provides all the rules needed to play during this period of grand armies and sweeping campaigns. Players' armies are composed of multiple corps, with command and control being of the utmost

importance, all influenced by the elan of your general. Do you follow in the footsteps of Napoleon and be crowned the Absolute Emperor or stand against tyranny as Wellington and Blücher.

This rule set isn't a skirmish game but rules that are designed to play much larger battles. The reason I've included this is because if you want to move up to larger battles then this is a great set to do so. It's relatively easy and simple rule set to grasp, it's been designed to play with 50-100 miniatures a side but with maximum ease. The rules have been designed with 28mm scale in mind but there is some discussion of going down and up in scale, so the game can be played from anywhere between 2mm right up to 54mm.



I personally probably won't use this ruleset simply because I don't plan to play large scale actions from the period, that might change in a year or two but currently I've no intention of going big. If I do decide to go big it won't be in 28mm scale as I'll probably opt for either 15mm or most likely go down the 1/72 plastic model soldier route.

Silver Bayonet (Release Date: November 2021)

As the wars of Napoleon ravage Europe, chaos and fear reign and the darkness that once clung to the shadows has been emboldened. Supernatural creatures - vampires, werewolves, ghouls, and worse take advantage of the havoc, striking out at isolated farms, villages, and even military units. Whether they are pursuing some master plan or simply revelling in their newfound freedom is unknown.

Most people dismiss reports of these slaughters as the rantings of madmen or the lies of deserters, but a few know better...

The Silver Bayonet is a skirmish wargame of gothic horror set during the Napoleonic Wars. Each player forms an elite band of monster hunters drawn from the ranks of one of the great powers. Riflemen, swordsmen, and engineers fight side-by-side with mystics, occultists, and even those few supernatural creatures that can be controlled or reasoned with enough to make common cause.

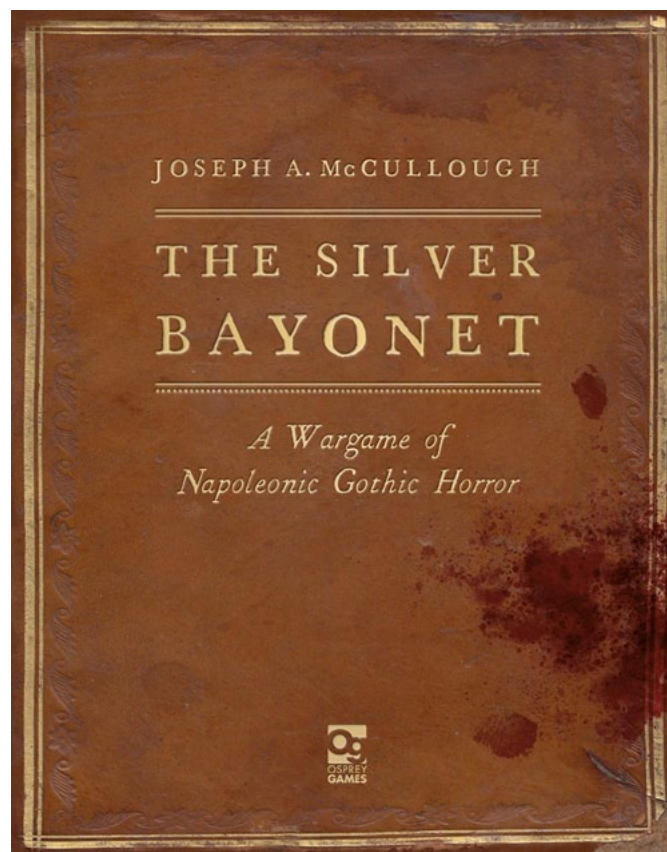
The game can be played solo, co-operatively, or competitively, with players progressing through a series of interlinked adventures with their soldiers gaining experience and suffering grievous wounds,



and their units triumphing... or falling in the face of the shadows. It is a game of action and adventure, where musket and sabre meet tooth and claw.

I've not seen a copy yet so I can't add any thoughts to the game, but we hope to have a more detailed article on the game in the next issue of the magazine which will be out just before Christmas. I'm looking forward to playing a skirmish Call of Cthulhu style game set in the Napoleonic period, and I'm already on the look out for appropriate miniatures to use.

This is just a sample of the rule sets out in the marketplace for this period, and all of these are published by Osprey. Napoleonic's is probably one of the most popular historical periods to play and as such there are a plethora of miniature producers in metal, plastic and resin. I'll keep everyone up to date with my progress of Sharpe's Adventures in the Editors Challenge article going forward. I'll also take a look a couple of the smaller miniature manufacturers in the next issue.



The Americans & Germans at Bastogne

Author: Gary Sterne

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

In December 1944 the Third Reich was retreating. It was almost inconceivable that they could mount a counter offensive.

To the Allies, the capitulation of the Third Reich was just around the corner. Or was it?

Could the Battle of the Bulge succeed in turning the tide of the war for the German high command?

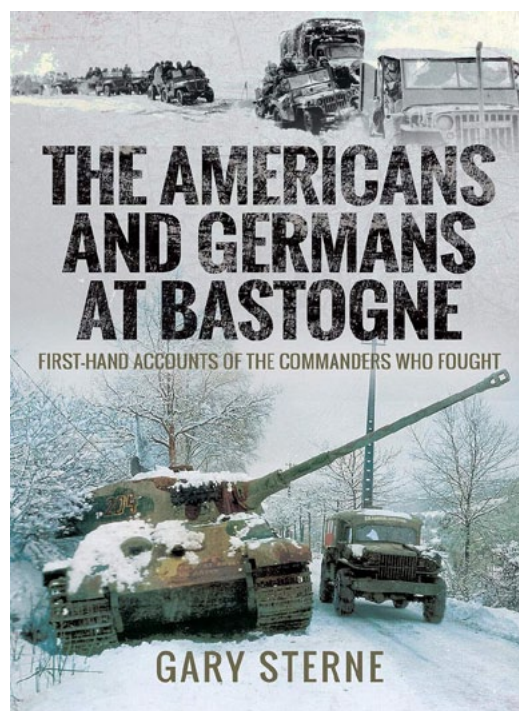
The US 101st Airborne were the only Allied unit capable of slowing down the German advance towards Antwerp - and they were ordered to do just that - at a place called Bastogne.

The battle for the small Belgium cross-roads town is now world famous and to add to that historical narrative, the author has located de-classified interviews with the German unit commanders who took part. Brought together for the first time - they provide a unique perspective on the battle as the Germans were forced to make continuous alterations to their plans - and the 101st resisted every attempt to dislodge them.

This book offers significant and fresh research on this famous battle and the narrative unfolds in words of the men who were actually there.

What makes this an interesting book are the recollections of the battles and skirmishes by both American and German soldiers who served there. Most people are aware of the Battle of the Bulge, this book provides another perspective because of those recollections. Many of those interviewed on the German side were senior officers so they provide a top-down recollection at a divisional level which is interesting. This is because normally many of the recollections are from front line soldiers who fought in the thick of it, and there are still plenty of those as well.

The book has plenty of maps throughout which helps to place things which is being written about. It also is a great resource for wargamers, there is nothing more a gamer loves than a map and this book has plenty.



This book is a great resource for recreating this period of Late WW2, and wargamers who play this period should have this book on the shelf.

I found the book to be well written and a great resource of information for a battle that's very well-known and has been written a lot previously. I enjoyed this publication because of the accounts by soldiers on both sides of the conflict. If you're interested in World War 2 and in particular the later part of the war, then this is definitely a book you should pick up.

Roman Conquests: Britain

Author: Simon Elliott

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The Roman Conquests series seeks to explain when and how the Romans were able to conquer a vast empire stretching from the foothills of the Scottish Highlands to the Sahara Desert, from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf.

How did their armies adapt to and overcome the challenges of widely varied enemies and terrain?

In this volume, Dr Simon Elliott draws on the latest research and archaeological evidence to present a new narrative of the conquest (never completed) of Britain. From Julius Caesar's initial incursions in 55 and 54 BC, through the Claudian invasion of 43 AD and the campaigns of expansion and pacification thereafter, he analyses the Roman army in action.

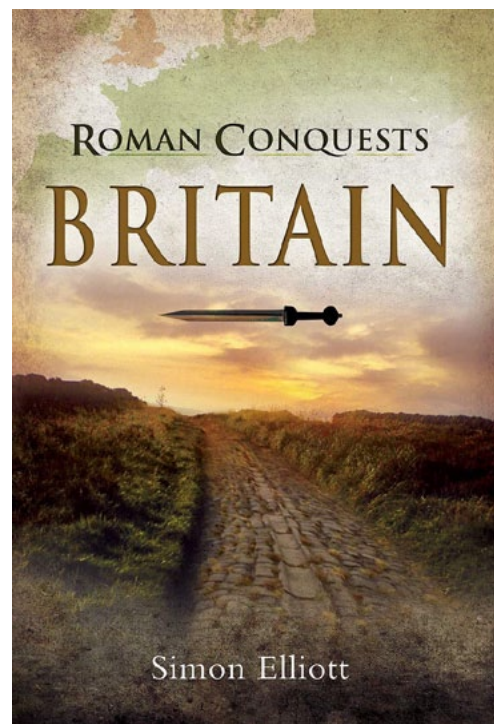
The weapons, equipment, organization, leadership, strategy and tactics of the legions and their British foes are described and analysed. The ferocity of the resistance was such that the island was never wholly subdued and required a disproportionate military presence for the duration of its time as a Roman province.

Anyone who has read Dr Simon Elliott's previous work will already know how well he writes. He writes with an air of authority and yet fun to read. It's not a dry read that requires a degree in history and archaeology to understand the book.

It's an informative and engaging read that's suitable for people with a passing interest in the subject yet at the same time will be an equally enjoyable read for someone with more in-depth knowledge on the topic.

The author has drawn on the latest archaeological evidence and research to provide an in-depth analysis of the Roman conquest of Britain, that includes the failed attempts by Caesar in 55/54 BC, and the eventual conquest by Claudian in 43AD. He also takes a look at the attempts at pacifying the area north now known as Scotland.

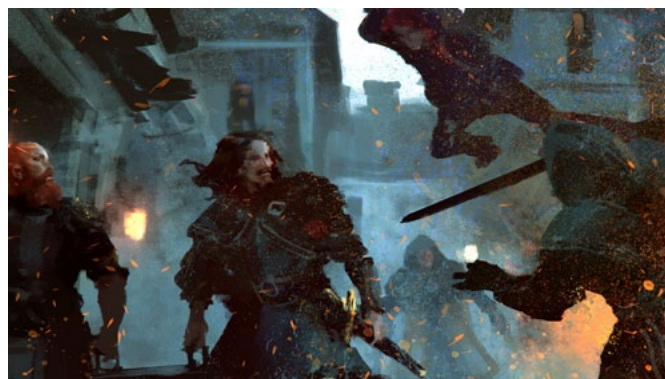
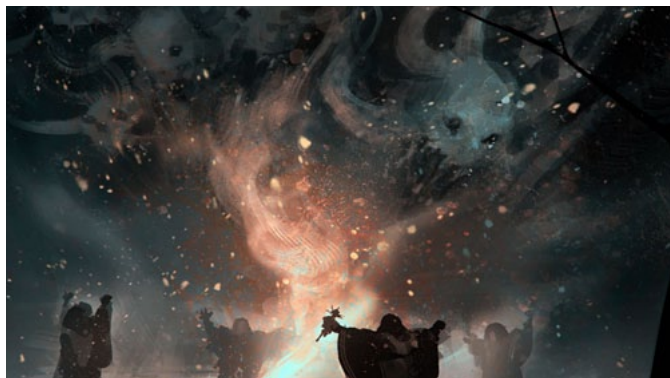
The information provided in the book will be of utmost interest to wargamers looking at recreating this period of history on the tabletop. As a wargamer I did find this a fascinating read and will definitely keep this on the shelf for



future reference in regard to planning a campaign on the table to conquest Ancient Britain.

I especially liked the chapters concerning the forays north of the wall into the hinterlands of Scotland. I felt as a gamer that this would provide some great ideas regarding trying to conquer Scotland, which I'm thinking of running as a campaign using the SPQR rules by Warlord.

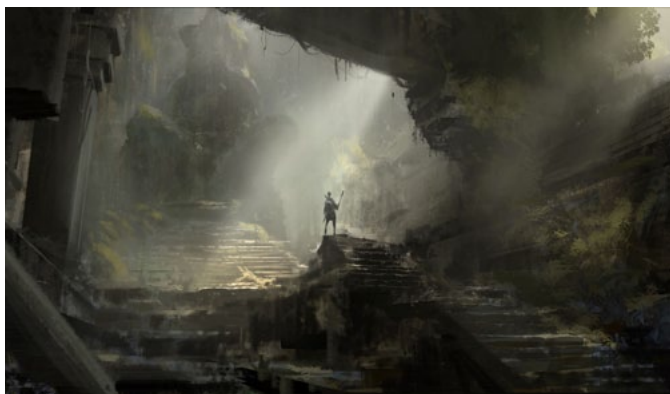
I'd say this book will appeal to those who have an interest in the history of Roman Britain and if you're a wargamer looking for a campaign idea then conquering Britain might just be up your street.



SYMBAROUM RPG; Treasure Hunts in Davokar

Brave adventurer, welcome to the wondrous world of Symbaroum. Explore vast forests in the hunt for treasures, lost wisdoms and fame. Visit the barbarian clans to trade or to plunder their treasuries. Establish a base of power among princes, guilds or rebellious refugees or survive encounters with trolls, dark-minded Blight Beasts and undead warlords.

But whatever you do, never ignore the warnings spoken by the wardens of the forest: tread carefully and do not disturb the ruins of old, for the dark deep of Davokar is about to awaken in the dark fantasy game Symbaroum.



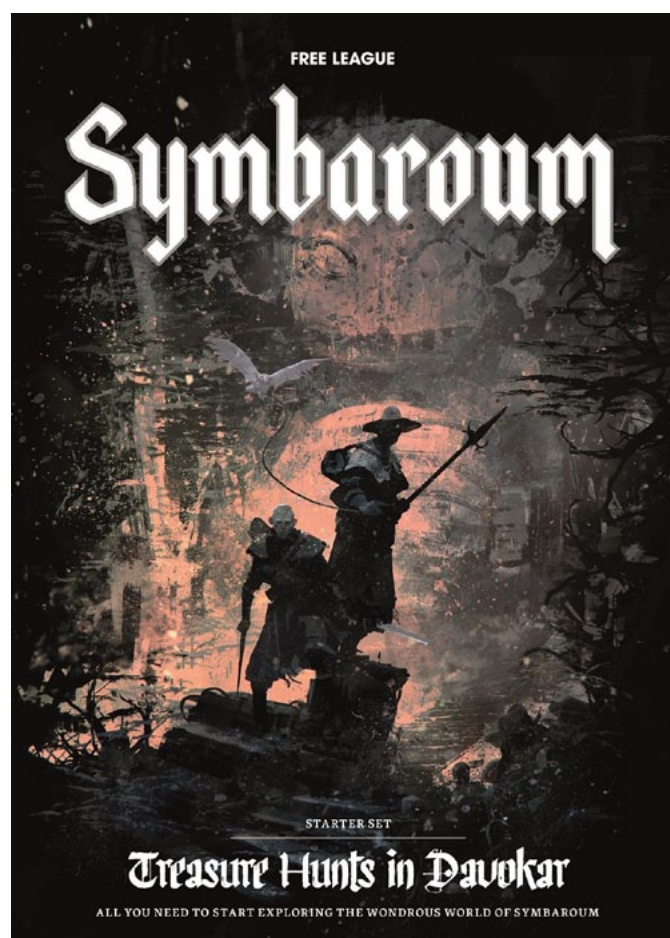
What's in the box

- A bag of polyhedral dice.
- A 64-page Starter Rules book. This is perfect bound with glossy paper and colour illustrations.
- A 64-page Setting and Adventures book. Similar in appearance to the Starter Rules book.
- Five pre-generated characters (being a Starter Set character generation rules are not included).
- Free League catalogue.
- Two double-sided 17 x 11-inch map sheets illustrating
 - A map of the civilized land of Ambria and the mysterious forest of Davokar
 - A map of the settlement of Thistle Hold on the borders of the forest. Gives me Keep on the Borderlands vibes.
 - Maps of two adventure sites – one an outdoor map and the other a cutaway view of a tower

The box is quite weighty, and this gives the impression you're getting more than your money's worth when picking it up for the first time. That impression isn't wrong, you do get your money's worth if fact probably more.

When you open the box for the first time the first thing, you'll notice are the emerald, green dice, these are a pretty good quality set for a starter box, and I was quite happy with this. Normally if dice are included in a set they're quite cheaply made and not worth keeping.

Next are a set of pre-generated characters, which are nicely laid out and easy to read, mine only criticism was the lack of artwork of the characters on the sheets. This isn't a major issue, but it would have been nice to include some. There is a good variety of character types to choose from to get you started. These are designed to allow you to jump straight into a game without any fuss and explore the world.



Then we have some maps, two in fact both of which are double sided. One of maps reference's locations in the scenario and is an adventure aid, whilst the is on one side a map of the local city Thistle hold and on the other Davokar the world you're going to be exploring. I have to say both of these maps are printed on good quality thick paper stock and not the normal flimsy almost see-through paper other starter sets have used.

So, we come to the first book, The Starter Rules, this is a 64-page full colour introduction to the basic rules of the game and is illustrated throughout with some great looking artwork.



This is nicely laid and easy to follow, there are plenty of examples in regard to how the rules work which make getting to grips with those basic rules quick and easy.

The combat works really well, it's not overly complicated for the sake of complication but it's not been streamlined to the point of it just being a simple dice roll. On page 45 there is a Quick Guide for Combat that simply lays out the combat element of the game which makes understanding the rules for melee really easy to grasp. Obviously, there are additional rules that covered in this set which are in the core rule book, but you don't need to know those at this stage.

This book also includes information on races and traits, a short introduction to the setting, as well as the powers and tradition this section includes information in regard to magic in this setting. Again, there is more in-depth information in the core rule book. It also includes information on the types of characters you can role play along with equipment you can issue your character.

The second book focuses the setting and your first adventure in the world. This includes back-ground information on Thistlehold and Davokar. It also includes you first foray into the setting in the form of two short adventures, the first is Where Darkness Dwells and the second is called the Gathering Storm. These two adventures will introduce both Thistlehold and Davokar to the players and give them a flavour of the world they're going to explore.

Davokar is a vast and mysterious forest, where your players can literally stumble over anything from a ruined building, or small village/town to bands of enemies.



This makes exploration completely unpredictable and exciting. You've literally no idea what you're going to stumble upon as you delve into the forest. I liked the game it reminded me of my first forays in to playing D&D as a teen, stumbling around a dungeon not knowing what to expect, Symbaroum provided that experience again. Yet it's a lot meatier than D&D, it's darker and grittier, it was a very unpredictable playing experience, and it's a great way of doing a dungeon crawl without the dungeon.



What the starter set provides is an intro into a world you're probably going to want to explore in greater depth. It's drops you into a setting that's going to pull you further into the depths of the forest, wanting to know what's just beyond the tree line and then wishing you hadn't trundled over to find out, when you discover what's there. I really enjoyed my first time wandering around the Davokar forest and plan to continue.



I was quite impressed with the starter box, and plan to pick up a copy of the full core book at some point. It's potentially a great setting, and I have to say it's awakened my desire to play RPG's again.



The Last Viking

(The true story of King Harald Hardrada)

Author: Don Holloway

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The Last Viking is a masterful and pulse-pounding narrative that transports the reader into the middle of the action. Carl Gnam, Military Heritage Harald Sigurdsson burst into history as a teenaged youth in a Viking battle from which he escaped with little more than his life and a thirst for vengeance. But from these humble origins, he became one of Norway's most legendary kings.

The Last Viking is a fast-moving narrative account of the life of King Harald Hardrada, as he journeyed across the medieval world, from the frozen wastelands of the North to the glittering towers of Byzantium and the passions of the Holy Land, until his warrior death on the battlefield in England. Combining Norse sagas, Byzantine accounts, Anglo-Saxon chronicles, and even King Harald's own verse and prose into a single, compelling story, Don Holloway vividly depicts the violence and spectacle of the late Viking era and delves into the dramatic events that brought an end to almost three centuries of Norse conquest and expansion.

The author has managed to write a gripping read; it feels more like a fictional tale than a non-fiction read. He's managed to gather multiple sources which shows he has a great depth of knowledge and understanding on the subject matter.

I didn't know much about King Hardrada apart from his failed attempt at invading England and trying to seize the English crown in 1066. This book changed that and has given me a much greater insight to fascinating king of the Vikings.

Hardrada is one of those adventure warriors, who in more modern times would have written his own memoirs about fighting in one conflict or another. The author has given us something akin to that. This is a great retelling of a man who was a warrior, adventurer and a king.

This is great fun read and I'd highly recommend picking it up. The book is full of his narrow escapes as a young warrior.



How he fled to Constantinople and become the Commander of the Varangian Guard along with his downfall where he's thrown in prison from which he escapes and flees back to Norway. Then how he becomes a king and the ill-fated invasion of England.

Harold is one of life's rogues who manages to fall into scrapes and somehow manages to pull himself out of unscathed. It's a fascinating read, and a tale that wouldn't be lost on Hollywood, at times it feels like you're reading a tall tale, an embellished yarn to make the hero sound more impressive, but it's all true (as far as we know) and that makes this all the more fun to read.

This is a definite must have book for any wargamer or historian who enjoys reading about the Dark Ages, and the heroes and warriors who lived during this period.

The Military History of Late Rome 518-565 AD

Author: Ikka Syvanne

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

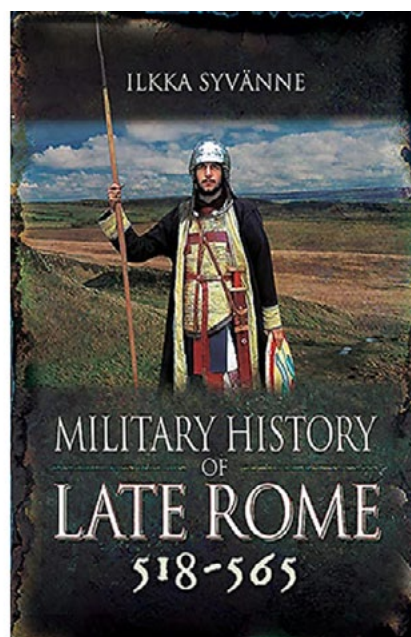
The Military History of Late Rome 518-565 provides a new, fresh analysis of the revival of Roman fortunes during the reigns of Justin I (518-527) and Justinian I (527-565). The book narrates in great detail the re-conquests of North Africa, Italy and southern Spain by Justinian's armies. It also explores the massive encounters between the Romans and Persians in the east, and the apocalyptic fights in the Balkans between the Romans and barbarians.

The author pays particular attention to the tactics and battles so there is detailed analysis of all of the period engagements, such as Dara, Satala, Callinicum, Ad Decimum, Tricamarum, Rome, Scalae Veteres, Antonia Castra, Gallica, Campi Catonis, Hippis River, Busta Gallorum, Mons Lactarius, Casilinum, Archaeopolis, Phasis, and others. The narrative features the military exploits of the great Roman heroes, such as Belisarius and Narses, while not forgetting the many other overlooked generals such as Germanus, Mundus, John the nephew of Vitalian, Martinus, Dagistheus and Sittas, not to mention the dashing hero John Troglita whose achievements were immortalized by the Roman epic poet Corippus.

The author has produced another book in the series looking at the Late Roman military, earlier books in the series have been reviewed in previous issues of the magazine. This series is giving us a good in-depth look at the Roman army and provides a good insight into the decline of Rome and her military.

A large proportion of the warfare carried out in the sixth century is covered by the author. The book also covers the reconquest of the lost western Roman Territories. Dr. Syvanne doesn't just concentrate on the Roman military but also takes a look at the enemies of Rome during this period. The information provided is well written and extremely in-depth which highlights how well researched this book is.

I liked how the book is laid out, it's done in chronological order which is what you'd expect but each chapter covers a particular campaign, war or revolt. Which means if you want to go back to a particular period, battle or campaign after reading the book it's quite easy to do so.



Which means it's a great reference tool for any wargamers who might want to go back over a particular battle or war they're considering replaying.

If you're wondering if you should pick up a copy, that will depend on how interested you are in the subject matter. I think anyone considering gaming the Late Roman period will find this book useful, as it provides a plethora of information on the battles and the tactics utilized by the Romans, but it also has some excellent information regarding the enemies the Roman army faced during these years.

If you're absolutely obsessed with this period and the Roman military then I'd suggest getting all the books in the series is probably a good idea. If you've just got a passing interest, then this book may not be for you.



Skirmishers in the Napoleonic War

The invention of the modern rifled barrel made a significant influence on modern warfare. Despite having a lower rate of fire compared to the smooth bore musket, it had a massive advantage over range and accuracy.

The seven years' war and the American War of Independence were two conflicts in which the new rifled weapons made some significant contribution. During the Napoleonic period, skirmishers would play a key role on the battlefield.

Their main role was to disrupt the enemy by firing into their ranks or pick off officers and NCOs with the hope of causing confusion in the enemy. They would also target enemy skirmishers to prevent the opposition from doing the same.

Skirmishers had the advantage of fighting in the open, so they were able to make use of any cover that was available. Nearly all major European armies of the period created skirmishing troops to screen ranked infantry and protect them from opposing skirmishers.

The rifle was an important weapon because it allowed a soldier to take aimed shots, rather than volley fire. The musket was really only effective as a massed volley fire weapon from a short range.



This was because the musket was very inaccurate, so musket fire only really worked when a mass of musket balls was fired into the ranks of the enemy. Massed musketry didn't need to be accurate as when fired into a block of infantry it was bound to hit something. Think of it like a massive shotgun a mass spread of balls being blasted towards the target some of them are going to hit the tightly packed ranks of soldiers.



Skirmishers were generally trained line troops but were expected to be able to act independently on the battlefield. Along with trained line infantry civilians such as game keepers or poachers were also accepted into the ranks of skirmishers. When the rifle regiments were formed in the British Army, line infantry were supposed to send their best soldiers as recruits but instead most sent those soldiers who were troublemakers.



These turned out to make the best riflemen because they didn't follow rules in the line infantry, they were better at thinking independently on the battlefield. British Rifle Regiments

The British learnt the hard way during the American War of Independence regarding how effective the rifle was in the hands of an expert shot. Experiments were carried out during the AWI forming a (60th Royal American Regiment) using dark coloured uniforms and light equipment. This would later fight in the Peninsula

campaign as the 5/60th and were formed into a rifle regiment armed with the Baker rifle. The more famous unit the 95th Rifles were formed in 1800 by Colonel Coote Manningham. The rifles wore dark green rather than the traditional red coat of the British army and armed with the Baker rifle. They would work in pairs of the battlefield and would pick out targets from the advancing enemy. The unit didn't carry colours onto the battlefield, so they had no flag to rally round and would use bugles as a way of signalling.

Jager's

Jager's were a German light infantry unit, and the word translate as hunter. Jäger came to denote light infantrymen whose civilian occupations made them well-suited to patrolling and skirmishing, on an individual and independent basis, rather than as part of a large-scale military unit or traditional line infantry. The earliest known Jager unit was formed around 1631 in Hesse-Kassel, and they were formed as a light infantry unit in the Hessian army. Many were former games keepers, hunters and forest rangers.

At the battle of Valmy the Prussian line infantry were unable to break the French Voltiguers. Initially soldiers were drawn from the line regiments to fight as skirmishers, but over time the Jagers were adopted into this role.



Jagers were allowed to act independently on the battlefield to deal with enemy skirmishers. The Jäger became primarily used for reconnaissance, skirmishing or screening bodies of heavier troops.

French Voltiguers

The Voltiguers were French military skirmish units created in 1804 by Emperor Napoleon I. They replaced the second company of fusiliers in each existing infantry battalion. Each line infantry unit was ordered to create a unit of ninety of the best shots who would then serve as skirmishers.



The voltigeurs were skilled at sharpshooting and received specific training in marksmanship, using cover and taking the initiative. They would regularly use for specialising tasks such as operating in loose formation, screening a battalion from the enemy. In 1807 the Voltiguer company was enlarged from 90 to 120 men.



Portuguese Cacadores

Caçadores were an elite unit created in the 18th century and the word Cacador means Hunter when translated into English. In 1809 British General William Beresford took command of the Portuguese army and carried out many reforms.

One of which was the creation of 6 independent battalions of Cacadores along the same lines as the British rifle regiments. Dressed in brown uniforms which would act as a camouflage and armed with Baker rifles. They were especially noted for their marksmanship during the Peninsula war.

These types of units are great for small scale actions on the tabletop, think the Sharpe TV series for ideas. Plus, there are several rule systems for potential games at this scale, you could wage a skirmish campaign or use them to fight smaller fights of much larger battles.



Roman Conquests: Mesopotamia & Arabia

Author: Lee Fratantuono

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

This volume explores the Roman invasions and military operations in two distinct yet related areas: Mesopotamia and Arabia. In these far-flung regions of the ancient known world, Rome achieved the greatest point of expansion in the history of her Empire.

Under the reign of the Emperor Trajan, the Roman Empire reached the point of maximum expansion made famous by maps of the world circa AD 120.

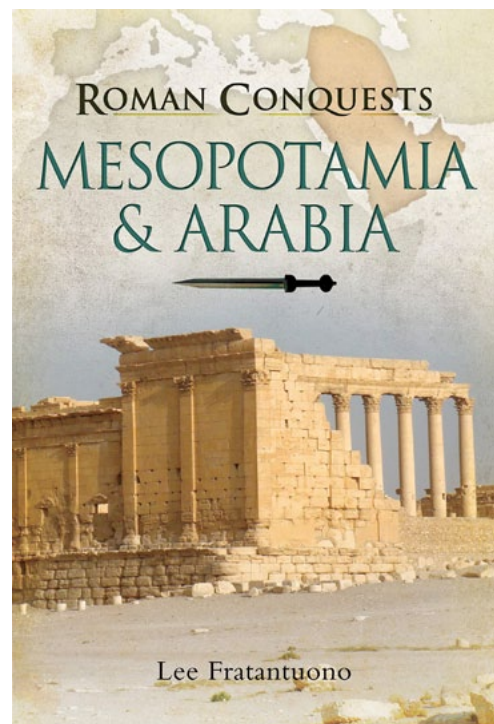
Under the Severans, significant efforts were expended on a Roman dream of linking the two regions into one mighty provincial bulwark against Eastern enemies. Individual chapters detail the history of the conquest of these easternmost territories of the Empire, analyzing the opposing armies involved (Roman, Parthian, Sassanian, Arab) and the reasons for success and failure.

The story of how Rome won and lost her Far East offers a paradigm for the rise and fall of the greatest military empire of the ancient world.

Roman expansions have been covered quite widely over the years, except those campaigns in the Mesopotamia and Arabian regions. The problem has always been the lack of source material, so as a result it's often been neglected. The author has done a great job of covering the Roman campaigns in this region.

For wargamers the campaigns against the Mesopotamia and Arabia are probably some of the more interesting, which means this is a great resource to pick up, especially if you fancy recreating some of the battles that took place.

The author looks at how the Roman army had to adapt to the terrain and the way they fought against their new foes. He also explains how the Persians adapted when fighting the Roman army in order to stand their ground against the Roman Empire. The book covers a large chunk of history and probably one volume is really not enough to do it justice. That being said it's a great read.



The book is well written a broken down in to 15 chapters and 177 pages, it's a slim volume but the author has managed to pack in a plethora of information. I felt that this would a be a great jumping off point for historians, but they'd probably want more, as I felt it needed more depth in some areas.

For wargamers there is probably just enough to sink your teeth into and provide enough information to plan a campaign on the tabletop.

Rome and Parthia: Empire at War

Author: Gareth C Sampson

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

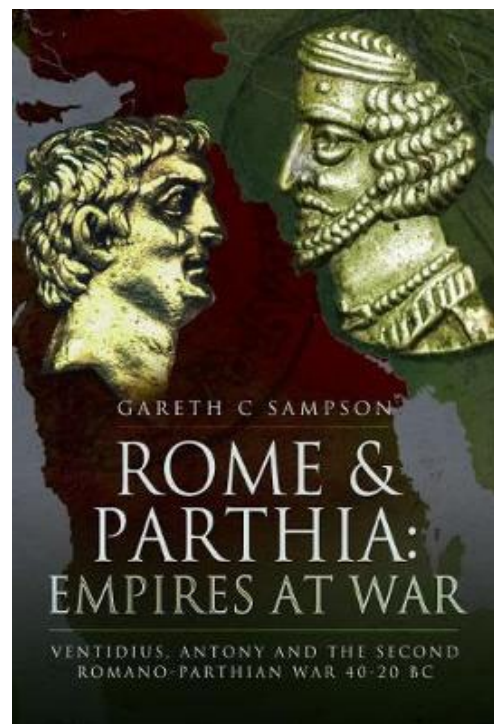
In the mid-first century BC, despite its military victories elsewhere, the Roman Empire faced a rival power in the east; the Parthian Empire. The first war between two superpowers of the ancient world had resulted in the total defeat of Rome and the death of Marcus Crassus. When Rome collapsed into Civil War in the 40s BC, the Parthians took the opportunity to invade and conquer the Middle East and drive Rome back into Europe. What followed was two decades of war which saw victories and defeats on both sides.

The Romans were finally able to gain a victory over the Parthians thanks to the great, but now neglected, general Publius Ventidius. These victories acted as a springboard for Marc Antony's plans to conquer the Parthian Empire, which ended in ignominious defeat. Gareth Sampson analyses the military campaigns and the various battles between the two superpowers of the ancient world and the war which defined the shape and division of the Middle East for the next 650 years.

The author has precisely researched and detailed the several conflicts between the Roman Empire and Parthia. This subject has been ignored and sparsely written about but is quite important period in Roman history, it may only be a short period roughly 30 years, yet it covers the rise of Julius Caesar and the beginning of Augustus as Emperor. It was a chaotic period but in that short period some of the most well-known Roman personalities rise and fall.

Even though this is a short period in the history of the Roman Empire it does provide a very colourful and chaotic few years that are great for wargamers. This is because of the number of battles and skirmishes that occurred during this time. The plethora of potential enemies to fight makes it a great period for players of Roman armies. Which means this book is definitely one those individuals should consider picking up.

It's well written and nicely laid out and entertaining as well as being very informative. The author has taken a very challenging, difficult subject and making it easily digestible by a wider audience. This isn't one of those dry academic stuffy reads but engaging well-constructed informative research.



One of the main issues with this topic is that there aren't any surviving sources from the Parthian side, so we have to rely of those written by Roman writers, and there isn't a vast amount of the Roman sources left. Also, numerous accounts were produced after the period, so they tend to favour the victorious sides.

So modern writers have to rely on these, the archaeological data that's been left and try to reconstruct the period and the events. I felt whilst reading this publication that the author has managed to achieve this.

This is definitely a book that anyone who is interested in this period or wants to recreate the battles on the tabletop should read this book.

Stargrave: Quarantine 37

Author: Joseph A. McCullough
Publisher: Osprey Publishing

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

When it was commissioned, Imperial Research Station 37 was home to nearly 10,000 scientists and researchers working on a vast array of biological and chemical projects. Then, six months before the outbreak of the war, Station 37 went dark. No escape pods were launched and all attempts at communication went unanswered.

Only a solitary, repeating broadcast filled the silence: "This station is under quarantine – do not approach". When the war came, the station was forgotten, left to drift lifelessly in its empty system. Now, in the aftermath of the Last War, Station 37 has been rediscovered and its broadcast heard once more...

Quarantine 37 is a supplement for Stargrave in which players lead their crews into an abandoned space station, hunting for lost technology, unique research, and forgotten experiments. Compete with your opponents for these valuable resources across two competitive mini-campaigns, or venture into the vast maze of corridors and laboratories alone in the first Stargrave solo campaign. Also included are six new soldier types, new backgrounds and powers, terrifying additions to the bestiary, and a new advanced technology table packed with loot to help you in your adventures in the ravaged galaxy.



So, what do you get with this new supplement from Osprey for Stargrave?

This new supplement provides a wealth of new rules for the game, as well as three small mini campaigns one of which is solo. Yes, I did say solo and that means there are solo rules in this supplement, which is probably the major selling point for Quarantine 37.

This means we can all start playing Stargrave even if you're unable to attend clubs and gaming with friends due to the ongoing Covid situation.

The new supplement introduces two new major beasts in the form of zombies and alien bugs. These are showcased in two mini campaigns set on an abandoned research station. So, think Walking Dead in space and recreating the Aliens 2 film.





There are also two new backgrounds for your Captains and first mates, these are aristocrat and hunter. There is also a selection of new powers to go alongside these new backgrounds. At the same time there are also new soldiers and rules for them. I quite like the gunfighter and trophy taker. There is bestiary section that mainly provides rules and information on the types of zombies and bugs that you could face on travels around space. The advanced technology list included in the supplement is a great resource, there's plenty of new tech to equip your crew with everything from Bug Bombs through to Incendiary ammunition and much more.

The final new aspect of Quarantine 37 is the new attribute list to give to crew members, a lot of these will be vital when dealing with the new threat that comes from bugs and zombies.

If you play Stargrave then this is an essential supplement to pick up, even if it's just for the Solo rules. Add in the zombies and bugs which will provide a new element to the game and potential new scenarios makes this great value for money. I tried the solo rules, and they work quite well, it allowed me to get a better understanding of the game before I meet up with friends to play a game or two with.



I have the game Star Saga, so I made use of the floor plans to play a space hulk type game against zombies and was pleasantly surprised at how well the solo rules worked. Next plan is to go up against some bugs and I'll be using Tyranids to represent the bugs.



The Reckoning

(The defeat of Army Group South, 1944)

Author: Prit Buttar

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

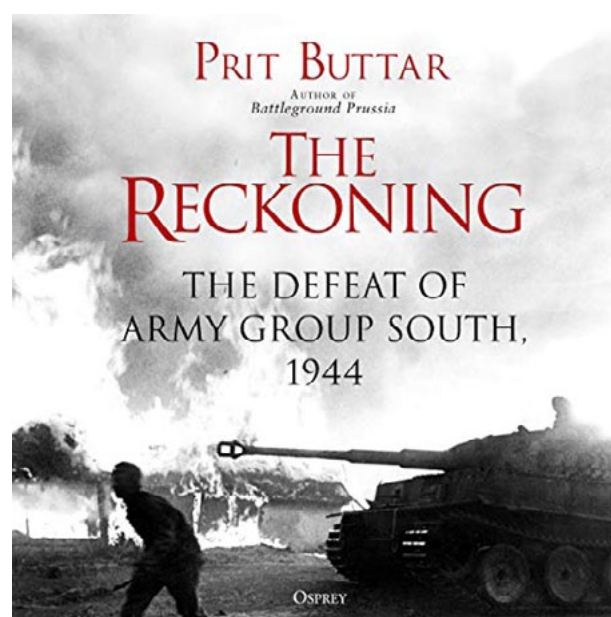
The Reckoning is vivid history, the tragic Eastern Front brought to life through the widest range of Russian and German sources I've ever read. Bravo! -- Peter Caddick-Adams, author and broadcaster

A detailed and engrossing account of the fighting in Ukraine in 1944, making use of the extensive memoirs of German and Russian soldiers involved in the fighting, as well as partisans behind the German lines, to bring the story to life.

By the end of 1944 the Red Army was poised on the very frontiers of the Third Reich. How had the once unstoppable, mighty Wehrmacht faltered so disastrously? Certainly, it had suffered defeats before, in particular the vast catastrophe of Stalingrad, but it was in 1944 that the war was ultimately lost. It was no longer a case of if but rather when the Red Army would be at the gates of Berlin.

Prit Buttar retraces the ebb and flow of the various battles and campaigns fought throughout the Ukraine and Romania in 1944. January and February saw Army Group South encircled in the Korsun Pocket. Although many of the encircled troops did escape, in part due to Soviet intelligence and command failures, the Red Army would endeavor to not make the same mistakes again. Indeed, in the coming months the Red Army would demonstrate an ability to learn and improve, reinventing itself as a war-winning machine, demonstrated clearly in its success in the Iasi-Kishinev operation.

The view of the Red Army as a huge, unskilled horde that rolled over everything in its path is just one myth that The Reckoning reassesses. So too does it re-evaluate the apparent infallibility of German military commanders, the denial of any involvement in (or often even knowledge of) the heinous crimes committed in the occupied territories by German forces, and the ineffectiveness of Axis allies, such as the Romanians at Iasi, to withstand the Soviet forces. Like all myths, these contain many truths, but also a great many distortions, all of which are skillfully unpicked and analysed in this powerful retelling of 1944 on the Eastern Front.



This is a well written book regarding the Eastern Front especially in Southern Ukraine during late 1943 through to early 1945. The author begins the journey in the aftermath of Erich von Manstein's successful recapturing of Kharkov, and the Russian success in the south at the Battle of Kursk.

The book is well researched, and the author has investigated the events and misconceptions around the defeat of the Axis forces in the south. Prit also looks at the capabilities of both the Axis and Russian military and the misconceptions surrounding them.

Accompanying the text are 29 black and white maps, which include scales which provides a better understanding of the Russian offensive and the German counter attacks. There are also over 30 photographs which includes images of several officers from the campaign. These maps will prove extremely useful and interesting to those who are considering running a tabletop war game campaign.

This is one of those books that will interest those who are interested in military history of this period and region. It will also be a valuable resource for anyone wanting to replay this campaign on the tabletop.

Desert Raids with the SAS

Author: Gerald Hough

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

Tony Hough's war started with ski training in the Alps in early 1940 preparing for winter warfare in Finland. Nothing came of that. Later that year, back with 9th Battalion, The Rifle Brigade, he sailed for North Africa. In March 1941, his under-gunned Battalion suffered a catastrophic baptism of fire in Libya from 15,000 troops and 500 tanks of Rommel's Afrika Korps.

For the next 18 months Hough and his Battalion experienced brutal conflict against a formidable enemy. Selected for David Stirling's elite 1st Special Air Service (SAS), he was captured in December 1942 while raiding behind enemy lines.

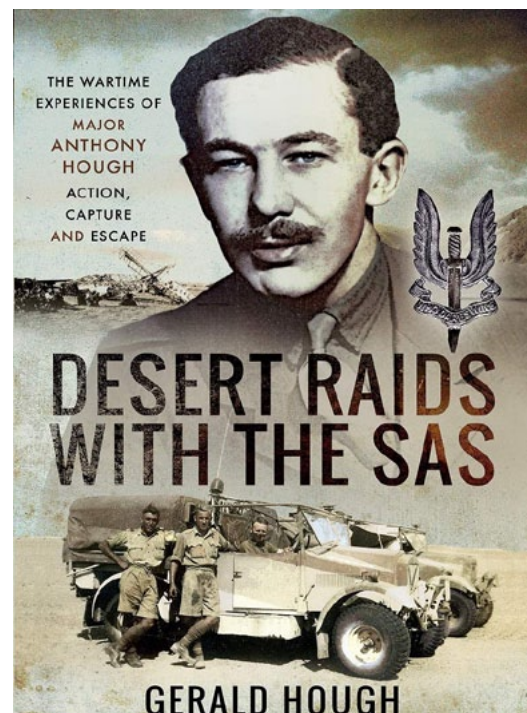
Sent to an Italian POW camp he suffered the deprivations of captivity. Taking advantage of the September 1943 Italian Armistice, he and fellow POWs escaped. After an arduous three-month ordeal, he reached Allied lines thanks to the help of brave locals. He went on to fight in Northwest Europe before becoming a Town Major in occupied Germany.

Beautifully and modestly written, Tony's many and varied experiences make for a classic war memoir. It is heartening that even after 75 years, accounts such as this are still appearing.

The author expertly guides us through his father's wartime experiences with the Rifles and then the infamous SAS, from the heat of the desert as a soldier and a POW through to operating behind enemy line in Europe. This is a great memoir of an extraordinarily brave member of the armed forces.

The book is well written and keeps the reader thoroughly engaged through out, he manages to paint a very vivid picture of what it was like to serve in extreme and chaotic conditions of war against both the Germans and Italians.

This book does remind me of the Commando Comics stories, it's like a gripping adventure novel set during the war, the irony is this was a real character, and these were real events. This is definitely one of those books you should read if you have an interest in the second world war, especially if you're interested in the early days of the SAS.



This will appeal to both wargamers and historians, but also anyone who grew up reading Commando comics, or watching WW2 adventure movies. I do have to say that book only covers the desert raids for about 20 or so pages, and there is much more to the book than the title suggests.

If you like reading about the exploits of the SAS during World War 2 then this is definitely a book, you'll enjoy reading. Any gamers looking for background material on the SAS or 8th Army then this will also prove a valuable read.

Trent Miniatures Napoleonic Range

Manufacturer: Skytrex

Scale: 28mm

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

Trent Miniatures is based in the UK and are now under the Skytrex banner. They produce a range of figures from the conflicts of the French Revolutionary Wars which includes the French Revolution, the Irish Revolt and the wars in the Caribbean. There is an extensive range of miniatures for this period, with plenty of variety. Some of these miniatures can easily be carried over into the early part of the Napoleonic period and would be ideal for anyone wanting to recreate the Egypt Campaign of 1801. Skytrex sent us a selection of miniatures from the range, and we were really impressed with them. They also sent some of the battlefield accessories which we managed to paint and base.

We'll start off with Napoleon on horseback (FG 03), this is a nice miniature which is really well sculpted. There was no flash or mould lines on the horse, but the actual figure of Napoleon himself did have some mould lines, which were easily removed with a sharp craft knife, and the gap between his arm and body had some flash which needed removing.

Otherwise, this was quite a clean model. Both the horse and the rider have some nice detailing. Napoleon's face is nicely sculpted with quite a lot of character. It's a nice model with a reasonably good pose, it's not very dynamic but then you wouldn't really expect Napoleon to be on a charging horse with sword raised.



The next item is a French Artillery piece, a 4 pounder Gribeauval (FA 07). This is a stand-alone cannon with no crew, those are bought separately. This can be used as a battlefield accessory if you don't want to purchase any crew. It could be used as an objective on a skirmish board. On the carriage I couldn't find any mould lines, and there were just a few nodules of flash that need to be scrapped off.

On the barrel there was a slight mould line but otherwise very clean. There was a mould line which runs all the way round both of the wheels on the rims, but this is easily removed.

My plan is to make this an objective marker for the time being. I will probably add crew at a later date.

Next up are the United Irish Command (Ir98/03) which consists of a piper, flag bearer and two Officers, though one could be used as an NCO. The flag bearer doesn't come with a pole so you'll have to sort one out for yourself. You may need to drill the handout a little to slide a thin brass rod into his hand but that won't take long to do.

There were some mould lines on the figure, but these were very minimal and didn't take much to clean. Next is the piper, both him and one of the officers have separate

heads whilst the other two figures are one piece. The pose is quite static, but the figure has some nice detailing.



There are some mould lines on the miniature but overall, it's quite clean. Then we have the two officers, one is armed with just a sword whilst the other has a pistol as well. The officer with just the sword has some quite visible mould lines on the under side of his arms that will require some filing. Both of these would make great minis for the upcoming Silver Bayonet game by Osprey Publishing.



Then we have the Italian Banditti (IT 01) pack which comes with 6 figures all with separate heads. There is only one body repeat in the pack of six which is good, as I would have expected a couple more repeats. There were no repeats on the heads, which means even though there are two bodies which are the same, due to having different heads they are effectively two different figures.

Most of these were really clean in regard to flash and mould lines, though as can be seen in the picture one of them will require more work than the others due to the amount of flash.

These are a nice set and I think you easily use them as bandits or partisans from any region of Europe. My plan is to use them as Spanish Guerillas.



Finally, we have the terrain or battlefield accessories, these were a mixture of resin and metal pieces. This was a mixture of barrels and wooden boxes. These made great terrain scatter for soldiers to hide behind or to obstruct troop movements. Also, by having them on the table adds a little flavor to the game, whilst breaking up the landscape.



My aim to order more scatter terrain pieces because they can be used for a number of periods and genres and also make great objectives.

Overall, I was quite pleased with the sample from the range, they're quite nice miniatures and cover some interesting conflicts from that period in history. It's a great range for anyone looking for miniatures to use with Silver Bayonet when it's released in November.



Armies of the Thracians & Dacians

500BC-150 AD

Author: Gabriele Esposito

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

The Thracians are mentioned as early as in the epic poems by Homer and were fundamental in the evolution of the Greek military systems across the ages. They fought in the Persian Wars, were part of Alexander the Great's army, were used as mercenaries in many Hellenistic armies and resisted Roman conquest for a long time. In addition, they used some iconic weapons and had a distinctive panoply.

The Dacians were a mix of different cultures and were extremely influenced by some steppe peoples like the Sarmatians. They had a lot in common with the Thracians but had a different history. They formed one of the largest and most powerful kingdoms of Antiquity, a sort of super-power that dominated over the Balkans. Their wars against Trajan and the Roman Army were absolutely epic, the last campaigns of conquest in the history of the Western Roman Empire.

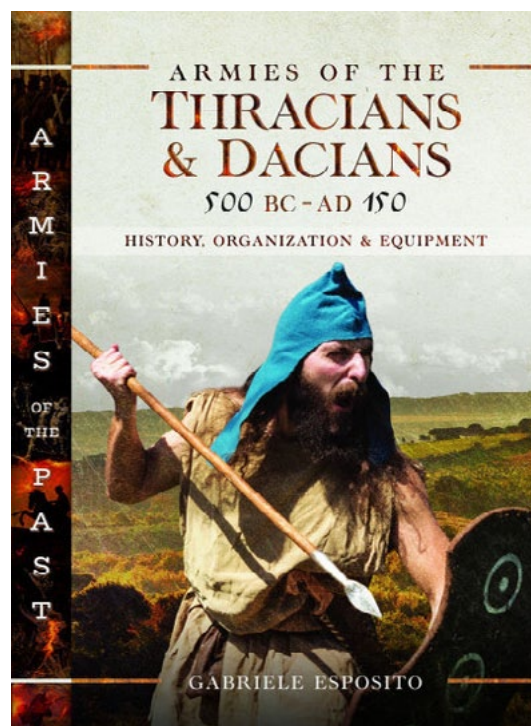
The book contains a rich collection of photos specifically made for it by some excellent groups of reenactors.

This isn't a big book, it's rather thin compared to previous works by the author, but it is well written. It was an interesting read as there isn't much written about both of these peoples, especially on the military side.

The book includes several photographs of re-enactors which is great as it gives you an idea of equipment and clothing, especially in regard to colour. The chapters that cover the military organisation and equipment are probably the better sections of the book. These will be of most interest to wargamers.

I did like the photographic illustrations throughout the book, but I was a little disappointed there were no maps, especially when the author is talking about various groups and places. They would have been useful as reference points, and so I had to go to the internet for this.

This is a great book for wargamers as it's probably at the right level of depth and information for those looking to build and paint a Dacian or Thracian army. I think many historians may be a little disappointed by this lack of depth, though it may be OK as starting point in their research.



I enjoyed the book as I wasn't looking for an in-depth read on the subject, as player of Roman armies this was a great background resource of the two of Rome's adversaries. Likewise, if I was thinking of building a Thracian or Dacian army this would be an excellent choice for background research and the full colour plates would be ideal for painting references.

Overall this is a great book for a wargamer but for historians it may be a little lacking in areas.

Towers of Strength: Martello Towers Worldwide

Author: W H Clements

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

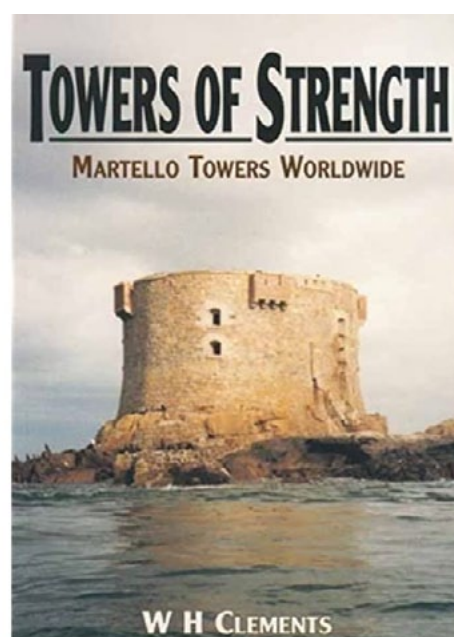
Martello towers were built in the early part of the nineteenth century to defend the coast of England against Napoleonic invasion. Almost 200 years later forty-one of these handsome brick towers still stand along the coast of Kent, Sussex, Essex and Suffolk. The cost of their construction was comparable in relative terms to that of today's Trident missile system. The line of towers was never tested in action but acted as an effective deterrent against invasion. Today Martello towers are a familiar sight from Aldeburgh in Suffolk to Newhaven in Sussex, but it is generally known that similar towers were built by the Royal Engineers to defend British interests in other parts of the world.

Martello towers were being built as late as the 1850s as far afield as Canada, Mauritius, Australia and the Mediterranean. This book, illustrated with numerous photographs and plans, is the first comprehensive and detailed study of the known Martello towers built by the British. Its description of their construction, use, current condition and fate will fascinate the enquiring reader, as well as being a source of interest to visitors. Many of the towers remain landmarks today, Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour being a case in point.

Most people will know the Martello Towers as those strange old buildings at seaside towns and locations. What most don't realise is that these were a network of state-of-the-art defensive technology in its day. Many more probably won't know that these towers also exist elsewhere in what was the British Empire.

The author has collated all these towers from around the world and packed them into this volume, along with many photographs of those towers that have survived down the years. This book provides a fascinating look at a form of coastal defence that was utilized for much of the 19th Century.

Along with the many photographs are several diagrams and cutaway illustrations which I found really useful, especially when I started having ideas about making a tower for the tabletop. This would be a useful book for wargamers who recreate campaigns from the 19th Century, especially if like me suddenly have the urge to recreate a Martello Tower as a terrain piece to fight over.



I actually enjoyed reading this book, the subject matter was more interesting than I expected. I especially liked learning about those towers that have been repurposed or that in more recent conflicts were used in a similar manner as they were originally intended for. For instance, the one at Fort Saumarez in Guernsey had a four-storey observation post built on top by the occupying German forces during World War Two.

I think this book will have a limited readership and will only appeal to a few potential readers, but those who do pick a copy up will be pleasantly surprised.

Mob Sitters

Players: 3-6

Publisher: East Street Games

Duration: 15-30 minutes

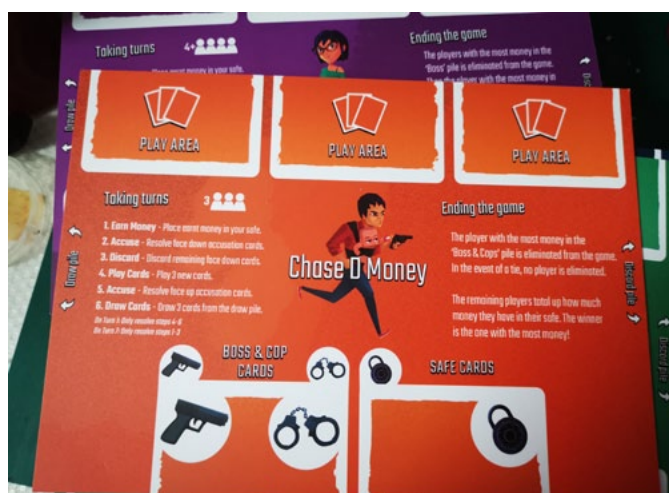
REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

Mob Sitters is a small card-based tabletop game for 3-6 players. Players take the role of a greedy babysitter working for a mafia boss. The aim is to get out with the most cash, whilst trying to avoid being arrested and the wrath of the mafia boss.

You can choose to work for the boss, steal from him or snitch on one of the other players. Will you become the king pin of the baby-sitting world?

So, what's in the box?

For starters there is a full colour rule book that lays out the rules for playing the game in an easy-to-read manner. It's illustrated throughout with examples which makes picking up the rules quite quick and easy. If that's not all there is also an online video that will guide you through playing your first game.



There are four double sided playmats for each of the characters you can play in the game. Also, there are 120 full colour cards required to play the game.

Each player has a small deck of cards which is made up of accusation and reaction cards. You can use accusation cards on other players, forcing them their ill-gotten gains into the discard area unless they can counter with a reaction card. Very soon players are chucking accusations all over the place, which creates some very unpredictable results.





The game will last for 6 rounds, and it's over quite quickly. Even though this game can be played with a minimum of 3 players, it works better when there's more than 3. There's a lot of player interaction and the accusations will come thick and fast, then before you know it the games comes to an end. All players decks are the same and everyone will play all but two of their cards during the game, so the trick is knowing when and how to play your cards.

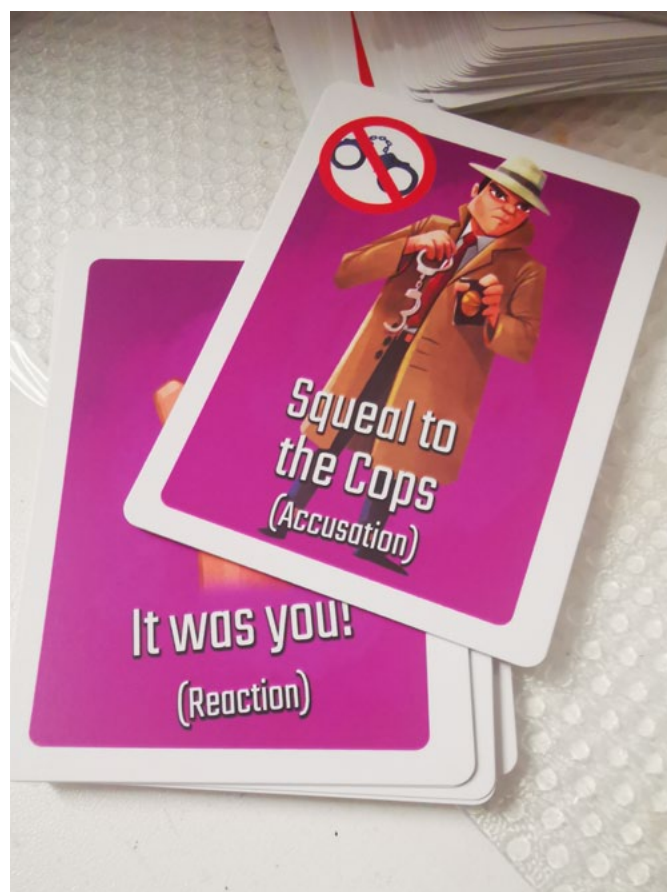
This game is really easy to set, and you can quickly get started playing as the rules are quite simple to learn. It fun to play and because it only takes 15-30 minutes to play it's great to take down the pub, or on holiday for those rainy days.



I plan to take this to play when we're on a long-haul flight and stuck in the airport waiting for connecting planes. This is a great little game, which is family friendly, so this is a great one if you have kids.



With Christmas just around the corner this could be an ideal stocking filler for someone. Remember though back stabbing and being mean will win you the game.



Into the Valley of Death; The Light Cavalry at Balaclava

Author: Nick Thomas

Publisher: Pen & Sword

REVIEW BY JASON HUBBARD

Into the Valley of Death tells the thrilling story of the Charge of the Light Brigade in the words of the men who fought during the most heroic and yet futile engagement of the modern era.

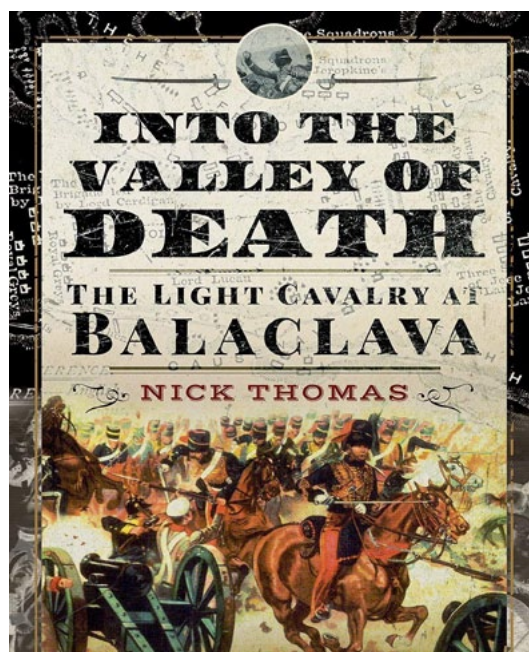
By drawing on key evidence the author has not only provided a clear narrative of the events leading up to the 25th of October 1854 but has painted a vivid picture of the Charge itself. No punches are pulled and the carnage which ensued is clear for all to read, dispelling the romantic myth of 'death or glory' fostered by the Victorians.

This work tells the blood and guts story of a desperate charge by 673 men in the face of what seemed insurmountable odds. It reveals the trauma endured by the rank and file who witnessed all around them men and horses cut to pieces while endeavouring to ride through walls of flying iron and lead, and not knowing if the next second would be their last.

Yet in the midst of this horror and devastation, the author takes time to give an overview of the battle itself and puts on the hats of some of the commanders involved, looking at not only what they did, but also at how a terrible disaster could so easily have been turned into the greatest single victory of its time.

Could such an apparently mad-cap charge have succeeded? Did sufficient men arrive at the guns to successfully capture them? Were there troops and close support that could have been utilized to drastically change the course of events? Could a simple stalling tactic have allowed these resources to have been fully exploited? All of these questions are answered.

This work truly lifts the lid on the events of over 150 years ago and through the words of the survivors allows the reader to assign the responsibility for the Charge having taken place and for the consequent loss of the Light Brigade. The Charge of the Light Brigade has become an almost mythical legendary act of courage that's been written about in books and featured in films and TV for decades. The true story has become shrouded in myth and jingoism.



The author has taken this famous military act and provided a very detail examination of the day through thorough research and first-hand accounts. He investigates the events leading up to, during and after to paint a fully fleshed out picture of the event. One aspect of the book I found fascinating are the tables at the back which list all those who took part in the charge. It details rank, whether they survived or were killed in action, along with some details of what they did.

The author covers why the charge occurred and the events leading up to the act, along with why it gained so high a status within the British military history. The Charge of the Light Brigade was one of those last glorious cavalry charges, as the battlefield was rapidly changing and making men charging on horse back redundant.

This was a fascinating read on one act in a much larger campaign, whilst the book almost exclusively only deals with the Charge of the Light Brigade, it is a valuable resource for both historians and war gamers alike. Definitely worth picking up a copy if you're interested in mid-late Victorian military history.



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