

irregular

Summer Issue 2022

magazine

Warring States

Go Big, Go Small

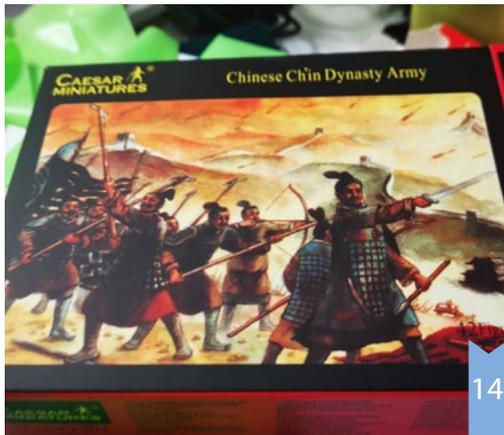
Bushido

Two Gun Cohen

Death in Space

D&D Chainmail

Plus Interviews, Reviews, and much, much more



Cover Art; Enrique Meseguer

(<https://pixabay.com/users/darksouls1-2189876/>)

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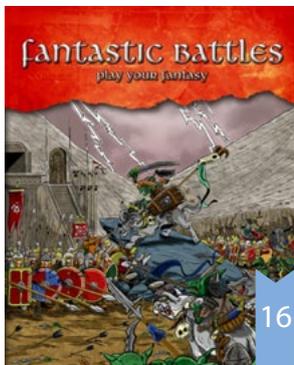
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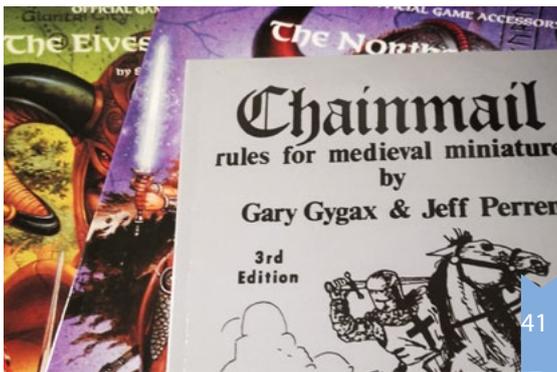
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Spring Issue 2022

Editorial

Jason Hubbard

Welcome back to another issue of Irregular Magazine.

Some things have started to return to normal, with shows back and running, the biggest being the UKGE, on top of that clubs are finally open and folk are meeting up to game again.

So what have we got for you this month, well we take a look at going down in scales which is especially useful with the rising cost of living we're all experiencing. We have also included a tutorial on making cheap hills using polystyrene packaging. We also have the usual reviews of the latest RPG's as well as miniatures, including the 10mm fantasy range from Pendarken and 1/72 Qin from Cesear Minaitures.

Over the last few months I've been spending time painting, trying to finish projects as well as starting a couple of new ones. I've also been getting a bug for Role Play Games again, something I've not done in a long time. The last RPG I played was D&D 4th Edition, whilst I enjoyed playing that edition it didn't spark of any long term commitment to playing rpgs.

Then this year several came out that have rekindled my interest in playing more rpgs and maybe getting back to GMing again. I've also started to have a inclination to play mass battle games, but not in 28mm but a smaller, cheaper and easier to store scale such 10, 12 or 15mm.

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

Jason

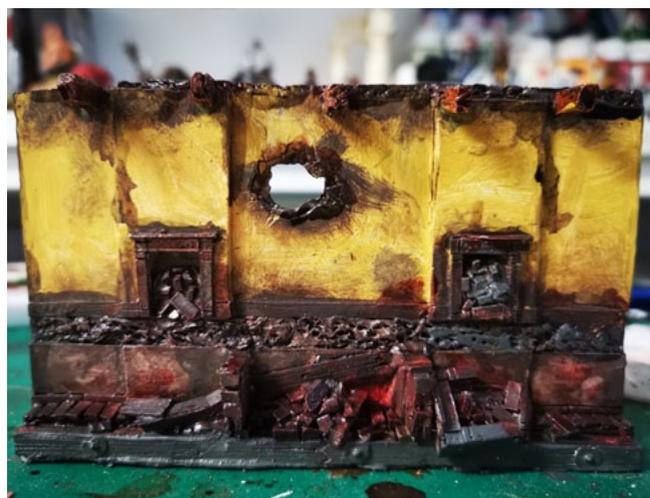
Editor's Challenge

Since the last issue I've upped my game and managed to blast through a good chunk of miniatures, including a plethora of scatter terrain. Some of that terrain has been in my possession for 10 years, yes that long but finally they have some paint slapped on them and they're ready for the gaming table. This is going to be a short episode of Editor's Challenge this issue.



Terrain

I've been going through a box of scatter terrain I've had for a while, some of the pieces I've had since 2009. I decided to finally get some paint slapped on to them. They ranged from fantasy pieces through to scatter that would be suitable for games from WW2 right up to and beyond apocalyptic.



The aim of was to give them all a quick lick of paint and ready for gaming. Since I was getting these painted for the last few weeks, I haven't managed to get any work done on the Asian town project. I'm hoping to get this finally finished this year, hopefully.

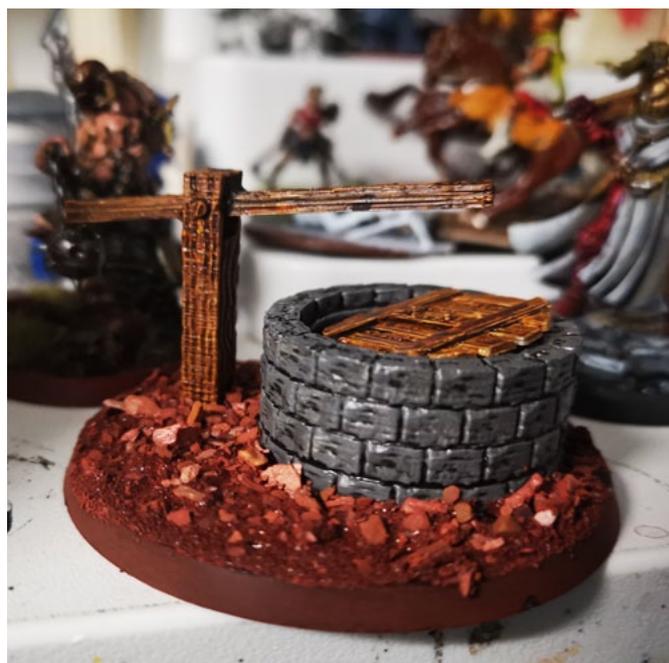




This is pretty much the only Games Workshop game I play these days, it's also in my humble opinion the best rules set produced by GW. The plastics are starting to look a little dated now though.

Historical

I've been slowly working on the Late Roman band for Saga, and so far, managed to get all the infantry painted, and plan to start on the archers soon.



've also managed to get some more Samurai period miniatures painted that included a few more ninjas. I painted the ninjas in colours other than black used in film and TV.

Fantasy

Most of the fantasy miniatures I've been painting recently have been from my LotR collection, most of which has been metals apart from a handful of plastics. These included several orcs, as well as some character miniatures.



Necromunda Hive Scum

Producer: Games Workshop

Review by Jason Hubbard

The Gangs of Necromunda are made up of the dregs of underhive society. These individuals have freed themselves from the constraints of societal hierarchy in order to walk a dangerous and often short-lived path of risk and reward.



Hive Scum can be found everywhere, often hired by more established gangs looking for cheap bodies or arranged into fully fledged Underhive Outcasts gangs that clash with the legendary Houses of Necromunda for territory, scraps of loot, and more.

This small box allows you to build four plastic Hive Scum with plenty of weapon options to choose from. This box is designed to allow you to add additional members to your gang. The box comes with a set of instructions showing you how to assemble your miniatures. They follow the usual Games Workshop easy to understand instructions.

The single sprue is comprised of 32 parts, which will allow you to build four scum, the bases supplied aren't the usual plain black ones but scenic molded bases instead

which is a bonus. Remember the miniatures and bases are supplied unpainted and will need to be assembled. The sprue contains a good selection of both melee and ranged weapons, one of which is a chain sword. The range weapons consist of a mix of pistols and rifles, which means you have plenty of choices when it comes to arming your scum. What I was surprised with was the number of heads supplied, a total of eight, so you're not limited to a choice of heads to use.



As usual for Games Workshop these are well sculpted, and there are some mold lines in places they're easy to remove. The great thing about this kit is that it will work for a number of games besides Necromunda. They could quite easily be used in 40K, but equally you could use them as space pirates in Stargrave or as gang members on in a post-apocalyptic setting. They would be great as gangers in a Mad Max style setting.

Empire of crime

Author: Tim Newark

Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

When Great Britain took the moral high ground and banned its lucrative export of opium from Imperial India to China, it unleashed a century of criminality.

Where America's misguided Prohibition of alcohol made illicit fortunes for the Mafia, across the pond the organised criminals within the British Empire grew rich on their trade in illegal narcotics in the 20th century.

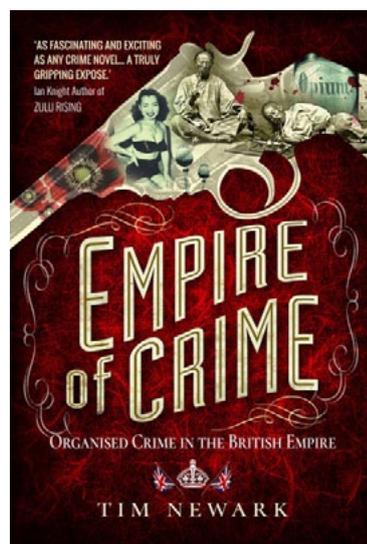
Empire of Crime is the first book to reveal the full extent and variety of organised crime within the British Empire in the 20th century. By delving into British colonial archives, Newark has discovered breath-taking truths about organised crime inside the British Empire.

This book unravels how gangsters exploited its global trade routes to establish a new age of criminal networks that spanned the world.

At the turn of the 20th Century Britain banned the export of Opium to countries like China. This resulted in a black market and the beginnings of the drug trade as we know it today. Prices soared and the lucrative trade of drug smuggling began. In the US alcohol was banned which gave rise to the Mafia, so the illicit drug trade also gave rise to criminal gangs in places like Shanghai.

The author has dug deep into the archives, reports and government documents to present a clear well researched picture of the rise in crime, those behind it and the efforts of law enforcement to combat this growing rise in organized crime. In the book we meet individuals such as Du Yu-Sheng the underworld boss of Shanghai, William E. Fairbairn who developed an anti-riot squad, similar to a modern Swat team, he would also during WW2 develop the Commando Close Combat training and the infamous Fairbarin knife.

The author shows how these criminals managed to exploit the trade network of the British Empire to establish smuggling routes across the world, in a similar manner to how modern drug cartels operate today.



This is a great read, especially as it shows a side of history that many won't know much about. For gamers there's plenty of information that would provide useful ideas for possible gaming scenarios. The possibility of playing out gang warfare games set in Shanghai, with the added elements of police and spies thrown into the mix and you suddenly have an interesting skirmish campaign.

For those interested in the period then this is well worth a read, it shines a light on a much-ignored aspect of the British Empire. I would also suggest RPG players to grab a copy especially those who play Call of Cthulhu, it's a great resource that could provide some interesting villains, NPCs and potential scenario ideas.



The Warring States; China 475–221 BC

The Warring States period was an era in ancient Chinese history characterized by warfare, as well as bureaucratic and military reforms and consolidation. It was a period of seven states (Chu, Han, Qi, Qin, Wei, Yan, & Zhao) who battled for control of China.

The Warring States started when the vassal states of the Zhou Dynasty all decided to declare independence. The collapse of the dynasty fractured into a mass of smaller states, who all claimed the Mandate of Heaven (China).

During this period of three centuries various rival states all battled for territorial advantage and total control of China. It ultimately ended when the Qin state was victorious and finally established a unified China for the first time. It was a chaotic period that help create some of China foundational philosophies. Over time the mass of states in the initial collapse of the Zhou dynasty were formed into the seven larger states that would eventually via for complete control of the country.

It wasn't just a period of warfare, it also saw significant developments in society, commerce, agriculture, philosophy and the arts. It also set the foundations for the creation of Imperial China.

One of the changes that took place during this period was with warfare. Battles had been previously conducted by small groups of chariots. The problem was driving a chariot into combat took years of dedicated training, alongside the martial training required. Each chariot was accompanied by a unit of infantrymen anywhere from 10-70 soldiers. Large armies could easily consist of a thousand chariots, with several thousand soldiers alongside. This was possible before the collapse of the Zhou dynasty, but in the wake of the collapse this wasn't possible for many smaller states. In each state a new ruler or king was declared alongside independence.



Then they each started to look further afield converting their neighbour's territory. This would lead to ever shifting alliances and constant conflict which gave the period its name. Huge armies were raised, chivalry was abandoned, and commanders campaigned hard to destroy their rivals. The ultimate prize being complete control of China.



During the Warring states, this changed some stopped employing chariots such as Wu and Yue, who become successful by raising armies of infantrymen. Infantry armies were able to be more flexible than the traditional forces of infantry accompanying chariots. Officer class became more mobile commanding from horseback rather than a chariot. Other states followed in their wake and discarded the chariots to form armies made up with infantrymen.



Cavalry became a feature on the battlefield, horse archers and the iron weapons appeared on the battlefield. Suddenly troops were armed with swords and crossbows, which made warfare far deadlier than previously. The battles became faster and more dynamic, as well as sophisticated with subterfuge and espionage played a larger role. Troop deployment and movement became much more disciplined. Armies on the battlefield expanded on a massive scale from the normal 10,000 to over 200,000 infantrymen being deployed. It wasn't unusual for some states to have nearly a million men in military service. Due to the massive numbers of soldiers most of them were either untrained or had very little training, so most battles became about numbers rather than fighting skill.



It was also around this time that many of the great military strategies were written such as Sun Zi's Art of War, which is still highly regarded today. Along with this text there were several other military writings created many classics of ancient China that included

Jiang Ziya's Six Secret Teachings, The Methods of the Sima, Wei Liaozi and Three Strategies of Huang Shigong.

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The states

Chu

Chu was one of the more important of the smaller states that contended for power in China during the Warring States period. Though towards the end of the period the government had become very corrupt, with the vast majority of the state's treasury being used to pay the royal entourage. Also, by this time the army had deteriorated and was considered to be of very low quality. Chu was finally defeated by Qin around 224BC.



Han

Han was an ancient Chinese state during this period in Chinese history and is often referred to as Hann so as to distinguish it from the later Han Dynasty period. It was governed by a royal family who were ministers in the Jin State. They had slowly managed to gain power and wealth from the Jin royal family, and they eventually divided the state into three smaller states Han, Wei and Zhao,

Han was at a disadvantage during this period because they were surrounded by much more powerful rivals. They were the smallest of the states and so were unable to compete against their much bigger rivals. They were eventually fell into decline and need to ask for military assistance from their rivals. The last king of

Han was executed in 226 BC, they were the first state to fall to Qin in 230BC

Qi

Qi or Ch'i was one of the biggest and more powerful of the several smaller states that made up China during the Warring States period. During the 4th Century BC there was a change in the ruling house, this allowed them to become a dominant power in China, and so early in the 3rd Century they made a play to gain sole control of the country.

This attempt led to the decline of the state and absorption by the Qin state.

Around 222BC Qi was one of the last states to be conquered by Qin, which in doing so the Warring Period came to an end and China was unified under Qin.

Zhao

Zhao was one of the main states to emerge from the fall of the Zhou dynasty, they were created from the three-way breakup of Jin, along with Wei and Han. Zhao was one of the few states who were powerful enough to be able to stand against the Qin military. In 322BC the Qin forces were defeated by a Zhao army led by Li Mu, though the Zhao army suffered heavy losses and they had to retreat back to the capital. Zhao never really recovered from this battle and even though they were victorious they had been severely weakened.

Then two years later the state suffered an earthquake and a famine which further weakened the state. This prompted the Qin army to invade in 229BC from the North and South eventually leading to a stalemate between the two armies. Eventually with the loss of the Zhao general Li Mu, Qin finally conquered the state around 222BC.



Wei

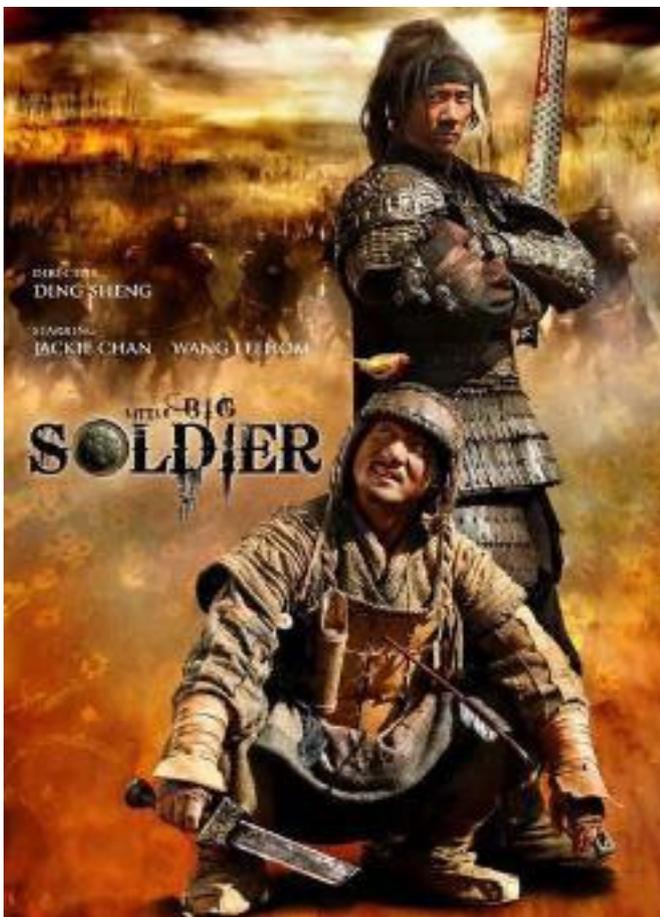
The state was located in what is now referred to as the Shanxi province in north central China. Wei was originally a vassal kingdom who were annexed by their neighbour Jin around 661BC.

During the Warring states period Wei made the mistake of thinking Qin were weak and mainly ignored them as a real threat, so they concentrated most of their military trying to conquer states to the east who were rich in resources.

Wei eventually ended up in a state of constant conflict with Qin after losing a strategic stretch of land. They were even required to relocate the capital which was originally based in Anyi to Daliang. Wei was forced to surrender to the Qin forces around 225BC, after the Qin military under Wang Ben diverted the yellow river so that it flowed in Daliang destroying the city in a devastating flood.

Yan

Yan was one of the ancient states during the Zhou dynasty, its capital was known as Ji and was located where modern-day Beijing is. Yan first began in the Zhou Dynasty and after the fall of the Zhou the state survived to become one of the strongest in China. During the Warring States period they were one of the last to be conquered by the Qin.



The state eventually fell around 222BC, just a year before the declaration of the Qin Empire. After the collapse of the Qin Empire, they briefly gained independence before being swallowed by the Han Dynasty.

Qin

During the Warring States period Qin rose to become the most dominant state and would eventually unify the country. It most famously known today because of the Terracotta army discovered in the 70's by a farmer working in his fields.

The Qin Ying Zheng formulated a plan to conquer the states, by allying with a distant state to conquer a nearby neighbour. Slowly over time they conquered each state to eventually become the dominant state and unify the country under a single leader.

The Qin would only last a few years eventually falling in 209BC, but they would have a lasting influence on the dynasties that followed. They left behind two great pieces of architecture, the Great Wall of China, and a palace for the first emperor. They also contributed to the simplifying and standardising of the emerging written Chinese language.

This only a brief overview of this period, for more in-depth information there are plenty of book and websites on the subject. It's a period of intrigue and conflict as one state rose to dominate eventually unifying the country and setting China on its path to the China we see today.

Inspiration from Film and TV

Kings War (Netflix, China) also known as Legend of Chu and Han, is a Chinese television series based on the events in the Chu–Han Contention, an inter-regnum between the fall of the Qin dynasty and the founding of the Han dynasty.

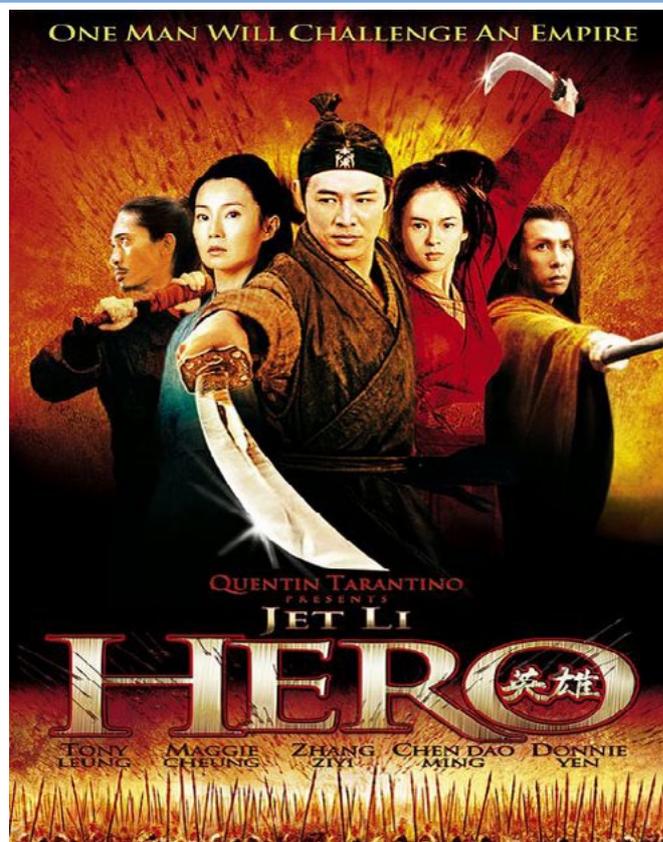
The series is set during the final years of the chaotic Qin dynasty and traces the origins of Liu Bang and Xiang Yu: one, a middle-aged hooligan who nonetheless has his personal charm; the other, a young grandson of a famous general of Chu during the Warring States and anxious to restore his destroyed kingdom. After the death of Qin Shihuang, Qin quickly descended into chaos, and the stage is set for the two men to rise to prominence, but ultimately, only one man can become the next emperor of China.



Hero (2002 film) The historical background of the film refers to the Warring States Period in ancient China, when China was divided into 7 countries. In 227-221 BC, the Qin state was about to unify the other six states, and many patriots from other states assassinated the king of Qin when they were about to commit suicide. One of the most famous incidents was Jing Ke's assassination of the King of Qin

The Warring States is a 2011 Chinese film directed by Chen Jin. The story takes place during the Warring States period, but is only very loosely based on the actual history.[1] The plot focuses on the rivalry between military generals Pang Juan and Sun Bin.

Little Big Soldier takes place during the Warring States period of China and tells the story of three men and a horse.



An old foot soldier and a young high-ranking general from a rival state become the only survivors of a ruthless battle. The soldier decides to capture the general and bring him back to his own state in hopes for a reward in return.

The Warring States Period is a documentary drama that follows the heroic figures of the seven states Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei and Qin and retells the rise and fall of a nation through realistic depictions of the events from the demise of the Warring States Period until the unification under Qin rule.

Miniatures

1st Corps – Curteys Miniatures (<https://1stcorps.co.uk/product-category/ancients/warring-states-chinese/>) This is a range of 28mm figures that includes cavalry, archers, crossbow, spear/halberdiers, swordsmen, commanders and chariots.

Caesar Miniatures

This is a Taiwan based toy soldier company, they produce a range of 1/72 figures that includes the Qin army, there is a review in this issue.

Eureka Miniatures (<https://www.eurekamin.com.au/>) Another 28mm range that includes infantry, cavalry and chariots.

Ch'in Dynasty Army

Producer: Caesar Miniatures

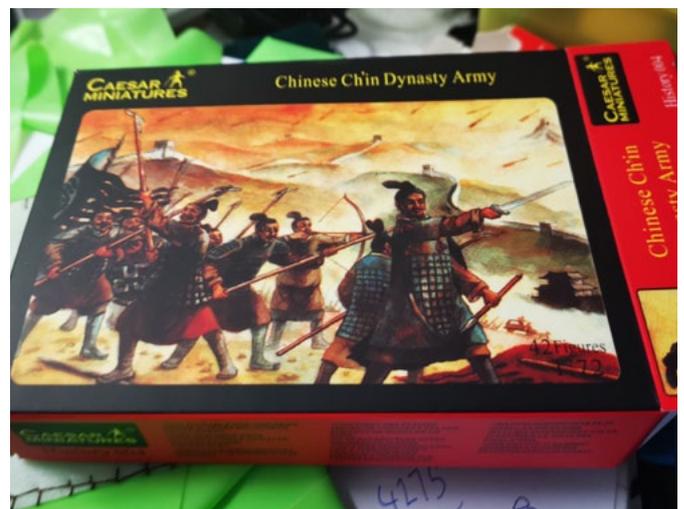
These are a box of 42 plastic miniatures produced by Caesar Miniatures of Ch'in period infantry. Most people will recognise these as the Terracotta Warriors, and they'd be right. The Terracotta warriors were recreations of the Ch'in soldiers. Ch'in (Qin) were one of many warring states who managed under the first emperor of China subdued and united the states to form China. The dynasty that followed only lasted 14 years but it was a major point in Chinese history.

The figures consist of infantry armed with the standard weapons of the period, most of the figures are quite dynamic, with the exception of the general who is quite static. The general is an exact copy of a figure from the Terracotta army, apart from an additional sword has been added.



There are some mould lines on the figures that will require to be cleaned up before painting. My one complaint about this set is the fact the weapons are a little soft and bendy, which makes them difficult to paint, It's the only issue I have with this set of miniatures.

Review by Jason Hubbard



These minis stand a little taller than 20mm at a height of approximately 26mm, which makes them rather tall for ancient Chinese, though some historians have suggested that the Royal Guard (Terracotta Warriors) were taller than the average Ch'in soldier.



The detail of these figures is exceptional, especially for 1/72 scale miniatures. The facial details are excellent, along with the armour which is made of squares tied together to form a cuirass. At this scale the detail is as good as 28mm scale miniatures.



They're a pretty accurate representation of the historical army, though they aren't a great representation of the Terracotta army.

None of them are wearing helmets, which is a pity as I doubt most troops would have gone into battle without head gear of some description.



I've seen other miniatures from Caesar and the quality of sculpt and cast is as exceptional as these. If you're looking at delving to gaming with this scale, then I can highly recommend this manufacturer.



These are good miniatures, and at the price 1/72 figures are priced at it's a cheap way to get into mass battle wargames.



I would like to see Caesar produce some chariots and cavalry, along with some skirmish troops to complement this box set. Until then you'll need to convert or use proxies to fill out your army. One idea could be to use chariots from Egyptian's or other ancient armies.



Fantastic Battles

Author: Nic Wright

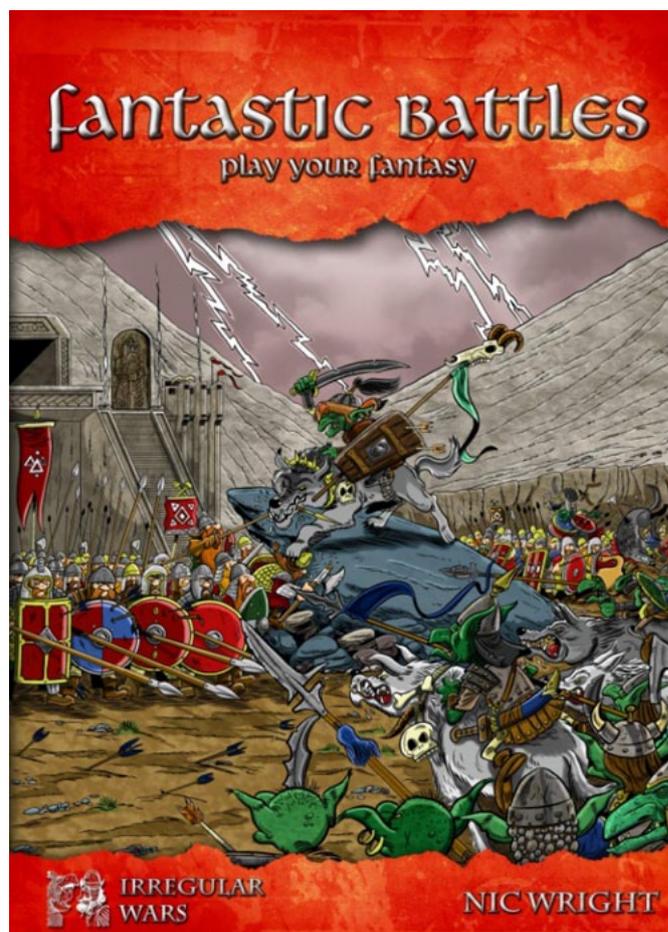
Publisher: Irregular Wars

Review by Jason Hubbard

Fantastic Battles is a fast-play, mass-battle, wargaming system for any fantasy setting. The rules emphasise the tactical concerns of command friction and the fog of war through randomised initiative, tabletop mishap rolls and the impetuous decisions of unsupervised unit commanders.

An all-in-one volume, this book contains the rules for stand-alone pitched battles as well as campaigns. Twenty-four example army lists are provided; however, army building is designed to be flexible. A toolkit of base profiles and unit traits allow players to build customised armies to suit their own vision of their fantasy faction. Scale agnostic, with multi-based figures and no individual figure removal, the game can be played using any fantasy figures, or historical armies from the ancient to the early modern period.

This rule set probably works best at scales between 6-18mm, but it can easily be used for 28mm. My plan is to use it for fantasy at 10mm the old Warmaster scale, and 15mm for historical gaming. This is the first great aspect of these rules is that it can be utilised for either fantasy or historical games. Period rise I'd say it'll only work up to and including the 17th Century, beyond that and you'll need another set of rules.



These are a really easy set to pick up and play, you won't get bogged down in too many rules to learn. The fact the book is laid out in a rather; logical manner makes learning the rules much easier and faster. There are several illustrations/photos throughout the book.

The setting and scale are agnostic meaning you can use any existing armies you have or you can purchase any fantasy or historical army to play with these rules. A basic unit is a company on a war base of approximately 4-6cm square. You can use up to four in a formation in a unit. All companies will use the same sized base. Both movement and range weapons are measured in base widths (BW's).



Units are removed once they have suffered enough Resolve loss, which is similar to morale in other systems, this can be reduced through combat or magic attacks. Once RESOLVE reaches zero, the unit will disperse and have a detrimental effect of any units nearby.

Movement is limited in comparison to other similar rule systems, but I didn't find this to be an issue. It made for fast play which for me was great. I don't want a game to take several hours to play. I'd rather have two or three games in an evening rather than just one. That was my main issue with the last edition of Warhammer Fantasy Battles.



The book contains 24 sample armies for both fantasy and historical and it's not too difficult a task to create a list to suit your army. You only need this one rule book to play and it's a reasonable price to purchase from either Amazon or Wargames Vault website.



Once you get units into close combat then it becomes really harsh and it's quite easy to punch holes into your opponent's line.



Then when units start failing resolve that can have an even bigger effect and before you know one side is running for the hills. The book also includes a campaign section which is a great way to play the game. Fantastic battles can also be played in solo mode, which adds an extra dimension and is perfect for the current pandemic where some of us can't get out to play against friends. It's also a good way to learn the game before demoing it to friends.



I think this is a great set of rules to pick up and play especially if you're looking to go down in scale from 28mm. I want to play mass battles again, but storage space is a premium specially to build an army in 28mm. So, dropping down to 15 and 10mm is a much better option for both storage and cost.



Go Big, Go Small

Are you one of those gamers who plays a lot of skirmish games in 28mm and fancy playing some bigger games but don't have the storage space to house large armies in 28, or the cost of large armies in 28mm is prohibitive. The maybe looking at smaller scales might be the answer.

I myself have decided to go down in scale to larger battle games, but which scale is best or attracts your eye. I've looked at several scales from 1/72 or 20mm right down to 6mm, now whilst 6mm is a good scale for mass battles it's too small for me. So, I've opted to go down to 1/72 and 15mm scales. Going down in scale does have its pros and cons, now whilst they will be cheaper to purchase and easier to store, they're unlikely to be at the same quality of sculpting and casting as 28mm counter parts.

One of the major plus points for smaller scales is money. For example, a pack of 20-30 infantry at smaller scales will cost anywhere from a couple of pounds up to £10 depending on the scale. A box of 1/72 miniatures which will normally have anywhere from 30-48 miniatures for under £10. To purchase that number of 28mm figures will cost you significantly more. You could literally purchase a small army for the cost of 28mm unit from a company such as Games Workshop.

At smaller scales you can field larger armies, if you were to drop down to 6mm you could play games that featured 1000 troops on each size, something could



never achieve at 28mm without an extremely large space to play.

A popular scale for fantasy mass battles is 10mm, this was made popular by Games Workshop in the past with the rule system Warmaster.



As such it's still a popular scale amongst fantasy gamers, and it's been making a resurgence recently with the 3D printing explosion. It's not hard to find a small 3D printed starting army on eBay or other sites for less than £20. There are also several manufacturers that produce metal fantasy armies in this scale, one of which is Pendraken.

One of the more popular scales for historical gaming is 15mm, there are a plethora of manufacturers producing armies from all periods from literally every corner of the world. One of the more commercially successful games at this scale is Flames of War, a WW2 period setting. Companies such as Xyston cater for the ancients whilst other manufacturers feed the later periods.



Sci-fi works well at 15mm in the same way it works for WW2, one popular set of rules for this scale is Hammers Slammers.

15mm isn't the smallest of scales available you can go all the way down to 2mm. One particular scale that is very popular is 6mm, there is even a convention that caters just for this scale, called Joy of Six held in Sheffield and organized by 6mm miniature manufacturer Baccus. It's an annual wargame show that devoted to this scale, we can highly recommend this show especially if you're contemplating this scale.



The Napoleonic period is very popular at 6mm as it allows you field large armies which isn't possible at larger scales.

This is one of the appeals that many switch to smaller scales is the ability to field much larger armies on the same table size as say 28mm. It will allow gamers to play games at a divisional level, fielding more units. One big advantage of playing smaller scales is they're quicker to get painted, and that means faster on to the gaming table.

Are there barriers to going to smaller scales, yes just like any other wargame and scale. Switching to a smaller scale will mean doing some research for manufacturers and sellers. 28mm is probably considered the mainstream scale, and that's what most stores will stock on the high street. So, you'll need to invest some time researching on-line or attending some local gaming shows.

So, have I gone to smaller scales, the short answer is, yes? I've already started at 15mm with Flames of War and Team Yankee. I'm now tempted to start playing large scale fantasy games at 10mm, along with playing some games at 15mm and 1/72 scales. I'm planning to start playing Sci-Fi games at 15mm as I like the idea of playing with Mechs and futuristic armoured vehicles. So why not take the plunge to a smaller scale, it may be a great way to save money in these difficult times and play bigger games.

The East Africa Campaign 1914-1918

Author: David Smith

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

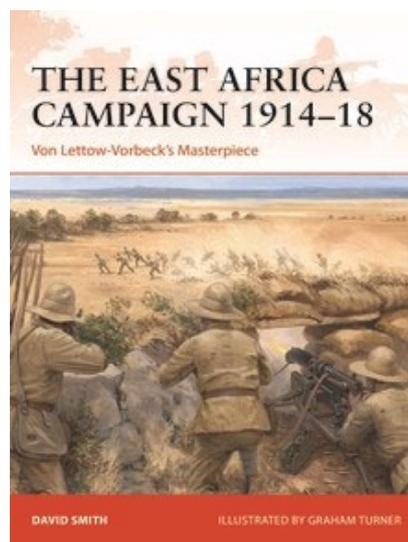
The East African Campaign in World War I comprised a series of battles and guerrilla actions which began in German East Africa in 1914 and spread to portions of Portuguese Mozambique, northern Rhodesia, British East Africa, the Uganda Protectorate, and the Belgian Congo.

German colonial forces under Lieutenant-Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck attempt to divert Allied forces from the Western Front. Despite the efforts of the Allied forces, Lettow-Vorbeck's troops remained undefeated at the end of the war.

In this fascinating work, David Smith documents how a wide array of British, Indian, South African, Belgian, Portuguese and local native forces invaded German East Africa and slowly ousted the German forces, a process made tortuous by Lettow-Vorbeck's masterful management of the campaign. Among the events covered in this work are the Battle of Tanga, the scuttling of the Königsberg, the German railway campaign, and the battles at Salaita Hill, Kondoa-Irangi, Mahenge, Mahiwa and Namacurra. Colourful period and specially commissioned illustrations bring to life a wide-ranging and eventful campaign in which a high price was extracted for every inch of ground given up.

This was a part of the First World War that I really didn't know much about, in fact barely anything at all. I think my sum knowledge came from a few TV shows and films, such Young Indiana Jones and the episodes set in Africa. So, when this book dropped on to my desk, I was keen to read it.

This follows the same layout as other campaign books published by Osprey. So, you can expect a plethora of illustrations, maps, photos and battle maps to accompany the text. The author follows the campaign carried out by Von Lettow-Vorbeck. It was a masterpiece in military campaigning through the use meticulous management of tactics and troop movement.



The author investigates both the troops under Vorbeck and those who opposed the German force. He also takes a look at both the battle plans of the Germans and the allied forces who opposed Vorbeck.

This is a great book for any wargamer who is considering developing or recreating the Vorbeck's campaign onto the tabletop. There's plenty of information to aid creating a campaign, and for the wargamer I would say this is probably the only book they'll need to develop a campaign. Historians will most likely want to dig a little deeper than this book goes. As such I'd say this is going to be a great jumping off point. This will definitely give the reader a good overview of the campaign, where they can choose to go further with their reading.

I found this a fascinating read, and it did give me an urge to look into gaming in Africa during WW1. There are several Osprey books to read after this that look at the armies who fought in the theatre of operations a little more closely. So those will go on my wish list and include Armies in Africa 1914-18.

10/12mm Fantasy Range

Manufacturer: Pendraken Miniatures
<https://www.pendraken.co.uk/>

Recently Pendraken sent us a selection of miniatures from their 12mm range of fantasy armies. 10mm hasn't been a scale I'd normally look at but with the growing cost of living crisis coupled with storage issues, smaller scales suddenly look appealing. So, when I opened the package from Pendraken I was pleasantly surprised at how detailed these were for a small scale. So, what did they send to check out?

Undead

These are your typical skeleton army, very much in the Harryhausen style skellies. These are a staple of the fantasy genre with enough options to build a range of different war bands. I particularly like the bone catapults, and the Dark Coach.

Dark Elf

I really like the Raptor riders from this faction, these are nicely sculpted especially the raptor. The army also has spider riders which is unusual because normally those are associated with goblins rather than dark elves.

Hill Dwarves

These are your typical dwarves, stoic and armed with cannon and gyrocopters. These are old school style dwarves, similar to those cast in the 80's. These were really easy to paint, the detail is quite good, the casting on these and all the other miniatures are really clean.



Human

The human army are known as dragon men, ruled by a chromatic dragon. This is a very typical medieval style army filled with armoured knights, archers, crossbow men, hand gunners along with men at arms and wizards. This is one of the armies I'm drawn to from the samples sent us along with the Dark Elves.

High Elves

These look and feel very similar to the high Elves of 4th edition Warhammer, one main difference are the chariots. This is the first time I've seen Elven chariots, but I do like the idea of a highly mobile elf army.



There are several other armies in the range including Samurai Apes, orcs and monsters. There is plenty of choice within the range to appeal to most gamers.



These will work for a number of rule systems, such as Fantastic Battles and Warmaster, which is still popular amongst gamers. Pendraken also has a rule set called Warband which will allow you to play large scale mass fantasy battles

The miniatures are well sculpted and cast, there was very limited mold lines and flash. Most of the miniatures didn't require cleaning up much at all.

The bases needed some clean up on the underneath to make them sit flat, but this was easily cleaned up with a sharp knife and a little filing.



Painting these wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. There's enough detail on them to make them interesting to paint, but not too much detail like some 15mm ranges do that make them a pain to slap some paint on them. I found them pretty quick to up to a tabletop standard.

After painting up some of the samples that I realized that painting up an army wouldn't be too much of a chore.

I pretty much went with a simple base coat of a reduce colour palette, followed by a wash and some highlights in noticeable areas.

Most unit packs cost around £6 with 25 miniatures, command units are around £2 or you could purchase a ready-made army for £35, which makes this scale a bargain compared to the larger scales available.



Overall, I'm really impressed with the level of detail especially for a small scale. Going forward I think this is the perfect scale for fantasy mass battles especially when you consider price and how little space a 12mm army will take up. The next big question is which army or armies, because yes, I could afford more than one at this scale.



I'm considering probably going for Dark Elves and maybe either Human or a Dwarf army.

Pendraken also has a plethora of historical periods in 10mm that's also worth looking at, as well as scenery. It wouldn't cost much to build a gaming table in 10mm scale and cost wise it would be really reasonably cheap especially compared to larger scales.



German Tanks of World War 2: Military Vehicles and Artillery Series: Volume 1

Author: Craig Moore & David Bocquelet

Publisher: Key Books

Review by Jason Hubbard

In World War Two, the German army deployed a wide variety of tanks in many different variants and forms of camouflage. These tanks were often lethal to become entangled with and known to be formidable pieces of military engineering.

This book features a unique collection of colour illustrations which detail their development, differences in design and modifications that were made during their production run.

The artwork is accompanied by descriptions and technical information about each tank, written by respected expert Craig Moore, making it an essential handbook for anyone interested in the German armed forces and World War Two armour.

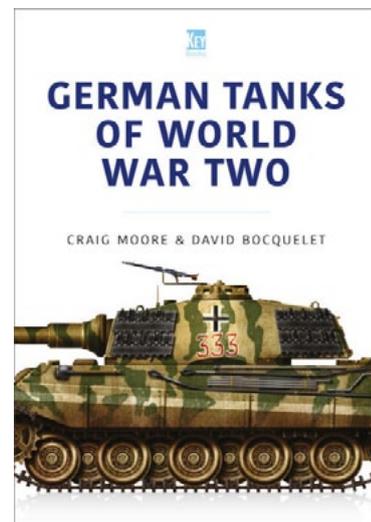
This is basically a modern version of a tank recognition guide that concentrates on the armour of the German military. Each tank that was used by the German army is included in this book, each with a page of information and several illustrations of the tanks.

This is a great resource for modelers and wargamers, it provides more than one illustrated example of each tank. This is great for painting ideas, and unit markings.

This is definitely one book that will stay on my shelf as a resource for Bolt Action and Flames of War. This looks to be the first in a series of books looking at tanks and artillery of the second world war.

I'm looking forward to the next volume, and I'm hoping it's either British or US tanks.

The book is well laid out, easy to read and the illustrations are a great resource. I would defiantly recommend this book to gamers of World War 2 games. This is literally a one stop shop for tank recognition.



This isn't an in-depth look at German tanks, there are better books on the marketplace for that, what this book is it's a handy sized volume that provides an overview of every tank that saw service during the war.

I'm definitely going to pick up future volumes as they're published, and I'd recommend you do to.



Bushido Two Player Starter Set

Bushido is an oriental fantasy tabletop miniatures battle game for two players. Each player commands a force of no more than a handful of individuals, represented by 32mm metal miniatures. In the world of Bushido, the individual is important, the world isn't saved by armies but by heroes.

The fate of the world hangs on these heroes, folk of extraordinary capacity, who are attuned to a life force known as Ki. This force is the fabric of the Bushido world, and those with the right training or natural ability can plug into this energy source and gain super-human powers.



The delicate tapestry of Ki – and thus the world itself – is constantly threatened by the forces of imbalance, and it is up to the heroes to protect it – or help tear it to shreds.

It's a game of duelling martial artists, testing their training against one another. One shall prevail and prove their techniques superior. The other will return to studying until they are strong enough to win. Players begin with a card draft which represents the training of their fighters.

This isn't an historical Japan or Asia but a fantasy version of the region. It's a skirmish game with a minimal miniature count. Players take control of a small warband, which is great for those who like to spend a lot of time painting, or on the opposite side great for those who like to spend time painting. The game requires a 2-foot square playing area, which means you don't need a large table to play the game. It also means you won't need a lot of terrain to fill that table space.

Bushido uses a I move, you move approach, but with an added dimension. Each model has three “conditions” – Rested, Tired, and Exhausted. You can activate a model, even for a second time, as long as it isn’t exhausted. You can even use it twice in a row. But your opponent makes a move or action in between. Bushido is a fast paced, highly flexible, filled with strategy and counter strategy, tactics are important in this game, whilst the dice add an element of randomness that requires to think fast.



Before we get started, I’ve never played Bushido, but I’ve always been attracted by the miniatures of which I’ve picked up a few of the years. So, I’m looking at this starter set as a complete noob, so before I continue to ramble let’s crack it open and have a butcher at the set.

The starter set contains.

- A copy of the Risen Sun rulebook in A5
- A set of tokens
- 10 Resin miniatures, five for Hozumi family and five for Kiyozumi along with the unit cards for each of them.
- 21 cards which includes theme, event and enhancement cards.



Most games take around an hour to play, though if when you’re starting out, they’ll probably take longer.

There are several sanctions to choose from, some of which are committed to keeping the delicate balance of the KI Forces in the universe. There are also other forces who want to upset the balance for their own nefarious means.

Recently CGT released a two-player starter set for Bushido, so let’s take a look at this.



The rule book comes in at 94 pages, and is packed with illustrations, the rules are easy to pick especially as there are some videos provided on YouTube by CGT Studios that run you through the basics of the game.



All of the miniatures come with an enhancement card, and stat cards which will allow players to play basic level games initially before adding the enhancement card for a more complex game. The game allows for a more narrative game, where characters can gain abilities as a campaign progresses.



The miniatures are a brand-new resin, where previously were produced in metal. The casting is really sharp, with a high amount of detail, the quality is superb. Most are single piece which will need to be clipped from the sprue attached to the base of the mini. There are a few that are multi-part and will need to be glued. These are very easy to build and glue together which is a good sign for future releases.



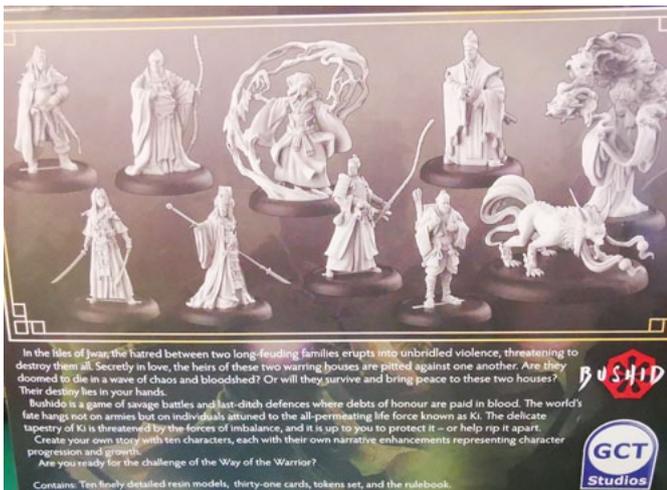
The starter set is designed to play as 5 Vs 5 immediately using the two families/warbands. Both are roughly equal to each other which are big enough to play a 75 Rice cost game out of the box, it also means that either side won't need much adding to either side to take them up to 100 rice.



The ten units that come with the starter set can be used with various other factions from the game. The factions the units can be used with are stated on the back of the unit stat card. This means no matter which faction you choose to play; you'll be able use at least one of the units. You will need to choose a faction because you can't select Ronin as a faction when using the two starter set themes. Bushido is an I go You go activation game, basically each player takes turn to activate a miniature. Yet where this game differs is that Bushido has three phases of activation: Unactivated, tired and exhausted. So when a unit activates, it can complete either a simple or more complex action.



A simple action will result in a unit being tired, or a unit which already tired will become exhausted. Whereas a complex action will mean a unactivated unit become exhausted. When in combat an Exhausted unit will take modifiers to their rolls.



The game comes into its own when players make use of the units' abilities and utilising Ki powers that some characters have, along with the abilities of the plethora of weapons available. Once you've learnt and mastered these it will give you that extra edge in a game.

This is a great place to start, it allows you to start playing the game and getting to grips with the game prior to committing to choosing a faction. It will give you a good understanding of the game whilst starting out.

CGT have been improving the game, and this starter set shows this. For existing players this new set has eagerly awaited, and it lives up to expectations.



I'm looking forward to continuing this delve into Bushido and getting some more games played. Beyond the starter set there are also starter set for each of the factions with new miniatures. The rule book has a short background information on each of the factions, so this should allow you to make a choice of which one to collect and expand your forces.



Ninja: Unmasking the Truth

Author: Stephen Turnbull

Publisher: Pen and Sword

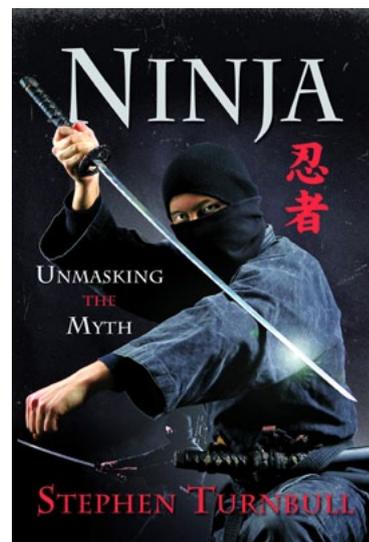
Review by Jason Hubbard

The ninja is a well-known phenomenon in Japanese military culture, a fighter who is widely regarded as the world's greatest exponent of secret warfare. He infiltrates castles, gathers vital intelligence and wields a deadly knife in the dark. His easily recognisable image is that of a secret agent or assassin who dresses all in black, possesses almost magical martial powers, and is capable of extraordinary feats of daring. He sells his skills on a mercenary basis and when in action his unique abilities include confusing his enemies by making mystical hand gestures or by sending sharp iron stars spinning towards them.

That is the popular view, but it is much exaggerated, as this exciting new book explains. Ninja is a revealing, fascinating and authoritative study of Japan's famous secret warriors. Unlike all previous books on the subject the author, who is an expert in the subject, does not take the ninja for granted. Instead, he examines the entire phenomenon in a critical manner, ranging from accounts of undercover operations during the age of Japan's civil wars to the modern emergence of the superman ninja as a comic book character.

The popular ninja image is shown to be the result of several influences that were combined to create the world's greatest secret warrior. Many well-known features of the ninja tradition such as the black clothes and the iron stars are shown to be complete inventions. One important feature of the book is the use of original Japanese sources, many of which have never been translated before. As well as unknown accounts of castle attacks, assassinations and espionage they include the last great ninja manual, which reveals the spiritual and religious ideals that were believed to lie behind the ninja's arts. The book concludes with a detailed investigation of the ninja in popular culture up to the present-day including movies, cartoons and theme parks.

Most people's image of the ninja were black dressed assassins who were the bane of the samurai warrior class.



The author takes this mythological view and throws it out of the window to provide a more realistic image of the ninja. He shows us that the image of the ninja we all know was created by modern pop culture, via TV and movies. He attempts with this book to provide a more accurate picture of who and what the ninjas were.

What the author shows us is that the ninja rather than being a black clad super warrior with mystical like qualities was more likely a well-trained soldier in art of espionage and secret warfare, much like modern day special forces operatives. The ninja rather than an elusive assassin was in reality a special forces operative and spy. These operatives would have been dressed in normal clothing to blend in with their surroundings rather than the black uniform we've all become accustomed to seeing on film and TV.

This is a great book and will appeal to a wide range of people, from those interested in feudal Japan, martial artists, role players and wargamers. It's an interesting look at the myth of the ninja often regarded as the ultimate assassin with fantastical abilities.

War in Japan 1467-1615

Author: Stephen Turnbull

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

In 1467 the Onin War ushered in a period of unrivalled conflict and rivalry in Japan that came to be called the Age of Warring States or Sengoku Jidai. In this book Stephen Turnbull offers a masterly exposition of the Sengoku Jidai, detailing the factors that led to Japan's disintegration into warring states after more than a century of peace; the years of fighting that followed; and the period of gradual fusion when the daimyo (great names) strove to reunite Japan under a new Shogun. Peace returned to Japan with the end of the Osaka War in 1615, but only at the end of the most violent, turbulent and cruel period in Japanese history.

The author is well known authority on Japanese military history especially the Samurai, he already has a large back catalogue of books written on the subject. In this book he provides the reader with a well-researched highly detailed background to the period, those who fought during this time along with the tactics and development of warfare during this turbulent era of Japanese history. This is a great introduction to the period providing a detailed account, add some of the other books published by Osprey about this period and you suddenly have an extensive collection that combined delves into some depth on the subject matter.

This book is a very good introduction to the subject matter and whilst it's very well researched and well written, it's not a definitive book on the topic. This will most likely be enough especially when combined with some of the Man at Arms books on this period. For those who are military historians or gamers who want a depth of knowledge far greater than they'll need to read beyond this book. This book will be a good starting point for both gamers and historians.

The book has some excellent sections one of which the author looks at the conflict from a soldier's perspective. The author also looks at how the farming community were affected and the emergence of the farmer-warrior.



The author finishes the book by looking at Tokugawa Ieyasu who eventually became the Shogun of Japan. He would go on to develop a government that would establish peace within the country that would last 250 years, which would come at a price. As the country descended in isolation, they remained in a feudal society while the rest of the world advanced to a more industrial world.

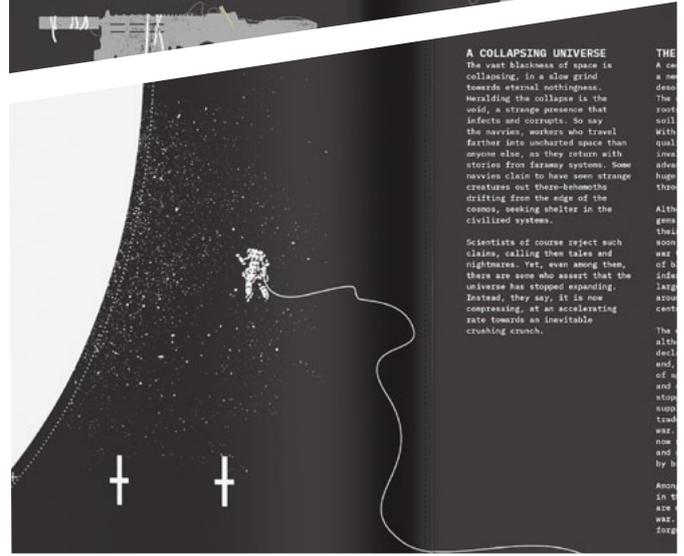
This would lead to eventual downfall of the samurai warrior class when Japan eventually opened up to world. This was an exceptional read, and gave me a good grounding in the period, especially for games like Test of Honor.

I'd highly recommend picking this volume up if you are gaming this period or plan to start. There is enough material in this handy sized book to provide you with a good grounding of background knowledge.

Death in Space RPG

Publisher: FreeLeague

Jason Hubbard



It **DEATH IN SPACE** is a game about adventure and uncertain journeys out into the darkness of space, where the void whispers to the unlucky and imbues travelers' bodies with strange powers. It is about you and your crew making a home of your spacecraft or station, your only sanctuary in a dangerous universe. Most of all, it is about surviving in an abandoned frontier system where resources are scarce, and competition is fierce.

Engage in power struggles and build your crew's reputation. Salvage and steal to endure a ruthless universe. And above all, do anything you can to get that next job. Your life will depend on it.

The core game book contains everything you need to start playing:

- Light-weight rules, intended to be easy to use and quick to learn
- A system for quickly generating player characters & their spacecraft or space-station
- 60+ different modules to make the spacecraft or space-station your own
- An introduction to the Tenebris system, its main locations and history
- A system for repairs, where you collect spare parts to repair your stuff

- 20 cosmic mutations, representing physical manifestations of the void
- A system for spacecraft confrontations and boarding



- An introductory scenario to jumpstart your campaign
- 40+ tables and generators packed with setting flavour

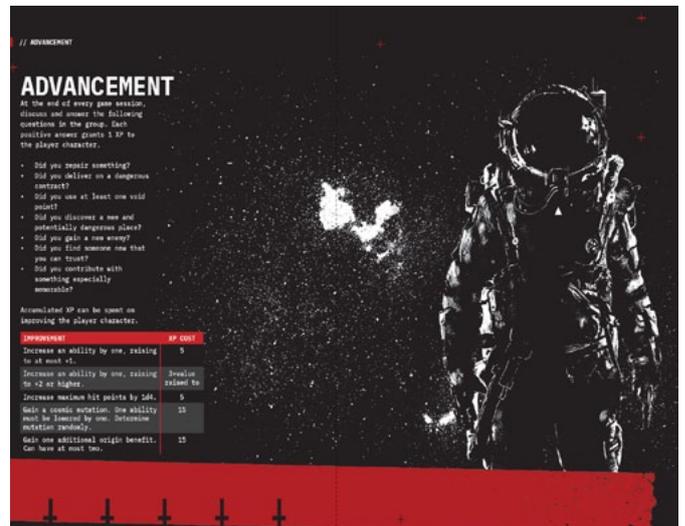
The setting for this game is a hypothetical situation where our universe stops expanding and suddenly starts to contract instead. Added to this the universe is going through the aftermath of a terrible galactic war, which was over resources along mutations caused by the void this is a pretty dark setting to explore.

The core rules come in an A5 volume similar in style to Mork Borg, there is also a nice starter adventure which will introduce players to the general game mechanics. Players can decide to either set their games on a space station or a spaceship. It depends on which style of adventure you want to play out.



In regard to the mechanics, the game is very rules light just like Mork Borg, which for a sci-fi game makes it a lot easier to dive into. For instance, the rules for creating a spaceship are cover in two pages, yes, I did just say two and not a complete chapter. The creature bestiary is also pretty light when it comes to rules which means it's a lot more open for interpretation.

This is the appeal of Death in Space; you won't be bogged down in complex rules like other Sci-Fi RPGs. As an added dimension to the game is the void, which is an extreme force interacting with the universe. It has the ability to affect both your mind and body, so you may gain benefits or disadvantages.



This will add an extra element to the game- and role-playing opportunities.

I haven't played a sci-fi RPG for a long time, not since my days playing Traveler and Star Frontiers, mainly because none of the newer games appealed to me. So, when I got my hands on this, I was intrigued by it.



The rules light aspect of the game appealed to me, as I didn't want to play a game that's bogged down with tables and cross referencing. The game is a nice break from playing fantasy themed games, there's plenty of customization for GM's along with a good deal of flexibility for players to get their teeth into. If you're a fan of sci-fi movies and want to recreate those worlds, then this would be a great set of rules to achieve that. It's definitely worth checking out and giving it a whirl.

Images of War

The Liberation of the Philippines

Author: Jon Diamond

Publisher: Pen and Sword

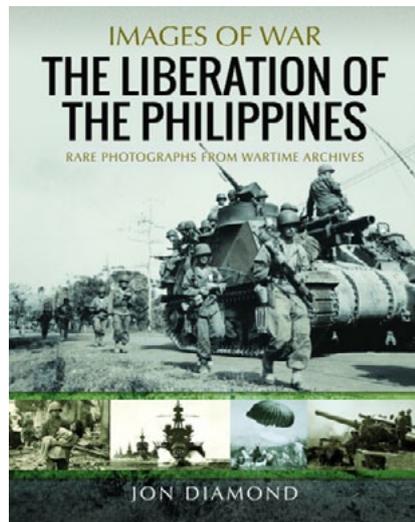
Review by Jason Hubbard

General Douglas A MacArthur, Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, saw the liberation of the Philippines Archipelago as the launching board for the invasion of the Japanese Home Islands. By late 1944, with the capture of New Guinea and surrounding islands, the US Sixth and Eighth Armies were poised for the challenge.

American forces landed on Leyte on 20 October 1944 with the Leyte Gulf naval battle quickly following. By 25 December the island was cleared opening the way for Lieutenant General Walter Krueger's Sixth Army to invade Luzon on 9 January 1945.

Bitter Japanese resistance required Eichelberger's Eighth Army as reinforcements. Manila finally fell on 4 March. In the meantime, Bataan was captured on 16 February and Corregidor on 2 March after a US airborne assault. Fighting continued and MacArthur finally declared the liberation of the Archipelago on 5 July, just a month before the Atom bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This superbly illustrated work in the Pacific War Images of War series leaves the reader in no doubt as to the intensity of the land, sea and air operations required by the Allies to defeat the Japanese.



Battle of Peleliu 1944

Author: Jim Moran

Publisher: Pen and Sword

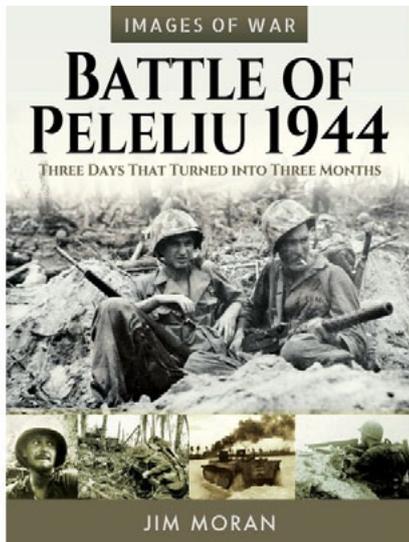
After the Allies had defeated the Japanese in the Solomons and the Dutch East Indies, the capture of the Philippines became General MacArthur's next objective. For this offensive to succeed, MacArthur felt compelled to secure his eastern flank by seizing control of the Palau Islands, one of which was Peleliu.

The task of capturing this island, and the enemy airfield on it, was initially handed to Admiral Nimitz.

The Palau Islands, however, formed part of Japan's second defensive line, and Peleliu's garrison amounted to more than 10,000 men.

Consequently, when the US preliminary bombardment began on 12 September 1944, it was devastating. For two days the island was pounded relentlessly.





Such was the scale of the destruction that the commander of the 1st Marine Division, Major General William H. Rupertus, told his men: 'We're going to have some casualties, but let me assure you this is going to be a fast one, rough but fast. We'll be through in three days - it may only take two.' At 08.32 hours on 15 September 1944, the Marines went ashore.



Despite bitter fighting, and a ferocious Japanese defence, by the end of the day the Marines had a firm hold on Peleliu. But rather than Japanese resistance crumbling during the following days as had been expected, it stiffened, as they withdrew to their prepared defensive positions.

The woods, swamps, caves and mountains inland had been turned into a veritable fortress - it was there where the real battle for possession of Peleliu was fought. Day

after day the Americans battled forward, gradually wresting control of Peleliu from the Japanese. Despite Major General Rupertus's prediction, it was not until 27 November, after two months, one week and five days of appalling fighting, and a final, futile last sacrificial charge by the remaining enemy troops, that the Battle of Peleliu came to an end.

Both of these books contain an impressive collection of photographs taken at the time and coupled with some informative text on the conflicts.



The US were fighting a determined, well dug in enemy and the images depict how ferocious the fighting was to retake both places.

This series of books work well as an introduction on the topic and as a visual reference material, there are more in-depth books that would suit the historian more, but these are great for the wargamer. This series works well for those looking to recreate the battles and conflicts on the tabletop.

The visual references will provide a great deal of inspiration in regard to terrain. They also work well as a visual reference for modellers looking to build dioramas, there are plenty of images to take inspiration from. On top of the images there is plenty of informative text for the average wargamer to gain an insight into the battles. As usual these are worth picking up if you plan to recreate these battles on the tabletop.



Two Gun Cohen

from a street rogue to a general

by Jason Hubbard

Morris Cohen was a British Polish Jew originally from London, who became a general in the Chinese army. A young teen he was a street thug come petty criminal, got into fights and involved in small street crime. He spent five years in a reform school because of his behavior.

At 18 his father shipped him off to Canada, where he worked as a farm hand, here he learnt to play cards and the tricks to cheat. At 20 he worked at a circus for a short while but left in Winnipeg where he ended up in jail for 6 months for pimping. After jail he moved to Saskatchewan selling retail, it's here he became involved with the local Chinese immigrants. It's also here where he learnt about Sun Yat Sen.



At 35 he was broke and had become someone of interest to the Canadian police, so he left Canada for China. So, in 1922 he sailed for China, and he was asked to broker a deal to build a railway in China. He started out as a wheeler dealer, it was at this time he finally met



He moved to Edmonton and started selling land, as well as indulging in criminal activities again. He also became more involved with the Chinese community in Edmonton. He left Canada in 1913 and returned to London quite a wealthy man. He returned to Canada just before the First World War started, and the land selling boom broke. He joined the army at the start of the war, he was made the rank of Acting Sargent, his role was building railways in France. After the war he returned to Canada, where he continued to build his own myth and returned to his criminal ways.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-12301
Foto: o. Ang. 1 September 1931



Sun Yat Sen. Morris entered the inner circle and became an ADC/Bodyguard for Sun Yat Sen. He reinvented himself, training up other bodyguards, as well as being known as a tough guy. On several occasions he had to protect Sun Yat Sen from numerous assassination attempts. This was when Cohen started carrying two 45 pistols and gained the nick name Two Gun Cohen. In 1924 he was sent to Canada to source and purchase weapons for Sun Yat Sen.



Sun Yat Sen died in 1925, and this meant Cohen's meal ticket in China was gone. He now needed to cement his position within the KMT. The Hong Kong Strike 1925-27 meant Cohen used his connections to act an intermediary between the officials and the strikers. In 1926 he became head of security of Shanghai Bank, people believed Cohen acted as intermediary between the factions in Shanghai. Then the purge of communists occurred in Shanghai in 1927, forced Cohen to find another meal ticket.



He joined a group of Chinese officials who were traveling the world drumming up interest and business for China. The group had some great success in the UK and the US with the help of Cohen. He also connected to some of the Southern Warlords during this time acquiring military equipment for them.

In 1927 Cohen started taking part in the KMT campaign against Communist rebels, as well undertaking trips abroad to Europe to purchase weapons on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek. During the war between the KMT and the Communists at this time Cohen was trusted by both sides, so acted as a go between the two sides. Cohen was given the rank of Brigadier General in 1931 and was placed in command of the 19th field army, he commanded them in battle against Communist and Japanese forces.





After the invasion of China by the Japanese military in 1937, the British approached Cohen to act as a spy for them passing valuable information. One particular exploit of his was exposing the poisonous gas stocks the Japanese had compiled in Manchuria.



In 1941 Cohen was captured by the Japanese in Hong Kong and was placed in the notorious Stanley Prison in Hong Kong. He was released in 1942 as part of a prisoner exchange and was returned to Canada.



After the war he often visited China and Taiwan as a respected guest of both governments. When he died in England in 1970, Chinese representatives from both China and Taiwan attended his funeral.



Cohen is one of those interesting characters that could easily turn up as an NPC in an RPG set in China from 1922-1940, likewise he could also feature in a post war setting in either China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. He is basically a conman, street wise thug with connections to various legitimate and illegitimate factions in China.

He would have a variety of skills, that would include pick pocketing, boxing, firearms, military tactics, intrigue, spy craft and skills mostly associated with conmen. He's a larger-than-life character who was very loyal to Sun Yat Sen and China. He is always armed with two pistols, one on the hip and the other in a shoulder holster.

Narvik 1940

The Battle for Northern Norway

Author: David Greentree

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

In early 1940, a battle raged to control the ice-free, iron-ore port in northern Norway – with changing fortunes until the very end.

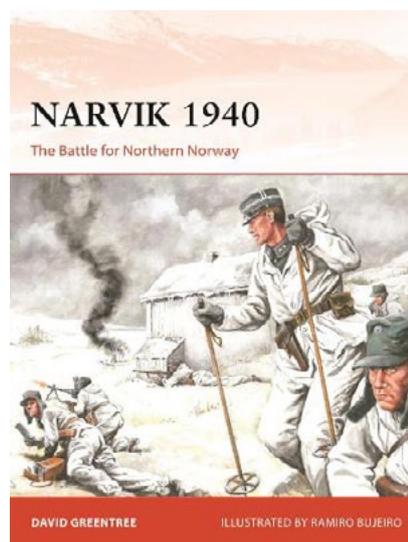
This highly detailed book covers both the naval battles and the individual Norwegian, British, Polish, French and German units that fought the land campaign over northern Norway. Highly detailed maps guide you step by step through the events. Few other books on Narvik give you as much detail on the forces of the fighting five. From Gebirgsjäger to Guardsmen, Fallschirmjäger to Foreign Legionnaires, it offers you an impressive level of tactical detail, even down to company command, whilst also helping you understand the strategic confusion surrounding the whole Allied expedition to the north too.

Among the naval clashes covered in this action-packed story are the destroyer battles in the fjords, the sinking of the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious and the roles the famous battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau played in the fighting. No less dramatic are the land battles, which include amphibious landings, sabotage, commando raids, daring ski missions and a rare parachute insertion by Gebirgsjäger troops.

The Nazi invasion of Norway is relatively quite well known these days, but for a long time was a forgotten aspect of World War 2. The battle for Northern Norway, was largely ignored, though in recent years there has been much more written about the conflict. It was a campaign fought either near or above the Arctic Circle which meant conditions for those involved in the fighting was extremely harsh.

The invasion of Norway was carried out roughly at the same time as the Germans blitzkrieg into France, so the Norway campaign was largely ignored in favour of trying to stop the Germans invading the lowlands.

The author has done a great job of covering this topic in great detail, looking at both sides of the conflict covering tactics, commanders, troops on the ground and



equipment. He also takes a detailed look at some of the battles which includes some of the naval skirmishes. Anyone thinking of recreating parts of this conflict on the tabletop, then this is an ideal companion to pick up. You'll definitely find plenty of background information that will provide a plethora of ideas to re-create.

I wasn't looking to recreate this campaign on the tabletop but after reading this I'm tempted and if you combine this book with the Finnish-Soviet War volume we reviewed in the last issue then you'll have plenty of possibilities to recreate battles in the snow either against the German or Russian forces. Or you could fight games set in either Norway or Finland with Russian and German forces. If

If your interest is military history, and in particular World War Two then this will be an interesting read, it'll provide a great overview of the subject.

Conquistadors

Producer: Wargames Atlantic

Review by Jason Hubbard

The men who plundered the Americas were typically adventurers down on their luck and willing to risk all to change their fortunes. Many were well-trained mercenaries in service to the kings of Europe who vied among themselves to control land, people, and the Church and wouldn't look out of place in those armies. They travelled to the new world (the Americas) and plundered the land, as well as murdering the indigenous population. These guys were practically villains, most weren't concerned with the local people, they were there for the riches they could gain, and they didn't care how they came by those riches.

This box set from Wargames Atlantic will allow you to build twenty-four miniatures, equipped with a variety of weapons that includes both melee and ranged. There are four main sprues and four smaller sprues.



The smaller sprues have additional weapon options, mainly two handed, such as pike and longsword as well as some more heads to use.





The larger sprue contains 6 bodies, each with different clothing and armour, there two with a breast plate, whilst the other four have a variety of padded clothing. There are four large shields on the bigger sprue, whilst on the smaller sprue there are four buckler shields included. There is a total of sixteen heads on the large sprue, and on the smaller sprue there is an additional eight. This means you have a plethora of choices for heads, and this means you shouldn't have too many doubles in your warband of twenty-four troops.

As I said before there is a plethora of weapons choices, this means you can have a good selection of both ranged and melee soldiers. On each sprue there are four muskets and three crossbows, this is because the crossbow was being phased out by many armies in this period in favour of the musket.

This box will work for most armies of Europe during this period in history. I plan to use them for Border Reivers for the upcoming game Border Wars from Flags of War. You could quite easily use them against Samurai as Portuguese adventurers/merchants.

The kit is quite versatile as they can be used in a number of historical conflicts from the 16th century. Equally you could field these as Dogs of War for Warhammer, or as human force in a number of fantasy settings. Another idea I have is to use them for Frostgrave.



The Oil Campaign 1944-45

Draining the Wehrmacht's Lifeblood

Author: Steven J Zaloga

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

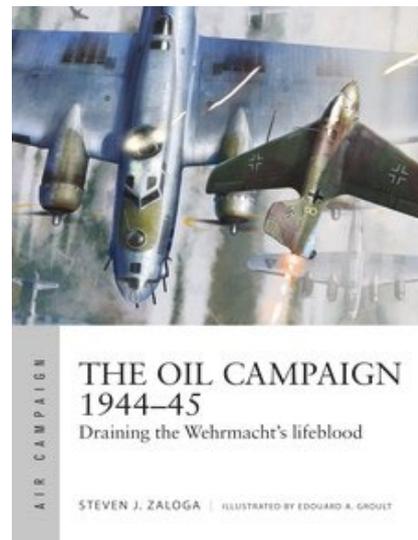
A new illustrated history of one of the key air campaigns of late World War II - the American effort to cripple Germany's oil production and grind its armed forces to a halt.

With retreating German forces losing their oilfields on the Eastern Front, Germany was reliant on its own facilities, particularly for producing synthetic oil from coal. However, these were within range of the increasingly mighty Allied air forces. In 1944 the head of the US Strategic Air Forces, General Carl Spaatz was intent on a new campaign that aimed to cripple the German war machine by depriving it of fuel.

The USAAF's Oil Campaign built up momentum during the summer of 1944 and targeted these refineries and plants with its daylight heavy bombers. Decrypted German communications made it clear that the Oil Campaign was having an effect against the Wehrmacht. Fuel shortages in the autumn of 1944 forced the Luftwaffe to ground most of its combat units except for fighters involved in the defence of the Reich. Fuel shortages also forced the Kriegsmarine to place most of its warships in harbour except for the U-boats and greatly hampered German army campaigns such as the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944-45.

This fascinating book packed with key photos and illustrations examines the controversies and debates over the focus of the US bombing campaign in the final year of the war, and the impact it had on the war effort overall. This campaign was so successful the Luftwaffe had to ground most of its aircraft due to the fuel shortage caused by the campaign.

I've never really had an interest in the air war fought during World War 2, so I wasn't looking forward to this reading this. Yet I was pleasantly surprised how interesting I found this book. The author has extensively researched the available material to produce an easy-to-read overview of this vital campaign in the closing stages of the war.



As with all previous campaign books, the book is filled with battle scenes, birds eye views, maps and diagrams. This would be a great read for any Blood Red Skies player, or any gamer who is fascinated by air campaigns especially those who replay World War 2 air battles. I would also say that this book would greatly appeal to historians interested in the air campaigns of the 39-45 war.

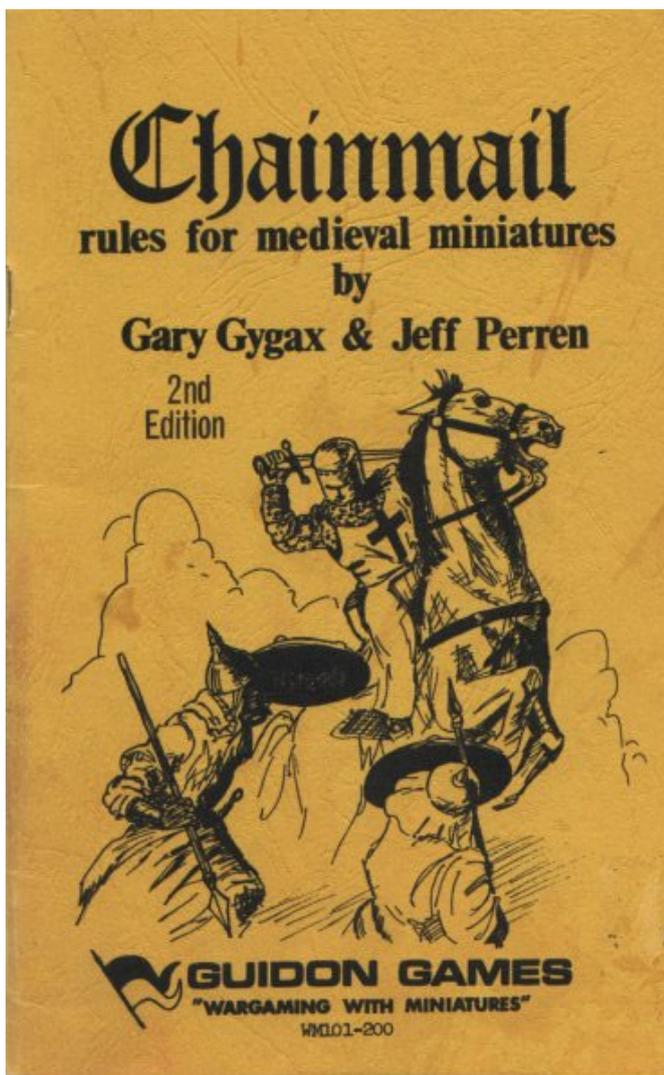
I have to say if you're a wargamer and you haven't read any of the Osprey books, which would be unusual then I suggest you try one. They're a great resource for background information of armies, military planning, tactics and campaigns.



Chainmail *rules for medieval miniatures*

A Blast from the Past

Jason Hubbard



Over the years I've looked at numerous games and rule systems from the past or before I started in the hobby as a 12-year-old in 83. These have included those written by Featherstone, along with Little Wars by H.G Wells. Chainmail was one that influenced the first fantasy game I played Dungeons and Dragons, so I was intrigued about this rule set. A reprint can be purchased from Drive Through RPG for under \$10.

Chainmail was a set of medieval miniatures rules dating back to 1970. The rules were originally published in a couple of wargames rules. Then Guidon Games published two standalone versions before this third edition was published by the new business started by Gygax and his friend Don Kaye – Tactical Studies Rules, or 'TSR'.

The first two editions were published Guidon Games, before Gygax and Kaye formed TSR and future editions of the rule system were published by them.

Most of the rules are for straight medieval wargaming, but Gygax added a 'Fantasy Supplement' book to allow gamers to "refight the epic struggles related by J.R.R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard and other fantasy writers".

You can see many familiar D&D races, monsters, spells etc in this Fantasy Supplement, and the combat tables were certainly an important step in the evolution of Dungeons & Dragons.



Dave Arneson (who wasn't involved in the development of Chainmail) argued that the Combat Matrix was the only real influence of Chainmail on D&D, but that would seem to be debateable...

The rules are broken down into 4 areas, which include rules for medieval battles. Man to man fighting, a short fantasy section (an additional supplement added to these rules) and tables. There is also a short introductory history of wargames which then goes onto terrain for wargaming. Then the rules describe how the game is played. This was one of the faults of the rule book, is that it didn't really follow a player friendly approach, it jumps all over the place.



Chainmail is the type of rule set that was common in the 60's wargaming community, they're designed for medieval warfare, with one figure representing either 10 or 20 soldiers depending on the miniature scale being used. The rules have been designed for melee, missile (archery and crossbow), siege engines along with early gunpowder weapons. There are also rules for morale, cover, weather as well as siege warfare. Originally the game was written to be played with 40mm scale miniatures, though most players would use 25mm figures.

Also included in Chainmail are rules for man to man or close quarter combat. This is basically a skirmish rule system where every miniature on the gaming table represents a single fighter. It was also designed to be used for games of jousting and small skirmishes.

This was at the time an important innovation for the wargaming community, though at the time supported role-playing games more than it did war gaming. It was until much later than this style of war gaming would become popular. One aspect the rules don't have are any army lists, which is a shame as most modern rule systems include them.



The fantasy section/supplement added rules to allow players to field races such as dwarves, elves and monsters. It also introduced the idea of heroes, wizards, seers and other fantastic heroic individuals.

The biggest problem with this rule set is the amount of bookkeeping that the game requires, this will put most modern gamers off the game. For instance, moving troops around the battlefield will cause fatigue, this needs to be monitored because it can cause penalties to troops are significantly worn out. These rules are fast and lethal, once you get passed the way they're written, they are quite easy to pick up.

The rules for jousting are worth a try and will make a great little competition game at the local club, with each player taking a knight/champion or two.



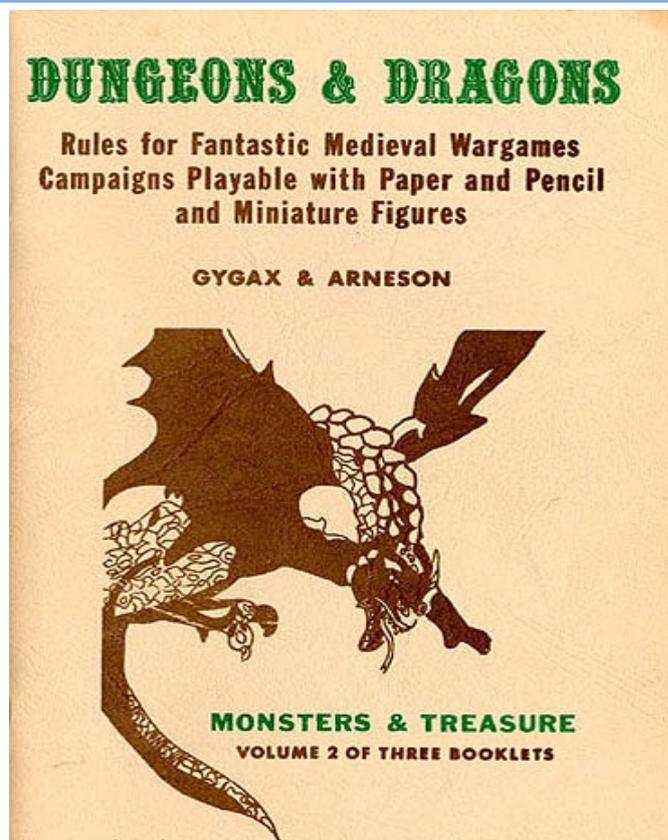
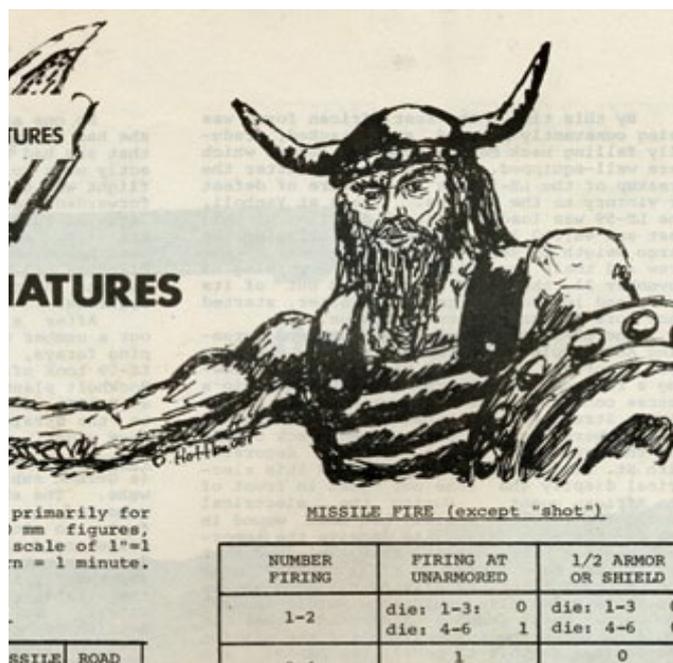
If you're looking for a very early or one of the first skirmish rules set, then it's definitely worth getting a copy to try out.

There has been a significant number of rules systems down the years, many of which were far better written than Chainmail. Though Chainmail did have a big influence on tabletop gaming, both wargaming and RPGs, especially Dungeons and Dragons.

Though some people disagree about Chainmail and the fantasy supplement having a major influence on D&D.



Gary Gygax disagrees. In Best of Dragon Volume 1, he notes: "...when the whole appeared in Chainmail, Dave (Arneson) began using the fantasy rules for his campaign and he reported a number of these actions to the C&C Society by way of articles. I thought that this usage was quite interesting and a few months later when Dave came to visit me, we played a game of his amended Chainmail fantasy campaign.



A few weeks after his visit, I received 18 or so handwritten pages of rules and notes pertaining to his campaign, and I immediately began work on a brand-new manuscript. About three weeks later, I had some 100 typewritten pages, and we began serious play testing... Dungeons & Dragons had been born."

Gygax quickly goes on to say that Arneson was only given co-authorship of D&D for his "valuable idea kernels", and that D&D bears little resemblance to the Blackmoor campaign

This book has spelling and grammar mistakes, it's badly laid out and is not easy to read through. It has a self-published feel that wasn't edited compared to modern rule books, yet this still has value in the history wargaming and rpgs. So, I'm quite happy to say I have a printed copy on my shelf.

Tanks at the Iron Curtain 1960-75

Author: Steven J. Zaloga

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

A new analysis of the technology and tanks that faced off against each other on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, during the very height of the Cold War.

From the 1960s onwards, there was a generational shift in tank design and warfare with the advent of CBR (chemical, biological, radiological) protection and a move away from HEAT ammunition to APFSDS.

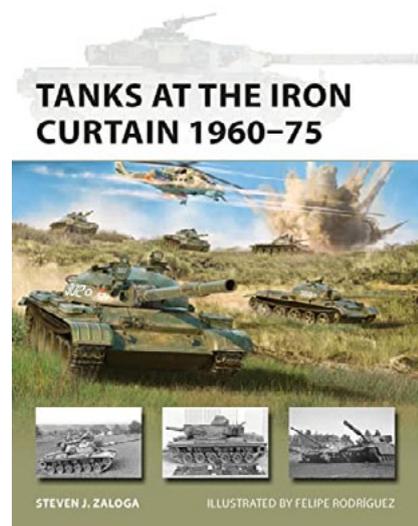
This shift confronted the growing threat of guided anti-tank missiles and saw the introduction of composite armor. Soviet heavy tanks and tank destroyer/assault guns became obsolete, giving way to the technological might of the T-62 and T-64, while NATO forces employed the Chieftain, AMX-30, Leopard I, and M60, plus the initial attempt at a common US-German tank, the MBT-70.

Using detailed illustrations and contemporary photographs, this companion volume to NVG 301, Tanks at the Iron Curtain 1946–60 focuses on key battle tanks and their technology to give a comprehensive overall picture of how tanks developed during modern times.

This isn't a slim volume that's just full of photographs of tanks, it's a well written and researched small book that takes a good look at the tanks in service at the Iron Curtain during the height of the Cold War.

The book summarizes the tanks of varying European and US military forces that were in service during this fifteen-year period where the Main Battle Tank was in its heyday. It was period in history where the expectation was the Soviet Union, and its allies would attack via land with a spearhead of tank battalions.

This is an easy-to-read volume stacked with great images of cold war tanks, this is definitely a book worth picking up especially war gamers who either play or plan to play A Cold War gone hot scenario.



It'll provide a good overview of all the participants who served at the Iron Curtain, as well as the varying tanks that were in service during this time.

I play Team Yankee, and this is definitely going to be a useful resource for that game. It may only be 50 pages, but the author has managed to pack in a wealth of useful information, couple that with the numerous illustrations and photographs it's definite must have.



Building Cheap Hills Tutorial

Jason Hubbard



Once you've got the desired shape, start to cover the polystyrene in filler. Just slap it on until the whole of the hill is covered. Then leave this to dry before starting the next stage,

To start off with you'll need some cheap polystyrene, the type you get as part of packaging. Glue this to an MDF base or some other suitable material. Then cut the polystyrene with a sharp knife in a suitable shape just like the photo.





Next I covered the hill in mix of PVA and some water before pouring sand all over it. I would suggest you do this on some newspaper. This is mainly to collect all the sand that doesn't stick to the glue. The remaining sand can be poured back into the container.

Once this has dried, we can start the next step. This next step is optional. I decided to place a couple of stones on top to act as large rocks. These are best glued in place and then some fillers were added around the stones to make them look sunken into the ground. I then added some texture basing around the stones to make it look more realistic.





Once this has dried it's time to move on to the painting stage. I initially used a dark brown cheap acrylic paint to fully cover the hill. This was then followed a three step dry brush.



Once this has dried it's time to move on to the final stage of this tutorial. Adding flock and tufts to our hill.



Decide where you want the flock and then smear some PVA over the area. Once you've done this sprinkle flock all over. As you did with the sand place it on some newspaper to collect the left over flock.



Slowly build up a the highlights using lighter browns, the best type of brush for this are make-up brushes. These can be bought reasonably cheap in some supermarkets.

This is also the time to paint the rocks with a grey and and then a wash of Nuln Oil or a similar coloured wash from any other paint manufacturer.



The Long War for Britannia

Author: Edwin Price

Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

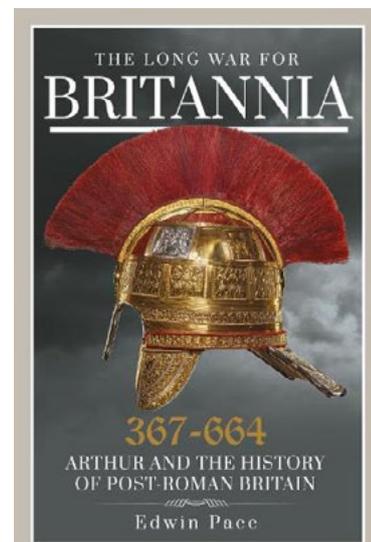
The Long War for Britannia is unique. It recounts some two centuries of 'lost' British history, while providing decisive proof that the early records for this period are the very opposite of 'fake news'. The book shows that the discrepancies in dates claimed by many scholars are illusory. Every early source originally recorded the same events in the same year. It is only the transition to Anno Domini dating centuries afterward that distorts our perceptions. Of equal significance, the book demonstrates that King Arthur and Uther Pendragon are the very opposite of medieval fantasy. Current scholarly doubts arose from the fact that different British regions had very different memories of post-Roman British rulers.

Some remembered Arthur as the 'Proud Tyrant', a monarch who plunged the island into civil war. Others recalled him as the British general who saved Britain when all seemed lost. The deeds of Uther Pendragon replicate the victories of the dread Mercian king Penda. These authentic--yet radically different--narratives distort history to this very day.

Anyone with an interest in Post Roman Britain or King Arthur then this book will appeal from the outset. The author has written an engaging, well thought piece of research into the period following the fall of Roman Britain. The author states that this is the first comprehensive study of all written works for this period of history. He also has some fascinating claims regarding historical figures, such as Uther Pendragon whom the author claims were in fact King Penda of Mercia.

This period of British history is notoriously patchy, missing or embellished where written sources are concerned. So, the author has done a great job of gathering that scant material and producing a compelling read that gives a much clearer picture of Britain at the time.

The author presents some interesting theories in this book, especially around the contemporary writers of the period, he argues that many of the dates were wrong simply because of mistakes made switching from the



Roman dating calendar to the use of AD. Whilst he presents some new arguments around Arthur, Saxon invasion and other key events many will disagree, yet it makes for a fascinating read, that takes our understanding of the period in a new direction

This book will definitely appeal to those who are fascinated with the legend of King Arthur, along with those who are interested in the Post Roman period. I would also suggest anyone who plans to recreate this period on the tabletop with rules such as Saga; Age of Invasions would do well to pick a copy up. For wargamers this will provide a great deal of background information that would greatly aid in developing a suitable campaign. For those interested in the history and myths from the Dark Ages, then this book will provide some fresh new ideas that are worth reading about.



Battle of Britain: The People's Project

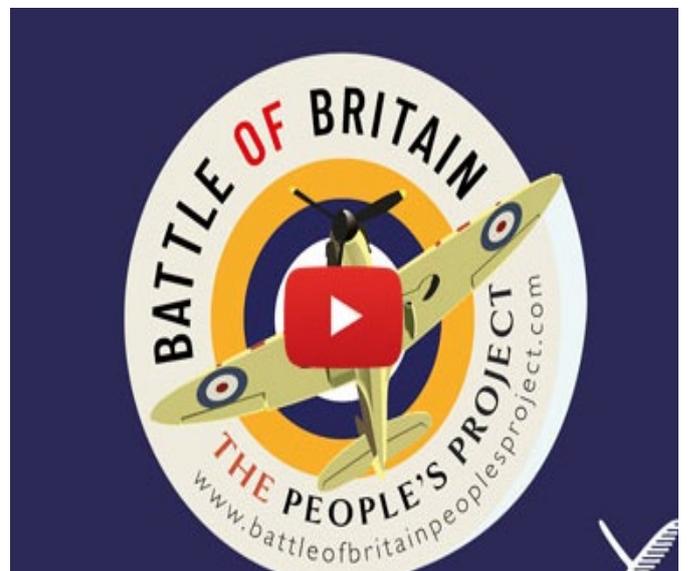
A nationwide search for untold stories about the Battle of Britain has been launched by renowned author and historian Dilip Sarkar MBE as he sets out to write the ultimate book about the event that changed history.

The author of more than 50 books, many about the Battle of Britain and the men who fought it, is planning a comprehensive, seven-volume history of the 1940 aerial conflict that saw the Royal Air Force deny Hitler's invasion plans.

The work is being published by Pen & Sword in association with the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, custodians of the National Memorial to the Few at Capelle-Ferne in Kent, with the aim of including previously untold stories from around the country.

"The central story of the Battle of Britain, when fewer than 3,000 aircrew stopped Hitler in his tracks in the summer of 1940, is relatively well known, but it goes much wider than just the bravery of the men who took to the skies to defeat the Luftwaffe," Dilip explained.

"The aim of Battle of Britain: The People's Project is to unearth all the other stories. Tales of groundcrew, of volunteers, of factory workers and family members who 'did their bit' on the ground while the fighters tackled the #



threat in the air. These are stories I want to tell as part of a comprehensive history of perhaps the most important battle fought by this country in the whole of the 20th century."

Dilip was inspired in part by visiting the family of Squadron Leader Tom Gleave, a Hurricane pilot based at RAF Kenley with No 253 Squadron in 1940, while researching another new book.



“Although I clearly knew the Tom Gleave story, during my visit I was shown a wealth of unpublished material and photographs, which made me wonder what other material people have tucked away in attics and cupboards,” he explained.



“After, all, if such a huge amount of material relating to someone who was once as famous as Tom Gleave could stay undiscovered for many decades, then what else is out there? There must surely be many untold stories, particularly about less well-known aircrew, ground crew and civilians who found themselves caught up in this incredible story.

“I’m looking for anecdotes and family stories that highlight the bravery, the sacrifice and the determination shown by those who may not have flown a Spitfire or Hurricane but were an integral part of the Battle of Britain.”



Those with stories to tell or material that could be included in the ultimate Battle of Britain reference work should head to the Battle of Britain: The People’s Project website at

<http://battleofbritainpeoplesproject.com>



“The headlines may have been written in 1940 at airfields like RAF Kenley, but the stories are still being told today. Please help make this work as comprehensive as it can be,” Dilip concluded.

British Celtic Warrior Vs Roman Soldier

Author: William Horsted

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

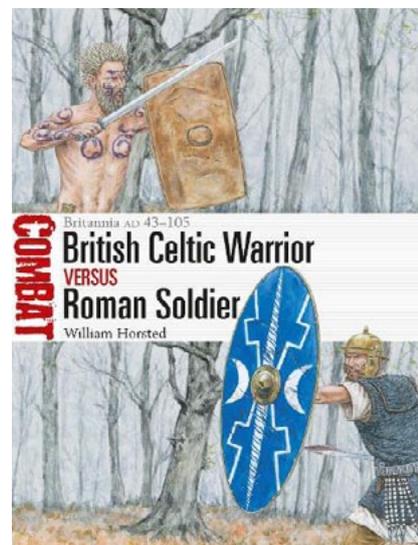
An illustrated study of the British tribal warriors and Roman auxiliaries who fought in three epic battles for control of Britain in the 1st century AD.

Following the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43, the tribes of the west and north resisted the establishment of a 'Roman peace', led by the chieftain Caratacus. Even in the south-east, resentment of Roman occupation remained, exploding into the revolt of Boudicca's Iceni in AD 60. Roman auxiliaries from two peoples are known to have taken part in the invasion of Britain: The Tungrians, from what is now Belgium, and the Batavians, from the delta of the river Rhine in the modern Netherlands. From the late 80s AD, units of both the Batavians and the Tungrians were garrisoned at a fort at Vindolanda in northern Britain. The so called 'Vindolanda tablets' provide an unparalleled body of material with which to reconstruct the lives of these auxiliary soldiers in Britain.

Featuring full-colour maps and specially commissioned battlescene and figure artwork plates, this book examines how both the British warriors, and the Roman auxiliaries experienced the decades of conflict that followed the invasion. Their recruitment, training, leadership, motivation, culture and beliefs are compared alongside an assessment of three battles: the final defeat of Caratacus in the hills of Wales in AD 50; the Roman assault on the island of Mona (Anglesey) in AD 61; and the battle of Mons Graupius in Scotland in AD 83.

I assumed that this volume and book series would be quite light and dare I say it fluffy. I was then pleasantly surprised by how much depth the book has on the subject. The author takes a look at two combatants that fought each other, comparing the tactics of both, weapons, equipment and leadership.

The book opens with a short introduction before tackling both sides, with quite an in-depth chapter on the two combatants before the author looks at three significant campaigns/battles where these two fought each other.



The information is supported with a good selection of maps, photographs, battle diagrams and illustrations. This is a concise well researched volume that looks at the two combatants through the Roman conquest of Ancient Briton.

This is a great book for anyone thinking of recreating the Roman Conquest of Briton. This will provide a great deal of background information, and a great place to start any research for ideas and info.

For the military historian this is a nice introduction to the subject, and I suspect they'll want a more detailed and in-depth read. For me this was great for some ideas to play a small Saga Campaign of Roman Invasion of Briton.



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