



irregular

Spring Issue 2022

magazine

Twilight 2000

Invasions

The One Ring

Andy Remic Interview

Resource Wars

Age of Invasions

Plus Reviews, and much, much more

Cover Art; Javier Rodriguez

(<https://pixabay.com/users/rosiette-stock-15911/>)



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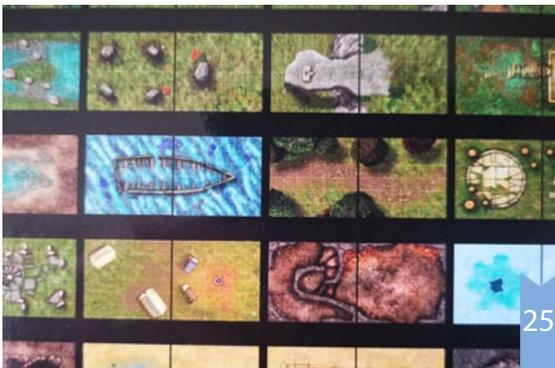
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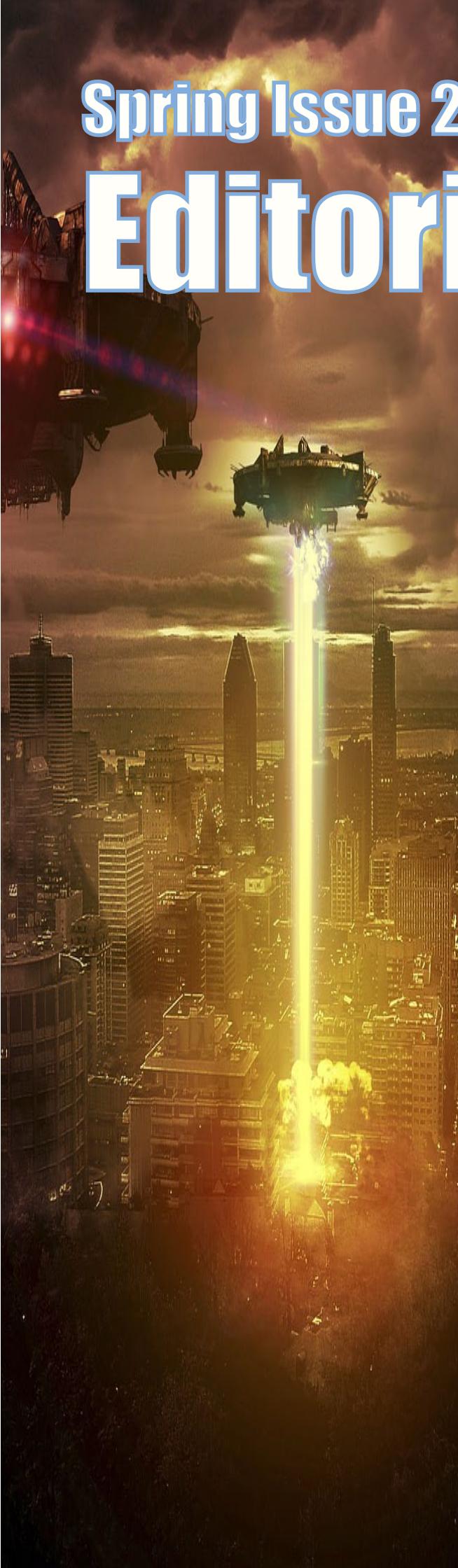
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Spring Issue 2022

Editorial

Jason Hubbard

Welcome back to another issue of Irregular Magazine. We entered the year with things starting to look like they would return to normal. Then in February Russia invaded Ukraine, and things are again thrown up in the air. This time with a war rather than a pandemic. We hope that by the time this issue goes live the war in Ukraine will have stopped and Russian troops will have returned across the border.

In the world of hobby, with the Christmas festivities over and the new year has begun, we hobbyists tend to start thinking of new projects. Just like the rest of you I have also started to look at new possibilities, one of which is jumping into Saga. I've decided to begin at the Fall of Rome, and I've made a start on building and painting a Late Roman force.

This issue looks at invasions, and so we look at Saga Age of Invasions, we also look at the idea of an invasion and the types you can use in a campaign.

Also in this issue we take a look at two of the newest and probably will be two of the biggest RPG releases this year, Twilight 2000 and The One Ring. Twilight 2000 was a game I played as a teen, as well as Iron Crown's Middle Earth Role Playing Game. So I'm excited by the release of The One Ring, which will drop you into the world of Middle Earth.

We've also included an interview with author Andy Remic which was published in issue 4. Andy sadly passed away recently and we decided to include this interview with him again.

I also take a look at purchasing print on demand products from Drive Through RPG as I start to look back at two RPG's from my youth.

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

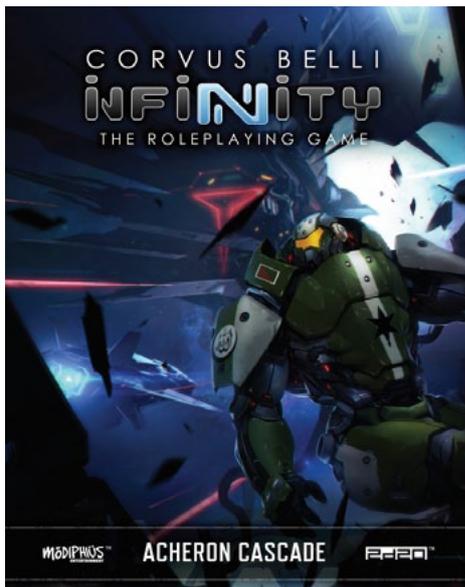
Jason

Infinity: Acheron Cascade Campaign

The Attack begins

Mired in the jungles of Paradiso, three conspiracies will lead the player characters across the Human Sphere to uncover the treachery that lies at the very heart of the war.

The player characters are dispatched to Paradiso's militarised moon Satori, to investigate an explosion at a Yu Jing facility. A series of secret plots lead the agents to investigate a number of factions, taking in such disparate and dangerous locations as the notorious Black Labs of Praxis, Yu Jing's Zhi Shan Centre, the Snark Lands of Dawn, and finally, the Acheron Blockade itself!



Face off against conspirators, terrorists, and the alien menace of the Combined Army in an action-packed Sphere-spanning campaign that uncovers the true extent of the Combined Army's efforts to bring the Human Sphere into the fold.

Features:

Inside this 156-page campaign book, you'll find: New maps and adventure locations on Varuna, Dawn, Paradiso, and its moon, Satori - including Zhi Shan, one of the StateEmpire's Invisible Prisons.

New situations to challenge the PCs - a heist on Bakunin, a prison break, a Shavastil asharii base, and a deadly game of cat-and-mouse infowar with an EI hacker. New adversaries including the Nomad Wildcats, the deadly tiangou, and the notorious Ko Dali.

Information on the Acheron Blockade including a chance for the PCs to show off their spacecraft piloting and command skills!

Murder on the Transtartaric railroad! Can the PCs uncover a murderer before their train arrives in Dalniy?

New tech and vehicles like the Pyxis device and Mayi transport. New spacecraft and rules for running action scenes in the void of space.



Infinity: 0-12 Files Supplement

Co-operation, Unity, Support and Progress

Welcome to O-12. Born from the failings of the UN and the League of Nations, the O-12 is a place where what passes for interplanetary law across the Human Sphere is born, bred, and ultimately enforced. A bureaucratic monolith, it provides guidance on every topic and imposes order when all other measures fail.

It is the one neutral place where all the factions can come together and talk out their differences. Each can contribute, secure in the knowledge that they will be equally able to speak regardless of military might or economic leverage, and who knows, occasionally someone might even listen. Whether marshalling the forces arrayed against the Combined Army, negotiating multilateral trade treaties, or pursuing shoplifters on a Circular, the O-12 is a constant, often quiet part of the Sphere's everyday life. Partnered with the Sphere's sole AI, ALEPH, it seeks to promote order above all, despite the natural anarchy that humanity is inclined to pursue.

Features:

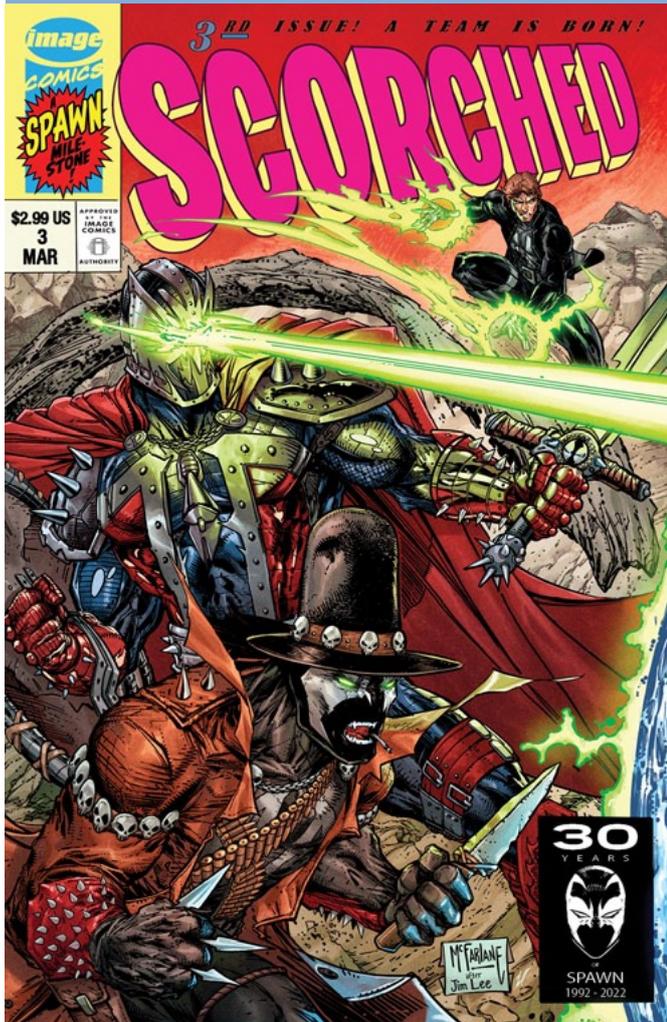
Inside this 123-page book, you will learn of the O-12's many and varied bureaus with a special emphasis on the agencies and ultimately people that strive to keep ruin from the door.

Full character creation rules for O-12 characters, including a wealth of background information on the O-12 faction, and expanded campaign rules for Bureau Noir.

Detailed information on Bureau Aegis, SWORDFOR, and Bureau Noir.

Inside gossip on the important embassies of the O-12. A full rundown on the Concilium System and the threats hiding in its shadows.

MCFARLANE HOMAGES HISTORIC X-MEN #1 COVER BY JIM LEE



Todd McFarlane is paying homage to Jim Lee's historic X-MEN #1 cover beginning with THE SCORCHED Issue #3. McFarlane has revealed the artwork for the first cover and announced he will be drawing three more connecting covers in the coming months. THE SCORCHED issues #3 through #6 will all connect to create one stunning piece of artwork to help celebrate SPAWN's 30th year anniversary this year.

McFarlane said: "Over the years, I have what seems like hundreds of homage/parody covers based on my artwork. So, it is always fun to turn the tables and do an homage to other covers and artists whose work I have admired. This will mark my first attempt at tipping my hat to my friend Jim Lee's amazing art. His career and the images he has given us have been an inspiration for many. I thought this image would be the best way to pay tribute to his talents."

McFarlane's THE SCORCHED #1 launched in January 2022, bringing together the shared universe of SPAWN's best characters for three decades and putting them together into one title.

It set the sales record for the "Biggest New Team Book" from the past 30 years. In addition to McFarlane, the creative team on the record-breaking title includes the creative team of writer Sean Lewis and artist Stephen Segovia.

McFarlane had four record-breaking titles in 2021, SPAWN'S UNIVERSE #1, KING SPAWN #1, GUNSLINGER SPAWN #1, and THE SCORCHED #1 which became one of the biggest selling Image Comics books in the 21st century.

The EXTENDED retailer Final Order Cut Off for THE SCORCHED #3 is Monday, February 21.

THE SCORCHED #3 will be available at comic book shops on March 16, 2022 (24 pages, full color, rated: Teen+, \$2.99, FREE UPGRADE PREMIUM COVER STOCK) and on digital platforms, including Amazon Kindle, Apple Books, and Google Play.

- Cover A by Francesco Mattina - Diamond Code DEC210328
- Cover B by Todd McFarlane - Diamond code DEC210329 (connecting cover to 3 upcoming THE SCORCHED covers)

#SPAWN #THESCORCHED



McFarlane Toys Receives 2021 Top-Selling Action Figure Award



McFarlane Toys has received top honors in The NPD Group's 2021 Toy Industry Performance Awards. The company received recognition for its DC Multiverse Collection in the 2021 Super category of Top-Selling Action Figures and Accessories for the U.S and Canada, making McFarlane Toys the #1 Action Figure Manufacturer in the U.S and Canada.

In 2020, McFarlane Toys successfully launched its best-selling DC Multiverse lines with 7-inch to 12-inch ultra-posable action figures, accessories, and vehicles to bring dozens of iconic DC comic books, video games, and feature films' stable characters to life at mass and specialty retailers globally. The DC Multiverse Collection quickly grew as one of the fastest-growing McFarlane Toys lines in its history and continues to experience strong sales performance at retailers globally.

McFarlane Toys is known for its artistic and creatively designed toys. Under the helm of Todd McFarlane, it produces highly detailed action figures of the DC Multiverse iconic heroes and villains.

"At McFarlane Toys, we consider ourselves very fortunate to be in an industry that not only has survived through the complications that the world is dealing with but, in some cases, has thrived. The toy industry has been a much healthier business than many others in the past two years. But you also have to have

strong brands at times to go with that success," said Todd McFarlane, McFarlane Toys CEO and Creative Force. "Warner Bros, with their strong DC Multiverse characters, have proven themselves globally to be the type of characters that millions of people want to take home in some form or another. And now it has been proven as the DC Multiverse figures we produced last year were taken home at a higher rate than some of our competitors, including Avengers, Star Wars, and more. It's a testament to the continuing strength of that brand. Lastly, thanks to all the geeks and moms for supporting us last year. Obviously, we couldn't have done it without you either. You guys are the true champs."

In 2022, McFarlane Toys will introduce several exciting new DC Multiverse product categories, including the new Todd McFarlane-designed DC Direct Collectible statues, busts, and figures. Tune into McFarlane Toys digital channels for upcoming news on future reveals and line-up announcements during the McFarlane Toys Winter Showcase February 25-27, 2022.

The NPD Group, a leading global information company, awards and recognizes the top-selling toys, properties, and manufacturers globally and in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Europe according to NPD's Retail Tracking Service.

Vaesen and Symbaroum RPGs launched on the Foundry Virtual Tabletop



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

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

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

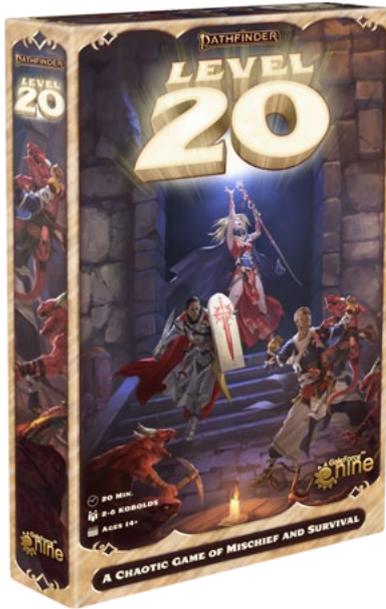
Previously released, Tales from the Loop RPG, Mutant: Year Zero RPG, the official ALIEN RPG and Forbidden Lands RPG are all available on the Foundry platform. All the released game modules on Foundry are fully integrated with the VTT platform with online maps and diagrams, player handouts ready to share,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



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

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

Level 20 Board Game



Level 20 is a chaotic game, where players control kobolds fleeing from a fighter just a few XP short of reaching level 20.

The players will need to search through junk piles to find treasure to help them stay alive, whilst embarrassing the fighter into running away – or sabotaging their fellow kobolds! The winner is the kobold who makes the fighters flee – or the last kobold standing.

Fighters are obsessed and not very smart! As soon as some movement catches their attention, they need to chase after it! So make the most of this! Lead them into traps, straight into walls... or your fellow Kobolds.

If there is one thing the fighters care more than XP it's their pride. So if you manage to reduce their pride to zero... they'll run away leaving you and any surviving Kobolds in peace once again.

Everything you need is contained in the box!

- 1 Rulebook
- 1 Game Board
- 16 Junk Tokens
- 20 Obstacle Tokens
- 34 Playing Cards
- 8 Standees with plastic bases

In Pathfinder: Level 20 each player controls an individual Kobold, and it's up to you whether to work together with your fellow Kobolds to outsmart the fighters... or to sabotage them and make sure you are the last one standing!



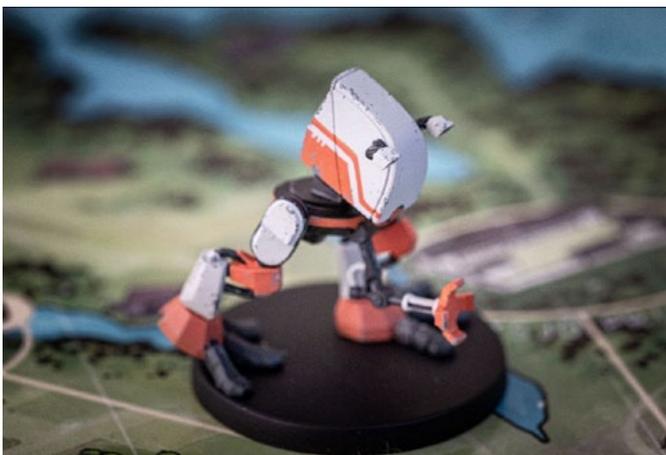
Tales From the Loop – The Board Game Out Now!



Step Into Simon Stålenhag's Stunning Retro Sci-Fi World in the Cooperative Board Game launched today by Free League



Step into the amazing world of the Loop. Tales From the Loop - The Board Game by Free League Publishing, based on the works by acclaimed visual storyteller Simon Stålenhag, has launched today and is available in the Free League webshop and in retail stores worldwide.



In Tales From the Loop - The Board Game, you and your friends play cooperatively to investigate the mysteries originating from the Loop, a huge underground science facility with strange effects on the suburban landscapes around it.



You take the roles of local kids that investigate whatever phenomena that threaten the islands (or perhaps just the local video store), and hopefully stop them. Each day starts at school, but as soon as the bell rings you can use whatever time you have before dinner and homework to go exploring!



Tales From the Loop The Board Game includes eight unique scenarios as well as six high-quality miniatures of Simon Stålenhag's robot designs.

The Release Includes:
 Tales From the Loop - The Board Game
 Invasive Species expansion
 The Runaway expansion

Bright Eye Game's debut release Savannah Park



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

Editor's Challenge

I haven't been that productive since the festive break, though I did manage to start a new project for 2022. I'd decided to build a Late Roman warband for Saga, Age of Invasions. So far, I've managed to finish my first unit of Hearth Guard and made a start on a unit of warriors. In order to build a Late Roman warband I decided to pick up a box of plastic Late Roman infantry.

The box will allow you to build 44 soldiers (4 command miniatures and 40 soldiers). They can be used as legionary or auxiliary infantry of the 4th / 5th centuries, for either Eastern or Western Roman Empire.



They can also be used beyond that, for early 6th century armies, like Roman Britain or Gaul, as well as early Byzantine armies.

I decided to build two units of archers, two levy units and a unit of hearth guard and a command unit. I plan to add a cavalry unit to the warband along with a Scorpion ballista for added fire power.



I've also managed to get some orcs from the Lord of the Ring range painted as well, these were done with a minimal paint palette, and I decided to make the armor look rusty and dirty as possible.

I've also painted a few odds and ends for generic fantasy gaming, but as I've said before I've not been very productive in the last couple of months. I've found that I haven't had the motivation coming into the New Year like I had for the last 18 months. I'm guessing I've hit a bit of a hobby burnout.





So now I'm looking for things to motivate myself again such as new project ideas, trying to find a spark to revamp or kickstart myself on old projects that have been forgotten and left to the wayside.



One plan I'm considering is picking up a small starter set of the new Army Painter Speed Paints and hopefully this will rejuvenate me into painting some miniatures for the numerous board games I have. Looking at the many reviews online they seem to work better than GW's contrast paints so one plan is to give these ago over the next few months.

I need to finish the Asian Town Project this year, and so I'm going to concentrate on getting as much of this done as possible going forward. My aim is to make a start on the river sections and make use of the water effect resin



I have. I'll probably write up a small tutorial for the next issue. As I have plans to play a few different games with the project everything from Samurai skirmish, WW2 and Korea battles, Asian Zombies, Silver Bayonet and Wild West games set in 1920-30's Manchuria.



I also need to get my ECW project started so I can get some games this year, along with a wide number of games and projects that includes Silver Bayonet in Europe, Stargrave, modern conflicts and more WW2 action.



Twilight 2000 Role Playing Game

This new retro-apocalyptic edition of Twilight: 2000 goes back to the roots of the franchise with open-world roleplaying in the devastation of World War III. Just like the original 1984 edition, this new game is set in a year 2000 devastated by war – now in an alternate timeline where the Soviet Union never collapsed.

Twilight: 2000 is a roleplaying game about survival in mankind's most desperate hour. Yet, in this bleak world, there is still hope. In the midst of utter destruction, you can start to build something new. Rally people to your ranks. Stake a claim and protect it. And maybe, if you live long enough, start turning the tide.



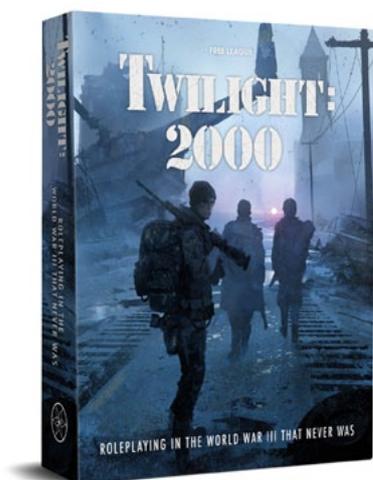
This core set includes:

- A 152-page Player's Manual, including rules for character generation, skills, specialties, combat, base building, and travel.
- A 112-page Referee's Manual, describing a world at war and including 52 ready-to-play encounters and four complete scenario sites.
- A huge double-sided full-colour hexagon travel map.
- 16 modular battle maps, designed to create an endless variety of battlefields.
- Four battle maps for specific scenario sites.
- 108 cardboard tokens for fighters, vehicles, conditions, and more.
- 52 encounter cards.
- 10 initiative cards.
- Blank character sheets

The starter set is rammed with plenty of stuff to get you going with this rpg. There are a plethora of great maps, This box set is really heavy which immediately lets you know you're getting your moneys worth. I remember playing the original version of the game back in the 80's as a teen. We had watched the film Red Dawn which focused on an invasion of the US by Soviet forces. This inspired us to run a campaign with a similar plot based in the UK. We had great fun using local knowledge, maps, photos and locations to play out a campaign set around where we lived.

So, when I heard Free League were rereleasing this classic RPG with a re-vamp, I was excited especially as I was going through a nostalgia period for old games. This meant I could play an updated and new version of one of my favorite RPGs from my distant youth.

The game is set in an alternative year 2000 where the Cold War has gone hot. The Soviet Union never collapsed and war between the West and the East has broken out. This has meant US troops who were stationed in Europe have been stranded and left behind. Players can play as either military personnel or local civilians in what is essentially a sand box style game where just surviving is the main aim, and returning home is a distant dream.



The enemy aren't necessarily Soviet forces but could be other stranded US troops or wandering gangs of survivors.

The game follows closely to the original rpg, but the background has been updated to follow and take account for real world events that have occurred since the original game was published. The game makes use of the Year Zero Engine, but a more simplified version of it. For instance, there is an ammo dice which suggests you'll need to track how much ammunition you have for your weapon. This isn't a war rpg, but a post-apocalyptic game, so you'll not have unlimited resources.

This game is all about survival, getting from one day to the next with a backdrop of a collapsed society due to an all-out war. You won't know who are friendly or dangerous. For anyone who watches TV shows like The Walking Dead, will have a good understanding of this type of scenario, everyone you meet are a potential enemy. Vehicles will be available to you, but they'll need to be maintained, re-fueled and the noise they make may end up being more detrimental to your group, yet they'll allow you cover greater distance.



It's a very focused game and the starter set comes in two books, a 150-page player manual and a referee/GM book which is a little shorter at 100 pages. Character generation has been cut down but there are plenty of options to choose from. This is a well written game, with plenty of potential especially in taking the game out of central Europe to other parts of the world.

I'm considering revamping the campaign we played as teens, though this time instead of being set in the Southwest of the UK but shifting it further north of England and into Scotland. The referee manual has rules that allows you to convert 1st and 2nd edition material, along with solo rules which are a great way not learn the game.

This version of the game is a vast improvement on the original rules and will still appeal to old grognards like myself. Will it appeal to younger players who didn't live through the Cold War? The simple answer is yes, it will definitely appeal to those who have grown up watching TV shows like Jericho or Walking Dead, films such as V for Vendetta, the Road, the Book of Eli or I am Legend. What's great is you can potentially set your game in your local area, where you're a bunch of survivors trying to get by in a world that's collapsed, where resources are scarce and wandering groups may or may not be friendly. Or you could be a group of soldiers stuck in Europe trying to survive and return home.

This isn't a happy go lucky type of game, with heroes performing great feats. This is a gritty game of survival, where choices like do you fight against child soldiers, will you side with a bunch of unpleasant murderous villains against locals as that may benefit you more than helping the locals. This game starts to come into its own when you start creating your own adventures, the possibilities at this point are endless, the world suddenly becomes your massive sand box to play in.



Battle for Bocage; Normandy 1944

Author: Tim Saunders

Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

This is the story of the fighting in Normandy by the veteran desert formations brought back by Montgomery from the Mediterranean in order to spearhead the invasion; 50th Infantry and 7th Armoured divisions, plus 4th Armoured Brigade. Heavily reinforced by individuals and fresh units, their task beyond the beaches was to push south to Villers Bocage with armour on the evening of D Day in order to disrupt German counterattacks on the beachhead.

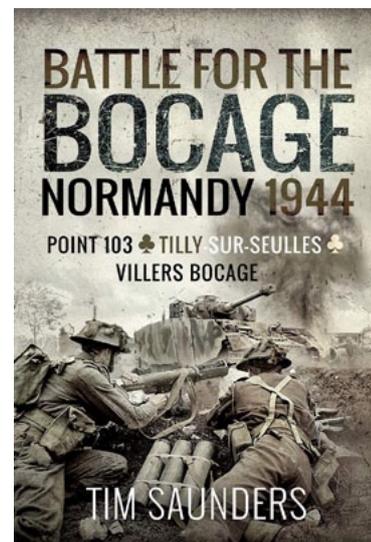
Difficulties on 50th Division's beaches and lost opportunities allowed time for the 12th Hitlerjugend SS Panzer Division and the equally elite 130th Panzer Lehr Division to arrive in Normandy, despite delays of their own caused by allied fighter bombers. The result was 4th Armoured Brigade's thrust south encountered opposition from the start and was firmly blocked just south of Point 103 after an advance of less than 5 miles.

A major counterattack by Panzer Lehr failed, as did a renewed British attempt, this time by the vaunted 7th Armoured Division, which was halted at Tilly sur Seullles. From here the fighting became a progressively struggle of attrition in the hedgerows of the Bocage country south of Bayeux.

More and more units were drawn into the fighting, which steadily extended west. Finally, an opportunity, via the Caumont Gap, to outflank the German defences was taken and 7th Armoured Division reached Villers Bocage. Here the County of London Yeomanry encountered the newly arrived Tigers of Michael Wittmann, with disastrous results. The Desert Rats were forced to withdraw having lost much of their reputation.

There then followed what the battalions of 50th Division describe as their 'most unpleasant period of the war', in bitter fighting, at often very close quarters, for the 'next hedgerow'.

This book follows the breakout from the beaches of D-day, fighting to gain a foothold in France.



The author has clearly not only researched the subject matter really well, but also has a clear understanding of the terrain being fought over. This is a well written description of the fighting carried out by British and Canadian units against the German army. The author has broken down the book into chapters covering particular battles and actions which are well illustrated with maps, photos and documents. The author also doesn't overlook the Germans and goes into great detail about the units fighting against the allies.

The author describes in great detail how difficult this terrain was to fight in and was a ferocious and bloody campaign to breakout from the beachheads. The bocage made life difficult for armour but was excellent for deploying anti-tank units for ambush purposes.

This book would be perfect any war gamer looking to recreate this part of the D-Day landings. There is plenty of information to pour over to develop ideas for gaming. Military historians will also find this a fascinating read, Tim has written a great book that you'll find hard to put down.

The Finnish Soviet Winter War 1939-40

Author: David Murphy

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

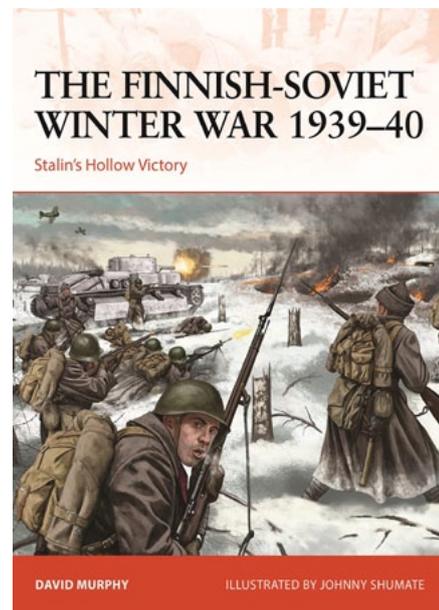
Review by Jason Hubbard

This book explores the Soviet invasion of Finland, detailing the events of the Winter War of November 1939 to March 1940. The invasion was expected to be swift and decisive, however, the fighting qualities of the Finnish Army blunted the Soviet advance and inflicted high numbers of casualties. A combination of difficulties caused by the weather, the terrain, the Mannerheim Line defences, and Finnish tactics resulted in a fascinating David vs Goliath type struggle.

On 23 August 1939, a secret protocol was appended to the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact; as part of this, Finland was assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. On 30 November that year, in an effort to protect against renewed German aggression in the East, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, beginning what became known as the Finnish-Soviet Winter War. This long-awaited addition to the Campaign series explores the events of the war of November 1939 to March 1940. Set against the background of the developing global conflict, the conflict saw the Finnish Army thwart the plans of the sizeable Soviet forces assembled against it, before finally being forced to concede. The major battles of the war, which took place in harsh winter conditions, are covered in detail, including the Mannerheim Line, the fighting in Ladoga Karelia and Kollaa, and the clashes in Finnish Lapland.

This is a great look at a conflict that's often ignored or overlooked. It details the war between Finland and the USSR at the start of WW2. The author makes great use of photographs, illustrations and some excellent maps. This is obviously an overview of the conflict and there are other books that go into greater detail.

The author made use of the historical archives for both sides to provide a balanced look at the conflict. There are some excellent discussions by the author on the tactics and strategies used by both sides. It makes for a fascinating read on a much-ignored aspect of the Second World War.



As usual for Osprey this is a highly detailed book, well written and superbly illustrated throughout. This is definitely a book wargamers should grab if they're planning to re-create the conflict. They'll find the highly detailed maps in the book very useful, especially for campaign planning. There's plenty of information for the wargamer without having to dive into more in-depth books. Add to this Osprey books on German or Finnish forces of the period and you're set to go.

Those interested in just the history of the war, will probably want to go further in their research and this book should really be a first toe into the subject. It'll provide an good overview before going deeper and looking for books that go into much more in-depth detail.

Invasions

Invasion is a great way to start a campaign, throughout history one side or another has invaded another country for a wide variety of reasons, none are generally good reasons. An invasion can come via land, sea and in more modern times by air. In science-fiction the most often used type of invasion will generally come from space and the whole planet is being invaded by an alien species.

Most countries have at some point been invaded at least once in its history. The UK has been successfully invaded on numerous occasions, and there have also been several unsuccessful invasion attempts. As I write this article, we're currently seeing Russia building forces along the Ukrainian border, and will they or won't they invade. The mere threat of an invasion could be used to gain concessions from a country or force them to do something in your favour.

Most wars start with an invasion, WW2 began with the invasion of Poland in Europe, in Asia it was Japan invading China. Sometimes an invasion could come in the form of non-combatants such as the first settlers to America.



If we take the UK as an example there have been several invasions dating back as early as Julius Caesar's attempt in 55BC. Caesar made two attempts but failed on both occasions though a 100 years later the Romans under Caligula made another botched attempt but eventually under Claudius they finally succeeded in invading, conquering and occupying the country. The Romans occupied Britain for over 400 years.



When the Romans left, the next successful invasion was the Saxons though it was always believed to be a military invasion modern archaeology is disputing that claim and suggest it was more a cultural invasion rather than one of conquest. They suggest there isn't enough evidence to support a mass invasion of a conquering force. What this suggests is that Saxons were most likely trading with settlements in the UK and replaced the Romans as the major influence on the population.



The next period of invasion were the Vikings, these started off as raids with the first recorded raid being Lindisfarne in 793 AD. You could say that the early raids were effectively reconnaissance or scouting missions. Whereby the raiders were making early investigations of the landscape and those who lived with those landscapes.

This could be a way to start a wargame campaign by conducting scouting missions to gather intelligence about the country you plan to invade. Creating a number of sorties across a border together information, supplies and even prisoners. The opposing player could do the same or capture prisoners to discover possible plans of your adversary.



The Vikings made several invasions into England and Ireland, securing footholds in both countries, establishing kingdoms in York, Dublin and East Anglia. The last great invasion attempt by a Viking was in 1066, Harald Hardrada brought a Great Heathen army across from Norway to conquer England. This was foiled when Harald Godwinson drove an army north to stop the invasion. Harald defeated the Vikings at Stamford Bridge, and then had to force march back down south to prevent another invasion.

This time it was the famous Norman invasion by William the Conqueror in 1066. With Harald having to force march back down south to face them after already force-marching north and defeating the Vikings. The army under Harald was exhausted and whilst managing to hold them at the Battle of Hastings for period of time, eventually the Normans wore them down defeating Harald and his army.



This was the last successful invasion and conquest of Britain, though there were several failed attempts over the years. When William was in the early stages of occupying the country, the Danes attempted an invasion to support an uprising in the North of England. A large Danish army landed in England in 1069. William marched his army from Nottingham to York with the intention of engaging with the rebels who were uprising. By the time William had reached York the rebel army had fled. The Danish force didn't have anywhere to winter and decided to go back to their ships. In 1070 they were reinforced with a fleet from Denmark and together they sailed to East Anglia where they carried out raids. William met with the Danes, and they agreed to leave if he paid them off to do so.



During the War of the First Coalition, the French tried to invade Britain via Ireland, landing a small force in Fishguard, Wales in 1797. The brief campaign, on 22–24 February 1797, is the most recent landing on British soil by a hostile foreign force, and thus is often referred to as the “last invasion of mainland Britain”.

The French general Lazare Hoche had devised a three-pronged attack on Britain in support of the Society of United Irishmen. Two forces would land in Britain as a diversionary effort, while the main body would land in Ireland. Adverse weather and ill-discipline halted two of the forces but the third, aimed at landing in Wales and marching on Bristol, went ahead.

After brief clashes with hastily assembled British forces and the local civilian population, the invading force's Irish American commander, Colonel William Tate, was forced into unconditional surrender on 24 February. In a related naval action, the British captured two of the expedition's vessels, a frigate and a corvette.

During World War Two, Hitler drew up plans to invade Britain which was called Operation Sealion. It was meant to take place in September 1940, and if it was successful, would have meant the domination of Western Europe. In order for this to have been successful the German military would have been required to have defeated the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain. This was one of the first times when an invading force needed to gain air superiority in order to make an invasion successful.

A recent example of this was the Gulf War 1990, otherwise known as Operation Desert Storm, where the US and allied forces gained air superiority over the Iraqi forces. The ground war then lasted a mere 5 days before the Iraqi army was defeated.

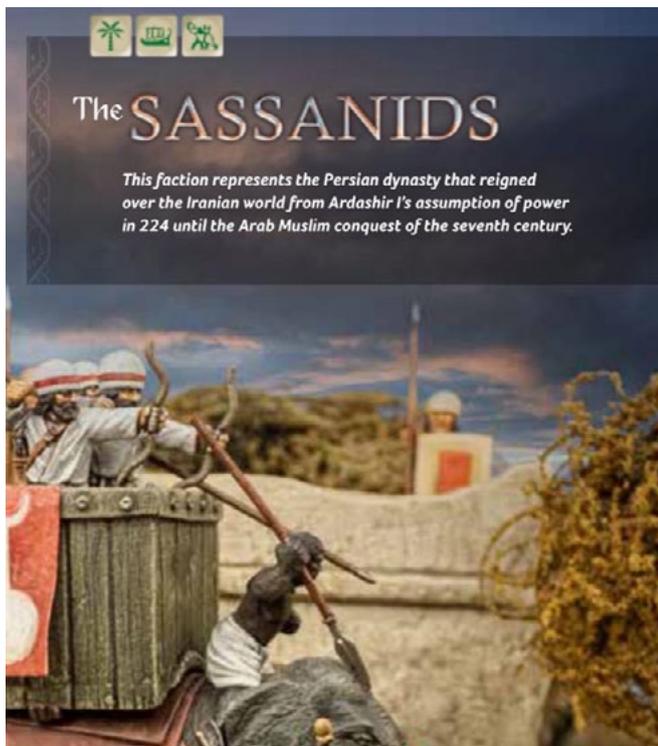
An invasion is a good way to start a campaign, this could be initially done with small border skirmishes, intelligence gathering, stealing supplies before eventually a full-scale invasion. You should decide whether this should be a land, air or sea borne invasion. An invasion by air will only be an option if the game/period or genre has the technology to carry out an air borne invasion. WW2 is a great example of early invasions by air, the most well-known is Operation Market Garden, whereby allied forces dropped infantry by parachute and land glider. It was the largest airborne invasion in military history but was only partially successful. An invasion is a great way to kick off a campaign, the decision to be made is how you plan to carry out that invasion.

Saga: Age of Invasions

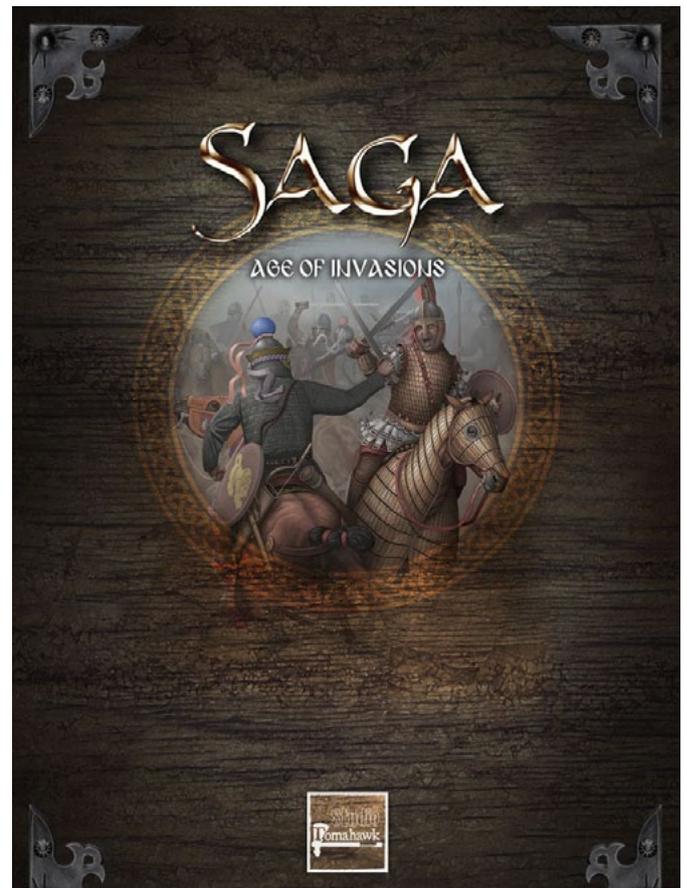
Publisher: Studio Tomahawk

Review by Jason Hubbard

SAGA Age of Invasions is a SAGA supplement which covers the era of the Great Invasions that ended in 476 AD when the last Roman emperor was dethroned. Divided between East and West since 395, the Roman Empire was under pressure from the so-called “barbarian” peoples: Goths, Germans, Persians, Huns and many others. The threats were many. This is a great period to game in, the whole of the Roman Empire was in a period of complete chaos.

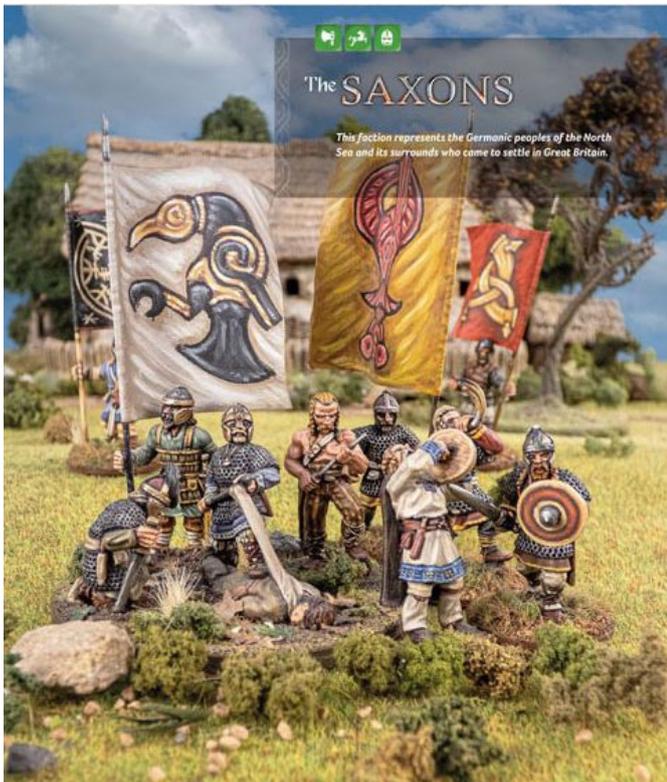


This little-known period has left its marks in our collective imagination, none greater than Arthur, the British chieftain who literary tradition raised to the rank of legendary king. It also knew its fair share of skilled generals and intrepid chiefs.



The book contains some background and information on the period and events that occurred in Europe during this part of history. This allows for play right across the European continent and the Roman Empire. There are eight forces in the book: Romans, Huns, Goths, Britons, Saxons, Picts, Franks, and Sassanids. There is also a section on mercenaries otherwise known as Dogs of War, Factions can make use of some the unit choices to bolster their own warband.

The book includes new rules/units such as the cataphracts which are armoured cavalry, and they don't reduce their armour against shooting.



Their movement distance is medium, whilst they can still charge, they don't have the same movement as other cavalry because of the armour. Most factions can make use of them which is good. There is also the great war chariot, which can be used by Warlords, and they count as mounted.

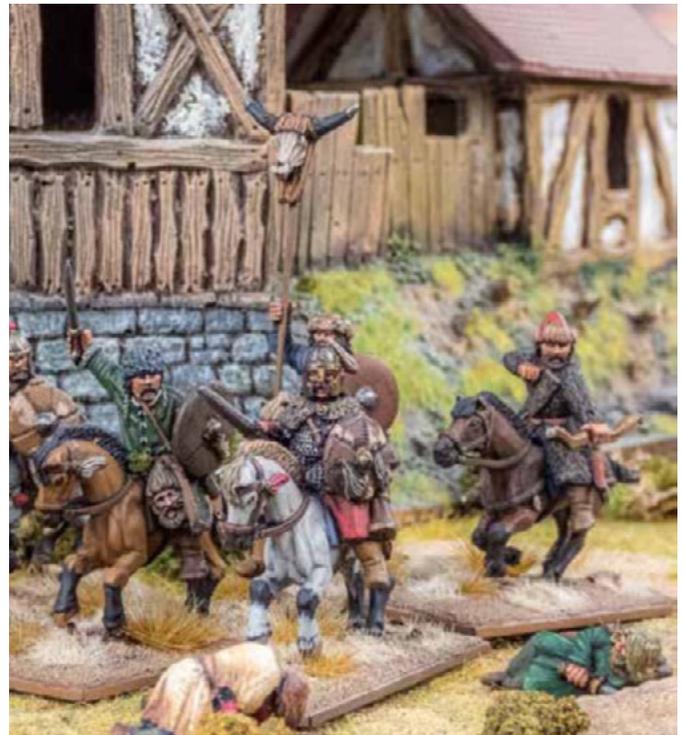
A typical force size for Saga is around 4-6 points or 8 for a larger game. A point will get one of the following.

- A hero (you get your leader for free)
- 4 hearth guards (elite troops)
- 8 warriors (trained soldiers and the backbone of your army)
- 12 levy (poorly trained and armed peasants)

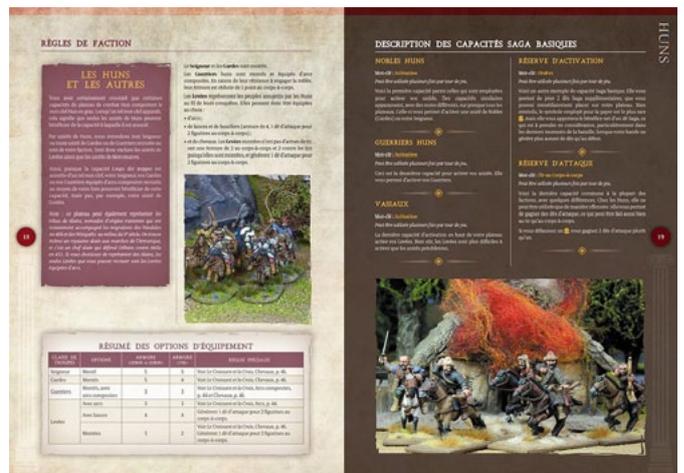
Some factions will allow you add additional units such as a banner bearer or a ballista.

The Manuballista is an oversized crossbow and will count as 6 levies for victory points and as a levy of 6 with missile weapons. It doesn't add any saga dice to the pool, instead it does have a special aggression rating. It's range of two-times L, aggression is half the total of miniatures in the targeted unit. It also gains a +1 bonus to attack as well. This will definitely be added to my Late Roman force.

Saga has been written and designed to be played with 28mm miniatures, but it can be played with smaller or larger figures. It's a skirmish game and an army are a small warband consisting of around 30-50 miniatures, though it can be played with less or any number to around a maximum of 100. You'll also need a copy of the core rules as this book is just a period supplement.



The book also contains several Dogs of War units, along with four new scenarios. It also contains the Limes campaign system. This is definitely a book that most Saga players will want to grab a copy.



This isn't one of those games where virtually everyone around the table are targeting one individual whom they all think is the baddie. Dune Betrayal is a game where players are trying to appear all nice and friendly to avoid being targeted by the other players, if they start acting suspiciously, you'll suddenly attract unwanted attention and find yourself being targeted.

This really is one of those games that'll be of interest to those who enjoy social deduction games. Personally, I wasn't that enamored by it, but then I haven't been of previous social interaction games. That being said it's well made and will appeal to those gamers who do enjoy these types of tabletop games. This'll make a good pub game played with a few beers, and it plays fairly quickly with most games around 30 minutes.

Greece Against Rome

The Fall of the Hellenistic Kingdoms 250–31 BC

Author: Philip Matyszak
Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

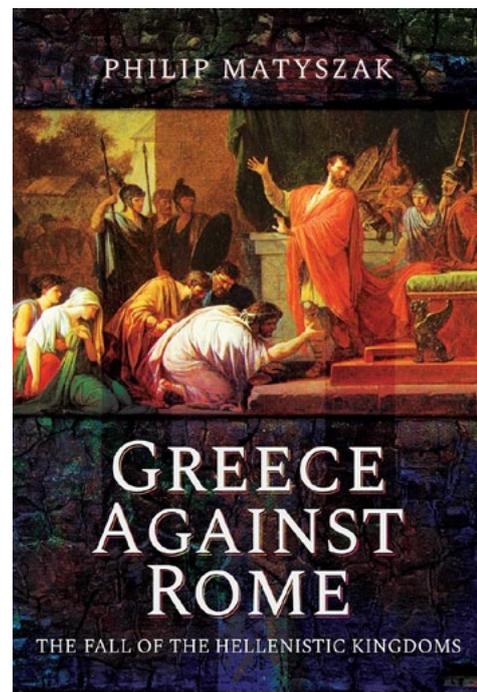
Towards the middle of the third century BC, the Hellenistic kingdoms (the fragments of Alexander the Great's short-lived empire) were near their peak. In terms of population, economy and military power each individual kingdom was vastly superior to Rome, not to mention in fields such as medicine, architecture, science, philosophy and literature.

Philip Matyszak relates how, over the next two-and-a-half centuries, Rome conquered and took over these kingdoms while adopting so much of Hellenistic culture that the resultant hybrid is known as 'Graeco-Roman'

Refreshingly, the story is largely told from the viewpoint of the Hellenistic kingdoms. At the outset, the Romans are little more than another small state in the barbarian west, and less of a consideration than the Scythians or Jews. Much of the narrative therefore focuses on the 'game of thrones' between the Hellenistic powers, a tale of assassinations, double crosses, dynastic incest and warfare. As the Roman threat grows, however, it belatedly becomes the primary concern of the kingdoms as the legions destroy them one by one.

The author takes a look the fall of the Hellenistic world in the face of Rome's advances and expansion. After the death of Alexander, the Great his empire started to fall apart and this allowed Rome, which was at this time a city state to start expanding eastwards. He looks at how the Hellenistic states were fighting amongst themselves unaware of Rome's ambitions.

Most authors have tackled this period by looking at Rome's climb in relation to the fall of the Hellenistic fall. Philip tackles the subject from the opposite side, writing from the Greek perspective. This was a complex period, and many view the kingdoms from the perspective of Rome's advancement.



The author has written an engaging book and firmly places the Hellenistic states centre stage, with Rome's expansion as a menacing development that would lead to rise of an Empire.

This is a great read and a perfect starter for anyone looking to research this period of the Classical world. It's also a great read for any wargamer looking to develop an early Roman campaign, it provides a good overview of the decline and fall of the Hellenistic world. The book is an easy read and gives a good introduction to the period and the looming threat of Rome. This is a good jumping off point to the rise of the Roman world.

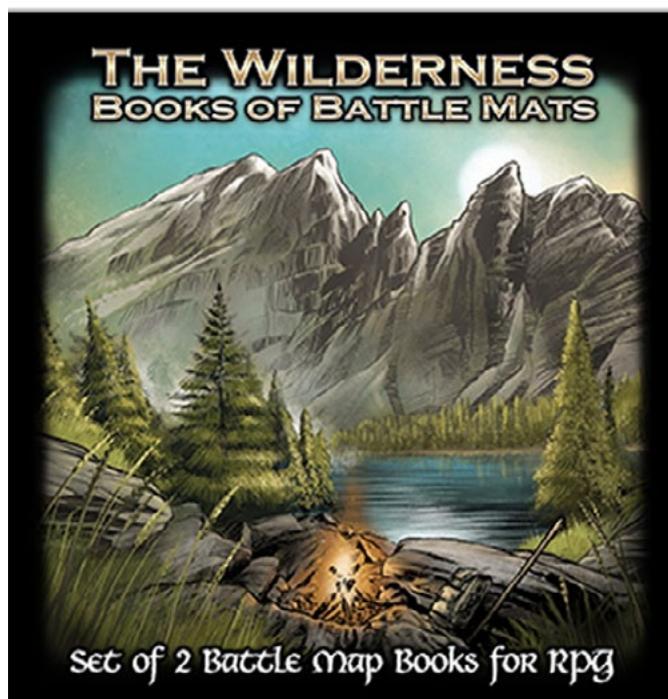
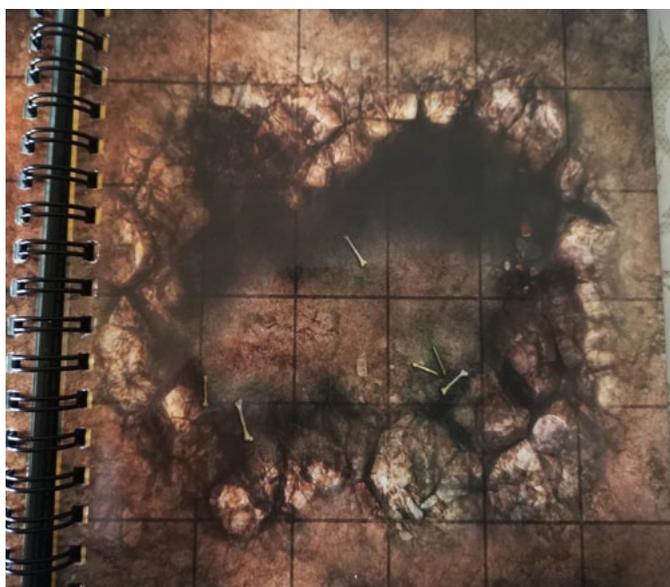
Wilderness BattleMat Books



Guide your party as they scale perilous mountains, brave angry seas and traverse scorching deserts. Plot the path of your adventure through dense rain forest floors, dark and perilous woods and challenging heathlands. Every turn reveals canyons, raging rivers and even splintering ice sheets.

Loke Battle Mats' trademark two book format allows you to use one map page for smaller encounters or combine both books to create 2x2 foot map areas. And with standard entry/exit points you can line up the pages to create exactly the maps you need!

The Books of Battlemats come in two volumes just like the previous release by Loke Towns and Taverns, like all the Battlemat books, they've been designed primarily to be used with 28mm miniatures.



The books utilise 1-inch square grids and each page is 12x12 inches in size. The means when opened and using both pages you'll get a 1 foot by 2-foot gaming area. If you then add the second book alongside your gaming arena 2x2 feet

The quality of the maps in the books is as usual excellent, also there are a good range of differing wilderness landscapes, everything from the desert through to snowy winter scenes. The graphics are of high quality and are some of the best gaming accessories on the market.



These are primarily designed to be used for RPG games but will also equally work for skirmish games. I've used them for both, and they work really well for quick pick-up skirmish games.

I would highly recommend people picking up these and the Towns and Taverns books to go alongside them. They're great for quick encounters or wargaming/skirmish battles.

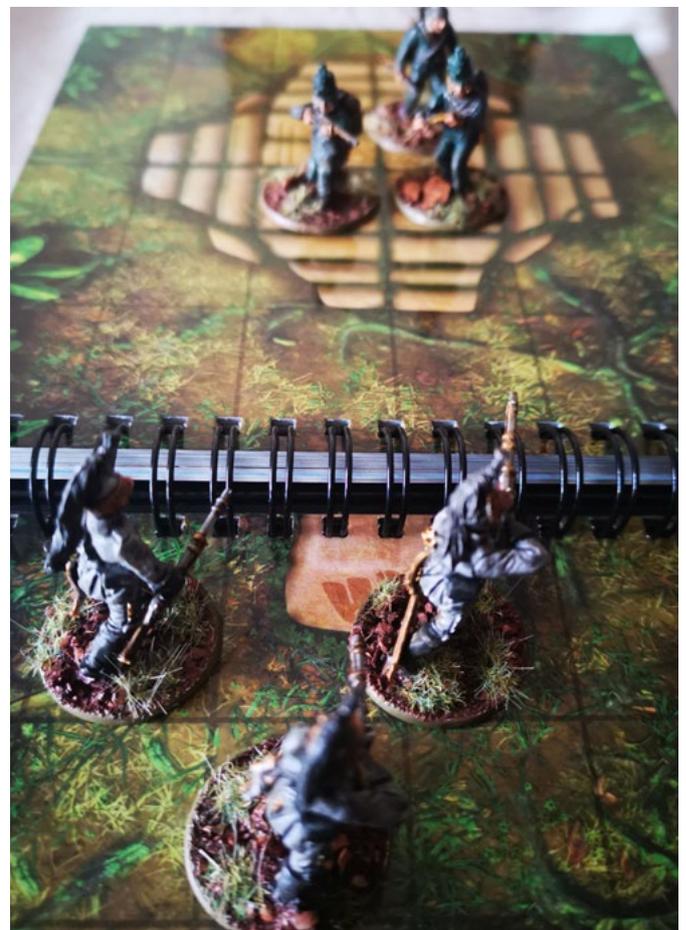


One of the great features of the books is that once open they stay flat. Also being laminated they're very robust and they work well with the static clings that are available from Loke. These add-ons will allow you to create more engaging and immersive maps to game on. They can be used with any of the Battle Mat range, they'll easily stick down and peel off. It also means you can write on these using dry wipe markers, remember not to use permanent ones, and then easily wipe them clean.

My only gripe which isn't a major one, is that they don't really fit on the shelf, they're just a little too large. Apart from that I can't find any fault with them.

These are robust books that will take a lot of wear and tear from gaming which is a good thing as you're likely to make use of these on a regular basis. I have every intention to use these books and the Towns and Taverns books all together to form a massive gaming area.

I now have a few of the Battlemat books including the little books which are great for travel, especially if you're going to be stuck in an airport for a few hours to get a small game with a handful of miniatures.



Immortal Valor

The Black Medal of Honor Winners of WW2

Author: Robert Child

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

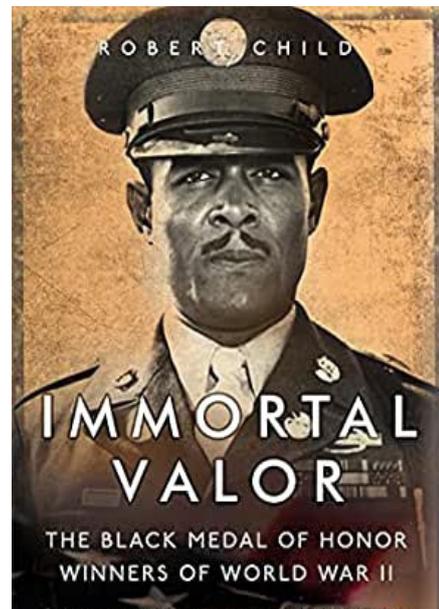
The remarkable story of the seven African American soldiers ultimately awarded the World War II Medal of Honor, and the 50-year campaign to deny them their recognition.

In 1945, when Congress began reviewing the record of the most conspicuous acts of courage by American soldiers during World War II, they recommended awarding the Medal of Honor to 432 recipients. Despite the fact that more than one million African-Americans served, not a single black soldier received the Medal of Honor. The omission remained on the record for over four decades.

But recent historical investigations have brought to light some of the extraordinary acts of valor performed by black soldiers during the war. Men like Vernon Baker, who single-handedly eliminated three enemy machine-guns, an observation post, and a German dugout. Or Sergeant Reuben Rivers, who spearhead his tank unit's advance against fierce German resistance for three days despite being grievously wounded. Meanwhile Lieutenant Charles Thomas led his platoon to capture a strategically vital village on the Siegfried Line in 1944 despite losing half his men and suffering a number of wounds himself.

Ultimately, in 1993 a US Army commission determined that seven men, including Baker, Rivers and Thomas, had been denied the Army's highest award simply due to racial discrimination. In 1997, more than 50 years after the war, President Clinton finally awarded the Medal of Honor to these seven heroes, sadly all but one of them posthumously.

This is a collection of stories of those service personnel who's acts of selfless heroism that earned them the highest honor in the US military. What makes these all the more extraordinary was they were done against a backdrop of systematic racism in the armed forces. The author not only looks at the acts of bravery, but also goes beyond them to look at the lives of these heroes.



This was at a time when Black and White soldiers were segregated, and in the early part of the war a lot of black regiments weren't given combat roles.

We hear constantly about the non-black winners of bravery medals in books, TV or film, whilst the those from the black community are quite often ignored. So, this makes this a book a fascinating read and for many readers this will most likely be the first time they've come across some of these soldiers. Many of those in this book would definitely make a great war film, and rightly should be made into films.

I enjoyed reading this book about these remarkable and brave soldiers, it was a fascinating read. I feel it will appeal to those with an interest in military or black history, along with wargamers looking for new interesting stories to recreate on the tabletop. It'll make a great gift for someone with an interest in the period and I'd highly recommend people reading this book.



Future Invasions – Resource Wars

NB: This was written before the Russia invaded Ukraine in February of this year.

The year is 2030 and Europe has been at war for the last three years. In 2023 Russia invaded the Ukraine and occupied the country. Europe responded with sanctions and went into negotiations. A peace was brokered, and Russia eventually pulled back to the boarder, but a small, localized conflict breaks out with Russia slowly taking territory in Ukraine. This lasts for three years on and off, before a deal is agreed with the European Union. A year later Russia turns the gas off to Europe, as supplies start to dwindle. Russian troops then move westward through Ukraine and into Poland, forcing NATO to act and a full-scale war breaks out.

After the collapse of the USSR, former KGB and FSB members sent young pro-Russian/USSR individuals across Europe to embed themselves into European society and become sleeper cells waiting to be activated. This process went on for years and non-one noticed the influx of east European men and women across the continent, nor did anyone suspect anything.



These individuals were thought to be migrating workers, so no one paid any attention. People at the time were migrating and travelling around Europe from many countries, and so one suspected anything. East European crime syndicates smuggled weapons over the years through to these sleeper cells. Their mission when activated was to cause chaos and internal strife within Europe.

The UK and the rest of Europe have become embroiled in trying to push back Russian forces and their allies, The ongoing war has caused the economy to crash, and many countries in Europe are experiencing internal strife as a result. The Isle of Man declared itself independent and Northern Ireland has allied itself to Southern Ireland, to survive the ongoing economic mess.

Oil in the Middle East starts to dwindle, as the fields start to fail. The US sends troops to the region to protect the oils fields that are still producing the black gold. As a result, insurgency springs up in many countries as the population become angry at rising food and fuel costs. During this time Israel attacks Iran, in attempt to seize the oil fields in the country.



Out in the Far East China decides to take advantage of the global crisis, and they attempt a beach assault on Taiwan. Japan comes to the aid of Taiwan. A small conflict continues in the country, but China becomes distracted by events happening in the Korean peninsula. The events that occur there, forces China to discontinue the conflict in Taiwan, and consolidate troops on the coast and call for a ceasefire. Taiwan is forced to accept the situation and have an occupying force on the island. After this Japan decides to become a neutral nation as does Singapore. Most countries in Asia don't become embroiled in the further global conflict but are suffering internal issues related to the loss of the global economy. Many are working closely with Australia and New Zealand to try mitigate the economic effects.

Seeing the chaos in the rest of the world the leader of North Korea makes an attempt to invade the south. The conflict grounds to a stale mate after South Korean forces push the north back across the border. They continue to press further north until a stalemate occurs. This situation worries China as they don't want US or pro-US forces along their border.



China has also experienced issues along the border with Vietnam, as Vietnamese forces made incursions into China. The PLA has sent troops to the south of the country to deal with the problem. Along the Russian Chinese border a Russian General has made himself a warlord and started to carve out a kingdom for himself in both Russia and across the border in China. This has caused problems for China and so they've had to send a military force to deal with the problem.

India in 2027 made a small incursion into China, and after some initial successes were forced to retreat when fighting broke out in the Kashmiri region with Pakistan. The fighting continued until late 2028, before a tense ceasefire was declared. The region is still quite tense but so far, the cease fire has held out.





Australia and New Zealand decide to remain neutral and refuse to aid both Taiwan and South Korea. Elsewhere in Asia local populations are protesting and rioting because of food and fuel shortages. Stock markets around the globe have crashed causing further chaos, this has in turn caused internal issues and problems for many countries.

In North America there have been border clashes with the cartels who have taken control of Mexico, this has created a wave of refugees trying to escape the violence. One cartel has risen to control all the others, but this was only achieved through violent clashes with the police, military and other cartels. They were able to bribe and pay several of the military to switch sides which aided their rise to the top and eventually control of the country.

In the US there is a growing movement of far-right groups causing internal conflict. It started out mainly as protest but in recent years has descended into domestic terrorism with bombings, targeted attacks and assassination.

Canada suffered some internal issues, but these were resolved and has since declared itself neutral, as they fear a civil war could break out south of the border in the US.

South America has managed to avoid most of the violence that has been seen in the rest of the world. Argentina did invade and occupy the Falkland Islands, after a bloody conflict with the British forces stationed there. So far, the UK hasn't responded to the invasion due to being embroiled in the ongoing conflict in Europe. The US sent a division to Venezuela to take control of the oil fields in the country and prop up a Pro-US puppet regime.

Africa has seen several minor skirmishes as some warlords have risen in the global chaos, though on the whole has remained fairly intact despite the on-going global meltdown. Africa has seen an influx of refugees travelling from Europe trying to find safety. The routes into Africa are controlled by criminal gangs from both Europe and Africa. These criminal gangs also smuggle goods, drugs and weapons in both directions.

The idea of this article is to use it as a backdrop to a global conflict in the future, countries fighting for dwindling natural resources, which could include gas, oil, precious metals and minerals. It could also include land for food and water supplies. You could set a little further than I have in say 2040. It could be played at any scale, or even as an RPG using the new Twilight 2000 rules.

Courage in Contact Range

Publisher: White Dragon Miniatures

Review by Jason Hubbard

White Dragon produces a range of modern conflict miniatures in both 20mm and 28mm. The range is called Courage in Contact and consist of British, Russian, Israeli and Taliban force. There are a number of vehicles for each of the factions. They come in packs of 4 3D printed infantry for £10 in 28mm and £7 for 20mm.

The sculpts are really well done, with a great level of detail on them, and what is really impressive is the quality of the cast or in the case of these miniatures the 3D print. If they didn't inform you that these miniatures are 3D printed, you wouldn't know.



The advantage the 20mm scale has it's roughly the same scale as modelling 1/72 as well as Railway scale. This means you can make use of the building produced for the railway hobby and you can pick up a variety of modern vehicles from the plethora of model kit manufacturers out there.

I assumed they were a resin cast when I first saw them. There are no differences between the two scales apart from the actual size. The 20mm version is just as highly detailed as the larger 28mm. There were some 3D supports that needed cleaning off the miniatures, but this was really easy to with a sharp hobby knife.

I was sent a selection of both scales, from each faction. The Russian and Taliban miniatures are quite versatile as they can be used as other factions quite easily. There are several Eastern European countries that use Russian produced equipment so you could use them as non-Russians. Likewise, the Taliban could be used as any middle eastern insurgent, including Pakistan armed civilians.



COURAGE IN CONTACT



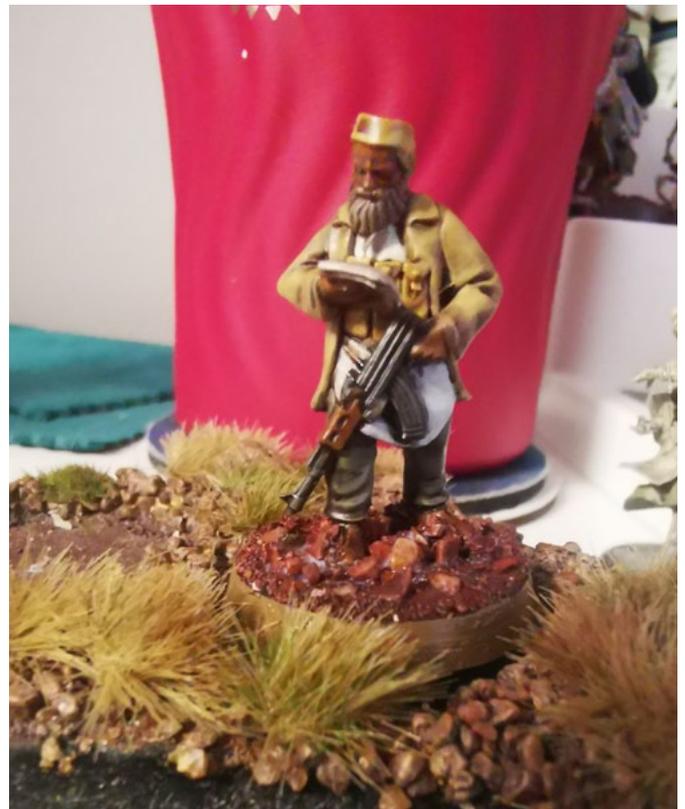
The British and Israeli are quite distinct and can only be fielded as these. The miniatures also come with a range of head options you can choose at the point of ordering. For instance the British come with three helmet options, Para, Skrim or the Mk6.



The range also includes some vehicles, the British has the Foxhound and Mastiff, along with some trailers and quad bike. Currently the Taliban only have two different motor-bikes with riders, it would be good if a pick-up became available for this faction. As yet the Russians and Israeli's don't have any vehicles available, and the Russian faction is quite new, so they're limited to just two packs.

Overall, these are really nice miniatures, well sculpted and are a nice print. I can see myself purchasing some more of the British and Russian figure in 28mm.

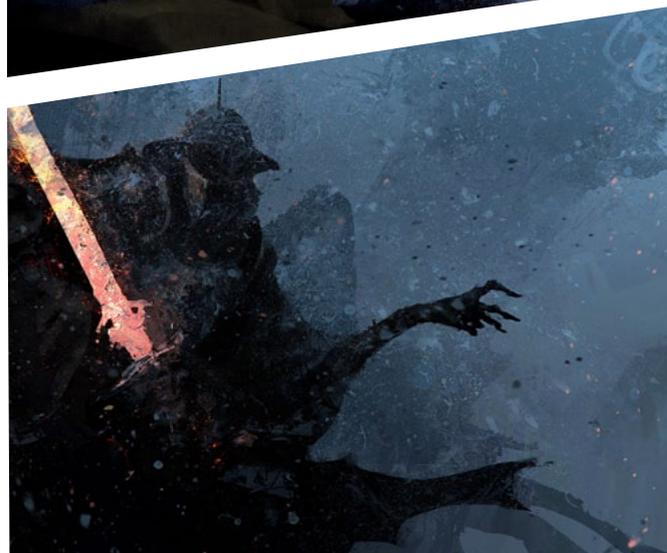
I've started delving into modern and near future war-gaming and these will be perfect for that.



I really liked the level of detail on the individual miniatures. They paint up really nice and easily, though I would recommend giving them a quick wash before undercoating just like you would with Resin figures.

The One Ring Role Playing Game

Jason Hubbard

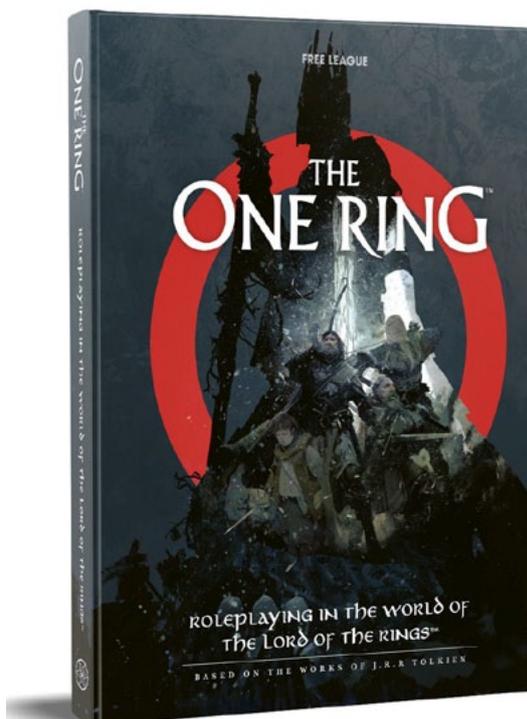


It is the year 2965 of the Third Age and the Shadow is returning. Twenty-four years ago, an alliance of Elves, Men, and Dwarves defeated a horde of Orcs and Wild Wolves, under a sky darkened by Giant Bats, inaugurating a new era of prosperity for the Free Peoples. But twenty years is a long time for peace to last, and in many dark corners of the earth a shadow is lengthening once again. Rumours of strange things happening outside the borders of civilised lands are spreading with increasing regularity and, while they are dismissed by most as fireside-tales and children's stories, they sometimes reach the ears of individuals who recognise the sinister truth they hide.

These are restless warriors, curious scholars and wanderers, always eager to seek what was lost or explore what was forgotten. Ordinary people call them adventurers and, when they prevail, they hail them as heroes. But if they fail, no one will even remember their names.

This is the 2nd edition of the role play game set in the world of The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings, two literary books by the respected grandfathers of fantasy fiction JRR Tolkien. These books introduced readers to the world of Middle-Earth and all those lived and fought in these realms.

Now you can delve into the setting, explore the world and fight in the struggle against the dark forces of Mordor.



The game comes as both a core rule book and an impressive starter set which includes a compressed version of the rules along with a custom set of dice. This RPG will allow players to travel and explore the Northern regions of Middle-Earth, where they'll encounter all the classic monsters from the books or meet some of the iconic characters such as Gandalf or Arathorn.

There are plenty of options to create characters from a range of options that includes Men of Bree, Elves of Lindon and even the Rangers of the North. The rules are relatively simple in comparison to other RPGs such as Dungeons and Dragons. The mechanics work via Fellowship points, Shadow points along with Hope and Wit. Which all pushes towards the driving force behind the RPG which is to team up with fellow players and wander around the realms of Middle -Earth in a fun and exciting way.



This game isn't about leading armies against the dark forces in battle but exploring the world at large. This is about exploring the parts of the world that were ignored in the novels and engaging with the cultures and people of Middle-Earth.

The starter set concentrates on the Shire with some premade scenarios for players to explore. There won't be kings, wizards or powerful empires in the starter set but the rural landscape of Eriador. In the adventure book there is a series of five scenarios which stars Bilbo Baggins as the lead non player character, who will lead and provide advice to the players whilst they embark on small quests.



This will allow new players to get to grips with the rule system and ease them into the world of Middle-Earth. The rule system makes use of a pass-fail D12 mechanic, making use of the characters statistics and skills to determine success with additional 6D rolls. Play is quite fast and easy to pick up.

In the loremaster section of the rules provides guidance for developing the story and plot, as well as running the game, along with running non player characters. This is well written and easy to follow which will allow even beginner lore masters to run games. The core rules include a complete Landmark adventure, The Star of the Mist, with extra support for new loremasters, in the form of tutorial advice throughout. There's plenty of information on the realms in both the starter set and core rule book to allow both new and existing players with enough background to set out exploring the world of Middle Earth.

There are rules for travelling across the land (Journey), facing frightening foes (Combat), and meeting the personalities of Middle-earth (Council). It also includes in-depth information on six Patrons — individuals sponsoring the adventures of the Player-heroes — including Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey.



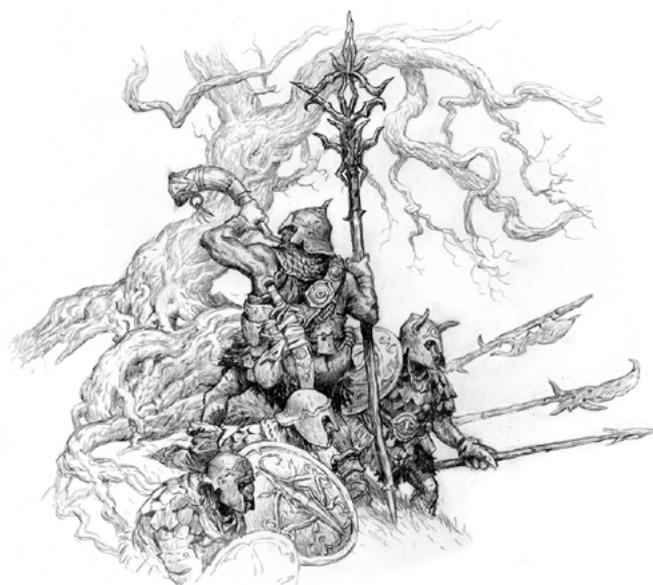


There is a bestiary containing a spread of adversaries, from lowly Orc Soldiers and Highway-robbers to monstrous Cave-Trolls and Barrow-Wights. As well as tables to create your very own Nameless Things — unknowable beings from the dark corners of the world.

I can't offer any complaints about this game, the artwork is stunning, and the rules are easy to pick up, which means you can jump straight into the setting really quickly and immerse yourself as a character in Middle-Earth.



The look of the RPG is as usual for Free League products stunning with a mixture of colour and black and white illustrations. The maps are as always really stunning. Free League never fail on producing great looking games with excellent and fun to play rule mechanics.



With the game set in a smaller section of the world, rather than the grand sweeping realms it allows players to explore these smaller areas of Middle-Earth in greater detail. Players can spend time exploring and questing around these regions or equally be sent on a grand quest and journey that takes them across the realms. This allows for a lush roleplaying experience for both new and existing fans of the setting. The game has a smoother feel, easier to delve into, more streamlined and much more weight to it.

The Dutch Resistance 1940-45

Author: Klaas Castelein & Michel Wenting
Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

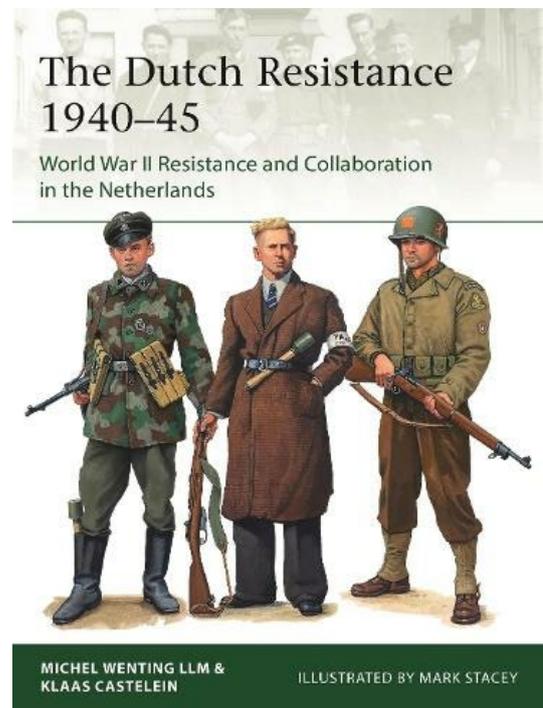
The Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II followed a complex course, whose scope is not widely understood. It was a great deal broader and more varied than the much-reported German counter-espionage success against Dutch agents parachuted in by the Special Operations Executive. From spring 1943 onwards, three Dutch Resistance organizations gained momentum: the Order Service (OD), the Resistance Council (RVV), and the National Assault Teams (LKP). In response, the Germans raised collaborationist forces to counter the Resistance, including the much-feared Landwacht.

In September 1944 the OD, RVV and LKP amalgamated into the Netherlands Interior Forces (NBS), while Allied troops began to liberate the southern provinces. This allowed NBS forces in the south to form *Stoottroepen*, uniformed and armed by both the British and US armies. These assisted the Allied advance, while a bloody underground struggle continued in the occupied north until final liberation in April–May 1945. Illustrated with rare photos and new colour plates, this book gives a comprehensive account of one of the lesser-known struggles of World War II.

Another well written and presented book by Osprey, this book looks at the resistance and collaborators in Holland during the Second World War. The book follows the standard format for the Elite series, with a well-researched and informative overview of the subject matter, which is supported with illustrations, photographs and colour plates.

The book starts by looking at Fascism in the country prior to the start of the war before moving to the military occupation and describing the German units that were stationed in Holland. The author also provides a section on the local security forces that helped keep control of the country alongside the German. This is then followed with an informative overview of the rise of the resistance movement. There is also a well written section regarding the period after D-day where the resistance carried out open warfare against the Germans and collaborators. The last part concerns the period up to 1945 and the end of the war.

Despite the short length of this book the author has managed to pack in a plethora of information on the topic.



This information has been supplemented with an array of images, which makes this a great book for both historians and wargamers.

The colour plates provide a good resource for wargamers looking to paint up miniatures to represent resistance fighters or the various collaborators operating in Holland during the war. This is an excellent resource to pick up for anyone looking to develop a campaign set during the occupation of Holland. It provides just enough information for the wargamer on both the resistance and the types of units that collaborated with the German army.

For any historian considering researching this particular topic of World War Two, then this is the perfect starting point. It will provide a good overview of the subject before delving further.

Outremer: Faith and Blood

Author: Jamie Gordon

Publisher: Osprey Wargames

Review by Jason Hubbard

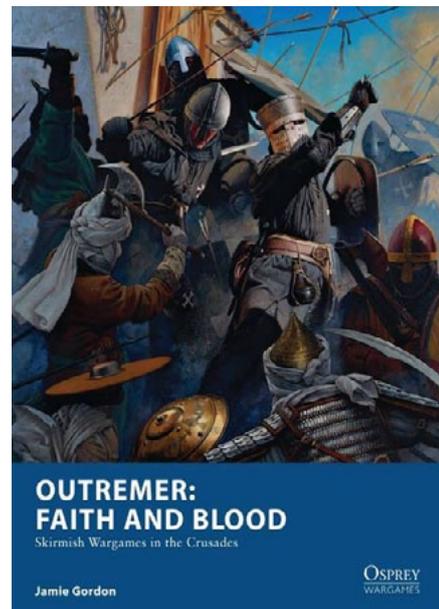
Outremer: Faith and Blood is a 28mm skirmish wargame featuring small groups of warriors fighting in Outremer during the Crusades. While suitable for one-off skirmish encounters the focus of the game is a structured and progressive campaign setting in which they are able to watch their force grow and develop over a series of scenarios and encounters from a small party of five or so soldiers into a powerful warband a score strong.

Character development is key, and a wide range of troop options and factions allows a high degree of individuality and personalisation. Players will also be able to recruit mercenaries and agents such as Hashashin and Varangian survivors to bolster their forces - potent but expensive additions that will add a distinct flavour to each encounter.

Generally, when you envision a game set in the Crusades, you'll most likely assume large armies of painted miniatures, and for the most part you'll be right. Most rule sets that are designed for this period are geared towards mass battles. This set from Osprey is the complete opposite, it caters for small skirmish engagements. Which is great for those who fancy playing this period of history but don't really want the task of building and painting a large force.

As with all of the Osprey blue wargame books, it's a fast and easy to play set of rules. Each miniature in your warband is an individual, and not just some mere grunt. This game could easily be utilised outside of the Crusades and taken into any part of Medieval Europe with a few adjustments. You could very easily use the rules to play out a Robin Hood campaign against the Sheriff of Nottingham and his men.

The rules make use of both dice and playing cards to determine a variety of different actions throughout the game. Playing cards are used to determine the in which miniatures will move. Which does away with the old I move you move mechanic, and at the same time adds a randomness to the game.



The rules also cover things like jumping, taking cover, falling along with the normal actions expected in a game.

The book also come with some campaign rules which is the best way to fully enjoy this game, but you can just play pick up games as well. Members of your warband can level up as the campaign progresses, which is great for creating narrative within your small force. My one criticism is that rules for mounted troops is basically non-existent, it would have been good to be able to field cavalry or mounted troops, but it's just a minor complaint.

Overall, this is a good solid set of rules that's definitely worth picking up. It's a great way to dip your toe into the period without having to build a large army. Anyone who plays games like Frostgrave and fancy dipping the old toe into something more historical, then this would be a good choice, as it still feel familiar.

Stalin's War on Japan

The Red Army's 'Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation', 1945

Author: Charles Stephenson

Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

Did Japan surrender in 1945 because of the death and devastation caused by the atomic bombs dropped by the Americans on Hiroshima and Nagasaki or because of the crushing defeat inflicted on their armies by the Soviet Union in Manchukuo, the puppet state they set up in north-east China? Indeed, the Red Army's rapid and total victory in Manchukuo has been relatively neglected by historians.

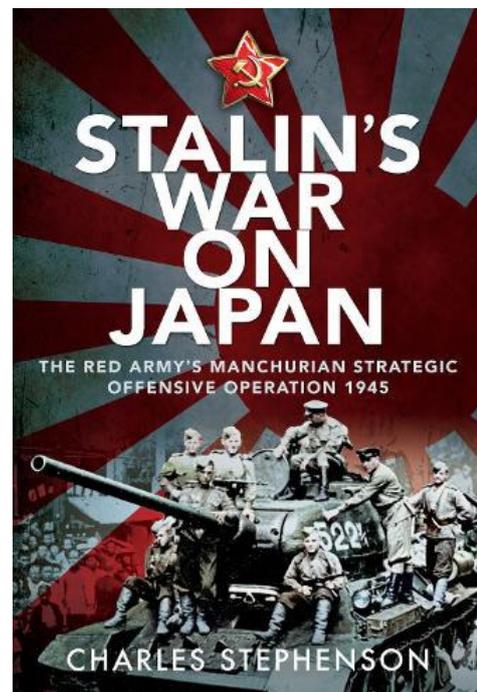
Charles Stephenson, in this scholarly and highly readable new study, describes the political, diplomatic and military build-up to the Soviet offensive and its decisive outcome. He also considers to what extent Japan's capitulation is attributable to the atomic bomb or the stunningly successful entry of the Soviet Union into the conflict.

The military side of the story is explored in fascinating detail – the invasion of Manchukuo itself where the Soviet 'Deep Battle' concept was employed with shattering results, and secondary actions in Korea, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands.

But equally absorbing is the account of the decision-making that gave rise to the offensive and the political and diplomatic background to it, and in particular the Yalta conference. There, Stalin allowed the Americans to persuade him to join the war in the east; a conflict he was determined on entering anyway.

This is an aspect of WW2 that I honestly didn't know a lot about. I was aware that they fought but beyond that I didn't know a lot. So, this was a really interesting read, and got me thinking about a war game campaign in this aspect of the war.

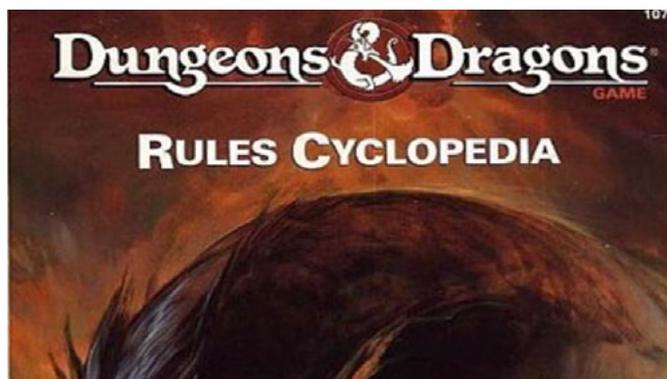
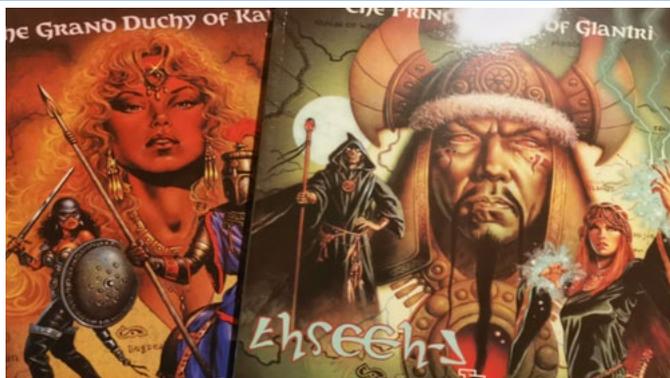
This was one of those actions at the end of the war, which was considered as a land grab, but this was a well-planned attack that was aimed at effectively putting a severe mortal wound on the Japanese military. The aim was to tie down the Japanese forces and prevent them sending troops back to the homeland whilst the allies were invading Japan.



Though by the end of the war the Japanese army in Manchuria was a much lesser version than when they initially invaded the region due to large sections being sent to fight Chinese troops.

The author also looks at how the Soviets conquests of the territories that were occupied by the Japanese and how this had an impact of the geo-politics in the post war era, especially in regard to the Chinese Civil War and the Korean conflict.

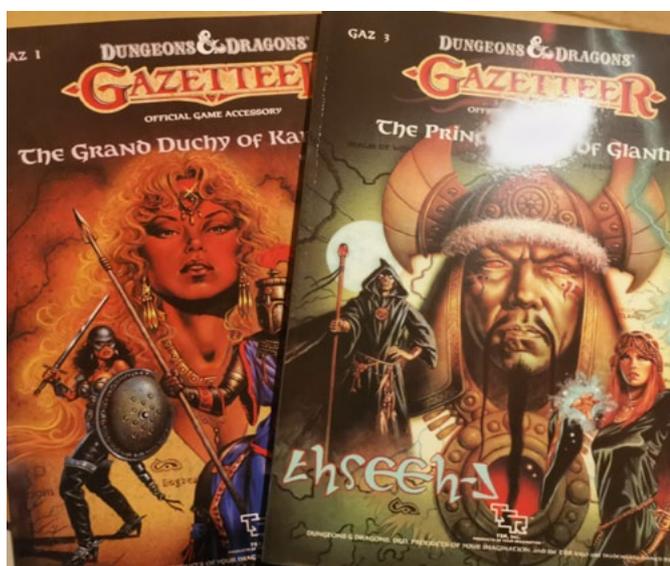
This is a great read and would definitely be a great resource looking to recreate battles and campaigns in Eastern theatre of World War 2. It's also worth a read for anyone interested in military history in Asia, especially those looking for information that led to the post war geo politics in the region.



Printed books from Drive Thru RPG

I've recently gone on a nostalgia kick, looking at some old games I played in the past that have included Mordhiem, Hordes of Things, Twilight 2000, D&D Basic and Star Frontiers. I decided I wanted to play both D&D Basic and Star Frontiers. So, I decided to head over to eBay and check out the prices for both D&D and Star Frontiers.

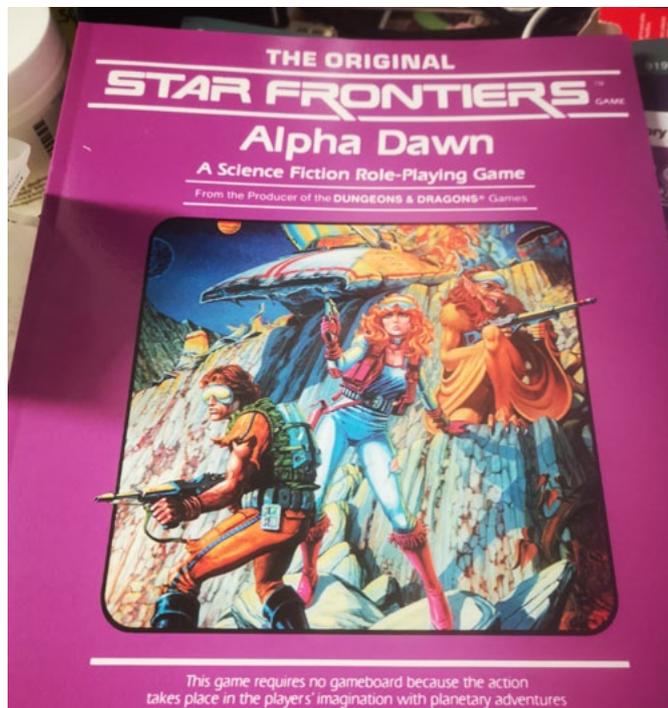
What I discovered was the pricing on those 2nd hand copies of the game were priced at silly money especially when you considered most copies are either quite battered and pretty well worn and the majority were without the original box. Those that did have the original box in a reasonable state meant the price was at insane level pricing.



So, I was becoming a little despondent at this stage and was starting to give up the idea of getting hold of a hard copy of the rule books for both games, and just picking up PDFs instead. Then a friend mentioned that DriveThruRPG were selling print on demand versions of some of old RPGs. So, I headed across to the site and did a quick search for old TSR games and low and behold they had the Star Frontiers rules for print, but the old D&D Basic books weren't.

So, at first, I was a little disappointed until I discovered the D&D Rules Encyclopedia was available for print. The Rules Cyclopedia was all the rule books apart from the Immortal rule set collected into a hardback book originally. The Rules Cyclopedia contained all the major rules, compiled and revised from the

Dungeons & Dragons Basic Rules, as well as the Expert Rules, Companion Rules, and Master Rules boxed sets. Originally published in 1991 and was meant to be for more experienced players as it didn't contain the examples of play and explanation like the original rule sets did. The book allows players to develop from level 1 through to 36.

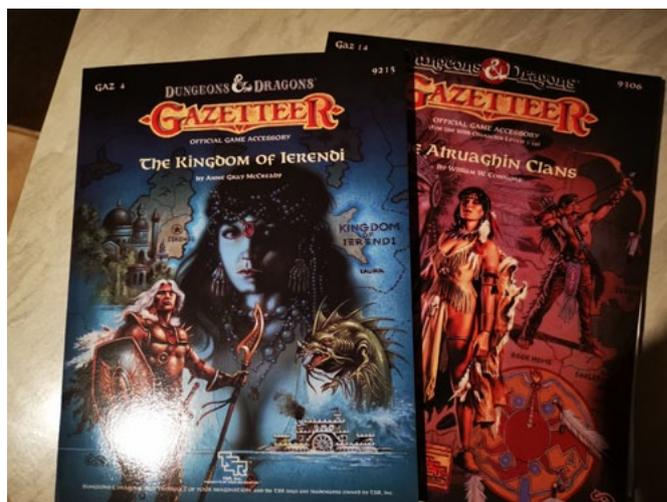


DriveThru allows you to purchase either a softback or hardback version. I opted for a softback copy of the book, though I now plan to buy a hard back copy at some point. At the same time as ordering this I also added two the Gazetteer books. The gazetteer books covered one nation or empire from the world of Mystra and had three basic elements: cultural and geographic background, features, and adventures.

The cultural and geographic campaign background section offers a brief history and timeline for each nation; basic geography, climate, and ecology; and fundamental social and political concepts of the region. Each Gazetteer also offered a list of scenario ideas appropriate to the campaign setting.



I decided that if I was happy with the print quality then I add further books that are available to print online. I also ordered the core rule set for Star Frontiers, this was basically my go to sci-fi game as a teen. I dabbled at time in other sci-fi genre rpgs such as Traveller, Paranoia and Judge Dredd. Yet we always returned to Star Frontiers, especially when we picked up the expansion set Knight Hawks that added space travel and ships to the game. The plan was to order this expansion after receiving the core rules Alpha Dawn and the seeing the quality of the printed book.



So, the books finally arrived, and I was excited to finally get my hands on those original games that helped me on my journey within the hobby all those years ago. The covers were all great, nicely printed with great colour. Which is immediately a good sign especially when most of these publications have artwork from the golden age fantasy art. Star Frontiers has a piece by the legend Larry Elmore. I opened the books and was pleasantly pleased with the results as these are printed from PDFs. What was a massive bonus compared to buying battered old originals from eBay was price? These are bargains in comparison, the only downside is the fact that maps aren't printed separately but as part of the book, but that is only a slight downside.

So since purchasing those four books I've since purchased Knight Hawks expansion for Star Frontiers, along with two more Gazetteers, an adventure module for D&D and a couple of the accessory books for Dungeons and Dragons. Overall, I've been very impressed with the quality and speed in which they were printed and delivered. I'm definitely going to continue getting printed books from the site.



Dune

A Game of Conquest and Diplomacy

Publisher: Gale Fore 9

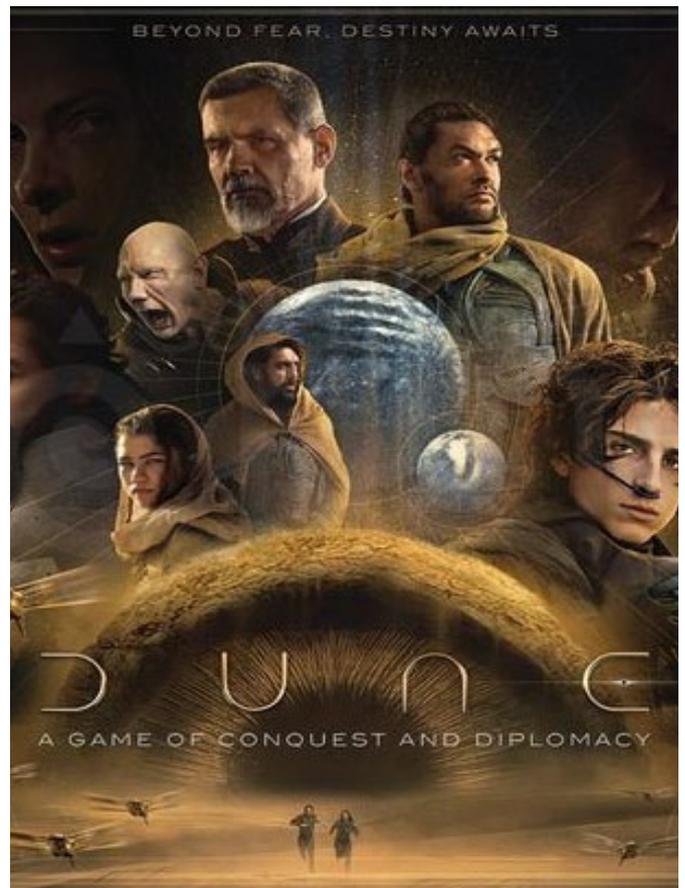
Review by Jason Hubbard

Dune, A Game of Conquest and Diplomacy builds on 40 years of development, refinement and evolution from the original classic game.

This is NOT a reskin of the classic Dune game, re-published in 2019. It has the same beloved DNA, flavour, tension and themes, BUT with beautiful new game board design, updated look and feel to reflect the upcoming film, more spice, new streamlined rules, and a new market deck where you can purchase game advantages.



The brand new 2-player mode really opens up new gaming opportunities, all making the game more accessible for even the most casual gaming nights where not quite such a time / player number commitment is required. For this reason, Dune, A Game of Conquest and Diplomacy doesn't replace the original classic Dune but sits next to it in the cabinet / on the shelf.



In Dune, A Game of Conquest and Diplomacy you will take control of one of the four great factions—House Atreides, House Harkonnen, the Fremen, and the Imperium, all vying to control the most valuable resource in the universe: melange, the mysterious spice only found at great cost on the planet Dune.

The game is set on the planet Arrakis where the four factions are fighting for control. All four factions are standing by waiting for military forces and leaders to be deployed on to the game board. The game plays through 7 phases via 5 rounds, the player who controls a minimum of three strongholds by the end of rounds 3-5 will win the game.



If no player has achieved this then the winner will be determined by the strongholds and spice they hold. As soon as you've managed to grasp what occurs in each of the seven phases, you'll soon pick the game up without needing to refer back to the rules all the time.

In order to engage in combat, you'll need to ship and pay your troops down to the planet, once done you'll get an additional movement on the board. This then makes decision making quite a tense affair, as you'll need to decide whether to split your forces to find spice deposits or try to capture strongholds. You're also able to purchase cards from the marketplace which can be used to disrupt things. These are great for making life a real pain for opposing players.



The board is nice looking and feels really robust, though the cards felt a little thin and I'd recommend getting some sleeve protectors for them. The tokens are nicely designed and feel quite robust. The board has a dark and menacing feel to the design which I liked but I have seen many complain about this aspect on-line. Most games take around an hour, which is a good length of time and can be played even when time might be limited. The game can be played with a minimum of two players but personally I would say it plays better when there are more folk around the table.

It's a pretty easy game to pick and play, the rules are well written and easy to understand. The game is really nice looking, Gale Force has made great use of outstanding artwork to produce a beautiful looking game. There wasn't much in the way of diplomacy, it was more geared towards fighting and trying to defeat your opponent's vid force of might. It was a fun game to play, though felt a little light. It's probably not the type of game I'd normally pick up, but I did enjoy playing it. I haven't played the original 70's version of the game so I can't really do a comparison of the two. Though from what I've read about the original version is it was a longer game to play, with more rounds of play. As a tie-in movie game this is a pretty good one, as most are normally quite poor in theme and game play with shoddy components.

Overall, I quite enjoyed the game, especially as it didn't take too long to play, had it been much longer I think I'd probably lose interest. So, I doubt the original version of the game is suited to me and I much prefer this new slimmed down version. Likewise, there will be other who'll probably enjoy the original version of the game and Classic Dune is available from Gale Force as well.



US Civil War; Battle by Battle

Author: Iain Mcgregor

Publisher: Osprey Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

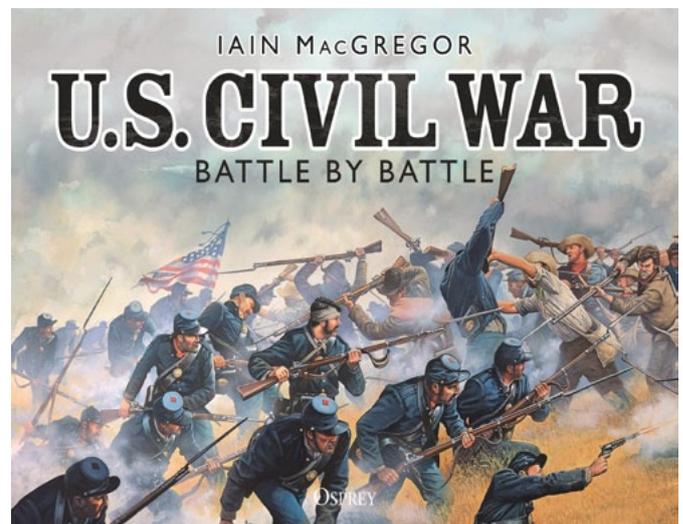
This attractively packaged gift book offers a highly illustrated introduction to some of the U.S. Civil War's most famous and important battles, from the Battle of Fort Sumter in 1861 to the Battle of Appomatox Court House in 1865.

The U.S. Civil War was the most cataclysmic military struggle of the late 19th century, and in four bloody years of fighting from 1861 to 1865 over 620,000 American soldiers and sailors lost their lives in more than 8,000 battles, engagements and skirmishes.

U.S. Civil War Battle by Battle tells the story of 30 of the most significant of these battles. These include some of the most famous clashes, such as the battles of Gettysburg and Fredericksburg, which resonate through American military history, but also the less well known, such as the battles of Brandy Station and Cedar Creek.

This highly illustrated introduction, packed full of colour artwork, covers every theatre of the war and details infantry, cavalry, artillery and seaborne units from both the Union and the Confederate forces to give a true sense of the scale of the War between the States.

I really liked the format of this book; the size is perfect to slip into a bag and read on a train or bus journey. It's a soft back with around 130 pages, illustrated throughout with the usual great Osprey uses in all their publications. The book covers 30 of the most significant or major engagements from the civil war. The book provides a good overview of each battle and doesn't go into great depth, but it does provide a great starting point. This is a book that going to appeal to wargamers, especially those just diving into the period for the first time. It's a great pocket-sized reference for potential battles that could be replayed on the tabletop. It's also a great first book for anyone wanting to learn more about the conflict, this will be a great jumping off book.



I don't have a massive interest in the US Civil war, but I did enjoy reading this book. I discovered a lot of information about the war I didn't know. It was an easy read, and I liked the fact it didn't dive too deep into the subject matter but gave me enough information to have a better understanding.

Now I will say this if you're an avid historian or gamer who is fully embraced into this conflict, you probably won't find much in this book that you don't already know. So, you may be a little disappointed by its lack of depth, if you're trying to convince a friend into the subject of the US Civil war then this would make an ideal gift to whet their appetite for the topic.

There are currently five other books in this series which includes a battle by battle of WW2, which I think I'll pick up a copy at some point as it'll make an excellent resource for playing Bolt Action and Flames of War.

Dune Betrayal

Publisher: Gale Fore 9

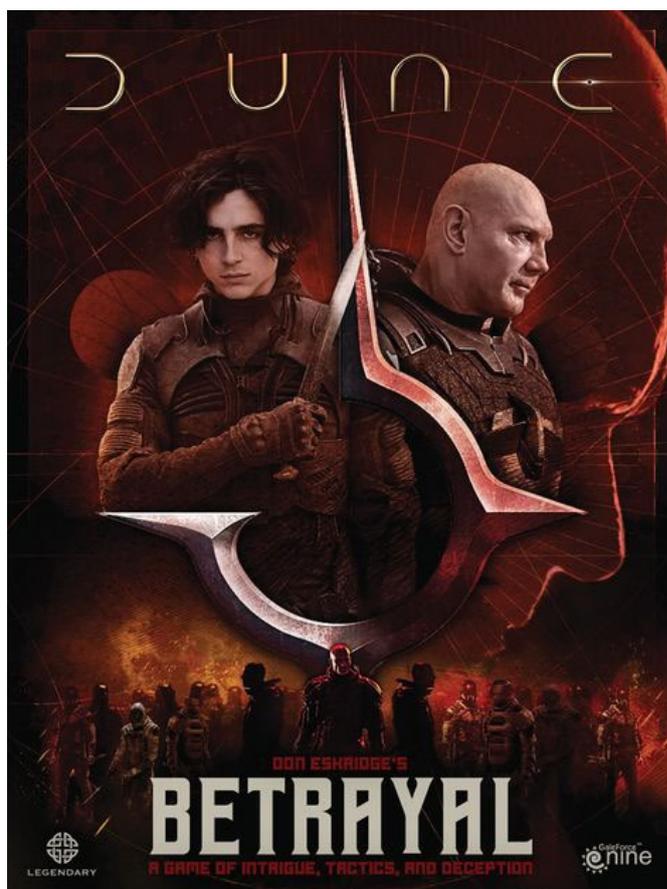
Review by Jason Hubbard

In the social deduction game Dune: Betrayal, players take on the identity of one of the iconic characters of Dune, each representing a distinct role within the factions vying for control amid the sands of Dune.

Your goal is to learn the identities of your foes while protecting your nobles, forming alliances, and utilizing tools to gain knowledge, and therefore power. Pay close attention to determine your allies and enemies, then defend your allies and attack your foes to secure victory.



This is a social deduction game, which utilizes great visuals from the new film. You'll take the role of a secret agent working for one of the great houses vying for control of Dune and the spice trade. This is a fast-gaming experience which revolves around deception and use of tactics. The components of the game are well made and nicely designed.



Games begin with each player receiving an identity card, this will identify them as either Atreides or Harkonnen, and whether they are a fighter or a noble. Then they shuffle two face-down trait cards, nobles presenting as both houses, while fighters simply have their house and fighter. Harkonnen nobles secretly learn who their fighters are, and play advances to the action rounds.

The aim of the game is to discover the identity of your enemies. You'll be able to create alliances and leveraging cards to acquire more knowledge. During the course of the battle players will need to cunning as they attack their enemies and try to ensure the survival of their own house.



DUNE

DON ESKAIDGE'S

BETRAYAL

A GAME OF INTRIGUE, TACTICS, AND DECEPTION

TM & © 2021 Legendary



This isn't one of those games where virtually everyone around the table are targeting one individual whom they all think is the baddie. Dune Betrayal is a game where players are trying to appear all nice and friendly to avoid being targeted by the other players, if they start acting suspiciously, you'll suddenly attract unwanted attention and find yourself being targeted.

This really is one of those games that'll be of interest to those who enjoy social deduction games. Personally, I wasn't that enamored by it, but then I haven't been of previous social interaction games. That being said it's well made and will appeal to those gamers who do enjoy these types of tabletop games. This'll make a good pub game played with a few beers, and it plays fairly quickly with most games around 30 minutes.



Vaesen: A Wicked Secret & Other Mysteries

Publisher: Free League Publishing

Review by Jason Hubbard

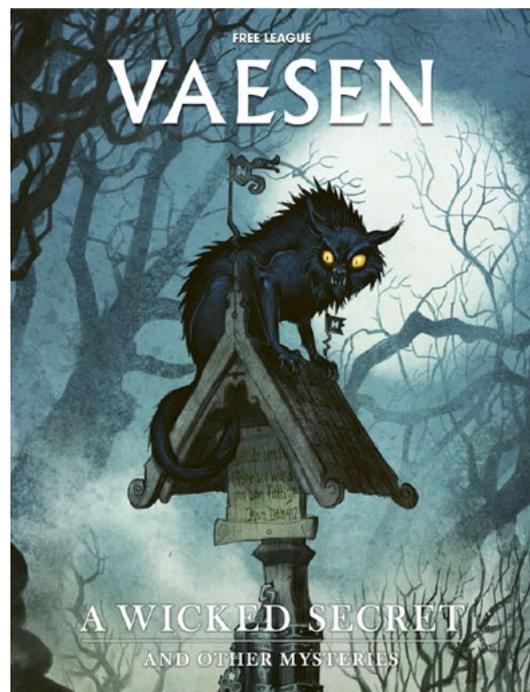
If you hear the sound of fleeing birds, snapping branches, and loud footsteps, you shall be its next victim. Pray then that your fate will be swift - for staring into its infernal gaze can plunge even the purest mind into madness. Journey to the Mythic North and investigate four bone-chilling cases that will test your abilities to the fullest.

This book contains four standalone mysteries for Vaesen - Nordic Horror Roleplaying, playable on their own or as part of a longer campaign.



In these pages you will find:

- The Silver of the Sea - The death of a preacher leads the characters to the rocky western archipelago, where something strange is afoot on Wrecker Isle
- A Wicked Secret - Travel to the deep forests of northern Sweden and investigate rumours of a murderous beast in a remote village. What ancient evil lurks there?
- The Night Show - Welcome to Beautiful Mölle, a city by the sea, known to many as the Heart of Sin - and now also for cold-blooded murder.



- The Song of the Falling Star - A cursed child, a strange instrument and a desperate aristocrat. Travel to Arensburg on the island of Oesel and discover the horrible truth about what has happened there.





The book consists of 4 adventures which take place in regions of Sweden and Estonia. They also take place in different parts of the year, but the author has provided a specific year. As you can expect from Vaesen these are brutal adventures, where outcomes are awful, and the decision making is horrific. Choices you'll make a lesser of two evils, there's plenty of death and gore to experience. There is plenty for all styles of role players to get to grips with.



The adventures make use of a good variety of differing monsters/horrors to keep you busy. There are plenty of moments where trying to stay alive and not perish make these adventures really entertaining to play. The horror sits in the background while the themes of poverty, industrialization, changes in society and the onward move to the modern world dominate the main picture. The Silver of the Sea case revolves around the death of a preacher which leads characters to investigate Wrecker Isle.



A Wicked Secret sends character into the deep forests of northern Sweden to explore rumors of a murderous beast killing villagers.

The Night Sow takes investigators to Molle, a city by the sea, to check out a murder.

The Song of the Falling Star features the mystery of a cursed child who is a strange instrument and a desperate aristocrat.

The book also provides a great deal of useful information that includes, maps, NPC's, new Vaesen and a good chunk of historical background. All of which will provide GM's with great tools for future scenarios they create themselves.

As with all of Free League products, this is well written, lavishly illustrated and nicely presented. If you've picked up a copy of the core rule book, then you'll definitely want to grab a copy of this as well. These are some great adventures to help introduce the world of Vaesen to your new players and allow them to explore the Vaesen world.



The Jungle War Against the Japanese

Author: Tim Heath

Publisher: Pen and Sword

Review by Jason Hubbard

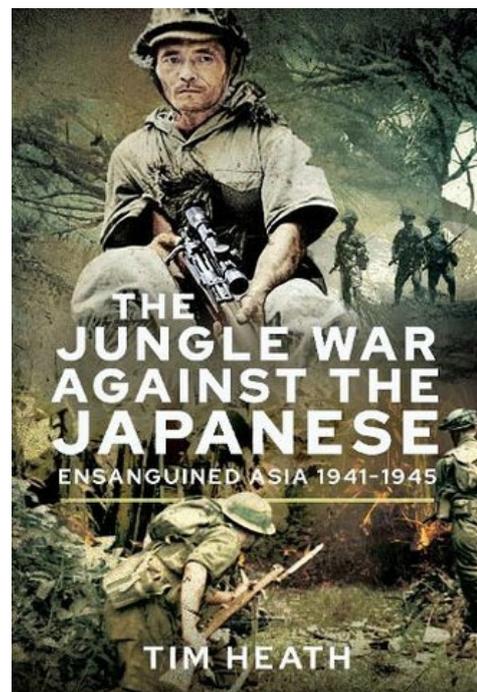
The jungle war against the Japanese was arguably one of the worst terrors that could be inflicted upon a young soldier who had never been away from home before, let alone be faced with a brutal, sadistic and uncompromising enemy in an alien environment.

Based on the accounts of three culturally different veterans, Tim Heath investigates the war against the Japanese, primarily in the jungles of Asia during the Second World War. From the first jungle forays, through to the defeats, the victories, the massacre of indigenous populations, the war crimes and the final elements of the war in the jungle which led to ultimate victory over the Japanese, this volume is a unique attempt at telling the story from a fresh perspective.

The way in which the individuals who have contributed to this volume speak might imply a sanitized view toward the act of killing in times of war. Yet to truly understand this mind-set one has to relive their experiences of that claustrophobic hell.

The book examines the factors which initially made the Japanese such brutally efficient exponents of warfare in jungle terrain, the natural hazards encountered in the jungle environment, the techniques that the British had to master in order to become at least equal to their enemy and what it was like to have to live and fight knowing your enemy was never far away from you. It was a war where methods and tactics had to be developed through hard experience along with strong leadership, which was initially lacking on the part of the British.

The author has superbly explored the brutal jungle warfare through the accounts of those who served there. This makes for a staggering read especially in regard to how brutal this warfare was, and what makes this even more interesting is that the first-hand accounts come from several culturally different soldiers. He also looks at how the jungle itself was an enemy to all sides who fought in this terrain.



Tim also explores the reasons that made the Japanese superb and brutal adversaries in the jungle. He also explores how the British and allies had to learn and master how to fight both this enemy and natural conditions in order to survive and win. Troops had to learn on the job and develop methods and techniques to fight in this environment.

This was a superbly fascinating read and really brought home how brutal this conflict was. It's a part of the Second World War that mainly ignored in schools and by many. The European theatre of war generally takes centre stage, and when we look East it's mainly the US vs Japanese forces. So this book is genuinely worth read not only for historians but wargamers looking to recreate jungle combat and taking the war against the Japanese military.



THE QUEST OF A HERO!

Digging out HeroQuest

A Blast from the Past

Alex Garbett



“Welcome young hero. Dare you venture into the dungeon, to defeat the foul creatures of Morcar that await you and claim your prize as hero of the empire?”

Firstly, if you’re young, I bet you’re asking what the heck is HeroQuest.

The Game

HeroQuest is an adventure board game that was created by Milton Bradley (MB) in conjunction with Games Workshop and Citadel Miniatures. The game was set during Games Workshop’s early years in the Warhammer Fantasy fictional universe – ‘Old World’.

The game was based around archetypes of fantasy role-playing games: The Wizard, Dwarf, Elf and Barbarian

HeroQuest was the very first introduction for an entire generation of people into tabletop wargaming. The game was released in 1989, back when board games were run of the mill, and blew a lot of people away, winning an award for ‘Best Graphic Presentation of a Board Game of 1991’



The goal of the game was to go through each dungeon, cleverly using the generic gaming board for different quests. Each game would build up your character through acquiring gold and magical items to eventually defeat Morcar and bringing peace back to the Empire.

A normal board layout of the latter quests in the quest book

Although the game could work with 2 people I've often found it works best with 5 people – and some drink and snacks!

Stats cards with lovely artwork on them



Characters

Barbarian:

The Barbarian is tall, strong and muscular, and brandishes a broadsword. He is a powerful character in combat, having excellent attack, with moderately good defense, but has no magical abilities. Being the Barbarian he has the highest amount of body points,

so can withstand a lot of injury.

Dwarf:

Like all dwarfs he is short, stocky and very well armoured. His main weapon is a battleaxe. He is very good in defence, not as strong as Barbarian and has no magical abilities. The dwarf also has the unique ability of being able to disarm traps without special equipment.

Elf:

The elf is tall, slender and comes armed with a short one-handed sword. He is equal in attack strength to the dwarf, but is able to use one kind of elemental spell - air, earth, fire, or water magic.



Wizard:

The wizard figurine wears cloak and carries a mages staff. In combat, he is the weakest in attack, but compensates for this by being able to use three kinds of spells, for a total of nine spells. He has very few body points so can be easily killed in combat. His high mind points allow him to be more resistant to the effects of magic.

The Games Master:

The most important role, the games master is there to play as Morcar, moving his monsters around the Dungeon trying to injure and if possible kill the heroes, but also facilitating the play of the game. The Games



Master has access to a map of the Dungeon and knows where everything is while the heroes stumble around in the dark encountering monsters as they search for their goal.

Game play

HeroQuest used a very simple yet very effective engine for game play, movement was determined by rolling 2D6, adding the score together and being able to move up to that distance – paying the cost for opening doors with one square of movement, etc



Combat involves using special dice unique to HeroQuest. To hit and wound requires the white die, if you got a skull you lost a wound. Defending was simple too – if you rolled a shield the hit was blocked.

This simple set of rules made for fast and furious play and lots of laughs too! Imagine hacking poor goblins to death with a beefed up uber Barbarian.



End Game

The ultimate goal of the game was to complete the quest – whether killing some great monster, loading up on gold, finding some magical object or saving a prisoner.

The game proved to be very popular, with Milton Bradley and Games Workshop releasing several expansions to the game. Most of them can be picked up on Ebay but due to the rarity of these expansions, they can be very expensive.

- HeroQuest "Kellar's Keep"
- HeroQuest "Return of the Witch Lord"
- HeroQuest "Adventure Design Kit"
- HeroQuest "Against the Ogre Horde"
- HeroQuest "Wizards of Morcar"
- HeroQuest "The Frozen Horror"
- HeroQuest "The Mage of the Mirror"

Final Thoughts

Although almost 20 years old now, HeroQuest still offers many friends and myself a quick and easy game of hack and slash. Unlike many other games HeroQuest has lasted the test of time and still manages to excite me when playing. I'd definitely recommend the game.

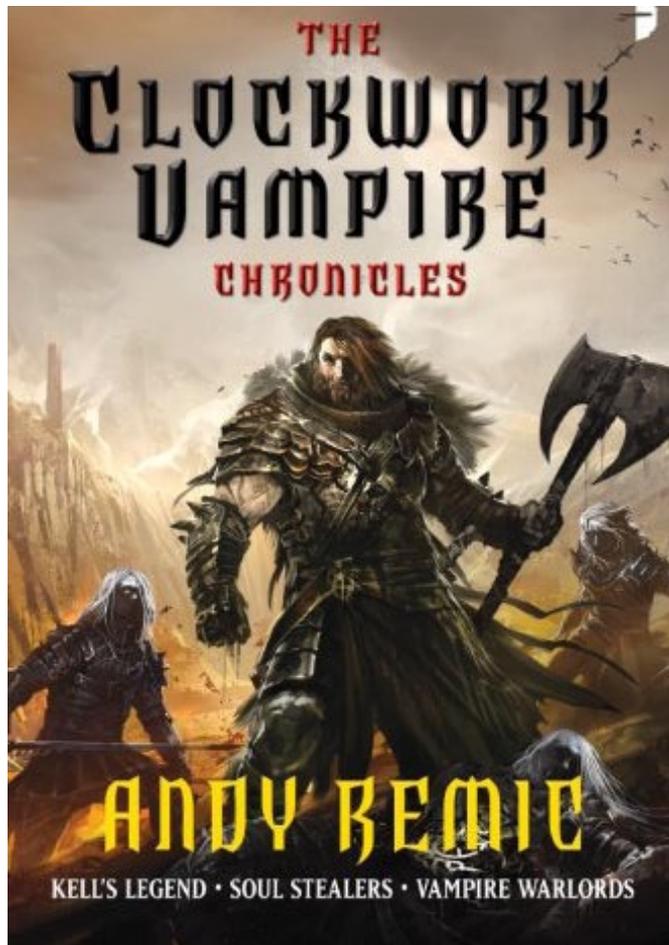
Hero Quest next to the its Grandchild 'Descent' – Probably the final ultimate Dungeon Game

Interview with Andy Remic

This was first published in Issue 4

When did you first start writing?

I wrote my first book when I was about 7. It was called *The Four Headed Monster* and had a picture on the front of a four headed monster, King Kong style, being attacked by fighter jets. My teacher thought it was cool, and I carried on writing from that point. My first serious novel attempt, for the benefit of my friends in the pub when I was 17 (*cough*), was called *SILKWORM*, a comedy fantasy about Moronik the Barbarian, Pipkin the Wizard, and Spud the Gnome. It kind of snowballed from that point. That's what happens when you're doing A levels.



Your books generally fall within the Sci-Fi & Fantasy genre, do you plan to write within any other genre in the future?

I see myself as a writer, and there's lots of horror and black comedy in my labelled SF and Fantasy works. Recently I've got into filmmaking, and so I'm working on short film and feature scripts at the moment, alongside my fiction. You can see my short horror film *CHEMICAL MAN* here.

Are you a gamer? If so, what do you play?

Oh yes. I remember the *Monster 3D* card, and the first time I saw *QUAKE* in 3D. My mate and I networked that, listening to *Clawfinger* and *New Model Army*, fragging, eating donuts and drinking beer. All the *Quake* and *Medal of Honour* games were high on our networking list, alongside the *Red Alert* games. Once, we'd been playing for about 4 hours, built up mammoth bases with tanks and MIGs, and then went down for a chilli my wife cooked for dinner. All the time we were eating, we could hear in beautiful female dulcet tones, "Your base is under attack" and we kept eating faster and faster and faster. Haha. Suffice to say, I won. I was the *QUAKEMASTER*. I'm

also a big fan of the Half Life games, Unreal Tournament and Bioshock, that sort of thing. Although more recently, having 2 little boys, Lego Star Wars has been high on the playlist.

Have you been approached by anyone looking to option any of your books into films?

I had some early interest from Paramount and Impact Pictures on the first three books (Spiral, Quake and Warhead), but it just stagnates and goes o---n..... f o r..... --- e v e r My agent said just sit back, and if it happens it happens. That's if I don't make something myself first!! Check out Grunge Films for more information.

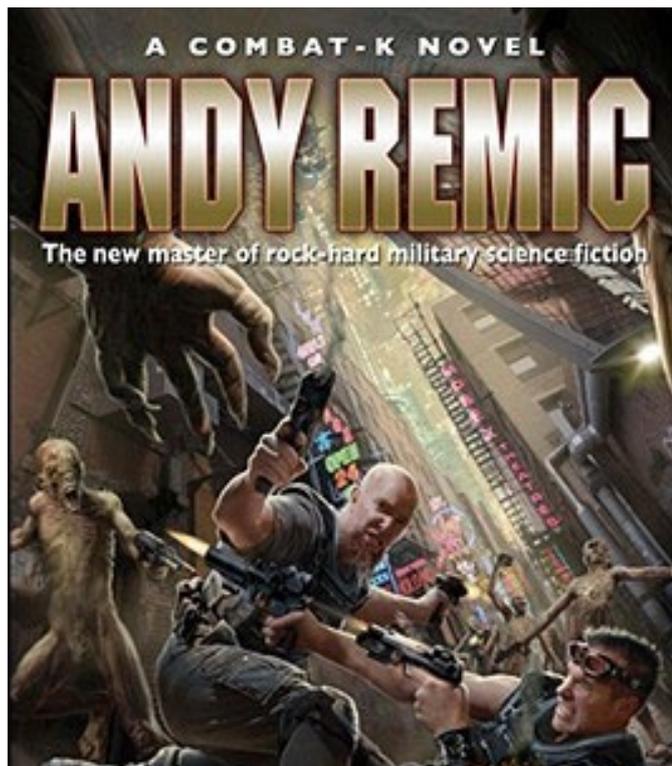
Which book would you most like to see on the silver screen and why?

Hmm. Probably BIOHELL, because I'm a big zombie fan, and BIOHELL is my uber-comedy zombie kickass white-knuckle action thriller adventure story. With zombies. Did I mention it had zombies?

What type of books do you read yourself?

Anything from mainstream, SF, fantasy, horror, and Bill Bryson's travel books. He's a real funny dude. In genre fiction, I'm a fan of Iain M. Banks, David Gemmell, Joe Abercrombie - I could go on for a week...

When you get writers block, if at all, what do you do to overcome the problem?



Never happens. Watch. It'll happen tomorrow now. How do you approach a new book, what do you normally start with?

I put down a skeleton plot, devise the characters, then do a chapter plan until 2/3rds of the way through. Having said that, each book can be triggered by something different – a plot idea, a character, something you see on the news. So, it depends, really.

What advice could you give someone considering writing a book for the first time?

Plan it out. Pace yourself – so a few thousand words a week. Don't give up. Omit needless words. I still remember what it felt like to be unpublished – I thought I'd never get a deal. Honestly. It took me about 10 years, just like many other popular authors you read today. Now that's stubbornness!!

Now for some odd questions from our readers.

From Ian If there was no such thing as cheese, what would you have on your crackers after a nice meal? I'd love a slice of your raw kidneys, with a fine Chianti - chhh chh slurping noises and evil cackling follows.

From Dave Red, Brown or neither on Bacon & Sausage sandwiches?

That would be brown. My uncle was in King's Regiment and got me into horrible sauces on army butties at a young and impressionable age.

If you had to go back in time which period, would you go back to and why?

Good question - I think, possibly, Elizabethan England so I could meet Edmund Blackadder. He was real, wasn't he? I flunked History BIG STYLE.

Who do you think would win in a fight, Homer Simpson or Peter Griffin?

Homer! Homer!! Homer!!!





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