
#11 **S&T** Supplement

The S&T SUPPLEMENT is published every other month as a supplement to STRATEGY AND TACTICS magazine. One, six issue subscription is \$3.00 payable to SIMULATIONS PUBLICATIONS.
Back issues are available at \$.75 per copy.

Simulations Publications, Inc.
34 East 23rd St.
New York 10010

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Edited by Albert A. Nofi and Stephen B. Patrick.
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Dark Ages Revisited

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by Stephen B. Patrick

Those who found the article on the Dark Ages in S&T to be long will be non-plussed by the fact that there was even more which was cut out. Since the stated purpose of the Supplement is to handle the overflow from S&T, the following three segments are included.

CORONATION 800

Though hindsight is often a good way to understand an historical event, sometimes subsequent events completely change the interpretation to be given an event so that its original meaning is obscured or misunderstood.

This is particularly true of the Coronation of Charlemagne which occurred on Christmas Day, 800, in Rome, during the Papacy of Leo III. In modern history books this event is often portrayed as a benign gesture, attempting to restore the mystique of the lost Roman Empire, which event became the first step in the creation of that curious institution, the Holy Roman Empire.

In 800, however, this event had an effect now forgotten by many. In the first place when, by the Twentieth Century, we have seen so many countries which have been ruled by self-styled emperors, ranging from Russia (though Tsar is really a corruption of Caesar, rather than Imperator) to Mexico, the nature of the Emperor's position in 800 is overlooked. He was, at that time, unique. From the reign of Constantine, the notion was that there was one Empire, at whose head was the Imperator Romanorum (Emperor of the Romans) and there was one Church, at whose head was the Pope (though, of course, there was some debate on that). In reality, the question of who headed the Church was an outgrowth of the whole struggle between the Pope and the Emperor, and Papal supremacy was generally acknowledged except when the Emperor was at odds with the reigning Pope, at which time the Patriarch of Constantinople became equal to the Pope in all respects. This equality of the Patriarch came, at base, from the fact that he was the chief prelate in the capital of the Empire. Thus, the whole struggle turned around the relationship of the Church and the Emperor, with the Pope left with one alternative: his battle for supremacy could not be won until he had removed the danger of the Emperor's power.

Historically, it was well recognized that there might be two men holding the imperium. They might be rulers of the

respective halves of the Empire, as in the days after Theodosius the Great, or they might be father and son, as was the custom when the father wanted to ensure the succession. Despite this, they were considered to rule as one. The concept of the imperium is a key point in the whole Roman legal system. The Emperor derived his powers, originally, from the people through the Senate. When the Senate waned in power, the concept was that the power returned to the people. However, once vested in a monarch, that Emperor had the power to pass the imperium to whomever he pleased. If the people did not approve, they rebelled. If they won, they could give the imperium to a new Emperor. No matter what happened, though, the imperium was, at base, a grant from the people and was indivisible. At no point did religion figure in the matter. The clergy had no say in selection of the Emperor, except insofar as they were citizens. If the Emperor claimed to derive his power from Christ, it was merely a continuation of the old idea that the Emperor was god. You can be sure that there was no idea that the powers of the Emperor were derived through the clergy. If from Christ, it was a first-hand donation without any intermediary. The Emperor was superior to the Pope, at least as far as the Emperor saw it.

Of course, after 476 there was no factual basis for the idea of a universal Empire co-terminus with a universal Church. Still, the idea persisted throughout the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Centuries, much as the idea of Christian unity persists today. In fact, by 800 the Emperor's writ no longer ran in Rome. One hundred fifty years earlier, Constant II was able to have Pope Martin bodily seized, tried for treason, convicted and exiled for life in the Crimea. Now the Emperor could, at best, have the Patriarch excommunicate the Pope (as was done during the Papacy of Honorius). In addition, the basic issue which ultimately split the Church (protestations that it was purely on religious grounds notwithstanding) came rapidly to the fore: who was to dominate, the Pope or the Emperor. The Emperor, based on the precedent of Constantine the Great in calling the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea, determined that the Emperor was Christ's chief representative on Earth and that he should have the decisive choice in who would be Pope. The Pope, for his part, was of a contrary opinion.

In 797, Irene (by some error later canonized) in an outpouring of maternal devotion, blinded her son, Constantin VII, who soon thereafter died. Irene became sole ruler - the first woman to sit alone on the throne of Constantine the

Great. Due to this problem she styled herself "Emperor" as if the very gender of the term had suddenly become neuter. In 800, the success of Charlemagne gave Pope Leo III a chance he had been waiting for in his struggle with the Emperor - he declared the throne vacant because a woman could not be Emperor, a position not without some merit and not without some support even within the Empire. The Pope, being Vicar of Christ, declared that the power therefore fell to him to choose the new ruler of the Empire of Christ so that the throne would not remain vacant. By coincidence, he had a candidate and on Christmas Day, 800, he crowned Charles, King of the Franks, Imperator Romanorum. In theory, Charlemagne was therefore empowered to move right into the palace in Constantinople and throw Irene out (at least in the Pope's view of the theory). In reality, as well as under technical Roman law, the Pope had as much right to name a new Emperor, particularly while Irene reigned, as Irene did to name a new Pope.

Still, these two Emperors had a unique way out of the problem. First, they could fall back on the old tradition of shared imperium. More interestingly, they had the singular remedy of marriage and negotiations were immediately opened along that line. One can imagine the import of such a marriage if it had been concluded. In fact, Nicephorus, a general who had been less than satisfied with Irene's harsh rule, overthrew her in 802 and the prospects of a marriage between the Emperors thereafter dimmed.

The actual solution was neither fish nor fowl. Nicephorus grudgingly agreed to accept Charlemagne as having the right to bear the title Emperor (or Basileus, as he was known in the Greek which was now spoken in the Empire) while Charlemagne, for his part, seemed not too impressed by the rather empty title and right to the end his seal merely titled him King of the Franks. On his death, his successors had to renegotiate with the Emperor to get the title accepted and it was not for some time that it was considered as inheritable in the west to the extent that the owner need no longer look to the east for approval. Actually, this was not the old shared imperium but rather a classic example of the so-called "Byzantine" politics: a realization of a political reality and a determination to make the best of it. The frankish "emperors" were always treated as equals, but in an Orwellian sense: the Emperor in the east was more equal.

The real importance of the coronation was that the idea of a universal Empire, ruled by one Emperor, under the Grace

of God and one Church, was given a fatal blow. If the Pope could make a new Emperor, then who needed the old one? The death of the universal Empire led, ultimately, to the death of the universal Church

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON AND THE DARK AGES

The search for the ultimate weapon which would ensure victory to the possessor has entranced people from time immemorial. Certainly the advent, in the early days of recorded history, of the iron sword accomplished this feat until technology throughout the rest of the area caught up.

The Dark Ages, curiously, saw the development of three weapons which, for a while, seemed to be the long-sought-after ultimate weapon. Again, technology has outstripped them, but they did influence the period.

Starting, in no particular order, with the Arab world, one finds that they contributed more than alcohol and the concept of zero to our culture. The names of two cities under the control of the Arabs during the Dark Ages, Toledo and Damascus, hardly need the noun "steel" after them to call to mind the deadly Moslem scimitar. The steelworkers of Toledo and Damascus made a major jump in the science of metallurgy. The scimitar was not only light, but took and kept a razor-sharp edge, as opposed to the rather dull, heavy, iron sword the Crusaders wielded. Moreover, the lightness of the steel permitted the Moslems to carry out their highly mobile tactics in a manner impossible with heavier weapons. It is far easier to cut a man down while on horseback with a scimitar than the Crusader's sword, if only because the latter almost required that the user be a man of above average strength and that he set himself before using it in order to achieve maximum effect.

A development such as this, though, could not remain a secret for long and the advantage gained by the Moslems was lost when the Western Europeans gradually developed their own steel industries. Still, the impace made by the steelworkers of Toledo and Damascus was, during the Dark Ages, great - so great that the names are still recognized as hallmarks of fine steel.

* * *

It is hard to think that a weapon was developed in the Dark Ages that was so dreaded that the Pope demanded it be banned and kings denounced it as unfit for civilized warfare. It is harder still to realize that this was true when one knows that the weapon in question was the crossbow. The unsung genius who decided that the old Roman

ballista would work well as a hand-held weapon must be regarded as one of the innovators of history. The Roman device was large, moved by a crew over the ground, and fired a spear-like projectile rather healthy distances. The crossbow substituted a shorter bolt for the spear and was, as mentioned, hand held. Otherwise, the similarity was quite apparent. Crossbows, of course, came in several varieties. They all had a stirrup at the end for use when cocking the weapon, had a "trigger" in the form of a manual release for the bow-string, and usually could not be hand-cocked: some device was needed. The most basic bow was cocked by suspending a two-pronged device from the waist, catching the bow-string while in a crouched position, and standing up, thereby drawing the bowstring to a cocked position. Greater tension in the bow required more elaborate cocking devices and a more common system was a "coffee grinder" type of winding machine that literally wound the string back into position.

The rate of fire, as can be imagined, was slower than with regular bows. The advantage was that much less skill was required to use them with some accuracy. For one, they could more literally be aimed. As a result, the crossbow became the weapon with which the leaders could quickly outfit an army capable of doing some rather accurate archery.

The first major battle to record the use of the crossbow was Hastings (1066), but they were not really widely used until after Hastings. The crossbow then being widely used to the extent that, in 1189, Pope Innocent II banned its use and called it "hateful to God and unfit for Christians." Of course, it was fit for Moslems and was therefore also used in the Crusades. It was a short step to find that it also killed Christians and thereby made it worthwhile ignoring the Papal ban - so much for arms control in Dark Ages.

In the end, no really effective means to stop the crossbow was devised. Heavier and heavier armor became the rule until the knight who was unhorsed was a dead man. The advent of gunpowder ended the armored knight but the crossbow had already put him in a fatal position. It was gunpowder which replaced the crossbow, largely because its killing power was so much greater.

* * *

The third innovation was on which would also fall in the category of a "wonder weapon" which was introduced at a critical time in a war to turn the tide of battle. In April, 673, the Arabs laid

siege to Constantinople. Up to that time, the Arabs had not lost a major campaign since they burst onto the world scene less than a century before. They seized control of the seas from the Romans - the first peoples to do so since the Vandals - and had surrounded the capital on all sides: only the Golden Horn remained in Roman hands. From the Golden Horn, the Emperor, Constantine IV (669-685) sailed out with the Roman fleet and laid waste to the superior numbers of the Arab fleet in the Sea of Marmora. The means by which this was done was known as "Greek Fire." Greek Fire turned the tide at Constantinople, dealing the Arabs their first major defeat and ending Moslem threats to the Balkans for almost a thousand years. It continued to be a major weapon in the Roman arsenal, the formula being one of the most closely guarded secrets of the time. Based on its effects, however, a fair guess is that it was composed of sulphur, naphtha and quicklime - the exact formula having been lost before the fall of the Empire to the Turks. It was fired under pressure from hoses, combined with water as it was fired, and ignited by contact with water. Since water set it going, another means was required to quench it. This requirement meant it was particularly formidable for naval engagements. It was said that sand, vinegar and even urine could be used to extinguish Greek Fire, but the ability to have on hand large quantities of such substances was limited.

Since the formula was lost, the history of this "ultimate weapon" encompassed only one period - the Dark Ages. Pragmatically, technology would have caught up with Greek Fire even had the formula not been lost. There is no indication of "maximum effective range" for Greek Fire, but since naval tactics of the time required closing to ram or board, it need not have had too great a range. The advent of naval gunnery really did not occur until after the close of the Dark Ages. Nonetheless, that development ensured that such weapons as Greek Fire would be obsolete as, once cannons achieved a respectable range, enemy ships could lay out of range of such weapons as Greek Fire, which required hydraulic pressure, and batter the other ship into submission. In effect, the range of the cannon developed later would have made Greek Fire as obsolete as fore- and after-castles.

While the Dark Ages, in general, merited their name in the truest sense, that did not mean that the minds of men were totally stagnant, particularly when it came to the fine art of killing other men, as these three developments attest.

A quick run-down of important names to drop when being erudite (or mildly so) about the Dark Ages. The dates are the reign dates for the kings and princes; for those few non-Royal types, the dates are birth and death dates.

500-700

Theodoric (493-526) - Established Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy; the greatest of the Ostrogothic kings.

Justinian (527-565) - Flavius Petrus Sabiatus Justinianus, for those interested in full names; last great Latin Roman Emperor; embarked on program of reconquest which, while restoring Roman prestige, over-extended the Empire and ensured that the Empire would thereafter be Greek-oriented.

Belisarius (505-565) - One of the great generals of history; Justinian's war-horse, brought out to win wars against the Persians, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Avars and even the Nike revolt, being then forcibly retired after each victory and, on occasion, imprisoned; loyal to Justinian, which loyalty was rarely returned.

Clovis (481-511) - Grandson of Meroveus (whence, Merovingian); greatest Merovingian king; united Gaul under Salian Franks.

Heraclius (610-641) - First great Greek-speaking Roman Emperor; destroyed power of Sassanid (Neo-Persian) Empire; created theme system instead of provinces; last years marred by defeat at the hands of expanding Arabs; one of most underrated generals in history, thanks largely to Gibbon.

700-800

Tarik ibn Ziyad - Moslem leader, invaded Spain; his landing (Gebel el Tarik) by the Pillars of Hercules left the corrupted name of Gibraltar; destroyed Visigothic Kingdom at Guadalete (711).

Offa (757-769) King of Mercia; first king to control all of England.

Charles Martel (711-741) - Mayor of the Palace (Major Domo) of Austrasia; effective ruler of Franks; defeated Abd er-Rahman at Tours.

Pepin III (741-768) - Son of Charles Martel; King of Franks in 751; defeated Lombards.

Charles the Great (Charlemagne) (768-814) King of Franks; soi-disant Emperor of the Romans; conquered modern Germany, Northern Italy; effective ruler of Italy; discussed marriage with Irene (q.v.) to re-unite Empire.

Leo III (The Isaurian) (717-741) - Roman Emperor; broke Arab siege of Constantinople; first iconoclastic Emperor.

Irene (797-802) - Wife of Leo IV; mother of Constantine VI; deposed and blinded her son to become first female Emperor; her own deposition ended plans for marriage with Charlemagne as her successor, Nicephorus, was unable to go through with the marriage plans; iconodule (icon worshipper); canonized.

Al-Walid (705-715) - Omayyad Caliph under whom Omayyads reached greatest power.

Harun al-Rashid (786-809) - Abbasid Caliph under whom Abbassids reached greatest power; caliph of 1001 nights.

800-900

Alfred (the Great) (871-899) - First great king of Wessex; brought England under control of Wessex; built first English fleet.

Krum (808-814) - First Bulgar Tsar to effectively defeat Romans; first barbarian to kill an Emperor (Nicephorus) since Adrianople; had Nicephorus' skull silver plated to use as a drinking cup.

Rollo (c. 896 - ?) - Viking invader into Northern France; received Duchy of Normandy as price of peace (911).

Oleg (c. 880-912) - United Varangian (Viking) states in Russia; made Kievan state major power in Russia.

Leo VI (the Wise) (886-912) - Roman Emperor; author of Tactica, a major tactical work of the period.

900-1000

Harold Bluetooth (940-985) - United Denmark.

Sweyn Forkbeard (985-1014) - Son of Harold Bluetooth; conquered Norway.

Aethelred the Redeless (978-1016) King of England; defeated and killed by Sweyn and his son, Knut; "Redeless" actually means "without counsel", not "unready."

Hugh Capet (987-996) - Succeeded Louis IV, last Carolingian king; founded Capetian dynasty.

Otto I (the Great) (936-973) - Holy Roman Emperor; made Holy Roman Empire a viable power.

Vladimir (the Saint) (978-1015) - Varangian king; sent Varangian Company to Constantinople to found Varangian Guard; first Varangian king to be baptised.

Basil II (Bulgaroctonus) (976-1025) - Roman Emperor; destroyed Bulgarian Empire; greatest soldier-Emperor since Heraclius; under him, Roman Empire reached its apex - the true decline began after his reign.

Brian Boru (976-1014) - Irish High King (1002); cTeared Ireland of Danes.

1000-1100

Knut (1016-1035) - Danish King; gained half of England from Edmond Ireonside; elected King of England by Witan (Anglo-Saxon parliament); famous for ordering the tides to stop advancing.

Edward (the Confessor) (1042-1066) - King of England; regained throne, due to influence of Godwine, Earl of Wessex, upon expulsion of Danes; built Westminster Abbey.

Harold Godwinson (1066) - Earl of Wessex; King of England on death of Edward; defeated Harold Hardrada at Stamford Bridge; lost to William of Normandy at Hastings.

William I (the Conqueror) (1066-1071) Duke of Normandy; King of England (1066) known to his enemies as "William the Bastard" for obvious reasons.

Malcolm II Canmore (1005-1034) - United Scotland.

Robert (Guiscard) de Hauteville (1059 - 1085) - Norman ruler of Southern Italy and, through his brother and vassal, Roger, Sicily; defeated Romans at Durrazzo; defeated Pope at Cannae; dominated all of Italy.

Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118) - Roman Emperor; one of the few able ones after Basil II, despite defeats by Normans; his call for mercenaries against Turks led to First Crusade.

Alp Arslan (1063-1072) - Seljuk Sultan; his defeat of Romans at Manzikert sealed fate of Anatolia and ensured future Turkish expansion.

1100-1200

Philip II Augustus (1180-1223) - King of France; contemporary of Richard I of England; fought with Henry II of England and Richard I, except for alliance during Third Crusade.

Henry II (1154-1189) - King of England; ruled more territory than any English monarch prior to colonialism; founded Plantaganet dynasty; father of Richard I and John.

Richard I (Coeur de Lion) (1189-1199) - King of England; epitome of chivalric king; led Third Crusade; good soldier, poor monarch since he ignored his kingdom in favor of warring.

Frederick I (Barbarossa) (1152-1190) - Holy Roman Emperor; greatest of Hohenstaufens; drowned while going to Third Crusade.

Salah-al-din Yusuf ibn-Ayyub (Saladin) (1169-1193) - Founded Ayyubid dynasty; had regular army of Turkish slaves (Mamelukes); called for Holy War (jihad) against Crusader States; retook Jerusalem; prompted Third Crusade.

Temujin (Genghis Khan) (1190-1227) - Great Mongol Khan; one of great generals of history.

Campaign Analysis ②

NORTH AFRICA 1940-42 THE BRITISH ARMY
A BRITISH SOLDIER COMMENTS

By. LTC Henry A. Radice

Introduction

Having read Mr. Nofi's exposition on the Italian Army and accepted it as an accurate portrayal, I was looking forward to his second feature on my own Army. Alas, I have been very disappointed. The best I can say is that it is like the "Curate's egg - Good in parts." I do not know anything about Mr. Nofi, what reading he has done, or what authorities he used in writing this article. Regretably, while he is, in the main, sound on weapons and material factors, and while he makes some good points in his historical, organizational and doctrinal section, he goes sadly astray at times. For instance, his examples are badly chosen and are "sitting ducks" for an opponent, as I shall show later. His final section is almost complete nonsense and in places mischievous nonsense. I am afraid that Mr. Nofi has fallen into the same faults as those he condemns in others. As is the case with many Americans, he does not understand the British Commonwealth and Empire, nor the relationship between its members. His views are very old fashioned, even pre-Crimean War, and put me in mind of an American friend, whom I was showing over one of the London Services clubs. When we came to a portrait of King George III, he paused and said "Do you know there are people in my country who believe that guy still rules England."

Before dealing with his article in detail, I had better give readers a brief note of my credentials.

I am and have been a British professional soldier for 30 years, joining up as a Private (enlisted man) in 1940. I am not a scion of the nobility, nor do I belong to what is often called a fashionable Regiment. I belong to the backbone of the British Army, a steady county Regiment (The Glosters) which is

proud of the fact that it has no fancy titles but will not bow the knee, in its fighting record, to any unit in the British or any other Army for that matter. We are the only British Regiment to have the honour of being awarded the US Presidential Citation, an honour which we are proud to share with at least one other Dominion Regiment. I served mainly in the Far East in World War II, but since then have been in practically every theatre where British Troops have been engaged. I do therefore have personal and practical knowledge of the weapons, organisation systems and men of whom Mr. Nofi writes. I am also a keen but amateur historian. I shall comment upon Mr. Nofi's article taking each section separately in the same order as it appeared.

Material Factors

I do not quarrel seriously with this section, which is generally accurate and has the mark of painstaking research. One general reason for our inferiority in some weapons and in organisation was the lack of money for research and attention devoted to Defence between the wars. Tank development was practically at a stand-still for example. When rearmament came, followed by the loss of almost all our heavy equipment at Dunkirk, it was a choice of producing either the weapons then in existence or having no weapons at all. In extremis "half a loaf is better than no bread," so it took two to three years to produce improved types. In the case of tanks, we were not really on terms until the war ended.

Small Arms

As Mr. Nofi says, we had a very good rifle. There was, however, never a No. 14 rifle in use. The one to which he refers and illustrates is the No 4. This may be a printing error or he may have been confused by the P.14, which was issued to the Home Guard in 1940, and often mistakenly called the Ross Rifle. The No 4. was slightly inferior to the Mark III, but it was easier to manufacture and so gradually replaced it. The British Army had no automatic or even self-loading rifle through the war. With the Vickers medium machine gun (MMG) he only includes the direct fire range. Using the dial sight and special ammunition this gun could fire up to 4,000 yards and be laid on fixed lines at night. It remained in service until a few years ago. It was a most reliable accurate and battleworthy weapon. The sten submachine gun, as a weapon, was cheap and nasty. It was produced in a hurry by small workshops to meet the urgent need for such a weapon, after Dunkirk. It was effective for what it was and remained in service for many years

in improved models. It was deliberately designed to use 9 mm ammunition, the same as the German Schmeisser. It did not compare, however, with the US Thompson submachinegun. I am not sure what Mr. Nofi is getting at over his criticism of three machine guns. He mentions only two, the Vickers MMG and Bren LMG. We had, of course, to use a .300 Browning on the American tanks, which we bought. We used the Besa in our own tanks, whose calibre was 7.92 mm.

Tanks

The data on tanks is generally correct and I only disagree in a few instances over weight, speed, penetration and thickness of armour figures. It is not worth going into these in detail. A few general points will suffice.

- a. The Valentine was a notoriously slow tank and I believe the speed is a little high.
- b. I believe the penetration figures for the Grant and Sherman are optimistic.

Anti-Tank

- a. In the anti-tank field the penetration figures for the 25 pr are definitely too high, 63 mm at 500 m and 54 at 1000 are correct.
- b. The penetration figures for some of the German A/tk guns are on the high side.

The comments in several places about our failure to use the 3.7 in AA as an A/tk weapon are somewhat misleading. Attempts were made; in April 1942 about 60 were so deployed. The chief drawback is an obvious one when one looks at its weight and size i.e. 10 tons, twice as heavy as the 88 mm. In addition, although a big gun, the 88 was designed to fire low angle, was more manoeuvrable and was easily adaptable to a low mounting, which the 3.7 was not. The 3.7 sight was unsuitable for A/tk work. Altogether the inadequate sight, its size, height, weight and consequent lack of mobility coupled with the huge clouds of dust it kicked up on discharge made it a most unwelcome addition to any defended position. While possibly greater efforts to adapt it might have been made, it is incorrect to suggest that this failure was due to social and psychological reasons. Incidentally there were not very many 3.7 in. guns which could be spared from their primary role of AA defence in those days.

Historical, Organisational & Doctrinal Factors

There is not the space here to enter into a long discussion on the merits or otherwise of British Military Historians, as with all others there are good and

bad. I would suggest that Mr. Nofi studies Fortescue's History of the British Army for a balanced account up to and including the Crimean War. For later periods the plain prose of the official histories, when read carefully, shows up our shortcomings to the perceptive reader as well as any of the "Why we lost Singapore" or "The Donkeys" type.

The remarks concerning the First Western Desert Offensive during the Winter of 1940-41 are highly misleading. Let us first examine the number of troops produced by Britain, Australia and India respectively. Three divisions were used, although never more than two at any one time, these were 7th Armd Div (British), 4th Indian Div and 6th Australian Div. The only troops to fight from start to finish of the campaign were 7th Armd Div and 7 RTR in 1 (Infantry) tanks, all British; 6th Australian Div was completely Australian but it did not come into the first battle (Sidi Barrani) of the campaign; from then onwards, supported by 7 RTR, it took the lion's share of the campaign until Beda Fomm where the brunt fell on 7 Armd Div. 4 Ind Div, after the battle at Sidi Barrani, moved to East Africa where it suffered the major casualties referred to by Mr. Nofi. At Keren for example 4 and 5 Ind Divs suffered about 3,000 casualties.

The force used in the battle of Sidi Barrani consisted of:

- 7 Armd Div (British)
- 4 Ind Div (3 British, 6 Ind Bns, all gunners British, Sappers and other supporting and administrative elements Indian)
- 16 Bde (British) attached to 4 Ind Div
- Selby Force (the Mersa Matruh Garrison) (British)
- 7 RTR (British)

The Bdes used by 4 Ind Div in the assault were 5 and 11 Indian and 16 British i.e. five British to four Indian bns, 7 Ind Bde being in reserve. Since the two Ind Bde's attacks on Nibelwa Camp and the Tummar Camps were led by their British Bns, it is fair to assume that the British troops' share of the 624 total casualties was comparable to the Indians. In the Bardia battle, 6 Aus Div suffered 456 casualties and at Tobruk 355. It is readily apparent from both the Despatches and Official History that the figure of 1928 covers all casualties from all the forces involved in the campaign. If one adds the three totals mentioned above together one is left with 493 unaccounted for. This will be largely British.

A broad Division in round figures would therefore be 800 British, 800 Australian

and 300 Indian, in other words 40% British, 40% Australian and 20% Indian, not quite the picture Mr. Nofi paints. The short answer to Mr. Nofi's rhetorical question is therefore no.

I can find no reference in the Official History of any mention of the loss of six British Officers to 600 Italians. The nearest approach is in the action of Bullo Erilla where as an example of the fierce fighting it is mentioned that 8 white officers and NCO's were casualties in the 2nd Gold Coast Bn. To those who know the organisation of these units, it represents a very high percentage of the few white officers and NCOs in the African Bns. Further study of this campaign reveals plenty of examples of total casualties including a few of Ethiopian Patriot Forces. The remark that our African troops were given no credit for their efforts is an unworthy one. There are plenty of references to disprove this statement in the campaign literature.

While I agree that the bulk of pre-war British Officers did not study the art of war as closely as their German contemporaries, any British Officer is only too well aware of the disasters which we usually incur, through lack of national preparation. Somewhat light heartedly, it is always said that one should not be "at the top of the tree" at the outbreak of war and that one should always try to be in the second not the first expedition.

Turning to our organisation, I support Mr. Nofi that there is good ground for criticism, especially over the armoured division. There is much good sense in his criticism of organisation and tactical methods but again he spoils it by exaggeration. Most higher commanders were not ex-cavalrymen (he is one or two wars out in this statement), they were infantrymen. The comments on the Infantry Division are sound but the splitting up into groups was mainly a matter of necessity, due to lack of troops, not tactical intention. As soon as the numbers available were adequate and old habits had died, albeit hardly, under Montgomery's firm hand; divisions fought as such. Mr. Nofi's Infantry Battalion organizations are a little inaccurate. During the Second World War there were two main ones. Each had the same number of rifle coys and platoons, the difference was in the supporting weapons. Up to 1942 or so, the Bn had a HQ coy of six pls - Signals, Anti-aircraft, Mortar, Carrier and MT, which included all the administrative staff. In 1942 this was replaced by a Support (Sp) coy of 3 in. Mortar, Anti-Tank, Assault Pioneer and Carrier pls, and a HQ coy of Bn HQ, Signals, MT and administrative

elements. There were some theatre differences but this was the main outline. Again in 1942 the Motor Bn was reorganised into three Motor coys and an A/tk coy of 18 A/tk guns, plus a HQ coy, but no Sp coy.

Every soldier "worth his salt" thinks that all HQ superior to his own are too big, staffed by incompetent idiots and exist solely to frustrate him. You will not therefore find me drawing a very large sword in defence of the Middle East HQ. However, as is so often the case, Mr. Nofi makes a sweeping general criticism with little supporting data. I think it is necessary to put things into perspective. In peace time there were three separate Army Commands in the Area: Egypt, Sudan, Palestine and Trans-jordan. East Africa was separate. When war seemed imminent it was obviously necessary for one man to control all or almost all of the operations in the area and Wavell was therefore appointed in June 1939, before the outbreak of war. The fall of France had catastrophic results in the Middle East, as elsewhere. It removed the Theatre Strategic Reserve (three French Divisions) and turned the friendly northern flank of Palestine into first a doubtful neutral and later an active enemy. It allowed all Italian forces to concentrate against the British. With our slender resources, control of operations, troops, etc. had to be at the highest level and there was nothing other than GHQ Middle East to do it. As the war spread, each new crisis had to be met and "the butter spread thinner," despite help from India, South Africa, the East African Colonies and various "Free" forces. Despite everything, we did survive and when the crisis passed, measures were taken to set up a better command structure. East Africa reverted to Independent status, a new Persia-Iraq command was established in 1942. The creation of the 8th, 9th and 10th Armies also made for greater efficiency. There is no doubt, however, that in 1942 the conduct of operations in the Western Desert suffered on account of Auchinleck being distracted by his other responsibilities. By now Churchill, the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff Committee were able to devote time to this problem. In addition, despite the spread of the war to the Far East, our resources were greater. To sum up, therefore, there is substance in the criticism but there were reasons, going back as always to our national unpreparedness for war.

There is much substance in the criticism of our tactics. However Montgomery's strictures on our predilection for Jock Columns, extravagant dispersion and scattering of "boxes" around the desert hardly gives the picture of World War I

or Crimean tactics. If we must search for an example in the past, the Boer War would be more appropriate!! I do go along, however, with the general criticism of our armoured tactics

Social and Psychological Factors

It is in this section that Mr. Nofi really goes "off the rails." It is such nonsense that it is impossible to refute in its entirety without going into such detail that would make these comments' length even more inordinate than they are. I will therefore confine myself to a few main points.

First the class barrier to promotion. It is interesting to note that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff for most of World War I was Fm Sir William Robertson, who enlisted in a Hussar Regiment as a trooper (private); his son also became a general. The example of "Wavell's Offensives" is ridiculous. Wavell was the Theatre Commander, Wilson commanded all troops in Egypt and O'Connor the Western Desert Force, later 13 Corps i.e. a Corp Commander. Wavell as the senior commander initiated the policy, gave general directions, allotted resources and approved plans. Wilson allotted the troops in detail, provided the support and gave more detail to the plan while O'Connor commanded the divisions in the field and made the detailed battle plan. If the offensive had been a failure, it would have been Wavell's head, not O'Connor's which rolled, as indeed it did later. The example is on a level with suggesting that credit for the "break out" from the Normandy beachhead should go to Collins (VII Corps Commander) and not to Bradley and Patton. It reminds me of the story of old Fm Von Hindenburg, who when asked if he really won the battles of Tannenburg and Masurian Lakes, replied, "I don't know if I won them but I know very well who would have lost them." No, Mr. Nofi, this suggestion is nonsense.

I find it difficult to remain dispassionate when dealing with the gratuitous insult to both the British Crown and Army on the subject of the Victoria Cross Awards. I only hope it is a case of ignorance, rather than premeditation. The Victoria Cross is the highest British award for which the only criterion is "most conspicuous bravery or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy." Neither "religious, caste, colour, birth, rank, long service, wounds nor any other circumstances or condition whatsoever save the merit of conspicuous bravery" entitle a man to this award. In the 116 years since it was instituted by Queen Victoria, who incidentally chose the simple inscription "For Valour" personally, it has

been won about 1350 times, excluding the award to the American Unknown Warrior, 633 times in World War I and 182 in World War II. Each award has to be supported by "such description, conclusive proof as far as circumstances will allow and attestation of the act." Each award is conferred personally by the Sovereign. There is an authentic case in World War II of King George VI upgrading a gallantry decoration to a Warrant Officer to the VC. The RTR has gained three VC's, one in World War I (by an attached officer), two in World War II, admittedly all by officers, but this hardly justifies the description of a large number. This insinuation of class prejudice can be disproved most simply by another example, the 2/5 Roay Gurkha Rifles won three VC's in World War II, a very rare occurrence in a single bn; all the recipients were Gurkha soldiers, not one a British officer.

To suggest that the average British soldier was inspired by thoughts of Empire, Country or even Democracy is just "so much eyewash." He fought maybe for his Regiment, etc., certainly for his family but generally because it was just a job which had to be done. It is incorrect to say that Commonwealth officers did not reach high rank. Commonwealth officers invariably commanded all their own formations (divisions, brigades, corps). Two, Smuts (South Africa) and Blamey (Australia) became Field Marshalls. Blamey became Wavell's Deputy, McNaughten commanded the 2nd Canadian Army in France and Germany which was composed of British, Canadian and sometimes Polish troops. Freyburg commanded all forces in Crete and became a corps commander, first of a British and later the NZ corps. First Morshead (Australian) and later Klopper (South African) commanded all troops in Tobruk. Laverack (Australian) originally commander of 7 Australian Div, commanded all troops in Cyrenaica during Rommel's first (1941) offensive after Neame and O'Connor had been captured. In Syria he succeeded Blamey in command of 1 Australian Corps which contained 6 Br Div and Free French troops. I know many British officers of humble social origins who became Lt. Cols.

To correct adequately Mr. Nofi's many misconceptions on the subject of Indian troops would require an article in itself. The Indian Army was the only all-volunteer force to fight in the War and became, at two million strong, the largest volunteer army in history. It fought as professional soldiers do for the army to which they belong. The majority of Indians were simple people and were ready to fight for simple things. The fact that the Indian and British governments had enemies was good enough for them, they needed no other reason. A little more of this simplicity would not be amiss today.

The Indian Army at that time was officered in two ways, by a small number of British officers, about 12 to 15 per major unit, the rest were Indians holding a Viceroy's commission. In the 1920 period a start was made on Indianization or the production of Indian King's Commissioned Officers. A trickle began to train in the English military schools and as years went by it increased until it became a flood during the Second World War. It is a matter of simple military progression that if we start with a few 18 year old cadets in the 1920's there will only be a few Lt Cols by 1940. At the end of the war the most able of these were commanding brigades. It was not discrimination; it was lack of experience and education that kept the numbers down. I served with and knew many Indian officers, both in units and on the staff of higher rank than mine. The practice of brigading one British bn with two Indian ones had its origin in the Mutiny, but by 1940 it was largely a matter of habit. This practice fell into disuse during the War. For example, in 1943, out of 17 Field Force Indian Brigades in Indian and Assam, 10 were composed entirely of Indian Bns. I will not dwell on the Muslim, Hindu and caste system, together with its religious, feeding, cooking etc problems, which one must understand before charges of discrimination can be made with any degree of authority. Discrimination is also a two way process. Apart from Gurkhas, it is true that no Indians were allowed in British Canteens. I believe Mr. Nofi must have "his tongue in his cheek" when he suggests that a British defeat and, implicitly and American one, might have been to India's advantage.

Finally, having been pretty hard on Mr. Nofi in much of this article, may I say that I agree entirely with his conclusions. I write not so much in a spirit of offended pride or "amour propre," the matter of the VC excepted, but to correct mistakes and in the hope that Mr. Nofi and all readers will understand that everything connected with warfare and armies is not as simple as appears at first sight. There are usually reasons for everything, often good, sometimes bad and wide generalisations can be both misleading and positively dangerous.

Parachuting in Miniatures

3

BY Jay Richardson

I Introduction

The purpose of this article is to give miniature players the basis for reconstructing small scale parachute attacks.

The rules and guidelines I present in this article are the ones I use in my battles, and I consider them quite satisfactory, although some may wish to go beyond them.

II The Figures

For your parachute force, you will need mainly troops with a few heavy weapons: machine guns, bazookas and such. You will not have vehicles and artillery weapons dropping down along with your troops unless you are fighting a very modern wargame.

It is very hard to find a good selection of paratroopers. Usually there is only one nationality available in each different scale. This fact, however, is no particular reason to worry. Take H0 scale, for example: American paratroopers are the only ones available. When you paint them, merely given them gray helmets and you have a neat British force. Then, if you paint the uniforms gray, you end up with a German force. This same system may be applied to almost any scale.

As for the supporting heavy weapons, the ones included in the H0 box should be sufficient, but in other scales, it may be hard to obtain suitable weapons.

III Conducting the Parachute Drop

The zone in which the paratroopers and their weapons may land is very decidedly elongated in the direction of the flight of the transporting aircraft. I find it useful to use a rectangular area to represent the drop zone. The size of this rectangular area is dependent upon the size of the parachute force. It should be large enough to hold the force more or less in a dispersed manner.

I use the following procedure to simulate the actual parachuting of the troops: first the commander of the paratroopers positions the rectangle guide strips anywhere on the battlefield he wishes. Details of construction will be given later. After the rectangle has been positioned, the defending commander may move it an agreed upon number of inches in any direction, as long as it remains oriented in the same direction as the paratroop commander originally laid it. This action by the defending commander is to allow for the effect of wind and other variable factors. Finally, the paratroop force is positioned inside the rectangular area.

Before going into the details of positioning the force inside the rectangle, I will show how this rectangular area is determined. I use two strips of two-

inch wide paper, one 36" long, the other 18" long. These are glued at right angles to each other and marked off at two inch intervals. Each interval is then marked to represent a certain playing card. The cards that match up with these intervals are then placed face down in two piles, one for each strip of paper. To parachute your force into this rectangle, you draw a card from each pile and then cross-index from the strips of paper out into the area of the rectangle and find the actual landing point. Then return the cards to their respective piles. This process is repeated for each man and heavy weapon. Note that heavy weapons and their crews do not draw their cards as a whole: each crewman and weapon has a separate draw.

IV After the Drop

Once it has landed, several delays are imposed on the attacking parachute force. First, the turn that they land they may do nothing -- not even shoot. They would be too busy trying to get down in one piece. Likewise, the turn after they land they may do nothing as they would supposedly be too busy shucking their 'chutes and trying to get organized. After these two delays, the force may act as normal. The number of delay turns may be varied.

V The Game Situation

There are basically two main types of game situations possible with a parachute attack. You may either have a direct assault where the enemy force is originally set up on the battle field at the start, or you may have a deep assault where you land on the battlefield practically unopposed and, after a certain number of moves, the enemy "reaction" force arrives to give battle. For a direct assault to succeed, the paratroopers must either have a very great numerical superiority or have friendly ground troops attacking simultaneously from another direction.

The deep assault attack is, however, an entirely different matter. The way you work this is as follows: the enemy force will come onto the battlefield on a certain side, a given number of turns after the paratroopers land. If they delay one turn longer than necessary, they have the option of entering on either of the two sides adjacent to the originally specified side and if they delay two turns longer than necessary, they may come onto the board anywhere they wish. The ground force should generally enter as a whole, not some on one side and some on the other.

These two basic game situations may be elaborated to almost any extent desired.

VI Conclusion

I strongly urge you to try a parachute attack battle, in either of its two forms. It makes for a fascinating battle!

References

Strategy & Tactics #20 - "The Luftwaffe Land Army" - a clear analysis of the parachutists. Excellent!

Mechanix Illustrated, Oct. 1940 - "Secrets of the Nazi Parachute Army" - analysis of the German attack methods.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST and LIFE AND DEATH OF THE LUFTWAFFE - both are excellent sources of information, available from Ballantine Books.

The Shape of Things to Come

As S&T undergoes a new editorial policy, there will be some direct residual benefits to the SUPPLEMENT. With emphasis being placed on game-related articles in S&T, this will mean a greater diversion of non-game related articles to the SUPPLEMENT. This will produce the effect of up-grading even further the articles in the SUPPLEMENT by reason of providing longer articles. There are already several which have been turned over to us which had heretofore been awaiting space for publication in S&T. These will be spaced out over the next several issues as they each are of some length and we would prefer to keep away from a three-article issue, such as this. Therefore, you should anticipate seeing a lead article of some length as well as the usual shorter ones. How long this availability of longer articles will keep up is, of course, subject to the needs of S&T since, as is often mentioned, the SUPPLEMENT's function is to provide a space for articles which cannot be put in S&T for reasons of space and the like.

We have available, needing only typing and the decision when to use them, articles on the Zulu War, the Rising of the '45, Campaign Analysis on the Battle of Britain, the World War I Zeppelin campaign, the events in England of 1066, the Nez Perce Indian War and several others, all of which fall into the major article category. So, we shall see what transpires.

As for TRAGEDY & TACTIX, that oft-mentioned, unpublished parody of war and war games, it sits, partly completed, with some nice stuff. Someday, when we have a chance, that will appear. In the interim, if you have any material in the vein of parody or satire, send it in, and we'll see what can be done.

Last Minute Announcement

This Is the Last Issue of the S&T Supplement

It's not as bad as it sounds, in fact, it's very good. Let us explain. Both GAME DESIGN and the S&T Supplement were started as stop-gap measures. Neither was intended to be permanent, at least not in their present crude form. We eventually hoped to upgrade both to a level of quality similar to S&T itself. With this in mind we did a little computing and found that we could upgrade now if we combine Game Design and the S&T Supplement into one magazine. This we have done, or will do come February 1972. In February we will publish the first issue of MOVES. Each issue of MOVES will contain about one-third to two-thirds "Game Design" material with the remainder being "S&T Supplement" type material. MOVES will be a 32 page, bi-monthly magazine of much the same quality as S&T. MOVES will sell for \$2.00 the copy. Subscriptions will be \$7.00 for one year (six issues), \$12.00 for two years (12 issues), and \$16.00 for three years (18 issues). Now you may not want to receive MOVES. Give us a chance, though. Our computer will shortly combine the subscription lists for Game Design and the S&T Supplement. For each issue you have left in your subscription to either Game Design or the S&T Supplement you will receive credit for $\frac{1}{2}$ an issue of MOVES. If your new subscription to MOVES ends up with $\frac{1}{2}$ an issue credit we will round it off in your favor. In other words, if you had four issues left in your Game Design subscription and three in your S&T SUPPLEMENT subscription this would give you $3\frac{1}{2}$ issues of MOVES. We would round this upwards to four issues. If you like MOVES, consider the first issue you receive as the first issue of your new subscription to MOVES. If, by some fluke, you don't like MOVES, keep the first issue (consider it free) and return your mailing label for a full refund. We expect you'll like MOVES. We don't expect we'll have to give out too many refunds.

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