

World War 2 (British) Bibliography

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Historical Maps of World War II Europe – Edited by Michael Swift & Michael Sharpe **
Villers-Bocage (Through The Lens of the German War Photographer) – Daniel Taylor *****
A Fine Night For Tanks – The Road To Falaise – Ken Tout *****
The Bloody Battle For Tilly – Ken Tout ***
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Tanks Advance! – Normandy to the Netherlands – Ken Tout ***
To Hell With Tanks! – Ken Tout ***
The Guards Armoured Division – G L Verney **
Bloody Bremen – Charles Whiting **
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The Armoured Micks, 1941-1945 – Regimental HQ, Irish Guards *****
The Battle of the Reichswald – ? ***

World War 2 (British) Bibliography

Pegasus Bridge – Stephen E Ambrose ***

An excellent account from the British viewpoint of the battle taken from interviews with many of the participants. Lots of wargames ideas here, though the German side of the story leaves a lot to be desired – many of the units described are completely wrong and Ambrose places far too much reliance on the account of Hans von Luck, who was nowhere near Pegasus Bridge and had nothing whatsoever to do with the battle (elements of his regiment were there, but they were under the command of a different kampgruppe). Nevertheless, there is plenty of information for the scenario writer. A useful book.

Breaking the Panzers – The Bloody Battle For Rauray, Normandy, 1 July 1944 – Kevin Baverstock *****

Absolutely the best book to be written about a single British battalion's battle (in this case the 1st Tyneside Scottish). This book is based largely on the accounts of dozens of British participants and tells the story of a desperate, and largely forgotten, battle to stop II SS Panzer Corps from defeating Operation Epsom. The quality is superb, with colour used throughout and aerial recce photos used as maps, overlaid with symbols indicating troop positions. Orders of battle are detailed for the British – included a wealth of detail on battalion organisation. The German information is less detailed, though the units are accurately designated. Put simply, this book tells you how a British battalion fought – buy it now! Highly recommended.

Tank Tracks – 9th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment At War 1940-45 – Peter Beale *****

Probably the best armoured regiment history to be published to date (9RTR was a Churchill regiment in NW Europe). Plenty of personal accounts and some pretty good maps give plenty of scenario-fodder. Recommended.

Bataille de Caen – Jean-Pierre Benamou *****

A very large volume of photographs from the various battles fought around Caen. Captioned in French, but not too challenging, even for my 'Schoolboy French'! Plenty of prime source material for painting those tanks and building scenery. Recommended.

Battalion – A British Infantry Unit's Actions From El Alamein To VE-Day – Alistair Borthwick *****

Previously published just after the war as 'Sans Peur', this is the history of 5th Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders – part of 51st (Highland) Division. This book covers the battalion's operations in the greatest of detail and is packed with prime source material and good scenario-fodder. As with many histories, it does however, lack good maps, though as it was originally published before German accounts appeared, is forgiven in not having much detail on the opposing forces. Recommended.

Armoured Guardsmen – Robert Boscawen ***

One of the better memoirs of an armoured troop commander (of the Coldstream Guards). Especially interesting from a tank-nut's point of view, as Boscawen was instrumental in the introduction of 'Tulips' (Typhoon rockets fitted to Sherman turrets) in 1945. However, his style seems rather impersonal and it's harder to identify with him than with Tout's or Hills' accounts. There is some pretty good scenario fodder in here, though the book suffers from a lack of maps. A useful book.

The British Soldier – From D-Day to VE-Day (Vols 1 & 2) – Jean Bouchery *****

An absolute must-buy for any student of the British Army in NW Europe. The book does have the odd mistake (as most of them do!), but this is by far the best one-shop-stop for British Army information. The first volume concentrates mainly on uniforms, but the second volume is the real gem, with tables of organisation and vehicle markings for absolutely everything – armoured, infantry and airborne divisions, commando units, independent armoured brigades, recce and armoured car regiments and even beach groups, chaplains, the NAAFI, medical services and much more. There are also technical specifications and photos of smallarms, artillery pieces, tanks and other vehicles (including gliders, bulldozers, cranes and

steam trains!). Volume 2 is therefore highly recommended. If you don't fancy painting every cap badge and shoulder title in 15mm, then you can probably live without Volume 1.

The Churchill Tank – Peter Chamberlain & Chris Ellis **

A small, functional study of the technical aspects of the Churchill series of infantry tanks and Churchill-derived 'Funnies'. If it's organisations, markings and battle histories you're after, then you won't find it here, I'm afraid! Most of the photos are factory shots, so not much use for modelling tanks 'in the field'. Not recommended.

The Black Bull – From Normandy to the Baltic with the 11th Armoured Division – Patrick Delaforce ****

The definitive history of 11th Armoured Division in NW Europe – by a man who was there with them (as an artillery FOO). Plenty of personal memoirs and scenario fodder, though as with all Delaforce books, it suffers from very few maps and absolutely no study of the opposing forces. However, there is still a wealth of information here and is recommended.

Churchill's Desert Rats – From Normandy to Berlin with the 7th Armoured Division – Patrick Delaforce ****

The definitive history of 7th Armoured Division in NW Europe, who fought at Villers-Bocage and Operation Goodwood, among other places. Plenty of personal memoirs and scenario fodder, though as with all Delaforce books, it suffers from very few maps and absolutely no study of the opposing forces. However, there is still a wealth of information here and is recommended.

Churchill's Desert Rats 2 – North Africa, Italy and Burma with the 7th Armoured Division – Patrick Delaforce ****

Despite being the sequel, this is actually a precursor to the original book, in that it looks back before Normandy, to the North African campaign and then follows the histories of the three brigades of the division as they were sent variously to Italy and Burma. Recommended, though as with other Delaforce books, it does suffer from a lack of good maps and almost no information at all on the opposing forces.

Churchill's Secret Weapons – Patrick Delaforce ***

A study of 'Hobart's Funnies' – also known as 79th Armoured Division – which were instrumental in the success of the Normandy Landings, as well as the subsequent breakout and most offensive operations right up to the end of the war. A useful book. See also 'The Funnies' by Futen.

Fighting Wessex Wyverns – From Normandy to Bremerhaven with the 43rd Division – Patrick Delaforce ****

The definitive history of 43rd (Wessex) Division in NW Europe, which was instrumental in Operation Epsom, the crossing of the Seine and Operation Market-Garden. Plenty of personal memoirs and scenario fodder, though as with all Delaforce books, it suffers from very few maps and absolutely no study of the opposing forces. However, there is still a wealth of information here and is recommended.

Marching To the Sound Of Gunfire – Patrick Delaforce **

A book of anecdotes by British and Canadian soldiers in NW Europe. While an interesting read, there is no real scenario fodder here and if you already have Delaforce's unit histories, there is very little that is really new. Not recommended.

Monty's Highlanders – 51st (Highland) Division in WW2 – Patrick Delaforce ***

This isn't one of Delaforce's best divisional histories, I'm afraid. The timespan covers North Africa, Italy and NW Europe and as a result, the detail on individual actions is a little scanty when compared to his other books. Like all of his books, it suffers from a lack of good maps and little or no information on opposing forces. Worth getting, but I'd take a look at Alistair Borthwick's 'Battalion' (aka 'Sans Peur') first. A useful book.

Monty's Ironsides – From the Normandy Beaches to Bremen with the 3rd Division – Patrick Delaforce ****

The definitive history of 3rd Division in NW Europe, which spearheaded the assault on Sword Beach and fought right through to the bloody end at Bremen in 1945. Plenty of personal memoirs and scenario fodder, though as with all Delaforce books, it suffers from very few maps and absolutely no study of the opposing forces. However, there is still a wealth of information here and is recommended.

Monty's Marauders – 'Black Rat' 4th Armoured Brigade & 'Red Fox' 8th Armoured Brigade – Patrick Delaforce ***

This double unit history follows two of Monty's veteran independent armoured brigades from north Africa, to Italy and then to NW Europe. However, as in his other book 'Monty's Highlanders', the long timespan leaves little room in the book for great detail on individual actions. Like all Delaforce's books, there is little in the way of decent maps and information on enemy forces. However, unit histories aren't exactly thick on the ground, and for that reason, this book is still well worth buying. A useful book.

The Polar Bears (Monty's Left Flank) – From Normandy to the Relief of Holland with the 49th Division – Patrick Delaforce

The definitive history of 49th (West Riding) Division in NW Europe, which began its war career being considered unfit by Monty to take its place in the line, but ended up saving Monty's entire army group at the Battle of Rauray. Plenty of personal memoirs and scenario fodder, though as with all Delaforce books, it suffers from its maps (though even these are noticeably better than others in the series) and a lack of research into the opposing forces. However, this was really the first book to really emphasise the role of 49th Division in defeating II SS Panzer Corps at Rauray and led directly to Kevin Baverstock's superb 'Breaking the Panzers'. Recommended – one of his best.

Red Crown & Dragon – 53rd (Welch) Division in WW2 – Patrick Delaforce *****

In my opinion this is Delaforce's best divisional histories, but then I am biased (being Welsh!). It covers the division's actions from Normandy to Belgium, the Reichswald and Hanover and is full of excellent scenario fodder. As always with Delaforce books, it could do with a few better maps and research from German sources, but there is plenty here to draw inspiration from – particularly the Germany portion of the book, which actually has good maps and some decent stabs at enemy force composition. Sadly, this is the most difficult Delaforce book to get hold of, as unlike the others it has never been reprinted. Highly recommended.

Taming The Panzers – 3 RTR at War – Patrick Delaforce ***

A good regimental history, but having already read Delaforce's 'Black Bull', I thought I'd already read this book! 3RTR was a Sherman-equipped regiment with 29th Armoured Brigade of 11th Armoured Division and fought in Operation Epsom, Operation Goodwood, Antwerp, the right 'shoulder' of Operation Market-Garden, the Ardennes and Germany, where it became the first regiment to receive the new Comet tank. There is some reasonable scenario fodder in here, but is let down by the lack of maps. A useful book.

Smashing The Atlantic Wall – Patrick Delaforce **

An operational history of the battles for the Channel Ports after the breakout from Normandy. Interesting from the point of view that it covers a gap in most other histories, though it lacks the same wealth of personal anecdotes that is found in Delaforce's divisional histories. As an operational history, one would also assume that some effort would be made to research the German side of the story, but sadly the only information on German forces comes from the British intelligence logs, which are at best fragmentary and at worst, downright untrue! Apart from as operational scene-setting, there is little here for the wargamer. Not recommended.

Gold Beach – Inland From King, June 1944 – Christopher Dunphie & Garry Johnson *****

This is one of the early WW2 titles from the excellent 'Battleground Europe' series of paperback battle histories/guide books. The book covers the operations of 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division and 8th Armoured Brigade during the D-Day landings and the immediate aftermath and covers famous actions such as Lingèvres. While not one of their best, this book is still packed with scenario material – maps, photos, anecdotes, orders of battle, it's all here. Recommended.

A History of The Irish Guards in the Second World War – Desmond Fitzgerald *****

Despite the wide timeframe of this history, it still manages to cover the war, as seen by 'The Micks', in considerable detail. Written just after the war by one of its officers – for the enjoyment of the former soldiers themselves – the book is packed with detail, anecdotes and dry, often black, soldiers' humour (*Divisional HQ was mortared during the night – the news gave general pleasure.*). An absolutely invaluable book for anyone researching Operation Market-Garden – many of the commonly-accepted 'A Bridge Too Far' 'truths' regarding XXX Corps' breakout are glaringly contradicted by this book. Tim Saunders has leaned heavily on this account for his excellent recent 'Battleground Europe' series of books on Operation Market-Garden. Fitzgerald's history of the Irish Guards has been out of print for some time, but RHQ Irish Guards recently commissioned a reprint, so get your copy while you can. Recommended.

British Tanks of WWII – (1) France & Belgium 1944 – David Fletcher *****

This seemingly slim volume is simply packed with photos of diverse British AFVs in the field and from that point alone it is a valuable guide to modelling and painting. However, the book also contains several pages of colour plates and is packed with photo captions and several pages of text, which give a considerable amount of information on organisation – especially various regimental oddities. Volume 1 covers the campaign from D-Day to the liberation of Belgium. Recommended.

British Tanks of WWII – (2) Holland & Germany 1944/1945 – David Fletcher *****

This seemingly slim volume is simply packed with photos of diverse British AFVs in the field and from that point alone it is a valuable guide to modelling and painting. However, the book also contains several pages of colour plates and is packed with photo captions and several pages of text, which give a considerable amount of information on organisation – especially various regimental oddities. Volume 2 covers the campaign from Operation Market Garden and the battles for the Scheldt Estuary, to the crossing of the Rhine and the advance into Germany and the subsequent victory parades. Recommended.

A Photohistory of Armoured Cars in Two World Wars – George Forty ***

An excellent easy resource to armoured cars from their inception to the end of WW2. Also includes many ad hoc armoured vehicles from conflicts such as the Spanish Civil War, as well as armed trucks, captured vehicles, field modifications and prototypes that never made it into production. Most photographs are also accompanied by data on the vehicle (if known). If it had wheels and a gun, it'll be in here. A useful book.

British Army Handbook, 1939-1945 – George Forty ***

A general guide to the organisation, training, tactics, formations and equipment of the British Army in WW2. However, if your field of interest concentrates on the NW European campaign, I would buy Jean Bouchery's 'The British Soldier – Vol. 2' – it's bigger, cheaper, more complete and is in full colour – superior, in fact, in almost every respect to George Forty's book. That isn't to say that this is a bad book, it isn't, but it has simply been surpassed. A useful book.

And We Shall Shock Them – Sir David Fraser **

An account of the Fall & Rise of the British Army in WW2. Generally deals with the 'big picture' and contains very little of interest to the scenario-writer. Not very useful & not recommended.

The Funnies – Geoffrey W Futen ***

A study of 'Hobart's Funnies' – also known as 79th Armoured Division – which were instrumental in the success of the Normandy Landings, as well as the subsequent breakout and most offensive operations right up to the end of the war. A useful book. See also 'Churchill's Secret Weapons' by Delaforce.

World War 2 Tanks – Eric Grove ***

A very useful first-stop reference to tanks in WW2, plus all their sub-types such as self-propelled guns, flak tanks and the like. The colour plates however, leave a lot to be desired, but it's a useful book nonetheless.

Arnhem Lift – Louis Hagen ***

An interesting and deeply personal account of a German-Jew, who had a miraculous escape from a German prison in the 30s, before being interned in Britain as a suspected fifth-columnist! He was then allowed to join the British Army (under an assumed name) and eventually volunteered for the Glider Pilot Regiment. His account gives an uncompromising view of what a glider pilot could be expected to do after he had delivered his load safely into the battle – he flew into Arnhem, took part in the unsuccessful 'charge' to Arnhem and was then engaged in bitter street-fighting in Oosterbeek, before being one of the lucky few who escaped across the Rhine. It has to be said that there is perhaps more here for the small-scale skirmish gamer than the 'Battlefront: WWII' gamer, but it will help you win those arguments with 'unbelievers' who believe that you can automatically see a gun when it fires (he fired a PIAT and a Bren out of the same loophole for days on end at close range, without ever being spotted by the Germans)! A useful book.

Arnhem – A Tragedy of Errors – Peter Harclerode ***

A slightly newer take on Operation Market-Garden. Harclerode reappraises the conduct of the 1st Airborne Division and XXX Corps in the campaign and comes up with what is, in my opinion, a more balanced account than the accepted 'truth'. Some pretty good scenario material. A useful book.

'Go To It!' - The Illustrated History of the 6th Airborne Division – Peter Harclerode *****

An excellent history of the 6th Airborne Division, from its creation in WW2 to its first employment on D-Day, its deployment to the Ardennes, the crossing of the Rhine and post-war peacekeeping deployments to Palestine and the Far East. The book covers the training of paras and glider pilots and list the order of battle to the finest detail. The text is absolutely stuffed with scenario fodder, with each battalion's and brigade's role in the battles being meticulously recorded. However, the only thing that lets this book down (along with so many military history books) is the lack of maps. It is particularly frustrating when trying to follow the thread of a battle, when there is no map indicating where the villages are in Europe, let alone the disposition of the troops! The photos however, are outstanding. Highly recommended.

Arnhem – A D Harvey **

A competent-enough account of the Market-Garden campaign, but it is too general to be of any use to a scenario-writer. This book is rather 'mutton dressed as lamb' – it has nothing new to say that hasn't already been said by Powell, Middlebrook, Kershaw and Harclerode (and latterly by Saunders), but dresses it all up with fancy graphics (this however, is better than having poor maps or no maps at all, which is what you get in so many books). It does have detailed graphical orders of battle for both sides, but there are some pretty whopping errors. Not recommended – spend your money on Saunders instead!

Overlord – Max Hastings ***

Yet another history of D-Day but not a bad one. It does come up with some accounts from the German defenders for one, which I hadn't seen before – did you know for example, that the only armoured response to the British/Canadian landings early on D-Day, was by a Lorraine SP artillery battery from 716 Division? No? Well now you do! There are some pretty basic mistakes (as the 'big name' historians always seem to do when they're concentrating on the 'big picture'), however, it's available cheaply in paperback, this book is worth the money and has very useful orders of battle and other data in the appendices. A useful book.

By Tank Into Normandy – Stuart Hills *****

Yet another tank troop leader's memoir, I hear you cry! Well actually, I think this one is the best one to date – Hills is a born story-teller and he really draws you into the lives, deaths, heroics and tragedies of his troop (of the Sherwood Rangers' Yeomanry, 8th Armoured Brigade). The book has some sketch-maps of his most memorable battles – such as the assault on Rauray in Normandy and is thus very useful scenario-fodder. Most importantly though, this book is a fitting and moving tribute to the brave men of what was probably the finest armoured regiment, of the finest armoured brigade in the British Army. It is the perfect complement to Stuart Jary's account of an infantry platoon leader. Highly recommended

18 Platoon – Sidney Jary *****

Ever since its first edition, this little book has been hailed as the finest personal account by a British platoon leader to come out of WW2 and I would agree with that assessment. It is the perfect complement to Stuart Hills' account of a tank troop leader. If you ever needed reminding of just how bad the lot of the PBI was in WW2, then this is the book to read. Highly recommended.

Six Armies In Normandy – John Keegan ***

Yet another general history of Normandy, but this one is actually quite worth getting – if just for the account of the heroic stand by the 1st Polish Armoured Division at Mont Ormel and Chambois, which was probably the most desperately-fought battle of the entire campaign and has been largely ignored by British writers (even worse, the Poles have been criticised by many). The author examines one division from each of the six major players in Normandy (Britain, USA, Canada, Germany, Poland and France) and devotes a chapter to each. This also includes an excellent account of the liberation of Paris by Leclerc's 2nd French Armoured Division. As usual, this book lacks decent maps, but if you can find the appropriate Ordnance Survey maps, there is some good scenario material in here. A useful book.

It Never Snows In September – The German View of Market Garden and the Battle of Arnhem, September 1944 – Robert J Kershaw *****

This was the book that spawned a resurgence in interest in Operation Market-Garden when it was published in the early 90s and made many wake up to the reality that perhaps Ryan, Urquhart, Powell and Sosabowski weren't perhaps as correct as had been previously thought. Using only prime archive material, the author has pieced together the fiendishly complex and constantly shifting mosaic of battlegroups hastily thrown together to counter the Allied assault – and shatters many cherished myths in the process. The whole campaign is covered – from Joe's Bridge in the south to Arnhem in the north, and the book includes very detailed orders of battle and – amazingly – excellent maps! Yes folks, a military historian who actually understands the importance of maps in military history! It's probably because the author was himself a Para officer (on secondment to the Federal German Army when he wrote this book). Highly recommended.

Sherwood Rangers – T M Lindsey **

A pretty dull regimental history which covers little in any real detail – all the interesting bits have been picked out by Delaforce in his book 'Monty's Marauders'. Not recommended – spend your money on Delaforce or Stuart Hills' 'By Tank Into Normandy' instead.

Arnhem 1944 – The Airborne Battle – Martin Middlebrook *****

The first book to appear after the publication of Kershaw's 'It Never Snows In September', which was the first detailed study on the German side of Market Garden. This book is the ideal complement to Kershaw's book, though it only deals with the operations of 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem and Oosterbeek – and the Polish Para Brigade at Driel. The orders of battle in this book are the most detailed you'll find on Arnhem anywhere, and include full casualty numbers (which make shocking reading), details of who went in which lift and has the bonus of having half-decent maps. This book is excellent scenario-fodder, and as it draws heavily from Kershaw, the opposing forces are listed in detail (though having Kershaw to hand is a bonus). As it's available in Penguin paperback, it is also extremely good value. Recommended.

The Desert Rats – Robin Neillands *

Very general, very dull. Don't buy it!

Iron Fist – Classic Armoured Warfare Case Studies – Bryan Perrett ***

There are only a few chapters on WW2 in this book, but the chapter dealing with the D-Day assault is worth the cover price. It describes in incredible detail, the operations by four 79th Armoured Division 'Breaching Teams' on Sword Beach – if you don't understand exactly what it is that AVREs do, you will when you read this chapter. The book is also worth getting for the story of Graf Hyazinth von Strachwitz ('Der Panzergraf') – the greatest panzer leader of them all and makes Wittmann look like the strutting Nazi nancy-boy he really was. A useful book.

The Devil's Birthday – The Bridges to Arnhem 1944 – Geoffrey Powell **

One of the classic accounts of Arnhem, written by a man who was actually there. Powell was a company commander in 156 Para and escaped with the survivors of his company across the Rhine at the end of the battle. This book covers the whole campaign, not just the battle of Arnhem itself, though is understandably (though possibly unfairly) bitter towards XXX Corps and the US Airborne. One snippet mentions how the Irish Guards were held up at Aalst (south of Eindhoven) by 'a single SP gun and a handful of antitank guns'. However, we now know from more recent research that there was in fact the best part of a company of SPs, plus eleven 75mm antitank guns, a battery of 88s and the mere matter of a regiment of fallschirmjäger all wielding panzerfausts! Much as I respect the author and his own personal sacrifice, I have to say that there are better, more balanced accounts out there – particularly Tim Saunders' books and Kershaw's German viewpoint. Not recommended, unless you want to get a different slant on the argument.

Steel Inferno – I SS Panzer Corps in Normandy – General, Sir Michael Reynolds ****

One of the best accounts of Normandy from the German perspective, this book concentrates on the 1st and 12th SS Panzer Divisions (as well as the corps troops which included 21st Panzer Division, Panzer Lehr and 101st SS Heavy Panzer Battalion at various times). The detail is meticulous and the book is stuffed to bursting with scenario-fodder. But why isn't there a single decent map?! The book also includes detailed orders of battle for I SS Panzer Corps, as well as more general orders of battle for Allied formations. This is the perfect complement to Patrick Delaforce's series of British divisional histories. Recommended.

A Bridge Too Far – Cornelius Ryan *

Definitely the most overrated WW2 'history' book of them all! Take one American writer with a large (British) chip on his shoulder, stir in half-truths, downright fibs, fictitious characters and conversations and events that never happened and then simmer while adding bitter recriminations from ex-paras and the odd Pole to taste. I'm afraid it isn't history – it's drama. The film was even more of a hatchet-job, being made by an infamous 'Useful Idiot'. No scenario-fodder here unless you really want to, though you might as well wargame 'Saving Private Ryan' or 'Battle of the Bulge – The Movie' or 'Kelly's Heroes' and then call it a historical game – it ain't! Absolute drivel – spend your money on Tim Saunders, Martin Middlebrook or Robert Kershaw instead and find out what really happened.

British Guards Armoured Division 1941-1945 – John Sandars ****

Now long out of print, this was one of the 'old' Vanguard Series by Osprey. Using the standard Osprey format, this book details the organisation, markings and equipment of the Guards Armoured Division, as well as 6th Guards Tank Brigade and the 2nd Household Cavalry Regiment. A very useful guide if you're creating this unit as your wargames army. Recommended.

Hill 112 – Battles of the Odon, 1944 – Tim Saunders *****

This was Tim Saunders' first book for the Battleground Europe series of paperback battle histories/guide books and it set the exceptionally high standard he has subsequently maintained for his series on Operation Market-Garden. This book covers the bloody battles for Hill 112, overlooking the Odon Valley, which was bitterly contested throughout July 1944. This little book is simply superb – packed as it is with photographs, excellent maps, orders of battle and detailed, balanced accounts of the battles from both sides. This is simply outstanding scenario fodder and should be in everyone's collection. Highly recommended.

Market-Garden – Hell's Highway – Tim Saunders *****

This is a paperback battle history/battlefield guide from the outstanding 'Battleground Europe' series. This book covers the breakout from 'Joe's Bridge' by XXX Corps and the operations by 101st Airborne Division to seize and defend Eindhoven, Son, Best, Veghel, St. Oedenrode, Schijndel and Koeving. Perhaps surprisingly, for such a small book, the 'old hand' will actually find a lot of new information here – such as the reason why the Irish Guards were delayed at Valkenswaard (possibly the most controversial incident in the entire operation). The book is packed with excellent maps, superb photos and simply amazing aerial recce photos that are often better than maps. Woven in between all this is a balanced account, with the story told by both sides. This is absolute gold-dust for the scenario-writer. Highly recommended

Market-Garden – Nijmegen – Tim Saunders *****

This is a paperback battle history/battlefield guide from the outstanding 'Battleground Europe' series. This book covers the linkup between XXX Corps and 82nd Airborne Division, as well as the operations by 82nd Airborne Division and Guards Armoured Division to seize the bridges at Nijmegen and Grave and their subsequent operations to defend the corridor against

attack. The book is packed with excellent maps, superb photos and simply amazing aerial recce photos that are often better than maps. Woven in between all this is a balanced account, with the story told by both sides. This is absolute gold-dust for the scenario-writer. Highly recommended

Market-Garden – The Island – Tim Saunders *****

This is a paperback battle history/battlefield guide from the outstanding 'Battleground Europe' series. This book covers the failed attempt by Guards Armoured Division and 43rd (Wessex) Division to break through to Arnhem from Nijmegen across 'The Island' (aka 'Bettuwe' – the island of land formed by the splitting of the Rhine into the Waal and Neider Rhein). The linkup with the Polish paras at Driel is also covered, as is the Dorsets' doomed attempt to reinforce 1st Airborne Division at Oosterbeek. Finally, the book details the evacuation of the 1st Airborne survivors and the subsequent campaign by 101st Airborne Division and 43rd (Wessex) Division to defend the bridgehead. The book is packed with excellent maps, superb photos and simply amazing aerial recce photos that are often better than maps. Woven in between all this is a balanced account, with the story told by both sides. This is absolute gold-dust for the scenario-writer. Highly recommended

Villers-Bocage (Through The Lens of the German War Photographer) – Daniel Taylor *****

This is a landscape-format book by the 'After The Battle' people. Most of the book is packed with photos taken by an unknown German photographer immediately after the notorious battle of Villers-Bocage, where the infamous Michael Wittmann devastatingly ambushed a column of 7th Armoured Division in extremely close terrain. In addition to the photos, the book is littered with excellent maps, graphical organisation tables and aerial reconnaissance photos (especially useful is a map which indicates where every photo was taken), as well as portraits of the main participants on both sides. The account of the battle, pieced together from prime sources, is simply outstanding and is the irrefutable, definitive story of the battle. There are a lot of Villers-Bocage myths in other books – many of which have taken Nazi propaganda at face value – and this is the book that conclusively debunks the myths. Following the initial clash between Wittmann and the British column, the story moves on to detail the bitter street-fighting between the infantry of the Queen's Brigade and the remaining Tigers, followed by the 'Battle of the Brigade Box'. This book is heaving with scenario possibilities. Highly recommended.

A Fine Night For Tanks – The Road To Falaise – Ken Tout *****

An excellent account of Operation Totalise – the offensive to close the Falaise Pocket – told by a tank commander who was there – in the Northants Yeomanry. Although largely operational in scale, there is quite a lot of scenario-fodder for 'Battlefront: WWII' games, though no suitable maps (which is a common trait among military history books). He is a little harsh on the 1st Polish Armoured Division, I feel – for example, he criticises the Poles for their seemingly rash tactics, but neglects to mention that General Maczek had only a company's frontage in which to deploy his entire division! However, his conclusions and thoughts on Operation Totalise and the Normandy Campaign as a whole are excellent and worth the cover price alone. His opinions on British tactics – particularly their employment of armour and especially in relation to the Bocage are a breath of fresh air and will come as quite a revelation to many – particularly as they are from the pen of a man who was there, commanding tanks! Recommended. See also 'Tank!' by Ken Tout.

Tank! – Ken Tout *****

A classic tale of one tank commander's first 24 hours in combat – during Operation Totalise in Normandy (the initial effort to close the Falaise Pocket. What is not immediately clear when reading the book, is that it is actually about the author's actual experiences. Plenty of small-scale scenario possibilities here. There are no maps, but the small nature of the actions described does not really necessitate one. Recommended. See also 'A Fine Night For Tanks', 'Tanks Advance!' and 'To Hell With Tanks!', all by the same author.

Tanks Advance! – Normandy to the Netherlands – Ken Tout ***

The second volume of the author's war memoirs as a tank commander with the Northants Yeomanry. The series started with 'Tank!' which was an account of his first 24 hours in combat. This doesn't have quite the same impact, but it's still as useful book.

To Hell With Tanks! – Ken Tout ***

The third volume of the author's war memoirs as a tank commander with the Northants Yeomanry. The series started with 'Tank!' which was an account of his first 24 hours in combat. This doesn't have quite the same impact, but it's still as useful book.

Bloody Bremen – Charles Whiting **

An operational-level account of the closing stages of the war. Contrary to the title, the story does not just concentrate itself with Bremen, but wanders as far south as the American operations in Bavaria. There is not much described in the way of tactical combat, nor are there any suitable maps or orders of battle. I would recommend spending your money on Delaforce's 'Monty's Ironsides' instead. Not recommended.

Explore knitting and fashion in the Second World War Economy With the ever-present threat of the Blitz, the bombing of civilian targets in Britain during the Second World War is now commonly referred to as "The Blitz". The song "All Stick Together" released by Ralph Butler in 1939 summarised the need for Britain to pull together as a nation against the threat of an invasion, and the "Blitz Spirit" has gone down in history and is still invoked today in times of strife. However, whilst the vast majority of the population may have been sticking together, there were