We strive to give fair, unbiased and truthful reviews. Reviewers are asked to express their honest, measured opinions, which are not necessarily those of the Editor. We will never submit to intimidation of any kind, howsoever disguised, and though we do not publish critical reviews lightly, we reserve the right to do so where we believe constructive criticism is justified.

**Rule & game review categories:**
Readthrough; Dabbled; Played; Multi-play.

The Battlegames Award for Excellence is given only to those products or services which, in the opinion of the reviewer, would deserve a score of 9 or 10/10 under a numerical scoring system. Recipients of this coveted award will be recorded on our website.

**FLEET COMMANDER: NIMITZ**


*Played*

At the start of America’s active involvement in the Second World War, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz faces a Pacific Ocean on the brink of disaster. The Imperial Japanese Navy has just delivered a devastating attack against the US fleet at Pearl Harbor, and little stands in the way of total defeat for the US in the battle for the Pacific.

In the months to come, the situation will spiral from bad to worse. Nimitz will see the Japanese score one victory after another as they march across the Pacific, until only Midway and Hawaii stand between them and the West Coast of the US.

Without doubt, the first thing to strike you about Fleet Commander: Nimitz is its sheer size. The box is even deeper than DVG’s other ‘big box’ packages, such as the Leader series, and it’s heavy. On opening, you’ll discover that the components are superb. The rulebook is nicely printed and should be relatively hard wearing. The counters are the thick, super-chunky type we’ve come to expect from DVG, and the artwork is simple, but effective, and all the statistics very legible. The boards are stunning, with a great view of an – admittedly abstracted – Pacific naval front, and all the paths clearly marked, as well as some nice, convenient holding boxes.

The rules take some getting used to, as while the basics of the game are very easy to comprehend, the AI is noticeably more complex than those of the Leader series. Obviously this is to be expected, as it’s a much larger theatre of operations and scale of conflict. You’re going to be following steps and sequences for your first couple of games until the procedures sink in. Also, be ready for a lot of dice rolling. You may want to invest in a dice-rolling app or a pile of D10s and a dice tower, as you’ll be pushing around a lot of enemy units, and making lots of dice rolls for all of them.

Once you move all your fleet around the board, the Japanese units move, and then it’s onto combat at any location where US and Japanese are both present. The combat system, it needs to be said, is a lot of fun, and you’ll be emotionally invested at each throw of the dice – just the way it should be.

Those who come to Fleet Commander: Nimitz expecting lots of deep strategy and the nitty-gritty minutiae of naval combat are going to be disappointed. This is not what the game is about. This is – while not a full on ‘beer and pretzels’ game – certainly on the lighter side of things. This is no bad thing. Complaining that this isn’t a detailed, rivet-counting sim is like complaining that Street Fighter II doesn’t contain a mini-game where you book your tickets to fly to the next country. This is a game about the bigger picture. It’s Hollywoodised. Go into it looking for a fun, cinematic adventure, and you’ll have a great time.

**Brad Harmer**

**LIFECOLOR ACRYLIC PAINT SET CS30 LEATHER**

*Available in the UK from www.airbrushes.com £16.99 per set*

The box (above) comprises six 22ml pots of fine acrylic paints themed around ‘leather’. The colours included are a useful mix of warm cream to dark brown shades and as always, I’d suggest thinking beyond the confines of the name on the box.

These paints are designed for airbrushing and having thinned and added a drop of flow enhancer to the mix, the paint went through my Iwata HP-B airbrush beautifully at pressures from 16 to 20psi, building up to give excellent coverage.

Although you could use a brush to apply the paint, it is quite thin and you’d need to build up several layers to reach an opaque finish. For those who like to paint with ‘stains’ over a white undercoat, I’d suggest this range would be worth experimenting with.

The Lifecolor range keeps growing and includes many sets and colours useful for the AFV, aircraft and ship modellers and gamers. Highly recommended for airbrushing.

**Tim Beresford**
Granger’s continued employment seems to have owed much to political connections. He was in Washington assisting President Andrew Johnson during his impeachment in 1868, and it is a pity that lack of knowledge of Granger’s precise involvement prevents a more detailed look at this episode.

The chapter on Granger’s reconstruction work in Texas after the war’s end is interesting (that’s the ‘Juneteenth’ reference, a holiday celebrating Granger’s announcement of the abolition of slavery) and again leaves the reader wanting more about how the Union occupiers went about the task of reconciliation while enforcing the new order of emancipation.

As always, more maps would have been helpful. That point aside, this is a well-written, highly readable book that is certainly worth your time.

Giles Allison

NEXT WAR: TAIWAN
Designed by Gene Billingley and Mitchell Land, Published by GMT Games, $85

Multi-play
Next War: Taiwan, the latest volume in GMT’s series of Next War games and the follow-on to Next War: Korea, allows players to fight a near future war in and around the island of Taiwan. In this sequel, the communist state of China, the PRC, has decided that it’s time to end the ‘Western Theater’ of the American Civil War is the central focus of this book, but Granger’s career in the Mexican-American War, on the Western frontier and then in Texas after the Civil War ended are all covered. The Union Army’s rapid expansion saw Granger progress to divisional and then corps command, but his temper and refusal to be shy with his opinions alienated General Grant and hindered promotion.

Granger appears to have been a drunker and there is an amusing story of how an aide wrote the word “Tight” at the end of an unwise message that Granger had written, an instruction to the telegraph operator not to send the telegraph operator not to send the telegraph operator the word to the telegram that was then wired to Grant.

Despite Granger’s proven ability to handle large formations in the field, Grant continued to find fault and Granger never progressed to the more prominent commands that he must have wanted. Conner is good at describing the army’s internal politics, with Grant continually trying to have Granger removed and Granger’s immediate superiors doing their best to keep him on active service.

Cumberland from annihilation.

However, the biography of a soldier whose reputation rests on participation in one particular battle runs the risk of having little to say about anything else and so become a book about the battle rather than the man. Happily, this is not the case here. Granger failed to leave any memoirs, but the author has researched Granger’s life and times well and makes the most of his material.

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