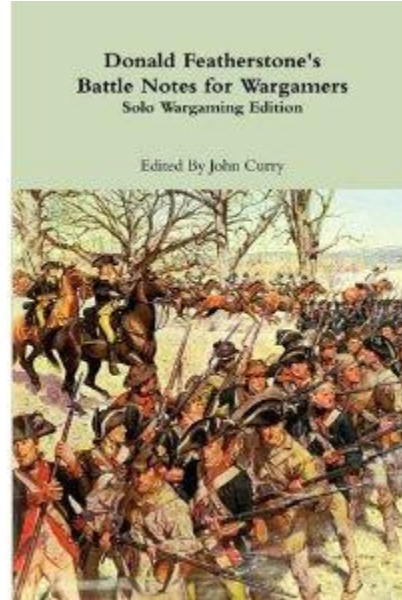


'Battle Notes for Wargamers: Solo Wargaming Edition' **By Donald Featherstone, edited by John Curry**

Review by Paul Le Long

Since I have already reviewed the original "Battle Notes for Wargamers," I will limit myself here to telling what's new in this "Solo Wargaming Edition" and whether you need to buy the new edition.

The battles covered are the same – Pharsalus, Poitiers, Barnet, Cheriton, Wynendael, Prestonpans, Guilford Courthouse, Maida, Aliwal, Wilson's Creek, Little Big Horn, Modder River, ANZAC landing at Gallipoli, Raid on St Nazaire and Pork Chop Hill. The text is identical to that in the original book as are all the maps. There are some additions which I'll talk about in a minute and the order of the paragraphs has been changed around – but basically the material in the new edition is the same as the old. That holds true for the introduction as well, which contains all those old Featherstone favourites – classification of commanders, morale, surprise, chance cards and military possibilities. It's a shame, I think, in a special solo wargaming edition that more wasn't added to the sections on surprise and chance cards – a missed opportunity, in my view.



There is extra material however. Each battle now has a list of figures and rules appropriate for use in a reconstruction, as well as an updated bibliography. Taking Pharsalus as an example, the sections on historical outline of the battle, rating of commanders, military possibilities and construction of terrain are all identical to the original. The short section on forces is more or less the same though in this edition the wargamer plays Caesar and biographical notes on commanders and orders of battle are added – often in footnotes. There is one extra (new) paragraph dealing with solo mechanisms for the enemy force, but this is simple in the extreme – throw a die to see if the enemy army waits to be attacked or whether it initiates the attack.

As you can see, this new edition adds little to the original. Its chief value, apart from resurrecting a classic, is to make solo wargaming appear a little more mainstream in the wargames marketplace – though the editor’s introduction does state that Featherstone dislikes solo wargaming as being the last resort of the wargamers with no friends! (I’m paraphrasing – but not much.)

Nevertheless, I liked the original edition and I like this one too – mainly because the two are almost identical! I don’t believe that the soloist gains much from the extra material – there isn’t much new material for a start and the advice on soloing is extremely basic. And the lists of figures, rules and books for each battle are fine but won’t revolutionise your gaming.

So, should you buy the book because of its solo wargaming theme? No, because the solo-specific material is thin. If you have the original edition, should you buy this one too? No, because you get very little extra material and what you do get isn’t that much use. Should you buy it if you don’t have the original? Yes, because, like the original, it is a good book full of scenarios, all well laid out and explained.

Details:

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