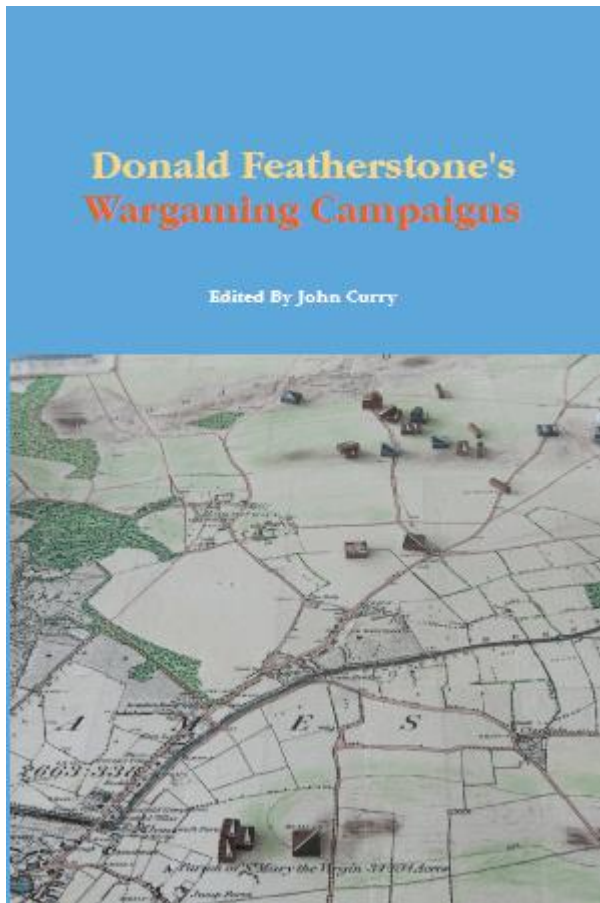


'Wargaming Campaigns'

By Donald Featherstone

Review by Paul Le Long

As our very own Graham Empson points out in his review on Amazon, this book was first published in 1970 and has now been reissued as part of John Curry's History of Wargaming project. It is this new edition that I have, so I must limit my comments to that rather than the original. I remember borrowing the original from the library many years ago but I can't remember the details so I don't know what's different between original and reissue.



The book is split into four sections, the first concentrates on the basics of campaign gaming – moving your armies around on maps, bringing them into contact with the enemy and so on. Section two is all about wargames clubs, while section three is advice on running historical campaigns. The final section is all about campaigns set up by the author ranging from Vikings to World War II.

Section 1 runs to about 40 pages and focuses on how to run a campaign. We have advice on maps and map movement, enemy forces contacting each other, set-piece battles, encounter battles and flank marches as well as movement rates, lines of communication and attrition. In short, advice on how to reproduce all the fundamental elements of a wargames campaign at operational level. This is all valuable material. We move on to war diaries and campaign journals before rounding off with a suggestion that a wargames league

involving linked battles might be an alternative to the conventional campaign – this was a shock to me when I read it since I wrote an article for *Lone Warrior* on this subject last year thinking I was being terribly original! It turns out that Featherstone had got there a long time before I did. Oh well!

Section 2 – clubs – need not detain the dedicated soloist too long. This section (about 20 pages) is all about setting up a club, suitable activities for the club, club leagues and so on. There are some ideas here though that the soloist could plunder – ideas on

individualised wargaming, where a player plays a single character (not unlike an RPG) and strategic-level Napoleonic games. A mixed bag but worth a dabble, I think.

Section 3 (historical campaigns) is the shortest at 18 pages. Topics covered are advice on refighting the Franco-Prussian War as a whole, refighting the battle of Spicheren from that war and refighting the Peninsula War. Given the length of this section, the advice given on each is fairly basic.

Section 4 is the heart and soul of the book running to more than 100 pages. Here we have many campaign settings and ideas based on games played or organised by the author. Each is presented in a different way. Some are skirmishes, others massed battles, others somewhere in between, but all with campaign elements. Most are extended scenarios really, with linked engagements rather than mega-campaigns, including state finances and the like. The length and complexity varies – some are only three pages long, including a map, while others run to 15 pages.

It would take far too long to describe them all, so I shall simply list the campaigns: We start with a Viking raid, then we have Agincourt, Alton Church (ECW), French and Indian War, a Napoleonic corps campaign, a narrative battle set in the Franco-Austrian war of 1859, Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley (ACW), an Apache uprising, a potted campaign (Franco-Prussian War), Boer revolt, a mythical Franco-Prussian colonial campaign, WWI colonial campaign, North West Frontier 1936, and two WWII games – one an amphibious landing, the other set in France in 1944.

This is a very good book, recommended for novices and veterans alike. If you are new to campaigns, then the advice in section 1 will be good reading for you. The scenarios in section 4 will suit all gamers regardless of experience. And scenarios are what these chapters are – linked actions mostly, rather than mega-campaigns fought at strategic level between nations with lots of considerations like politics, finance, social unrest, governments and personalities thrown in. These campaigns are relatively simple to set up and play and that, I think, is the chief value of the book. The focus here is for the most part on the operational level rather than the strategic or tactical.

This indeed is what sets this book apart. If you want strategic-level campaigns, read *Setting Up a Wargames Campaign* by Tony Bath or *Wargame Campaigns* by CS Grant. If you want tactics, then read just about any book on wargaming. If you want specific campaigns, then there is *Napoleon's Campaigns in Miniature* by Bruce Quarrie, *A Wargamers' Guide to the Crusades* by Ian Heath, and more. What Donald Featherstone gives you here is a range of advice and scenarios, mostly aimed at the operational level.

Recommended.

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