

An Obituary, and a Wargame

By Rob Morgan

The death earlier this Summer of Sir Patrick 'Paddy' Leigh Fermor at the remarkable age of ninety six, will I suspect have gone largely unnoticed amongst wargamers. His commitment to Greece in terms of culture and history was immense, and he lived there since the end of WWII. His writings, mainly on travel were sparse, but his wartime exploits are the stuff of a solo wargamer's dream.

Paddy Leigh Fermor was the hero of the remarkable raid which captured the Nazi commander of Crete in 1943, transported him across the island and brought him to captivity in Egypt. He didn't write the book of that, it was left to Stanley Moss in *Ill Met by Moonlight: the abduction of General Kreipe*, later a film.

It's what - thirty years since an old friend of mine Dave Simpson produced a wargame of this little encounter, using a deck of cards, a map of Crete - remarkable island - and a few figures of Partisans and Afrika Korps troops if needed. The game, I recall took kidnapers through a tremendous number of checkpoints, past and through German garrisons and across rugged terrain.



Fermor in 1966

Pursued or sought by Mountain Troops, by spotter aircraft, coastal warships and by everything that could move along a mountainous road. There were spontaneous ambushes by Greek fighters, and vast time-consuming sweeps and raids by large German columns. Chance was everything, real 'Who dares Wins' stuff. I wish I'd kept the rules now!



Patrick Leigh-Fermor almost made it into the footnotes of history right at the end of the war too. In what would have been a sort of 'Skorzeny' action, he and a small force of British and Imperial paratroops were intended to 'drop-in' to Colditz Castle in April 1945. Along with a mass drop of supplies and hold it until liberated; thus preventing the Nazi elimination of a substantial number of Allied Officers. The belief was that the structure of Colditz, fairly well known because it wasn't actually escape proof, would withstand even field artillery for some time. If the Wehrmacht had field artillery available to spare for a siege with the Red Army at their backs!

Another scenario made for the solo game. I might try to reconstruct the 'Crete' raid rules.