

The SA 1921-45: Hitler's Stormtroopers
Osprey Men-at-Arms series No. 220 (1990)
Text by David Littlejohn; colour plates by Ron Volstad

Well, here's an Osprey title which from a war gamer's perspective can be dealt with in much shorter fashion than many of the other titles in the Men-at-Arms series.

The *Sturmabteilung*, an organisation founded in September 1921, and thus one of the longest lasting Nazi groups, was yet another of those intrigue-laden, complex structures which the Germans thought worked. The book is filled with uniform detail, from belt buckles to cuff titles, gorgets and daggers. There's an account of the specialised formations of the SA, involved with flying, the sea and waterways, and also signals, motor vehicles, cavalry of sorts and medical elements.

Littlejohn goes on to deal with some of the 'elite' units which existed within the SA, and with their Police and Para-Military formations, a few of which operated under dual control with the *Luftwaffe* or *Gestapo*. The text covers 24 units, elements or sections of the SA in all, some of which were very small indeed. The author briefly covers the role of SA training establishments and apart from a short historical account, largely pre-war of the *Sturmabteilung*, that's it.

Plenty of good quality photographs in the book, all period, most pre-1939, and of illustrations of badges, caps and headgear. Ron Volstad's plates are, as always with his work in Ospreys, well done, and colourful. Unfortunately for the war gamer at least, if not for the historian, Plates A, B, C, D, E, F, and G are of pre-war SA members, and about 75% of those are of officers.

The only plate of value is Plate H, and it is interesting. Figure H1 shows an SA adjutant wearing the Italian-style field cap which was favoured by the SA until about 1943, though it may have lingered, and the olive-brown uniform. Figure H2 is wearing the late war (1944) uniform by which time the M1943 *feldmütze* was almost universal. This figure, like that of H3 would fit in with a *Volksturm* group. The final plate, H3, is of a 1945 SA man in light fighting kit, and wearing the olive-brown uniform and a large SA District brassard which does offer a very decent war's end alternative to a standard infantryman. The brassard is that of Styria, and given that there are about 30 District *Gruppe* listed in the text, it seems likely that other *Gruppe* may have sported similar brassards, in their district colours or with a regional emblem. It would have been an interesting matter to explore further.

The 'fighting SA' figures are easily provided, in 20/25mm or indeed 15mm. Both Mick Yarrow's and Peter Pig's 15mm late-war Germans, given the right paint job, will do nicely for an add-on to the *Volksturm*'s last-ditch ranks, or for a patrol in Styria.

I picked up this copy for three pounds in a book sale, but speaking as a wargamer, I don't think it's in any way essential reading.

4 out of 10.

SCOUTS
MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES 220

THE SA 1921-45: HITLER'S STORMTROOPERS



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