

The Chaco War 1932-35: South America's Greatest Modern Conflict

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Comments:

This was a war that I knew nothing about and found the book interesting as a result. Really this volume is a potted history for the most part. The war was between Paraguay and Bolivia over the disputed territory of the Gran Chaco ó a boiling, jungle and thorn-choked wilderness so remote and worthless that it is surprising that either country cared enough to fight over it. Apart from the (suspected) oil fields under the surface, of course.

This was an infantry war with few vehicles or aeroplanes. The Paraguayans had a riverine navy that engaged in amphibious operations and bombardment.

The difference between the two sides was mobilisation ó the Bolivians with a much larger population, failed to mobilise effectively and so the smaller Paraguayan army (which did mobilise effectively) was never outnumbered as it should have been.

Generalship was also a factor with the Paraguayan General Estigarribia showing real ability, always outmanoeuvring the Bolivians who were themselves operating in a very World War I fashion.

An interesting topic and something a little different ó I expect a wargame would have a WWI or Spanish Civil War feel rather than WWII.

--Paul Le Long

