

Armies of the War of the Triple Alliance 1864-70: Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay & Argentina

Osprey Men-At-Arms series No. 499 (2015)
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Comments:

Given the esoteric nature of the subject, this book gives you just the introduction you need, I feel. I had heard of this war ó fought by Paraguay against a coalition of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina ó but only vaguely, and I knew almost nothing about it.

About two-thirds of the book is a primer on the causes and the course of the war ó essentially it was an offensive war by Paraguay intended to grab bits of southern Brazil and northern Argentina and to cut a path through those areas to the small nation of Uruguay on the coast. As a plan it was quixotic, desperate and doomed. Under the leadership of the Paraguayan dictator, Francisco Lopez, the country lost something like 70% casualties ó and about 90% of all adult males were killed, including Lopez himself who fought to the bitter end with only several hundred troops left, mostly children. Total war indeed.

The remainder of the book provides a brief description of the forces involved, their training (little), tactics (rudimentary) and weapons (obsolete). The plates are very nice ó uniforms are ACW/Franco-Prussian style. Battles fit that sort of mould too, but were

fought over very harsh terrain of sub-tropical marshlands and scrub. There were also plenty of naval riverine actions and amphibious actions.

All in all, this is a very gameable war ó armies were small, you can probably (at smaller scales anyway) get away with using ACW or European troops already in your collection; there are a number of varied and interesting actions including amphibious landings, naval actions, assaults on fixed trench lines, skirmishes, guerrilla activity and open field battles.

A cracking read.

