

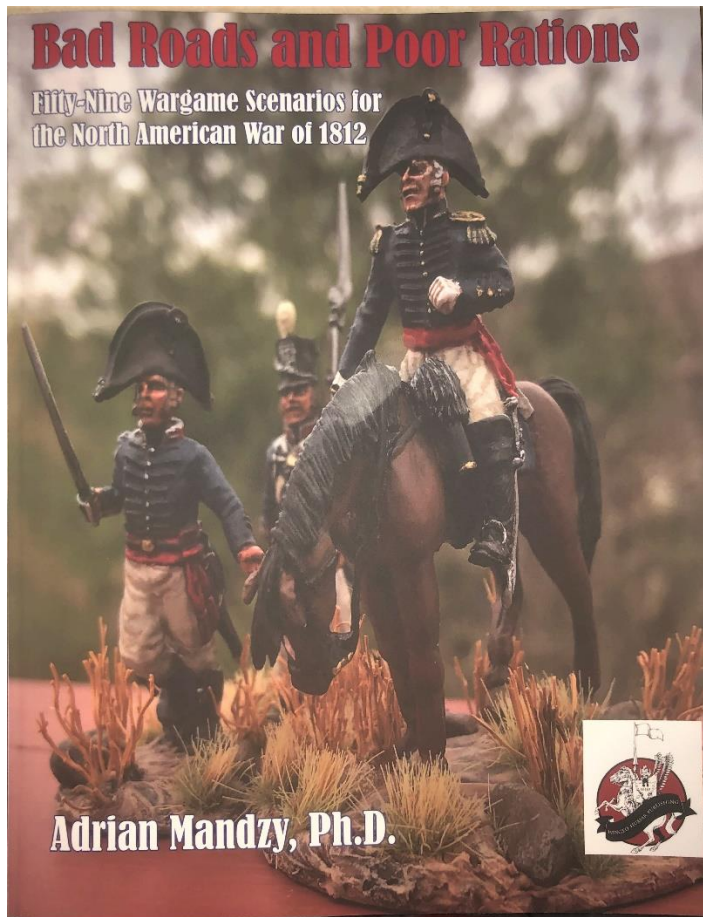
# Wargaming the War of 1812

## A Review of *Bad Roads and Poor Rations: Fifty-nine Wargame Scenarios for the North American War of 1812*

By Adrian Mandzy, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Rich Barbuto

I can hardly wait to tell you about an outstanding new publication on a subject near to my heart. However, some background is perhaps in order. Both Adrian Mandzy and I grew up in western New York, not far from the battlefields we research and write about. We pursued careers and developed our interests. I went into the army as an armor officer. Adrian entered academia and embarked upon the fascinating sphere of battlefield archeology in which he has contributed for twenty years in both the U.S. and Europe. We met at a War of 1812 symposium in Oswego, New York, sponsored by the Friends of Fort Ontario and professionally directed by Paul Lear. Later, Adrian asked if I would be interested in participating in this project. I jumped at the chance. As much as anything, I assisted by scrubbing the orders of battle, ensuring that strength figures were derived from the most creditable scholarly sources. Along the way, I appreciated Adrian's methodologies and framework for this book. Needless to say, I am overwhelmed by the thorough treatment of the subject and usefulness to a new or experienced wargamer!



First, why the War of 1812 – Especially if it is not your current area of wargaming? For a conflict which is in a subordinate position to the Napoleonic wars, this war in North America has much to offer. Campaigns swirled around vast distances in undeveloped and lightly populated regions from the Great Lakes and their connecting rivers, along the Atlantic coast including the very active Chesapeake Bay, and ending along the Gulf coast and decisive battle around New Orleans.

Participants were regulars, yes, but also large numbers of militia and native warriors on both sides. Combat activity spanned numerous small naval and land raids, through brigade-sized battle, and on to land battle by multi-brigade forces. The contents include skirmishes with fewer than 50 participants to campaigns with more than 10,000 soldiers, sailors, marines, militia, and native fighters.

The book also includes naval battle on Lakes Ontario and Erie, Chesapeake Bay, and Lake Borgne near New Orleans.

Second, the scope. Two hundred twenty pages, 166 illustrations, and 67 maps! The reader will enjoy many, many color images of War of 1812 figures from a wide variety of manufacturers and in several scales. Mandzy has enlisted the painting and diorama talents of numerous contributors. You will be pleased with the eye-candy.

Third, the author's approach. Each scenario starts with introductory material setting the strategic situation that put forces into motion. This section further describes the events and decisions that took forces to the battlefield. The scenario then describes the battlefield activity: the plans, maneuvering, key decisions, and results of combat. The scenario is supported by a detailed order of battle and a battle map. The author goes on to offer suggestions on how a gamer might set up his battle, such as what aspects of the battle could be simulated. For example, what effects of terrain, supply, morale, leadership, and quality of troops could be modeled. The author also offers specific victory conditions that link the outcome to the larger strategic or campaign goals. Finally, there is a short bibliography of accessible and suitable books for a gamer who has additional interest in a specific campaign, battle, or skirmish. The scenario does not specify a required scale of figures or size of gaming surface. The gamer uses the rules he is comfortable with.

In an additional section of this full-size, soft-cover book, Mandzy offers information on available lines of figures from 6mm through 54mm. He also mentions rules that fit the period and the terrain.

In the final analysis, *Bad Roads and Poor Rations* reflects the latest scholarship, is written clearly, provides lavish illustrations and maps, and provides any wargamer with what he needs (except figures and rules) to simulate any of a wide variety of land and water operations of the War of 1812. I recommend this work very highly indeed!

*Bad Roads and Poor Rations* is published by Winged Hussar Publishing with a list price of US \$40 and CAN \$42.

To order this book, visit the publisher at [www.wingedhussarpublishing.com](http://www.wingedhussarpublishing.com)

*Bad Roads and Poor Rations* is listed under Enlightenment, Revolutionary Wars & Napoleon.

This publisher has a wide variety of books useful to the wargamer and/or military history buff.