

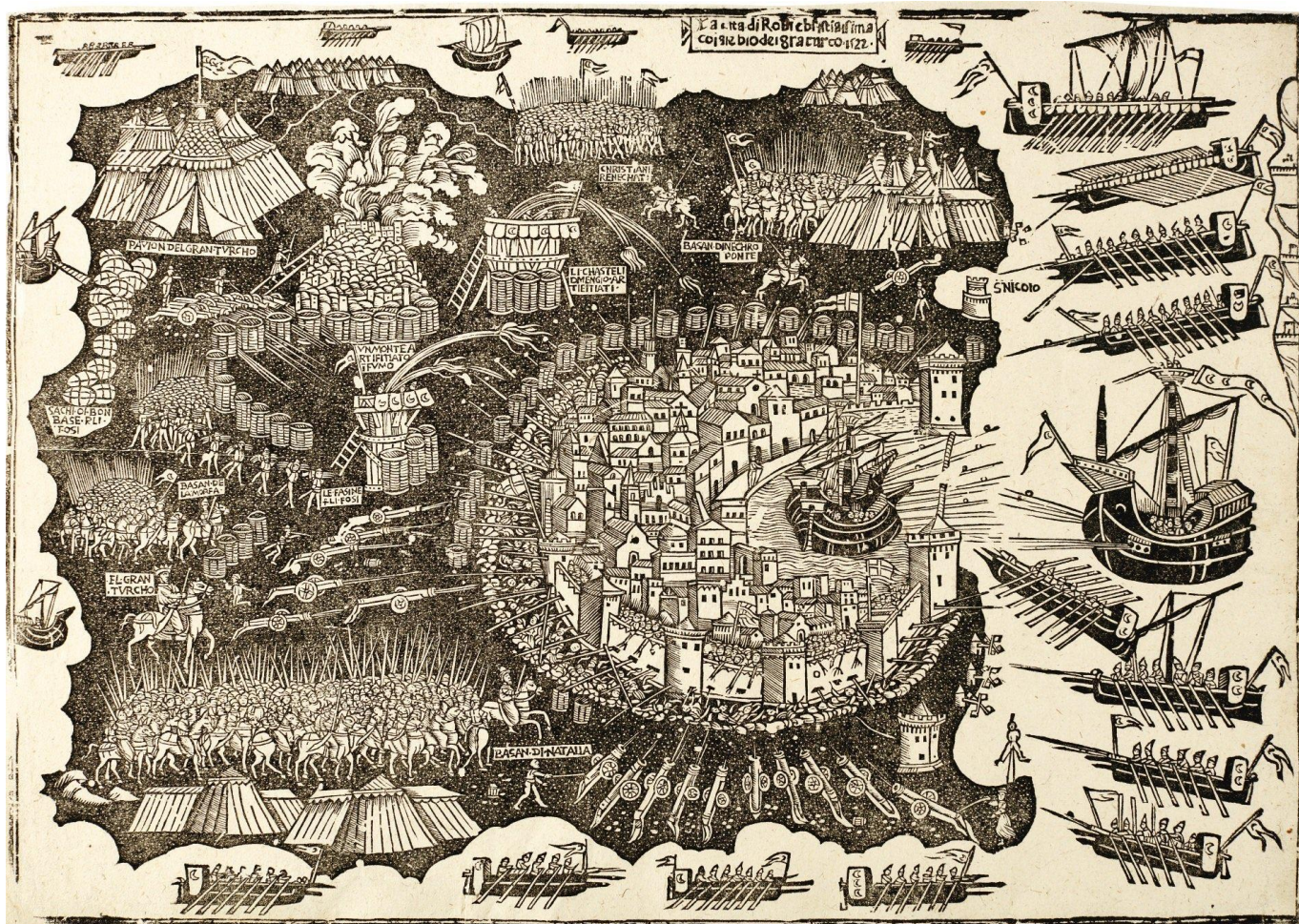


Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

XLVIII, No. 6

June 2022



Siege of Rhodes in 1522.

News and Views

*Message from CMH Secretary
Eric Elder*

First off, we had a stellar West Wars convention this year. Attendance was high throughout the weekend, maybe best I have ever seen. All that matters is everyone had a good time. I hope so, I did.



The current board members were all up for re-election and were all voted in for another term. Also, at the convention we raised \$180 for Greg Cornell's catalytic convertor relief fund.

This month we have two article submissions. Jim Raridon's Part Three article is on the 5th Engineer Special Brigade involvement on D-Day. John Brown shares a HOTT scenario for an upcoming meeting.



May

Unit of the Month

Temporarily no sponsor

Each month, at the monthly meeting, CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts.

CMH Member	Scale	Manufacturer	Era	Unit
Larry Irons	25mm	Chiltern	Dark Ages	Belisarins
Larry Irons	25mm	Old Glory	Dark Ages	Saxen Nobles
Larry Irons	25mm	Navigator	Ancient	German Archers
Dave Manley	28mm	Foot Sore	F&IW	French Militia



Engineers on D-Day

The 5th Engineer Special Brigade on Omaha Beach.

Part Three: Operation OVERLORD

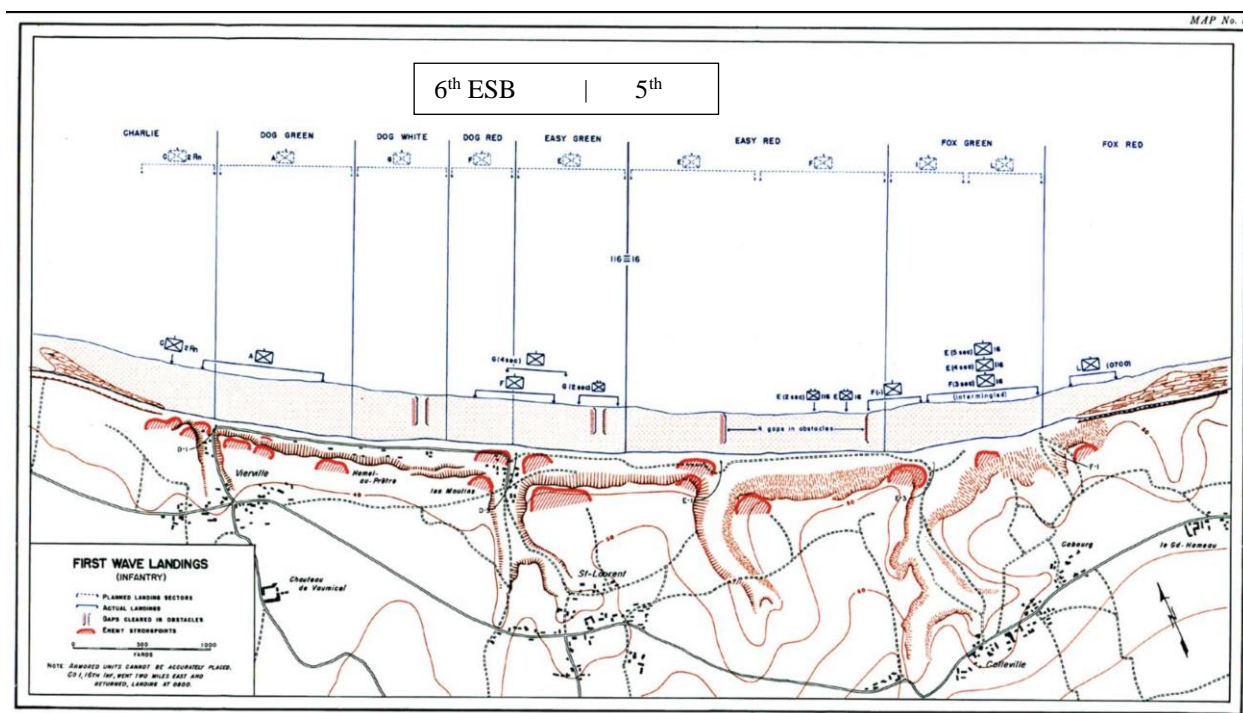
*Article by CMH Member
James L. Rairdon, DM, FLMI*

The months of training and organizing have finally come to an end. The 5th Engineer Special Brigade landed on Omaha Beach alongside the 6th Engineer Special Brigade. The 5th Engineer Special Brigade supported the 1st Infantry Division, and the 6th Engineer Special Brigade supported the 29th Infantry Division. The 1st Engineer Special Brigade supported the 4th Infantry Division on Utah Beach. This article will discuss the 5th Engineer Special Brigade's approach to the beach, the landings, and the actions on the beach.

The Plan for the D-Day Landings

The planning for the United States First Army's landings on the Normandy beaches was conducted under the name Operation NEPTUNE. The Brigade coordinated all the efforts for the invasion with Operation NEPTUNE's plan to ensure that the Brigade completed its assigned tasks. All during this time, supplies were being collected for the invasion and the subsequent movement from the beaches. The initial phase of the brigade plan included the organization of the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group under which were the 5th and 6th Engineer Special Brigades. BGN William M. Hoge, then commander of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade, assumed command of the Provisional Group on 2 March 1944. Colonel William D. Bridges assumed command of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade. The headquarters of the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group was in Torquay in southern England. The various units of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade were located in five camps situated within a radius of 10 miles of the Group headquarters. During the first week in March a study of the Operation NEPTUNE plan was conducted, and the tasks for the engineer special brigades were being broken down from that plan. On 10 April 1944 a meeting was held at Headquarters, Provisional Special Brigade Group in Torquay that was attended by members of the group staff and the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and the S3 of the two brigades then under the group's control. Work on the brigade's plan for Operation NEPTUNE was supervised by the Executive Officer, LTC Irvin M. Rice. On 30 April 1944 the Group's Operation Plan was published. The 5th Engineer Special Brigade's plan was completed by 2 May 1944, and was forwarded to the Commanding General Provisional Engineer Special Brigade for approval. After the 5th Engineer Special Brigade's plan was approved, the Group issued Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group Order No. 3, which was received on 11 May 1944. Brigade Field Order No. 14 was issued on 19 May 1944; Field Orders to the Battalions were issued by 26 May 1944 (DeAman, 1944).

The Normandy landings at Omaha Beach were to be conducted by Force "O," consisting of two Regimental Combat Teams ("RCT,") the 16th RCT of the 1st Infantry Division and the 116th RCT of the 29th Infantry Division. The 16th RCT was to land on Beach Sectors Fox Green and Easy Red in the initial wave, with the 5th Engineer Special Brigade supporting. The 18th RCT and the 26th RCT were to follow in subsequent waves, starting at approximately H-Hour +3 (DeAman, 1944).



The Landing Sectors on Omaha Beach (Wikipedia, 2022).

The beach was characterized by hard firm sand, and at low tide there was between 250 and 400 yards from the waterline to the shingle; at high tide there was between 75 to 125 yards to shingle. The shingle was just about the high-water line and consisted of rounded pebbles 1 to 3 inches in diameter; it formed a ridge 6 feet high and 18 feet wide. Beyond the shingle the land rose to a high ridge approximately 180 feet high, which overlooked the beach. The ground beyond the ridge was characterized by gently rolling country, devoted to agriculture, and consisted of heavy clay that during the dry season permitted easy cross-country movement of military vehicles. There were five exits from Omaha Beach which were closed with concrete roadblocks (DeAeman, 1944; Harrison, 2012)

The mission of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade was:

Support the assault landings of V Corps and the subsequent debarkation of XIX Corps, and other First United States Army and Communication Zone Troops on Omaha Beach.; beginning D-Day. The Engineer Special Brigades under Group control, will organize and operate all shore installations necessary for debarkation, supply, evacuation, and local security, in order to insure the continued movement of personnel, vehicles and supplies across the beach and through MULBERRY "A", an artificial port, to be constructed by the Navy, and the minor ports of Grandcamp-les-Bains and Isigny (DeAeman, 1944, p. 52).

Approaching Omaha Beach

Elements of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade were loaded on the various types of troop transports (APs, APA's and LST's) as well as various other landing craft. The force which was to land on 5 June 1944 sailed from Dorchester in Southern England on the night of 4 June, but due to inclement weather they turned back. On 5 June they set sail late in the day and the crossings were largely uneventful except for a few isolated attacks while at sea. The landing forces were about 15,000 yards off of the beaches by about 0200 hrs. on 6 June 1944 (DeAeman, 1944; Heavey, 2010; Harrison, 2012).

The D-Day Landings¹

H-Hour for the landings on Omaha Beach was 0630 hrs., and the first landings by the 5th Engineer Special Brigade occurred by 0700 hrs. Overnight the 8th Air Force had bombed in the Communication Zone, and at H -45 minutes the Navy bombarded the beaches. The actual minute-by-minute arrival of the landing craft is uncertain, but Companies E and F of the 16th Infantry Regiment landed at about H-Hour. The 37th Combat Engineer Beach Group started landing with the first wave between 0625 and 0640 hrs. (Heavey, 2010; Harrison, 2012).

Chaos reigned during the first hour of the invasion. The tide at H-Hour was three feet lower than the seaward obstacles and was rising at about one foot per hour. Many of the first wave were landed in the surf and had to wade to the shoreline. This meant that there was still approximately 200 yards of beach to the shingle. The troops upon landing took partial cover behind the beach obstacles, but the rising tide forced them to move to the area below the cliffs. Casualties were high, and while there were a few small incursions up the cliffs the bulk of the landing force was sheltered behind the shingle (DeAeman, 1944; Wikipedia, 2022).

Boat Team 14 was hit by a shell as soon as it landed, killing most of the crew. The engineers began trying to clear obstacles from the beach. Team 12 laid explosives on beach obstacles, but only five were destroyed, because the infantry was still around the obstacles. Team 7 was preparing to set off their explosives to clear obstacles when an LCM crashed through the stakes setting off teller mines wrecking the craft. Only six of the 16 M4 tank dozers got ashore, and they were prime targets and were destroyed. In all, only five gaps were blown in the obstacles, and only one on Easy Red beach proved useful (DeAeman, 1944).



Robert Capa gets closer to his subject, exposing his back to fire from the dunes.

Engineer in the Surf, Omaha Beach (Capa, Morvan & Trefouel, 2015).

In the second hour chaos continued to reign, and while there were a few small incursions up the cliffs, the bulk of the landing force was still sheltered behind the shingle. Many troops were not in their designated

¹ The landings from west to east were the 4th US Infantry Division on Utah Beach, the 1st US and 29th US Infantry Divisions on Omaha Beach, the British 50th Infantry Division on Gold Beach, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division on Juno Beach, and the British 3rd Infantry Division on Sword Beach. The 82nd and 101st US Airborne Divisions were dropped into the Carentan Peninsula, and the British 6th Airborne Division was dropped behind Sword Beach near the Orne River.

landing areas. For example, elements of the 116th RCT were mixed with the 16th RCT, and Group engineers, who were charged with clearing the western end of the beach, landed far to the east. However, a few strong points existed and soldiers had cleared their weapons of sand and were firing. The confusion in the second hour is illustrated by the story of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion, which landed several groups near Exit E-1, the craft carrying the mine removal platoon of Company B was driven away from the shore twice by artillery fire and was finally hit and had to beach. The reconnaissance group of Company C was forced to make an emergency landing. Elements of the 348th Engineer Combat Battalion landed near Exit E-1, instead of on Fox Beach as planned. In many instances the Engineers were fighting as infantry (DeAeman, 1944).



US Army Bulldozer (Pinterest, n.d.)

Between 0900 and 1200 hrs. members of Brigade distinguish themselves. For example, Privates Vinton W Dove and William J. Shoemaker of the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion operated bulldozers up and down the beach under constant artillery and mortar fire cleared beach obstacles and made paths for vehicles through the shingle strip, removed roadblocks, filled in anti-tank ditches, and helped to prepare road exits. These two men were recommended for Silver Stars by their commanding officer but were actually awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by higher headquarters (Heavey, 2010).

At about 1030 hrs. the efforts of the Navy to relieve the deadlock increased. LCT 30 and LCI 544 drove at full speed through the obstacles in front of Exit E-3. The craft beached and continue to fight it out, engaging enemy fire from the house on the cliff. As a result, they facilitated further advances up Exit E-3 by the 16th RCT, and they established the fact that the beach obstacles could be breached by ramming. Other craft follow their example and from that point on landings were almost continuous. At approximately the same time, two destroyers from the Destroyer Fire Support Group swung broadside to within 1000 yards of the beach fired at German positions. They first concentrated on emplacements and the houses on the cliff at Exit D-3 then continuing to the east. The fire was highly effectively placed and played an important part in neutralizing the enemy defenses. Engineers also operated heavy weapons from the 16th RCT, which helped to suppress enemy fire from the cliff. At about 1100 hrs. the 18th RCT landed on EASY RED beach, with the 2nd Battalion in the lead. At almost the same time the 115th RCT was approaching EASY GREEN and EASY RED beaches. This established the beachhead and elements had begun moving inland where they could regroup. By 1230 hrs. the artillery and machine gun fire had lessened (DeAeman, 1944, Heavey, 2010; Harrison, 2012).

By 1500 hrs. the situation had improved markedly. Enemy fire on the eastern sectors was much less and Exits E-1 and E-3 were being opened. By late afternoon there were five large and six small gaps opened. The concentration of gaps around Exit E-1 made it the primary exit on D-Day. While none of the units had reached their D-Day objectives, they had started moving off of the beach. Casualties were heavy on D-Day. The 37th Engineer Combat Battalion with an assigned strength of 37 officers 3 warrants and 751 enlisted men for a total of 791, had 4 officers and 17 enlisted men killed, 2 officers and 70 enlisted men wounded, and 3 enlisted men missing in action DeAeman, 1944). According to Heavey (2010):

Hardest hit of all brigade units what is the 37th Engineer Combat Battalion which lost its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lionel F. Smith, it's S-2, S-3, and two of its four company commanders. Its officers were certainly real *leaders!* (p. 113)

Even though the D-Day objective were not all accomplished, there was much individual effort and heroism. The Brigade was able to help clear beach obstacles and mines, they helped to open exits from the beach. In many cases they fought as infantry alongside the soldiers of the 16th RCT. Next would be the months of effort put into getting supplies to the advancing US First Army (later the 12th US Army Group).



Essayons (Let us try)

Next Month:

The 5th Engineer Special Brigade After D-Day

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West Wars 2022 Photos



Gods of Egypt: Horus versus Set

July Meeting Game Scenario

By John Brown

Careful study of mythology, archaeology, and the History Channel leads one to the inevitable conclusion the Pyramids of Egypt were designed by space aliens to facilitate inter-stellar travel and the animal-headed Gods of Egypt are cultural memories of these visitors. The aliens were not all of a like mind or from the same place, so conflicts occasionally arose among them. These conflicts merged into myth along with the “Gods” themselves. Perhaps the most famous of such disputes pit Hawk-Headed Horus against Jackal (or Aardvark?) Headed Set.

Horus was the son of Osiris and Isis, descended from spacefarers who engineered the Star Gate Edfu and thrust through it to explore Earth and exploit its resources. Osiris and Isis took up with the thriving human agricultural population of the Nile Delta where their technological prowess, assumed to be supernatural, soon gained them deified status. This gave them control of Earth’s largest and most prosperous single concentration of *Homo Sapiens* and a sturdy support base from which to scour the planet for Celestial Ethereum Hydrate (CEH). CEH, formed when Celestial Ethereum (“Star Dust”) interacts with water at 72 degrees Fahrenheit, is essential to inter-stellar Star Gate technology.

Set and his consort Nephthys arrived after Osiris and Isis were established. Also seeking CEH, they settled in less populous Upper Egypt and built a support base by charming lesser concentrations of *Homo Sapiens* such as Desert Dwellers, Sea Peoples, and Queen Aso of Ethiopia. Still under-staffed for their requirements, they further imported Crocodilian Warriors and Triceratine (mistaken by the Egyptians for Hippopotamine) Cavalry through the Star Gate. Egyptian Mythology recognizes each of these diverse populations as a source of strength for Set.



Set's Crocodilian Warriors Ready for Battle

Rivalry emerged among the CEH seekers, aggravated when Osiris insulted Set and seduced Nephthys. Set, assisted by Queen Aso, overcame Osiris, dismembered him, and scattered his body parts. Isis initiated a Make Osiris Great Again (MOGA) movement, gathered his pieces, and resurrected him using Recombinant DNA Technology. Meanwhile Horus mobilized Hamitic national sentiment against Set’s efforts to amalgamate the Egyptians with his own adherents – or perhaps replace them altogether. Horus

assumed command of the military campaign against Set. Osiris and Isis raised money by applying Recombinant DNA Technology to the wealthiest of their subjects who died. To these, post-treatment requirements to wear protective linens over erstwhile dead flesh seemed a small price to pay.

Our 10 July HOTT scenario will recreate the climactic battle of this prolonged conflict. Horus and Set both realize the Star Gate Edfu, thinly secured by an inter-galactic custodial staff, is central to their long-term plans. Both Horus and Set are determined to seize it. Horus advances with a largely Egyptian army amply reinforced with other deities, mummies, and exotic creatures of various types. Set advances to meet him with a contingent each built around Desert Dwellers, Sea Peoples, Ethiopians, Crocodilian Warriors, and Triceratine Cavalry. Star Gate Edfu is in the middle. Who will triumph?

If you would like to participate in this epic battle, please contact Jim Rairdon (recruiting for Horus) or John Brown (recruiting for Set). We'll be playing HOTT 2.1 in 15mm. Plans are for 120 AP on a 4' by 6' mat but the scenario can be expanded as necessary. Since a Star Gate is in play, we enjoy great flexibility concerning what type of armies get into action. The consequences will last for a thousand years – or at least enough time to vacuum up all the CEH that has settled on the planet.



Set's Triceratine (reported as Hippopotamine) Cavalry

May

Game of the Month

Temporarily no sponsor

Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
Larry Irons	15mm	ADLG	Ancients Tournament
Dave Manley	28mm	Fist full of lead	2 nd Battle on Snowshoes
Hugh Thompson	15mm	Etat Sans Resultant	Action at Ordac
Larry Armin	28mm	Fist full of lead	Bad guys vs Good guys
Dave Newport	15mm	Homegrown	Guadalcanal



2022 Conventions

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>
June		
8-12	Origins Game Fair	Columbus, OH
July		
20-24	Historicon	Lancaster, PA
22-24	Twisted Lords	Oklahoma City, OK
23-31	World Boardgaming Championships	Seven Springs, PA
August		
4-7	Gen-Con	Indianapolis, IN
19-21	Histori-KC Fest	Overland Park, KS
19-21	Nashcon	Nashville, TN
September		
1-4	Hurricon	Orlando, FL
October		
7-8	Advance the Colors	Springfield, OH
November		
4-6	Rock-Con	Rockford, IL
4-6	Fall-In	Lancaster, PA
?	Midwest GameFest	Kansas City, MO
10-13	MillenniumCon	Rolling Rock, TX

Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado Military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when the meeting is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreation Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver, Colorado. The club also hosts gaming at least one Friday night a month, called “Friday Night Fights” (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. Friday meetings will be held at a future determined location. See website for latest information.



CMH maintains ties with numerous local, regional, and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers serving on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms of office are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$60.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mailed newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$60.00

Half year Adult Membership: \$30.00

(For NEW members who join after June 30)

Family Membership: \$60.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)

Student Membership: \$30.00 (16 to 22 years old)

Children: free (younger than 16 accompanied by member)

Club Links:

Web Site: <https://cmhweb.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cmhgamers/>

Groups.io Group: <https://groups.io/g/cmhweb>

Discord: <https://discord.gg/DAP2Gn>

CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado Military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

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