

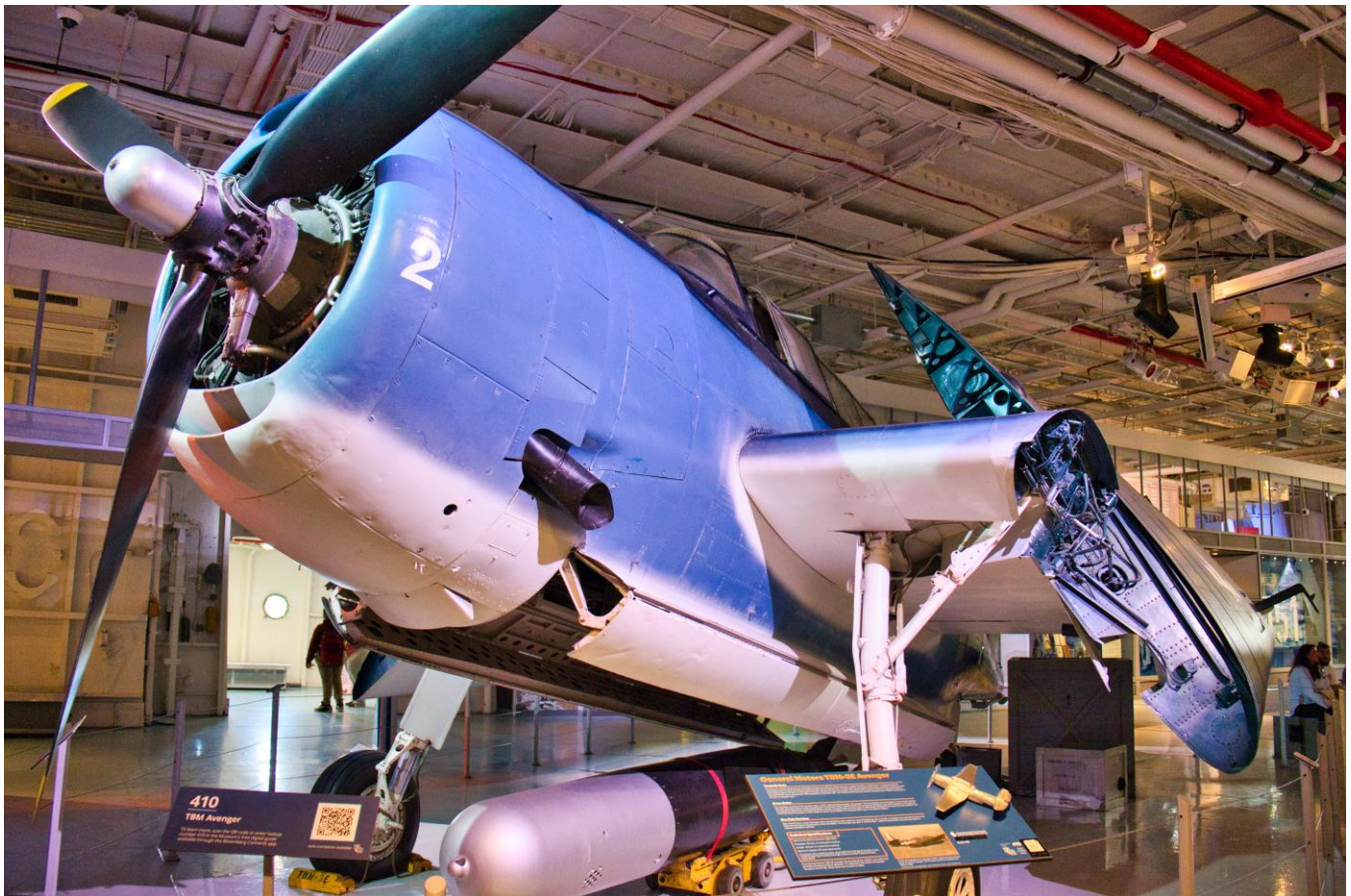


# Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

LII, No. 6

June 2026



Avenger on hanger deck of USS Intrepid

# News and Views

*Message from CMH Secretary  
Eric Elder*

Thank you to John Carter and John Brown for your articles this month.

We had another successful West Wars in May. We had 18 people attend on Saturday and 27 on Sunday. There were about four games per session, and all games were well attended. I thought our swap session was good. I was glad to bring home less stuff than I brought.

Recently I visited New York City. The only military site I visited was the USS Intrepid aircraft carrier and USS Growler submarine. This was the first time I have been on a cold war vintage U.S. submarine. It operated from 1958 to 1964. This submarine was designed to operate 500 miles off the Soviet Union in the Pacific and if ordered, launch nuclear cruise missiles while surfaced. In theory it could launch four, but we were told that they expected to only launch two before Soviet detected the launches and fire missiles that would take out the submarine. It was good to hear from a crew member who served on the submarine about the submarine and the cruises.



Regulus I missile on USS Growler (Aug 1963)

Our annual vote for our club board took place on the Sunday of West Wars. The club voted to continue with the same Board members in the same positions.

The Baker Community Center, where we meet, will be undergoing renovations between our May and June meetings. The expectation is all will be done by our June meeting. If not, we will notify the membership via our groups.io site.

# May

## Unit of the Month

Sponsored by Tom Dye



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                           |
|--------------------|-------|--------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| <b>JIM RAIRDON</b> | 15mm  | Essex        | Medieval | Byzantine Commanders & Cavalry |
| Jeff Lambert       | 1/144 | Revell       | WWII     | Hurricane & Spitfire           |

Winner in **RED**

# West Wars Photos



# May

## Game of the Month

Sponsored by Tom Dye



Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.

| CMH Member        | Scale | Rules          | Description           |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Jeff Lambert      | 1/144 | Angels One Six | Demo Game, WWII Air   |
| Don Cygan         | 3mm   | Harrier!       | Playtest Mechanics    |
| <b>JOHN BROWN</b> | 15mm  | ADLG           | Achaemenid Tournament |
| Dave Manley       | 28mm  | Sharp Practice | Battle of             |

**Winner in RED**



# Achaemenids Fight on in West Wars ADLG Tournament

*Article by CMH Member*

*John Brown*

West Wars featured the first round of our now customary spring *L'Art de la Guerre* (ADLG) tournament. The theme is “Armies and Enemies of the Achaemenid Persians”. A list of eligible armies was provided in advance and appeared in the May Newsletter. John Brown and Richard Kasten showed up with Early Achaemenids (List 64). Greg Rold brought Scythians (List 76). Pat Harvey, Jim Rairdon, and Steve Van Dyke each brought an Alexandrian Macedonian Army (List 39). Our first round pitted Macedonians against not-Macedonians, and thus armies relying on the powerful melee capabilities of phalanxes and impact cavalry against armies relying on mobile firepower.

Greg Rold’s Scythians represented the apex of mobile firepower. He fielded two robust commands of horse archers (mostly medium, with a few heavy and light) and a diminutive command dominated by light and medium missile infantry. Jim Rairdon’s Macedonians featured a command dominated by phalanxes, a balanced command of heavy and medium infantry, and a cavalry command including heavy, medium, and light. One flank of the battlefield featured fields and a marsh whereas the rest was open.



**Macedonians and Scythians Meet. Note the Rush on the Macedonian Camp.**

The Macedonians gamely advanced into the hail of Scythian firepower, hoping to force the Scythians to accept melee or leave the board. The Scythians pulled “shoot and scoot” evade maneuvers, attriting the advancing Macedonians but losing running room with each successive turn. The Macedonians eventually forced a fight and inflicted significant losses. Alas for them, the Scythian’s diminutive mixed command, benefitting from Macedonian preoccupation elsewhere, snuck through the rough terrain and sacked their camp. This and losses to archery pushed the Macedonians beyond their break point even as fierce melee combat raged on.

Richard Kasten's Early Achaemenids were another army in which every unit could shoot. He fielded six elite armored horse archers, ten Immortals or *Sparabara* (mixed medium swords and bows), two bow armed medium camels, a light horse archer, and a light bow. Pat Harvey's Macedonians faced him with a command dominated by phalanxes, a balanced command with elite Companion heavy impact cavalry and Hypaspist medium spearmen, and a command mixing Thessalian heavy cavalry and Thracian peltasts. The terrain featured a large field (rough) on one flank and patches of woods on the other.



**Achaemenids and Macedonians Face Off**



**Sparabara and Immortals Assault Peltasts**

The Macedonian phalanxes pushed forward in the center and were met by armored horse archers, who delayed them with shoot and scoot tactics. The Companions and Hypaspists threaded their way through the wooded flank but were delayed by terrain and the Achaemenid camels – which frighten horses. Meanwhile the Immortals and *Sparabara* swept online across the field (rough) terrain on the other flank, presenting a wall of bow-armed medium infantry ten units across. They outnumbered and overwhelmed the peltasts opposing them, turning the Macedonian flank. Macedonian losses mounted; advances on the right and center could not make up for the collapse of their left. They broke.

John Brown's Early Achaemenids featured a command of six armored and two light horse archers, a command of five *Sparabara* (mixed medium swords and bows), and a command of three Immortals (elite mixed medium swords and bows) and four heavy spearmen supported by two war wagons. Steve Van Dyke's Macedonians met them with a command of four elite Companion impact cavalry with two horse archers, a command with six phalanxes and three light infantry javelinists, and a command with two medium cavalry, four medium spearmen, and three light infantry bowmen. The center of the battlefield was open but ringed by fields (rough). Within the Achaemenid deployment area there was a gully on the right flank and a plantation on the left.



**Macedonians Encircled by Achaemenid Archery Fire**

Achaemenid armored horse archers erupted from the gully in an ambush and swept around the Macedonian left flank. They were joined by the *Sparabara* moving through a field (rough). The two commands converged on the Macedonian command of medium cavalry and spearmen, annihilating the cavalry and hammering the spearmen with archery fire. Meanwhile the Immortals held inside the lip of a field in the center facing the phalanxes and the war wagons rolled towards the Companions on the Macedonian right flank. The Companions sought to reposition to the left flank and the phalanxes attacked into the field at a disadvantage rather than endure further archery fire. Assailed or under fire from all sides and with the Companions out of position, the Macedonians capitulated.

When the dust settled, John Brown, Richard Kasten and Greg Rold were tied for first place with 5 points each. Points per game are awarded at 5 for breaking an opponent, 4 for having an advantage of over 20% when time runs out, 3 for a tie with players within 20% of each other when time runs out, 2 for being at a disadvantage of over 20% when time runs out, and 1 for being broken. Taken together, the day's results rewarded armies relying on mobile firepower. The games were tricky balances, with troops best at melee trying to close before troops relying on firepower could do too much damage to them. This time fortune favored the bow; it will not always be so.

The tournament will go for another round at the June 14 meeting, with all players still in striking distance of final victory. If you missed the May meeting but would like to play a round of ADLG, please join us in June. You will be most welcome, and we will be happy to work you in with our late-comers bracket. Contact John Brown if you have questions.

# Historic Location of the Month

## *Pier 88*

### *New York City*

The S.S. Normandie liner caught fire in February 1942 while being converted to a troopship. Water from the firefighting caused the ship to capsize and sink. The ship was never recommissioned, and she was scrapped in October 1946.



# **Militia: Reality and Myth**

*Article by CMH Member*

*John Carter*

**The militia played a big part in our early wars through the War of 1812 and, as such have acquired a reputation that is mixed from glorious to embarrassing.**

**Let's take a look.**

**Militia, in early American history were men locally raised for local defense, primarily against Indians. Sometimes that defense became offense, in reprisals and occasionally in the ongoing wars with the French. Success was mixed. Their training was a sometime thing, often involving a keg. At best, there would be a little close order drill and some shooting. But, there was little if any training with the bayonet and none of the repeated practice that creates a cohesive unit for a bayonet attack or defense.**

**So, what were the results? Isreal Putnam once said that if you protected the militia's legs with a fence or wall, they would fight all day. If you protected their heads with a higher wall, they would hunker down and not fight at all. And if you did not protect them at all they would run. Dan Morgan, before Cowpens, commented that he would never position militia near a swamp, because there would be no keeping them out of it. Washington, early in the Revolution, for want of anything better, tried to maneuver them in the field, but the moment the Redcoats lowered bayonets, they ran.**

**This is hardly surprising. When a group of confident, trained, practiced troops lower bayonets and let out a shout, as you look at them, it feels like they are all coming at you. If you are not well trained, with the utmost confidence in your fellows, your guts turn to water. At that moment, being anywhere else seems like a good idea. Not surprisingly, to Washington's frequent dismay, they ran.**

**So, why was there such faith in militia? Often, there was little else and they could make up numbers, but using them as maneuver units was generally fatal. There were successes, just enough to create the idea that militia were useful.**

2

**Lexington And Concord:** During the retreat, Col. Smith, the British commander, knew that he was being swarmed by steadily arriving militia, who could overwhelm him by sheer numbers if he stopped and made a stand. He had to keep moving, which meant that the Minutemen and Militia could snipe at his troops as they moved. Even with the arrival of Percy's reinforcements the problem continued. Quantity has a quality of its own. But, every time the Militia tried to make a stand they failed. Bayonets triumphed. Still, it was a British defeat and gave the Americans confidence in their Citizen Soldiers.

**Bunker Hill:** Here the Militia had its legs protected in a quickly built redoubt. Even better, the British arrogantly decided that they could take the redoubt head on, by main force. They did not just go around, secure Charleston Neck in the redoubt's rear, and collapse the whole position. So, marching straight into the fire, they were duly cut down until the Rebel ammo ran out, and then British Bayonets cleared the position. Another victory, but the British learned and Howe never again tried a blind unsupported head on assault. See Long Island and Brandywine.

**Saratoga:** The famed turn out of militia following the Jane McRae atrocity leaves out the fact that the real fighting was conducted by regular Continental Army units, who were beginning to learn their business.

**Cowpens:** Here Morgan understood the weaknesses of militia. He knew they would not stand, so he famously asked them for two volleys, which they delivered, and then fled. Headstrong Tarleton, not realizing that he was being played, just followed Morgan's plan, right into the second line where he got the same treatment. Then, weakened, he got to meet the Continentals and defeat. But, note, Morgan never thought of using the militia as maneuver troops. He understood their fragility.

**King's Mountain:** Here, again, was a special scenario. The American leaders had available the Over Mountain men, an unusually hardy lot. They were told, if pushed by bayonets, not to make a stand but to fall back shooting. As soon as that attack lost steam, follow up resuming the push forward. Since Ferguson was encircled it, was not unlike an anaconda, squeezing until the enemy

collapsed. But, afterword, their goals achieved, the Over Mountain Men went back over the mountain and did not continue to serve.

**War of 1812:** Jefferson famously said that taking Canada was merely a matter of marching. The problem was that the militia would not leave their immediate area to go on an offensive, frequently leaving the Regulars in the lurch.

**New Orleans:** Once again, the legs were protected, while Pakenham obligingly launched a head on assault. Oops!

So, how did the Americans finally succeed if the Militia were so bad? As Washington had insisted from the beginning, a permanent regular trained army was needed. Congress, afraid of the dangers posed to the government by a trained army refused, until results dictated otherwise. When they were finally trained up to British standards, by von Steuben, at Valley Forge, they became a force to be reckoned with. But, often numbers of Continentals were small and militia was relied upon, as at Camden, and the results were disastrous.

But, if Militia were unreliable on the battlefield they were critical to ultimate victory. The Rebels arranged that their people led the local militia. This meant that Loyalists were harassed and intimidated, so that they had a hard time organizing in support of the government. It was like being in a hostile gang's turf. The harassment included the physical, (Tarring and feathering or worse) destruction of property, eviction, etc. The militia were a constant source of intelligence for the Continentals.

So, after the Revolution, why did Congress not learn its lesson? Congress continued to be afraid of an organized military and a future "Cromwell." There were just enough Militia "Successes" to seem to say that a Citizen army could spring up in a minute and beat all comers. It also saved scarce money. Even the failed first campaigns against the Indians in the 1790's did not teach anything. It was the failures of 1812 that finally moved Congress to allow a professional army who would be backed by volunteers in wartime. They even allowed a Military Academy, which would have left many of the founders aghast, but by that time, they were dead.

# 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 our groups.io site for the 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:

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

- Our Groups.io page is the best way to see what our club is up to.

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

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

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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