Battle factfiles

## the French Revolutionary wars

The battle of Valmy (20th September 1792)

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| Who? | France | vs. | Prussia and the Holy Roman Empire |
| Commanders | Kellermann, Dumouriez |  | The Duke of Brunswick |
| Numbers | 32,000 |  | 34,000 |
| Casualties | 300 |  | 184 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* COMMAND AND CONTROL
* ‘Career open to the talents’ –Brunswick’s retreat, Kellermann’s incisive positioning
* Demi-brigades – the Cannonade of Valmy, exploiting French artillery supremacy (de Gribeauval)
* TOTAL WAR
* ‘Vive la Nation’ – revolutionary élan of Kellermann’s force, contrasting with the lacklustre Prussian hordes

The battle of wattignes (15th-16th October 1793)

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| Who? | France | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Carnot, Fromentin, Balland |  | Josias of Coburg |
| Numbers | 45,000 |  | 30,000 |
| Casualties | 5,000 |  | 3,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP – the Carnot question
* Glover: ‘the organiser of victory’
* Ineffective at Wattignes – over-complex double-envelopment attempted (links to Lee’s initial bold manoeuvres during the Seven Day Battles)
* MANPOWER
* Numbers determined the outcome of the battle – the French 3:2 superiority in troops enabled Carnot to suffer a considerably higher number of casualties, in comparison to Coburg
* Impact of the ‘Levèe en Masse’ – contrast with the relative numerical equanimity between Austrian and French forces at Valmy
* ORGANISATION
* Divisional movement to the battlefield (Balland, Fromentin etc.) – shades of the Napoleonic ‘march dispersed, fight concentrated’ witnessed during the Ulm and Wagram campaigns
* Skirmisher advance – ‘l’ordre mixte’
* Columnar attack – linking back to Carnot’s mass conscription

Toulon, late 1793

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Britain |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Dugommier |  | O’Hara |
| Numbers | 37,000 |  | 15,000 |
| Casualties | 2,000 |  | 4,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP – excellent example of Napoleon’s skill as a commander
* Personal leadership – ‘never left the batteries’
* Cajoled suppliers, organised arsenals, commandeered foundries
* Promoted to general at the age of 24
* TACTICS
* Bombardment followed by advance (used throughout the era – useful in arguing that tactics remained the same in the titular period)

The Italian Campaign (1794-1797)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Piedmont, Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Massèna |  | Beaulieu, Wurmser |
| Numbers | 49,300 |  | 80,000 |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* ALLIANCES
* Weak bond between the Austrians and the Italian city states – Napoleon deliberately targeted the Piedmontese and the Neapolitans, knocking them out of the overarching conflict
* Foch: ‘Now I know about coalitions, I respect Napoleon rather less’
* STRATEGY
* Fast follow-up victories (three battles in three days – Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego)
* Targeting of individual enemy forces
* Speed and mobility (300 miles covered in six weeks by Napoleon in June-July 1796, marching through Florence, Livorno, Bologna, Modena, Verona and Milan, procuring 40 million francs)
* Bold manoeuvre – Lannes and Augereau’s crossing of the Po
* DECISIVE BATTLE – Rivoli
* ‘March dispersed, fight concentrated’ – Rey, Augereau, Sérurier
* Concentrated artillery batteries (links with the massed gun emplacements used in the Soviet Vistula offensive of Jan. 1945)

## THe napoleonic wars

The Battle of marengo, 13th June 1800

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| Who? | France | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Kellermann, Lannes |  | Melas, Ott |
| Numbers | 15,000 (11,000 in support) |  | 29,100 |
| Casualties | 4,600 |  | 6,481 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Bold crossing of the Alps (first since Charlemagne – Operation Yellow’s strike through the Ardennes)
* Discipline in retreat – Lannes’ echelons, Gardanne’s withdrawal
* Employment of the Consular Guard to ‘shore up’ the French right
* Kellermann’s charge – 400 cavalry took 2,000 Austrian prisoners (typical Napoleonic strike)

The ULM Campaign, September-October 1805

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Lannes |  | Ferdinand, Mack |
| Numbers | 200,000 |  | 72,000 |
| Casualties | 2,000 |  | 60,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* ‘Le manœuvre sur les derrières’ (envelopment)
* Dynamic offence – quintessentially Napoleonic
* Mobility – 150 miles in two weeks (similarities with Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley)
* ORGANISATION
* Corps system (125 mile front on the Rhine reduced to 40 mile front on the Danube)
* Impact of training – each corps trained on the Boulogne Coast for over eighteen months in divisional manoeuvre
* ‘OPEN TO THE TALENTS’
* Davout (noble) next to Murat (son of an innkeep) and Ney (son of a cooper)

The Battle of Austerlitz, 2nd December 1805

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Austria, Russia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Davout |  | Archduke Charles, Kutusov |
| Numbers | 74,200 |  | 86,000 |
| Casualties | 8,000 |  | 27,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* PREPARATION
* Topological Bureau of the Imperial Headquarters – identification of the marshy right and the importance of the Pratzen Heights
* ‘Gentlemen, examine this ground carefully. It is going to be a battlefield and you will have a part to play on it’ (Napoleon – two weeks beforehand)
* TACTICS
* Envelopment on the right
* Deliberate weakening, to enable Soult’s corps to break through the centre
* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Davout’s III corps of 10,000 men repelled 36,000 Russians and Austrians
* STRATEGY
* The decisive battle
* ‘Let us finish this war with a thunderclap’
* Francis I declared an armistice the very next day

The battle of Jena, 14th October 1806

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Prussia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Davout |  | Brunswick, von Hohenlohe |
| Numbers | 67,000 |  | 120,500 |
| Casualties | 14,920 |  | 33,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TACTICS AND STRATEGY
* Classic ‘manoeuvre sur les derrieres’ – attack upon the Prussian flanks
* Napoleon’s employment of strength at the decisive point
* Decisive battle – knocked Prussia out of the Coalition
* Lengthy pursuit, by the Emperor’s cavalry
* CORPS MOVEMENT
* Davout’s III corps at Auerstadt – 27,000 repelled 60,000
* Lannes’ relief of Ney
* ‘March dispersed, fight concentrated’ – 24 miles per day, 9 days in a row (similar speeds to the German infantry during Barbarossa)
* IMPERIAL HEADQUARTERS
* Berthier sent ahead spies, enabling Napoleon to cross the Saale River
* Exploited Prussian weaknesses – 90,000 Prussian troops garrisoned in fortresses
* Use of topology – Landgrafenburg Plateau

The battle of eylau, 8th October 1807

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Augereau |  | Bennigsen |
| Numbers | 48,000 (30,000 in support) |  | 63,500 |
| Casualties | 22,000 |  | 18,000 |
| Outcome | Undecided |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Crude ‘punch through’ approach
* Largest cavalry charge of the era – Murat’s 10,400 horse
* Napoleon – maintained the Guard in reserve
* ORGANISATION
* Mixed order – presence of significant cavalry reserve
* Corps – Augereau’s failure (stumbled, in freezing fog, upon a Russian artillery battery, losing 5,000 troops in fifteen minutes), Davout’s resilience

The battle of friedland, 14th june 1806

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Ney, Victor |  | Bennigsen |
| Numbers | 80,000 |  | 60,000 |
| Casualties | 11,500 |  | 20,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Skilful employment of the Imperial Guard (similarities with Lee’s adroit usage of A.P Hill’s division at Antietam, to reinforce the Rebel right, near Burnside’s Bridge)
* Ney’s frontal charge through Sortlack Wood
* Offence – Victor’s artillery advance (General Senarmont’s ‘pepper-pot’ advance inflicted 4,000 casualties in 25 minutes)
* Lannes – utilised skirmisher movement to disguise numerical inferiority (links to Magruder’s deception, during the Battle of Yorktown)
* ORGANISATION
* Exploited Bennigsen’s weak positioning – troops caught in the bend of the River Alle

The peninsular war, 1808-1814

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| Who? | France | vs. | Britain, Portugal, Spanish irregulars |
| Commanders | Soult, Suchet, Dupont |  | Wellington, Moore |
| Numbers | 224,000-406,000 (varying over the period) |  | 35,000-50,000 guerrillas, varying British forces |
| Casualties | - |  | - |
| Outcome | Coalition victory |  |  |

* BAILÈN, July 1808
* Poor generalship – Dupont’s division of force (separation fromVedel’s division)
* Castaños – adroit manoeuvre
* GUERRILLA CAMPAIGNING
* £2.65 million p.a. funding from Britain
* 200 men to escort a single dispatch
* 1811: Massèna required 70,000 men to maintain communications links between Paris and Madrid
* LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS
* Three lines across the 29-mile Lisbon Peninsula
* Defended by 628 guns
* 165 fortified redoubts
* Telegraph system (enabling rapid response to French attacks)
* WELLIGTONIAN DEFENCE
* Vimeiro
* Surprise offence at Salamanca
* WEAPONRY
* Usage of the Baker rifle, by elite British regiments
* Shooting of General Colbert at long range in 1809
* Sniping at officers and SNCOs

the battle of wagram, 5th-6TH JULY 1809

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Davout, Lannes |  | Archduke Charles, Hohenzollen |
| Numbers | 161,000 |  | 155,000 |
| Casualties | 34,000 |  | 41,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TECHNOLOGY
* Chappé semaphore-telegraph system (250 miles/day) – enabled Napoleon to control deployments on the move
* AUSTRIAN REFORMS (Archduke Charles, after Austerlitz)
* Introduction of nine Jäger battalions
* Formalisation of drill
* Corps system
* THE BATTLE OF ASPERN-ESSLING
* Napoleon’s first defeat for ten years
* Demonstration of the importance of quality troops (contrast between Austrian performance in 1805 and 1809)
* Charles’ Grand Battery – 200 guns
* STRATEGY
* Complex movement (the Landshut manoeuvre)
* Combined actions from individual corps
* TACTICS
* Frontal assault
* Lauriston’s Grand Battery (15,000 rounds fired)
* MacDonald’s sophisticated hollow-square advance – reliant upon skilled troops

The invasion of Russia, 1812

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Ney, Davout |  | Kutusov, Barclay, Bennigsen |
| Numbers | 612,000 |  | 900,000 (militia and regulars) |
| Casualties | 400,000 |  | 180,000 (deaths) |
| Outcome | Russian victory |  |  |

* ALLIANCES
* Napoleon’s Grand Alliance (48% French) – Austrians, Poles, Prussians, Florentines, Milanese, Romans, Westphalians, Spanish, Portuguese, Dalmatians, Croats, Badeners
* French inability to tempt Turkey and Sweden into attack
* Eventual Prussian defection
* ORGANISATION
* Army Groups, not corps (Smolensk manoeuvre)
* The retreat
* By Smolensk – less than 10% of the initial invading force left with their colours
* Rapid attrition – 1360 to 60 in just four days, in one regiment
* ECONOMY – war bonds increased from 6% to 10%
* Logistics
* An average of 1,000 horses died per day during the 175-day period the Grande Armée spent in Russia
* No billets = bivouacking = heightened casualty rates (Ney’s III corps was reduced by 34% before reaching the field of battle)
* TOTAL WAR?
* Scorched earth tactics – Rostopchin’s brutal suppression of agitators in Moscow
* Burning of Moscow (two thirds destroyed) – deliberate dismantling of all fire engines beforehand
* Razing of Smolensk
* Kutusov’s purposeful push of Napoleon’s army back onto the Smolensk Road
* Russian Orthodox Church mobilised for propaganda purposes (similar to Stalin’s approach to the clergy during WWII)
* Formation of a 420,000 strong militia, partisan units (Davidov)
* 100 million roubles donated by the Russian population (= the Russian military budget for 1812)
* GENERALSHIP
* Barclay’s chaotic Rudnia Offensive – Bagration ordered to change direction three times in a matter of days
* Kutusov – dynamic, inspirational presence; effective withdrawal strategy (akin to the approach adopted by Stavka during 1941, using the Russian land mass to absorb invading force)
* Napoleon – unwillingness to ‘lose face’ (refused to bolster the stores at Smolensk); inability to obtain a decisive battle blunted the efficacy of his ‘coup d’oeil’

The battle of borodino, 7th september 1812

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| Who? | France | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Ney, Davout |  | Kutusov, Bagration |
| Numbers | 103,000 |  | 120,800 |
| Casualties | 28,000 |  | 43,000 (more than a third) |
| Outcome | French tactical victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Frontal assault – softening bombardment (200 guns)
* Strength of defensive positions – columns sent against the Raevsky Redoubt and the three fleches (nearly identical to the Russian defence of the Malakhov and the Grand Redan at Sebastopol)
* Napoleon’s unwillingness to commit the Young Guard
* CASUALTIES
* Bloodiest single day in the history of warfare until the first day of the Marne
* Equivalent to one full jumbo-jet crashing into the battlefield killing everyone aboard every five minutes for the ten-hour duration of the battle
* 91,000 rounds of French artillery shells, 1,400,000 French musket shots
* POOR GENERALSHIP
* Kutusov – passive positioning, weak left, ‘forgot’ about his artillery reserve
* Napoleon – cautious, irresponsive, failed to employ his reserves at the decisive moment

The 1813 campaign

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| Who? | France | vs. | Russia, Austria, Prussia, Britain |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Ney, Eugene |  | Blücher, Wittgenstein, Frederick William |
| Numbers | 325,000 |  | 425,000 |
| Casualties | - |  | - |
| Outcome | Coalition victory |  |  |

* THE SIXTH COALITION – A STRONG ALLIANCE
* Britain paid £1 million to Sweden for the deployment of 30,000 men; Treaty of Reichenbach – Britain provided £7 million to Russia and Prussia
* Prussian reforms
* Free market
* Taxation homogenisation
* Introduction of the General Staff (Scharnhost, Gneisenau, Clausewitz) – skilled generals: von Bülow, von Blücher
* 8 1806 generals remained in 1812
* Landwehr – 10% of the population
* BATTLE OF LUTZEN (2ND MAY 1813)
* Classic corps manoeuvre (Ney in the centre, MacDonald on the right, Bertrand on the left, Lauriston leading the reserve)
* Grand Battery – 198 guns
* STRATEGY
* Attempts to utilise French interior lines

The battle of dresden, 27th August 1813

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| Who? | France | vs. | Russia, Austria, Prussia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Ney |  | Schwarzenberg, Wittgenstein |
| Numbers | 155,000 |  | 237,770 |
| Casualties | 10,000 |  | 23,000 |
| Outcome | French victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Defensive fortifications constructed by St. Cyr in Dresden
* Barricading of streets and gates
* Cutting down of all tress within 600 yards of the walls
* Corps movement
* St. Cyr – holding action in the centre
* Frontal charge
* Massing of a grand battery on the Strehlen Heights
* Countering of Coalition numerical superiority

The battle of leipzig, 16th-18th october 1813

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| Who? | France | vs. | Russia, Austria, Prussia |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Ney |  | Bernadotte, Schwarzenberg |
| Numbers | 203,100 |  | 362,000 |
| Casualties | 85,000 |  | 54,000 |
| Outcome | French defeat |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Schwarzenberg – six great converging attacks
* Thin distribution of French forces – no chance for concentration
* Use of Prussian reserves to parry MacDonald’s advance
* Effective alliance – close cooperation between the Coalition partners
* QUALITY VS. QUANTITY
* Guard units repelled by force of numbers at Paunsdorf
* 120,000 men besieged on the Oder, Vistula and Elbe (similarity to the stranding of Nazi forces in Courland, Breslau, Poznan and Norway towards the close of WWII)

The battle of waterloo, 18th june 1815

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| Who? | France | vs. | Britain, Allied Dutch |
| Commanders | Napoleon, Murat, Ney |  | Wellington, Blücher |
| Numbers | 72,000 |  | 68,000 (36% British) |
| Casualties | 31,000 (50%) |  | 24,000 |
| Outcome | French defeat |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP – ABSENCE OF SUBORDINATES
* Only three Marshals under Napoleon’s command (compare to the 14 at Austerlitz, the 14 at Leipzig and the 13 in Russia)
* No Berthier – weakened communications considerably
* MOVEMENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD
* Napoleon divided his force into three (Ney on his left, Grouchy on his right)
* Initial skirmishes at Ligny and Quatre-Bras – designed to stop British-Prussian convergence
* 17th June – Grouchy ordered to split from the ‘mainforce’ to harry the Prussians
* Wellington’s scouting of the Ridge of Mont Saint-Jean – choice of ground limited Napoleon’s tactical options (right protected by Hougoumont, left by forest, centre by La Haie Sainte)
* COURSE OF THE BATTLE

1. 11am – bombardment, before Jerome’s diversionary attack on Hougoumont
2. 1.30pm – D’Erlon’s massed attack against Wellington’s centre-left repelled by British cavalry charge
3. 4pm – Ney’s cavalry charge against Wellington’s centre-right repulsed by Allied squares (thirteen)
4. 6.30pm – Ney takes La Haie Sainte
5. 7pm – Guards advance repulsed

* ALLIANCES
* Importance of von Bülow’s appearance
* Britain, in 1815, subsidised no fewer than 30 powers

## tHE CRIMEAN WAR

The battle of the alma, 20th September 1854

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| Who? | France, Britain, Turkey | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Raglan, Bosquet |  | Menshikov, Kiriakov |
| Numbers | 60,000 |  | 33,000 |
| Casualties | 3,600 |  | 5,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Raglan’s hour and a half delay –troops left lying prostrate on the ground, vulnerable to Russian artillery
* Cambridge’s slow deployment of reserves
* Kiriakov’s ‘friendly fire’ attack on the Kiev Hussars with the Minsk Regiment
* Shambolic British assault across the
* Bosquet’s Zouave ascent of the cliffs
* TECHNOLOGY
* Minie bullets – Evans’ advance (superior range)

The battle of balaclava, 25th October 1854

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| Who? | France, Britain, Turkey | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Raglan, Bosquet, Lucan |  | Ryzhov, Liprandi |
| Numbers | 4,500 |  | 25,000 |
| Casualties | 615 |  | 627 |
| Outcome | Indecisive |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Charge of the Light Brigade – 113 killed, communication confusion between Raglan, Lucan and Cardigan
* Campbell’s Highlander ‘thin red streak’ – repulsed four cavalry waves
* Scarlett’s relieving charge of the Heavy Brigade
* TACTICS
* Crude frontal assault

The battle of inkerman, 5th november 1854

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| Who? | France, Britain | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Raglan, Cambridge, Bosquet |  | Soimonov, Menshikov, Dannenburg |
| Numbers | 15,700 |  | 42,000 |
| Casualties | 4,336 |  | 12,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Over-complex manoeuvre – 35,000 men ordered to storm a 300m wide ridge
* Change of commander during battle
* Unclear line of command (Soimonov to Pristovoitov to Uzazhnov)
* Cambridge’s resolve on Shell Hill
* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Cambridge’s elite First Division able to repel thrusts on Shell Hill and the Sandbag Battery
* De Lacy Evans’ Second Division – change of command to Pennefather = far more successful than the Russian change
* Relief by Bosquet’s Zouaves

The siege of sebastopol, OCTOBER 1854 to SEPTEMBER 1855

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France, Britain | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Raglan, Cambridge, Burgoyne |  | Gorchakov, Kornilov, Nakhimov |
| Numbers | 175,000 (maximum) |  | 42,000 |
| Casualties | 128,367 |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* SYNTHESIS WITH WWI
* Trenches, static warfare, 50,000 shells a day
* Fortified positions (Grand Redan, Malakhov, Mameluke)
* Gorchakov’s final desperate offensive on the Chernaia = Ludendorff’s Spring Offensive???
* Bombardments to ‘soften up’
* Frontal assaults – leading to high casualty rates, turnover of command (Canrobert to Pelissier), direct intervention of political leaders
* Tactical innovation following the failed 18th June assault

## THE FRANCO-AUSTRIAN WAR

The battle of magenta, 4th June 1859

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| Who? | France, Piedmont-Sardinia | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon III, MacMahon |  | Gyulai |
| Numbers | 59,100 (1,100 Sardinians) |  | 125,000 |
| Casualties | 4,615 |  | 10,406 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* USE OF RAILWAYS
* Napoleon III manoeuvred his army around the Austrian right flank using the Piedmontese rail infrastructure – RAILWAYS USED IN A TACTICAL CAPACITY
* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Elite Zouaves able to capture the central bridge over the Canal (Magenta’s main defensive position) intact – synthesis with the British airborne seizure of the bridges at Eindhoven

The battle of SOLFERINO, 24th June 1859

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | France, Piedmont-Sardinia | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Napoleon III, MacMahon |  | Benedek, Franz Josef I |
| Numbers | 130,000 (40,000 Piedmontese) |  | 129,000 |
| Casualties | 17,000 |  | 22,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* d’Hilliers’ costly assault west of Solferino, without artillery support
* MacMahon’s Imperial Guard assault on the Prinz von Hesse
* Benedek’s defence of San Martino – repulse of five converging battalions (epithet – ‘the lion of Solferino’)
* TACTICS
* Austrian inability to concentrate force in the South (despite 2:1 numerical superiority)
* Corps movement – each French corps ordered to occupy a separate village (Solferino, Cavriana, Guidizzolo, Medole)

## the austro-prussian war

The battle of kÖnnigratz, 3rd July 1866

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| Who? | Prussia | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Moltke, Prince Friedrich |  | Benedek |
| Numbers | 221,000 |  | 238,000 |
| Casualties | 9,172 |  | 31,434 |
| Outcome | Prussian victory |  |  |

* MOVEMENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD
* Mobilisation disparity generated by von Roon’s reforms
* Prussians: 285,000 in 25 days, using five railway lines and the ‘kreise’ system of reserve garrisoning
* Austrians: 200,000 in 45 days, using a single railroad – mainly due to the tendency to distribute reserve forces fairly widely to prevent separatist uprisings
* Coordination by Moltke in Berlin using the electric telegraph
* Prussian confusion – 2nd Army unable to join the fight initially (until 2pm)
* WEAPONRY
* Dreyse could fire five times for every Lorenz rifle shot
* Higher rates of fire = considerably greater Austrian casualties (despite the reality that Dreyse performance was below the optimum, due to the obstructing woodland of the battlefield)
* TACTICS
* Benedek’s unwillingness to deploy reserves to support Pöckh’s attack
* ‘Massed’, swinging assault from the 2nd Army into the Austrian flank
* STRATEGY = NAPOLEONIC DECISIVE BATTLE
* ALLIANCES
* Austrian failure to ally with either France or Russia
* Italian assault on Venetia – Austrians exposed to attack on two fronts

## the franco-prussian war

The battle of spicheren, 6th august 1870

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Prussia | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Steinmetz |  | Frossard |
| Numbers | 37,000 |  | 29,000 |
| Casualties | 4,871 |  | 4,000 |
| Outcome | Prussian victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP – Frossard failed to counter-attack, withdrawing with his full strength from the Spicheren ‘point magnifique’ (a heavily fortified ridge, bolstered by emplacements and trenches)
* COMMUNICATIONS – confusion between Bazaine and Frossard; communication passage so slow that reserves were ordered to bolster the high ground after it had been seized by the Prussians

The battle of gravelotte, 18th august 1870

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Prussia | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Moltke |  | Bazaine |
| Numbers | 188,332 |  | 112,800 |
| Casualties | 20,163 |  | 12,275 |
| Outcome | Strategic Prussian victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Bazaine’s passivity – remained firmly behind the Front Line, issuing two or three minor orders across the entirety of the day, refusing to deploy Bourbaki’s elite 30,000 strong reserve
* Steinmetz’s suicidal VIII Corps attack on entrenched French positions opposite the Mance Ravine – assault repelled by Chassepot fire
* WEAPONRY
* Relative weapon superiority
* Chassepot responsible for 70% of Prussian casualties
* Krupp artillery responsible for 70% of French casualties

The siege of metz, 14th august-27th october 1870

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Prussia | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Friedrich Karl |  | Bazaine |
| Numbers | 134,000 |  | 180,000 |
| Casualties | 47,000 |  | All 180,000 either killed or captured |
| Outcome | Prussian victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Bazaine – failure to utilise the formidable Metz defences; vacillation over whether to force a break-out or wait to be relieved
* Moltke’s astute manipulation of Napoleon II’s desire to rejoin with Bazaine’s Army of the Rhine – complete encirclement, staunching supplies to encourage surrender through starvation

The battle of sedan, 1st september 1870

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Prussia | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Moltke, Wilhelm I |  | Napoleon III |
| Numbers | 200,000 |  | 120,000 |
| Casualties | 9,000 |  | All 120,000 either killed or captured |
| Outcome | Prussian victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* ‘Pincer’ encirclement – ‘kesselschlacten’
* Artillery fire – 71 Krupp batteries, utilising the topography (the ‘natural bowl’ of Sedan)
* Moltke’s rapid response to the planned break-out at La Moncelle – responsive, flexible command

The siege of paris, 19th september 1870 -28th january 1871

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Prussia | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Moltke, Wilhelm I |  | Trochu, Gambetta |
| Numbers | 240,000 |  | 400,000 |
| Casualties | 12,000 |  | 24,000 (47,000 civilians) |
| Outcome | Prussian victory |  |  |

* ‘TOTAL WAR’
* ‘Franc tireurs’ – guerrilla assaults on Prussian forces
* Bombardment of the civilian populace -12,000 shells fired over 23 nights in January
* MOLTKE’S PASSIVE STRATEGY – no all-out attack on fortified positions

## the american civil war

The first battle of bull run, 21st July 1861

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Beauregard, Johnston |  | MacDowell, Patterson |
| Numbers | 18,000 |  | 18,000 |
| Casualties | 2,000 |  | 2,725 |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* USE OF RAILWAYS
* Four reinforcing brigades – numerical advantage to the South
* Manassas = major junction
* QUALITY OF TROOPS
* Northern failure to synchronise attacks = no concentration of force
* TACTICS
* ‘March dispersed, fight concentrated’
* Johnston’s reinforcement of Beauregard
* PUBLIC OPINION
* Buoyed the South, adversely impacted the North
* Lincoln – immediately passed two bills enlisting over one million men

The battle of shiloh, 6th-7th April 1862

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Beauregard, Johnston |  | Grant, Sherman |
| Numbers | 25,000 |  | 40,000 |
| Casualties | 10,000 |  | 10,000 |
| Outcome | Union victory |  |  |

* SURPRISE
* Johnston’s sudden attack (Kellerman, at Marengo)
* TRAINING
* Prentiss’ division of 4,500 able to hold off 18,000 Southerners
* CONCENTRATION OF FORCE
* Shipping of Buell’s brigades for the second day counter-offensive

The valley campaign, may 1862

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Jackson, Ewell |  | McDowell, Shields, Frémont |
| Numbers | 17,000 |  | 33,000 |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* STRATEGY
* Smaller skirmishes – not decisive encounters
* Rapid, deceptive manoeuvre (160 miles in two weeks)
* Northern force divided into three ‘chunks’ (interior lines)
* IMPACT
* Six weeks, five victories
* Despite being outnumbered almost 2:1, Jackson succeeded in bringing superior forces to all but one of his clashes with the North

The seven days’ battles, 25th june – 1st july 1862

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Jackson |  | McClellan |
| Numbers | 87,000 |  | 105,000 |
| Casualties | 20,000 |  | 10,000 |
| Outcome | Undecided |  |  |

* CONCENTRATION OF FORCE
* 60,000 Southerners concentrated against 30,000 Federals north of the Chockhominy (poor Union organisation)
* OVER-COMPLICATED MANEOUVRE
* Lee – moving nine divisions by six different roads, concentric assault
* Jackson – slow, indecisive (McClellan similarly reluctant to engage)
* Attack on entrenched Union positions at Malvern Hill – 5,500 Confederate casualties
* TECHNOLOGY -2:1 casualty rates, South armed with smoothbores, North armed with rifles

buell’s western campaign, 1862

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Forrest, Morgan |  | Buell |
| Numbers | 2,500 |  | 40,000 |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* GUERRILLA WARFARE
* Buell’s forces travelled just 90 miles in three weeks, harried by Forrest’s irregulars
* Raids on railways
* ‘Hit and run’ on supply routes
* Forrest’s troops initially largely unarmed – by time of their return to Mississippi following the close of the campaign, Forrest had more soldiers than he had started with, the majority equipped with Union rifles

the second battle of bull run, 29th august – 1st september 1862

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Longstreet, Jackson |  | Pope, McDowell, Porter |
| Numbers | 53,000 |  | 65,000 |
| Casualties | 10,000 |  | 16,000 |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* JACKSON’S MOVEMENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD – 50+ miles in two days
* TACTICS – Longstreet’s adroit exploitation of the ‘weak point’ in the Union line, directing five divisions against Pope’s left (Clausewitzian premise)

the battle of antietam, 17th september 1862

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Jackson |  | McClellan, Porter, Burnside |
| Numbers | 25,000 |  | 75,000 |
| Casualties | 10,316 |  | 12,401 |
| Outcome | Confederate tactical victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Burnside’s tardiness – inability to concentrate force against the weakly defended Southern left
* McClellan – indecisive, failed to deploy reserve forces under Franklin and Porter (lost initiative as a consequence)
* Lee = skilful overarching command
* Interior lines – moving of supporting divisions to ‘plug’ gaps
* Employment of A.P. Hill’s division at the decisive point, to bolster his ailing left
* CASUALTY RATES
* 50%+ in some brigades
* Four times the total suffered by American soldiers on D-Day

the battle of fredericksburg, 13th december 1862

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Jackson, Longstreet |  | Burnside, Franklin |
| Numbers | 72,500 |  | 114,000 |
| Casualties | 5,000 |  | 13,000 |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* DEFENSIVE WARFARE (Confederate approach)
* Good cover
* Interior lines
* Comprehensive Southern repulsion of the Federal advance (Franklin unable to deploy more than 50% of his strength at any one time)

the fall of vicksburg, 4TH JULY 1863

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Johnston |  | Grant, Grierson, Sherman |
| Numbers | 30,000 |  | 70,000 |
| Casualties | All 30,000 killed or taken prisoner |  | 4,865 |
| Outcome | Union victory |  |  |

* GRANT’S UNCONVENTIONAL TACTICAL APPROACH
* Grierson’s ‘distraction’ raids on Pemberton’s forces (cavalry attacks on supply lines and railroads)
* Feigned crossing – enabled an actual, incisive breakthrough
* Frontal assault, preceded by bombardment (failure of traditional methods, when attempted against fortified opposition)
* Encirclement – classic KESSELSCHLACHT
* Statistics
* 17 day advance
* 180 miles marched
* Inflicted 7,200 casualties at the cost of 4,300
* Five engagements
* OVERARCHING STRATEGY – TO CUT THE CONFEDERACY IN TWO

the battle of chancellorsville, 2nd – 6th may 1863

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Jackson, Stuart |  | Hooker |
| Numbers | 45,000 |  | 90,000 |
| Casualties | 13,000 (22%) |  | 17,000 (15%) |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* JOMINIAN OFFENCE
* Confederates outnumbered two-to-one
* Lee ordered Jackson’s 30,000 to the Federal rear (*manoeuvre sur les derrieres*) leaving just 15,000 in a screen facing Hooker
* Effective Union bayonet charge at Marye’s Heights
* GENERALSHIP
* Hooker – passive, reluctant to employ reserve forces (ignored demands to launch a counter)
* Lee – skilful demonstration of manoeuvre, comprehensive defeat of forces definitively numerically superior to his own
* PUBLIC OPINION
* Lincoln, upon hearing the news at the White House telegraph office – ‘My God, my God! What will the country say?’

the battle of GETTYSBURG, 1ST-3RD JULY 1863

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Pickett, Longstreet |  | Hancock, Meade, Reynolds (killed by a sharp-shooter) |
| Numbers | 71,699 |  | 93,921 |
| Casualties | 28,000 (one-third) |  | 23,000 (one-quarter) |
| Outcome | Union victory |  |  |

* OFFENSIVE-DEFENSIVE STRATEGY
* Davis’ cabinet tempted by Lee into invading the North
* ‘Decisive, peace-forcing battle’
* STRENGTH OF THE DEFENSIVE
* Meade’s interior lines – ‘plugging’ movement of battalions
* Topography – high ground (Cemetery Ridge) held by the Union
* Pickett’s Charge (50% casualties - two-thirds in Pickett’s division, which also saw all thirteen colonels killed or wounded)
* GENERALSHIP – adroit Union manoeuvre, contrasted sharply with uncoordinated Confederate strikes

the western campaigns of 1863 (chattanooga and chickamauga)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Bragg, Longstreet |  | Rosecrans, Hooker, Grant |
| Numbers | N/A |  | N/A |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Union strategic victory |  |  |

* RAILROADS
* Dictated broader strategy – Rosecrans’ desire to ‘cut the Atlanta railroad’; Chattanooga targeted purposefully to destroy the railway interchanges between the Eastern and Western halves of the Confederacy
* Movement of Union troops – Grant’s transportation of 20,000 troops across the country to reinforce his armies attempting to seize Chattanooga (1,233 miles covered in eleven days, including the crossing of the Appalachians and the Ohio River)
* GENERALSHIP
* Feuding amongst the Confederate leadership (Bragg, Polk, Forrest)
* Grant – ‘made things move’; ‘the cracker line’ of supplies supporting the besieged forces
* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Charge on the Confederate Line (23,000 men) at Chattanooga – Missionary Ridge
* Relative success over Pickett’s advance at Gettysburg

the BATTLES OF THE WILDERNESS, mAY-JUNE 1864

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee, Longstreet |  | Grant |
| Numbers | 64,000 |  | 115,000 |
| Casualties | 25,000 |  | 44,000 |
| Outcome | Union victory |  |  |

* PUBLIC OPINION
* South’s desire to prolong the war into late 1864 – ‘war weariness'’ forecasted impact upon the Union election
* TACTICS
* Use of topography to nullify the Union’s numerical advantage (Longstreet’s raids on the Union rear)
* WEAPONRY – carbines enabled Union repulsion of Stuart’s cavalry
* Defensive at Spotsylvania (abatis, trenches, emplacements, the Bloody Angle salient)
* Four weeks of constant guerrilla-esque engagements
* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Southern draft system enabled maintenance of veterans
* Union – able to draw upon a wider pool = higher turnover

the battle of Cold harbor, 3rd june 1864

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee |  | Grant |
| Numbers | 59,000 |  | 128,000 |
| Casualties | 1,500 |  | 7,000 |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* DEFENSIVE STRATEGY
* Lee’s Clausewitzian attempts to fell the Northern war efforts through deliberate reversion to attrition
* Grant forced into crude frontal assault on fortified positions
* ECHOES AT PETERSBURG
* 10 miles of 20 foot thick breastworks
* 55 artillery redans
* ‘Cold Harbour syndrome’ – 632/850 men lost in one assault upon the Fortress
* ENORMOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYNTHESIS WITH WWI

the battle of the crater, 30TH JULY 1864

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Lee |  | Burnside, Ledlie |
| Numbers | 6,100 |  | 8,500 |
| Casualties | 2,000 |  | 4,000 |
| Outcome | Confederate victory |  |  |

* TECHNOLOGY
* Use of mines to blow a ‘crater’ in the Confederate lines
* Failure to be exploited tactically (an entire Rebel regiment buried)
* GENERALSHIP
* Ledlie = drunkard
* Burnside – lost control over his divisions, unable to resist Meade’s demands to lead with inexperienced white battalions

sherman’s march to the sea, december 1864 – march 1865

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Confederacy | vs. | Union |
| Commanders | Wheeler, Johnston |  | Sherman |
| Numbers | 20,000 |  | 62,000 |
| Casualties | 2,000 |  | 4,000 |
| Outcome | Union victory |  |  |

* TOTAL WAR
* ‘*we are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war’*
* ‘Liberal foraging’ (6,000 horses, 10 million pounds of grain and fodder)
* Two stages – to Savannah then through the Carolinas
* Burning of Columbia

## the russo-japanese war

KEY BATTLES (insufficient detail from records to mount extensive discussion)

* YALU RIVER (30th May -1st June 1904)
* Japanese usage of advanced Krupp artillery to crush the exposed Russian lines
* Effective three-pronged Japanese advance across the river
* MUKDEN (20th February – 10th march 1905)
* Fusion of mobile warfare and staticism
* Effective Japanese flanking manoeuvre, contrasting sharply with Kuropatkin’s chaotic placements
* ‘Kesselschlacten’ – search for ‘pincer’ encirclement

## The first world war

the invasion of france, 5th August – early october 1914

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | France, Britain, Belgium |
| Commanders | Moltke the Younger |  | Joffre |
| Numbers | 1,485,000 |  | 1,071,000 |
| Casualties | 256,000 |  | 263,000 |
| Outcome | German tactical victory |  |  |

* PLANNING CULTURE
* Schieffen Plan
* Mathematical precision (29 miles – corps marching column)
* Unrealistic – relied upon increasing army numbers by 25% within days of invasion (8 new corps)
* ‘Swinging mass’ through Belgium
* Plan XVII
* Advance into Alsace-Lorraine
* Attempt to ‘buy time’ for Russian mobilisation
* PUBLIC OPINION
* The ‘Rape of Belgium’
* Andenne, Seilles, Tamines,Dinant
* Destruction of Louvain
* Turned the U.S.A. against Germany
* Defence of Paris under Gallieini – demolition charges under the Seine bridges, mobilisation of labourers, provisioning of the 2,924 guns of the fortifications
* GENERALSHIP
* Ludendorff’s dynamic seizure of the Liege fortresses
* Joffre – dismissed 31/103 divisional commanders by the end of August, effective response to Moltke’s misjudgement
* Moltke – dissipation of force on the German right (weakened the critical mass)
* THE FRONTIERS
* Quality troops – a pitfall? (11,000/15,000 troops in the French elite 2nd Colonial division wounded or killed, overwhelmed by German conscripts)
* Railway movement of troops back from the Eastern border to fortify Paris, ensuring outnumbering of the right wing ‘mass de manouevre’
* Mons (23rd August)
* Defence of the Mons Canal by the BEF: power of the defensive (four well trained British divisions ‘held off’ six German divisions)
* Quality of soldiers – British = superior troops (integration of infantry and artillery attack, marksmanship = pay by performance, fifteen shots per minute)
* 1,600 British casualties – 5,000 German casualties
* THE MARNE
* Kluck’s misguided movement – 35 km gap left unexploited by the vacillating Sir John French
* Von Hausen’s bold night attack on the French 9th Army
* Collapse of the Schieffen Plan – Kluck’s autonomous operations to the north of the capital
* Hentsch’s mission = static warfare, through withdrawal back to the lines of the Marne and Aisne
* CASUALTIES
* 200,000 French losses in September (1% of population)
* 241,000 German casualties

the first battle of ypres, early october-late november 1914

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | France, Britain, Belgium |
| Commanders | Falkenhayn |  | French |
| Numbers | 5,400,000 |  | 4,400,000 |
| Casualties | 50,000 |  | 24,000 |
| Outcome | British tactical victory |  |  |

* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* Mass German volunteerism (only 50% of the annual class conscripted)
* Lack of British reinforcements – four poorly trained divisions of the Indian Army (3:1 Indian: British)
* 14 German divisions vs. 7 British divisions
* British superiority solely through skill at arms
* Germans: 10 times number of British artillery pieces
* TACTICS – German advancement on fortified positions = crude, frontal strikes
* DESTRUCTION OF THE BEF
* By the close of 1914, fewer than 80,000 of the original 160,000 regulars sent to France were in fighting condition
* 100% casualties in some battalions
* Reliance on the Territorial Force

the eastern front, 1914-1915

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Prittwitz, Ludendorff, Hindenburg |  | Rennekampf, Samsonov, Brusilov |
| Numbers | Variable |  | Variable |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | German victory |  |  |

* FAILURE TO CONCENTRATE FORCE
* Prittwitz’s exploitation of the five day gap between the Armies of Samsonov and Rennenkampf
* Improvisational edge of the Russian response – surprisingly effective when placed against German dogma
* Conrad’s successful strike in the gap between the 3rd and 8th Russian Armies
* Front fragmentation (East Prussia, San, Carpathians, vistula)
* TECHNOLOGY
* Tannenburg – Russian radio insecurity
* Gas at Bolimov
* TANNENBURG
* A ‘cauldron battle’ – 142,000 Russian casualties
* Ludendorff’s skilful ‘pincering’ of Samsonov’s force
* Shift in overarching strategic objectives – Berlin placed greater emphasis on the Eastern Front
* ALLIANCES
* Austrian fragility undermined the manoeuvres of the Germans in East Prussia
* Ethnic divisions (44% Slav, 28% German)
* Conrad’s misjudgement of Russian strength at Lemberg
* 400,000 troops lost by late 1915 (out of 1.8 million mobilised) – 2,268,000 casualties by March 1915 – failed counter-offensive
* PRODUCTION CRISIS
* 25% of required rifles produced per month in Russia
* Shell crises
* TACTICS
* Railways
* Deliberate destruction by the Germans of the Polish rail infrastructure, to slow Russian advances
* Ludendorff’s convocation of the Ninth Army using a single railroad between Silesia and Thorn
* War of mobility
* Gorlice-Tarnow – presaging of Western infiltration

the battle of neuve chapelle, 10th march 1915

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain |
| Commanders | Rupprecht |  | French |
| Numbers | 2 divisions |  | 4 divisions |
| Casualties | 8,600 |  | 11,652 |
| Outcome | Indecisive |  |  |

* FAILURE OF FRONTAL ASSAULT
* British delay after break-through
* Communication complications (six hours between advance and further orders)
* 64 German defenders, armed with two machine guns, killed over one thousand British troops, left stranded in ‘no-man’s-land’
* Failed German counters – attacking newly fortified ground
* Features also witnessed at Loos (gas attacks, German positions on reverse slope)

the italian campaign, 1915-1918

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Italy | vs. | Austria |
| Commanders | Cadorna |  | Conrad |
| Numbers | 5,000,000 |  | 8,000,000 |
| Casualties | 1,600,000 |  | 1,611,000 |
| Outcome | Indecisive |  |  |

* THE ITALIAN ARMY
* Poor quality Southern troops; only 120 heavy guns
* Strong, Savoy-based officer corps – Cadorna
* CRUCIAL ROLE OF TOPOGRAPHY
* Alpine border
* Few paths – easily fortifiable crags
* Twelve separate battles on the Isonzo River
* CAPORETTO
* Cadorna’s foolhardy positioning of reserves well to the rear – incapable of mounting effective counters
* Austrian infiltration tactics – smashing throught the Italian line through small-scale manoeuvre

the gallipoli campaign, 25th april 1915 – 9th january 1916

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | The Ottoman Empire | vs. | Britain |
| Commanders | Sanders, Kemal |  | Hamilton, de Robeck |
| Numbers | 315,000 |  | 568,000 |
| Casualties | 251,000 |  | 265,000 |
| Outcome | Ottoman victory |  |  |

* QUALITY OF SOLDIERS
* ANZACs unable to manifest their exceptional training in battle – due to topological difficulties (crests, gullies)
* W Beach – 50%+ casualties, attacking fortified machine gun emplacements
* Entrenched defensive positions – practically inviolable (Dublin, Lancashire and Munster Fusiliers)
* STASIS ON THE PENINSULA – FAILURE TO OPEN A SECOND FRONT

the battle of verdun, 21st February – 20th december 1916

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | France |
| Commanders | Falkehnhayn, Wilhelm I |  | Joffre, Petain, Nivelle |
| Numbers | 1,250,000 |  | 1,140,000 |
| Casualties | 434,000 |  | 542,000 |
| Outcome | Indecisive |  |  |

* STOCK TACTICAL APPROACH – INNOVATIVE STRATEGY
* Bombardment, before frontal assault – designed to lure the French into a ‘blood-letting’ attritional attack
* 80,000 shells on first day
* Petain’s invocation of the ‘moral’ dimension (Du Picq)
* INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE
* ‘Voie sacree’ – 12,000 trucks utilised to transport 2,000 tons of stores per day
* GENERALSHIP
* Falkenhayn’s inability to inflict punishing casualties without sustaining them himself
* Nivelle’s improvements to French artillery – dynamic figure

the battle of the somme, 1st july – 19th november 1916

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain |
| Commanders | Falkenhayn |  | Haig, Rawlinson |
| Numbers | N/A |  | 750,000 |
| Casualties | 600,000 |  | 600,000 |
| Outcome | Indecisive |  |  |

* COMMUNICATIONS – reliance upon telephony; six levels of command,; 16-20 hours for order transmission
* TECHNOLOGY – tank break-through
* PREPARATIONS
* SS-109 – continuous waves of assault
* Three million shells, 1,000 field guns – preliminary bombardments
* Failure of the ‘creeping barrage’
* Attempt to alleviate pressure at Verdun (alliances)
* FIRST DAY CASUALTIES
* 60,000 British losses
* German 180th Regiment (180/3000); British 4th Division (5,121/12,000)
* ATTRITION – 42 German divisions sent to the Somme in July and August

the brusilov offensive, June-october 1916

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany, Austria | vs. | Russia |
| Commanders | Conrad |  | Brusilov, Kaledin |
| Numbers (initial) | 467,000 |  | 663,000 |
| Casualties | 780,000 |  | 1,400,000 |
| Outcome | Russian tactical victory |  |  |

* PREPARATIONS
* ‘Broad front’ approach
* Deep dugouts constructed
* Focus placed upon force concentration opposing the weak Austrian 7th Army
* LOGISTICAL COLLAPSE
* Tremendous surges – encouraged Romania to join the Allies
* Inability to launch follow-up raids – no rail or motor infrastructure

ludendorff’s spring offensive, 21st march-17th july 1918

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | France, Britain, Belgium, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Ludendorff |  | Pershing, Foch, Haig |
| Numbers | N/A |  | N/A |
| Casualties | 688,341 |  | 860,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* PREPARATIONS
* Bruchtmüller’s ‘creeping barrage’
* Movement of troops from the East – 192 divisions vs. 178 Allied
* Stormtrooper assaults – practice throughout 1917 (Geyer’s theories)
* ‘Decisive battle’
* CONCENTRATION OF FORCE
* 76 German divisions ordered to attack 28 British divisions
* Ultimately pyrrhic – loss of German morale after mass casualties
* Five separate punches – frontal assault grew gradually more and more unpopular)
* FORMATION OF ALLIED HIGH COMMAND (Foch as effective ‘generalissimo’)
* ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS – bolstered the Western line, just as German capability was slipping (momentum shift)

## the second world war

The invasion of poland, september 1939

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany, USSR | vs. | Poland |
| Commanders | Bock, Timoshenko |  | Rydz-Smigly |
| Numbers | 2,000,000+ |  | 950,000 |
| Casualties | 59,000 |  | 200,000 |
| Outcome | German-Soviet victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Blitzkrieg – complete occupation within a month of invasion
* ‘Kesselschlacten’ – ‘cauldron battles’ (principally on the River Bug)
* ALLIANCES
* Nazi-Soviet Pact – two fronts
* 217,000 of the 910,000 captured Poles fell into Russian hands

The ‘winter war’, November 1939 – March 1940

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | The USSR | vs. | Finland |
| Commanders | Voroshilov |  | Mannerheim |
| Numbers | 1,000,000 |  | 175,000 |
| Casualties | 200,000 |  | 25,000 |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* ‘motti’ guerrilla operations, by ski troops
* Encirclement battles on the Eastern flank of the Finnish line, between Ladoga and the White Sea
* Rigid defence of the Mannerheim Line (two month long repulsion of the Red Army)

operation yellow – the invasion of france, may 1940

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | France, Britain, Belgium |
| Commanders | Guderian, Rommel, Manstein |  | Gort, Gamelin, Georges |
| Numbers | 3,350,000 |  | 3,300,000 |
| Casualties | 163,650 |  | 360,000 |
| Outcome | German victory |  |  |

* TACTICS
* Blitzkrieg
* Concentration of force in the Ardennes (1,800 tanks)
* Mobility (40 miles in four days by leading Panzers)
* Stuka strikes, armoured thrusts
* ORGANISATION
* OKH’s development of the ‘sickle-stroke’ in one week
* Clear planning from Manstein – contrast with 1914
* Panzer divisions (10 ‘tank-heavy groupings’)
* French had more tanks (3000 vs. 2400)
* British Mk. 1 and French Somua > German Mk. III
* COMMAND AND CONTROL
* Simple chain in Germany– Hitler → OKW→ OKH→ Army Groups
* Complex and complicated amongst the Allies
* Three separate headquarters
* Supreme Commander → Commander Land Forces→ Commander North-East→ Armies
* GENERALSHIP
* Rommel’s shattering of Corap’s line
* Gort’s masterminding of the evacuation from Dunkirk (338,000 transported back to Britain)

operation barbarossa – the invasion of the ussr, may 1940

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | The USSR |
| Commanders | Leeb (N), Bock (C), Rundstedt (S) |  | Zhukov, Budenny |
| Numbers | 3,800,000 |  | 2,680,000 |
| Casualties | 800,000+ |  | 4,000,000+ |
| Outcome | German strategic victory |  |  |

* PLANNING
* Moltkean ‘kesselschlacht’
* Offensive in the Balkans, to prevent the opening of a second front spearheaded by the Greeks and Yugoslavs
* GERMAN TACTICS
* Encirclement battles (Minsk – 25 divisions; Smolensk – 330,000 men; Kiev – 665,000, 5 armies)
* Reliance on mobility
* Two speed army (20 m.p. day infantry, 50 m.p. day armoured thrusts)
* 17th July – infantry in Army Group Centre 200 miles behind the spearheads
* ZHUKOV’S MOSCOW MANOUEVRE
* Dynamic encirclement
* Movement of Siberian divisions – concentration at the decisive point

the siege of leningrad, 8th august 1941 – 26th january 1944

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | The USSR |
| Commanders | Leeb (N), |  | Zhukov, Popov |
| Numbers | Variable |  | Variable |
| Casualties | 579,985 |  | 3,436,066 |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* DEFENSIVE WARFARE
* 400 miles of anti-tank ditch
* 620 miles of earthworks
* 370 miles of barbed wire entanglements
* Zhukov’s arrival – energetic repulse (500,000 civilians mobilised)
* STASIS REDOLENT OF WWI

THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD, 23RD AUGUST 1942 -2ND FEBRUARY 1943

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| Who? | Germany | vs. | France, Britain, Belgium |
| Commanders | Paulus, Manstein |  | Zhukov, Rokossovsky |
| Numbers | 1,040,000 |  | 1,143,000 |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* URBAN WARFARE
* New style of fighting?
* Failure of concentration of force?
* ‘No steps back’
* Evolution of integrated, ‘combat team’ manoeuvre
* OPERATION URANUS
* Encirclement of the Sixth Army
* Zhukov’s strike against the weak Romanian/Italian armies (alliances)

THE war in the pacific, 1941-1943

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Imperial Japan | vs. | The U.S.A., China, Britain |
| Commanders | Yamashita |  | MacArthur, Nimitz, Wavell, Slim |
| Numbers | 8,400,000 |  | Approximately 19,000,000 |
| Casualties | 2,000,000 |  | 4,000,000 |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* FAILURE OF THE BRITISH IN MALAYA
* Japanese outnumbered two-to-one
* Poor quality Indian soldiers (British soldiers = no Urdu)
* British 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders – well trained, skilled in defence
* Yamashita – concentration of force to seize Singapore
* ECONOMIC STRATEGY – Japanese expansionism (East Indies)
* AMERICAN TACTICS/STRATEGY
* ‘Mixed order’ naval-infantry operations
* Guadalcanal – strength of defence (Japanese casualties = 22 times American casualties)

the north african campaign (1941-1943)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany , Italy | vs. | Britain, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Rommel, Graziani |  | Auchinleck, Ritchie, Montgomery, Clark |
| Numbers | Variable |  | Variable |
| Casualties | 510,000 |  | 250,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* GENERALSHIP
* Rommel’s dynamic approach
* Surge to Benghazi
* Personal direction of the encirclement battle at Gazala
* Auchinleck – ‘no killer instinct’ (Howard)
* Montgomery
* Importance of character – no retreat
* ‘Decisive battle’ strategy
* Breach of the Mareth Line
* STRENGTH OF DEFENCE – Atlas Mountains = natural defensive position for the 5th Panzer Army

the italian campaign, 1943-1945

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| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Kesselring |  | Clark, Montgomery, Patton |
| Numbers | Variable |  | Variable |
| Casualties | 580,630 (similarities with Napoleon’s ‘Spanish Ulcer’) |  | 313,495 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION
* Ineffectiveness of Mussolini’s propaganda
* Losses at Stalingrad and in North Africa (570,000) = plotting
* Defection of Mussolini’s government
* DEFENSIVE WARFARE
* Kesselring’s exploitation of topography (Monte Cassino, Rotondo)
* 1:6 casualty ratio inflicted in some engagements
* Allied advance limited to 70 miles in eight months
* Gothic Line, Viterbo Line
* ALLIED COOPERATION
* VI Corps (American formation – large British component)
* Polish II Corps, Eighth Army (Indians, South Africans, Canadians), French Moroccans (skilled mountain fighters)

D-DAY, 6th june 1944

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| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain, Canada, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Rundstedt, Rommel |  | Crerar, Montgomery, Bradley, Eisenhower |
| Numbers | 50,350 |  | 156,000 |
| Casualties | 4,000-9,000 |  | 10,000 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* PLANNING
* Germans
* Atlantic Wall (4 million mines, six Panzer division reserve)
* Dispute between Rommel, Rundstedt and Hitler over armour deployment
* Allies
* Operation Fortitude (FUSAG)
* Aerial supremacy (12,000 vs. 169)
* Hobart’s ‘Funnies’
* OMAHA BEACH
* Importance of quality – German 352nd Division inflicted vertiginous numbers of casualties
* Topography – imposing cliffs, well-fortified by the Wehrmacht
* GERMAN INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE FORCE
* ‘He who defends everything defends nothing’
* Hitler’s direct obstruction of reinforcements from Pas de Calais

THE battle of normandy (june-august 1944)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain, Canada, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Rommel, Kluge, Eberbach |  | Bradley, Crerar, Montgomery |
| Numbers | 1,000,000+ |  | 2,052,000 |
| Casualties | N/A |  | N/A |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* GOODWOOD
* Bombardment, followed by concentrated assault (‘schwerpunkten’)
* German resilience – 186 tanks lost
* THE BOCAGE
* Defensive warfare amongst the Norman hedgerows
* Hedge-uprooting Shermans designed
* MORTAIN COUNTER-ATTACK (Lüttich)
* Hitler’s damaging intervention
* Over-extended supply lines; Panzer divisions at lowered strength
* Poor positioning of troops
* ALLIANCES
* 1ST Polish Armoured Division under Canadian authority
* British absorption of German strength (Panzer Lehr, Das Reich) – enabled the Cobra break-out
* RE-APPEARANCE OF BLITZKRIEG
* Patton’s dynamic offensive to Avranches
* Encirclement at Falaise

THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE (DECEMBER 1944)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | Germany | vs. | Britain, Canada, U.S.A. |
| Commanders | Rundstedt, Model, Dietrich |  | Bradley, Crerar, Montgomery |
| Numbers | Variable (200,000 initially) |  | Variable (83,000 initially) |
| Casualties | 100,000 |  | 76,408 |
| Outcome | Allied victory |  |  |

* POST-NORMANDY ALLIED MANOUEVRE
* Conflict between Eisenhower’s ‘broad front’ and Montgomery’s ‘narrow’, focussed strike aspirations
* German defensive approach (West Wall, Moselle, Meurthe, Seille)
* Stalling of momentum (Allied divisions = 700 tons of supplies per day; German divisions = 200 tons per day)
* THE OFFENSIVE (the ‘Bulge’)
* Poor quality troops (contrast with Operation Yellow)
* Czech and Polish conscripts – many non-German speaking
* Disparity between SS and Wehrmacht troops
* Surprise!
* American blocking manoeuvre (US 101st Airborne Division transported 100 miles overnight by truck)
* Montgomery informed about German progress by Ultra decrypts – counter-attack on the salient
* STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE
* Exhaustion of the Wehrmacht’s manpower resources
* US = ‘unlimited’ pool
* 21 divisions (Sept. – Jan.)
* 7 divisions (Jan. – Feb.)

THE kursk offensive, 5-15th july 1943

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| Who? | USSR | vs. | Germany |
| Commanders | Rokossovsky, Vatutin |  | Manstein, Hoth, Model |
| Numbers | 1,910,000 (5,128 tanks) |  | 780,900 (2,700 tanks) |
| Casualties | 431,000 |  | 252,000 |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* OPERATION CITADEL
* German attempt to strike the Kursk salient
* Defensive warfare – Soviet resistance to armoured thrusts
* ‘The greatest tank battle in history’
* Soviet re-equipment
* Tanks produced at double the German rate
* Artillery divisions, armed with Katyushas
* 21,000 anti-tank guns
* 3,000 mines per km of Front in the salient
* 300,000 civilians constructed eight defensive lines, echeloned to a depth of 100 miles
* 183,000 trucks received by mid-1943
* Army Fronts – advance from Napoleonic corps
* HITLER’S INTERFERENCE
* Withdrawal of troops from the Eastern Front to Utaly
* Prompted the abandonment of the resource rich Donetz basin
* Sacking of Manstein and Kleist, replacement with Model and Schörner

operation bagration, 5-15th july 1943

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | USSR | vs. | Germany |
| Commanders | Rokossovsky, Konev |  | Busch, Model |
| Numbers | 2,231,000 |  | 1,036,000 |
| Casualties | 770,000 |  | c. 500,000 |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* ECONOMIC STRATEGY
* Strategic bombing of oilfields and processing installations = German abandonment of vehicles
* CONSUMMATION OF THE ‘DEEP BATTLE’ APPROACH
* Encirclement and destruction of the bulk of Army Group Centre
* Destruction of 25% of the German army in the East
* Coordinated, multiple assaults
* Exploitation of fragile Balkan alliances (Bulgarians, Romanians)

THE ASSAULT ON BERLIN, JANUARY-APRIL 1945

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Who? | USSR | vs. | Germany |
| Commanders | Konev, Zhukov, Rokossovsky |  | Wenck, Krebs, Heinrici |
| Numbers | 6,700,000 |  | 776,000 |
| Casualties | 361,000 |  | All killed or captured |
| Outcome | Soviet victory |  |  |

* JANUARY OFFENSIVE
* Hitler’s communications = 24 hours behind action (refusal to reinforce using soldiers from Courland or Norway – where the Nazis had 400,000 crack troops garrisoned)
* 300 guns per km on the 1st Ukrainian Front
* Howard: ‘without the American trucks provided under Lend-Lease, the Red Army would never have made it to Berlin before the Americans’
* 451,742 Wehrmacht deaths – roughly equivalent to total American deaths across all theatres during the entirety of the conflict
* Total war
* Mass civilian involvement – *‘Wilhelm Gustloff’,* Nemmersdorf
* 8.35 million refugees moved to the centre of the Reich
* ATTACK ON THE SEELOW HEIGHTS
* 1,236,000 rounds fired on the first day alone (8,983 guns)
* Frontal assault, preceded by bombardment
* Strength of defence (three day resistance); Teltow Canal
* ‘Kesselschlacten’ – Konev from the South, Rokossovsky
* Poor generalship – Zhukov’s blunt thrusts on fortified positions