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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our 2016 *Against the Odds Annual!*

I always love the annuals because they are a free form, a sampler of sorts, of what our regular issues contain. It allows me the freedom to use longer pieces to outline significant events of history. Also, the games are bigger, giving us a larger canvas to tell the story of a struggle against reality. Here, with *Confederate Rails*, we see how the less industrialized South struggled for four years to maintain a transportation system in order to fuel their armies as they resisted the more capable North, who had no lack of supplies, materials, and manpower. This unequal struggle is what we are all about.

The big guy against the little guy is a recurring theme, and our articles portray it well this issue, such as tiny Numidia versus the might of Rome. Not all resistance is futile in such contests, and indeed, the smaller emerging Polish state of the 1920s was able to hold off the larger Soviet Union after the former's naïve attempt to establish an independent Ukraine as a buffer against the growing might of Red Russia.

As always, if you enjoy this issue, please consider subscribing. Each four-issue span allows you to view history from a unique perspective, that of the underdog, the upstart, the oppressed, or those facing utter destruction. Along with a game in every issue, you will be able to read articles by some of the best and brightest in our hobby today. You'll see why we are still going strong after 15 years, and why we have won numerous awards in the past.

Meanwhile, the steam whistle shrills its warning. Time to board the swaying wooden cars, squeezed in among men in worn butternut, smelling of tobacco, sweat, and gunpowder. Feel the jolt to your spine as the train lurches forward, wheels clattering over the steel rails. Look out through the grimy windows on the rolling landscape of the Southland, full of half-empty plantations and small, quaint towns. Ahead lies the enemy, well-fed, well-armed, and with an entire military transportation apparatus at its back. Your destiny awaits as you ride the *Confederate Rails*.

Andy



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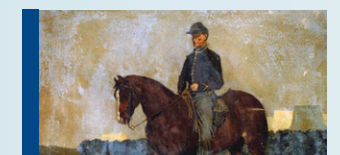


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