



# EMPIRE TOTAL WAR

## The World of Empire: Diary 2

This is the second bite of the cherry of history in Empire: Total War. It's time to look beyond Europe, and then briefly consider the Enlightenment. Don't worry, though, this isn't going to be a history lesson - at least not like some of the history lessons that I remember. I think I'd sooner nail my own tongue to the rear bumper of a Trabant than go through some of those again. Yuck.

Europe developed a global reach in the Empire period: there were fortunes to be had in the Americas, in the Caribbean and, above all, in India. A man could make a fortune in Madras or Bengal, New France and Jamaica – if he survived disease, European rivals and hostile natives. In the meantime, many carved out an Empire in the name of their respective monarchs, with an eye to royal favour, of course. The period was one where lining one's own pocket was an accepted, if not quite respectable, part of serving the nation: John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, thoughtfully appointed himself as one of his army's chief supply contractors. The money helped build Blenheim Palace – not bad for someone who started out as a gigolo!

And during a century of warfare, there was a tactical and strategic revolution in the way that war was conducted. In 1700 some men still carried pikes in European armies mostly, it has to be said, because it was very expensive to give them muskets. Within the space of a few years, the infantryman had been given a musket, a bayonet (that stopped him firing), a better bayonet (so he could shoot as well as stab his enemies), a completely new drill book, and (as the old joke has it) the chance to see the world, meet interesting people and kill them. Wars in Europe and in the distant colonies caused changes in tactics, equipment and strategy throughout the period. You'll see these in Empire: Total War.

Yes, there were powerful Empires in the world when the Europeans "arrived": the Ottomans and Mughal India. Yet it was the apparently minor powers like the French, British and Dutch

who sailed away to make money, by trade, warfare and outright theft. No Mughal admiral ever dropped anchor outside Rotterdam or London and demanded trade rights. Then again, to be fair, the Mughals had more money than they could ever spend. Trade with India actually caused a silver shortage in Europe because the Indians quite sensibly wouldn't take crappy European products for their shiny, lovely stuff. The Europeans really lowered the tone in India: Sultan Tippu of Mysore hated the English so much that he had a tiger automata made that gored an equally mechanical Englishman to death, just so he could laugh at it.

This really is the century where the modern world starts. Apart from the wars that barely stopped during the century, it was a time of tremendous intellectual vigour. The Enlightenment is well named, even if it did look like a bunch of be-wigged gentlemen thinking about life, the universe and everything. They were doing that, and they were having great ideas.

They were colourful, clever and downright odd. A quick selection illustrates the point: Isaac Newton, for example, invented calculus (the basis of quite a lot of mathematics) but then didn't really bother telling anyone until Gottfried Leibniz claimed to have done it too. Without them: no difficult maths, no computers, no computer games. Yet Sir Isaac was also an alchemist, trying to find the secret of immortality and turn base metals into gold. The word "millionaire" appears in France, thanks to the efforts of a banker, gambler and con artist called John Law. Before him, no one had ever had enough cash to count it in millions! Adam Smith accidentally creates the modern world of work by showing that dividing jobs up into repetitive tasks makes money. Thanks for that, Adam, and the 9-to-5 working day. Benjamin Franklin showed that genius and gormless stupidity are but a heartbeat apart by flying kites in thunderstorms to see what lightning did. And Carl von Linné created a system of labelling plants and animals so cunning it's still in use today. You are a "Homo sapiens sapiens" and not just a lumpy collection of bone, muscles and floppy bits thanks to Carl. If you're not a Homo sapiens sapiens and you're reading this, then welcome to Earth! It is quite nice, apart from all the bits we've buggered up.

So, although you might not believe it just yet, Empire: Total War is set in a world that's going to seem strangely familiar and then different too. It's dramatic, world-spanning, bloody-minded and just plain fun. And there's plenty of stuff that's just interesting. Consider, for example, this piece of oddness: Londoners rioted in 1752 when Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar and skipped 11 days to get the date into line with the rest of Europe. People went to bed on September 2, and awoke on September 14. The old-style Julian calendar was wrong, but the "new" Gregorian scheme caused outrage for two reasons: people had (obviously) had their lives shortened by this daylight robbery! It was the work of foreigners and Catholics! I think the hard drinking led to the trouble: too many people just thought the latest hangover had lasted 11 days!

And so, as Samuel Pepys would have it, to bed. Next time round, I'll try to find something to say vaguely interesting about warfare in what I've come to think of as the Age of Enormous Wigs and Big Hats. In the meantime, where's the gin?

Mike Brunton is Writer and Designer on Empire Total War at The Creative Assembly.

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