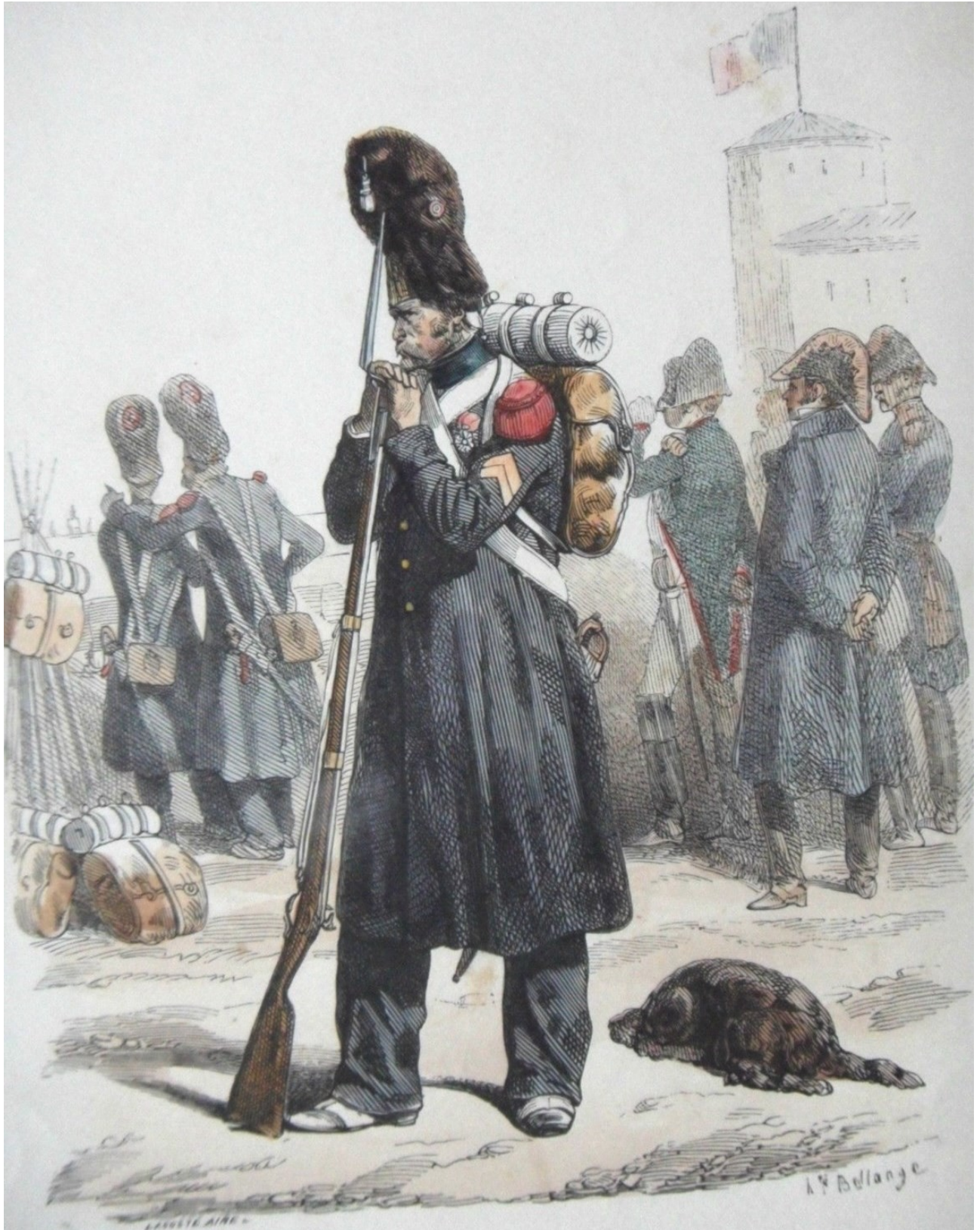




The Grumbler

The Official Newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society



Volume 17 Issue 1

May 2017

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Editorial

Welcome to the new edition of “The Grumbler” – the official bimonthly newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society. We hope to revive the publication which in the past provided a place to share knowledge of military history, experience of battlefield command, and joy of our wonderful hobby.

As the new Editor, I would like to thank Rowland for his invaluable help in putting the newsletter back to life. Special thanks go to the first contributors: Mike Allen, Michael Colclough, and Ross Dawe.

The numbering, layout and structure of the Grumbler will remain in line with the “old” (2006-2008) Grumbler. Over time, we plan to locate and scan previous issues of “The Grumbler”, thus creating an archive of our club publication.

Your contributions are always welcome. In fact, your contributions are vital for re-birth of this newsletter. These could be anything, from scholarly history pieces to lengthy reminiscences about good old days when *your* dice always rolled high! And, of course, battle reports, announcements, notices, pictures, questions, suggestions, discussions, and anything else which can be put on paper. So please do not hesitate to submit your items, or just approach and talk to me (Sergiy) or our Committee members: Lance, Rowland, Sasha, Mike, and Nick – on what would you like to see in the future issues of the newsletter.

Sergiy, Editor

Submission Guidelines

Items for “The Grumbler” can be e-mailed to:

TheGrumblerGNHWS@gmail.com

Files could be of any format supported by the Open Office: plain text (.txt), .doc and .docx, .rtf, .pdf, etc. with embedded or attached pictures.

Paper submissions (“hard copies”) can be dropped into “The Grumbler” box in the Society’s Library room. Please feel free to include pictures, maps, drawings, and photographs – these will be scanned and returned to the owner.

Finally, paper submissions can be posted to the club mail address (see below).

The submission deadline is the last day of even months. Articles and items received after this date and before the edition goes to print may get in but that cannot be guaranteed.

Next issue submission deadline is 30 June.

Club address: A. E. Martin Hall (building 36), Penfield Avenue, Edinburgh SA

Mail address: PO Box 1040, Salisbury, SA 5108

Diary

Gaming nights:

Regular: Wednesdays from 19:00

Subject to members interest: Fridays from 19:00 (must be confirmed with a “key master”)

Day	Date	Event
Sat. and Sun.	10/06/2017 11/06/2017	Queen’s Wargames, the mixed game competition weekend
Mon.	12/06/2017	Pre-AGM Committee meeting (tentative)
Wed.	28/06/2017	Annual General Meeting (tentative)
Friday	30/06/2017	Next issue submission deadline

Other clubs:

The ConCentric Games web-site maintains a list of this year gaming conventions: <http://con-centric.com.au/tabletop-games/game-conventions.html>

Also, the Wargamers AU forum provides updates on the current and future wargaming events. Go to <http://www.wargamer.au/forum> and scroll down to the Tournaments and Conventions sub-forum. The direct WargamerAU link for the SA 2017 game calendar is:

<http://www.wargamer.au/forum/index.php?showtopic=187630>

Notices and Announcements

Queen's Wargames, June 10-11 2017

On Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th of June 2017 Group North will be throwing open its doors to allow a series of small wargame events to be played. Each event is free to enter though space may be limited for events so confirm with the hosts early that you are coming.

The Fall of Rome – Saturday 9 AM

Organiser: Marcus

A DBA Campaign for 8 – 20 players. This campaign allows 5 games of DBA over one day using a simple set of campaign rules and the standard DBA 12 element armies.

The DBA rules used will be “Version 3.0”. The DBA games are fought with 25mm figures on a 120x120cm board.

All terrain and figures can be provided, but you may bring your own 25mm figures/Army if you have one.

Email queensdba@groupnorth.club for more details and entry.

Fear Naught – Saturday 1 PM

Organiser: Lance

GaleForce9 Tanks are coming to Group North. We'll be running a three round competition of 100 point battle groups. Swiss ranking will be used between the rounds with a mix of missions from the rulebook.

Email queenstanks@groupnorth.club for more details and entry.

The Ogre Must Fall – Sunday 9 AM

Organiser: Marcus

A Blucher “doubles” Competition for 6-12 players. The rules set used will be Honor Games “Blucher”. The games are fought with 25mm figures on a 240x120cm board. All terrain and figures can be provided, but you may bring your own 25mm figures/Army if you have one. Each side of two players will field a single 240 point Blucher army.

Email queensblucher@groupnorth.club for more details and entry.

Wings of Glory, World War I – Sunday whole day (from 9 AM)

Organiser: Sasha

The rules set used will be “Wings of Glory WWI”, scale: 1/100 miniature airplanes (the WoG WWI scale). The game will be played on one or two 4' x 8' boards in one row, depending on the interest.

Scenarios will be worked out depending on the number of players interested and players will be briefed upon the day. Bring along your airplanes, or feel free to borrow any of the airplanes from the organizer (e-mail if need to borrow). If you are interested to try this game out, don't worry if not

acquainted with the rules, more than happy to explain them on the day. Also, if you can't come for the whole day, and only part of it, feel free to fly in whenever. Just let me know of this so I can figure scenarios out accordingly.

E-mail infinityhersir@gmail.com for more details and entry.

Epic X-Wing – Sunday whole day (from 9 AM)

Organiser: Glenn

This is a perfect chance to bust out those big ships that were purchased just because they look cool.

A 5v5 Epic X-Wing event. Each player will control a 150 squad point single faction fleet (that includes Epic ships). Players will be divided into teams of Rebels/Scum versus Imperial/Scum. Each side buffs will apply to all friendly ships on their team (regardless of faction or player).

The game will use the latest Epic rules + FAQ, and be run on a 3x9 or 3x12 gaming area, with 18 or 24 obstacles that can be placed anywhere (within normal placement rules).

The Intercepting Signals ensure there is only one named copy of each unique card in the entire side. Players will coordinate with the TO via Facebook or email at queensxwing@groupnorth.club. First reserved players get the choice of unique cards. Used uniques will be listed.

The event allows card substitution (proxy for a real card as printed from the FFG images) but not ship substitution (no using a Z-95 as an X-Wing).

Tournaments and Events

Reports from tournament/event organisers. Pictures from our painting competitions. Reports from other events attended by society members (CANCON, MOAB etc.)

Crows Feast

Crows Feast was run on 8 April. While the numbers were lower than expected we still had a very competitive field with a close finish. Club member Ross Dawe won with his Empire of Santa (Dust) army by one point at the end of a long but fun day.

1) Ross Dawe	Empire of Dust	: TP	68	Attrition Caused	6045
2) Matthew Nield	Twilight Kin	: TP	67	Attrition Caused	6240
3) Tim Cook	The Herd	: TP	58	Attrition Caused	3900
4) Norman Blunden	Ogres	: TP	52	Attrition Caused	5515
5) Andrew Kerekes	Elves	: TP	51	Attrition Caused	5590
6) Chris Earl	Ogres	: TP	41	Attrition Caused	4705
7) Lance Holden	Orcs	: TP	38	Attrition Caused	2775
8) Mark Cook	Abyssals	: TP	34	Attrition Caused	4505
9) Sean Davis	Orc & Goblins	: TP	--	Attrition Caused	1725

A big thank you from the club to the event sponsors Nerdvana Games and Jackal Laser Designs.

Photos and other details are at <http://www.groupnorth.club/crowsfeast/>

Lance Holden

Rimmer's War Diaries

This section continues the tradition established by Rowland, Editor of the Grumbler from mid-2006 to 2008. To quote Rowland's words from that time, "I would also like to see a new section introduced in which club members can boast to the world about their brilliant tactical successes over their opponents. If this takes off, I felt an apt name for the section would be 'Rimmer's War Diaries' – in honour of that great military genius Arnold (Ace) Rimmer of the mining ship 'Red Dwarf'".

"Rimmer's war diaries are composed so that, for future generations of tabletop commanders, the experiences and insights of successful (and not so successful) commanders can be made available to them. Through such magnanimous generosity of their predecessors, the future commanders can be suitably informed and over-awed by the brilliance of those who have gone before."

A One-Hour Wargame

or What Can You Play with Three Dogs, Two Cats, and One Toddler Running Around

By Sergiy Kravchuk, with invaluable help of Sasha Pushkarov

The common sense says that dogs are good at tug-of-war, cats are great in hide-and-seek, and toddlers excel in grab-and-run, and all of them are unbeatable in curiosity to small colourful things like your favourite heroic scale warband. The moment the figures appear on your dining table you are into a real battle to defend their mere existence – forget about intricate strategy and tactics, it is a bare fight for survival!

Sure you can pack up things and go to the club for a gaming night, but then you miss the best company of your little one for the full evening ... a tough choice indeed.

As they say, necessity is the mother of inventions, and dire situations inspire brilliant solutions.

After all, dogs are happy to run amok on your backyard – provided you have left enough small sticks and other toys for them to be entertained for a couple of hours. Toddlers have daytime sleep – just match the time with the dogs ruining the backyard. And cats... put a pillow in a sunny spot and pray they would fall for it. Now you have half an hour to an hour and a half of relative calm. The last bit is to fit a full-fledged game into it.

Luckily we had a book aptly named "One-hour Wargames: Practical Tabletop Battles for those with limited time and space", written by Neil Thomas. We were limited both in time (one hour) and in space (one dining table), so we hesitated no more. 28mm figures were blu-tacked to temporary cardboard unit bases. Sasha fielded a bunch of Elves who summoned help from Walking Trees, hired some Mercenaries, and even lured in some shirtless Brigands, who became skirmishers. Elves, of course, had Elven magic on their side. I had my stout Dwarfs with a stone thrower, regular Crossbowdwarfs (they were proudly *not* -men!), and four units of Workers and Peasants militia, workers armed with picks (as they were miners) and peasants with axes (perhaps, coming to the battle straight after clearing a forest lot). They didn't believe in magic and were quite immune to it. Or that's what they thought.

We took the “Take the High Ground“ scenario from the book, with Dwarfs defending the Bald Hill they captured last night after hearing rumours of silver deposits underneath. The Elves, on the other hand, were very keen in wrestling back their favourite *Walpurgisnacht* venue.

We decided to follow the Dark Ages rules from the book, but added some simple magic to it: each turn the Elven Mage, if not in a combat yet, could try to stop (pin down) or deny shooting (mess up) for one turn any single Dwarf unit. The magic roll preceded Dwarfs movement and would take effect if it was higher than the Dwarfs’ roll, with Dwarfs having a +1 advantage for their stubbornness.



One cat fell for the trick...



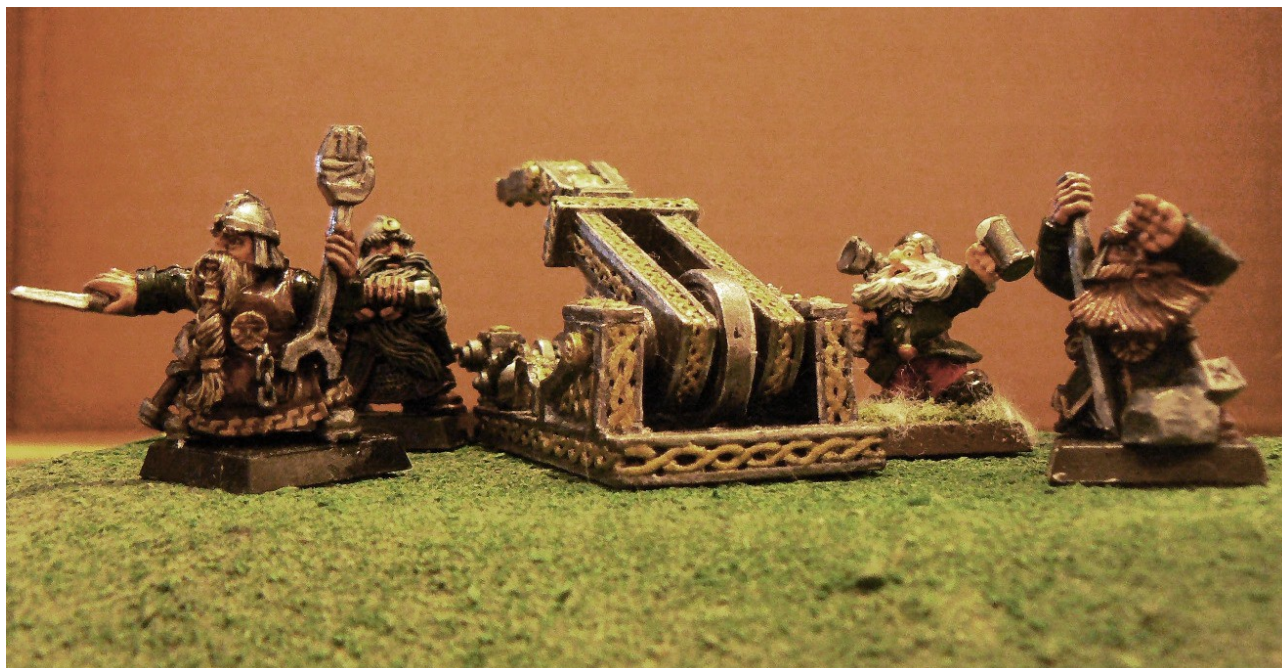
... the other obviously didn't.

“Forgive my curiosity, what did you say you’re playing today?”

Two Dwarf units (the catapult and the shooters) initially occupied the hill. Four more units would arrive at turn 2, and move on from the table edge in turn 3. Elves deployed all at once, with skirmishers leading the charge.



Elves and human mercenaries. “We are mean, and we mean business!”



The catapult crew is about to face grim reality. “Weapons free!”

And so it began... Elves rushed towards the hill, presenting an ideal target. Catapult – fire! Dud. Shooters... bad luck. One more turn before mercenaries climbed up – this time rolls were a bit better, but not enough to wear them down.

Militia had arrived, the Elven Mage – still not in combat – tried to pin them at the spot. Sasha rolled 2, I rolled 6. I didn't need it – even if I rolled 1, the magic would fail ($1[\text{roll}] + 1[\text{advantage}] = 2$). I wished I could swap the roll for my shooters!

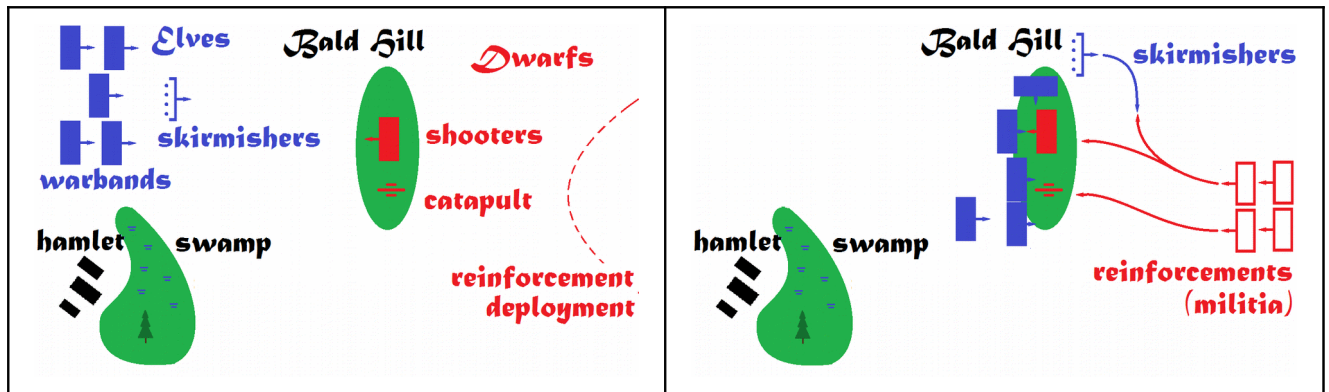
Skirmishers moved around the hill to block my militia. Wise move – it worked unlike magic. Still my second unit climbed the hill to rescue the shooters who were, honestly, in a dire situation fighting a mercenary warband to the front and the Elven warband on the right flank. Too late! One more roll, and the shooters were gone. My axe-wielding militia rammed into the mercenaries and was trapped the same as the shooters before. Well, at least Elves were still fighting uphill, and their Mage was too busy to cast a spell.

Meanwhile the catapult was finished – no surprise, artillery never had good chances against a warband, – but somehow they managed to disperse one enemy unit. Two fresh units of my militia were now attacking somewhat worn out mercenary warband and a bunch of Waking Trees. Skirmishers finally broke and run away, freeing my another unit. I immediately moved it to my left flank, reinforcing the attack. Dwarfs *must* get back onto the summit! The chances seemed to be even.

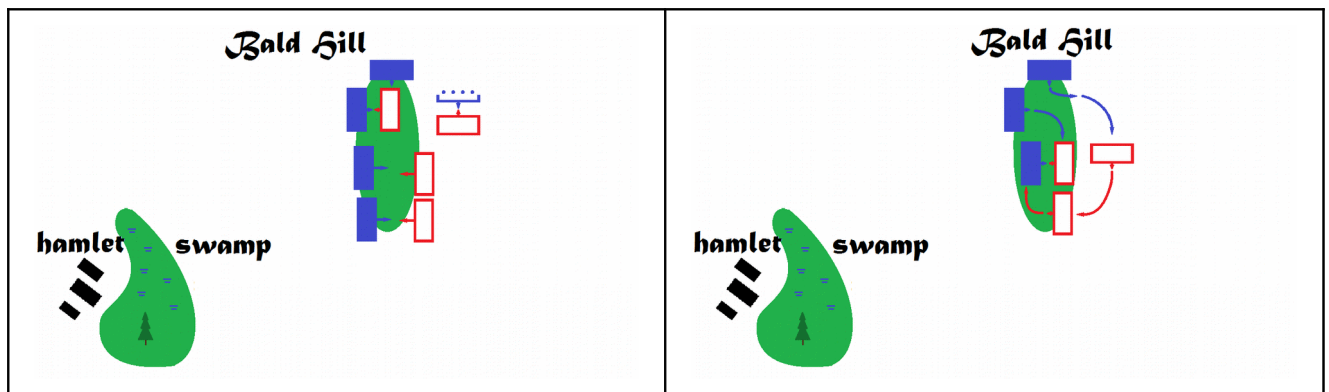
I did all I could, let my dice roll high... Oh, no, not *again!* If I keep rolling like this, my troops wouldn't last four turns... Well, I was an optimist – in no time I had just one weary unit left. But what could you do if you consistently rolled 1s and 2s? Next time don't tell me that Elven magic doesn't work on Dwarfs...

So I conceded to Dwarfs' defeat and shook Sasha's hand. Now his Elves can claim the hill back for their next witchcraft festival.

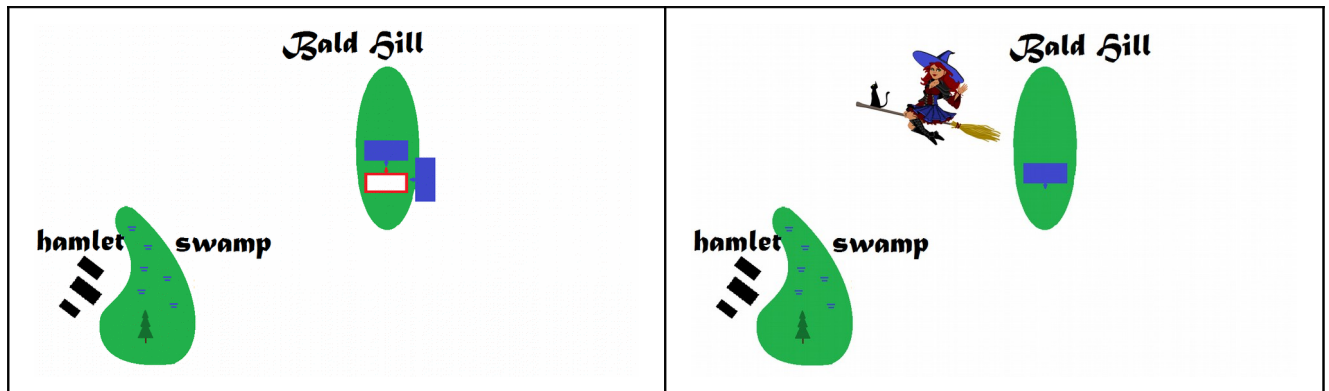
The whole affair was over in 30 minutes.



The first two stages of the battle – shooting and running...



The climax of the battle. Chances seemed to be even...



The Grand Finale. Dwarfs failed to secure the mining concession, so Elves celebrated with Hexennacht.

My takings from the game:

The rules are simple, straightforward, and readily adjustable. We took the Dark Age rules, added some magic and jumped to the realm of fantasy just to try it, and in my and Sasha's opinions it worked well. Other changes may include fine-tuning of troops combat performance according to your ideas and expectations, gradual (not abrupt) decline in combat performance with fatigue and losses, and so on.

Even as they are, the rules reward sensible tactics and punish for stupid moves. Importantly, the rules leave enough room for making good, bad, and not-so-obvious choices.

The book contains thirty generic scenarios with references to historic events, which makes it worth buying just for this part alone.



The height of the battle. “Oh, what a horrible mess...”

A game can be finished in half an hour; I don't think many games would last for 15 moves specified in the rules. With required six unit bases per side and 3' × 3' tabletop at most (we played on a 70 × 120 cm table), it is even lighter on your time, space, and money than DBA.

From reading the book, I am quite happy with rules from Ancient to Horse and Musket eras, although experienced DBA players might find them rather over-simplified and thus less interesting to play. I have some reservations about how these rules would work for modern warfare (from the late XIX century) when technology really kicked in. Perhaps I and Sasha will spare another afternoon for finding it out.

The rules can serve as a base for a quick relaxing game when you can't commit yourself for something bigger. They also can be a good choice for an introductory wargame for a novice or a visitor.

Articles

Wargaming in the Early Years of the 18th Century

By Mike Allen

Like many gamers of my generation I started out gaming in the Napoleonic and WW2 eras using the readily available rules published by Airfix in the 1970s. The wars of the 18th century were not on our radars and even in more recent years with forays into the Seven Years War and English Civil War, most gamers regarded the 100 years between the mid-17th to the mid-18th century of little interest. However from a historical point of view this is a dynamic period of history that shaped both Europe, the Americas and Asia.

There were many conflicts in this period but best known and very suited for wargaming are the following.

The War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1715) was a major European conflict which spread into the Americas and Asia and is considered by many to be the first worldwide war. It was triggered by the death in 1700 of the last Habsburg King of Spain Charles II. At this time Spain had a significant global empire and the question of who would succeed him was a major concern for the other powers in Europe. On his deathbed Charles II fixed the entire Spanish inheritance on his grandnephew Philip, Duke of Anjou, the second-eldest grandson of King Louis XIV of France. With Philip ruling in Spain, Louis XIV would secure great advantages for his dynasty, however this was seen as a major threat by the other powers in Europe. An alliance of Britain, Austria and the Dutch took on France and Bavaria. In the coming years every country in Western Europe was drawn into the conflict. In the war two of the greatest generals in history emerged: John Churchill (picture left), Duke of Marlborough and



Prince Eugene of Savoy of Austria.

The Great Northern War (1700–21) was a conflict in which a coalition led by the Tsardom of Russia successfully contested the supremacy of the Swedish Empire in Central, Northern, and Eastern Europe. The initial leaders of the anti-Swedish alliance were Peter I the Great of Russia (picture right), Frederick IV of Denmark–Norway and Augustus II the Strong of Saxony–Poland. Frederick IV and Augustus II were defeated by Sweden, under Charles XII, and forced out of the alliance in 1700 and 1706 respectively, but re-joined it in 1709 after the defeat of Charles XII at the battle of Poltava. George I of Great Britain and of Brunswick-



Lüneburg (Hanover) joined the coalition in 1714¹ and Frederick William I of Brandenburg-Prussia joined it in 1715.



Charles XII (picture left) led the Swedish army. Swedish allies included Holstein-Gottorp, several Polish magnates under Stanisław I Leszczyński (reigned 1704-09) and Cossacks under the Ukrainian Hetman Ivan Mazepa (sided with Charles in 1708-09). The Ottoman Empire temporarily hosted Charles XII (in 1709-14) and intervened against Peter I (the Pruth Campaign 1710-11).

The war ended with Swedish defeat with peace treaties signed in 1719, 1720, and 1721. This conflict heralded the arrival of Russia as a European power and was the pinnacle and beginning of the decline of Swedish military and territorial power.

The Jacobite rising of 1715 (also referred to as the Fifteen or Lord Mar's Revolt) was the attempt by James Francis Edward Stuart (picture right: also called the Old Pretender) to regain the thrones of England, Ireland and Scotland for the exiled House of Stuart.

After a bold start the revolt was defeated and James returned to Europe in exile. However the highlands would revolt again in the better known rising of 1745.

So how easy is it to wargame in this period of the 18th century and what resources are there?

Though not a popular period in the past in recent years manufacturers have produced excellent ranges of figures in 28mm. These range from the recently released plastic figures from Warlord to the rather “chunky” but excellent figures from Front Rank. One bonus for the gamer is the uniforms were very similar for all nations with red coated Frenchmen and French, Dutch and Austrians (amongst others) in white/grey coats. So if you are not too fussy a collection of this period can easily proxy as another nation with the addition (or removal!) of flags.

There are many set piece battles very suitable for the tabletop as well as smaller actions in the colonies and sieges of towns and cities.

It is my opinion that his period deserves more attention than it has traditionally received from gamers.



¹ The Great Britain formally declared war on Sweden in 1717, but changed sides in 1719 ending the war as a Swedish ally – Ed.

Fantastic Plastic

By Michael Colclough

Plastic soldiers have been around for a very long time. Over some fifty years now and some tribute should be paid in my humble opinion. Most of us wargamers have had plastic soldiers at some time in our lives and as such, we went on to use lead figures as our finances and requirements changed. However, plastic soldiers are still around and will continue to be around as long as there are people out there buying them.

With new lines of plastics being made from Victrix, Perry and Black Powder as well as Esci, Revell and Zvezda to name just a few, I would like to regale my time using plastics and how I have come appreciate how far plastic soldiers have come.



As an old wargamer (some forty years now), I started back in the day with my first foray into Napoleonics with some 'AirFix' Hussars, Cuirassiers, British and French Infantry and rounded it off with artillery from both sides.



Now this hobby started while still at High School, where my brothers and I would line up the troops and throw rocks at them! We didn't know about

rules of the game and only a vague understanding of even who Napoleon Bonaparte was and only after looking in our Encyclopaedia Britannica (1974 version) that we understood what had happened in the previous century. A friend down the road also became interested in Napoleonic and my brother lost interest, however, while searching the local library I came across this book to which I started a passion with Napoleonic and wargaming:



Regretfully, I took the book from the library without signing it out and never returned it. I simply had life get in the way, but I meant to return it once I bought my own copy, but alas, the library no longer exists.

Anyway, having left home, serving time in the army, getting married and starting a family, led me back home digging through old boxes stored under

Dad's house and I found my treasure trove of my old Napoleonic plastic army. Oh Yeah!



Sadly, the years of neglect had taken their toll on my poor French (I choose to do the French from reading about Napoleonic exploits), I brought them home, cleaned them up and repainted a British army (yes, the French had to fight someone), based them randomly (I still had no rules) and found a local wargaming club to play my repainted army. At this club I found someone looking for a game and I brought my troops out to play WRG Rules. I knew nothing about skirmishers, columns, squares and what cavalry can do to a British line. I was soundly beaten. I packed my troops up, went home and threw the box of troops (it was a big box) on the floor and kicked the box sending the plastics everywhere. Boy, was I a spoilt sport and sore loser. However, I did buy a set of rules, rebased my French accordingly and learned to control my temper and went on to play Napoleonics for the next six years. In that time, I had got a mould for both 28mm lead and 15mm lead to which I developed a passion for and got rid of my plastics. I don't even remember who I gave them to. I do remember though, a friend of mine had French Hussars in plastic (Airfix British Hussars) and they had their heads replaced with French soldiers heads, with a pin placed neatly through the top front of the Shako, with putty around the pin, making it a neat plume! I was impressed.



Due to life again getting in the way, I didn't do any Napoleonics for some twenty years until I moved to Adelaide. Suffice to say I needed a place to meet other wargamers and have found a local club where Napoleonics are being played under Blucher and Lasalle rules, with the occasional Black Powder or other rules being tried out. I had acquired several new 15mm armies, both French and Austrian, but I don't get to play as much as I would like to. Finances are also limiting.

One night, when I came looking for a game, there was a game of Lasalle being played in 28mm. Yes, I thought, I would like to get into this! So upon making enquiries, I found that the average lead figure was around \$3.50 per soldier and more for cavalry and artillery. So I trolled Facebook looking for bargains and found a plastic army (still in boxes) from a guy in Singapore and bought them from him. I got over 15 boxes worth of Esci, Italeri, Hät and others for just \$120 plus \$60 postage. I checked out prices in our local hobby store and found each box of these sells for around \$16-\$22 depending on the brand. I was in for a bargain.

I waited some six weeks for these order to arrive and proudly announced I was going to make a new plastic army so I could join my friends at the club. I was dumbfounded at their response: "Plastic crap!" – "What do you mean "plastic crap"?" – "They aren't even 28mm, they are 72nd scale." They are around an inch tall, depending on the manufacturer. Even so, I wasn't going to mix different suppliers in the same units, but they were all 72nd scale and as such, looked down and frowned upon, like a cousin down on his luck.

"Save some money and buy lead figures. They paint up nicely and look good", I was told. "I would never play against a 72nd scale army with my army". What was this prejudice – because my men were not as tall as the 28mm? Really? I thought it was a joke, but some of the players said that the game would look awkward if I pitched my 72nd plastics against 28mm figures. Mine were certainly painted historically.



*Saxon Light Infantry 1812
(HäT French Grenadiers)*



Saxon Foot Artillery (Zvezla)



*Saxon Chevaulegers Prinz von Polenz
(Italeri British Light Cavalry 1815)*



*Saxon Divisional General
(Italeri French General Staff)*

Fortunately, it turns out that there were just several people who felt this way. Others I talked to said so long as they are around the same size (not 15mm v 28mm), so long as you wanted to play, a game would be had. These are the kind of players I like to game with.

Anyway, having looked around that the 28mm plastic manufacturers out there I cannot argue that the 28mm plastics do look exceptionally well crafted as well as including lead components giving them some weight and feel of a lead figure.

For around \$60, you can get a box of 48 Victrix figures making for a good bargain when comparing the cost of lead figures and companies such as Victrix make excellent 28mm plastic figures.

As you can see, the quality of these figures are excellent, the pricing is within reach of most people these days and what's great is that these companies are bringing out new lines all the time. Combined with being able to purchase these products directly from the Internet, it makes it hard to justify buying 72nd scale soldiers unless you are just starting out into Napoleonic wargaming. So what should I do with my Saxons? Should I just attempt to eBay them? I have tried that with my 72nd scale French Italeri Dragoons, 4 Regiments along with a Horse Battery and a Commander for a mere \$150, but alas, no offers.



Perry Miniatures



Victrix

Perhaps the days of 72nd scale plastic Napoleonics are numbered? What will become of my Lasalle 72nd scale Saxon Army? Will they be dusted off sometime in the future perhaps by my grandson and wonder what they are?

Any takers?

Repurposing Figures as Proxies in Fantasy Armies

By Ross Dawe

Building a fantasy wargame army can be fun, but the prices for new figures can do major damage to personal finances. Yes, it would be nice to use those expensive figures – but you still need the rest of the army!

In this article I am going to give you some pointers in filling out your fantasy army project on a budget. While Games Workshop's Citadel Miniatures are well known and Mantic Games are making inroads into the fantasy market, the focus here is on other ranges to fill out your fantasy army.

The example photos here are of figures painted and based for wargaming: they are not collector standard! Apologies in advance for the smartphone photos: apparently my green flock bases are not photogenic.

First up we have a selection of Mage Knight (MK) figures. These are pre-painted miniatures made by Wizkids. I have bought up boxloads of them at closing out sales and on eBay. The paint schemes for the early sets were dull and blocky, but greatly improved for the later sets and these usually only required a tidy up of the factory paintwork. You can still sometimes find batches of Mage Knight figures for sale, but beware of paying exorbitant prices for single figures from collectible dealers. The MK sculpts vary in quality, but the biggest bonus is their wonderful range of monsters. Most of the classic fantasy races are fully catered. Except for rats – I have no idea why. In this example at far right we have a dark elf on an ice dragon on a 60mm base for Hordes of the Things. At the centre rear there is an orc with drum and bagpipes: just the thing for Kings of War. The human figures are compatible in size with standard 28mm ranges.



Next we have a couple of units of orcs. These are mainly Mage Knight, with some Fantasy Warriors, Citadel and Heroquest mixed in.



Heroquest was a fun miniatures board game and provides an excellent filler for units of orcs, goblins, skeletons and chaos warriors. It also included several mummies, but you do need to mix them with other ranges otherwise your mummy regiment looks like a Broadway chorus. The gargoyle in the Heroquest set makes an excellent hero for an Abyssal army. Group North's second hand stall has sold several sets of Heroquest over the years.

Fantasy Warriors is a great source of orcs and dwarves as filler for units. You can buy them from em4miniatures in the UK in bulk lots at around 30 cents per figure. The next picture shows Fantasy Warriors orcs and dwarves, some Lord of the Rings goblins and a base of Mage Knight fairies at the far left. While the Fantasy Warriors orcs can mix with other ranges if you use a consistent paint scheme, the dwarves are too distinct in style from Citadel and would be better in separate units.

The Lord of the Rings (LotR) plastic figures also make for good unit fillers. The sprues were relatively cheap with mixed poses and batches of the figures regularly turn up cheap on eBay. The Rohan figures from the LotR range are excellent army filler for historical Dark Ages armies of Northern and Western Europe, and for Kings of War will do nicely in human and Varangur armies. The second hand stall has sold a large number of LotR figures over the years.



In our next photo we have a unit of Naiad Ensnarers for Kings of War (KoW). These are shape changing mermaid fighters that the KoW background fluff describes as sometimes alluringly beautiful. However, the pictures in the army list book show women that seem to be a cross between Cybermen and piranhas. Going with the fluff, these figures are mostly Heroclix with a few Mage Knight. At left is a Horrorclix Vlad the Impaler, doing what he did best. The happily smiling face is actually the factory paint job and shows how far the factory quality has advanced.



Heroclix is another game of pre-painted miniatures by Wizkids, with each set usually based on mainstream comics such as Marvel or DC. The range has enough different Batman figures to fill out an infantry horde! Heroclix fit well with 28mm figures, but the comic basis means that some of the figures can be a little odd. Batches of Heroclix from superseded sets often appear on eBay at reasonable prices. Again beware of the single figures sellers, as some of the rare miniatures from sets can cost a small fortune.

The Heroclix Judge Fire from their set based on the 2000 AD comic makes a superb KoW Abyssal effect.

Horrorclix was another pre-painted miniatures game from Wizkids, with plenty of bizarre monsters plus the usual horror tropes. They also turn up on eBay.

Both Mage Knight and Heroclix figures are good fodder for conversions. The plastic is soft enough to cut and carve. I have made some undead giant worm cavalry with Ral Partha lead riders on Mage Knight creatures, and the ranges fit reasonably well.

Ral Partha was a very prolific miniatures company in America from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. For many years they made all of the Dungeons and Dragons monsters, plus a wide selection of characters. Every fantasy race was fully covered. The figures are mostly true 25mm, but several sets were made to fit with the enlarged 28mm ranges such as Citadel. Iron Wind Metals now makes the Ral Partha figures, but sadly there has been a price escalation. Also check Ral Partha Europe, which has a separate licencing deal.

Our next photo shows some more monster examples. The big green guy is a Star Wars figure I bought from the toy section at Coles: it works well as a giant for an orc army. In front of the giant are a Heroclix necromancer on a 25mm square base (for scale) and a Mage Knight flying monster. The fire elemental at the rear is Heroclix: there were six different ones in a recent set so I have a KoW fire elemental horde with no duplicates.



Obscured behind Vlad is a monster from a game called Trinity: Battleground by White Wolf that came out twenty years ago and quickly disappeared. The human figures were a right pain to clean up and paint, but the monsters were very well done. Even though this article promotes using cheap proxy figures, I would happily pay full price for packs of the Trinity: Battleground monsters.

A range of monsters that was sold in Target was called Monster in my Pocket (MimP). The next picture shows a couple of MimP examples which fit very well with 28mm figures. Sadly now out of production, the MimP range included hydras, demons, golems, ogres and several other monsters, including the toothy fish monster shown here.



The skeletons included for scale are a Black Tree Designs (BTD) standard bearer, Mage Knight armoured skeleton warrior in front and a Heroquest skeleton with scythe.

Black Tree Designs are based in the UK and have a wide range of historical and fantasy figures. They frequently have sales, so it is worth keeping an eye on them.

The skeletons also show the size of our next example, some monsters from Metal Magic. This was a German company that made a range of sci-fi figures. The adventurers and various space troops recently reappeared. The monsters are currently out of production, but if you can find them they work well for both fantasy and sci-fi. I use one in my KoW Forces of Nature army.



Some more ranges are shown in the next photo: here we have examples of Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) pre-painted plastics, Reaper Miniatures and Fistful of Aliens.



The whirlwind, gold dragon, ghost girl and mind flayer here are D&D pre-painted figures. The D&D range is huge and covers almost everything in fantasy. Their human figures can be bland and may need some extra work to stand out. Where the D&D figure range really stands out is the selection of

monsters, which often have excellent factory paint jobs. The whirlwind is going to be a KoW Well of Souls for an Abyssal army.

The alien figures at front left are from a range called Fistful of Aliens (FoA) that I bought at a toy shop. Now out of production, the figures are based on red, green and blue factions. The red monsters are now a horde of KoW Lower Abyssals and match the background fluff very well. Other KoW fluff describes the Trident Realms Thuuls as having octopus heads on halfling bodies: several of the green and blue FoA figures actually fit! These figures now turn up as relatively pricey singles on eBay, but keep an eye out for job lots.

The blue monster in the background is a Reaper Miniatures water elemental from their plastic Bones range. Reaper has just about everything in fantasy in metal, but this past few years they have branched out into plastics through a series of Kickstarters that were very well funded. The Bones figures have a good level of detail and the plastic is readily paintable, but do NOT water down your acrylic paints!

One caution with using plastic figures from Mage Knight and Reaper, is that the smaller figures may have bent weapons. These can be straightened after being warmed up (use very warm water), and then fixed in position with a dunking in cold water. However, sheds in Australian summer are warm enough to bend the plastic back to their original bent shape. Sigh.

There are several other sources of cheap of miniatures, not shown in example photos here. Historical miniatures have seen a major boom in plastic over the past few years. For your Kings of War or 9th Age human armies, there are medieval sets by Perry Miniatures, Fireforge, Victrix, Warlord Games and several others.

There are several other fantasy miniatures companies worth a mention.

Grenadier are out of production, but they made an excellent variety of figures and they still turn up in job lots on the second hand market.

RAFM has some useful ranges and they sometimes have sales with a very good discount.

Essex Miniatures also do a fantasy 28mm range, but I had to repurpose their Amazons as female orcs. It turns out there was a good reason the company did not have pictures of those figures on their website! The Essex Miniatures historical ranges are good and will work very well for your fantasy human armies.

Shadowforge, now available through Eureka Miniatures, do several ranges of fantasy women and I have several of these in my armies.

Eureka Miniatures have several theme fantasy ranges and I highly recommend them. If you have a project and are looking for a variety of figures to fill out your army, the Eureka website is definitely worth a browse. Keep an eye out for repurposing Eureka figures: the Kung Fu Schoolgirls can be used as Safe For Work proxies for KoW dark elf blade dancers or Abyssal succubi.

Alternative Armies do a fantasy range, plus their showpiece Flintloque range. This is Napoleonic with fantasy races, so if your elves, orcs and dogs need guns, this range has you covered.

Toy shops such as Target are also worth an occasional browse. The Yu-Gi-Oh miniatures sets that were sold a few years ago had some useful monsters, although the prepainted plastic needed a little bit of extra work. The zombie clown from that range is now a named villain in my role playing campaign.

For KoW Abyssal Dwarf obsidian golems, check the Megablocks toy range as some of these figures just need some orange/red spots to get the right look.

Years ago there was a big push for 15mm fantasy, with several companies duplicating the classic 25/28mm lines. Nowadays the trend has moved to smaller figures, such as 10mm from Pendraken and 12mm from Kallistra.

I have been playing 15mm historicals from nearly 40 years, and when 15mm fantasy figures started appearing I bought them up big time. Six hundred figures for an army? No problem! Unfortunately hardly anyone else followed me into 15mm fantasy, so I have boxes of the little guys just waiting for their table time. Happily, Kings of War has some short height units such as orclings and imps, which will soak up plenty of my spare 15mm figures.

The Irregular Miniatures 15mm fantasy range, formerly also sold by Eureka under licence, includes the usual selection of fantasy races and used to be sold as boxed armies for a good price. Quite a few are going into my intended goblin army as rabble.

Essex Miniatures also do 15mm fantasy to a good standard and several of these are going to see use as orclings and imps in my KoW armies.

Alternative Armies have a selection of 15mm figures that are also worth a look.

The 15mm Samurai range by Tin Soldier are also usable. They are supposed to be 12th to 17th century Japanese. However the sculptor appears to have been distracted during anatomy class, or decided to sculpt the figures to match the paintings of the era which distorted features. I am planning to repurpose my army of them as KoW League of Rhordia halflings. The Tin Soldier Hellenistic range (think classical Greece) has several figures that are chunky 18mm in size, which can work as thin dwarves.

One final point with proxying units in your army: plan ahead! Some of the examples shown here are out of production and only turn up in batches of figures, either at the club's second hand stall or on-line at eBay. Keep your eyes peeled for the bargains and be prepared to stash the figures in a shoe box for a while until the project is ready to work on.

Happy gaming!

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