



The Grumbler

The Official Newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society



Volume 18 Issue 2

May 2018

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Cover image: Sergeant Taria, Grenadiere de la Garde 1809-1815. The photo was taken in the 1850's.

Editorial

Welcome to the new edition of The Grumbler! As usual this issue features articles on a wide variety of topics: a game report, a description of a scratch-built model, a review on a plastic tank model, an article on the American Revolution, and a discussion on the past and future trends in our club. Many thanks to the contributors: Ross Dawe, Mike Cook, David Alva, and Sasha Pushkarov.

I am really happy I am able to write “as usual”. To be honest a year ago when the first “new” Grumbler was laid out I had some doubts it would last more than one issue. Thank you, the readers, for the keen interest in the renewed Grumbler, and thank you, the authors, for your contributions which keep the readers reading!

A year on from the first issue, I hope you still enjoy the newsletter. See you again in the club and on the pages of The Grumbler.

Sergiy, Editor

Submission guidelines:

Items for “The Grumbler” can be e-mailed to: TheGrumblerGNHWS@gmail.com. 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 next issue is planned for July 2018 with the submission deadline on 30 June. Don’t be stressed if you’ve missed the deadlines – there will be more future issues with enough pages for your writing!

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

Mail address: PO Box 1040, Salisbury, SA 5108

Web: <http://www.groupnorth.club>

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Society

Planned issues of The Grumbler

Volume and issue No	Submission deadline	Scheduled release
18, No 3	30 June 2018	July 2018
18, No 4	31 August 2018	September 2018
18, No 5	31 October 2018	November 2019
18, No 6 (Christmas edition)	30 November 2018	December 2018

Diary

Gaming nights:

Regular: every Wednesday from 19:00

May 23 & 30

June 6, 13 & 20

July 4, 11, 18 & 25

Subject to members' interest: other days must be confirmed with a "key master" from the Club's Committee.

Sat 26 May 2018	Crows Feast fantasy tournament
Sun 24 June 2018	Big Game Sunday
Wed 27 June 2018	Annual General Meeting
Sun 29 July 2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Sun 9 Sept 2018	Big Game Sunday (tentative)
Sun 21 Oct 2018	Big Game Sunday

General Notices and Announcements

The Next Annual General Meeting

From Sasha Pushkarov, the GNHWS Secretary

The AGM is fast approaching, the date is Wednesday the 27th of June. Please look up at your calendars if you can make it. The agenda for this year's AGM is in process of writing and is subject to replies to points 2 and 3 below specifically. I need the following items:

1. If you cannot make it, please send through your apology and nomination for proxy as soon as possible. No forms, just e-mail to me saying something along the lines:

My apologies for not attending the 2018 AGM.

<Name of the member> kindly agreed to vote as my proxy.

A member can hold proxy votes for more than one person.

Please remember, if we won't meet the minimum quorum, the meeting will need to be postponed to the following Wednesdays, which means less gaming nights. If you can't attend, proxies are the way to meet this quorum

as your proxy counts as you for attendance, but you need to notify me about this kind of arrangement as soon as you get it organized.

2. Call for any agenda items that you wish to discuss in the AGM, apart from the usual items.
3. Any nominations for the Executive positions: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.
4. If you would like to run for a non-executive Committee member, please notify me as soon as possible.

All the best, hope to hear from you soon.

Club Volunteer Positions

From Lance Holden, the GNHWS President

The AGM is approaching which gives everyone a chance to help contribute to the smooth operation of the Society. We're all aware of the major positions on the executive and encourage all who want to help to nominate. I'd like to see a vote off for a position that has at least two applicants once in my tenure.

The Committee is comprised of the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and at least three ordinary members, preferably five or six.

Additionally we would like people to volunteer for these other positions to help the Committee (no, we don't get voted just so we can do all the work). These positions report to the Committee but are otherwise free to operate as they determine is best for the club. These positions can be shared or other people brought in to help.

- Librarian:
 - Register in new/donated books for the library
 - Borrowing slips
 - Entry onto the computer/into the catalogue
 - Put away returned books
 - Advise the committee of members with overdue books
 - General presentation of library
- Terrain Room manager:
 - Identify and set aside items for repair
 - General feel for what is being used and what is not
 - Organising the terrain room
 - Marking new items as being owned by GNHWS
 - General presentation of the terrain room
- Competitions/Hall Hire Manager:
 - Deconflicting competition scheduling
 - Encouraging competitions and identifying potential competition organisers
 - Encouraging organisers to meet GNHWS requirements for competition planning
 - Keep committee informed of upcoming competitions and proposed competitions
 - Coordinating public hall hire to ensure no conflicts

- “PR” person:
 - Identify opportunities to promote the club
 - Identify opportunities to recruit new members
 - Monitor and follow up those who visit the club (visitors book)
 - Advise on opportunities to promote competitions
 - Encourage and identify potential organisers for the Open Day and the AGM Tattoo
- Building Maintenance supervisor:
 - Point of contact for any problems with the building observed by members
 - Keep an eye on the building and associated bits and pieces for anything that needs attention
 - Organising resupply of needed items
- Canteen manager:
 - Stocking the fridge
 - Maintaining records of canteen expenditure and income
 - Setting prices in accordance with Committee guidelines
 - Control of canteen monies: maintenance of float and passing excess monies on to the Treasurer
- Editor of the Grumbler:
 - Collating/editing submitted articles
 - Managing printing and distribution

Some positions that aren't specifically listed include Hall Cleaning. It is the responsibility of all gamers to help keep the hall tidy, the toilets clean and the bins emptied. If you see a small problem, fix it.

Annual Tattoo

From Lance Holden, the GNHWS President

Each AGM is accompanied by the Painting Tattoo (also known as armies on parade). This is a chance to show off what you have been working on over the year or your favourite army you just rediscovered in the bottom of a box.

The following describes the categories and voting for this year.

Army display: Entries in this space will be given a 12" x 12" area that can be filled with any amount of miniatures and decorations (terrain, display boards) that you can fit. There is no restriction on the category, you can have a large 15mm Assyrian army next to a Dystopian Wars fleet next to an Imperial Knight and Land Raider. Each club member may have up to two entries in this category.

Skirmish display: Entries in this space will be given a 6" x 6" area that can be filled with any amount of miniatures and decorations (as for the army display). This category is for the smaller games where you wouldn't have enough models to fill up the larger army space - such as Guild Ball or Infinity. Each club member may have up to two entries in this category.

Individual/Monster/Vehicle: These are for individually based miniatures that represent a single creature or vehicle models. Any scale is allowed but 28mm or greater is recommended for entry in the category. Each club member may have up to three entries in this category. If there are significant number of 'large'

miniatures (vehicles or monsters on large bases) these may be moved to separate Monster/Vehicle category.

Entries are to be submitted before the AGM starts. Register each entry with the event organiser who will give you an anonymous identifier number to display with the entry. You may enter an army or model(s) you have entered in previous years though you are encouraged to leave behind armies that have already been voted the best once before.

After the AGM all club members will be able to vote. Each member will be given three voting cards with their name on them. Each card counts as one vote for each of the categories. You cannot vote for the same entry in a category more than once (and we can check on the voting slips if you did). You are allowed to vote for your own entries. Within each category the entry that receives the most votes is the winner, with a second and third place recognised.

The goal is to ensure we have a nice dense mix of miniatures on each table. While this will mean historicals will be competing the same category as fantasy figures and different scales will be on the same table. I expect all entries to be judged on the merit of the total army look, accuracy or inventiveness as the case may be. Smaller scales will benefit from being able to fit in more models in the allocated space to look like an army. The skirmish, individual and monster categories should make it easier for any member to bring in some models to put on display. Remember this event is just as much about generating the buzz on social media with photos of all of our nice armies as well as recognising those who put extraordinary effort into their miniatures.

Members are encouraged to bring their latest work or something that hasn't been shown before.

The format is similar to last year except monsters and vehicles have been moved into the individual category due to the low turnout. If there are five or more entries for that category then it will be split into its own group. I'd expect lots of entries for individual figures, you only need to bring a miniature or two in your pocket to be able to enter.

Tournaments

Crows Feast Fantasy Tournament

From Ross Dawe

Group North's annual Crows Feast fantasy tournament is on 26th May. For full details, please see Lance Holden or check the club website or Facebook page. If you would like to play in Crows Feast but can't be there for all four games, please chat with Lance as it may be possible to play for just part of the day.

I am offering to loan armies and units to players for Crows Feast. I can provide playable armies for the following:

Salamanders (lizardmen), Forces of Nature, The Herd, Orcs, Empire of Dust (Dark Santa theme or regular skeleton theme), Abyssals and Varangur.

Note that these loan armies do not include some of my more esoteric proxy units. I can also provide loan units for many of the other Kings of War armies.

If you need any loan armies or units, just ask and I'll see if I can help.

I'll be using a Dwarf army at Crows Feast.

Club Events

April Big Game Day – Wars of the Successors

By Ross Dawe (text) and Greg Whish-Wilson (photos)

Group North's Big Game Sundays provide a good opportunity to play a much larger game than is usual for a club night. April's event saw Kevin, Harry, Simon and Ross play a game based on the Wars of Alexander's Successors.

After Alexander the Great's death, it did not take long before the generals and governors fell to fighting each other for control of the empire. The result was a period of politics, treachery and warfare that makes the Game of Thrones look tame. For an easy introduction, Wikipedia has a summary with plenty of links to get you started:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diadochi>

Our game was based on one of the early grudge matches: Antigonus Monophthalmus (One-Eye) and his son Demetrius versus Eumenes and his ally Eudemus, fighting for control of the core of Alexander's empire in Asia Minor.

The game rules were a home brew simplified version of Field of Glory (FoG) Ancients, with some tweaks to suit the era of the Successors and some borrowings from other rule sets. In the following pictures you will see the elements making up each FoG unit have been stuck onto larger movement bases for convenience.

The scenario is straightforward: a win could be obtained by routing sufficient units, making all the opposing phalanx units ask for terms, or killing all of the opposing named generals.

In our game the deployment by both the armies was similar to history: phalanx massed in the centre, most cavalry weighted on one wing for a big punch and plenty of light troops supporting each wing.



Here we see a long view of the battlefield. Antigonus is left centre and foreground, Demetrius at upper left has launched a mass cavalry attack. Eumenes is right centre and foreground, Eudemus at upper right has responded to the cavalry attack by launching his own wave of horsemen.



The cavalry fight between Demetrius and Eudemus saw plenty of casualties. Here we see Demetrius encouraging his purple cloaked Companions. While he eventually won the flank, he took far too long and was unable to reach the centre in time to influence the outcome.



A phalanx versus phalanx slugfest! It started poorly for Antigonus (at left). Throughout the mass push and shove, the dice morale gods favoured Eumenes (at right).



Several turns later, we see the view from Eumenes' right flank. A massive hail of missiles from numerous light units failed to stop Eumenes' end phalanx unit from getting around the flank of Antigonus's phalanx and turning it. This eventually proved to be fatal for Antigonus's army.



Antigonus tried pushing through on his right flank to capture the village and Eumenes' baggage. While there was some success, Eumenes slowed them up long enough with Thracian peltasts and some cavalry posted in front of the village. In the foreground, some Greek light horse skirmishers have been falling back in front of archers that were supported by peltasts. In the far distance, you can see how few units remain on the opposite flank.



While the remnants of Antigonus's phalanx were asking for terms, his support troops were desperately trying to salvage a draw by swamping an isolated phalanx unit (centre right). The phalanx did Eumenes proud and fought off several wave attacks.



Last turn as seen by Demetrius on the left flank of Antigonus's crumbling army. The cavalry at lower left is the one unit Demetrius managed to control and head towards the centre. It was delayed due to a heroic last stand by some light infantry, but did manage to capture Eudemus. Some of Demetrius's other cavalry had gone haring off in pursuit and was way out of shot at far left.

The elephant unit at lower right belongs to Eudemus and was only narrowly diverted from over running Antigonus's camp by some brave light horse and light infantry.

In the centre we see the final melee, as Eumenes' phalanx units fought their way out of a swarm of Antigonus's light troops. Surprisingly, Antigonus managed to sneak out of the debacle and escape. He'll be back for Round 2 versus Eumenes in the club's May Big Game Day!

* * *

Much fun was had by the players. They took the simplified FoG rules in stride, and even provided suggestions for amendments during the game that were used straight away. The unit basing helped to keep the ongoing melees tidy and straightforward to resolve each turn, so I will be keeping that system for future big games.

While preparing for this game, I discovered that I don't need to buy any more figures for armies in the Successor period. There were 80 bases of pikemen arranged in 10 phalanx units in the game: that would max out most commercial game army lists. I also found the figures to make at least another 60 bases of pikemen. It seems I have plenty of painting to do!

A big thank you goes to Mike Allen for organising the big game day. The pizza lunch organised by Sasha also helped keep up the good mood of the day's attendees.

Workshop

Just another All-Nighter, or A Story of a Last Minute DIY Masterpiece

By Sasha Pushkarov

Many of you heard about the Big Game Sunday at GNHWS on the 8th April Sunday, and it may just happen that someone has heard of the War of the Worlds Wings of Glory WWI game I was organising. The game was to be played using the newly developed rule set "Tripods and Triplanes" from Ares Games. The game is loosely based on the H.G. Wells "War of the Worlds" (but in the book there were no triplanes – there were no flying planes at all at the time it was written).

In short, the event went well, but this article is not an after action report, that one will be in a future issue. This article is dedicated to the creation of the main character of the show: the Martian tripod, or the "Fighting Machine", from H.G. Wells book.

If you were ever a university student, then the phrase: "Don't worry about the assignment tomorrow, we have the whole night to do it" or something along those lines should be quite familiar to you. Well, it was just the case with me, yet again. For the Wings of Glory WWI vs H.G. Wells Martians I needed to create something that would look great and – how to say it? – appear like an authentic Wells' Martian. As usual, I was extremely busy for weeks before the game with ... um ... other very important things. The question, why then didn't I just purchase a ready-made product from Ares? Well, have a look yourself.



A Martian Fighting tripod – one is from the 1906 edition of the book, the other is from Ares Games. Guess which one is what?

I think you may have guessed that on the left is the original artwork that was done for the “War of the Worlds” by Henrique Alvim Corrêa, the only depiction of tripods Wells approved personally (all other artists failed to come close to what Wells had in his mind). I was after the original work – I wanted to keep close to the “true thing”, as quoted in the book:

"Boilers on stilts, I tell you, striding along like men."

If it was a pre-planned well-thought project of an experienced modeller here would be the Bill of Materials and the Tools List. But the planning session was about five minutes, maybe less – the time I brewed a pot of tea and cleaned my desk by moving books and papers to the floor. And yes, got a nod of approval from my dog. So, sorry, no detailed list of “things you need to build an authentic tripod”. Even if I had one it would be of little use at 11 PM the night before the game. Instead, if I needed something to make a part “looking like that” I went for my boxes with used sprues and bits and pieces, then inspected my bags and drawers, and if this wouldn’t help I sifted through old stuff in the garage waiting for the council hard refuse collection day. I’m sure if you happen not to have exactly what I used you will improvise and find a substitute.

Anyway, enough of the introductory talk. First things first: the tripod body (or is it the cabin?) should be a solid cylinder. I cut a 25 mm piece from a 19 mm diameter broken wooden broom handle; it was just perfect for my purpose. See? If I put on the list “broken broom, 1 pce”, what would you think? On the other hand, if I pre-planned something like “wooden dowel $\frac{3}{4}$ ” diameter 1” length”, sure it could be bought from a hardware store, but would it be *that* necessary?

Back to the project. I made the legs from undone paper clips (got a few in my backpack, perhaps they kept together pages of one of my assignments). If not paper clips I would use straight sections of galvanised wire (I had a plenty of it) cut to required length.



The tripod with legs, stage one. Pay attention to the cup on the background – a gulp of hot brew really boosted creativity.

You may wonder: what is that green stuff on the body of the beast and on the knee joints? Well, to my dismay on that night I had found that the model putty on which I had put my bets so much dried up into stone! So, after frantically searching for a substitute I used Blu Tack. Yes, you are not reading this wrong and it is not a typo. Blu Tack is a wonderful thing, it is sticky and is easy to mould – perfect for joining small parts and making them look like mechanical joints. Once set in place I just poured super-glue over them (and a very good deal of it too), so in effect it was just like model putty and did its job pretty well.



The Blu Tack joints close up. I even made the super-glue generate a smooth transition between joints and the legs.

Okay, legs were done and the joints were created. Now, the next quote, right from the primary source:

“Machine it was, with a ringing metallic pace, and long, flexible, glittering tentacles (one of which gripped a young pine tree) swinging and rattling about its strange body.”

Looking at the Corrêa’s illustration, it needed a multitude of tentacles from beneath its body. It also needed two main arms with one holding a device which looked like a film camera, but in fact was – how do they call it now? – a “direct energy weapon”, an infrared laser gun (a sort of):

“It is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently. Many think that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute non-conductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the parabolic mirror of a light-house projects a beam of light.”

The tentacles were easy to sort as I had all kinds of wire in my “electronics” box. For the tentacles I just happened to have a long and thin strand of servo-motor wires – a flat bundle of four wires lightly glued together. I stuck a couple of sections of those to the cabin bottom in between the three legs and was pleased with the look. For the arms I had slightly thicker electronic wires. I again used my improvised model putty and stuck the arms to the sides of the cylindrical body. Well done.

The Corrêa’s picture also called for a conical roof which I made of paper: a circle (my cap served as a pattern) with a small section cut out and then slightly folded with ends glued by super-glue. The heat-ray generator was from spare bits I had remaining from my Warhammer Fantasy Empire volley gun sprues. It was supposedly a fire extinguisher of some sort, but it did look just right for the job, so I stuck to the right arm by Blu Tack with super-glue poured over it.



The tripod assembled, but not painted yet

After that it was a simple matter of spraying black undercoat and painting the thing in silver and doing some humble base-work, and here's the final result. It was time to call it a day (or rather a night), the game should be in the morning, and the dog was fast asleep already. I told myself "Bob's your uncle" and followed my dog's example...



The tripod takes a defensive position ready to shoot down careless Earthlings

In the end it worked well. The tripod attracted attention and was the centre "show-piece" of the game, even though it was effectively made from some junk and left-overs. It proved that it is possible to make a... well, why should I be *that* modest? ...a master-piece from easily accessible material and it doesn't need a lot of money. I can't say was it 20 cents in paint and Blu Tack or less or more than that, but it definitely didn't come even remotely to US\$ 20 they ask for the thing on the Internet. Even more it shows that one does not need to always rely on a manufacturer for their miniatures, the pitfall most of us wargamers have fallen into while catching the sickness called "shiny thing syndrome". You know what I mean.

And as for the game, as I promised at the beginning, I will write a report for a future issue, so watch this space.

Articles

1775 – 1783: The American Revolution, Part V

By Mark Cook

Tarleton's British Legion 1778 – 1781

The British Legion or Tarleton's Legion was formed from several independent Pennsylvania Loyalist units on 1st August 1778, shortly after the British evacuated Philadelphia. Lord Cathcart was the regimental colonel, but the Lieutenant Colonel, Banastre Tarleton (who had previously commanded the Loyalist Dragoons which were now in the legion) actually commanded the Legion in the field throughout the war.

The Legion served in the New York area in 1778 – 1779, often in conjunction with the Queen's Rangers, Emmerich's Corps and the 17th Light Dragoons. In 1779 the Legion sailed with Clinton's expedition to Charleston South Carolina. The Legion remained in the Carolina's as part of Cornwallis' army in 1780 – 1781, where it acquired its military reputation. It fought in most of the minor engagements in the South as well as the battles of Charlestown, Camden, Cowpens (where its infantry were destroyed) Guilford Court House and Yorktown.

Organisation

Originally the British Legion was to have 600 men, but its actual strength ranged from 300 to 500, depending upon the particular campaign. Slightly over half of the Legion was mounted, while the remainder was infantry. In the southern campaign, a troop of the 17th Light Dragoons was attached to the Legion dragoons, and four companies of British Light infantry (Light companies of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 71st Highlanders and light company of the 16th Foot and the light company of the loyalist; Prince of Wales Regiment) often accompanied the Legion on its operations.

The Legion Dragoons consisted of six troops each of 40 men. Depending on the campaign lower numbers were common.

The Legion infantry consisted of four companies of 60 men each; again depending on the campaign those numbers were often lower.

On the 1st of January 1779 in New York it was reported that the Legion mustered 450 officers and men. Two months later on 25th October 1780, the British Legion's now five troops of dragoons had three hundred men while its four infantry companies had 221 effectives just prior to the Battle of Camden.

After the debacle of Cowpens on 17th January 1781, there is a noticeable drop in Legion ranks. On 25th April, 1781 there were 247 dragoons and only 91 infantry men, for a total of 338 men.

Uniforms

The Legion Dragoons wore a double breasted green jacket with black cuffs and collar with brass buttons, gold for officers as well as epaulets and trim; white shirt and buff breeches; black boots; crossed with black belts holding a scabbard and black equipment. These were standard issue British Light Dragoon equipment but the belts were not "whitened" in English practice. A black leather

helmet with a black woollen crest from front to rear (the now known as the Tarleton Helmet) green and black feathers to the left side of the helmet and a green and silver metal band; saddle cloth is commonly known to be plain grey or possibly dark green edged white; Trumpeters wore reversed colours a black jacket faced green. The Dragoons were issued a sabre and a pair of horse pistols. No carbines were ever issued.



Don Troiani's prints show the British Legion Infantry and Dragoon uniforms

The Legion Infantry wore short light infantry style jackets in green faced black, collar cuffs and lapels with white linings. Green waistcoat, White button hole tapes with pewter buttons. White linen overalls for summer and brown woollen overalls for winter (see adjacent). Head dress is described a black crested helmet. The two schools of thought are that the infantry wore the same helmet as the cavalry or a black leather British light infantry cap as portrayed in the Don Troiani's print. Standard British light infantry equipment in black leather was issued. They were armed with standard British long land musket and bayonet. The Legion buglers would have worn reversed colours of black jacket with green facings.

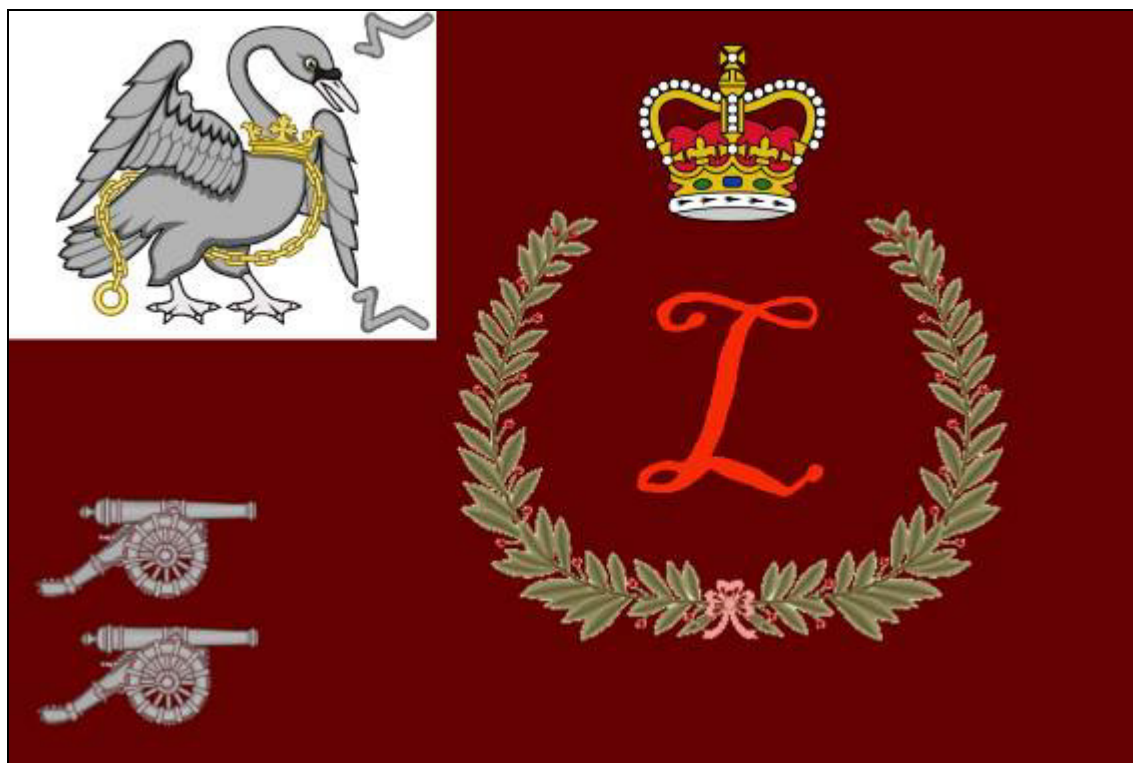
Legion's flag

Tarleton's British Legion was one of the most famous units of the American Revolution. In the famous portrait of Tarleton by Joshua Reynolds, Tarleton wears the uniform of the British Legion. He is surrounded by trophies of battle and cannons. More likely trophies won in the war. But in the upper left corner of the portrait there is another flag. Rather than being draped on the ground this one is flourished triumphantly by a trooper of the British Legion. Is this a legion flag?



Portrait of Sir Banastre Tarleton by Joshua Reynolds

An artist rendition of the pictured flag is shown below. A very unusual flag for this period. But it has many English traits about it: the wreath, the crown of Saint Edward, the swan with a gold chain and crown around its neck.



Is this the flag of the British Legion? More research is need, but it certainly has enough British elements to rule out the possibility that it is a captured French or American flag.

Conclusion

Tarleton and his Legion relied on shock and relentless pursuit to ensure victory over his opponents. Even though he was sometimes outnumbered, this policy worked more often than not. Lenud's Ferry (6th May 1780), Fishing Creek (18th August 1780), and Tarrant's Tavern (1st February 1781) were all surprise attacks resulting in significant enemy losses in men and material while British casualties were minimal. The Legion command also utilized the cover of night to have the maximum effect, as occurred at MacPherson's Plantation (14th March 1780) and Monck's Corner 14th April 1780). Tarleton's impetuosity did get him into trouble in at least two engagements: at Blackstock's Farm (20th November 1780) and Cowpens (17th January 1781).

In summarising the British Legion and its commander we will leave it to his Officer in Charge. In a letter to Lord George Germain on 15th May 1780, Sir Henry Clinton made a very insightful observation concerning the commanders of the British Legion and the Queen's Rangers,

These corps I must observe my Lord, exist in their chiefs, and I am persuaded that losing them they might shortly be reduced to the state of some other provincial battalions, very weak in numbers and not trained with the same exemplary degree of care or discipline though they are now such as I can place the highest confidence in.

Sources:

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Boatner, M.M. *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*. Stackpole Books, 1994

Jachim, J. *Defending the Legacy* (blog) <<http://defendingthelegacy.blogspot.com>>

Scotti, A. *Brutal Virtue: The Myth and Reality of Banastre Tarleton*. Heritage Books, 2008

Troiani, D. *Military Paintings of Don Troiani*. Image Bank of the American Revolution, <<http://www.historicalimagebank.com/gallery/main.php>>

Zvezda T-72B (1/100 scale / 15mm) Review

By David Alva



Wanting to add more Cold War era tanks as well as some more modern tank types to my ever growing list of miniatures and models I found the Zvezda T-72B tank kit that caught my eye. The graphics on the box enticed me along with the label in the right corner claiming that it was a snap fit kit and that no glue was required.

From my experience assembling World War II era tanks, I had been really happy of the 15mm range of models so I decided to add a few more and to take this one home with me and see how it went.

Getting out the scissors I sliced open the boxes seal sticker and pulled out the contents. I was greeted with the tank sprue consisting of two sheets in a sealed bag along with a decal sheet and a set of printed instructions with diagrams.

The diagram sheet was well set out and it was clear what parts assemble together. Taking the tank pieces off the sprue was easy and I had no problems during assembly. It took me around 30 minutes to assemble, but I was taking my time. The assembly sequence was logical so I feel a person could get by even without the instructions.

Assembling models later assemblies put the total time at around 15 minutes to assemble and get onto a gaming table and this seems to be consistent with the time reported by other people.

According to the box there are 15 pieces total for the tank and the tank length in metric is 10.1 cm in length:



I liked the look of the tank, I really liked the detail in some parts, assembling the back fuel tanks was a lot of fun. The plastic is hard but soft enough for sprue cutting with ease and I liked the overall detail.

I found the turret moves side to side with ease, there is no up or down turret movements and of course if you don't want to rely on snap fit for the model being kept together you can always add glue. The turret also comes off easily enough if a game you are playing calls for it, say, when the tank has taken a hit and is destroyed. The attention to detail I thought was good however there is no top turret mounted gun for anti-air on the tank like pictured on the front cover.

In assembling and afterwards I had no problems with the parts staying in place and in general putting the tank together was hassle free and fun. While the specific modelled tank might upset certain modelling purists by being a newer model T-72B tank with modern era plating, I don't see how this would be too much of a problem for wargamers who want to add this tank to their collections. However diorama modellers might find that this is not what they are looking for

in a T-72 tank if you are after a specific model or period when the setting has to be historically accurate, such as the T-72A tanks featured during the Iran-Iraq war.

Price wise, I was happy with the price I paid for the 15 mm tank especially in regards to quality. In Australia we often don't have the range and cheaper prices that wargamers in European countries can often access but I've been definitely happy with the kit, so much so that as you might of caught on earlier I brought a few more T-72B tanks from the same range.

I think I can field these tanks in any sort of Cold War era conflict and they would look at home in a Third World country arsenal for fighting a war or putting down a rebellion. I'm happy to add more of these to my collection.

Our Club in Numbers and Trends

By Sergiy Kravchuk

Last year yours faithfully took part in a rather lively and sometimes emotional discussion with some fellow club members on current membership and attendance tendencies and what could they mean for the future of the club. But being, after all, an engineer somewhere deep in my soul I trust in numbers, logic and diagrams not in rhetoric or hand waving. So in search of the truth (or a truth, if you like) I decided to sift through attendance records for the last few years (with the encouragement of Rowland and a big thank you for him having kept the records of attendances and helping me collate them). If there is any tendency it should certainly show up and either dismiss all worries or give some grounds for concerns. Here I'll try to present my findings without explicitly taking sides in the above mentioned argument.

Traditionally the club is regularly opened for wargaming on Wednesdays and Fridays. It can be opened on other days, of course, but this happen on a rather ad-hoc basis, so I exclude all data on irregular wargaming nights from further considerations. Also I excluded non-playing adults but included sponsored juniors in the headcount.

One would expect that club attendance is somehow connected with the membership, so I plotted these two on Chart 1.

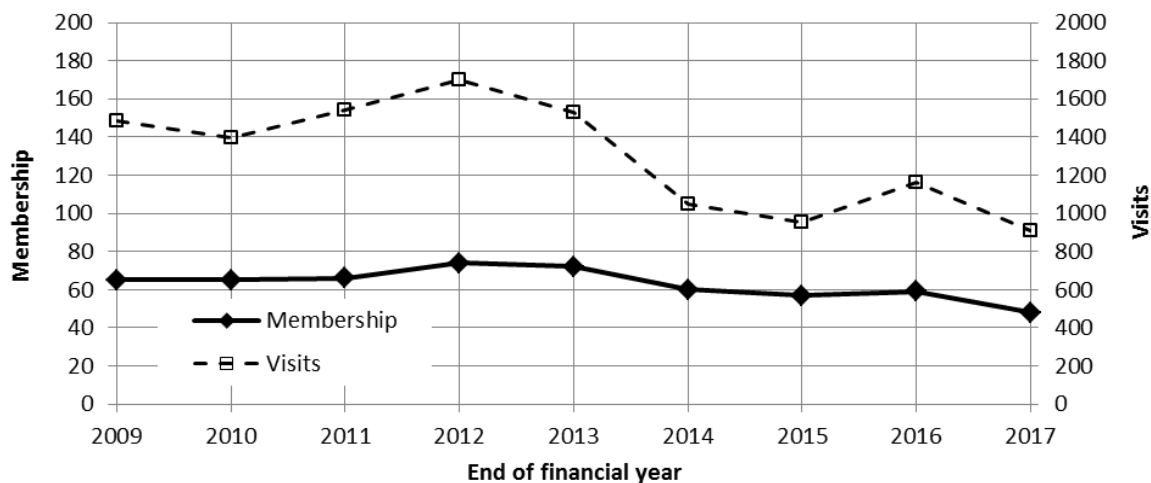


Chart 1. Total attendance and membership for each financial year

The attendance went up and down from year to year – some people joined the club, some left, some were busier, and some lucky ones retired and could play more – all sorts of reasons. Indeed the total attendance and the total membership follow similar patterns; however the drop in attendance from its peak in 2012 was more than 45%, way higher than the 23% drop in the membership for the same period. For some reason club members in average became less active. I had to look deeper.

I collated data separately for Wednesdays and Fridays and plotted them to see if these could offer a clue. Two things immediately became obvious.

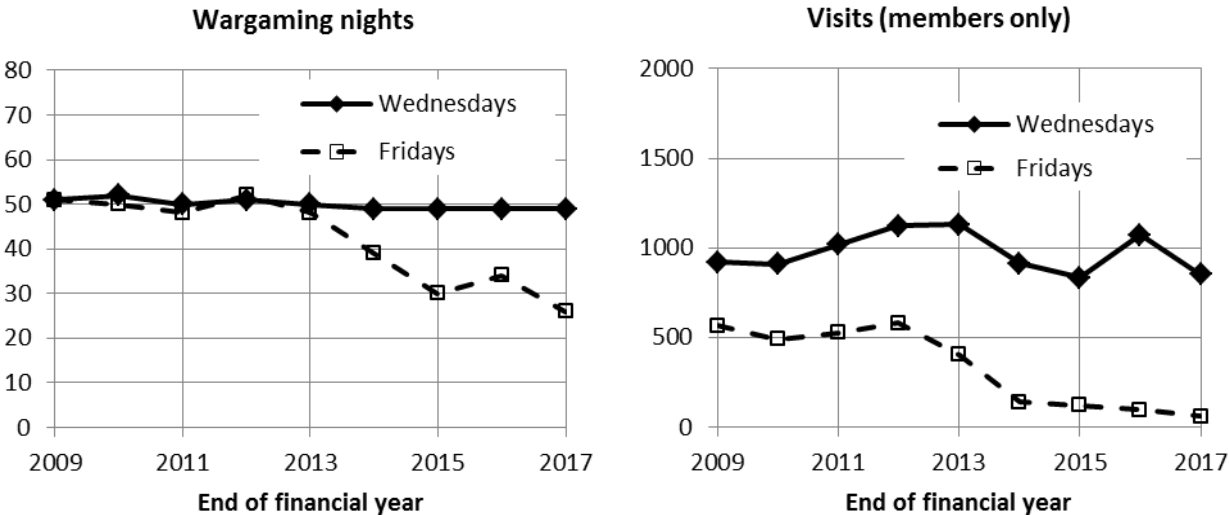


Chart 2. Number of regular wargaming nights (left) and attendance on these nights (right)

One could reasonably expect that number of Wednesday and Friday nights should remain the same, around $52 \times 2 = 104$ give one or two for big holidays like Christmas and Easter. Apparently these were not the case: Wednesdays remained pretty much the same for all these years, 50+ nights with attendance oscillating around 1000 a year, but Fridays went down from respectable 50 gaming nights with more than 500 attendances in 2008-2009 to 26 nights with virtually zero attendance in 2016-2017. Formally the club was still “open” for half of Fridays last year, but in average there were just two members, so the numbers didn’t add up to something significant. Fridays ceased to be regular gaming nights.

There should be a reason in losing five hundred visits a year.

In search for an explanation I looked at the membership composition. We have three age “grades” of players associated with the club: regular members (age above 18), junior members (age 13-18), and sponsored juniors (age under 13). Over years junior and sponsored membership declined to none, but it affected the total membership numbers only slightly as the bulk of our membership is made of regular members and the both junior groups together at their peak made less than 15% of total headcount. I plotted the junior and sponsored membership and Friday attendance on a chart and was rewarded with one of these “Aha!” moments:

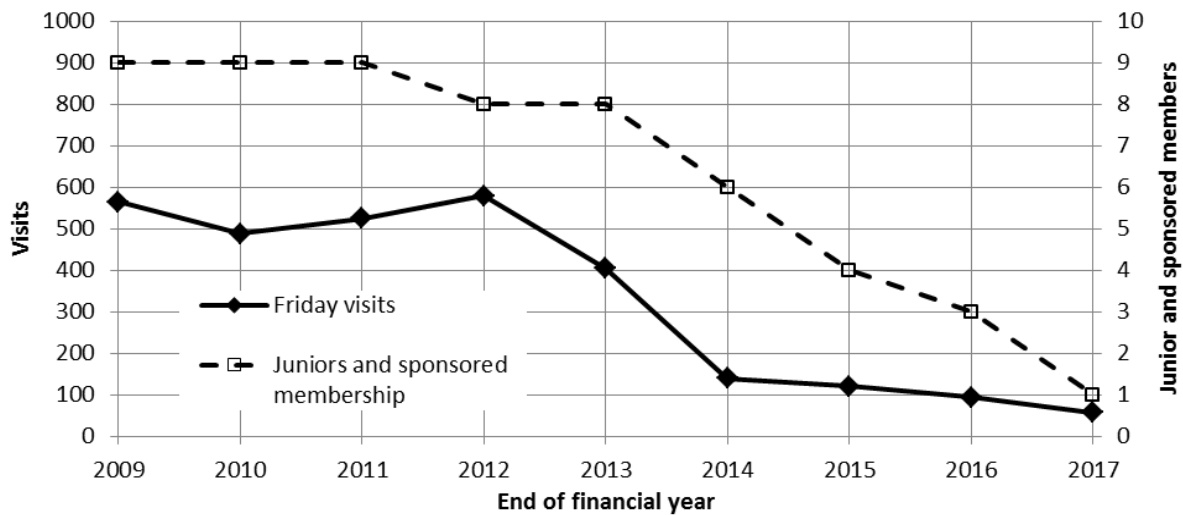


Chart 3. Junior and sponsored membership and attendance on Friday nights

It seems like Fridays were driven mainly by our junior players! Quite sensibly: they were students and it was easier for them and their parents to come on Friday and play until late because there was no school on Saturday and hence they could sleep in.

A junior coming on Friday would bring three more people in. Let's count. Someone has to play the opposing force in the game: one! Then someone has to drive the kid all way up to the club and then back home, so expect Dad turning up as well: two! (are you counting?) And then expect Dad to play another game with someone else: three! See? This may explain why a relatively small drop in headcount coincided with a disproportionately large slump in attendance. If in doubt have another look at Chart 3.

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I think I should stop here and let the reader to contemplate about this numbers and trends. But it would be unfair if I pretend that I have no personal opinion on the matter. After all, there should be a good reason for me to go through almost one thousand attendance sheets. Here I switch off my "unbiased" mode.

I think the club could retain existing members and attract new people (and hope it would) if it offered real-world social experiences which are richer than virtual ones. In my opinion the main problem the club is facing is the competition with social networks (think of Facebook and like most teens are hooked on) not with computer/on-line games. A wargaming club offers a face-to-face interaction during and after a game which is often more valuable than the game itself. To survive as a club we better put our stakes on expanding this "socialising" aspect as much as we can without compromising the original purpose of the club (wargaming). Again, this is my personal opinion, feel free to disagree and offer alternatives.

Just to provoke some thoughts, perhaps, we can revisit the Open Day concept and make it more newcomer-oriented with simple participation games, reserving a big gaming show for a purpose-organised convention. Or maybe we can promote the club to high school and university students. But I personally would like to see our club more open to juniors and their parents. Make them want to join. Maybe we can put some effort in making regular "family-friendly" nights. Remember: one kid brings in three more people to play.

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