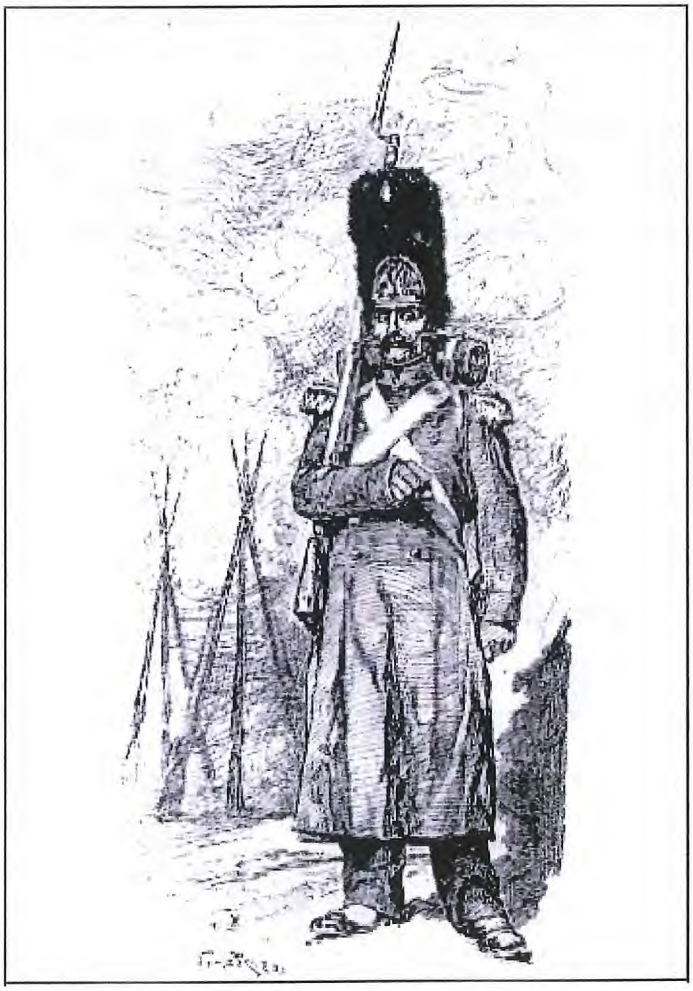
THE GRUMBLER

The Official Newsletter of G.N.H.W.S – March/April 2007

Vol 7 Part 2



To quote Field Marshall Blucher: **"Vorwarts".**

Welcome to the March/April Edition of the Grumbler – the official bimonthly newsletter of the Group North Historical Wargames Society.

In this edition, we have reports on CanCon and the Inaugural Lord of the Rings Tournament, and an article on Naval Wargaming. We also have our the regular items.

Rowland
Editor

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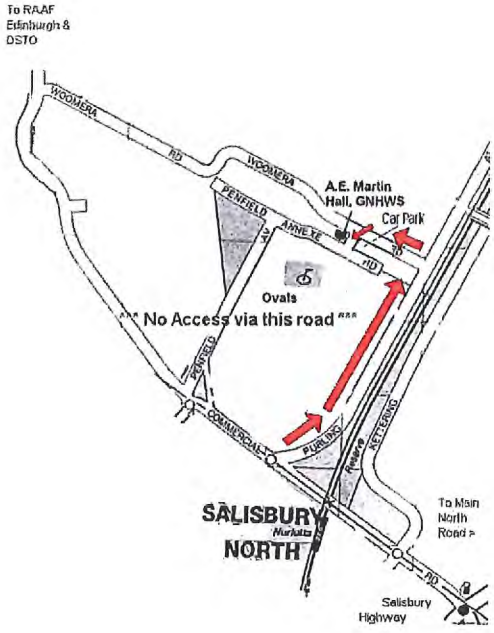
WHERE ARE WE? (for visitors)

The club rooms are located at the A.E. Martin Hall (Building 36), Penfield Ave Edinburgh UBD Ref: 61 E9. Access is by road and rail (Nurlutta Station - five to 10 minute walk). The nearest bus stops are over 1km away (twice as far as the station).

Access from the South along Penfield Ave is blocked. So access is from the North, off Woomera Rd. Drive down Purling Avenue and take the first left, (Woomera Road). Penfield Ave is the only access to the compound on the left (South). The Society's clubroom is right next to the entrance. (If coming from the North it is down West Ave then left on Woomera Rd)



Diary

3 & 4 March **Power of the Past** Mount Barker oval from 1000 hrs to 1700 hrs each day. (See detail below)

March – **Salisbury Fringe**- every Wednesday (7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th)

'Autumn 2007' **Beserker 07** –DBABB competition, Open to anyone. (See detail below).

19-20 May **DB Adeladium** - Details TBA, Organiser: Martin Foreman

June 2007 – **AGM & Annual Tattoo**

WANTED
COPIES OF THE SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTERS
PRE-GRUMBLER

Notices/Announcements:

Gaming Nights:

A reminder to everybody gaming nights are:

- every Weds and Fri evenings and
- every 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday afternoon.

Weds and Fri the hours are: Doors officially open at 7:00 pm and close at 11:00 pm.

- On Weds people often start arriving from 6:30 pm and a key holder might be there to open up. If you plan to be early please speak to a committee member (beforehand) to get access.
- Closing time is 11:00 pm. Please schedule your game to finish with enough packing up time to be out of the doors by 11:00 pm.

Sundays (2nd, 4th and 5th): Noon to 6pm. Attendance fluctuates at the moment so if you plan to come along it may pay to ensure someone has a key to get in. Otherwise email the Society (attention Mike Allen) on : mailto:groupnor@groupnorth.asn.au , check the Society's website at www.groupnorth.asn.au

AGM June

Traditionally our AGM is held on the last Wednesday in June. This year looks like being no-exception. So now is the time to think about points we would like to have discussed at the AGM and how each of us can contribute to the management of the Club by serving on the Committee or in some other official capacity.

Power of the Past

Each year a "Fair" titled **Power of the Past** is held on the Mount Barker oval. It covers a whole range of exhibits (to do with the past ... !) including craft, antiques, old cars, steam engines etc etc. This year Group North has been invited to have a small display. At this stage the display is Ancients and Napoleonics games and a small display of painted figures on two small tables.

If you would like to contribute to the display or attend in an "official" capacity (allowing Marcus to have a short break) please let Marcus know. Marcus originally made a "command" decision that the display is for Historical figures ... but he is happy to have the Warhammer players bring things along if they are prepared to attend for either of the days.

The activity is held at the Mount Barker oval on the weekend 3/4 March from 1000 hrs to 1700 hrs each day. The GNHWS stand is indoors. Come along if you get a chance.

Berserker 07 DBABB Tournament

The 'Berserker' ancients tournament is now underway. At the time of going to print there are nine competitors - there is still time for more to join in. The rules will be slightly modified Big Battle DBA, with loan armies available from Ross. The format is a self organizing round robin The details are in the notice below.

The Salisbury Fringe

During March the Salisbury Council runs a series of community activities known as the Salisbury Fringe. These activities include picnics, concerts, library readings, and other items of general community interest. This year Group North has been invited to participate. Our contribution will be to open up the Club to the public on four Wednesday nights in March to allow visitors to see what we do and participate in selected games if they wish. The Council has issued 6000 publicity leaflets and we expect that there will be some additional interest in the Club over the month of March. The number of visitors is unknown but we could expect anything from 2 to 22 … I guess we'd better stay flexible!

Club member involvement: There is no additional duties required of the members other than to be aware that we will have some visitors in the Club rooms on those nights. However, for those playing games please bring out your best scenery etc. If any members wish to help out or run an additional display or conduct games in which paasers-by can join in, please contact Marcus.

The details are as follows:

Dates: 07 Mar, 14 Mar, 21 Mar, 28 Mar
Times: 1930 to 2200 hrs
Activities: There will be DBA, HOTT, and other participation games set-up.

Looking for Opponents or Got Wargamers Visiting?

I know planning two or more months ahead is an anathema to most wargamers, but if you want to play someone outside your current circle then why not advertise in the Grumbler? Put a note in my (Editors) tray in the library or send an email to:
mailto:groupnor@groupnorth.asn.au

Ladders

DBA, DBABB and DBM ladders – contact Rowland Dickinson

New Members

We have had a number of visitors over the past few months. Bob Hodgson from Tasmania was most impressed with our club and the friendliness and hospitality of everyone. We also have two new members - **Graeme** Fazackerley and **Richard** Moriarty, so if you haven't met them yet, please make yourself known to them.

Items for 'The Grumbler'

Email address for articles: mailto:groupnor@groupnorth.asn.au . Alternatively hard or soft copies can be dropped into Rowland Dickinson's tray in the Society's Library room. Please feel free to include any photo's.

'Cut off date' is two full weeks before the effective date of the next issue. Articles/Items received after this date and before the edition goes to print may get in but that cannot be guaranteed.

Next Edition is the May/Jun issue. So the 'cut of date' is 16 April.

BERSERKER 07
Big Battles DBA Tournament

Organiser: Ross Dawe

Berserker 07 is a tournament using the Big Battles variant of DBA Version 2.2 rules. Figures are to be based for 15mm scale.

This will be a round robin tournament, in which each player can play any other player once. For example, if we have 10 entrants, you have a maximum of 9 games. You can play these games in any order. Only games played between the start of the tournament and the Group North Annual General Meeting in June count for points.

All games to be played at the clubroom of the Group North Historical Wargames Society. This can be Wednesday nights, Friday nights or any other time the clubrooms are open.

Each player chooses one army from any of the official DBA lists (no date limit) that can be found in the DBA v2.2 rule book. Army size is 3 commands, for a total of 36 elements. The selection of elements is fixed throughout the tournament, although how these elements are distributed across the commands of the CinC and subgenerals may be changed from game to game according to the BBDBA rules. An allied command remains fixed at 12 elements.

Army lists must be submitted by Wednesday 14 February[1] to Ross Dawe (list checker). Lists cannot be changed after lodgment except to correct detected errors.

Table size is 4' wide by 2' deep (standard for 15mm BBDBA with 3 commands per side).

Duration for each game is 3 hours starting when the players roll to see who is attacker and defender. At the 3 hour mark movement ends, any shooting and combats are resolved for that bound and the game ends.

Standard d6 dice will be provided for each game by Group North.

All figures must be appropriately based, painted and be a reasonable depiction of the troops they represent in the game. Note that allowance will be made for "fudging" figures, as long as it is still obvious to the players what the figures represent.

Entry fee is $10, payable to the Club Treasurer.

Playing Umpires: Ross Dawe and Marcus Tregenza.

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[1] I understand late entries are still being accepted - Ed

How the tournament works.

This is a round robin format, in which each player can play every other player once. Games played from February 21 up until the Group North AGM in June count for points.

Scoring: each player receives 1 point per opponent's element destroyed or fled off table, up to a maximum of 18 per player. Camps and built up areas follow the normal Big Battles DBA rules for counting toward command losses. This gives a potential score out of 18 points per game for each player.

Final score over Berserker 07 is the sum of your best results over a number of games, depending on how many players are in the tournament as follows.
5 or 6 players: best 4 scores count.
7 or 8 players: best 5 scores count.
9 or 10 players: best 6 scores count.
11 or 12 players: best 7 scores count.
13 or more players: best 8 scores count.
In the event of a tie, all the other scores by the tied players also count but only for resolving the tie. If there is still a tie after that, the tie will be resolved by who scored the highest in the game between those players.

The scoring system is designed to reward players who destroy enemy troops, even if the player loses the game. If the battle is going badly, fight on and score some points!

Players should note that, while they are encouraged to play all their games, they are not required to do so. This year's Berserker format is designed to allow players to engage in other club gaming activities as well.

Prizes

There will be trophies for first, second and third places.

This year the prize for unluckiest general is being scored according to a separate points system.

- A player scores one 'unlucky' point for each of his own generals that is killed by shooting or combat (fled off table doesn't count).
- A player scores 1 'unlucky' point if his camp is captured by the enemy at the end of the game.
- A player scores 1 'unlucky' point for each movement pip roll of triple 1 on three die, or for rolling 1,1,2 at least twice in the game.

Rules changes from Standard BBDBA.

Players should note that the following changes to the standard Big Battle DBA rules for the Berserker 07 tournament.

- The CinC's command is to be treated the same way as for as any other general's command. If the CinC is killed, this does not automatically end the game. Instead, the normal rules for loss of a general apply to the CinC's command and the game continues.
- If both sides have lost 18 or more elements at the end of a bound, the game ends and both players score 18 points.

Please note that you only have one army in this tournament, so choose wisely! Also check the available allies for an army as these can make a big difference. For example, Dacians with a Sarmatian ally command is a notably deadly combination. Remember that DBA has no troop grading as in DBM, so there are a lot more viable armies for a tournament in BBDBA.

There is a selection of armies available for loan from Ross Dawe. Players wishing to loan an army from Ross must contact him at least two working days before the game in which the army will be used and the figures will be brought to the clubroom on the day required. Ross's contact details are supplied below. Ross's figure collection can fudge most armies in Books 2, 3 and 4 with very limited coverage in Book 1.

When choosing your army, please remember that your choice of each 12 elements stays fixed throughout the tournament. For example, in a list with "1 LH or 1 Ps", if the player chooses the LH then the element stays a LH for every game and cannot be changed to a Ps.

Once the elements have been selected, they can be allocated to CinC and Subgeneral commands without having to follow the 12 elements per command rule. Instead, your 36 elements can be allocated as 13,13,10, or 16,10,10, or 16,13,7 and so on. There is a minimum of 6 elements per command. Ally commands must stay as 12 elements.

Ross's Contact Details:
Work phone: 8259 7132
Home phone: 8281 3125

Tournament Results/Diary Events

"Legion of the Ring"[1]

By Heinz Schoeder

Group North hosted its Inaugural Lord of the Rings Tournament on the 20th & 21st January 2007. Generally the tourney went well with all players stating they enjoyed. There was a minor hiccup with the PC but we were able to manually get the scores, make the appropriate match ups and keep the games flowing along. Originally 19 players had registered to play but eventually only 16 competed in the tourney - 10 senior players and 6 juniors (under 16). The event was a two day tourney with 6 x 2hour games being played from "The Legions of Middle Earth" scenario book; 3 games on both Saturday and Sunday. The Competitors came from far and wide - those from country areas showed the advertising worked.

Games Workshop, Military Hobbies[2], The Toy Collector and Gawler Hobby Supplies[3] were the major supporters of the event, providing heavily discounted or donated prizes to the event. Additionally every Junior also received a gift voucher courtesy of Military Hobbies.

Prizes and Certificates

For scenery we had Gondorian, Rohan, Far East with pyramids, elven forests, swamps ,snow and ice, the town of Bree and hobbit holes ,even some landing craft to hide in, which. all added variety and fun to the event. The scenery was as provide from Games Workshop and the Toy Collector (greatly appreciated) and by Dave Waldergrave and me plus what was available in the clubs terrain room.

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[1] This is an abridged report with elements rearranged for space purposes. The full report will be placed on the Group North Website: www.groupnorth.asn.au .

[2] Military Hobbies is located at 300 Port Rd, Hindmarsh.

[3] Gawler Hobby Supplies has closed their shop front store and will soon become an online order company.

Samples of Scenery

Group North provided trophies for the overall winners in both senior and junior divisions along with a champions Trophy shield, which will remain at the club with the overall winners name engraved upon.

Lord of the Rings Champions Shield

Overall Best Junior

Framed certificates were also awarded for Overall Best General, Sportsmanship and Painting. For Generalship the players received 50 points for a major victory, 35 for a minor victory and 25 for draw (in the minor victory the opponent received 15 points). Player's figures were judged by the opponents in each of the rounds. Scoring per game was for painting, basing and any extra conversions. This was averaged over the six games. Opponents scored Sportsmanship which was then totaled over the six games. During each round special awards (blisters) were given for bizarre or interesting events in the games i.e. Orc Captain rolling triple 1's in a fight or a brave hero attacking the troll.

In total there was over $900 in value of prizes for the Tournament.

The Saturday morning was a very hot humid day and the club AC struggled but by Sunday we had a much cooler and more enjoyable weather and temperature for gaming. As per usual the club provided hot pies, pasties and sausage rolls, drinks and nibbles and free tea and coffee.

Set Up and Ready to Go

The Scenarios played were:

- Storm the Camp,
- Contest of Champions,
- Ill Met by Moonlight,
- Till the Death,
- Clash of Piquet's, and
- Seize the Prize.

Where possible players would play an opponent of opposing force, similar ranking and on different tables.

Rohan: gate-crashing

and

in the village

Easterlings of Mark Cook

AMinas Tirith army with Boromir

Dol Amroth with Imrahil

The major awards were won by visitors , however Josh black and Nic Cameron members of Group North won awards for painting and generalship in the Junior Division - congratulations. It was unfortunate that none of Club the seniors could win anything major, except the experience of the event.

Champion Matt McCarthy

Overall Junior Luke McLaughlin

I wish to thank again all participants, Games Workshop and Military Hobbies and the Toy Collector for their invaluable assistance to Group North, all have been given framed certificates of appreciation.

I also wish to thanks those who assisted in making this event a success, namely, Harry Dunn, Alan Schultz, and the Cameron family and group North.

I hope that this will continue as an annual event and look forward to seeing the competitors back and hopefully many new ones too.

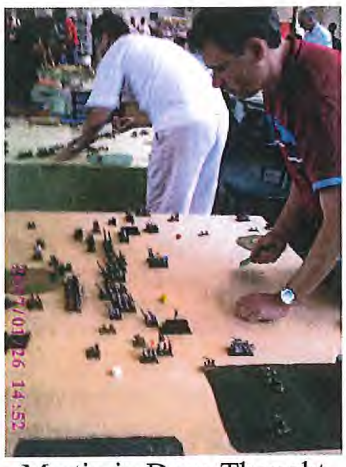
Many thanks to Heinz for providing this report and for organizing the competition – Ed

CanCon07[1]

Over the Australia Day long weekend the annual wargames convention CanCon (Canberra Convention) was hosted by the Canberra Games Society at the EPIC (Exhibition Park in Canberra (akka Canberra Showground). CanCon hosts a wide variety of Wargaming activities and is well patronized by Traders, many of whom offer significant discounts for purchases at the convention.

This year seven of Group North's members made it to all or part of CanCon – Marcus Tregenza, James Tregenza, Martin Foreman, Owen Batsch, Chester Batsch, Stephen Sills and Rowland Dickinson managed to get over there. Martin and Rowland entered in the Australian Nationals DBM competition, Owen and Chester were competing in the 40K, James played in the Star Wars miniatures and Magic (MTG) Competition game, Marcus and Stephen were networking, taking advantage of the sales, Marcus being involved in the Ancients Picquet (PK) demonstration game and the DBA competition while Stephen was generally having a good look around.

In the Australian national DBM competition there were 48 entrants, Rowland seeded 44th and Martin seeded somewhere in the middle. Six games were played over three days. As well as individual efforts there were team awards – for ad hoc teams arranged at the competition as well as state based teams. Rowland and Martin combined with a West Australian to form an ad hoc team – the Free Migrants to emphasis our South Australian origins - but with only two South Australians there too few to have a state team. The Free Migrants achieved an acceptable result. The progress of both Martin and Rowland through the DBM competition had its ups and downs. While Rowland managed an 8-2 win and 10-0 loss on Day 1 Martin was extremely depressed with two 10-0 losses, fearing what would happen in Day 2. Day 2 picked up for both Martin and Rowland. The former had two wins (10-0 and 9-1) and the latter a 10-0 win and 1-9 loss.



Martin in Deep Thought

[1] Prepared by Rowland Dickinson in consultation and with contribution from the attendees.

So at the end of the day both of them were on 19 points. Day 3 saw Rowland, despite his secret weapon of jelly beans, leave his head at his accommodation as first disaster struck and then on the last game he kept forgetting to move pieces, fire bows and misgrouped his losses resulting in declaring his second and biggest command being broken (hence army and game) when it wasn't. Another bound by him most likely would have finished off his opponent. So he ended the day where he started on 19. Martin meanwhile continued his ride to victory and pocketed another 11 points giving him a respectable total of 30. Rowland was also envious of Martin's camera and tripod enabling well taken shots of Martin's troops, a few snaps of which are attached.

Martin and Rowland also acted as Terrain Judges, unfortunately there was one lot of outstanding terrain (not either of theirs') and the $150 of World Maker terrain donated by Ross Dawe was duly handed over. Hopefully there will be stiffer competition for any terrain prize in the future.[1]

Owen and Chester played in the Warhammer 40K events. There were around 120 participants – 100 in the main event and 20 in the young bloods. Owen was in the main event with eight battles over the three days (three each on Friday and Saturday and two on Sunday) while Chester was in the young bloods (two games a day over the three days). Owen fielded Grey Knight Space Marines and Chester fielded Dark Eldar. While there were some lapses in the administration of the event, both Chester and Owen agreed that their opponents were all great to play against. There were also many compliments on their gaming skills and sportsmanship. As with any tournament, they came away with a great experience and wider knowledge of the rules. Rankings were posted on the Wargamerau site. Owen's overall ranking was 34th while Chester ranked 6th.

40K in the Foreground

Marcus, as well as enjoying the diversity of CanCon was involved in three demonstration/ participation games re-fighting the battle of Kadesh in 25 mm figures using the Ancients Picquet (PK) game system. The demonstration game allowed passers-by to join in and come and go as they pleased. While the results were not historically accurate the game system was fun and the high level of involvement from the players,

[1] Apologies for the lack of pictures, but I forgot to take a camera.

audience and organizers allowed a very enjoyable two days of low stress gaming. The Piquet rules are 'interesting' and deserve further exploration and analysis and the high standard of the figures and the game were well received by all. James joined CancCon on Saturday and played in the Star Wars Miniatures and on Sunday he participated in the Magic (MTG) Competition game. Marcus played in the DBA competition on Sunday. This activity was quite well set-up and attracted 20 competitors. The standard of play (and competitors!) was variable but an appropriate result was attained. Marcus had better than average luck but played quite poorly (clearly his mind was on the shopping!) and he finished in the bottom third of the pack. James had a similar experience in his games … doing his best to improve everybody else's game rankings!

Many thanks to all those who went who helped put this report together.- Ed

Rimmer's War Diaries

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.

Unfortunately, for this issue the New Year blues has struck – my forgetfulness at CanCon 07 meant that I do not have a photographic record plus I didn't record too much. Hopefully Beserker 07 will produce some nice DBABB reports plus our 40K, LOTs, Horse and Musket, and modern wargamers will be able contribute something for the next issue.

Articles

Among the Society's aims are:
"To advance the avocation of Historical Wargaming in the State of South Australia by means of research, … exchange of information, promulgation of rules, systems …"
and
"To widen public awareness of historical military heritage by … publishing reports and manuscripts of military history…"

This section provides the forum for the publication of articles and thoughts of our members to share with each other and the wider public. This issue we have the start of a series of articles b Ross Dawe on Naval Wagaming in the Sail period.

NAVAL WARGAMING USING THE "PIRATES" SHIPS BY WIZKIDS[1]

By Ross Dawe © 2007

I have always wanted to game naval battles from the classic 'Age of Sail', spanning the 1500s to 1800s. What put me off time and time again was the cost of the beautiful little ships, which then had to be assembled and painted. Fortunately for my wargaming enjoyment, Wizkids Inc. have invented their "Pirates of the Spanish Main" (PotSM) constructible strategy game.

This article is my review of the Wizkids ships from the various sets. Next issue of *The Grumbler* I will give you my home grown generic rules for using the plastic sailing ships and galleys to refight some of the great naval battles from history. The *Grumbler* issue after that will have some period specific rules to reflect some of the conditions and constraints the admirals of days past had to contend with.

Part I: Review of the Wizkids Ships

There are several sets of plastic ships by Wizkids Inc.: "Pirates of the Spanish Main", "Pirates of the Crimson Coast", "Pirates of the Revolution", "Pirates of the Barbary Coast", "Pirates of the South China Seas", "Pirates of Davy Jones' Curse", "Pirates of the Mysterious Islands" and the recently released set "Pirates of the Frozen North". A gallery of these sets is at the Wizkids Inc. website http://www.wizkidsgames.com/wk_home.asp.

The size of the ships varies from single mast pinnaces and two mast frigates up to five mast gun monsters. Wizkids uses the common/uncommon/rare scheme that has worked well for some collectible card games. The one mast and five mast ships are rare, the four mast ships are uncommon and the two and three mast ships are mostly common. Each sealed game pack has two ships or one ship plus a fort, but the buyer doesn't know

[1] All pictures in this article are from Ross' Battle of Lepanto, fought during the Society's Open Day October 2006 and they, plus more, are on the Group North website at : www.groupnorth.asn.au .

beforehand what ships are in the pack. This system encourages collectors to keep buying more packs but if you just want the ships for gaming, then getting plenty of the common three mast ships is a boon.

The "Spanish Main" set is, in my opinion, the most useful of the sets as all the ships are of the warship or merchant ship hull shape. The English and Spanish ships in this set are all usable as is, while many of the pirate ships can be tidied up with paint and used in regular navies as well: most of my Dutch fleet was made from spare pirate ships.

The "Crimson Coast" set is a mix of warships, merchant hull ships and introduces schooners. While schooners were good in the early versions of the PotSM game due to their manoeuvrability, they played no significant part in any of the great naval battles covered by this period and so are mostly useless to me. This set introduces the French as a faction.

The "Revolution" set is chock full of schooners for all the factions and is mostly useless for naval gaming. This is the one set I regretted spending money on. This set introduces the Americans as a faction.

The "Barbary Coast" set changes theme and is full of renaissance style galleys. Happiness and joy! While this set still has plenty of schooners, most of the vessels are galleys for the Barbary Corsairs faction. To make other fleets for gaming the Maritime Wars of the 1500's in the Mediterranean, I simply painted over the skull and crossbones motifs on the sails and repainted the flags. The galleys also fill in as naval elements for DBR games or DBM games with late medieval armies, so I was very happy with this set.

The "South China Seas" set introduces the fictional Jade Rebellion faction, with plenty of Chinese junks. Just what I needed for my DBM Chinese armies, plus it gives me the opportunity to game some of the big naval battles fought on Chinese lakes and rivers during the Three Kingdoms and Northern and Southern Dynasties period. The set also contains turtle ships, so now I can game the epic naval battles of the heroic Admiral Yi Sunsin leading Koreans fighting Japanese invaders in the 1590's. If you want to read a gripping story of heroism, betrayal and more heroism in the face of staggering odds, look

up Admiral Yi Sunsin using your internet search engine and be impressed. Wizkids also went back to including a good proportion of warship and merchant hull sailing ships, so I am very happy with this set.

The "Davy Jones' Curse" set introduces sea monsters and a fictional Cursed faction in a blatant cash-in on the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie franchise. The "Mysterious Islands" set is inspired by Jules Verne's classic *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and introduces submarines into the game. The "Pirates of the Frozen North" introduces Viking longships with cannons. These three sets left me unmoved and I haven't bought any of their game packs.

Overall, I think the sets that provide the best value for naval gamers are the Pirates of the Spanish Main (warships and merchant ships), Pirates of the Barbary Coast (galleys) and Pirates of the South China Seas (junks, turtle ships, warships and merchant ships).

Note that the ships and characters for the PotSM game are not intended to be based on a coherent history. For example, William Dampier and Captain James Cook appear in the same set as the American Commodore Perry. The game designers also opted not to include some notable characters such as Francis Drake, while including Henry Morgan. Other characters from history are renamed in the game, for example Blackheart the pirate bears a strong resemblance to Blackbeard.

Ship names in the game do not correspond well with historical ships of the same name. The English faction uses mostly fictional ship names: a pity since the history of the English and later British Royal Navy has plenty of ships to be proud of. Renaming vessels to suit historical games is easy: I use white adhesive labels over the name on the deck plate card for each vessel and also write the new name on the cardboard base I use with each vessel.

Part II: Adapting the Game Pieces

I use rectangular bases underneath the ships, with most of the base painted blue and the rear of the base with a patch of white so I can write the name of the ship on it. Combined with using white adhesive labels on the ship deck plate cards, this lets me rename ships to match specific naval battles. The ship is stuck to the base using Blu Tac, in case I need to remove the ship from the base later. The bases are painted on both sides, so some of my ships have multiple names.

Another feature of the rectangular ship bases is that each **S** or **L** move only allows a maximum 90° turn, which restricts the manoeuvrability of the ships.

I have found that applying a coat of paint over the white styrene edges of the ships makes them a lot more presentable for games. I edge the sails with medium grey, the masts and spars with dark brown and the hull pieces and jutting tabs with either grey or brown to suit the vessel's hull colour scheme. Tattered sails and sails with unwanted motifs (e.g. skull and crossbones), can be dabbed over with paint to tidy them up, often with a white/grey if I intend for the vessel to be part of a European nation's fleet. Mast pennons and flags are also painted around their edges in the appropriate colours. This extra effort makes the ships presentable as table top quality for games.

When using the PotSM ships for naval wargames, don't be afraid to adjust the ship speeds as appropriate. This can be done on the deck plate card by using a small white adhesive label over the speed box and simply writing the new speed on it.

Sailing ships often take a while to sink, so I use some of my spare pirate faction ships as markers to show sinking vessels. I assemble these ships with a side hull piece removed and put it on a base so the ship appears to be heeling over and sinking. The tattered appearance of the hull and sails on many of the pirate ships completes the right look. Instead of immediately removing a ship that has taken full damage, the sinking ship marker provides a visual obstacle during wargames that other ships should navigate around.

For games where vessels can have the crew wiped out (e.g. galley battles), I use the assembled hulls from spare schooners to indicate these derelicts.

The later boosters for PotSM have 'Firepot Specialists' as a crew type, with plastic pieces showing a fire and plenty of smoke to replace a normal mast when the ship is burning. These make excellent fireships for games such as the Battle of Gravelines (1588).

The plastic coins from the PotSM game have other uses. I use plenty as numerical casualty markers for Warmaster Ancients games. Covering the plastic coins with round adhesive labels and painting around the edges in different colours lets them become customisable markers for a wide variety of table top games: so far I have used them for pirate era skirmish battles and Napoleonic games.

In conclusion, I have had a lot of wargaming fun with the Wizkids Pirates of the Spanish Main and later sets. What started out as buying a few packs at a sale out of curiousity has led to gaming battles and campaigns I had thought too expensive, time consuming and difficult to play using metal fleets. For example, with the help of fellow gamers Harry, Martin, Peter, Phil, Kerin and James, the battles of Trafalgar and Lepanto were each played in a day. While the plastic ships don't look as good as the metal ships, they are relatively cheap, require minimal assembly skills and still look fine on the game table. Thanks Wizkids!

Many thanks to Ross and particularly for indicating there will be further articles - Ed